



William Henry Smith Specialist College

Curriculum Policy

Policy Details

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Lead member of staff:	Leanne Clarke
Responsibility of:	Simon Cotton
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1.0 Introduction

We believe that every young person, no matter their starting point or previous experiences of education, therapy or care, has the potential to make significant and lasting change, and to achieve great things. We aim to inspire and motivate all our young people to be ambitious and be certain they can succeed; we help them to realise their full potential, maximise results and accomplish success.

We prepare our young people for adult life, through person-centred academic and vocational study programmes, leading to them becoming more independent and improving their quality of life. By working together, we increase resilience, confidence, self-esteem, emotional intelligence and well-being: the cornerstones on which strong and successful long-term futures are built.

We support each of our learners to set and meet realistic goals for their future, whether that is by working towards specific qualifications, vocational experiences or focusing on developing key life skills.

The William Henry Smith Specialist College is a psychologically and trauma informed environment. Young people's needs are understood through the lens of trauma and neurodivergence and all staff have been trained in trauma informed practice and PACE. There is an understanding that the young people we work with often have complex needs, as a result of social, emotional and mental health needs; challenges with communication and interaction; childhood trauma; and difficulties in family relationships and that early developmental experiences sculpt the brain and therefore have a big impact on many areas of functioning. Prolonged or multiple episodes of trauma can shape how individuals respond to stress and their social, emotional and cognitive development. Subsequently, it is vital that support and intervention is developmentally appropriate and considers their cognitive abilities and early experiences as opposed to being focussed upon their chronological age. As a college, we understand behaviour as communicated need and strive to understand the function, seeking to meet need and work to develop skills systemically.

Interventions are bespoke and developed and targeted to meet each young person's unique and individual needs, as well as the needs of the system around them. They are evidence informed, delivered by trained practitioners and based on quality relationships.

Developing and maintaining feelings of safety is fundamental to trauma informed practice and the development of safe consistent relationships and provision of consistent care, daily routine and structure alongside individually tailored therapeutic support and educational curriculum is central to the college offer.

2.0 Our Curriculum

Our college offers accreditation in English, Maths and Science Functional Skills and Certificates, ranging from Entry Level 1 to GCSE and A levels. In addition, we offer GCSE's, BTECs and A Level's in a variety of subjects. For some learner's qualifications and accreditation are not appropriate to support good life outcomes. Their study programmes will use alternative ways to record and report progress and achievement, linked to their EHCP outcomes. All achievements and successes are celebrated. Work related activity is included in our study programmes and all learners can participate in work related learning. We have an expanding range of supported placements and connections with local businesses.

The **Preparation for Adulthood Framework** sits at the heart of our curriculum offer. The individual learning routes have their own distinct identity that allows for personalisation, whilst maintaining the quality of each study programme. Our curriculum intention is built upon four areas:

1. Employment

- To be able to read and write at a functional level
- To use Maths at a functional level
- To enjoy taking part in activities and learning new skills
- To understand and follow instructions
- To express self clearly so that others can understand
- To pay attention and maintain focus
- To learn the skills needed to get a job
- To be ready to learn and able to make appropriate behaviour choices
- To cope with change and unexpected situations
- To take part in meaningful work experience

2. Independent Living

- To learn the skills needed to live independently
- To live in a house and feel safe
- To be able to travel to chosen places
- To complete routine household tasks
- To understand what is happening and make decisions
- To complete forms and other documents
- To be able to manage money and understand budgeting

3. Good Health

- To be a relaxed and happy person who does not get easily stressed or worried
- To enjoy being active and taking part in activities
- To move around safely
- To have a healthy and nutritious diet
- To eat and drink safely
- To look after personal care needs
- To breathe safely
- To take all relevant medication safely
- To be free from pain
- To keep themselves and others safe from harm

- To manage personal and sexual health
- To know how to access support for mental health and wellbeing

4. Friends, Relationships and Community

- To enjoy taking some risks and be safe
- To go out a lot, enjoy being active and taking part in activities
- To be safe and enjoy the company of others
- To look forward to new people and new places
- To know about good and bad relationships
- To be able to access social media safely (e-safety)
- To have a circle of friends and support

All our learners come to us with a depth and range of diagnoses, with prevalence around Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and challenges, complicated by co-existing conditions. The needs of our learners, including their barriers, starting points, their contexts on arrival and experiences and feedback, are what shapes our curriculum design. Very broadly speaking, the special educational needs of our learners fall under the following areas: Communication & Interaction; Cognition; Sensory & Physical; Preparation for key transitions/independence/adulthood; and Health & Medical. Therefore, the breadth, diversity and complexity of their needs dictate individual approaches and pathways to scaffold education, health and care.

Improving Quality of Life (QoL) is embedded in our ethos and culture and is driven by our mantra of 'Becoming the best you can be'. Our Quality-of-Life work is underpinned by the belief that our learners need to be happy, healthy and able to make decisions, which prepare them for adult life.

We use the Preparation for Adulthood framework and QoL framework as a holistic approach to improving the QoL of our learners, their families, and the wider community. Key Workers work in partnership with individual learners and families, to create areas for focus which may include learning a new skill or creating an experience.

Our curriculum is supported by the expertise of speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and whole range of psychological services, including creative psychotherapy, EMDR therapy and systemic family therapy.

Our curriculum, in its purest sense, provides learners with teaching and learning experiences across a range of subjects and activities throughout the day. Learning is delivered in a sequential, progressive manner, at each point checking learning with recall and retention (using a multitude of methods) and developing learning over time. Whilst teachers understand the knowledge and skills to be gained to prepare the learners for their next stage of education, training, employment or independent living, the curriculum and its delivery identifies ways that it can build on the learner's current strengths to develop further knowledge and understanding from individual starting points to ensure our learners develop, consolidate and deepen understanding across all areas over time.

Subjects and curriculum areas include English, Maths, Science, RSHE, ICT, Statistics, History, Film studies, Computer Science, Art, Music, Media, Outdoor Learning, Physical Development and Healthy Lifestyles, The Arts Award, Hospitality and Catering, Home Cooking, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Careers, enterprise and work experience.

Alongside academic qualifications, all our learners can undertake a plethora of experiences such as Horse-riding, Animal Care, Construction, Maintenance, Health and Fitness, Outdoor learning, college trips and water confidence to name a few. Our learners also undertake learning in areas such as first aid, food safety, online safety, British Values; achievement of the Bacc also considers learner participation in our Quality-of-Life Curriculum, Therapy, Social Progress system, work experience, college jobs, volunteering and community work, participation in clubs and activities, and progress made towards their individual EHCP targets.

3.0 Assessment

Assessment and monitoring play a key part in identifying needs and using information to assess and address the suitability of delivery and the curriculum, therefore developing a holistic package of experiences and activities required to meet individual and group needs. A range of means, such as observation, questionnaires, QoL termly surveys, standardised and bespoke assessments, activity analysis and cross professional communication, best practice progress meetings, learning lunches, and governance etc. ensures we track, amend and prioritise the curriculum and wider work with individuals, groups and families.