



CHESTNUT HILL

SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

One Curriculum, Three Pathways, Accessible to All

Chestnut Hill School

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1. Policy Purpose and Scope

This policy explains how Chestnut Hill School designs, delivers, assesses and reviews its curriculum. It sets out the school's curriculum intent, the structure of learning across the school, the use of pathways, the role of Cycles A, B and C, and how the curriculum supports pupils with a wide range of learning needs, disabilities and barriers to learning.

At Chestnut Hill School, the curriculum is understood as every planned and purposeful learning experience pupils receive across the school day. This includes formal lessons, enrichment, therapeutic and regulatory routines, social communication opportunities, outdoor experiences, off-site learning, pupil voice, practical life skills and incidental learning that supports personal growth and development.

The policy applies to all pupils, staff and curriculum partners involved in planning, delivering, supporting, assessing or reviewing learning at Chestnut Hill School.

2. Legislation and Framework

The curriculum is informed by relevant legislation, statutory guidance, inspection expectations and national curriculum frameworks. This includes the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024, the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding duties, Additional Learning Needs expectations, and the Curriculum for Wales / Welsh National Curriculum framework.

The curriculum is designed to support the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales by helping pupils become ambitious and capable learners, enterprising and creative contributors, ethical and informed citizens, and healthy and confident individuals. Literacy, numeracy and digital competence are threaded through learning as cross-curricular skills rather than treated as isolated subjects.

The curriculum also reflects the individual provision set out in pupils' IDPs, EHCPs and personal plans. Individual targets and support strategies are not separate from curriculum delivery; they are woven through planning, teaching, communication, evidence capture and review.

3. School Context and Curriculum Rationale

Chestnut Hill School is a specialist day school for pupils with autism and a range of learning needs, communication difficulties and social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils may arrive with significant barriers to learning, interrupted educational experiences, gaps in knowledge and skills, low confidence, difficulties with regulation or a history of placement breakdown.

The curriculum therefore has to be structured, ambitious, flexible and highly responsive. It must give pupils access to a broad education while also recognising that learners may need personalised routes, repeated opportunities, sensory access, practical contexts, explicit teaching, visual support, therapeutic understanding and careful preparation for change.

The school's curriculum is designed to provide consistency across classes while allowing teachers to adapt learning to the needs of individuals and groups. It gives staff a shared curriculum spine, but expects professional adaptation so that pupils can make meaningful progress from their own starting points.

4. Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum has been designed to provide a broad, meaningful and ambitious learning experience for all pupils, regardless of their starting point, learning style, ability, communication need or level of independence. It is built around the belief that every pupil should have access to rich learning, purposeful experiences and clear progression, with the right level of support and challenge to help them succeed.

At the heart of the curriculum is the principle of one curriculum, three pathways, accessible to all. This means that all pupils are part of the same shared curriculum journey, but they access learning through the pathway that best meets their needs. The three pathways - informal, semi-formal and formal - allow pupils to engage with the same broad themes, skills and concepts in ways that are developmentally appropriate,

meaningful and achievable. This ensures that pupils are not separated from the curriculum because of their needs, but are supported to access it in the right way.

The curriculum is based on the Curriculum for Wales and is designed to support the principles of broad, balanced and purposeful learning. It reflects the importance of developing pupils as capable, confident and independent learners who can apply their skills across a range of meaningful contexts. Alongside this, the curriculum includes integrated NCFE accreditation opportunities for Functional English and Functional Maths from Entry Level 1 through to Level 2. This allows pupils to work towards recognised qualifications when appropriate, while still accessing a curriculum that is personalised, relevant and matched to their individual progression.

The curriculum aims to develop pupils' knowledge, skills, confidence and independence over time. It supports academic progress, communication, personal development, wellbeing, creativity, problem solving and preparation for adulthood. Learning is carefully structured so that pupils can revisit key concepts, build on prior knowledge and make connections across subjects and real-life contexts.

A key strength of the curriculum is its inclusive design. It supports pupils working across different progression steps and pathways, including those who require sensory, practical, visual, communication-based or highly structured approaches to learning. Activities are planned so that pupils can access learning in different ways, including through sensory exploration, practical tasks, visual supports, spoken language, symbols, discussion, reading, writing, digital learning and independent research. This allows teachers to adapt learning for pupils with a wide range of needs, including cognition and learning needs, communication difficulties, sensory needs, physical disabilities, social and emotional needs, and pupils who require personalised support.

The curriculum is organised through Cycles A, B and C. These cycles provide a broad rolling programme that ensures pupils experience a wide range of themes, topics, texts, skills and real-world learning opportunities over time. The cycle structure helps avoid unnecessary repetition while still allowing pupils to revisit important knowledge and skills in different contexts. This supports long-term learning, memory, confidence and progression.

Across each cycle, learning is carefully mapped so that pupils can work towards appropriate outcomes at their own level. Teachers are supported to plan from clear progression statements, adapt tasks to meet individual needs and provide meaningful evidence of learning. The curriculum is designed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of different classes and mixed progression-step groups, while still maintaining consistency, ambition and clear expectations across the school.

Through this curriculum, we hope pupils will become more confident learners who can communicate their ideas, develop independence, apply skills in meaningful situations and take pride in their achievements. It is designed not only to support progress in school, but also to prepare pupils for life beyond the classroom by developing the knowledge, skills and personal qualities they need for future learning, employment, relationships and adulthood.

5. One Curriculum, Three Pathways, Accessible to All

The school operates one shared curriculum rather than separate disconnected curricula. Pupils access this curriculum through one of three pathways: Informal, Semi-formal or Formal. The pathway determines how learning is accessed, scaffolded, recorded and evidenced; it does not reduce entitlement to breadth, ambition or meaningful progression.

Pathway	Access route	What this looks like in practice
Informal pathway	Sensory, communication-rich and highly personalised access to shared curriculum themes.	Learning may be experienced through regulation routines, sensory exploration, communication exchanges, cause-and-effect, movement, objects of reference, photographs, symbols, intensive interaction, outdoor experiences and practical routines. Evidence may include observed responses, engagement, communication attempts, choice-making, participation and increased independence.
Semi-formal pathway	Structured, practical and functional learning with high levels of visual and adult support.	Pupils work through concrete tasks, visual scaffolds, symbols, matching, sorting, shared reading, guided writing, practical maths, role-play, supported discussion, digital evidence and functional application. Learning remains linked to shared themes but is broken down into smaller, accessible steps.
Formal pathway	Subject-led and enquiry-based learning with increasing independence, reasoning and accreditation readiness.	Pupils access more formal reading, writing, recording, problem-solving, research, evaluation and extended outcomes. They build towards Functional Skills, vocational learning, careers understanding, personal development and preparation for adulthood.

Pupils may work at different levels in different curriculum areas. For example, a pupil may access a formal route in some aspects of literacy while requiring a semi-formal or informal route in aspects of numeracy, communication, regulation or practical learning. Curriculum planning therefore remains responsive to each pupil's profile, progression step, communication needs, sensory needs, independence and readiness.

Bespoke support is provided through individual adjustments, communication strategies, sensory regulation plans, therapeutic advice, timetable adaptations, specialist resources and targeted interventions. Bespoke support sits within the one curriculum model rather than becoming a separate, lower-expectation curriculum.

Pathway access is informed by ongoing assessment rather than by diagnosis, age or presenting need alone. Staff review how pupils engage with learning, the level of support required, the evidence of progress, and the balance between access, challenge and independence. This ensures that pupils are taught through the pathway that best supports meaningful progress while keeping expectations ambitious.

6. Curriculum Structure and Areas of Learning Experience (AOLE)

The curriculum is organised into clear subject and AOLE-linked areas so that pupils receive a broad, balanced and coherent offer. Each area has planned progression, but learning is also connected across the curriculum so that pupils can apply knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts.

Area	Purpose within the curriculum
Language, Literacy and Communication	Reading, writing, speaking, listening, communication, literature, vocabulary, comprehension, purposeful writing and Functional English progression.
Mathematics and Numeracy	Number, calculation, measurement, money, geometry, data, mathematical reasoning, functional numeracy and Functional Maths progression.
Topic	A cross-AOLE enquiry route encompassing Science and Technology, Humanities, Expressive Arts, and Health and Well-being. Topic gives pupils meaningful contexts for exploration, investigation, creativity, identity, community, environment, design and change.
Careers	A progressive route for self-awareness, aspiration, employability, decision making, workplace links, enterprise, financial understanding, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood.

Area	Purpose within the curriculum
Physical Education	Movement, physical competence, fitness, teamwork, challenge, outdoor learning, games, dance, gymnastics, athletics, leadership and lifelong participation.
Enrichment	Food Technology and Outdoor Learning delivered by instructors, alongside opportunities such as Yoga, BSL and Art delivered by external staff. Enrichment extends the core curriculum through practical, creative, social, communication and wellbeing experiences.

Topic is a key organising route in the curriculum. It brings together Science and Technology, Humanities, Expressive Arts and Health and Well-being through half-termly enquiry questions. This allows pupils to investigate the world, understand people and places, explore change, create and design, develop environmental awareness, and consider their own identity, safety and wellbeing.

Careers, PE and enrichment extend the curriculum beyond the classroom. They support pupils to develop communication, confidence, resilience, teamwork, creativity, independence, physical competence, responsibility and an understanding of life and work beyond school.

7. Cycles A, B and C

The curriculum route map is organised through rolling cycles. Cycles A, B and C ensure that pupils experience a wide range of themes and skills over time, while allowing learning to be revisited, strengthened and applied in new contexts. This is especially important for pupils who need repetition, overlearning and carefully staged consolidation.

Each cycle is arranged across the six half terms: Autumn 1, Autumn 2, Spring 1, Spring 2, Summer 1 and Summer 2. The titles provide a shared theme or enquiry for the half term, while schemes of work and teacher planning identify the progression-step statements, pathway access, learning objectives, resources, support, challenge and evidence expectations.

The cycle model supports mixed classes because pupils can work on the same broad theme while accessing learning at different progression steps and through different pathways. This makes whole-class teaching more coherent while still allowing individualised outcomes.

Where a title or cycle is revisited, learning is not simply repeated. Pupils meet the theme through increased depth, independence, vocabulary, reasoning, recording, practical application, qualification readiness and preparation for adulthood.

8. Enrichment and Wider Curriculum

Enrichment is an important part of the curriculum and is planned to extend pupils' experiences, confidence and independence. It gives pupils opportunities to apply communication, numeracy, literacy, personal development, wellbeing and social skills in practical and motivating contexts.

- **Food Technology:** develops independence, safety, healthy choices, sequencing, communication, measurement, following instructions, sensory tolerance, teamwork and life skills.
- **Outdoor Learning:** supports regulation, confidence, physical development, curiosity, teamwork, problem solving, environmental understanding, resilience and practical application of curriculum learning.
- **Yoga:** supports self-regulation, body awareness, breathing, focus, confidence, sensory regulation and emotional wellbeing.
- **BSL:** supports communication, inclusion, language awareness, attention, turn-taking and respect for different communication needs.
- **Art:** supports creativity, self-expression, fine motor skills, communication, confidence, choice-making, reflection and pride in achievement.

Food Technology and Outdoor Learning are delivered by Chestnut Hill instructors. Yoga, BSL and Art are delivered by external staff. These specialists contribute to the wider curriculum and work within the school's expectations for safeguarding, communication, differentiation, behaviour support, evidence capture and inclusive practice.

9. Teaching, Planning and Adaptation

Planning begins with the curriculum route map and moves through schemes of work, medium-term planning and weekly lesson planning. Teachers use progression statements, pupil assessment information, IDP/EHCP outcomes and class profiles to select appropriate learning objectives and tasks.

Teachers adapt learning by adjusting input, pace, language, visuals, sensory access, practical resources, adult support, communication method, recording method, task demand and level of independence. Adaptation should maintain ambition while making the learning accessible.

Effective teaching within this curriculum includes:

- clear routines and predictable lesson structures;
- explicit modelling, demonstration and guided practice;
- visual, practical, sensory and communication supports where needed;
- opportunities for pupils to practise, revisit and apply learning;
- planned support and challenge matched to pupil need;
- meaningful links to real life, employment, independence and adulthood;
- regular opportunities for pupil voice, choice-making and reflection;
- consistent evidence capture showing what the pupil did, what support was used and what progress was demonstrated.

Implementation of teaching, planning and adaptation is monitored through the school's internal quality assurance cycle. This includes lesson observations, learning walks, book looks, planning reviews, evidence checks, pupil progress discussions and review of staff training needs. Findings are used to support coaching, staff training and CPD, strengthen consistency across classes and refine planning, resources and assessment practice.

10. Accreditation and Preparation for Adulthood

The curriculum includes integrated opportunities for NCFE Functional English and Functional Maths from Entry Level 1 through to Level 2. Accreditation is used when it is appropriate for the pupil and when it supports meaningful progression, confidence and preparation for the next stage of learning or life.

Functional Skills are not treated as a separate bolt-on. English and Maths skills are developed through Literacy, Numeracy, Topic, Careers, PE, enrichment and everyday school routines. Pupils are supported to apply skills in meaningful situations such as reading information, communicating ideas, solving practical problems, using money, measuring, following instructions, making decisions and reflecting on their work.

Functional English and Functional Maths are evidenced and tracked through a combination of lesson evidence, marked work, practical outcomes, teacher assessment, assessment records, Evidence for Learning entries where appropriate, Renaissance assessment outcomes for Literacy and Numeracy where applicable and NCFE exam outcomes. Teachers identify where pupils are practising functional skills across Literacy, Numeracy, Topic, Careers, PE, enrichment and everyday routines so that leaders can see both taught skill development and real-life application.

Preparation for adulthood is threaded throughout the curriculum and is evidenced through curriculum maps, Careers units, enrichment planning, lesson objectives, evidence records, annual review targets, pupil voice, work-related learning, community or off-site learning, progress meetings and teacher assessment. It is not taught only as a separate subject; it is visible when pupils practise independence, communication, self-advocacy, relationships, wellbeing, employability, problem solving, community participation, personal safety, healthy lifestyles, creativity, digital awareness and responsible decision-making in meaningful contexts.

11. Assessment, Evidence and Progress Review

Assessment is central to the curriculum because it shows what pupils can do, how they access learning, what support they need, where barriers remain and what should be taught next. Staff use formative assessment within lessons to check understanding, adapt teaching, respond to misconceptions and identify immediate next steps. Summative assessment is used at agreed points to review progress over time, support pathway decisions, identify gaps and inform curriculum planning.

Alongside teacher assessment and evidence capture, pupils complete termly Literacy and Numeracy assessments through Renaissance where this is appropriate. These assessments provide standardised scores that help the school track progression over time, identify gaps, monitor the impact of teaching and interventions, and triangulate curriculum judgements with wider evidence from lessons, books, observations and formal reviews.

Evidence of learning may include written work, photographs, practical outcomes, teacher observations, pupil voice, digital evidence, discussion records, communication responses, marked work, self-assessment, formal assessment, accreditation evidence and Evidence for Learning records where appropriate.

Progress is reviewed against curriculum progression, personal targets and individual outcomes. Staff consider what the pupil has learned, how independently they accessed it, what support was required, what barriers remain and what should be taught next.

Assessment information is used to inform class planning, pathway placement, intervention, support strategies, annual reviews, reporting to parents/carers and whole-school curriculum development. Pathway placement and significant curriculum access decisions are considered through a multi-disciplinary approach, drawing on teacher assessment, work and evidence samples, Renaissance data where appropriate, IDP/EHCP paperwork, clinical and therapeutic advice, pupil presentation, family information and SLT oversight. This ensures decisions are not based on a single assessment, but on a rounded view of the pupil's strengths, needs, barriers, independence and progress over time.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team	Maintain oversight of curriculum intent, structure, implementation, assessment, quality assurance and curriculum development. Ensure the curriculum remains broad, ambitious, inclusive, legally informed and responsive to pupil need.
Teachers	Plan and deliver learning from the curriculum route map and schemes of work. Adapt teaching to pupil needs, progression steps and pathways. Maintain high expectations, record meaningful evidence and use assessment to plan next steps.
Teaching Assistants and Support Staff	Support pupils to access learning, communicate, regulate, participate, practise skills and demonstrate progress. Contribute observations and evidence to inform planning and review.
Instructors and External Staff	Deliver planned enrichment within school expectations for safeguarding, differentiation, communication, behaviour support, evidence capture and inclusive practice.
Pupils	Engage with learning at an appropriate level, communicate choices and views where possible, take part in reflection and build confidence, independence and pride in achievement.
Parents and Carers	Work in partnership with the school, contribute information about the child's needs and interests, support learning where appropriate and engage with reviews and communication about progress.

13. Quality Assurance and Curriculum Review

The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure it is being implemented effectively and is having a positive impact on pupils. Quality assurance is developmental and should support staff to improve consistency, progression, evidence quality, planning and pupil outcomes.

Quality assurance activity may include:

- curriculum and planning reviews;
- learning walks and lesson observations;
- work scrutiny and book looks;
- Evidence for Learning and evidence-quality checks;
- moderation of assessment judgements;
- pupil progress meetings;
- review of pathway placement and pupil access;
- pupil voice and parent/carer feedback;
- review of enrichment and external-provider impact;
- analysis of accreditation readiness and outcomes.

Curriculum review should consider whether pupils are accessing a broad and balanced offer, whether the three pathways remain fit for purpose, whether learning is sufficiently ambitious, whether pupils are making progress, and whether staff have the planning tools and training needed to deliver the curriculum well. The quality assurance cycle is completed termly and includes teacher assessment input, analysis of progression data, SLT lesson observations, learning walks, book looks, planning reviews, Evidence for Learning and evidence-quality checks, and follow-up coaching or CPD. Findings are recorded and used to identify strengths, agreed actions, training priorities and any changes needed to curriculum planning, assessment systems or staff development.

14. Reporting to Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are kept informed about the curriculum offer, pupil progress and next steps through ongoing communication, evidence sharing and formal review processes. The annual review process remains a key mechanism for reporting on progress against individual outcomes, alongside school-based reporting and parent/carer engagement opportunities.

Reporting may include parent/carer meetings, annual reviews, learning journeys or reports, Evidence for Learning records, home-school communication, newsletters and other updates. The aim is to ensure families understand what their child is learning, how they access the curriculum, what progress is being made and the next steps.

Appendix A: Curriculum Route Map Example

The route map below shows the curriculum titles and half-termly sequence used to structure learning. Detailed schemes of work and teacher planning sit underneath these titles and identify progression statements, learning objectives, resources, support, challenge, evidence and assessment opportunities.

Full Curriculum Cycle Overview

This overview shows the rolling curriculum titles across the mapped curriculum areas. Literacy and Numeracy currently run through Cycles A and B, while Topic, Careers and PE run through Cycles A, B and C. Where a cycle is revisited, learning is deepened through progression-step expectations, pathway access, age-respectful resources and increasing independence rather than simply repeated.

AOLE	Cycle	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Language, Literacy & Communication	A	What makes a story unforgettable?	How do writers bring worlds to life?	How can words inform & explain?	How do we make meaning through performance?	How can writing change someone's mind?	How do we create writing worth sharing?
Language, Literacy & Communication	B	How do stories shape the way we think and feel?	How can language paint pictures in our minds?	How do readers uncover meaning?	How do writers organise ideas clearly?	How can we use our voices to influence others?	How do we communicate ideas worth sharing?
Mathematics and Numeracy	A	Number & place value	Calculation & operations	Measurement time and units	Money and financial numeracy	Shape, geometry, transformation and scale	Data, statistics and interpretation
Mathematics and Numeracy	B	Fractions, decimals, percentages, ratio & proportion	Patterns, sequences, functions & algebra	Geometric measure, area, perimeter, volume and design	Position, direction, co-ordinates, maps and movement	Data, modelling, probability and evidence based decision making	Functional mathematic independence and applied problem solving
Topic	A	How do people show who they are?	What was life like when dinosaurs roamed the earth?	Why do things grow and change?	How do places and the world around us change?	How can we protect our planet?	What can we discover outdoors?
Topic	B	What can ancient Egypt teach us?	What can artefacts reveal about the past?	How do communities change over time?	How do journeys change what we know about the world?	How do Humans affect the planet?	How do people create and design?
Topic	C	What keeps us healthy and safe?	How do we communicate what matters?	What lives in our local environment?	How do inventions change the way we live?	How do Earth, energy and the universe work?	How can we make a difference in our world?
Careers	A	Who am I and how am I growing?	Who helps our world work?	How do I keep going and make choices?	How can I make things happen?	How do we help others and live well?	How does work connect to the wider world?
Careers	B	What am I good at and what could I become?	What jobs and pathways are open to people?	How do I make good decisions about my future?	How do People create opportunities for themselves and others?	How do money, fairness and wellbeing affect life and work?	How are careers shaped by society, technology and the environment?
Careers	C	How do identity, values and achievement shape my future?	How do I explore pathways, qualifications and recruitment?	How do I manage risk, change and transition in my career?	How do I build opportunities through leadership, networks and enterprise?	How do I balance life, money, wellbeing and responsibility?	How do the economy, society and environment shape careers?
Physical Education	A	Movement Foundations & Body Control	Ball Skills, Sending & Receiving	Dance, Rhythm & Expressive Movement	Gymnastics, Shapes and Sequencing	Athletics and Personal Challenge	Outdoor Learning, Teamwork and Adventure
Physical Education	B	Movement Refinement, Agility & Fitness	Invasion Games and Striking / Fielding	Dance, Culture and Performance	Gymnastics on Apparatus and Partner Work	Athletics Technique, Relay and Competition	Outdoor Adventure, Orienteering and Team Challenge
Physical Education	C	Health Related Exercise, Circuits and Safe Participation	Net / Wall Games & Tactical Decision Making	Dance Composition, Group Work & Performance Quality	Games Leadership, Advanced Tactics and Applying Skill	Athletics, Endurance & Performance Analysis	Outdoor Leadership, Challenge and Lifelong Physical Activity