

## Curriculum Policy

Category of Policy: Central Education Policy Adapted by School

**Willow Tree Park**

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## Introduction

Willow Tree Park is a specialist independent provider supporting vulnerable young people with complex needs. Willow Tree Park is committed to awaken the potential of all our students. We offer full-time education for students aged 4 to 25 years. Many students are referred to Willow Tree Park having spent significant amounts of time out of education and all students have an Education, Health and Care Plan or are in the referral process. The amount of time that they have spent out of education is often due to having high levels of anxiety causing them to reach crisis point in a more formal classroom setting. Students are often excluded from other education provisions because they do not have the skills to communicate their anxieties in social situations, and they may use negative behaviours to communicate which can cause unsafe situations for themselves and others. The education offered at Bright Futures develops students' experiences in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education.

Our ethos promotes the school curriculum as a whole school and life experience. It includes experience both in and outside school, the culture of the school, the opportunities within school, extra-curricular activities, external visits and residential trips, and staff interaction during the school day. We aim to teach classes in Willow Tree Park that help students develop skills and attitudes to equip them for transition to college provisions with a focus on life skills, independence, employability and a vast range of work experiences. At Willow Tree Park, we personalise timetables according to a students' individual and additional needs and to help achieve their personal goals, outcomes and self-esteem. The comprehensive education programme offered to each student, is personalised to meet their individual need, and address in full all recommendations as set out in their Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

## Section 1 – Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- Independent School Standards 2019
- DfE (2017) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2013) 'The national curriculum in England'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025'
- DfE (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'



This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
- Marking Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- SEND Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Individual subject policies

## Section 2 – Aims of the curriculum

We believe in a broad curriculum, delivered in innovative ways to excite and engage children and we are confident that exceptional results will be achieved because of the education that we offer. Students are encouraged to aim high, and we provide them with everything they need to succeed. It is our aim to furnish each child with the appropriate skills to develop their academic potential fully, as well as developing their personal and social values in preparation for life in British society. It offers a robust understanding of safeguarding through the comprehensive PSHE, RSE and e-safety programmes.

## Section 3 – Objectives of the curriculum

We are committed to providing an educational environment that challenges, nurtures, excites and involves every single student in the school through a curriculum which:

- Prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of the next stage of their education and lives.
- Challenges the individual academically and allows them to discover their own intellectual strengths in the pursuit of excellence and encourages a love of learning.
- Encourages independent learning and critical thinking skills and provides opportunities for students to express their learning and understanding in different ways.
- Is balanced and broadly based and encourages students to explore a breadth of academic, cultural, aesthetic, creative and sporting interests.
- Is completely flexible and individualised.
- Enables students to acquire skills in speaking and listening, phonics, literacy and numeracy.
- Enable all students to read fluently within their own communication method.
- Uses technology effectively in supporting teaching and learning and gives students opportunity to present work in personalised ways.



- Ensures students understand their own personal safety and that of others, including awareness of safeguarding.
- Enables our students to work collaboratively and successfully develop the skills needed to equip them for life.
- Encourages respect for other people, paying regard to the protected characteristics stated in the 2010 Equality Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
- Careers information enables students to know themselves better and begin to understand how their strengths, weaknesses and interests relate to the world of work, providing impartial and nonstereotyped guidance and support to help students make informed choices in the selection of future subject choices and begin to consider their options for higher education, training and careers.
- To ensure that students develop an understanding of fundamental British Values and uphold these throughout the curriculum and PSHE programme.
- All students can have a valued voice within their school through the student council.

## Section 4 – Curriculum offers

At Willow Tree Park, we have three main strands to our curriculum. These are:

- Engagement Curriculum (All Stages)
- EYFS Curriculum
- Pre- Stage 1 & 2 Curriculums
- Formal Curriculum (Stage 1 – 3)
- Pathways Curriculum (Stage 4)
- Post – 16 Curriculum

All of our curriculums teach and support students in their ability to experience and learn valuable skills including independence skills, social skills, mental health and well-being, creative skills, aesthetic skills, skills in Relationships and Sex education, British Values and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) aspects to learning and life.

## Section 5 – The engagement curriculum

As part of the Engagement Curriculum, we offer our students a range of thematic approaches to learning including Communication, Independence, Structured and Sensory Free Play/ Leisure Time, Life Skills, Physical Wellbeing, Outdoor School (including The World about me/ Scientific knowledge), Creativity (including Drama, Art and Music).

At Willow Tree Park, as part of our Engagement Curriculum, we have adapted the EQUALS semi-formal curriculum to suit the needs of our learners with Autism and/or severe learning difficulties who may be lateral learners for a considerable number of years. The curriculum is developmental in nature and open to personalisation. At Willow Tree Park, we recognise that some students may remain learning within the



Engagement Curriculum for a significant amount of time, and therefore it is not directly related to either age or stage although there are clear, personalised progression routes. Some students may move into National Curriculum learning in some areas, but may remain within the Engagement Curriculum for other areas of learning. The aim is to ensure that all learning is completely personalised and bespoke to meet individual needs.

## Section 6 – The curriculum offer at stage 1 & 2

All our students follow a curriculum stage or developmentally appropriate thematic curriculum which incorporates the foundation subjects and where suitable, may also link to the core subjects and the national curriculum. Careful planning and schemes of work ensure that there is a breadth and balance of subjects being taught across the year, including life skills, relationships and sex education, and health education including personal care, health and mental well-being, at a level that is appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the individual. Our students are taught basic health and safety and experience safety in the home such as fire safety and basic first aid. Our curriculum is further enriched through specialist provision such as, sports coaches and careers advisors, Duke of Edinburgh Award and forest school.

Willow Tree Park follows the Read, Write Inc Phonics, and Fresh Start programme. Willow Tree Park is a specialist provision for communication and interaction and our staff are highly skilled in utilising a range of communication methods to support students to access the curriculum. Examples include intensive interaction, Attention Autism, colourful semantics, Makaton, PECS, objects of reference (OOR), sensory cues and alternative augmentative communication (AAC) aids such as Speak for Yourself Application on an iPad or equivalent. We adopt a total communication approach and commission Shine Therapy Services who assess the speech, language and sensory needs of our students and work with our teachers to develop plans that are bespoke to individual needs.

Learning is broken down into small, achievable steps to ensure success and promote further development. All achievements are celebrated weekly, during our 'Celebration Assembly' meetings and there is a personalised reward system in place.

Our specialised teaching team adopt a thematic approach as required to the curriculum at Stage 1, 2, 3 & 4. This approach has several potential advantages:

- It can reduce pressure on the timetable to allow more time for the Core Curriculum areas.
- There is an overwhelming child-centred focus.
- It will help generalise skills and support students to transfer learning.
- Children will link learning with increased independence and fluency.
- Increased flexibility of thinking.
- Learning will be more practical.



- It can be a powerful vehicle to promote cross-curricular skills including independence and the skill areas of ICT, communication, problem solving (resilience), teamwork and improving own performance & learning.

The following subjects are taught at Stage 1 & 2:

- English/Phonics
- Communication/Language
- Mathematics
- Science
- Computing
- PSHE
- Humanities
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Art/DT
- Food Technology
- Music
- Sport
- Sensory Hub curriculum visits
- Swimming
- Horticulture
- Options – one afternoon a week, students are given the opportunity to choose between a range of activities.

## Section 7 – The curriculum offer at stage 3

Throughout Stage 3, we promote an ethos that provides a basis for more independent learning. The students receive a broad, balanced, relevant, differentiated curriculum which promotes academic, social and emotional growth.

Educational visits are an integral part of the curriculum to encourage our students to link learning and transfer their skills from the classroom to community situations such as using their skills from a maths lesson to pay for their swimming lesson each week.

The following subjects are taught at Stage 3:

- English/ Phonics
- Communication/Language
- Mathematics
- Science
- Computing
- PSHE including Relationships and Sex Education, Health Education

- Drama
- Humanities
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Art / DT
- Food technology
- Music
- Sport
- Swimming
- Equals 'Moving On' (Nationally Accredited 5-year course for 14 years plus)
- ASDAN Options – one day per week students are given the opportunity to choose between a range of activities.
- Enrichment and Careers Connect – Transition planning takes place later in Year 9 with Careers Connect who advise on relevant courses, work experience and future work-based training, including College placements.

## Section 8 – Stage 4 curriculum

Whilst our Stage 4 students continue to have a broad and balanced curriculum including the core and foundation subjects, they also benefit from a progressive work-related learning programme which incorporates Enterprise, World of Work, enrichment and work experience which takes place at our school and in the local community. During Enrichment Day, our students choose from a range of subjects to establish if they would like to further their studies or career in that area such as photography, hair and beauty, nursing, teaching etc. Students are accredited for their work across the curriculum through a range of sources such as a plethora of ASDAN qualifications and Equals 'Moving On' 14 plus. Our Pathways Curriculum provides the building blocks in preparation for transition into a mainstream, employment, work experience or college provision.

At Willow Tree Park, we strive to provide an engaging, exciting, and personalised curriculum which awakens potential and supports our students to excel in their self-esteem and grasp how important they are as members of our school and the wider community. We enter writing competitions to have our work published in Young Writers' Anthologies and display our artwork in local and national galleries. We enter sports competitions with other schools and promote independence throughout all our activities. If a student, their family or carers, education team and wider support network believe that a mainstream setting would support a student's learning and social development by having a peer group at similar level of development, for instance in their Maths studies, we will either support a full transition or a bespoke transition to a mainstream school. In this situation, we may accompany the student to a local high school so that they can learn with their peers whilst having the comfort and trust of their staff from Willow Tree Park. This support may be stepped up or down depending on the individual student's needs.





The following range of subjects are available at Stage 4

- English ASDAN
- Communication
- Mathematics ASDAN
- Science ASDAN
- ICT ASDAN
- PSHE including Relationships and Sex Education, Health Education
- Drama
- Humanities
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Art / DT
- Food technology
- Music
- Sport
- Swimming
- Equals 'Moving On' (Nationally Accredited 5-year course for 14 years plus)
- ASDAN Options – one day per week students are given the opportunity to choose between a range of activities.
- Individual interests related qualifications if appropriate.
- Enrichment and Careers Connect – Careers Connect who will advise on relevant courses, work experience and future work-based training, including College placements.

## Section 9 – Post 16 curriculum offer

Willow Tree Park's Post 16 Independence and Life Skills Curriculum lays the foundation for students' transition into increased independence and engagement with the wider community. The curriculum is delivered through the following six strands:

- Literacy for Life
- Mathematics
- Community Active Citizens
- Relationships, Health, and Wellbeing
- Enterprise
- Independent Living

We provide an engaging and personalised curriculum that supports students in boosting their self-esteem and understanding their role within our school and the broader community. Reading is tailored to each student's needs, with integrated programs such as Sight Reading, Phonics, and Symbol-Based Daily Life Reading. EHCPs are utilised to ensure the curriculum aligns with students' specific needs and goals.





Our belief is that every work experience should be purposefully chosen, ensuring students not only succeed but also find genuine job satisfaction. Through careful selection and guidance from both students and their education and care teams, we foster an environment where students can thrive, gain valuable skills, and develop a sense of fulfilment in their chosen paths.

In Post 16, our students have the opportunity to engage in accredited learning programmes tailored to their intended pathways. These include, but are not limited to:

- English: Functional Skills Programmes (Entry Level 1-3) and up to Level 5.
- Mathematics: Functional Skills Programmes (Entry Level 1-3).
- Physical Education: Swimming, Duke of Edinburgh, optional sports, and more.
- Career and Volunteering Options: Photography, Art, Food Technology, Sports, Hair & Beauty, Teaching, Administration, and other personal interests identified by students.
- Communication: Tools such as communication devices to support non-verbal students, e.g. the 'Speak for Yourself' AAC application
- AQA Unit Awards courses which give students formal recognition of their success in short courses linked to their interests.

## Section 10 – Safeguarding

Within our curriculum, we build in opportunities for our students to understand safeguarding issues which may affect them and to ensure they feel safe and supported at school. More broadly, our curriculum takes account of and promotes our students' mental and physical health and development to prevent any impairments that would affect the best possible outcomes for all. We include opportunities within lessons to address and promote health, mental well-being and our Curriculum Subject Leads strive to ensure that our students are supported throughout all lessons. Additionally, our PSHE curriculum provides opportunities to be responsive to issues in a pre-emptive manner and E-safety awareness is taught throughout the curriculum and particularly within the Computing and IT curriculum. Bullying and peer on peer abuse are extremely important in our values and ideals. Students are taught a range of strategies to report any form of bullying or abuse and from the onset we encourage acts of kindness with our students and staff teams.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is provided as appropriate for the students ages and stages of development and in line with statutory guidance effective from September 2020. Our PSHE/RSE curriculum focusses on supporting our students to develop the skills they need to be happy, successful, and productive members of society; to be able to respond positively to the increasing challenges they experience; to develop the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and to know how and where to seek support if problems arise. Central to this is our students' ability to believe that they can achieve goals, both academic and personal; to stick to tasks that will help them achieve those goals and to recover



from disappointment, unexpected changes, and challenging periods in their lives. This is complemented by the development of personal qualities including kindness, integrity, generosity, and honesty. SRE is an integral part of the school curriculum at Willow Tree Park and has a range of cross curricular links including but not exclusive to Science, Physical Education, PSHE and off-site education.

## Section 11 – Progress and assessment

At Willow Tree Park, the curriculum is based on interactive, individualised programmes and monitored to maximise individual progress. We regularly assess and track each student's progress using Evidence for Learning and B-squared. The teaching breaks down tasks into a series of small steps, each step preparing the way for the next. Success is reinforced using consistent praise and rewards to motivate students, so that segments of learning build into a meaningful 'whole.' This involves:

- specialised classroom organisation (workstations, visual symbols).
- safe spaces outside each classroom.
- individual learning that addresses gaps in learning and builds on skills.
- spaced learning, retrieval and recall practice
- breaking down tasks into achievable elements.
- a structured and consistent learning environment.
- high levels of classroom support.
- positive reinforcement of correct responses.
- a Total Communication Approach.
- highly trained staff including Autism Training (Bright Futures Care Ltd. is the Autism Education Trust (AET) training provider for the area.
- Individual Support Plans.
- Personal Education Plans
- Social Stories.

All students have an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) which are reviewed at least annually.

## Section 12 – Experiences provided by the curriculum

For all students, the curriculum is supported with community activities related to the work within the classroom. For instance, students will learn about 'places of worship' and visit a place of worship in or around their local community providing experience in the following areas:

- Linguistic

Students develop communication skills and increase their use of language through phonics, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They also have the opportunity to study a Modern Foreign Language. Skills that are developed in the classroom are promoted and transferred into real life situations in the community.



- Mathematical

Students make calculations and develop understanding and appreciation of relationships and patterns in number and space. They have opportunity to develop their capacity to think logically and to express themselves clearly. Knowledge and understanding of mathematics is developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion. Skills that are developed in the classroom are promoted and transferred into real life situations in the community.

- Scientific

Students develop their knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces. They are encouraged to view science as a process of enquiry and to develop associated skills such as observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings at a level that relates to their age and developmental level.

- Technological

Students develop a range of technological skills, including the use of ICT; developing, planning and communicating ideas; working with tools, equipment, materials and components to produce excellent quality products; and evaluating processes and products at a level that relates to their age and level of cognitive development.

- Human and Social

Students develop an understanding of people and how they interact with their environment; and how human action, both now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. They learn about the main world faiths within Religious Education and PSHE.

- Physical

Students develop physical control and co-ordination as well as tactical skills and responses through a range of sporting activities, cycling, sensory regulation and a vast range of experiences. They are encouraged to evaluate and improve on their performance across a range of individual and team sports and activities. They acquire knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health and are supported to transfer the skills and knowledge to situations outside of the school environment.

- Aesthetic and Creative

Students have the opportunity to make, compose and invent across within a range of disciplines and through a variety of media. In particular (but not exclusively), subjects such as art, music, dance and drama contribute to this area. During Enrichment sessions, students can express their special interests and make choices to learn about photography, filming, astronomy, and a wide range of experiences.

In all aspects of school life, staff will avoid any activity which promotes a partisan political view and will ensure that, where political issues are brought to the attention of students, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. (This is best



practice adapted from the Independent School Standards Regulations 2019 and DfE guidance).

## Section 13 – Careers guidance

Career Connect and other careers advisors become involved as careers advisors and speak to all students from Year 7 onwards at a level that is appropriate to their needs, aspirations, and levels of independence. If students are able to work beyond Level 5 of GCSE programmes, they are carefully and sensitively supported to transition to mainstream settings with the support from Bright Futures staff. Students have the opportunity to gain experience about different careers and to gather information about training, education and occupations beyond school. Each year we hold careers weeks that are led by the students' career interests, with a plethora of external speakers and opportunities such as personal fitness trainers, animal health, chef, police and many more.

## Section 14 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

At Willow Tree Park, we recognise that the personal development of our students, spiritually, morally, socially, and culturally (SMSC), plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve and prepares them for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities that life will bring. SMSC development is strongly influenced by the Employee Value Proposition and the School Values of our school and almost everything the school does is underpinned by these values. Here at Bright Futures, we firmly believe that:

- a variety of opportunities should be made available to our students to enable them to achieve their full potential, breaking down barriers to learning.
- all students will participate in a wide range of activities that will help them gain the highest level of independence possible and self-esteem.
- All students should be fully engaged, enjoy and be active participants in their learning.

## Section 15 – Fundamental British values

Willow Tree Park policies and procedures ensure that teaching is balanced and make certain that the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are fully resented through discrete teaching, assemblies, adapted planning, including our curriculum offer and bespoke schemes of work. Through expert teaching our students develop:

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process.



- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety.
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence.
- An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law.
- Developing a depth of understanding about different faiths and lifestyles.
- An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour; and
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

## Section 16 – PSHE/RSE

A high priority is placed on PSHE/RSE to include the acquisition of independent living skills to maximise opportunities for self-confidence, social interaction, personal autonomy, self-empowerment, economic well-being, self-advocacy and to enhance life chances. It includes aspects of Health Education including Relationships & Sex Education. We are dedicated to promoting anti-bullying and providing a safe environment for our students. Assemblies and discrete lessons often focus on peer-on-peer bullying and how to deal with such incidents at a level that supports the students understanding.

In addition to PSHE/RSE, students have access via Individualised Educational Programmes to the wide range of curriculum areas. School policy documents are available to parents, Local Authorities, and their representatives on request. The school's curriculum and schemes of work are a dynamic resource and will be continually revised and updated. We have a PSHE Lead teacher who takes responsibility for the overall curriculum and ensures that resources are of the highest standard.

## Section 17 – Supervision of students

The supervision of students is paramount to ensure that they make the best choices and remain safe, always feel safe and trust staff. We have high levels of supervision whilst balancing this carefully to support students in making choices and learning to be as independent as possible. Some students may need one to one support or greater when they join Bright Futures, however staff teams are committed to provide students with strategies to manage their anxieties and communicate these in more appropriate ways, thus reducing the level of support they need to manage their anxieties.

## Section 18 – Promoting good behaviour

Bright Futures is committed to providing an environment where all students and staff can feel safe, happy, accepted, and integrated. At Willow Tree Park, the dedicated team have a collective responsibility to:

- Promote desired behaviour.
- Promote self-esteem, self-discipline, proper regard for authority, and positive relationships based on mutual respect.
- Ensuring equality and fair treatment for all.
- Praising and rewarding good behaviour.
- Challenging and disciplining misbehaviour.
- Providing a safe environment, free from disruption, violence, discrimination, bullying and any form of harassment.
- Encouraging positive relationships with parents.
- Developing positive relationships with students to enable early intervention.
- A shared approach which involves students in the implementation of the school's policy and associated procedures.
- Promoting a culture of praise and encouragement in which all students can achieve.

To achieve this, we will:

- Work to create a positive learning environment within the school and ensure our approach to behaviour management is consistent, and understood by all the school staff, students, and parents.
- Ensure all adults provide positive examples and attitudes.
- Ensure relationships with other adults and with students are fair, honest, polite, respectful, and considerate.
- Teach, through the school curriculum, values, and attitudes as well as knowledge and skills. This will promote responsible behaviour, encourage self-discipline, and encourage in students a respect for themselves, for other people and for property.
- Make clear to students the distinction between minor and more serious behaviour and the range of consequences that will follow.
- Treat problems when they occur in a caring and sympathetic manner to achieve an improvement in behaviour.
- Provide role models.
- Encourage students to understand and value relationships particularly with peers, staff, parents, grandparents, elders, and other members of the community.
- All students are taught great lessons and social skills.
- Do our best to ensure that all students are safe and happy.

Further information on this is outlined in our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

## Section 19 – Promoting good behaviour

### 1.1 Willow Tree Park – Stage 1 & 2

- Public praise in the classroom and at Celebration or Team assemblies for good behaviour and good work.
- PSHE and circle time.
- Class Dojo.
- Displaying the students' work in the classroom to acknowledge their achievements.
- Share good work with parents.
- Home / school communication diaries.
- PSHE charts – Friendship tree.
- Peer mediation.
- School Council.
- Agreed class targets.
- Help children to challenge unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, harassment and name calling.
- Reassure children that they are always valued even if the behaviour is unacceptable at times.
- Safe spaces outside each classroom.

### 1.2 Willow Tree Park – Stage 3, 4 & Post-16

- Oral praise.
- Written comments on individual pieces of work.
- Recording of positive comment in school planner/diary.
- Positive comment for 'Record of Achievement' / portfolios.
- Telephone call / letter home to carer/parent.
- Certificate of Achievement.
- Acknowledgement in assembly's /tutor time.
- Peer mediation.
- School Council.
- Class Dojo.

Please see our 'Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy' for more detail on how we manage behaviour and encourage students to act responsibly.



## Section 20 – Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher, School Business Manager, and Subject Leads.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and relevant stakeholders.

The scheduled review date for this policy is September 2026.

## Appendix 1 – Revision Log

Date of first publication – September 2024

| Revision number | Date of Revision | Nature of Revision                             |
|-----------------|------------------|--|
| 1.              | 30/09/25         | Changed to new format and school name changed. |
| 2.              |                  |  |
| 3.              |                  |  |
| 4.              |                  |  |