

Curriculum Policy

Norton College Tewkesbury

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1. Curriculum aims

Our curriculum is purposely designed to meet the complex and varied needs of students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health challenges, with a strong emphasis on re-engagement, trust-building and achievement in core subjects. We are committed to providing a flexible, inclusive and aspirational learning experience that promotes both academic progress and personal growth.

Our curriculum aims to:

- Enable students to meaningfully engage in English, maths and PSHE through trauma-informed, differentiated approaches that build confidence, reduce anxiety and celebrate small steps of progress
- Provide a broad and balanced education that is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment
- Support students' emotional wellbeing, self-regulation and personal development through therapeutic supports, positive relationships, clinical input and carefully structured routines
- Create a trauma-informed learning environment where students feel safe, valued and empowered to succeed
- Enable students to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Ensure equal access to learning for all students, with high expectations for every student and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Provide a personalised, meaningful and empowering education that enables students to rebuild their confidence, achieve qualifications and develop the skills and self-belief needed to thrive in life beyond school
- Equip students with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- Support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support students' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Provide subject choices that support students' learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their goals, including vocational and technical pathways
- Develop students' independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for further/higher education and employment
- Prepare SEMH students effectively for adulthood through the Norton PFA Pledge, supporting transitions, work-readiness and life skills development

These curriculum aims are underpinned by our values:

Accountability: our curriculum supports students to take responsibility for their learning, behaviour and progress, promoting reflection, ownership and a clear understanding of personal goals.

Gratitude: our curriculum creates opportunities for students to recognise positive experiences, appreciate others, and celebrate achievements, helping to build empathy and a positive sense of community.

Honesty: our curriculum encourages open communication and self-reflection, enabling students to express themselves safely, build trust and develop authentic relationships with staff and peers.

Respect: our curriculum promotes respectful interactions, inclusion and understanding of diverse perspectives through discussion-based learning, collaborative work and restorative practice.

Work ethic: our curriculum develops perseverance, motivation and resilience by encouraging purposeful engagement, celebrating effort and helping students recognise the value of sustained hard work.

2. Legislation and guidance

As an independent school, this policy reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010.

This policy also aligns with the Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2014, which require independent schools to provide a full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age that:

- Gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education
- Enables students to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

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

The governing board will also make sure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- The school complies with the Independent School Standards and provides a broad and balanced curriculum
- Proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including students with special educational needs (SEN)
- All courses that the school provides for students below the age of 19 and that lead to qualifications (such as GCSEs, Entry Level, Functional Skills and BTECs) are appropriate for the students' needs

- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Students from year 7 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

3.2 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 students 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
- They manage requests to withdraw students from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- 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 students with different abilities and needs, including students with SEN
- Trauma-informed practice is embedded across all aspects of curriculum delivery and staff receive appropriate training

3.3 Deputy Headteacher (Quality of Education Lead)

The Deputy Headteacher (Quality of Education Lead) is responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation of the curriculum across the school
- Monitoring curriculum quality through lesson visits, learning walks and work scrutiny
- Leading curriculum development and supporting subject leaders in their roles
- Ensuring appropriate assessment practices are in place and data is used effectively to track student progress
- Coordinating quality assurance processes including curriculum lead meetings and BTEC meetings
- Developing subject-specific self-evaluation templates and action plans aligned with the ISI framework
- Ensuring trauma-informed practice is consistently applied in teaching and learning

3.4 Subject Leaders

Subject leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring their subject is well-planned, sequenced and delivered effectively using trauma-informed approaches

- Monitoring teaching and learning in their subject area
- Completing subject self-evaluation and action plans
- Managing resources for their subject
- Supporting and directing teaching assistants allocated to their subject area

3.5 Teaching Staff and Teaching Assistants

All teaching staff and teaching assistants will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy, delivering trauma-informed teaching that meets the individual needs of all students. Staff will work collaboratively with the Clinical Lead and Trauma-Informed Practice Champions to maintain consistent approaches.

4. Organisation and planning

4.1 Curriculum approach

Our curriculum is delivered through:

- Small-group teaching that enables personalised support and reduces anxiety
- Trauma-informed approaches that recognise the impact of adverse experiences on learning, build on students' strengths and celebrate progress. All staff receive trauma-informed practice training and work alongside Trauma-Informed Practice Champions
- Structured timetables that provide routine and predictability, supporting student and staff wellbeing with flexibility for alternative or one-to-one learning when required.
- Integration of therapeutic supports alongside academic learning, including clinical input and restorative practice
- Flexible pathways that respond to individual student needs and starting points
- Personalised learning for all students, including those with low attendance and/or engagement

4.2 Curriculum offer

Our core offer

All students, including those on part-time or bespoke timetables, are expected to access a minimum of **3 English** lessons, **3 maths** lessons and **1 PSHE** lesson per week. This ensures consistent coverage of essential knowledge, skills and personal development across all key stages.

Alongside core subjects, the school provides a broad and balanced range of foundation, functional, vocational and enrichment learning opportunities. These subjects support secure progression, the development of cultural capital and preparation for adulthood. Provision is flexible and may be adapted or expanded according to student interest, therapeutic needs and individual pathways; the examples below illustrate the range typically available.

Sciences: Biology, chemistry, physics, STEM activities

Humanities: geography, history, religious studies

Languages: Spanish, French, German, Italian

Arts: Arts and crafts, art, music (including peripatetic tuition), textiles, acting, dance

Vocational/Technical: Cooking, construction, woodwork, vehicle maintenance, sport, public services, business studies

Life Skills: Cooking and nutrition, preparation for adulthood, wellbeing, careers drop-in, citizenship

Physical Education / wellbeing: Activities such as football, basketball, badminton, netball, volleyball, golf, boxing, fishing, gym sessions, circuits, stretching/yoga, walk and talk

Enrichment: Activities such as computing, book club, games, chat groups, jam sessions, karaoke, quizzes

Reading is also used across the curriculum as a tool for regulation and engagement.

4.3 Qualifications

Students can work towards accreditation in:

- Entry Level and Functional Skills in English, maths and science
- iGCSE English, maths, science
- GCSE foundation subjects (e.g. modern foreign languages)
- BTEC Level 1 in: home cooking skills, construction, sport, public services, vocational studies, art, business studies
- BTEC Personal Growth and Wellbeing
- AQA Unit Award Scheme (various subjects including those linked to the Norton PFA Pledge)

As part of our school improvement plan, we are actively expanding the range of qualification subjects and raising attainment opportunities, so the offer will continue to grow and evolve over time.

4.4 Curriculum coverage

The curriculum covers:

Relationships and health education: Delivered through our PSHE programme, using discussion-based learning and unit workbooks. *See our Relationships and Sex Education policy for details.*

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development: Embedded across the curriculum, with particular focus in PSHE, RS, humanities and arts subjects, and through discussion-based learning that encourages thoughtful contribution and respectful engagement. Cultural capital is developed through experiences that enable students to thrive in wider society, including local history, community involvement, awareness days/weeks/months, and celebrating diverse cultures.

British values: Democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance are promoted through PSHE, citizenship education, and the ethos of the school which values respectful discussion and personal growth.

Careers guidance: Careers education is embedded within the curriculum with careers drop-in sessions, preparation for adulthood lessons, and vocational taster weeks. We

are working towards Gatsby Benchmarks with monthly themed Careers Focus months and termly Careers in the Curriculum weeks. Students receive independent, impartial careers guidance appropriate to their age and stage, including employer encounters through programmes such as Ductu and Springpod. *More information can be found in our careers policy.*

4.5 Planning

Planning takes place at three levels:

Long-term planning: Subject leaders develop schemes of work that show progression across key stages and year groups, informed by baseline assessments and individual student targets. Curriculum mapping includes clear outcomes and progress plans.

Medium-term planning: Teachers plan units of work, typically covering half-term periods, showing clear learning objectives, differentiation strategies and assessment opportunities.

Short-term planning: Lesson plans are responsive to student needs, using trauma-informed approaches and real-world manipulatives where appropriate to put learning into context. Planning takes account of students' regulation needs and personalised learning plans.

4.6 Norton PFA Pledge

The Norton PFA Pledge is a comprehensive programme designed to prepare SEMH students for adulthood through supported transitions, work-readiness and life-skills development. The programme is structured around the themes of **Transform, Thrive, Transition** and focuses on four key outcome areas.

Employment:

Examples include work experience, careers guidance, financial literacy, teamworking tasks, leadership opportunities, mock interviews, CV writing and basic maintenance skills.

Independent Living:

Examples include household skills, money management, travel training, booking appointments, cooking skills, healthy eating and practical safety such as road awareness.

Health:

Examples include personal hygiene routines, managing health appointments, first aid and CPR, emotional wellbeing strategies, using leisure facilities and understanding individual sensory needs.

Community Inclusion:

Examples include participating in community projects, volunteering, local visits, creative activities, developing communication skills (e.g. basic sign language) and engaging with cultural experiences such as museums and theatres.

Students work towards Bronze (5 units), Silver (10 units) and Gold (15 units) levels through AQA Unit Award Scheme qualifications linked to PFA activities. The programme includes regular workshop sessions, enrichment activities, employer and FE provider encounters, careers focus months—all designed to build the skills, confidence and cultural capital needed for successful adult life.

5. Inclusion

Norton College Tewkesbury is a specialist setting for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. All students have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Our curriculum is designed from the ground up to be inclusive, trauma-informed and responsive to individual needs.

Teachers and support staff set high expectations for all students. They use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- Students with varying prior attainment in core subjects
- Students who may be working significantly below age-related expectations
- Students with additional learning needs alongside their SEMH needs
- Students at different stages of re-engagement with education
- Students working towards different qualification pathways (GCSE, Entry Level, Functional Skills, BTEC)
- Students whose attendance and/or engagement are low

Teachers plan lessons using trauma-informed approaches so that:

- Students feel safe and supported to engage with learning
- Anxiety is reduced through clear structure, routine and predictability
- The impact of adverse experiences on learning is recognised and accommodated
- Small steps of progress are recognised and celebrated
- Positive relationships between staff and students enable effective learning
- Learning is put into real-world context through use of manipulatives and practical examples
- Students can access curriculum content through differentiated materials and teaching approaches
- Restorative practice is used to address conflicts and support relationship repair
- Clinical support and external therapeutic interventions are available where needed

All staff receive trauma-informed practice training and work alongside designated Trauma-Informed Practice Champions to ensure consistent approaches across the school.

Baseline assessments and ongoing progress tracking ensure that teaching is responsive to individual needs. Regular grouping reviews ensure students receive

appropriate challenge and support. Personalised learning and regulation plans are in place for all students.

Further information can be found in our SEND policy and our accessibility policy and plan.

6. Monitoring arrangements

The governing board monitors whether the school is providing a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the Independent School Standards through:

- Termly Quality of Education Governance Reports
- School visits and discussions with students
- Review of student progress data and assessment information
- Review of curriculum self-evaluation and action plans
- Regular school improvement partner visits
- Monitoring of trauma-informed practice implementation and staff training

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

- Conducting lesson visits with written feedback
- Reviewing planning and student work
- Analysing assessment data and student progress
- Completing subject self-evaluation and action plans
- Participating in curriculum lead meetings
- Monitoring the application of trauma-informed approaches in their subject area

The Deputy Headteacher (Quality of Education Lead) monitors curriculum quality through:

- Regular lesson visits across all subject areas
- Chairing curriculum lead meetings and BTEC meetings
- Reviewing subject self-evaluations and action plans
- Monitoring implementation of Evidence for Learning system
- Analysing student progress data and identifying intervention needs
- Collecting and responding to pupil voice
- Ensuring trauma-informed practice is consistently applied across the curriculum

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher (Quality of Education Lead).

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Accessibility policy
- Careers policy

- English as an Additional Language (EAL) policy
- Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy
- SEND policy