



Curriculum Policy

Purpose

The curriculum at Open Box Education Centre refers to all the planned activities organised for our students to promote learning and personal growth. This policy also highlights the importance of our “hidden curriculum” whereby our students learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. The essential aim of the policy is that students are supported in their personal and social development in order that they can access learning opportunities provided and be prepared for an adult world outside formal education. To that end English, Mathematics, Science and Personal Development are at the core of our educational provision and every aspect of our curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students. Our approach to the curriculum is characterised by choice and consultation, recognising our students as individuals; it is founded on compassion, character and kindness. We aim to provide hope and a future for our students, with our focus on building relationships, growing resilience and providing the resources required to prepare for adult life.

Scope

This policy is an inclusive policy designed to provide effective learning opportunities for all students by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to diverse learning needs. It is a holistic policy, which aims to overcome potential barriers to learning. Its objective is to educate our students in the knowledge, skills and understanding they need in order to lead fulfilling adult lives. It recognises the spiritual, moral, social and cultural factors which significantly affect students' ability to learn and to achieve.

Aims

- To provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum for all students that is coherently planned to enable students to develop the relationships, resilience and resources for a fulfilling and healthy adult life

- To provide opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills required for their chosen future learning and employment and as part of their preparation for adulthood
- To offer a framework of opportunities for all students to learn, develop and achieve that is informed by an understanding of the individual's educational journey and the impact of trauma, attachment difficulties and prior lost learning on each student's experience as a learner
- To provide subject choices at appropriate levels that support students' learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their preferred goals
- To enable all students to learn and develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills to the best of their ability, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- To support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and equip them with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- To support students' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- To provide bespoke opportunities for creativity, imagination and play that support students' wellbeing and personal growth
- To support students to develop the positive, healthy and supportive relationships and communication skills that underpin a successful life
- To provide opportunities for students to develop positive self-esteem, good mental health, confident self-determination and effective emotional literacy
- To provide opportunities for students to develop personal resilience and independent learning skills, to equip them for the challenges of adult life
- To ensure equal access to learning for all students, with high expectations for every student and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- To engage and stimulate students and promote a positive attitude towards learning
- To enable all students to have a positive experience of education, achievement and success
- To provide a broad range of curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of students and ensure progression in learning.
- To establish appropriate, coherent links across the curriculum
- To ensure the curriculum maximises reintegration into future educational opportunities and effective participation in adult life.
- To enable our students to have respect for themselves and develop a positive self-image as successful learners and successful citizens.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for all independent schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as set out in Part 1 of the Independent School Standards Guidance for Independent Schools April 2019. 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

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

The governing body will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- The school is complying with its funding agreements and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes the core learning required to support Post-16 progression, and enough teaching time is provided for students to cover the requirements of funding agreements
- Proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- All courses provided for students that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and Functional Skills, 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
- All students are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

The Principal

The principal 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
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing body 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 children with SEND

Other Staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy. Subject Leads have responsibility for monitoring the way in which curriculum resources are used, stored and managed.

Organisation and Planning

The curriculum aims will be achieved by:

1. Careful planning at three levels:
 - Long term planning which relates to exam syllabi, accreditation outcomes and preparation for adulthood priorities and provides an overview of topics or areas to be taught.
 - Medium term planning which gives clear indications of objectives, success criteria, differentiation and assessment opportunities to support learning in each topic/ subject area.
 - Short term planning which teachers prepare with learning objectives for each lesson and targets for individual students, specific activities, resources and deployment of learning support to promote learning
2. Working in partnership with our parents/carers, detailing expectations at all meetings and maintaining contact with parents/carers so they can fulfil their role in their child's learning
3. Providing a well-planned and focused curriculum that will support our students in a smooth transition into further education
4. Maximising student achievement in all subjects regardless of gender, race, ability, neurodiversity and prior educational and life experiences, by developing schemes of work which engage, motivate and challenge.
5. Providing half-termly reports with individual targets to facilitate curriculum access and meet specific requirements.
6. Ensuring all staff are aware of each student's prior learning journey informed by a comprehensive referral and induction process and the school's Student Profiles, in order to plan appropriately challenging and engaging courses.
7. Developing an awareness in the student of how they learn and that these skills can be applied in all subject areas.
8. Creating an ethos in which the quality of teaching and learning is continually evaluated and improved

Curriculum Structure

Our curriculum is structured around our Preparation for Adulthood aims and the three priorities we have identified as vital for our students to experience hope, overcome barriers to achievement and move successfully into their preferred future pathway. These are:

1. **Resources** that will enable independent economic wellbeing
2. **Resilience** that will enable recovery in the face of challenge
3. **Relationships** that will underpin fulfilment and happiness

1. Resources

Core Knowledge and Skills

All students will take the core subjects of English and Maths to at least Entry Level, and to Level 1 and 2 Functionals Skills and GCSE where possible. All students will be encouraged to continue Science learning, with the option of either Single or Combined Trilogy Science GCSE, Entry Level Science or our non-accredited 'Science for Life' course. All students will follow a PSE course that includes RSE, health and careers education.

Careers education includes research, planning and preparation while also developing key skills for employability. Where possible, students may undertake a period of work experience as part of their curriculum. All students will have access to a one-to-one meeting with a qualified careers advisor, visit at least one further education provider and, where appropriate, take part in a mock interview. Students with EHCPs will receive additional independent advice and guidance and will be supported through the post-16 transition phase by the annual review process.

Additional Knowledge and Skills

All students will be encouraged to choose at least one accredited option subject to at least Entry Level, and to GCSE where possible. It is possible for students to choose up to five accredited option subjects, where appropriate. The approach to ICT is both discrete and cross-curricular and online safety is an essential element of the curriculum. The Personal Project programme allows students to achieve AQA Unit Award Certificates that demonstrates research, practical skills and knowledge across the enrichment curriculum areas.

Enrichment Experiences

All students will be encouraged to choose at least one enrichment subject each half term. These creative, practical, fun and engaging subjects are designed around the specific needs and interests of the students, designed to broaden knowledge, expand cultural horizons and provide stimulating experiences in areas that the students might not otherwise be able to access. These options include practical outside activities, creative skill-based learning and intellectual research and study. These subjects also have accreditation opportunities through the AQA unit Award Scheme.

2. Resilience

Emotional Wellbeing

Students' emotional wellbeing and resilience is supported through weekly optional access to an on-site professional counselling service and to timetabled mentoring sessions. Drama therapy, Lego Therapy and therapeutic art and craft activities are offered to identified students.

Interest-based mentoring sessions, such as 'walking & talking', mentoring through rap music, dog care & dog walking, personal fitness, faith and culture focused and

scrapbooking provide students with a chance to develop trusting relationships and practise communication skills.

Our 'Skills for Success' lessons give students the opportunity to build upon their social, emotional and mental wellbeing with a trusted adult. Some students will also focus on organisation, communication and learning skills during these lessons. Our 'Skills for Independence' lessons allow students, particularly our Children in Care, to focus on building practical skills and knowledge for independent living, such as cooking, shopping, budgeting, hygiene, independent travel and home management. The aim of 'Skills for Success' and 'Skills for Independence' is to prioritise each student's individual need and tailor the learning opportunities to prepare them for adulthood.

Classroom learning is made more accessible to students who struggle to regulate and concentrate by a range of multi-sensory experiences, either during learning or as part of a planned or responsive sensory break. These include fidget toys, sensory snacks, blankets, build and create toys, doodling and colouring and access to our outdoor hammocks, pull-up bars, cross trainer and punchbag.

Physical Wellbeing

All students are expected to participate in at least one session of physical activity every week, but this is very flexible. Recognising that each student's needs are different and that some students may have had experiences of mainstream PE that have affected their confidence, weekly fitness activities are decided in consultation with the student. We work closely with outside partner agencies and with our personal fitness trainer to offer a range of options, including team games, outdoor adventurous activities, boxing, personal training, football, badminton, horse riding, walking for fitness and running. Students are also able to practise basketball, use a cross-trainer, pull-up bars and a punch bag in our garden area.

Students are taught the benefits of a healthy diet and nutrition and the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol across the curriculum, through cooking sessions, personal training, 'Skills for Success' and 'Skills for Independence' lessons, mentoring and more formally through the PSE programme.

3. Relationships

Community Wellbeing

Spiritual, moral, social, cultural and ethical issues are discussed twice a week in our morning 'Starter' sessions. During these sessions the whole school community starts the day considering an issue from 'Current Affairs', 'Wider World' and 'Culture and Belief'. Students are encouraged to listen, reflect and share opinions during these sessions.

Belonging and Connection

Positive relationships and a sense of belonging are fostered through three 'Starter' sessions a week of board games and card games. Through these informal, fun group sessions, students are building communication, logic and turn-taking skills as well as developing humour, playfulness and connections with peers and adults. Staff and students share lunchtimes together and these are an important part of the curriculum where staff model conversation, fun and empathy while eating lunch alongside students. Students are offered a range of lunchtime activities including table tennis, pool, darts, basketball, quizzes, colouring and card games.

Shared Human Values

Our five 'Human Values' for a positive community (democracy, rule of law, tolerance, mutual respect and individual liberty) are modelled and taught throughout the school day and the curriculum, and more formally in our SMSC 'Starter' sessions and the PSE and Personal Project programme.

Trips and Visits

Students are given the opportunity to experience activities off-site with a range of purposes: to support learning (trips to places of historical or cultural interest); to foster relationships (trips to leisure activities); or to widen horizons (trips to zoos, theatres and galleries).

Compassion and kindness

We practise restorative and relationship-led approaches to understanding and supporting behaviours and solving communication problems, prioritising compassion and kindness and modelling healthy and constructive strategies for adult life.

(See Appendix 1 for a visual representation of the curriculum)

Recovery Curriculum – Post Covid-19 Pandemic

As a school we are mindful that the impact of the lockdown periods due to Covid-19 on student mental health, wellbeing and progress nationally will be significant in the coming years. As a school whose aim is to provide hope and a future for those who have been excluded from education or who have experienced significant periods of lost learning, we are best placed to support all our students at this time. Our normal curriculum is a 'recovery curriculum' and we are confident that it is planned and structured effectively to support all our students in the wake of the pandemic lockdowns.

Curriculum Delivery

Open Box Education Centre provides education for students with special educational needs and we recognise the need for a flexible approach to curriculum delivery. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is at the core of our work. Account is taken of gaps in students' learning resulting from missed or interrupted schooling and of the difficulties related to emotional or behavioural problems. Age-related programmes of study are not always appropriate. The aim is for students to achieve as high a standard of outcome as possible. The curriculum is delivered through well-structured, efficiently planned lessons that take account of assessment and prior learning to ensure that the individual needs of students are met.

At Open Box Education Centre we recognise that we may need to organise learning in different ways for different students. Most teaching is delivered in small groups of up to four students. Groups can comprise students from both Year 10 and 11 and work is carefully planned to ensure that all students are working at an appropriate level. Some students may be learning through one-to-one teaching in school and others through one-to-one off-site learning for a period of time, following agreement and with regular reviews. A personalised pathway is developed for each student to undertake a range of courses appropriate to ability and that lead to the accreditation required for preferred post-16 pathways.

The school operates a bespoke weekly timetable of between 22 - 27.5 hours a week, depending on need, five days a week. Some students may spend time on a 'targeted contact timetable' where learning is maximised at specific times of the day to encourage engagement and attendance. Timetables are decided in consultation with parent, student and referring agency and are reviewed regularly. Each school day consists of up to six 40 minute lessons, depending on the student.

Effective Use of Resources

In order to enable effective development and delivery of the curriculum:

- Termly staff training meetings are planned to ensure all staff understand the structure of the curriculum
- Annual staff appraisals are planned to help develop staff skills and plan CPD
- The Principal meets regularly with teaching staff to quality assure the curriculum provision and monitor staff assessment of learning
- Teachers and support staff, with appropriate qualifications and experience, deliver the curriculum.
- Accommodation and resources allow the curriculum to be effectively taught.
- Training is identified for teachers to develop and maintain current subject knowledge. Contact is maintained with the Local Authority, school partnerships and national organisations to provide advice, and training is arranged on a regular basis.
- Meetings between the Principal and the subject leads are held in order to monitor, evaluate and further develop current schemes of work.

Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all students and ensure that there are no barriers to any student achieving. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able students
- Students with low prior attainment
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Students with SEND
- Students who are trauma-experienced or who have attachment difficulties
- Students displaying aspects of neurodiversity
- Students who are in care or who are care-experienced
- Students with English as an additional language (EAL)

Further information can be found in our Equal Opportunities Policy and in our SEND and Inclusion Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation

Governors monitor whether the school is complying with its funding agreements and teaching a “broad and balanced curriculum” through regular reporting from the Principal and governor monitoring visits.

Our curriculum, and its implementation, is monitored by the Principal. Schemes of Work are submitted to the Principal for scrutiny and discussion and these discussions are integral to the performance management cycle. The Principal conducts learning walks and teaching coaching meetings with subject leads regularly to discuss planning and to undertake student workbook reviews.

The School Improvement Team (SIT) monitors and reviews the curriculum regularly and proposes relevant changes or adjustments in the light of each cohort and the individual needs of students.

Consideration is also given to feedback from students and their parents / carers at the termly progress review meetings and at the end of a student's placement through questionnaires completed at the meetings. Review meetings are scheduled with parents three times each year to enable the Principal to formally discuss progress reports and to make any amendments to our approach to improve the student's access to learning.

Monitoring of achievement and progress is done through a range of methods:

- Baseline and ongoing assessment which allows progress to be measured.
- Individual targets and success criteria for each student.
- Examination and assessment results.
- Completed evaluation forms

Complaints / Concerns

Parents/carers who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum for their child, should discuss these with the Principal. If they are still not satisfied, they should follow the procedures outlined in the Complaints Policy.

Approved by: (Principal) (date)

Authorised by:..... (Chair of Governors)(date)

To be reviewed every: 2 Years

Next review date: June 2027

Date of Review	Reviewed by	Ratified by Governors	Date of next review
August 2017	Siobhan Garrett		July 2019
March 2021	Alison Dolan		March 2023
March 2023	Alison Dolan	21-03-2023	March 2025
June 2025	Alison Dolan	24-06-2025	June 2027

Appendix 1

Open Box Education Centre - Preparation for Adulthood Curriculum

