



CHESTNUT HILL

SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

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Section A

Legislation

This policy is designed to ensure that the school complies with, and exceeds, the expectations of all relevant legislation. We commit to meeting and surpassing the principles set out in The Education (Independent School Standards) (Wales) Regulations 2024 and Equality Act 2010.

Curriculum Rationale

Chestnut Hill School opened in September 2024 and is a day school for boys and girls aged 8 to 19 with a diagnosis of autism, and who have a range of complex learning needs, communication difficulties and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils are placed from a wide range of local authorities, and they all have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or an Individual Development Plan (IDP). All our pupils have experienced significant barriers to learning, due to either their developmental profile, negative life experiences, or both. Before joining our school, many have been unable to access a school-based curriculum effectively, and many have experienced multiple placement breakdowns. As a result, pupils start their time at Chestnut Hill School with significant gaps in their learning, and all pupils are working below age-related expectations, with some working significantly below. At Chestnut Hill School the curriculum is every planned learning experience the pupils have as a member of the school, both learnt formally within a lesson or informally outside the classroom throughout the whole school day. It is all the planned activities that we organise to promote learning, personal growth, and development. Teachers, support staff, therapists and tutors structure these experiences to ensure that they have the most positive effect on the attainment, progress, and personal development of all pupils. Our curriculum also incorporates the opportunistic learning experiences that occur throughout the day, and makes use of pupil voice.

Due to opening in September 2024, our pupil numbers are still increasing. Our curriculum is very much still developing in line with school growth and therefore has to constantly be adapted to meet the needs of existing and future pupils. This document will highlight our journey and forward planning to develop the curriculum.

Curriculum Aim & Design

Chestnut Hill School currently admits learners from as young as eight years old. From day one our focus is on preparing them to leave us at age nineteen. Regardless of the age at which our pupils join us, our priority from the outset is to ensure they are ready for the next stage of their journey, be that full-time education, a traineeship, or an apprenticeship. Our curriculum, therefore, is designed to prepare our pupils for life in modern Britain, and to address any barriers to learning they experience because of their autism, additional diagnoses, or past experiences. We understand that at Chestnut Hill School the learning journey, personal circumstances and educational and personal outcomes for every pupil are entirely unique, and so our curriculum will strive to provide pathways to vocational and academic qualifications that match the capacity and potential of each learner, taught and supported in a personalised way by our specialist team.

As of January 2025, our curriculum journey is currently in its second stage and is based on the Welsh National Curriculum. The third stage of the curriculum journey will begin to be implemented for the summer term of the 24/25 academic year before completing to start stage 4 the start of the 25/26 academic year.

Our curriculum has been developed so far in-line with the pupils that we have on roll and therefore is constantly evolving with school growth.

Stage 1: *Autumn Term 24/25;* Chestnut Hill School opens to twelve pupils. Pupils are placed in classes based on the information contained in their EHCP/IDP. More pupils are to be admitted steadily throughout the term. Autumn Term 1, will focus on building relationships, trust and to gather assessment information from the scheme of work 'All About Me'. Autumn Term 2 will continue on building relationships and trust and more formalised learning and assessment will take place under the 'Celebrations' scheme of work.

Stage 2: *Spring Term 24/25;* New curriculum map and formal curriculum has been established based on the Welsh National Curriculum and the Progression Steps. Pupils have been placed in classes based on assessment information from Autumn Term 1. Three pathways have been created based on learners; these are 'Semi-formal', 'Formal' and 'Bespoke'.

Our curriculum design was shaped by the '*Questions to aid the development of the curriculum*' which is underpinned by '*The four purposes*' of the Welsh National Curriculum which are '*Ambitious, capable learners*', '*Enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work*', '*Ethical informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world*' and '*Healthy confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society*'.

Our curriculum is based on a subject specific half termly approach guided from the Welsh Curriculum' '*Cross Curricular Skills Frameworks in Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence*'. These frame works will run through the six key areas of the curriculum in *Language, Literacy & Communication, Mathematics & Numeracy, Science & Technology, Health & Well-being, Humanities and Expressive Arts*. The school has chosen purposeful skills from the '*Descriptions of Learning*' that ensure our pupils can encompass the four purposes and make progress.

Due to using the progression step skills in the curriculum, teachers can move forwards or backwards through them to cover, teach and consolidate any gaps in learning that the pupils may have. This will be done in each subject area and sub-area of learning. For instance, a pupil might be working in Progression Step 3 in the mathematical area of number, but is working on Progression Step 1 in the mathematical area of shape. Teachers have to assess effectively where the pupils are in each area in order to teach them necessary skills to progress and to reach their full potential.

A curriculum map will be utilised that will show what areas of the curriculum is to be taught throughout the academic year.

Curriculum Aims Cont'd

Stage 3: *Spring Term 24/25;* Continuation of the existing pathways and introduction of JIGSAW to support the teaching of PSHE for the Semi-Formal learners. Formal learners will begin assessments against the NCFE entry level – Level 2 descriptors for the start of the academic year 25/26. The pupil cohort will still be increasing at this point and new pupils will be placed in classes based on their ability.

Stage 4: *Summer Term Year 24/25;* In line with school growth and referrals an additional 'informal' pathway will be introduced. Chestnut School will offer four bespoke pathways that encompass Autism Education Trust's Pupil Progression Framework, Welsh National Curriculum, EQUALS Informal Curriculum, NCFE, AQA Unit Scheme, Duke of Edinburgh and EQUALS Subject Specific Curriculum. With curriculum additions of *Pathways to Write*, *Accelerated Reader* and a Phonics programme. Our pathways will offer will be broad and varied and will provide rich learning experiences that are highly personalised. We will work alongside our sister school Maple Grove, Chester.

Appendix A displays the curriculum pathways plan for September 25/26

Section B

Structure of the School Day

The school opens to pupils at 8:45am, and pupils go home at 2:45pm (1:45pm on a Friday). The school day is carefully planned in each class, according to the needs of pupils. Throughout the school week the class timetable will ensure that all six areas of the Welsh National Curriculum is being covered.

Each class submits a class timetable to school leadership and this is displayed in class for the pupils to follow.

At break and lunch times, the pupils all gather in the Bistro to select their healthy snack and lunch. This promotes incidental learning for social and emotional experiences as highlighted in the Health and Well-being curriculum.

Schemes of Work / Lesson Planning

Autumn Term 24/25: Schemes of work for the themes of 'All About Me' and 'Celebrations' will be followed by Teachers for assessment and learning opportunities. Due to the Chestnut Hill being a new school, Autumn Term 1 for 'All About Me' will be hard to plan for initially as teachers will not know accurate academic information of the pupils in their classes. Teachers will assess and plan week to week based on the learners in their class making use of their assessment information. A Medium-Term plan will be required for 'Celebrations' in Autumn term 2 as early assessment information will have been sought. Teachers will also complete weekly lesson planning.

Spring Term & Summer Term 24/25: Teachers will provide Medium Term Planning and weekly session planning based on the curriculum maps and subject specific documents provided. They will plan work based on the progression step each individual pupil has been 'overall' assessed at. Homework will be introduced weekly in the form of 'spelling'. This will be given on a Monday and tested on a Friday.

The curriculum is still being developed in line with assessment information and new referrals. As the curriculum develops, teachers planning will reflect this.

Section C

Roles & Responsibilities

Chestnut Hill SLT will ensure:

- They have an oversight of curriculum structure and delivery within the school.
- Detailed and up-to-date schemes of learning are in place for the delivery of courses.
- Schemes of learning are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Levels of attainment and rates of progression are discussed with teachers on a regular basis and that actions are taken where necessary to improve these.
- Overall trends in progress and attainment inform strategic school development planning.

Teaching staff and learning support staff will:

- Ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- Keep up to date with developments in their subjects.
- Have access to, and be able to interpret, data on each pupil to inform the design of the curriculum in order that it best meets the needs of each cohort of pupils.
- Share and exchange information about best practice amongst their colleagues in different schools and through external networks, resulting in a dynamic and relevant curriculum.
- Participate in high quality professional development, working with other teachers to develop their skills in understanding the learning needs of their pupils and how best to address those needs and engage them.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to provide an appropriate range of curriculum opportunities.
- Actively support pupils in their progress through the new curriculum.

Roles & Responsibilities Cont'd

Pupils will:

- Be treated as partners in their learning, contributing to the design of the curriculum.
- Have their individual needs addressed, both within the school and extending beyond the classroom into the family and community through a curriculum which offers breadth, support and challenge.
- Be given additional support if they start to fall behind in their learning, helping them get back on track quickly.
- Receive coordinated support to enable them to make the appropriate curriculum choices

Parents and carers will:

- Be consulted about their children's learning and in planning their future education.
- Be confident that their child is receiving a high-quality education that is designed to meet their learning needs and which will equip them with the skills they need to thrive throughout their lives.
- Be informed about the curriculum on offer and understand the rationale behind it.
- Support learning at home where possible.

Quality Assurance

The quality of education provided to pupils at Chestnut Hill School is subject to regular and varied assurance activity, Quality assurance procedures will increase as the school grows and develops. Quality Assurance planning are to include:

Autumn Term 24/25:

- Informal learning walks; checks on timetables, class structure and use of resources.
- Planning reviews & book looks.
- In house training.
- Class grouping reviews and re-structure.

From Spring Term 24/25

- Internal moderation.
- Quality Assurance Calander and Policy in place
- Learning walks with visiting staff, including Clinical colleagues, Quality team members, and governors.
- Termly lesson observations
- Termly pupil progress meetings
- Half-termly supervisions for all teaching and teaching assistant staff
- Work scrutiny, including marking and assessment, and 'deep dive' activities.

Reporting to Parents / Carers

The primary means of reporting on progress to parents is via the Annual Review process, in which detailed feedback is given in relation to the short and long-term objectives identified in their son or daughter's Education, Health and Care Plan or Individual Education Plan. However, parents are also kept informed of the breadth, depth and quality of the education to their son or daughter via:

- Termly Parents' Evenings; Starting Spring Term 24/25
- Weekly Facebook updates
- Daily, child-specific Evidence for Learning records including Seesaw and Home/school liaison forms or email
- Termly learning journeys updated which will form the end of term report, to be sent out.

Appendix A

Our curriculum pathways and content are:

Pathway A Informal	Pathway B Semi-Formal	Pathway C Formal	Pathway D Bespoke
Autism Education Framework, IDP / EHCP Targets are a flowing thread throughout all pathways			
<p>Pupils working on Pathway A will be following the EQUALS informal curriculum focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Sensory Play • My Outdoor School • My Physical Wellbeing • My Communication • My Leisure and Play <p>Pathway A will be strongly supported by cross-curricular links to the Autism Education Framework, along with links to pupil's EHCP Outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Primary Aged Pupils</u> Pupils working on Pathway B will follow the EQUALS subject Specific Curriculum. This consists of:</p> <p>English Maths P.E. R.E. Science D&T History Geography</p> <p>Computing will be taught following an inhouse Scheme</p> <p>PSHE – Jigsaw</p> <p><u>Secondary Aged Pupils</u> At year 7, pupils will begin being baselined against the NCFE entry level descriptors.</p> <p>KS3 (Years 7-11): Pupils will follow NCFE English and Maths Entry Level 1 to Level 2.</p> <p>Equals: Independence linked to AET (how independent are the learners in the subjects)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Maths • P.E. • R.E. 	<p><u>Primary Aged Pupils</u> Pupils on Pathway C will follow the Welsh National Curriculum for the six areas of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics & Numeracy • Language, Literacy & Communication • Science & Technology • Expressive Arts • Humanities • Health & Well-being <p>At Year 5 & 6, pupils will begin being baselined and taught against the NCFE Entry Level Descriptors</p> <p><u>Secondary Aged Pupils</u> KS3 (Years 7-11): Pupils will follow NCFE English and Maths Entry Level 1 to Level 2.</p> <p>They will continue to follow the National Curriculum for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and Technology • Expressive Arts • Humanities • Health & Well-being <p>NCFE Level 1 Award in Relationships and Sexual Health Education – Units 1, 2 & 3</p>	<p>Health and Well-being based curriculum with areas of Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and the other curriculum areas chosen and taught based on the individual and need of the learner.</p> <p>More opportunities for offsite learning and work experience.</p> <p>Accreditation: AQA Unit Award Scheme</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science • D&T • History • Geography <p>PSHE: Jigsaw</p> <p>KS4 (Years 10 & 11) Pupils will begin vocational rotations to develop employability skills whilst continuing English and Maths. Pupils will be out for 1 day.</p> <p>NCFE Level 1 Award and Level 1 certificate in Personal Development</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Physical Education – AQA unit Awards Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award for 14 + year olds.</p>	<p>Year 9 Pupils: If appropriate; Begin Entry Level 3 units in Personal Development Award – B units.</p> <p>KS4 (Years 10 & 11): Pupils in KS4, will complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCFE English & Maths in Functional Skills • AQA Single and Double Award in Science • NCFE Level 1 Award and Level 1 Certificate in Personal Development (<i>Level 1 Award, 4 units, can be done over 1 or 2 years depending on ability. If over 1 year, they will complete 8 units in year 2)</i>) • NCFE Level 2 Award in Relationships, Sex and Health Education; Units 4 & 5 (<i>Level 1 Award, 2 workbooks, can be done over 2 years or 1 year depending on ability. If over one year, pupils will complete 3 workbooks in year 2)</i>) • Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and or Silver Award • Physical Education – NCFE Level 1 Certificate in Sport • Work experience tasters to develop employability skills 	
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Section D

Assessment

As stated in *Section A* of this document, Chestnut Hill School opened in September 24/25. Due to this the way we assess as a new school will evolve over time.

Our priorities for assessment are as follows:

Autumn Term 24/25; Assessment Priorities:

- Building and maintaining relationships with adults and peers.
- Coping with structure, routine and being in a school setting.
- Developing and adopting self-coping strategies.
- Initial baselining for current ability against the progression steps from Welsh National Curriculum for an initial 'overall' judgement.
- Evidence capture will be included with uploads to SeeSaw and comments in books.
- IEP targets will be created against EHCP/IDP Long term targets and will be displayed in class.

Spring Term 24/25; Assessment Priorities:

- Assessment against the progression steps from Welsh National Curriculum in subject specific areas and learning themes; gather and scrutinise data.
- EFL will be introduced for teachers to track evidence against pupil IDP targets.
- Marking and related comments with evidence uploads should be detailed and specific.
- Pupil groupings to evolve in line with overall learning ability which will inform pathway offers.
- In depth teaching and learning quality assurance will begin to take place which will inform planning for whole school approaches and sharing of good practice.

Summer Term 24/25; Assessment Priorities:

- Assessments will begin against NCFE Entry Level 1 – Level 2.
- PSHE Jigsaw will be introduced with initial assessments made for Semi-formal Learners
- Learners will be placed on specific pathways for September 25/26 in classes based on ability.
- Pupils will be assessed against the Autism Education Trust (AET) assessment standards.
- Staff will be trained for new content to education pathway content for September 25/26.

Assessment Cont'd

Sept 25/26 and beyond; Assessment Priorities

- Pupils will be working securely within their allocated pathway.
- Assessments will be taking place against EHCP/IDP long term targets.
- Termly assessments will be taking place against IEP targets.
- Termly data capture for assessment information against EQUALS, Jigsaw, AET, NCFE, AQA and Welsh National Curriculum.
- Accreditations will be assessed for AQA, NCFE and DoE.
- For pupils who are able and are at age we will be hoping to offer GCSE or equivalent qualifications.

In addition to Quality Assurance as stated in *Section C*