

**Outcomes
First
Group.**

CURRICULUM POLICY

The Tower School
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To be read in conjunction with:

- Marking, Feedback and Assessment Policy
- Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) Policy
- British Values Policy
- Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Inclusion and SEN Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy

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1.0 PHILOSOPHY AND ETHOS

At The Tower School, we believe that children with Autism deserve the very best education on offer. This vision is underpinned by our company’s ethos, ‘Ask, Accept, Develop’, in which we ask our students how they best like to learn and be supported, we accept, adapt to and celebrate neurodivergence, and we strive for our pupils to develop into well-rounded, independent and employable young adults. In order to achieve this vision, we aim to provide a consistently high quality of education to each and every student that comes to our school. We want them to leave us with the concepts, attitudes, skills, and knowledge required to take a meaningful and positive place within society. We know that with the right level of support, sensory input, therapy, empathy, class size and ethos, our students will be able to make great progress and we will be able to close the gaps of any misconceptions, missed learning and/or social exclusion they might have faced in previous educational settings.

As such, our curriculum is built on three core aims: Positive Identity, Independence and Employability. We aim to develop our pupil’s positive identify by supporting them to rapidly improve their self-belief, self-image, self-esteem and self-worth, so that they develop a growth mindset and are able to access the full curriculum. Then, through developing our pupil’s levels of independence, we aim for our students to develop a wealth of academic, social and life skills (underpinned by a broad and rich curriculum) so that they can live life as independently as possible when they become adults. Finally, through our focus on employability, we aim to change the current statistics, which state that only 22% of Autistic individuals are in any kind of employment (The Office for National Statistics), by equipping our students with a range of employability skills and qualifications. We develop our

pupil's employability not only through our curriculum, but also by regularly incorporating Life Skills, Enrichment, Careers and Level Up into our curriculum offer.

2.0 CURRICULUM INTENT

At The Tower School, the curriculum underpins the ethos of the school and strives to provide the context within which pupils with autism are given the opportunity to achieve high standards.

We offer a holistic curriculum which matches the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs, in which we aim to help pupils to do the following:

- Use English to express themselves clearly and confidently, and to understand others with equal clarity and confidence
- Understand mathematical ideas and apply numerical skills
- Understand scientific ideas and concepts
- Gain a basic understanding of historical and geographical skills and knowledge
- Acquire control of computers and digital technology
- Appreciate the joys and benefits of physical education and experience a range of sporting activities, and understand why a healthy lifestyle is important
- Use music, drama and arts and craft as a means of creative expression
- Acquire skills and knowledge to be able to cook independently in a variety of scenarios and contexts
- To spend their leisure time imaginatively, independently and co-operatively in formal and non-structured environments
- Develop self-help skills and be aware of the rewards and dangers of society in preparation for adult life
- Be able to learn beyond the classroom and develop an appreciation for the local area, wildlife and the environment
- Understand how to apply the skills and knowledge learnt to real-life scenarios and situations
- Access meaningful work experience and non-biased careers advice
- Show tolerance and respect to people from different backgrounds and cultures, developing an understanding and appreciation of British Values
- Build on each pupil's social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding

We aim to offer a curriculum that is engaging, varied and practical, and we therefore ensure we provide a broad offer which is centred on the following key objectives:

- **Broad & Balanced:** We ensure our curriculum includes academic, creative and therapeutic opportunities, including the development of life skills and offering vocational opportunities. We provide a range of opportunities and experiences to offer a motivating education that can develop and nurture talents in addition to having the opportunity to explore new ones.
- **Adaptable:** We acknowledge and celebrate the different learning styles and interests of our students and therefore our teachers have the autonomy, in consultation with the Head of Education, to adapt the curriculum to meet each child's needs, and to allow students opportunities to explore the curriculum through preferred interests.
- **Pathways:** We offer different curriculum pathways to equip each student for their future, by securing outcomes and qualifications appropriate to them to enable future success and achievement. We aim for every child to have the necessary qualifications they need to go into their chosen career, alongside

our wider curriculum, to ensure pupils are equipped to live a satisfying and rewarding life (physically, socially, academically, emotionally and economically). We also think ahead to life beyond The Tower School, with a focus on ensuring every child has a positive and purposeful 'next destination'.

- **High Expectations:** We recognise that many of our students are likely to have low level of self-worth. As such, our curriculum focus on growth mindset (Positive Identity) supports individuals in developing positive self-belief, self-discovery and self-confidence so that they have high aspirations of themselves and create a 'can do' attitude.
- **Impact:** In everything we offer, we strive to ensure that everything will be purposeful and have impact. We recognise that our education must motivate our young people and raise their confidence and self-esteem and provide them with the skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge they need for life.
- **Challenge:** To support the needs of individuals with accepting and responding to challenge, making mistakes, learning from mistakes and supporting others with their challenge.
- **Responsibility:** We teach every student to take responsibility, accept support, support others and contribute to being a successful member of the Tower School community.
- **Communication:** We believe that communication is the key to success. Students must learn how to *say it* and *read it* before they can *write it*. Therefore, the curriculum is planned to promote both paired and group dialogue as a way to improve overall literacy. Please see the Literacy Policy for further information.
- **Self-Regulation & Movement:** We provide opportunities for students to learn how to regulate and how best to meet their needs in an increasingly pro-social manner. We ensure that all subjects taught at The Tower School have a therapeutic/regulation element built within them. For many of our students, there is a strong need for movement, which is why we incorporate regular movement breaks into our lessons. This not only prioritises regulation, but also helps to develop each pupil's positive mental health and inner calm.

Implementation of this policy: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

3.0 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The Tower School provides a broad and balanced curriculum over time, with learning broken into small steps and frequent opportunities to repeat and practice skills before becoming independent. We use evidence-based practice to identify the unique needs, difficulties and learning skills of each pupil and then provide personalised learning experiences that:

- are appropriately challenging and enjoyable in varied environments
- utilise approaches, programmes and plans based on evidence of their progress and learning outcomes
- include opportunities for pupils to be involved in making choices and decisions
- have a cross-curricular focus on developing functional skills, knowledge and understanding

- include planned opportunities to generalise skills, knowledge and understanding in natural situations and settings (including the family home and the community)
- prepare for adulthood and a life that is as independent and fulfilled as possible.

The delivery of the curriculum at The Tower School is personalised to meet the individual needs of our pupils. It has an emphasis on experiential and sensory learning across the curriculum, while providing access to a holistic curriculum which leads on to a range of accreditations. The curriculum places an emphasis on addressing the core characteristics and challenges associated with autism by offering a comprehensive educational programme via their timetable, designed to promote social communication, language, literacy, problem-solving and self-management of behaviour and emotions.

Teachers develop and adapt the curriculum we offer through the use of the following working documents:

- The National Curriculum – with adapted objectives to suit the individual needs of each pupil
- White Rose Maths
- Jigsaw (PSHE)
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Exam board subject specifications (GCSE, ELC, Functional Skills, BTEC)
- SCERTS

We ensure effective and consistent planning and delivery of a personally engaging curriculum that maximises the ability of our pupils with autism and complex needs to enjoy learning and achieve their individual potential.

We support staff in making personalised professional responses to meet the profile and learning need of each pupil through recognised approaches based upon best practice in Autism and SEND Learning Needs. Our curriculum policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of different staff within the school, promoting curriculum access and achievement.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that introduces new ideas and experiences to all. We teach respect and consideration for theirs and others individuality, particular backgrounds, cultures and religions as reflected in the inclusive ethos and multicultural nature of the school. These skills prepare pupils for life in a diverse society, promoting and supporting the development and understanding of fundamental British Values.

We also aim to offer:

- The benefits of learning and growing in a calm, friendly, stable and structured environment
- An education, which prepares them for successful, inclusive, enjoyable, rich and active lives
- An education, which gives them high expectations for their future
- A curriculum that builds on a variety of approaches to teaching and learning
- An education that allows development and expression through creative opportunities
- An education that uses real experiences as a foundation for learning
- A curriculum that supports the physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development of the child.

4.0 CURRICULUM IMPACT

We hope and aim that our curriculum will lead to qualifications that hold currency for employers and for entry to further education while fulfilling statutory requirements. We prepare pupils to make informed and appropriate choices at the end of Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and beyond, ensuring continuity and progression within the school and between phases of education, further education, careers and beyond.

We hope that our pupils will develop an enquiring mind with the confidence to explore through trial and error, communicating effectively in verbal and written form, as well as teaching them to acquire information from various sources and to record findings in various ways including the use of digital technology to make informed decisions about their education and life in general.

The opportunities provided during work experience placements support pupils in exploring job opportunities they may not have considered and make an informed decision about further studies they would benefit from attending once they leave The Tower School.

We aspire to ensure all pupils who attend The Tower School become:

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- Confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

5.0 TEACHING & LEARNING

Teaching at The Tower School is the practice carried out by all staff to ensure all pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding as they progress through a curriculum designed to meet their special educational needs. Learning is the process through which the pupils can develop their knowledge, skills and understanding to the point where they have retained and generalised what has been taught. Teaching and learning is carried out in a context, which is relevant and meaningful to all pupils with autism to ensure effective learning and appropriate accreditation.

The curriculum design across all age ranges connects each pupil with the acquisition of knowledge, skill and understanding, enabling students to succeed. This design makes meaningful connections for pupils, which maximises their potential for success, access and independence.

6.0 CURRICULUM PLANNING

As identified above in our curriculum implementation, teachers develop and adapt the curriculum through the use of the following working documents:

- The National Curriculum – with adapted objectives to suit the individual needs of each pupil
- White Rose Maths
- Jigsaw (PSHE)

- Duke of Edinburgh
- Exam board subject specifications (GCSE, ELC, Functional Skills, BTEC)
- SCERTS

Transactional Support

Where appropriate, teachers will use a variety of transactional supports, in order to support the pupils to identify and understand the key learning of the lesson, the focus and the intended learning objectives within each lesson. This enables the pupils to know what is expected of them, discuss the relevance of what is being learned, and identify and celebrate achievement within the sessions.

Planning

Teachers develop the curriculum by creating clear, sequential curriculum maps which ensure each student develops the concepts, attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to make effective progress within each key stage. Teachers then adapt these planning documents into medium-term plans, which clearly map out how teaching and learning will take place over each half-term. Plans for the subject content are then tailored to meet each student's individual needs and are then adapted to meet their personal requirements.

Resources

The school recognises that quality education requires quality resources and there is a commitment to provide a breadth of exciting, suitable and up to date resources in all subjects.

Across the different key stages, the curriculum is planned to provide a wealth of opportunities to design engaging, challenging and coherent learning experiences, which will improve progression and achievement for all children who have autism. While the school sets out the curriculum in traditional areas of learning, planning is focused on making many of these connections more explicit and manageable. All pupils work at their own level through individualised teaching strategies and differentiated lessons, based on the expectations of our holistic curriculum and accredited courses.

Key Stage 3

CORE CURRICULUM

- **English:** with an emphasis on writing, reading, social communication and functional skills
- **Mathematics:** including direct teaching of problem-solving and reasoning skills
- **Science**
- **ICT**

WIDER CURRICULUM

- **PSHE, including Relationship and Sex Education**
- **Physical Education**
- **Humanities:** including History, Geography and Religious Studies
- **Music**
- **Art**
- **Food Technology**

- **Enrichment:** including Life Skills, Social Communication and how to prepare for adulthood
- **Careers**
- **Explore Clinical:** in which students explore pro-regulation strategies through our school's Level Up programme.
- **Project:** in which students develop speaking and listening skills, and research and explore preferred topics.

Key Stage 4 & 5

CORE CURRICULUM

- **English:** Entry Level, Functional Skills and GCSE
- **Mathematics:** Entry Level, Functional Skills and GCSE
- **Science:** Entry Level and GCSE Biology
- **Computing** (Pagoda class only)

WIDER CURRICULUM

- **PSHE, including Relationship and Sex Education**
- **Physical Education**
- **Enrichment:** including Life Skills, Social Communication and how to prepare for adulthood
- **Careers**

OPTIONS

At Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 each pupil will have the opportunity to choose and study up to three specialist subjects. There is a range of specialist subjects available, spanning a variety of exam board subject specifications (GCSE, ELC, Functional Skills, BTEC). Examples include:

- **English Literature GCSE**
- **BTEC First in Art and Design L1/2**
- **BTEC First in Sport L1/2**
- **BTEC First in Home Cooking Skills L1/2**
- **BTEC First in Music L1/2**
- **Duke of Edinburgh- Bronze/Silver**
- **Computer Science GCSE** (Obelisk, Martello and Spire classes)

Key Stage 4 & 5 Pathways

Pathways

At the end of each Key Stage, students will meet with their form tutor, in consultation with the Head of Education, to discuss their pathway into the next Key Stage. Progression Routes will be based on internal/external data, Annual Reviews and in consultation with parents. Students will then follow either Pre-Pathway, Pathway A, Pathway B or Pathway C.

Pre-Pathway

This pathway is for students who may have been out of formal education for a substantial period of time and who have missed opportunities to explore a broad and balanced curriculum and who are not yet ready to begin studying towards external qualifications. Students following this pathway will study Entry Functional Skills qualifications in English and Maths and will also be able to develop their skills in a full range of subjects so that they are able to begin studying Pathway A, B or C in the following academic year.

Pathway A

Students following this pathway will study Entry Functional Skills qualifications in English and Maths. Alongside this, students will study Science (Entry Level), ICT (Entry Level) and will then choose two options to study at BTEC Level 1, in either Art, Food or P.E. Some students may also elect to take extra English lessons, instead of an option choice, so that they can develop their key English skills and receive further support towards their English Functional Skills qualification(s).

Pathway B

Students following this pathway will study either Functional Skills or GCSE Foundation in English and Maths and GCSE Biology (Foundation). Alongside this, students will choose from three of the option choices provided above.

Pathway C

Students following this pathway will study GCSE Foundation or GCSE Higher in English and Maths and Biology. Alongside this, students will choose from three of the option choices provided above.

8.0 GENERAL

Equal Opportunities

We actively promote through our teaching, both discretely and in direct ways, the rights of all individuals to receive the optimum opportunity in all facets of school life. This is an integral part of the school's ethos and practices. We aim to promote acceptable values and attitudes in this area for all our pupils.

Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Values

Spiritual Development:

The specific spiritual needs of young people with Autism are as diverse as their academic profiles. At The Tower School, spiritual development enables our young people to look within themselves, at their human relationships and at the wider world. The spiritual development of all our children is addressed through the ethos of the school and explicitly through the curriculum.

We are committed to:

- Celebrate the religious and non-religious beliefs and values that our pupils bring as part of their family/culture heritage and to building an awareness of and respect for others' spiritual and religious beliefs
- Foster common human values and build spiritual capacities to promote self-worth
- Help our pupils to come to an understanding of themselves as individuals and encourage them to reflect on ultimate questions
- Develop our pupils' curiosity, imagination, and creativity and promote a sense of awe and wonder.

Moral Development

Moral development is the ability to know what is right and wrong and to act on it accordingly. We are committed to encourage pupils to:

- Be truthful and honest
- Respect the rights and property of others, their opinions and customs, even when they are different from their own
- Help others
- Solve differences of opinion in non-violent ways
- Reject all forms of bullying, cruelty, dishonesty, violence and discrimination.

Social Development

Social development is at the very core of our educational ethos in that social communication is a core deficit that accompanies a diagnosis of Autism. We are committed to:

- Develop a social skills curriculum that is tailored to the individual needs of pupils in order for them to be able to access the wider world outside of school
- Provide an environment where pupils can take responsibility for themselves and others in school and the wider society
- Develop the life skills required to socialise appropriately and independently

Cultural development

We believe in affirming and respecting the diverse cultures represented within our school environment and in society as a whole.

We aim for our pupils to become aware of differing cultures, be tolerant of other viewpoints and heritages, and be able to join and share the delights of our diverse population from an informed position.

Citizenship

We believe that The Tower School has a role to play in developing responsible attitudes by our pupils towards society. We actively promote the common tenets of good citizenship through Votes for Schools form sessions, PSHE and whenever the opportunity arises throughout our daily activities. The ethos and practices of the school combine to establish this as a feature of daily interaction between pupils, staff and friends of the school. We aim for our pupils to be motivated to join in with positive citizenship practices.

Careers Education / Environmental and Economic Understanding

From Key Stage 3, these skills are embedded through timetabled careers, outdoor education, enrichment and PSHE lessons. In Key Stage 4 and 5, pupils have access to work experience placements in school and external placements, a careers and work experience coordinator, access to the community with training in

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how to travel safely, and a holistic approach throughout the curriculum to prepare for the future after The Tower School.

Role of Parents & Wider Community

Parents and the wider community are welcome into the school. Parents are a valuable resource to the school and their knowledge of their children is central to all planning in school. Parents may have their own expertise, which can help provide stimulus to a topic or lesson. We aim to involve the local community in the curriculum through assemblies, using guest speakers and by visits to local areas, as a further, concrete aid to learning.

Monitoring

Leadership and management of the school monitor the content of the curriculum and its implementation to ensure partisan political views are not promoted in school. When global and sensitive issues have been discussed, a balanced presentation of views is offered to pupils.

Themed Months

Anti-bullying month, black history month, armistice, festivities around the world, Tolerance and Acceptance, Keeping Safe Online, Careers and Enterprise, Autism Awareness, Independence and Mental Health and more themed weeks are all regular features of the curriculum.

The Tower School is operated by Options Autism and is owned by Acorn Care and Education Ltd, a subsidiary company of Outcomes First Group (proprietary body). The Chairperson of the proprietary body is Richard Power (COO). The Tower School has its own dedicated management team, under the leadership of Lauren Gibbs. Oversight of school management is provided by the Regional Director for Options Autism, responsible to the Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer.

Key decisions are referred to the Outcomes First Group's Board of Directors. In addition, the group extends its robust governance through local governing committees, a national education performance board and an independent Safeguarding and Quality Committee with three independent members.

We are part of the Outcomes First Group Family, by working together we will build incredible futures by empowering vulnerable children, young people and adults in the UK to be happy and make their way in the world

