

# BANKS HOUSE SCHOOL CURRICULUM POLICY

**Enable.**  
*(...not label)*



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Last Updated: 15/10/2023 - Next Review Due: 15/10/2024

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## Important roles and named people

Throughout this policy, the following roles may be mentioned. It is important to know who these people are;

- Head of School
  - Dawn Wale ([dawn.wale@cascade-care.com](mailto:dawn.wale@cascade-care.com))
- The Registered Manager
  - Helen Baker ([helenbaker@cascade-care.com](mailto:helenbaker@cascade-care.com))

## Objective of Policy:

This policy aims to provide all stakeholders with a clear understanding of Banks House School's curriculum for pupils.

## 1 - School Aims

**Our aim is for every pupil to receive a broad and balanced curriculum which enables all pupils to:**

- **Care** for and respect themselves, others and the environment
- **Achieve** beyond previous expectations, experiencing success
- Know how to make **safe** choices
- Be able to read and write so that they can **communicate** consistently with an increased vocabulary linked to experiences
- Acquire maths and computing skills
- Be **active**, immersing themselves in the community and the outdoors
- Embrace their uniqueness and engage in the **diversity** of British Values
- **Enjoy** attending school and making decisions independently with the skills to access the next stage of their life

## School values

My voice, My choice, My lifelong learning

## 2 - Introduction

At Banks House School, we work with the staff at Banks House to ensure a smooth transition and continuous provision between home and school with learning continuing after the school day has ended. For example, staff at Banks House are trained in RWI and deliver sessions after school. Home and education staff meet in the morning to complete a 'handover' to discuss the learning that is taking place that day and how they can support pupils to be as successful as possible. Pupils have access to a selection of school clubs such as: swimming, yoga, makaton, football, sensory baking, gardening, lego therapy, reading, careers, forest school and these changes termly.

The school also encourages support from families and clinical professionals to ensure the best possible outcomes for each learner.

The school has high ambitions for all the students at the school. We create a nurturing and empowering space which enables our pupils to flourish in their communication and outdoor learning. Through a child-led carefully crafted curriculum, each child's unique abilities are celebrated and their individual needs are met with understanding and compassion, so that they can thrive, achieving beyond previous

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expectations experiencing success. They will be supported to fulfill their potential, recognise their skills, strengths and talents, as well as equipping them with the specific skills and knowledge which will help self-manage any areas of difficulty related to each individual student's conditions.

The school delivers an adapted curriculum (EQUALS<sup>1</sup>) providing an individualised programme for all learners with a lateral model which is based on experiences with pupils revisiting knowledge many times.<sup>2</sup>

Staff working within the school will have a sound understanding of the difficulties to learning that specific conditions cause. Staff will have been involved in any transition work with the student to ensure a smooth entry into the school environment and therefore work towards removing any barriers to learning.

## 3 - Curriculum Intent

Our Curriculum has been designed around the belief that our students are able to learn and are capable over time to be happy and successful. We know that our pupils come to us with different starting points and our main aim is to remove all learning barriers (social, communication and learning difficulties) in order to fill gaps in their knowledge so that we can begin to broaden and deepen their understanding of the world, supporting each pupil to be as independent as possible.

Evidence Based Practices (identified by the National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice, 2020), advice from Occupational Therapists, Starfish+ and Educational Psychologists, are used throughout to maximise learning. These practices have clear evidence of positive effects with autistic children.

This modified curriculum also includes post 16 provision.

## Implementation of the Curriculum - Teaching and Learning

### Curriculum organisation and planning

Teaching and learning takes into account the difficulties faced by our students (13-19 years age) from all cultural backgrounds. The curriculum and its delivery is modified to meet the needs of the students with a range of complex needs including learning difficulties, autism and/or mental health issues. The curriculum will be differentiated according to the aptitude and the needs of all pupils .

The school will provide learning in an environment which can establish clear and appropriate channels of communication, enabling students to feel supported and not rushed whilst maintaining challenge and aspiration, Hargreaves (2005:p4)<sup>3</sup>

The focus of our modified curriculum is on developing functional skills and life skills towards adulthood, academic learning and personal, social and emotional learning all of which enable our students to become as independent as possible in their lives.

Learning extends beyond the classroom to encompass learning within the community and developing independent learning skills beyond the classroom through engagement with families, external agencies and the wider Cascade team.

Often EHCPs state that students' needs are best met in calm, consistent school environments, with small group teaching. Student's anxiety and stress levels may have been aggravated by feeling trapped within

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<sup>1</sup> <https://equals.co.uk/curriculum/>

<sup>2</sup> Main, P. (2023) Jerome Bruner's Theories <https://www.structural-learning.com/post/jerome-bruners-theories>

<sup>3</sup> Hargreaves, D. (2005) Personalising Learning: Curriculum and advice & guidance, Specialist Schools Trust

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a crowded room or unable to cope with colours, displays and smells. Students may also find loud and crowded class spaces and corridors stressful which can add to stress and contribute to heightened behaviours.

The school has been sensitively designed to accommodate these needs.

Our modified curriculum demonstrates our commitment to every student developing their independence, enabling them to feel empowered to make positive choices about their own lives and to provide them with the skills and knowledge that allows them to participate fully in the direction of their own learning and future directions beyond the school.

The focus of the modified curriculum is on developing functional skills and life skills towards adulthood, academic learning and personal, social and emotional learning which all enable our students to become as independent as possible in their lives (e.g. dental hygiene, personal hygiene, travel training).

Learning extends beyond the classroom giving rise to students having opportunities to engage in the community, accepting different cultures diversity and equality, and developing independent learning skills within the residential home.

## **4.1 Implementation - Giving our students the skills to succeed**

- We will support our students to develop the skills they need to become independent learners.
- Our pupils explore the world around them through a curriculum which is heavily constructed through play. 'Play is one of the most important ways in which young children gain essential knowledge and skills.'<sup>4</sup>
- They will experience maths, literacy, linguistics, science, technology, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative education through the carefully constructed EQUALS curriculum.
- Our curriculum reflects the school's aims and ethos. The students will be encouraged to have respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Throughout each school day, students will have opportunities to understand British Values and to learn, thrive and develop the ability to form relationships and genuine friendships. This will lead to greater independence, allowing students to develop the communication skills for them to participate socially, within a verbal and non verbal environment. Within any work context, and where possible, they will be supported to become economically independent.
- We will offer personalised approaches to learning and teaching that builds on individual areas of strength and removes barriers to learning, so that all students reach their full potential and experience success.

## **4.2 Implementation - Close support from all our staff and Group Support Professionals**

- Staff will deliver a high quality education and relate confidently with all students.
- We will have available to each student a range of interventions and therapy based approaches, which form part of the educational process and not an additional or bolt-on support mechanism.
- With the child at the center, home and school work tightly together, sharing information, problem solving together and ensuring that what the child needs to learn continues before and after school too as part of our continuous provision.

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<sup>4</sup> UNICEF (2018) Learning through Play: Strengthening learning through Play in early childhood education programmes. New York: UNICEF.

## **4.3 Implementation - An open and collaborative approach**

- Regular discussions (formal & informal) will take place between professionals and residential care home staff to ensure a dynamic and proactive approach to the learning needs of each student.
- Staff will work closely with supporting clinical team professionals and multi-disciplinary agencies and form strong partnerships with parents, residential care home staff and students to create an environment where students are challenged as well as nurtured.
- We will have an 'open door' ethos and invite parents, residential care home staff and partners to be part of school life.

## **4.4 Implementation - A center of opportunity and community**

- We will provide as wide a range of enrichment activities as possible and further develop these so that an extensive and wide variety of opportunities is available to all students.
- Students will have access to additional specialist facilities, for example, facilities for the arts and sport, through establishing links within the community, supported by the Cascade Group Specialists in Community and Social Inclusion.
- We are open to further develop our work as a center of expertise in the local area, sharing our skills and knowledge and curriculum approaches with other educational establishments, to support them with the education of children with complex needs.
- Learning Outside of the Classroom is key to our curriculum offer. As our pupils learn through experiences we are very active throughout our school week and visit a variety of different places (swimming, horseriding, gymnastics, first schools, community garden, local area/parks, library).

## **5 - Safety & Security**

- Before a child starts school, an assessment meeting is held where members of staff from Banks House and Banks House School visit the pupil in their current school and home and speak with staff and parents. Gaining information about the student before the placement begins ensures a bespoke education package is prepared for them from day one in the school.
- Regular communication between the home and school. This will include daily handovers, regular joint team meetings, working in both settings and communication around incidents so the student is subject to this integrated approach.
- We have a consistent response to student behaviour from education and care in line with individual care plans rather than a standardised approach. Keyworker and Keyteachers meet to discuss consistent approaches in makaton signs, scripts and social stories.

## **6 - Relationships and Attachment**

- A member of the Education team will visit students prior to them moving to Banks House and School.
- An initial induction plan is agreed with home staff and/or social worker and parents to support the transition of the student into a new education environment which can then inform the creation of a formal bespoke timetable.
- As far as is reasonably practicable, we have consistent and predictable timetables developed in collaboration with students, through student voice, so they always know who will be supporting them in advance. These may be adapted to suit the individual needs of the student as they develop within the school.
- PECs will be used where appropriate, alongside other visual aids and makaton
- Quality time spent with students is critical to building relationships and connections through activities and play.

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- The education team and the care support team are visible in both settings to show positive relationships between teams and also in ensuring a continuous provision for our pupils.

## 7 - Effective Learning

- We provide high level support which is tailored to the needs of each student.
- We create bespoke formal timetables to meet the needs of the student.
- We conduct baseline tests (using MAPP and aligning targets with each pupils' EHCP) to establish each student's academic abilities and level of need so work is appropriate to their stage of development.
- We provide alternative learning provisions incorporated within the personalised timetables to promote long-term engagement.
- We offer individual education centred rewards and incentives, such as certificates, to learning programmes for all pupils to create motivation for learning.
- We demonstrate a flexible approach to learning should a student commence attendance at the school once a scheme of work or GCSE course has started. They will have opportunities to follow ASDAN & AQA Unit Award courses.

## 8 - Extra Curricular Development

Within the first half term of a pupil commencing their education with Banks House School, a professional meeting is held where the interests and dreams of the pupil are shared. This helps us to ensure that extra curricular activities are as engaging as possible. Where students demonstrate an aptitude or desire to learn to play a musical instrument, Banks House School will seek to engage with a suitable peripatetic music tuition service or tutor.

Prior to appointment, all music teachers will be subject to relevant DBS checks.

Banks House School has a range of percussive and simple musical instruments including unique instruments such as tongue drums. The instruments will be used as sensory tools and for stimulation for all students.

## 9 - Curriculum Review and Development

Each Scheme of Work will be reviewed as an ongoing process. All teaching staff will have access to schemes of work through Google Docs. Staff can make additions, amendments and comments to the documents in the light of their teaching experience and to cater for the specific needs of individual students.

*The Head of School monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis. They also report to the School Advisory Board on the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements.*

*This policy has been assessed for its impact on those with "protected characteristics" (Equality Act, 2010), as part of our commitment to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. It is our opinion that this policy is fair and does not prioritise or disadvantage any student or staff member.*