

Curriculum Policy 2021



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Curriculum Intention:

At Peak Education we understand that ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our students is the most important thing we do. Therefore, the focus for our curriculum is the social and emotional development and personal growth of all our students. Students learn valuable lessons at Peak. They improve their life skills; develop methods of overcoming challenges or problems and develop resilience. Our emphasis is on providing plentiful opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of our students. SEAL and SMSC are woven through everything we do. We support students to achieve their full potential within a safe, positive and nurturing environment.

Throughout this document the term curriculum will refer to the wide range of learning and enriching activities that are available to our students. All aspects of learning are designed to ensure that they enhance and further develop the student's social, emotional awareness and life skills. Our curriculum is developed with consideration of how individual students best learn and develop and our students are nurtured and supported to grow into happy, healthy, responsible and confident people, who develop the skills to work alongside and co-operate with others. They are taught to be respectful of others, their beliefs and identities; encouraged to become life-long learners, who recognise themselves as valuable members of society. We support students to develop their learning skills and self-esteem, enabling them to understand their emotions and the consequences of their life choices.

We aim to ensure that our curriculum is fun, exciting and engaging for our students. We focus not only on traditional subjects and class-based learning, but we pride ourselves on our adventurous curriculum. This is enjoyed by our students and allows them to experience success, build trusting relationships and develop a wide range of skills and knowledge in different learning environments. Many of our students have previously experienced difficulties accessing a mainstream school setting and therefore may lack trust and confidence and may have barriers and significant gaps in their learning. The adventurous curriculum that we offer can help students to make sense of the world around them, understand how society functions whilst learning to trust adults and develop confidence. We aim to support all students to develop into independent, successful learners that can actively contribute to their community.

All students are encouraged to participate in Outdoor Education, Music, Arts, PHSE, careers and other self-esteem enhancing activities which, Peak Education believe, gives students the ability to learn successfully in more academic areas. Almost all of our students have Education and Health Care Plans (focused around social, emotional and mental health difficulties) which means that a suitably differentiated curriculum is required to meet their needs.

All aspects of the curriculum actively promote those values that are fundamental to our culture and society; namely: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

Aims:

Our school aims to:

- Provide a safe and nurturing environment in which students are happy to learn and confident to take risks enabling them to develop their skills and talents to the best of their ability.
- To teach students to be able to understand and respect themselves and others and to have high esteem that comes from an understanding that they are respected and valued.
- To teach students to discern right from wrong and support them to make informed and thoughtful choice
- To teach students to develop and appreciate positive, safe and healthy relationships
- To promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that students enjoy coming to school and cultivate a firm foundation for life-long learning and success.
- To teach students the basic skills required for them to fully participate in society i.e. that they are effective communicators, literate, numerate and have adequate computing skill.
- To enable students to be creative and to develop their own thinking skills.
- To nurture students to become increasingly confident and independent
- To teach students about their ever-changing world including how their environment and society have changed over time.
- To help children understand Britain's cultural heritage.

Our Curriculum:

- Is rich, balanced and promotes the highest standards of achievement by all student regardless of ability, racial origin, gender, disability or past educational history, student's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, preparing them to be responsible citizens;
- Is planned to take account of national, local and individual priorities;
- Promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural, as well as academic and physical development; and support students understanding of fundamental British Values
- Offers opportunities to acquire and develop key skills to equip them for current and future roles (i.e. Speech, language and communication skills; Literacy; Numeracy, ICT and social skills.
- Offers the opportunity to gain accreditation matched to each student's ability whenever appropriate and available;
- Facilitates independence and confidence, preparing student for the opportunities, responsibilities, experiences of adult life and their next academic steps.
- Caters to and for their interests, aptitudes and needs to support progression to their next steps

Each student has access to a bespoke curriculum that is designed in consultation with the student, parent or carer and referrer where appropriate. This is planned during the admission process. All students access core subjects including English, Mathematics, Science, PSHE, ICT and careers. Some students may be educated on an individual basis where others may be best suited to working within a class group setting. We aim to ensure that our students have access to a broad a curriculum offer as possible, for as long as possible. During the admission process we would ascertain the start points for our students. This may be from information provided by previous settings or during the meeting. Students would also complete baseline assessments upon entry to Peak to ensure that teaching and learning are pitched correctly to ensure that students are able to reach their full potential at all key stages.

Foundation & Enriching Curriculum:

All students will have access to age appropriate, targeted teaching that will enable them to develop their speech, language, literacy, and numeracy skills on a daily basis.

The teachers will plan English and Maths lessons using a topical, blended approach to ensure that all aspects of the National curriculum are covered. All lessons will be planned to support the student's wider learning. Lessons will be enriching and will incorporate SMSC, historical, linguistic, creative learning opportunities. We endeavour to ensure that all our students have access to learning about the world through a series of topics/ subjects. Students will have a STEM day in which their learning will focus on the development of Scientific, technological, engineering, and mathematical learning. They will learn about important historical and political events, the achievements of humans, humanities, Art, Technology, cookery, and music.

Topical Learning:

We use carefully selected topics to deliver all aspects of the National Curriculum including English, Maths, humanities, Arts and Technology. Our topic programme is carefully balanced and planned to be age appropriate across the years. Long term plans are produced to show how each is taught, the knowledge and skills covered and links to other parts of the curriculum. It is important to us that art, music, literacy and where appropriate numeracy and science are linked in topic teaching. So, for example, a history Romans topic could include reading about Roman myths in English, learning about Roman Numerals in maths, urn making in art, catapult construction in design and technology and catapult testing and measuring in maths and science. We teach geography, weather and climate, and knowledge about significant historical events, people, and places.

Literacy/ English:

Our English lessons develop students' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary. Literacy is taught in a cross-curricular way, linking up with other areas of the curriculum. We teach our students to speak clearly, to convey their ideas fluently and confidently and to ask questions. Their vocabulary is developed systematically. Our students are encouraged to read for pleasure and to read widely.

The students will be heard reading individually and in groups. The guided reading sessions cover both fiction and non-fiction books. Guided reading also develops the student's comprehension skills. A range of ICT programmes are used to enhance learning. Parents are given clear expectations about reading at home.

We develop writing skills so that students have the stamina to express themselves in writing. To support students in moving towards independent writing we provide a wide range of activities including use of film and imagery, modelled, shared, and guided writing, peer editing and discussion. We use talk for writing to encourage students to express their ideas, exchange ideas and to develop more sophisticated vocabulary. We provide opportunities for writing for purpose, and we encourage students to see

themselves as authors. We promote the status of written work by providing opportunities for student's writing to be published and read by real audiences.

Handwriting sessions are incorporated into the English lessons. A range of extra activities are used to promote literacy within the school including an annual focus week.

Mathematics:

Our teachers will ensure that mathematical skills are taught daily. They also use every relevant subject to develop students' mathematical fluency. Our students understand the importance of mathematics, are encouraged to be confident in numeracy and to apply the skills that they learn to simple problem solving. The activities cover a wide range of mathematical knowledge, many with an emphasis on practical work. In each lesson there is a short and simple mental maths session. Students work on number, place, and value, learn how to do basic addition and subtraction, take measurements, and recognise basic shapes and their properties. We build on skills and understanding in a step-by-step way and continue to develop place value, the four number operations and the understanding of fractional parts. There are extra activities throughout the year to promote mathematical skills and thinking including participation in *World Maths Day*.

Science:

Science will be linked to our Topic work where appropriate. We will encourage our students to be curious about natural phenomenon and to be excited by the process of understanding the world around them. In Reception we start to develop blocks of knowledge and concepts alongside the development of enquiry skills. Key scientific terminology will be introduced each lesson. Students will be able to carry out simple tests and experiments using equipment and to gather and record data. Our lessons will include learning about plants, animals and the seasons. In the spring term we will be looking to hatch and nurture our own chicks and in the summer term we will release the butterflies we have watched develop from their caterpillar stage. We will also have dedicated science days throughout the year.

Art & Design:

Art has a very important place in our curriculum and is weaved into our half termly topics. We see art as a vehicle for creativity and individual expression and it provides opportunities for collaborative work. It is an important form of cultural expression and, therefore, has significance and meaning for all our students. Our teaching provides an understanding of all the diverse art forms so that the students experience drawing, painting, collage, textiles, 3D designs, printmaking, and digital media. They will be introduced to the Great Masters and a wide variety of other artists and their styles. Trips to galleries are regularly organised.

Technology:

Our design and technology lessons encourage the designing and making of products to solve real and relevant problems. Our students learn to select from and use a wide range of materials and components, including construction materials, textiles, and ingredients, according to their characteristics. Our cooking lessons teach the principles of nutrition and our students learn how to prepare and make a wide variety of

simple recipes. They understand where our food comes from and how it is grown. We believe that by instilling a love of cooking we will open a door to one of the greatest expressions of human creativity.

ICT:

We do have discreet timetable time for the development of ICT skills but our approach is to integrate ICT into all lessons: the use of laptops and other hardware such as cameras and film cameras is as much part of our learning tools as pencils and pens. Subject specific software, from one-off programmes to learning platforms, support teaching and learning across all years. The students develop their skills, with mouse control, keyboard skills, saving and printing work. They draw pictures, write and use the internet to carry out research. They then progress to more complex skills such as data analysis and coding. Students will use technology safely and identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns.

Music:

In their music lessons students use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes. Students will also be taught to play a variety of instruments musically and encouraged to play together in ensemble groups. We encourage listening to a wide range of music with concentration and understanding. Music lessons are linked to Topic work and music is used in a variety of lessons and activities to create, mood, atmosphere and to help thinking. Music will be heard every day in our classrooms.

Physical Education (PE):

Some form of physical activity takes place every day in our curriculum. Our Wake Up Shake Up sessions are designed to do just that and to prepare our students for their first activity of the day. Our outdoor adventurous activities focus on mastering basic movements including running, jumping, throwing, and catching, as well as developing balance, agility and co-ordination. Students are encouraged to participate in team games and to develop simple tactics for being an effective team member. The activities are rotated on a half termly basis.

PSHE:

PSHE, or personal, social, health and citizenship education, is a planned programme of learning through which students and student acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives. As part of a whole school approach, PSHE develops the qualities and attributes students need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society. It prepares them to manage many of the challenges and responsibilities they will face growing up in such rapidly changing and challenging times. It also helps them to connect and apply the knowledge and understanding they learn in all subjects to practical, real-life situations while helping them to feel safe and secure enough to fulfil their academic potential. In our programmes we actively promote British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs to prepare our students for life in modern day Britain.

Our citizenship lessons enable our students to understand the British democratic process and how to effect peaceful changes in society. Students learn about similarities and differences between people and

cultures. They participate in a variety of cultural events such as Diwali, Hanukkah, Shrove Tuesday, and Shavuot. Planting and growing things are important aspects of our PSHCE curriculum, and we link this to an understanding of healthy eating.

Thinking Skills:

Thinking skills are the mental processes that we apply when we seek to make sense of experience. They enable us to integrate each new experience into the schema that we are constructing of how things are. Better thinking will help us to learn more from our experience and to make better use of our world, the ability to think is fast becoming more desirable than any fixed set of skills or knowledge. We need problem solvers, decision makers and innovators. Our thinking skills lessons and thinking adventures will enable our students to become thinkers who can manipulate and judge information. As their confidence grows and skills develop, they will become pro-active thinkers who are able to make sense of information and tackle more complex problem-solving situations.

Enrichment and Visits:

We are committed to the broadest educational offering. A very successful enrichment programme that includes school trips, visiting specialists and themed days and weeks. The programme is planned throughout the year. Trips and events are directly linked to our topic work for example a Victorian topic may include a trip to the *Black Country Museum* in Dudley to experience living, working, and growing up in the Victorian era.

We will be planning residential trips for our students at our Underbank Activity Centre.

Vocational Curriculum

At Peak Education we have developed a range of BTEC L1/2/3 Vocational subjects to meet the needs of our Key stage 4 and post 16 students. The subjects on offer include.

- Hair and Beauty
- Motor Vehicle Technology
- Child Care and Development
- Health and Social Care
- Home Cooking
- Hospitality and Catering
- Retail
- Public Services
- Construction
- Sport
- Equine Studies
- Art

Peak Education offers a wide and varied programme of learning which is differentiated to meet learner needs and aspirations. Our range of accreditation enables learners to progress from their starting points to achieve recognised qualifications which will support them throughout their life after school.

Access to Qualifications

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Maths
- GCSE Science Synergy
- GCSE Biology
- GCSE History
- Creative Media
- GCSE Computing
- Step up to English Silver.
- Step up to English Gold.
- Entry Level Certificate Maths
- Functional Skills (Entry 1 – Level 2 in English, Maths and ICT)
- Entry Level 3 Science
- AQA PSHE
- AQA Careers
- ASDAN Careers/ Beliefs and Values
- OSA Certificate of Online Safety

Adventurous Curriculum:

Our students can also access a wide variety of course, subjects and learning opportunities

- NICAS (Indoor Climbing)
- Paddle Power
- GB Archery
- Gears (Mountain Biking)
- BCU 1* and 2* (Canoeing and Kayaking)
- Horse riding
- Boxing
- Martial Arts
- Fishing
- Golf
- Football
- Sports & Fitness

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Leadership & Management:

The Senior Leadership Team of Peak Education are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum intention is clear, and the policy is implemented and monitored regularly to ensure that it has the desired outcomes for our students. All staff are responsible for ensuring that it is implemented on a day-to-day basis.

Monitoring & Evaluation:

The Head Teachers, Executive Head and SLT will continuously monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of the learners.

Feedback from the Monitoring and Evaluation processes, parent / student surveys, and from external audits, and students will be used to from follow on schools and student progress data will be considered. Action points will be agreed and discussed with staff. The Executive Head will include curriculum developments in his termly report.

Learner Entitlement:

We will deliver learning opportunities for student which will:

- Provide student with a full range of ambitious and enjoyable options to learn new subjects and to develop new skills.
- Be delivered by skilled and experienced staff who are committed to helping student achieve.
- Provide students with access to a Careers Advisor to help them consider their options, plan a clear programme of learning with student and support them in reaching their goals
- Set clear targets for students' attendance, punctuality and learning which will be regularly reviewed;
- Support students to overcome any barriers to learning such as welfare, finance and personal issues;
- Improve skills students will need to be successful in all aspects of life; such as expressing themselves clearly in speech and writing, handling numbers, using computers and having the confidence to put their own ideas into practice;
- Involve students in helping Peak Education to improve the learning experiences offered to them and to others through regular evaluations and student voice;
- Learners join Peak Education with a variety of starting points due to missing and interrupted learning. Our curriculum enables us to identify gaps in their learning and work with the students to develop new and existing skills.
- Student will be taught in mixed age groups to account for their current levels and abilities.
- Our broad and balance curriculum caters for student's SMSC development throughout.
- Peak Educations Outdoor and Adventurous Activities Programme caters for student's Physical Education as well as develop key social skills such as resilience, team working, communication, experiential learning as well as developing an understanding of risk assessments and cause and effect.
- Independent careers advice is provided by the local authority in the main. Additional work experience opportunities, college visits and preparation for work is undertaken through the curriculum.

Review & Report Process:

- All teachers will review and report on students' progress regularly.
- Daily progress is charted through the behaviour and achievement record system. This leads to termly written progress reports to parents.
- A review may be called at any time if a young person is experiencing difficulties or progressing more quickly than expected.
- Peak Education will report on the progress of student's progress at Local Authority reviews annually, or sooner if requested.

Guidance:

- Peak Education will receive as much information as is available from the records of previously attended schools and make this available to staff.
- Students at each Key Stage will have a transition plan.
- The curriculum will be built around the core of developing skills in Speech, language, and communication; Literacy; Numeracy; ICT and SEAL.
- The curriculum will also incorporate a variety of outdoor adventurous activities, with will further develop the student's self-confidence, resilience and self-esteem.
- Peak Education will access specialist input from outside agencies or advisors to enrich the curriculum in the areas of creative, visual and dramatic arts for specialist projects.
- Opportunities for monitoring, evaluating and target setting will be reflected in half-termly reviews held with the student and staff.

Linked Policies:

Please read the following policies in conjunction with this policy

- PSHE policy
- SEND policy.
- Behaviour, Welfare and Safety policy.