

CURRICULUM POLICY - INCLUDING POST-16 EDUCATION



HARDWICK HOUSE SCHOOL

Date: September 2022

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: September 2023

Hardwick House School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This Policy is one of a series of School Policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the School's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each and every one of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this Policy should be read alongside all of these Policies in order to get the full picture. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the Equality & Diversity Policy, the Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, and the Safeguarding Children Policy.

All of these Policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to evidence the work that the whole School is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values: Confidence, Competence, Creativity, and Character.

In all the School's Policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. [Department for Education guidance](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The School employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula HR Online
- Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)

1 Statement of Intent

This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, therapists, and anyone working on behalf of Hardwick House School, pupils, parents/carers, external agencies and members of the public.

2 Introduction and Aim

Hardwick House School ('the School') is proud of the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils, and is committed to a safe and secure environment in which every child and young person can learn effectively in line with DfE guidance.

This document is a statement of the aims, values and strategies used for the development of the curriculum undertaken within Hardwick House School. The policy aims to take into account diversity of beliefs and needs, and provide equality of opportunity.

Hardwick House School is an independent special school which provides a broad and balanced curriculum for Pupils in Key Stage 2 through to Post-16 Education, who hold an Education, Health & Care Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Pupils at the school have a wide range of needs and abilities, but broadly have similar cognitive abilities to children in maintained primary and secondary schools. The nature of pupils with autism can create an uneven academic profile both within the individual young person and within the year groups. Additionally, heightened anxiety and school refusal are frequent traits within our Pupil community, many of whom have experienced lengthy periods out of school and / or had a history of multiple school placements. This presents particular demands to ensure that each Pupil has the opportunity to achieve their full potential in all areas of the curriculum. Accordingly, Hardwick House School offers a differentiated curriculum that meets the range of different ages, aptitudes, needs and interests of the Pupils

and is permeated with a specialised autism-specific curriculum and delivered within an ethos of empathy, understanding, and structure.

The primary focus of Post-16 Education at the school is to prepare pupils for transition into post-school providers and develop the skills for living and working independently in modern day Britain. The Post-16 Education curriculum comprises predominantly of Level 2 qualifications and is designed to give a balanced and varied programme, predominantly over one year, with a two-year option for those pupils with extenuating circumstances. The curriculum is effectively an extended opportunity for pupils to complete their Key Stage 4 education.

The curriculum offered to each pupil is based upon their individual needs as outlined in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Their individual timetables reflect their personal needs and abilities with opportunities throughout the week to mix with a variety of people in a wide range of situations.

The aim is that children and young people will leave Hardwick House School with comparable qualifications to those available in a non-specialist school and transition to an appropriate setting.

3 Legislation and Guidance

Hardwick House School is an independent special school but it chooses to broadly follow the national curriculum, therefore this policy reflects the requirements to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, and the National Curriculum programmes of study.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

4 The Curriculum

All learners at Hardwick House School broadly follow the framework of the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs and level of cognitive functioning. However, the school also recognises that in order to meet all the educational needs of the learners, the curriculum offered needs to consist of a great deal more than the National Curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum at Hardwick House School is much broader than the National Curriculum and offers a wide range of organised experiences and activities which have been planned to meet the educational and personal needs of each learner.

Hardwick House School acknowledges that many of the learners who attend the school first need to be equipped with the tools to engage with the learning opportunities on offer and to effectively manage their autism in order to successfully access the curriculum. As such the focus of the curriculum is determined by the priorities for each individual pupil and is based on 2 elements:

- Academic Learning; Based on the National Curriculum and an individual learner's prior attainment, providing general educational and academic learning opportunities across a broad range of subjects.
- Autism Specific Development; based upon the strategies, approaches and therapies, delivered according to the individual and taking into account the EHCP, parent views and the professional views of other outside agencies.

The precise balance between these 2 main elements of the curriculum will vary for each learner in response to the need to provide meaningful learning experiences in which the learner can actively participate and from which they can learn. Flexibility within the curriculum is therefore essential in order to ensure it remains relevant for individual learners throughout the different stages of their school careers. The school recognises that not all learners will necessarily experience all elements of the curriculum all of the time.

5 Key Stage 2 Curriculum

The Key Stage 2 curriculum is organised into discrete subject areas for English, maths, ICT, P.E., design technology, cooking and Social Communication. In addition, learners follow a termly topic unit. The topic units are cross-curricular in their nature. Recent topics include The Romans and The Circus.

Key Stage 2 has a strong emphasis on building social communication skills and reducing anxieties. There is a weekly stand-alone Social Communication lesson delivered in collaboration with the Speech and Language Therapist and weekly yoga sessions delivered in collaboration with the Occupational Therapist. Pupils also have a weekly Community Skills lesson and in addition, Social Communication and PSHCEE are also incorporated into the outdoor learning curriculum where pupils spend two sessions per week with the Outdoor Learning tutor. These sessions are broadly based around the Forest School model.

All pupils in Key Stage 2 also have their own unique sensory programme that is incorporated throughout their school day.

6 Key Stage 3 Curriculum

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is organised into discrete subject areas for English, Maths, Science, ICT, Art and Design, PSHCEE, Social Communication, Spanish, Cooking, P.E., Humanities, Outdoor Learning and Key Skills.

This broad curriculum gives the learners the academic education they require to prepare for the KS4 curriculum, whilst also meeting their sensory and communication needs. The P.E. curriculum is designed in collaboration with the Occupational Therapist to help support the sensory needs of our learners whilst improving their physical and sporting abilities. The KS3 PSHCEE curriculum includes Relationships and Sex Education which is relevant to the individual needs of the learners.

Where appropriate, the learners are given the opportunity to gain qualifications such as Functional Skills in English and Maths and the Entry Level Certificate in Science.

7 Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Learners continue to follow the curriculum experience of Key Stage 3, whilst embarking on the opportunity to access accreditation from Entry Level up to GCSE and Level 2 qualifications in all subjects. It is intended that every learner in Key Stage 4 and 5 will leave Hardwick House School with a minimum of 5 qualifications, including a qualification in English and Maths. Whilst we hope that the majority of learners will be working towards GCSE, it may not always be appropriate. As such, some learners will be working towards Entry Level Certificates or Functional English and maths, whilst some learners will be dual entered for both Functional and GCSE examinations.

Before reaching Year 10, our learners are surveyed on their interests and requests for GCSE options. The school will aim to meet as many of these requests as possible, based on the teaching abilities of the current staff.

Our current GCSE offer consists of English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Double Award Science (or individual Sciences), History, Geography, Art and Design (3D Design or Fine Art), Food Preparation and Nutrition, ICT, Sport Science, Child Development and FCSE Spanish.

Learners in Key Stage 4 continue with weekly PSHCEE lessons to ensure their social and emotional needs continue to be met and they are preparing for the next stage of their education.

8 Post-16 Curriculum

The Post-16 Education provision at Hardwick House is a Level 2 provision and effectively an extended Key Stage 4 opportunity. Hardwick House School recognises that learners with an autism diagnosis experience significant barriers to their learners that sometimes results in a delay in completion of a traditional mainstream Key Stage 4 programme.

The learners entering Post-16 Education at Hardwick House School join from either Year 11 within the school or are new learners and arrive via Local Authorities.

The curriculum offered in Hardwick House Post 16 Education is highly personalised to each of our young people, to help prepare them for adult life. Their individual timetables are linked to their key skills, and we place each learner in a small, compatible tutor group of between three and six young people.

Post 16 learners are offered a variety of activities within the various areas of the curriculum to enable them to make real choices about future activities. However, the common thread of the learner's EHCP targets and the Key skills provide a consistent focus in all areas of work. The areas of the Post 16 curriculum include, but aren't solely restricted to, the following Level 2 courses:

English, Maths and Science GCSE

Learners who did not achieve a GCSE grade 4 in English Language, English Literature, mathematics or science will be required to re-sit in Post 16. The school currently follows WJEC specifications for English Language and Literature, AQA for mathematics and AQA Synergy for Science GCSEs. Learners who have already attained a grade 4 or higher in these subjects also have the opportunity to resit should they wish to improve their grade.

Core PE

Learners in Post 16 Education at Hardwick House School are encouraged to stay healthy, and the school aims to foster an interest in physical activity that will hopefully stay with them beyond school. All learners have a minimum of one hour per week of PE and a number of activities are offered according to learner interest. Activity options that have been recently offered include; football, basketball, rock climbing, volleyball, snooker and horse riding.

Option Choice

Post 16 learners all follow a subject of their choice. Recent options have included GCSE Food and GCSE Triple Science.

Level 2 ICT

Learners work towards the OCR National Level 2 Certificate in ICT.

Art and Design

Learners currently have the opportunity to participate in GCSE Art (3D design).

PSHCEE, Travel Training and Life Skills

All learners in Post-16 Education at Hardwick House School follow a PSHCEE programme that aims to prepare the young people for independent adulthood within modern day Britain. Learners have one timetabled learning session per week of discrete PSHCEE, one lesson of Social Communication and a lesson of cooking. The units of work have been developed to take account of their age, interests and motivation. In addition, Post-16 learners participate in a broad programme that supports and prepares them for living a successful, healthy and independent life. This includes; travel training; voluntary/charity work; visiting and using various venues e.g. theatres, libraries, restaurants, shopping centres and sports facilities. Learners are also supported with Careers, Information, Education, Advice and Guidance; Work Experience where appropriate; cooking; budgeting; and home care skills.

Level 1 or 2 courses in local FE colleges

Where appropriate, learners are able to attend courses at local FE colleges supported by staff from Hardwick House School.

Privileges of being part of the Hardwick House Post-16

Post-16 learners have much more freedom and experience privileges. Unlike other pupils in the school, Post-16 learners do not always have a full timetable of lessons. Study facilities, supervised by members of staff are provided and we support learners to develop their independent learning skills. With this freedom comes responsibility and the School expects Post-16 learners to be 'role models' for younger pupils and for high standards to be upheld, including respect, courtesy, punctuality, attendance, and general behaviour.

9 Taking Account of the Individual

Prior to admitting all pupils and Post-16 learners, the school has informative discussions with the learner, their family, and where appropriate, their prior school and key worker from the Autism Outreach team. At this point, the child's Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and One-Page Profile are also reviewed and the aptitudes, needs and interests of the pupil are ascertained. For Post-16 learners, this meeting also includes discussion regarding the curriculum needs for the individual, taking into account any previous examination outcomes and future aspirations and career plans. At this meeting, those in Key Stage 4 and Post-16 are asked for their Option Subject choice. The option subjects are reviewed regularly according to individual interest and staffing availability.

Upon admission to the school, prior academic attainment data is obtained via past school records and the DfE's Key to Success secure website. This data is circulated to teaching staff to aid planning. It is acknowledged that learners coming into Hardwick House School often have significant gaps and periods of missing

education. As a result of this, target setting solely on the results of the Key Stage 2 SAT tests is not a reliable measure and therefore the pupils undergo a series of baseline assessments within their first half term in the school to ascertain their current level. These assessments are spread throughout the first half term to minimise anxieties; the pupils who are new to the school have frequently been out of education for in excess of a year, and often several years; to have their first few days at the school dominated by assessment is contrary to their needs driven by their ASD diagnosis. In addition to baseline testing for academic subjects, learners are also assessed for any social, emotional and behavioural issues using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), for communication needs through the Children's Communication Checklist Version 2, completed by the Speech and Language Therapist, and for sensory issues through the Sensory Processing Measure completed by the Occupational Therapist.

Information gathered through these assessments are collated into an individual Learner Profile that is circulated to staff. This includes suggested teaching strategies and approaches so as to aid staff in their strategic planning to meet individuals identified needs, aptitudes and interests. In addition to the Learner Profile, staff use common formats to write yearly Course Overviews detailing planned routes of learning with assessment opportunities, termly Medium-Term Plans and individual Lesson Plans. The Medium-Term Plan and Lesson Plan format ensure that learner's individual needs, aptitudes, prior attainments and interests are taken into account and that activities, resources and support are put in place to allow each pupil to make the progress that they are capable of. Throughout the academic year, planning is adapted on a regular basis to take into account the individual and whole group needs of the pupils.

10 Autism Friendly Learning

Hardwick House School knows that pupils with autism often display high levels of anxiety. The anxiety is often linked to the young person's perception of his/her inability to engage with the community and learning which is presented at school

Hardwick House School aims to ensure that the school community is one in which pupils will feel a full participant with a similar peer group. The Hardwick curriculum provides structure where the environment is predictable, accessible and the community is understood and everyone within it is known.

Positive approaches and expectations to support the development of self-confidence and self-esteem building on the natural strengths, interests and abilities of the pupils. In addition, classroom staff liaise regularly with the therapy team in order to best meet the needs of the children.

Approaches taken to support the pupils include:

- A balanced differentiated curriculum

- Flexible teaching arrangements
- Topics changed frequently to support skills in dealing with change
- Autism specific teaching using written step by step instructions with colour coding
- Visual timetables in all classrooms
- Calling by name
- Only essential visual aids at front of class
- Frequent breaks
- Individualised diet to aid sensory modulation
- Balance cushions
- Back cushions for comfort
- OT checks for seating heights of chairs and tables
- Calm, low sensory environment
- Sensory arousal exercises including yoga in Key Stage 2
- Individual pastoral support (e.g. for personal management issues)
- Pencil grips
- Timetabled Social Communication groups overseen by the Speech and Language Therapist
- Contact books or emails for daily communication with parents
- Time out for calming down
- Mentoring
- Desks facing front of classroom
- Students own learning styles considered in planning
- Concrete apparatus
- Instant feedback with marking
- Scribes when needed
- Routine
- Personalised learning programmes
- Colour coded reading programme to promote choice and independence
- Common learning displays in all rooms to promote independence

11 Extra Curricular Learning

All pupils at Hardwick House School have access to a wealth of curriculum enriching activities during their time at school. Many of these activities are annually recurring themes based on religious, cultural and political events which are built into the curriculum in a cross-curricular way. Some are one-off special events to develop community engagement, social skills and broaden experiences, such as visiting authors, holocaust survivor visits, theatre trips and working with local community groups. Some are longer term such as links with a school in Canada, lunchtime clubs and alternative PE curriculum.

At the end of Year 11, our learners stay with us until the end of the school year and have an alternative timetable (approximately 5 weeks) of personal development activities based on their interests, but designed to build employability and social

skills alongside developing self confidence in a fun and interactive way, much of which includes community based activities.

In addition, we have an extended period every Friday afternoon with a broad menu of on and off-site activities that pupils can select from as a reward and enrichment opportunity. The options are pupil driven and therefore change each half term based on pupil selection. Choices may include climbing, beach volleyball, gymnastics, boules, parkour, baking, craft, art, music, drama, robotics, forest school, film, tech, tennis, athletics, chess and much more.

Finally, we offer all pupils an end of term experience of their choice, to build relationships and offer new opportunities. Again, these choices are pupil-led but often include trips to the cinema, theme parks, theatre, roller and ice skating, or simply a social visit to a local eatery.

12 Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood

At Hardwick House School, we want our young people to have fair and equitable life chances as they move into adulthood and that they are prepared for further study, paid employment, and independent living. In addition, we want all our young people to be prepared for life in modern day Britain and be valued members of their community and have successful friends and relationships.

To aid in this, all pupils have a structured and individualised programme of transition including:

- Pupils are supported by their tutor team and by the independent Careers Advisor to find a suitable destination for their post-Hardwick studies.
- Where deemed appropriate, Post-16 learners can regularly attend a college course with the support of Hardwick House staff. An example is a learner who studied Level 2 Animal Care at Brooksby Melton College for 1 afternoon per week.
- Pupils are taken to college open days and visits by Hardwick House School staff so that they can experience college during a working day.
- Work placements are available to Key Stage 4 and Post-16 learners. The needs of the individual are considered when planning work placements and placements can be on a weekly basis such as one afternoon per week, or in a block.

13 Monitoring and Assessment

Hardwick House School assesses all pupils regularly to inform the planning and

approaches and strategies that will work best for the individual.

The assessment process is systematic and thorough, and above all, is a work in partnership with parents and other agencies to create the best education for all pupils as an individual.

Assessment Cycle:

- September-October - Baseline assessments in all subjects followed by target setting
- December – Key Assessments in all subjects and interim report to parents
- February – Key Assessments in all subjects
- March/April – Key Assessments in all subjects and interim report to parents
- May/June – external assessments for KS2 SATs and GCSE examinations.
- July - Key Assessments in all subjects and end of year report to parents

Each time progress is monitored it is discussed with pupils, staff and parents. The school holds three parents' evenings each year where parents can discuss their child's progress with each subject teacher. These are usually held in December, March and June.

14 Responsibilities

Pupils

Pupils are responsible for engaging with their learning as fully as possible, taking into account their unique needs due to their autism.

Parents

Parents are responsible for supporting their child to attend and engage in their learning, and to cooperate with and support staff in addressing the needs of their child.

Therapists

The therapists are responsible for supporting the subject staff in ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum and the curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils.

Classroom Support Staff

Classroom support staff will liaise with and work under the guidance of the subject staff to ensure that the pupils can access and engage as fully as possible in planned learning activities, contributing to the planning, delivery and assessment of the work of individuals or groups of pupils.

Subject Staff

Subject staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance

with this policy. Subject Leads are responsible for the quality of the curriculum delivered at all Key Stages in their subject. The curriculum must match the pupils' needs and ensure it is of a high standard in line with the School's core values.

Subject staff must ensure that long, medium- and short-term planning is in place, that is challenging and meets the needs of the individual pupils and the curriculum intent of the school. Subject leads are responsible for:

- long, medium- and short-term planning
- planning that is flexible to the individuals in the class
- differentiation to meet the individual needs of students in the classroom
- summative and formative assessment of the learning
- using a range of teaching and learning strategies, techniques and resources, that makes the curriculum exciting to the pupils and ensures engagement
- providing clear opportunities for challenge and support
- directing the work of support staff
- attending and contributing to training and meetings as requested

Deputy Headteacher

- Support staff in identifying and dealing with these concerns and ensure that everybody feels safe at work and in school;
- Take responsibility for resolving more serious incidents of bullying;
- Coordinate counter bullying curriculum opportunities, including involving learners in e-safety and responses to cyber bullying;
- Work with the instigators of bullying and help them to change their behaviour through a variety of appropriate sanctions and supportive strategies;

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- all required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the school's mission statement.
- proper provision is made to take account of the unique needs, talents, attributes and interests of all pupils regardless of ability, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN) additional to their autism.
- the amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing body.
- the School's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.
- all courses provided for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and BTECs, are approved by the Secretary of State.
- the governing body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- the governing body is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions.

Governors

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing body will also ensure that:

- a robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.
- enough teaching time is provided for pupils to broadly cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements.
- it participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- there is support for the Senior Leadership Team in implementing this guidance.
- the policy is reviewed annually in collaboration with the wider school community.