

# Curriculum Policy



**Approved by:** Governing Board

**Date:** July 2023

**Signed By:**

**Position:** Chair of Governing board

**Last reviewed on:** N/A

**Next review due by:** January 2024

## Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

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### 1. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for independent schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

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](#).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 2. Local context

Inclusion School is an independent secondary special school catering for young people aged between 11 and 16 years of age.

Our learners are neuro-diverse, have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and an associated Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP)\*. They typically exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- High levels of anxiety;
- Automatic behaviours associated with childhood traumatic experiences;
- Depression or other mental health need;
- Mainstream school refusal;
- Social communication and interaction difficulties;
- Suicide ideation or self-harm

A broad GDP view of the local (North East Hampshire) landscape is misleading. Although the region is generally affluent – and therefore often ineligible for national sources of financial support – the young people that we serve are very often disadvantaged.

Inclusion School supports those learners who find it very difficult to attend school, often due to anxiety related issues. Often, our learners are “in crisis” when they arrive and during some of their time with us. Within that context, it is vital that the foundations of learning – positive mental health and emotional wellbeing and attendance, in particular – are always placed first.

Our learners are intelligent, independent, creative, caring and passionate but they feel different to their peers – some feel broken, some anxious, some unable to face the world – and they all struggle to find the self-belief, fortitude and resilience to find out where they belong. They have not found their place in the mainstream school system but they belong at Inclusion School.

*\*Although Inclusion Hampshire ostensibly works with learners having an EHCP which might cover a wide variety of SEN, our successful background has been as a source of Alternative Education Provision.*

### **3. Intent**

#### **3.1 Guiding principles**

We aim to enable young people with emotional and mental health needs to be able to have access to a broad and enriching curriculum.

Ensure equal access to learning for all learners, with high expectations for every learner and appropriate levels of challenge and support.

We aim to provide a calm and nurturing environment in which learners feel safe, holistically valued and motivated to learn.

We aim to inspire in all of our learners a life-long passion for and love of learning whilst preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of the next stage of their education and/or working lives.

We aim to deliver an education which is understood to be relevant to the young person and which enables them to work towards achieving their goals.

We aim to offer bespoke educational pathways in support of the aspirations and current capability of our learners.

We aim for all of our learners to value and develop their facility for logical reasoning, their critical thinking skills more generally and understand reliable methods of enquiry. We aim for our learners to be able to objectively assess thoughts, ideas and theories.

We aim to support our learners in their development of emotional regulation, including developing self-help strategies, and in gaining an understanding of how emotion affects decision making and other people.

We aim to help our learners to become self-reliant; to learn how to learn, how to adapt and to develop the confidence necessary to become independent learners in the areas of personal, social and academic growth.

We intend to meet the needs of our learners for whom mainstream school is not currently not accessible due to (often complex) mental health needs.

We aim to instil a sense of fascination and awe in our learners for the world around them in all its forms in addition to helping our learners make sense of the world and their place in it.

We aim to foster respect for other people and celebrate diversity and inclusion, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics stated in the 2010 Equality Act (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

We aim to teach learners to become effective communicators; to seek help when appropriate and to offer to support others in return.

We aim to help our learners find and pursue a moral code that allows them to live a fulfilling and meaningful life founded on self-esteem.

We sincerely hope that our learners are accepting of their own limitations whilst committed to achieving challenging goals for themselves and their communities.

We aim to encourage high aspirations and a sense that anything is possible with the right commitment and resilience.

We aim to provide experiences and support through which our learners are able to consider and develop their character, aligned to the school's core values which include trust, honesty, respect, kindness, resilience and the promotion of a growth mindset.

Equip learners with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

It is our hope that our learners will be valuable members of their communities and society at large and that they will thrive as a result of the social, emotional and academic development they make with us.

### **3.2 Curriculum aims**

Our curriculum aims to deliver the following for all learners:

- An engaging and relevant education with breadth and balance covering linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.
- The opportunity to be involved in creative activities not linked to formal assessment, including writing, art and music.
- Regular opportunities to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy.
- An appropriate level of challenge according to age and aptitude, driven by meaningful formative assessment.
- Opportunities to work collaboratively and successfully develop the 'soft skills' needed to equip them for life.
- Responsibility for and ownership of their learning.
- Soft skills needed to develop their academic and broader potential.
- Guidance and education around healthy relationships, including sexual education (RSE).
- An understanding and appreciation for British values and Institutions.
- Support for learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).
- Support learners' physical development and responsibility for their own physical and mental health, and enable them to be active and healthy
- Learners will also learn about housing, finance, and how to access services such as health as they become young adults.

## **4. Implementation**

The Inclusion School curriculum is designed for learners aged 11-16 who have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and struggle with mainstream school. These

needs may include anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, self-harm, being victims of bullying and school refusers. We also support learners with PDA and ASC.

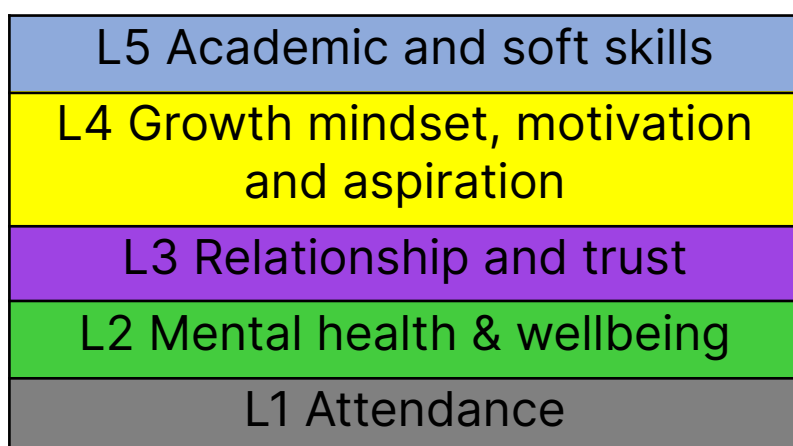
Our mental health strategy underpins our work to ensure individual learner needs are met, safeguarding is effective and that mental health support is accessible to all. Mentoring, listening and nurturing is embedded throughout our daily teaching and support and we also promote a Growth Mindset approach.

#### **4.1 Key principles**

Learning groups will be small (ranging from 1:1 to no more than 1:8)

All teaching staff are familiar with Barry Carpenter's Recovery Curriculum model and Dr. Sandra Bloom's principles of trauma informed systems and practices.

The pace of curriculum delivery is always dictated by the learner.



Genuinely rich and trusting relationships are central to our educational philosophy. Inclusion School believes that successful education involves kindness, empathy and commitment from everyone.

Teaching staff take the time required to ensure L2 readiness before attempting to engage L5 ambitions. Staff understand that "happy children learn".

Teaching is holistic: subject specialists and pastoral leads alike understand that "it takes a community to bring up a child".

The holistic learner-centred aims of our curriculum are distributed across subject, project/problem and theme-based components of the curriculum

Learning can happen anywhere, anytime. Teachers are ready to turn any learner-led interaction into a learning opportunity. Inclusion School staff are experts at finding learning opportunities within everyday conversations and activities.

Progress in any of these areas identified is understood to be non-linear, and thus monitored regularly to reliably identify trends.

Progress in L5 can be rapid, provided the foundations are in place. Inclusion School believes in being patient and investing in the holistic development of learners in order to support more general growth. In particular, Inclusion School understands that motivation is the single most significant indicator of likely academic success.

## **4.2 Structure and approach**

Every learner receives bespoke health and education support, grounded in robust research, to enable them to thrive in school, their community and society.

Our multi-disciplinary team has organically developed a curriculum model that has reliably delivered positive outcomes for all of our learners.

There is no competition between subjects: the learners' needs come before any consideration as to how "subjects" could help.

There is no artificial competition nor discussion about the merits of any one subject or topic or learning objective over another. At Inclusion School, we each recognise the part we play in educating a learner. Every member of staff takes an interest in the passion for growth held by every other subject specialist so that we can encourage engagement for our learners in every subject specialism offered.

### **4.2.1 Wellbeing provision**

Inclusion School places a primary focus on its mental health and emotional wellbeing provision. Many of the learners attending our school are in crisis or are receiving long term support from mental health services, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). This specific demographic of learners requires a calm, nurturing and listening environment for them to grow and succeed.

We work closely with our Health and Social Care colleagues, SEN team, parents and young people, to ensure we have accurate information regarding the learners needs, medication and relevant history.

Our experience and training has taught us that for many learners, structured forms of therapy (such as counselling) can be challenging and intimidating and, for structured therapy to be most successful in the long term, requires a fluid, relationship-first approach. For example, implementing a graduated approach by focusing on establishing a trusting relationship, identifying and managing emotions, and enabling learners to develop strategies to support them through moments of anxiety and emotional dysregulation. The aim is to enable learners to find the right tools for them to cope with extreme situations and to create an underlying culture of respect and support. Therefore, by design, access to our pastoral and therapeutic specialist is dynamic. Our therapeutic approach is embedded across our curriculum.

As a trauma-informed school, the adults in the school community are skilled at identifying and responding to those who have been impacted by traumatic stress. Those adults include administrators, teachers, staff, and parents.

The work that we do towards mental health and wellbeing and academic development are not seen as two distinct functions: they are co-dependent and integrated within our curriculum.

### **4.2.2 Familial setting**

Inclusion School strives to achieve a healthy familial setting. Whilst there are lessons structured towards a core learning objective/subject, there are also many opportunities to experience positive relationship-based learning in more traditional formats such as shared cooking, eating of meals and playing social games. This is based on Inclusion School's belief and experience that learning is essentially a social experience.

Our learners know that all adult staff care about them and all adult staff, no matter their specific specialisms, relate to learners holistically.

#### **4.2.3 Learner led**

Through trusted relationships, students learn that growth in specific directions – such as willingness to participate in more formal learning activities or those requiring greater independence or productive peer engagement – should be seen as an opportunity for celebration and associated growth of self-esteem.

The 'mode' of learning is never forced, but learners are consistently encouraged to view growth as success. Again, linearity is unimportant. Learners, like everyone else, have bad days. On those days, all forms of success are recognised and celebrated.

Careful consideration is made for, and in collaboration with, each individual learner at every stage of their academic journey to create bespoke learning paths for every individual based on their needs. For example, is the learner ready for a formal examination, and is there any additional support not in place that could be to enable access to achieve this, or, alternatively, would they benefit from learning that is accredited with ongoing assessment.

#### **4.2.4 Responding to immediate needs**

Inclusion School's teachers are sufficiently flexible to meet the dynamic needs of learners. Even during subject-based teaching sessions, topical and pressing mental health and wellbeing conversations are given precedence over planned lesson content. This is based on Inclusion School's belief and experience that the motivation to learn is best leveraged when it arises in the learner. In this way, the learner is able to direct and own their learning, thus fostering a passion for learning.

The impact of this approach on curriculum planning is that, whilst appropriate sequencing of material is well understood and embedded, the scheduling of content provision for each learner is adaptable and each teacher, tutor or therapeutic team member is empowered to put the learner's need first. This is overseen by leaders and reviewed collectively

Related to this common understanding are notions of proximal development (Vygotsky).

Working with very small groups (sometimes as individuals and pairs) allows us to identify skill and knowledge gaps dynamically which we respond to, feeding into and updating the planned scheme of learning.

As a teaching organisation, we are flexible, with learning objectives modulated by individual strengths and interests.

#### **4.2.5 Dedicated improvement and reflection time**

Learners are supported to look at and reflect upon their own progress and achievements as well as setting their own targets for addressing gaps in their work.

Learner work and teacher feedback forms a closed circle.

#### **4.3.6 Schemes of learning**

Our schemes of learning are individualised living documents, each must nevertheless be coherently planned and sequenced towards the acquisition of cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills to facilitate future learning and employment.

#### **4.2.7 Less haste, more speed**

Inclusion School has a successful model in which the length of sessions are not driven by time management and deadlines but by what meaningful progress can be achieved. For example, on arriving, it is important that there is time for learners to settle and discuss immediate concerns with their teacher. Without an opportunity to settle and talk about what they are thinking, learning will not be able to take place as their thoughts and focus are elsewhere. Similarly, throughout sessions movement breaks and activities (such as games) are incorporated into the session through collaboration between the learner and teacher.

Whilst encouraging a development for mental stamina and a motivation for learning, teachers must remain conscious of the fact that our learner profile is that of young people who have been unable to engage with their curriculum at all in a more conventional educational setting.

It is also understood that academic progress (that at the top of our model) may be sporadic and closely tied to mental health and wellbeing.

#### **4.2.8 Mixed model**

Inclusion School implements a mixed model of learning that comprises the following methods:

- A. Thematic
  - a. Awareness weeks provide learners with information that is relevant to the wider world and the confidence to share their understanding and opinions.
  - b. Daily staff briefings are used to raise any topical concerns regarding how best to handle controversial or anxiety-provoking news topics
- B. Project-based
- C. Traditional
  - a. English, Maths, Science are delivered semi-formally
- D. Cross-curricular
  - a. Embedded in our lessons are opportunities to look at citizenship and ethics

#### **4.2.9 Delivery**

Many learners are suspicious of more traditional learning delivery. From a teacher's perspective, it may be obvious that education is good. From a young person's perspective, this may be less obvious, requiring more natural delivery of communicating the value of learning.

For example, often the most meaningful and productive discussions take place whilst engaging in another activity with a learner, such as walking side-by-side or playing a game of table tennis. Focusing on an activity whilst talking removes perceived boundaries to the relationship, equalises the power dynamic, and minimises the emphasis and focus on what is being said to allow an open, honest conversation on what is affecting them personally, emotionally and academically to allow the member of staff to put in place the appropriate support. This is particularly helpful for learners with ASC, anxiety or other social communication needs as it removes the focus on eye contact.



Inclusion School's teachers seek to equalise the relationship and earn their learner's respect, trust and participation to best support them socially, emotionally and academically.

Lectures can be an aspect of teaching delivery but it is primarily in modelling the skills, behaviours and attitude that we develop our learners. In particular, Inclusion School is a place where people are kind to each other.

Opportunities to develop skills in settings outside of the school physical and cultural environment are vital. Thus outside trips and external partnerships are an important aspect of our delivery.

#### **4.2.10 Learning behaviours**

Negative behaviours, such as swearing are challenged in a positive way. For example, learners are offered alternative suggestions, and encouraged to explore vocabulary that more fully expresses what they are feeling and to communicate this appropriately. Furthermore, challenging the use of negative language is targeted to opportunities when the learner is receptive.

However, any form of bullying, prejudice-based discrimination or sexism/sexual harassment is challenged by a member of staff immediately. However, teachers and staff are trained and experienced in doing so using non-confrontational, non-personalised language ("that word you have used is transphobic") and turning the situation into a learning moment for the learner.

Our aim is for experienced learners themselves to begin to increase their own standards in this as in other areas of development.

Further details on this can be found in Inclusion School's Behaviour Policy.

#### **4.2.11 Learning resources**

- Learner folders
- Individualised lesson evaluations for each learner
- Links to resources such as worksheets from individual schemes of learning

Use of learner phones and tablets is permitted, though usage is, of course, managed. Indeed, activities which explicitly permit constructive use of devices are proactively supported. Learners have powerful "relationships" with their electronic devices. We strive to replace some aspects of this relationship with more meaningful direct human contact, but we do not see the two as mutually exclusive.

#### **4.2.12 Learner progress and assessment**

As a school, we collect data that helps inform and contribute to meaningful learner progress.

Assessment is made at each level (including soft-skills) and assessment information is used to drive effective interventions, and is fully integrated with individual target setting.

Measurable progress towards documented life and “next steps” goals for our learners will always be prioritised over comparative measures of absolute academic results. Inclusion Schools regards this as particularly important within a context in which learners have typically compared themselves unfavourably with their peers elsewhere.

It is important to recognise that, for many, learning is not linear. Thus, progress is frequently documented to enable trends to be identified. Formal progress tracking reports are communicated termly and give rise to a fine grade numerical indicator of progress.

For further details on learner progress and assessment please refer to Inclusion School’s Learner Assessment Framework.

#### **4.2.13 Learner voice**

It is Inclusion School’s foremost priority that our learners are happy, calm and psychologically safe.

We strive for our students to demonstrate an engagement in multiple positive, trusting relationships with adults and peers alike.

We care that our learners have a growth mindset and a desire to develop their knowledge and skills broadly.

### **5. Impact**

The impact of our curriculum implementation will be measured according by the following means:

1. Learner voice
2. Parent voice
3. Successful college applications
4. Successful work placements (learners going on to thrive in the workplace)
5. Internally generated objective progress data
6. Acquisition of nationally recognised qualifications
7. Reintegration of some students back into mainstream settings

### **6. Inclusion**

Inclusion School delivers bespoke, personalised education routes for every learner to ensure that they not only access the full curriculum offered, but also that they may develop a generalised love of learning.

Teachers set high expectations of progress in the areas of attendance, emotional regulation and academic development. They will use appropriate assessment against individual targets and plan challenging work for all individuals and groups, including:

- Learners with low prior attainment
- Learners from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Learners with SEN
- More able learners

Teachers will plan lessons on the principles of Quality First Teaching so that learners with SEN and/or disabilities can study every subject delivered, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every learner achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of learners whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help learners to develop their English, and to support learners to take part in all subjects.

## **7. Curriculum overview**

### **7.1 Key Stages**

We deliver education at Key Stages 2 (Entry Level), 3 and 4.

#### **Key Stage 2: revisiting to strength**

Some of our learners may need to revisit areas of the Key Stage 2 curriculum to ensure key literacy and numeracy skills are secure. Our programme to support low level readers is one aspect of this.

They will undertake age appropriate aspects of Work Skills and Employability, and Life and Wellbeing.

Physical Education - introducing learners to a range of sports and fitness activities; individual and team activities.

#### **Key Stage 3: holistic education**

Key Stage 3 is a holistic education with a broad base which aims to inspire a passion for learning for its own sake in addition to building the foundations (thinking skills, practical skills and knowledge) necessary to support KS4 courses of study.

#### **Key Stage 4: aspiration education**

Key Stage 4 aims to facilitate our learners' next steps towards their personal goals as well as delivering nationally recognized qualifications.

Mixed age groups may be implemented where appropriate.

There is no consideration of exams – exam board content, exam technique – prior to Key Stage 4.

## 7.2 Taught subjects

Individual curriculum overview, examination long and medium-term plans, schemes of work and resource banks exist for the following subjects:

Subject	KS2			KS3			KS4		
	Taught	Principal method	Accredited	Taught	Principal method	Accredited	Taught	Principal method	Accredited
ICT	N	N/A	N/A	Y	Through the curriculum	N	Y	Through the curriculum	N
Literacy	Y	Subject sessions	N	Y	Cross-curricular	N	Y	Cross-curricular	N
Numeracy	Y	Subject sessions	N	Y	Cross-curricular	N	Y	Cross-curricular	N
English Language *	N	N/A	N	Y		N	Y		Edexcel GCSE & / OR NOCN Functional Skills
Maths *	N	N/A	N	Y		N	Y		Edexcel GCSE & / OR NOCN Functional Skills
Biology **	N	N/A	N	Y		N	Y		Edexcel iGCSE (Single) & / OR Entry Level Certificate
Physics **	N	N/A	N	Y		N	Y		
Chemistry **	N	N/A	N	Y		N	Y		
Physical Education **	N	N/A	N	Y		N	Opt		Not Yet

Creative Expression ** (English Literature, Art, Music)	N	N/A	N	Y		N	Opt		Not Yet
Work Skills and Employability **	N	N/A	N	Y		Y	Y		NOCN "Employability"
Life Skills * (Cooking, PSHE, Citizenship, Critical Thinking and Study Skills, Personal Wellbeing)	N	N/A	N	Y		Y	Y		Pearson "Personal Growth and Wellbeing" BTEC EL3 – L2
SMSC *	N	N/A	N	Y	Cross-curricular and thematic	N	Y	Cross-curricular and thematic	N

*SMSC: Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (including British Institutions and Values and RSHE)*

*From year 9 Preparation For Adulthood is embedded in the curriculum and progress reviewed, including as part of the statutory EHCP Annual Review process.*

## **7.3 Curriculum Development**

As our learners become more resilient and ambitious it will be important to increase our curriculum offer. We anticipate the following additions to our offer:

### **September 2023**

- addition of a double science GCSE/Award
- additional options for non-accredited learning - such as catering, horticulture
- increased access to work experience, volunteering

### **September 2024**

- addition of an English Literature GCSE
- addition of an ICT/computing accreditation
- Integrate outdoor/Forest School non-accredited learning
- additional access to schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) or National Citizenship Scheme (NCS)

### **September 2025**

- Increased options for accredited learning in a range of other accredited subjects

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

### **8.1 The governing board**

The Inclusion School governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) religious education, and enough teaching time is provided for learners to cover the requirements of the funding agreement
- Proper provision is made for learners with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- All courses that lead to qualifications are approved by the secretary of state
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Learners from year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

### **8.2 Headteacher**

The headteacher 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 aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual learner will be met

- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- Requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects are appropriately handled.
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

### **8.3 Other staff**

All staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

Inclusion School has named subject leads for the following broad areas of curriculum:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Creative Expression
- Life Skills (PSHE+)
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (including British Institutions and RSHE)
- Literacy and Numeracy across the curriculum
- Technology

Subject leaders are aware of the pedagogical practice within their subject team. However, they do not impose specific pedagogy.

### **9. Monitoring arrangements**

Governors monitor whether the school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes the required subjects, through:

- Annual meeting with the headteacher
- Learner voice surveys
- Minimum termly site visits

Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- Informal observations (peer-to-peer development)
- Open door observations ("Something Brilliant")
- Learner record sample checks
- Learner voice

Subject leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

### **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Learner Assessment Framework

- Social Media Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Examination and Invigilation Policy
- Internal Quality Assurance Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disability Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- GDPR (in relation to storing assessment / learner data)