



iMap Education

School Policy

Section	School Policies
Policy Number	SP-019
Policy Name	Curriculum Policy

Creation Date	Review date	Next Review date	Nominated Reviewer
20/09/2023		20/09/2024	A Nelson

CURRICULUM POLICY DOCUMENT

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide a comprehensive document to share with staff, directors, other professionals, families, and other interested stakeholders. The policy incorporates the vision, values and aims for our curriculum and the approaches required for teaching pupils across our school.

Vision, Values and Aims

Our current curriculum approach reflects research into best models of practice for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We understand that the existence of ASD may affect **how** the student is taught but **what** is taught will be informed by the severity of any learning difficulty. Therefore, our curriculum is further informed by thorough research into Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD) and Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD), taking into consideration unique presentations and combinations. This research includes government recommendations, curriculum models in other similar schools (including those rated Outstanding by Ofsted), relevant literature and materials by leading experts in the field and advice from specialist consultants who have met and worked with our pupils. Findings from this research have been reviewed in line with our school's aims, visions, and values to develop the best possible curriculum approaches for all pupils. The starting point of 'what we want pupils to learn' is firmly focussed on preparing them for adult life, enabling them to connect with communities beyond school and achieve in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their future lives. This is developed through staff expertise in analysing the ongoing development of each pupil, understanding their rate of learning and intrinsic motivation and knowledge of the characteristics of their learning difficulties and associated conditions. This also guides us in how to teach every pupil and puts personalised teaching and learning at the centre of our curriculum within different pathways which are designed more broadly as a structure for different cohorts.

A tiered pathway model with key areas of learning/ domains rather than subjects was originally adopted by Swiss Cottage School (2014) and there has been growing acknowledgement of this as a more relevant curriculum for pupils with the greatest complexity of need compared with an adapted National Curriculum. The Rochford Review stated that: -

'schools already have the freedom to use any curriculum they feel is appropriate for the needs and requirements of these pupils' (Rochford Review, 2016, p20)

We value this freedom to meet the needs of each individual and utilise it to create bespoke learning opportunities which takes into account the potentially 'spikey profile' of an ASC learner. It has always been the case that a huge amount of work on other areas such as independence, communication and social and

emotional needs have been a priority for our pupils as identified by staff and families alike.

'By definition, exceptional students require an extraordinary response from educators – something different from the ordinary, even if the ordinary is good.....' (Kauffman, 2002, 259)

Through providing different, specific curriculum pathways matched to the needs of our pupils along with personalised plans, we aim to support our vision of enabling pupils to be successful learners and prepare them for future life (see Appendix 1 for Visions and Values document).

Our Curriculum Model and Pathways

The curriculum is supported by specialist schemes of work (EQUALS informal, Semi-formal, formal and 14+). These schemes take into account the characteristics of severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. For pupils with severe learning difficulties this includes 'difficulties with communication, understanding abstract concepts, concentration and moving things from the short-term memory to the long.' Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are 'likely to be pre-intentional communicators, have extreme difficulties conceptualising abstract concepts, have difficulty learning through imitation, be physically reliant on others and have a limited understanding of cause and effect.' (Imray and Hinchcliffe 2014).

Overall, there is a focus on promoting and sustaining skills including communication and independence in preparation for adulthood and increased pupil-led opportunities following personal interests. Personalised plans also form a key part of curriculum input and reflect how each pupil learns in their own way and has different strengths and needs. These are linked to key areas outlined in Education Health Care Plans; Communication; Interaction, Cognition & Learning, Personal & Social Development and Physical and Sensory or for pupils in Y9 and upwards 'Preparing for Community Participation', 'Preparing for Adult Pathway', 'Preparing for Independence' and 'Preparing for Good Health'. Each pupil has a personalised plan which specifies learning intentions or specific focus areas which are a current priority. Progress against these is recorded and used to plan next steps in teaching and learning. We acknowledge that some pupils may benefit from aspects of two different curriculum pathways/approaches e.g. some pupils working mainly in the semi-formal pathway may benefit from some approaches or content in the informal pathway or, if requiring extended challenge, the formal pathway.

In line with the change of curriculum, we have created assessment systems which accurately and meaningfully allow us to provide evidence of and support the progress of our pupils. As a school we believe that curriculum, assessment, recording, and reporting are central to the development of learning and are an essential part of good

teaching practice. Statutory assessment must also be completed in line with national guidelines. Please see the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy for more information.

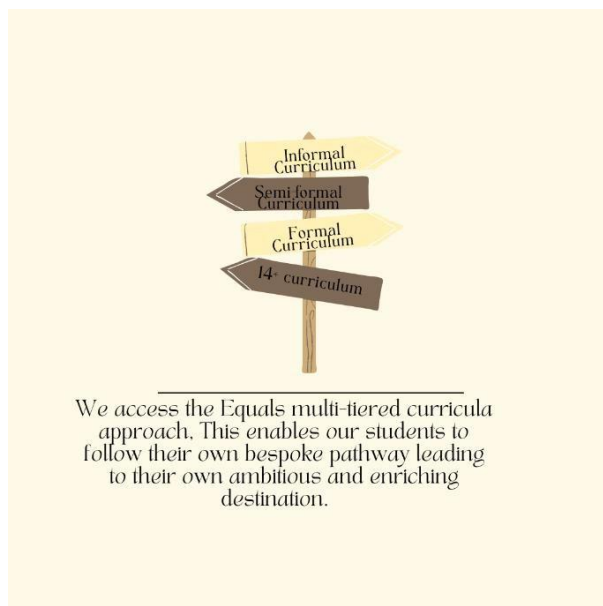
Curriculum Overview

Each Pathway follows a curriculum consisting of key areas;



(see Appendix two for full Curriculum Overview document)

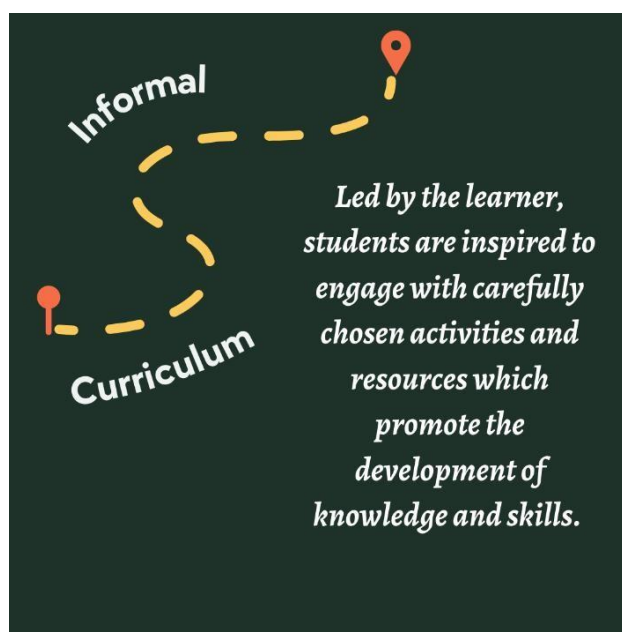
Curriculum Pathways



Across all our pathways at iMap, we aim to provide a balance of group and individual work that best supports learning for each pupil. Pupils have the opportunity to access bespoke timetables which can include access to a range of individual or small group input including community visits, forest schools work, drama, sensory work, nurture

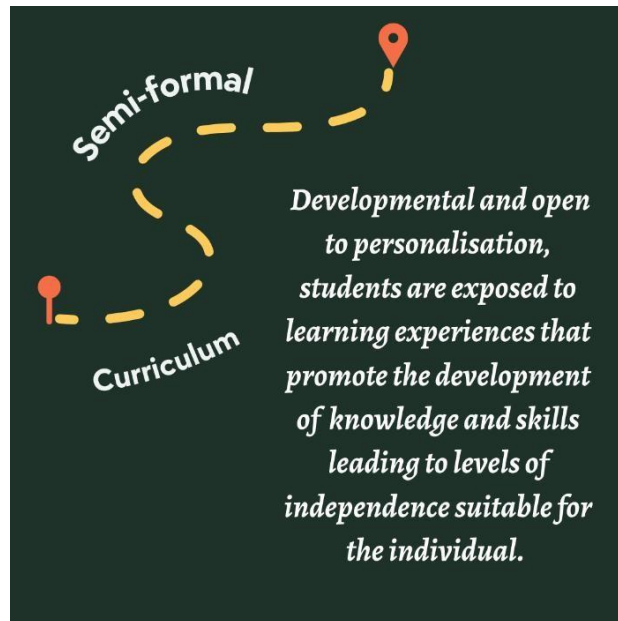
and wellbeing sessions and therapeutic interventions (Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Therapeutic Music, Therapeutic Art).

We work closely with a range of different health and social care agencies including; Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Complex Care Package Team, CAMHS (Children and Adults Mental Health Service), medical professionals and linked social workers. Where appropriate, joint working ensures that goals set for individual pupils by other agencies can be embedded into their individualised school curriculum. Below is a general description of the key elements of different pathways, although as mentioned above, pupils may benefit from aspects of different pathways, depending on their individual learning profiles:



- **Informal Pathway**

For some of our pupils, a highly structured learning environment with expectations to attend to adult-led activities can be very challenging. Our informal curriculum aims to explore different activities and resources and provide more developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for pupils working approximately within P4-P6 for the duration of their time in school. We aim to foster communication skills throughout with a flexible approach to developing and building upon interactions as they occur. As such, specific learning objectives cannot always be planned for as outcomes are driven by pupils' ability to engage, and experiences which capture their interests at any given moment. Staff work hard to create 'irresistible' learning activities to promote this approach. The informal curriculum supports experiences within and beyond the school community and sensory needs are addressed for individual pupils to promote self-regulation and increase engagement.



- **Semi-formal Pathway**

The semi-formal curriculum is designed for our pupils with severe learning difficulties (working approximately within P7 and above) who require experiences and opportunities which promote the development of functional skills, communication, emotional well-being, confidence, and independence. It is important for these pupils that achievable aspirations for transitioning to their adult lives remain at the heart of our curriculum and time is dedicated to ensuring a progression of skills throughout school. Within this approach staff act upon both planned and unplanned situations to develop learning for individual pupils. This includes opportunities to learn from problems, the chance to practise and apply communication skills in different situations with different people and time given to encourage and celebrate independence.

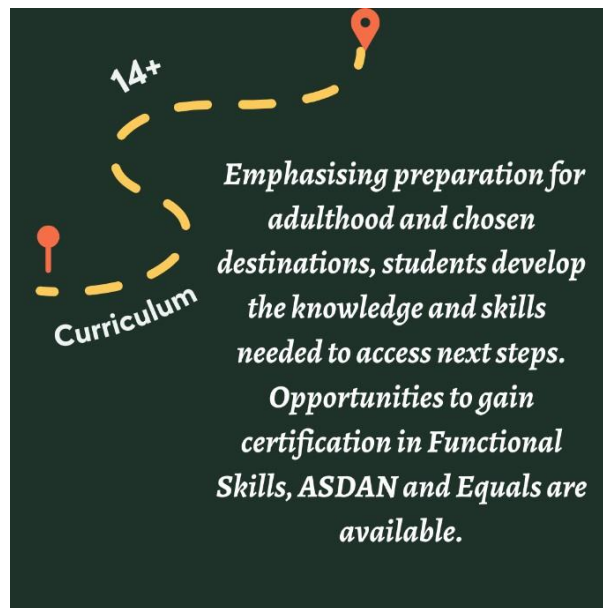
For some pupils, subject-specific input provides an appropriate extension to the semi-formal curriculum. Pupils who can access subject-specific content from the early stages of the National Curriculum are supported to do so, taking account of their individual learning styles and preferences. This input is tailored to individual learning styles and interests. Skills are taught contextually with functional literacy and numeracy skills being practised and applied to support real life situations e.g. reading a shopping list and handling money. Our pupils take many years to consolidate basic concepts and skills and therefore priorities are identified which will best support them in future life.



- **Formal Pathway**

The Formal Curriculum is specifically designed for pupils working consistently and over time below age related expectations. It is non key stage specific, so that pupils work at levels appropriate to their developmental stage. Pupils access subject-specific content from the early stages of the National Curriculum, taking account of their individual learning styles and preferences. This pathway has been specifically chosen for our ASD pupils with MLD or SLD.

Students are supported to develop skills in areas which may present challenges such as reading and writing and number. This is achieved in a way which promotes concentration and attention. We support the understanding of abstract concepts and development of strategies to promote long term memory, working memory and problem solving skills. These skills are applied contextually and repeated over time so that the skills can be applied across different contexts.



14+ Pathway

Students accessing the 14+ curriculum will be moving onto adulthood and accessing activities based in their local community to further develop their individual skill set as they strive for as much independence as possible. Through a holistic and engaging approach, students will be supported to develop positive interactive relationships with others, proactively explore the world around them and gain valuable independence/social skills as they prepare to transition into their next phase of life.

This cohort will broaden their horizons through exposure to a variety of enriching and inspiring 'post iMap' destination options. The options secured will be tailored to the individuals interests and strengths. Our aim at this stage is to support students to make informed decisions about their futures whether that be college, apprenticeships, the workplace, volunteering, social care or a supported internship.

Reading

Reading and early reading skills are promoted across our curriculum pathways in a way that supports our overall curriculum aims. This includes sensory stories, drama, book handling, use of symbols, narrative work, and simple comprehension. For the majority of pupils, we must focus on supporting them to become effective communicators through a total communication approach and acknowledgement of individual preferred methods (gesture, eye pointing, sign, symbols or speech). Progress in more formal literacy skills requires understanding of abstract concepts and memory. This presents challenge for many, but where appropriate opportunities to develop these skills are provided. For more information, please refer to the Reading Policy.