



R.E.A.L. Independent School Policy for Curriculum

Amended by Michelle Farr: May 2017

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As a learning organisation, R.E.A.L. (Re-thinking Engagement and Approaches to Learning) places children and young people at the heart of their learning experience. We focus on the needs of those with significant and complex additional needs who may be “lost to learning”, at significant risk of exclusion, or out of school with a placement “hard to establish”. We work with a range of children and young people for whom the learning experience has previously failed in either mainstream or special school. To reverse the identified pattern of failure, we promote a culture of respect alongside healthy and productive attitudes to learning by developing an ethos of ambition and achievement enabling each young person to achieve their potential. A key to the success of this approach is the value we place on the nurturing of quality relationships in building the trust for productive learning experiences.

In our work we are truly committed to re-thinking engagement and approaches to learning through the recruitment of staff fully committed to “going the extra mile”. This is embodied in a team of experienced, skilled and enthusiastic professionals fully focussed on empowering young people to prepare for their long term aspirations through a solution focused – “can do” – approach that will create realistic outcomes and appropriate pathways. We know that many children and young people and their families who engage with this approach initially have significantly poor self-esteem and aspirations. By providing a vibrant and progressive culture and climate of continuous innovation, we “raise the bar” on achievement and attainment whilst building on self-esteem, ambition and resilience.

We take an explicit, evidence-based approach to fostering the development of emotional health and wellbeing of our learners, which we begin at induction. We draw on a range of approaches that have been shown to improve wellbeing and we integrate these into our work in both explicit and indirect ways. We see this as a core element to our work.

We are focused upon a commitment to improvement, based on continuous and consistent professional evaluation and analysis of our performance and current and future needs. To achieve this we actively seek the participation of all stakeholders in moving to meet continued improvement. A key to this is the use of a person centred review process in all individual planning, thereby facilitating the recognition, nurturing and appreciation of the ideas, talents and commitment of all involved.

In meeting the personalised nature of its provision R.I.S sets out a curriculum policy which acknowledges the importance of the individual’s ownership of their learning journey. This will incorporate the implicit value placed on the prominence of interest and enjoyment in the initial stages of re-engagement and the significance of nurturing quality teaching and learning relationships. Despite the difficult starting points, our aspiration is always towards a re-integration into an appropriate mainstream provision, linked to both age and ability, that will enable each young person to lead useful and enjoyable lives within their community. The National Curriculum and QCA schemes of work serve as the core link to mainstream curriculum content and are used to highly personalise programmes around individual and group strengths and interests when beginning to re engage in subject areas.



At Key Stage 2 and 3 we deliver a creative and adaptable curriculum that works using a thematic approach across key stage 2 and for appropriate learners in KS3. More able learners in years 8 and 9 may begin to follow a curriculum that will engage them and fully prepare them for a GCSE pathway in key stage 4. This is in line with National changes to the curriculum and enables us to cover key concepts in a deep and meaningful way. Concepts are taught using a wide range of strategies including learning outside the classroom experiences, such as visits to places of interest including parks, museums and galleries.

Each half-term 'a project' is created to address a key concept. The curriculum is then delivered using a cross-curricular approach. Recent themes have been: 'Hall of Fame- who should be in there? Are the Pyramids one of the wonders of the world? Should Robin Hood have gone to jail or would he be a hero today? What make me unique?'

At Key Stage 4 we build upon the work done at KS2/3 and learners will progress to follow a accredited pathways based around their strengths, needs and interests. Accreditation may include a combination of GCSE, BTEC pathways or AIM Awards.

For appropriate learners our curriculum is taught through the following themes:

- Personal, social and emotional development: incorporating PSHE and ICT
- Communication, language and literacy: incorporating English and ICT - whilst identifying its key importance with links to all subject areas including personal development and wellbeing.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world: incorporating Science, History, Geography, Religious Education and ICT
- Physical development: incorporating P.E., Dance and Drama
- Creative development: incorporating Art, Design & Technology, Music, Dance, Drama and ICT.
- Independent living skills

It is our aim that all learners will have access to relevant applied learning opportunities leading to post 16 pathways / employment / FE.

We teach through these six areas of personal development to link the learning experience to everyday life and to make it "real" for the children and young people involved. Regular assessments, review and on-going planning help staff confirm that the experiences being provided are appropriate to individual need. It is important that individuals have the opportunity to acquire and practice skills, through experiences that are broad, balanced, relevant and stimulating. Where possible children and young people should gain first-hand experience and we use educational visits and community links to support their learning. Our innovative links with employers and our bespoke Hub and Spoke model, will enable young people to participate in a wide range of applied learning opportunities. Some of these include;

- Hospitality / catering



- Hair / Beauty
- Music / creative media
- Sport
- Construction
- Motor vehicle
- Small animal studies / horticulture

Literacy, numeracy and ICT together with personal development, wellbeing and social skills are identified as key drivers within this curriculum offer and at the core of each individual's programme. Contained within all of these studies, consideration will be given to multicultural education, equal opportunities and special needs. Our PSHE curriculum policy outlines in greater detail how each learner's curriculum has a PSHE input to ensure all students gain a full appreciation of the richness and diversity of British culture. Linked to the curriculum themes are a number of core values that are outlined in the principles below; together with guidelines for access, settings, assessment and attainment, a framework model and review cycle.

Principles:

The curriculum is about the development of the whole person. At the central core of all individualised curriculum planning will be the person-centred review process that will plot the personal learning journey of the young person and ensure the creation of a plan linked to personal development and well being.

All learners are given equality of opportunity in learning with suitable differentiation and adaptation to personal needs included within the personal support planning.

The school curriculum builds on learners strengths, interests and experiences with an emphasis placed on an initial induction period which will ensure that a foundation for learning is built around an accurate learner profile. Content and level are dictated by needs, ability and interests of pupils. In some cases this may need to be 1:1 at the start.

The curriculum includes an explicit approach to developing learner's emotional health and wellbeing. We use an innovative and engaging approach based on a combination of evidence based frameworks, including solution focused brief therapy, psychological coaching, positive psychology, and the human givens approach.

We place learner's literacy at the heart of what we do. Our literacy recovery framework is evidence-based and flexible. When a learner's literacy is assessed as a barrier to fulfilling their full potential a personalised pathway is created. Any intervention we use is evidence based, highly structured and reflective of the individual needs of the learner.

Every learner, parent/carer and member of staff can make a positive contribution in an environment which is appropriate to the learner and in which everyone is kept and feels safe and valued through the promotion of health, achievement and enjoyment. Important skills are embedded in the curriculum for all subjects, using a wide range of practical, theoretical and creative learning opportunities.



The curriculum presents all learners with new challenges and experiences. By being “risk aware” and not “risk averse”, staff will be encouraged to create exciting opportunities for individuals and groups of individuals which are carefully managed and risk assessed around individual needs.

The curriculum focuses on knowledge creation as well as knowledge acquisition. The curriculum reflects the learner’s place in their local communities. Teaching staff will link the interests and skills of their learners within community projects where appropriate, helping them to understand their communities, their heritage and their responsibilities. The curriculum reflects the learner’s place in the national and global community.

By developing curriculum opportunities to study and experience the wider picture both through technology and personal experiences we shall give learners the opportunity to acquire knowledge and formulate views and opinions on places, events and affairs that will take them beyond the local experiences.

ACCESS

For all aspects of the curriculum staff will seek to maintain the conditions most likely to facilitate learning for our pupils through:

- Provision of appropriate information and communication technology
- A total communication environment that will feature signs, symbols and sensory systems
- Implementation of strategies to alleviate sensory differences
- Consistent and sensitive application of positive behaviour strategies
- A commitment to multiagency collaboration with all stakeholders
- The incorporation of appropriate learning environments (e.g. Structured teaching – TEACCH- Mesibov et al))
- Appropriate use of positioning and mobility aids
- Assessment

At the core to the effective personalisation of a learner’s programme is an awareness of where they are in their journey towards appropriate outcomes. In order for this to be realised, each learner will experience a period of induction in their first half term with R.I.S that will establish a realistic snapshot of their learning profile which will include:

- Personal development and wellbeing profile
- Literacy and numeracy levels
- Learning styles
- Social and communication skills (profiling appropriate learning setting: 1:1/paired/group)
- A review of previous rates of progress and how these were established
- Attendance profile
- Levels as appropriate



- GCSE/Accreditation profile

This will determine the base from which to establish our ability to track further progress on a termly basis. It will also inform the individual reviewing and planning process (Personal Development Plan). During this time the student's and family's own views will be a key to establishing a new foundation to learning.

Curriculum Review Cycle

A review of this policy will be the subject of ongoing scrutiny. A formal review will take place annually, during the Easter period, in preparation for the following school year allowing for consultation with subject specialists and the staff group before final presentation. The principles forming the core values of this policy will be used as prompts for this review.

Key questions which may help in this review include:

- Are individual pupil's needs being met?
- Can we see broad areas of personal development linked to the wider needs of the young people we work with?
- Is there clear evidence of measurable progress across the key stages?
- Is the process accelerating progress compared to an individual's previous records?
- Does planning ensure continuity for individual pupils over time and across the curriculum?
- Do resources and approach facilitate the quality of differentiation needed for all learners?
- How effectively do curriculum areas relate to each other?
- Is the approach to individually tailored learning giving coverage across all curriculum areas?
- Are there adequate opportunities for practical work and problem solving?
- Are young people engaging in community opportunities and links; both locally and wider afield?

The review and development of the R.I.S approach to the curriculum will provide a central process for evaluating its impact on the work undertaken with learners, on behalf of those commissioning services. It will provide a forum within which curriculum development can be evaluated and reviewed and also inform all stakeholders about organisation and policy making. This process will be undertaken annually as outlined previously.

The RIS Curriculum policy outlines our commitment to the curriculum in its broadest sense.