



CURRICULUM POLICY

To be read in conjunction with:

- Assessment Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Careers Education and Guidance Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- SMSC Policy

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1. Introduction and regulatory framework

Willow Park School is a day school for pupils aged nine to sixteen who have experienced trauma and present with a range of complex needs that include social emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have moderate learning and attachment difficulties which make it hard for them to build and sustain positive relationships. The school also supports pupils with a variety of learning challenges including dyslexia and specific learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum condition. All pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Pupils attend from a wide range of local authorities. Because of trauma, emotional difficulties and associated learning needs many have been unable to access a formal education before joining Willow Park. Many have had disrupted school careers and periods of non-attendance.

The vision for the curriculum is to provide a broad and balanced education based on that is contextualised and delivered in a therapeutic learning environment. The school promotes the care of pupils and sets, respects and expects high standards in all aspects of school life. The curriculum aims to meet pupils' needs and prepare them for adult life.

All pupils at Willow Park have access to an education that is personalised and engaging. The curriculum is purposeful and ambitious. The word curriculum is understood in the widest sense. It includes every planned learning experience a pupil has as a member of the school community both within lessons and informally around the school day. It includes all planned activities that promote learning, personal growth and development. Teachers, instructors and support staff structure these experiences to ensure they have the most positive effect on attainment, progress and personal development.

The curriculum consists of activities that promote intellectual, personal, social, physical, therapeutic and cultural development. It includes the formal programme of lessons and the informal programme of enrichment activities. The curriculum ensures that pupils gain experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative. It also provides opportunities for therapeutic provision and for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and cultural capital.

All pupils who arrive at Willow Park have experienced disruption to learning. Many have not attended formal education regularly or for a considerable time. They often arrive as reluctant readers and writers and experience emotional barriers to learning. It is essential that pupils are engaged in an ambitious curriculum that inspires them to achieve their best. Teaching at Willow Park is ambitious and aspirational for every pupil.

The overall aim of the curriculum is to enable all young people at Willow Park to become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens

The curriculum is flexible, personalised and engaging. It provides choice and challenge and is focused on developing emotional literacy, core subject knowledge and accredited outcomes. There is a strong focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning. Opportunities are absorbing and rewarding, effectively differentiated and supported by diverse teaching styles. The curriculum is delivered by skilled, empathetic and experienced staff in a warm, safe, nurturing and modern learning environment.

The curriculum will:

- Build upon prior knowledge and help pupils store knowledge in long term memory so that they make progress by knowing more and remembering more
- Ensure that the right components are embedded in long term memory so that pupils can perform more complex tasks when they are ready
- Provide opportunities for pupils to revisit and over learn key concepts through repeated recall
- Contribute to achievement of overall subject goals
- Ensure that all pupils can achieve the best possible outcomes

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

This policy is written with regard to:

- The Education Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 Part 1 Quality of education provided
- The Independent Schools Inspectorate framework for inspection of independent schools with reference to the quality of pupils' academic and other achievements and the quality of pupils' personal development

2. Aims and principles of the curriculum

2.1 Curriculum aims

The curriculum at Willow Park supports three linked ambitions.

SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS

Always doing your best

Pupils will:

- Access a broad and ambitious curriculum that secures detailed knowledge and skills across a wide offer
- Achieve the best possible outcomes so that they are equipped for their individual future pathways
- Benefit from robust baseline and ongoing assessment which informs differentiated provision and high expectations for every pupil

The staff team is unwavering in supporting pupils to secure their very best and consistently promotes the principle of always doing your best.

CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS

Developing social skills, understanding and resilience.

Pupils will:

- Develop social communication skills, emotional resilience and a better understanding of themselves and others
- Learn strategies that support emotional regulation so that they can participate successfully in learning and wider life
- Rebuild self-esteem and develop a more positive outlook on life

Many pupils have previously found it difficult to understand and regulate their emotions which has led to breakdowns in previous placements. The curriculum aims to change this trajectory.

RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS

Maintaining positive relationships and following community expectations.

Pupils will:

- Learn how to develop and maintain positive and healthy relationships
- Learn how to socialise appropriately with others
- Develop tolerance and respect for their communities
- Gain a secure understanding of the world around them

The curriculum actively promotes Fundamental British Values including democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty.

2.2 Core principles

Curriculum aims and principles

Our ambitious and purposeful curriculum is designed around contextualised learning and strong relationships so that every pupil receives a high-quality education that reflects their lived experience and future aspirations. In line with the Independent Schools Inspectorate focus on the quality of pupils academic and other achievements and the quality of their personal development our curriculum has three connected aims.

Successful learners through contextualised learning

Pupils will become successful learners who can achieve the best possible outcomes and move on to appropriate next steps. We recognise that success looks different for every pupil at Willow Park.

We therefore

- Use robust baseline and ongoing assessment to understand each pupil's starting point
- Plan learning that is rooted in real life contexts and meaningful experiences
- Build differentiated pathways with high expectations for every pupil
- Ensure that pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across a broad curriculum

Staff are unwavering in their commitment to helping pupils secure their very best. They model and promote the principle of always doing your best and use relationships to encourage persistence, pride and resilience in learning.

Confident individuals through relationships and emotional growth

Pupils will develop the confidence to tackle and understand key life skills for success. This includes social communication, emotional resilience and a growing understanding of themselves and others.

Many pupils arrive at Willow Park having struggled to understand and regulate their emotions which has contributed to breakdowns in previous placements. Our curriculum responds to this reality.

We therefore:

- Place relationships at the heart of classroom practice so that pupils feel safe and known
- Teach emotional literacy, self-regulation and problem solving explicitly and through everyday interactions
- Support pupils to practise regulation in real situations and reflect on their experiences
- Use therapeutic and pastoral input alongside teaching so that pupils can behave and participate in ways that open future opportunities

By experiencing success in learning and relationships pupils begin to rebuild self-esteem and develop a more hopeful view of their future.

Responsible citizens with respect and connection to their communities

Pupils will become increasingly responsible with tolerance and respect for others and for their communities.

We support this by:

- Teaching pupils how to develop and maintain positive and healthy relationships so that they can socialise safely with others
- Providing structured opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community
- Helping pupils to understand the world around them through contextualised learning in subjects, visits and enrichment
- Promoting Fundamental British Values including democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty in line with the Independent Schools Inspectorate framework

Values that shape our curriculum

The curriculum is shaped by the specific context of Willow Park and a clear intent to deliver a quality education for all. There is a whole school approach that is holistic and individualised and which starts from each pupil's story, strengths and needs.

We therefore:

- Establish prior knowledge, skills and experiences and build pathways that nurture talents
- Design learning that is relevant to pupils' realities and links classroom content to life beyond school
- Ensure that all pupils encounter a rich range of opportunities so that they can discover interests and aspirations

Spiritual moral social and cultural development runs through all that we do. Life skills are taught across the curriculum not as an addition. The physical and relational environment is planned to promote curiosity, safety and belonging. A developed pastoral and therapeutic offer provides purposeful spaces for reflection, regulation and repair.

Our curriculum is engaging and practical with a broad offer and the following key objectives:

- **Broad and balanced** Academic, creative, therapeutic and preparation for adulthood learning. Pupils experience as many motivating opportunities as possible to develop talents and explore new interests.
- **Curriculum pathways** Clearly planned routes that equip individuals for their future. Outcomes and qualifications are chosen to secure future success and achievement so that every pupil has a positive next destination.

- **High expectations** Support for pupils to develop self-belief, self-discovery and self-confidence so that they in turn hold high expectations of themselves.
- **Impact** Every part of the offer is purposeful. Teaching and enrichment are designed to motivate pupils, raise confidence and self-esteem and make a measurable difference to academic and personal outcomes.
- **Challenge** Structured opportunities to experience and respond to challenge, to make mistakes, learn from them and support others in their learning.
- **Responsibility** Support for every pupil to take responsibility, accept support, offer support to others and contribute as a successful member of the school and wider community.

Pupil entitlement

As a special school for pupils with a range of complex needs Willow Park is committed to the principle that all pupils regardless of ability, race, cultural background or gender have a right to the highest quality of education we can provide. In line with the Independent Schools Inspectorate expectations this means that we seek to ensure

- Breadth and balance for all
- Ambition for every pupil
- Appropriate levels of expectation and genuine challenge
- Relevance to pupils' lives and experiences
- Continuity and progression in learning over time

Learning is planned so that every pupil can access the curriculum, experience success and move forward from their individual starting point.

Addressing special educational needs

As part of the admissions process and after a place has been confirmed education staff receive a range of information before the pupil arrives. This includes educational, social and medical history, attendance, safeguarding information and involvement of other agencies. The Education Health and Care Plan provide further detail on provision, outcomes and current attainment.

On admission each pupil completes a baseline assessment which may include therapeutic and academic assessments and observations. Data from this assessment is shared with staff and reflects current cognitive ability, social and emotional presentation and communication profile. Where the Education Health and Care Plan or baseline information indicates additional need further targeted screening is arranged with specialist support.

Baseline information is used to set realistic and personalised targets for progress across the curriculum and in relation to the key learning needs of the individual. These targets form a central part of individual education plans, positive support plans and individual risk assessments. They are reviewed regularly with

pupils, families and relevant professionals so that provision remains responsive and relational.

Key Stage four learners

Volunteering, work experience and contextualised careers education are key aspects of the Key Stage four curriculum. Strong and developing links with the local community, employers and further education providers ensure that pupils are given meaningful experiences that connect learning to life beyond school.

Pupils are supported to

- Explore interests and strengths in real settings
- Understand the expectations and routines of the workplace
- Reflect on their experiences and use these to shape future choices
- Move on to appropriate post sixteen destinations that match their abilities, needs and aspirations

In this way the curriculum at Willow Park supports pupils to achieve well and to grow personally in line with the Independent Schools Inspectorate focus on academic achievement and personal development.

3. Curriculum organisation and delivery

3.1 Curriculum

The curriculum is planned to meet a wide range of needs and includes academic, vocational, therapeutic and enrichment components.

Curriculum Approach	Curriculum Delivery
Academic A breadth of subjects offering a range of qualifications. We will take autonomy for our school curriculum and for the way we plan for and mirror, to an extent, the National Curriculum.	Academic Timetable Structured and systematic approach with clearly defined lessons. Can follow a primary or secondary model of delivery. All have access to specialist staff and learning environments.
Vocational Training, development of skills and practical knowledge that may and can relate to occupation and employment	Learner-Initiated and Adult Led Teaching A flexible approach with teaching input delivered in short and diverse sessions.
Therapeutic Individual and group interventions are offered and embedded across the curriculum with a structured, well-informed environment that is designed to support pupils' health and well-being at all times.	Thematic / Topic Learning Integrated approach with cross-curricular opportunities around a focused theme or overarching question. Thematic learning space to support and enhance delivery.
Creative Imaginative, problem solving and expressive in approach, practice and originality	
Experiences & Talents Providing new and rich opportunities for pupils to have experiences and explore possibilities. Recognition and nurture of interests, ambitions and talents. Opportunities to support and enrich.	

Willow Park is committed to ensuring that every pupil has equal rights and opportunities to their education and can reach their full potential while having their specific needs met. The curriculum immerses pupils in a purposeful education that builds independence and well-being and supports pupils to explore interests and find their individual pathway.

Planned sequential steps of knowledge, skills and learning in each subject build cumulatively to enable curriculum access and success in each key stage. The curriculum is personalised, takes account of previous gaps in learning and revisits key concepts. There is a strong emphasis on experiential and sensory learning.

Learning experiences include:

- Linguistic English with communication integrated throughout
- Mathematical numeracy with a focus on functional and experiential learning
- Scientific biology, chemistry and physics including theoretical and practical elements
- Technological digital competence
- Human and social PSHE, citizenship, geography, history and religious education
- Physical education
- Aesthetic and creative learning
- Therapeutic experiences including sensory work, play and forest school

Alongside the taught curriculum pupils engage in a range of experiences that develop social and emotional skills.

3.3 Sensory integration and learning environment

The school recognises the sensory difficulties and challenges that many pupils experience. Sensory differences can affect learning and behaviour. A key focus of the curriculum is to adjust aspects of school life to meet sensory needs.

The curriculum places significant emphasis on sensory integration and processing so that pupils can thrive in an environment that supports learning and helps them to organise and respond to sensory input.

Approaches include:

- Clear visual timetables that can be adapted
- Clearly labelled key words, topic vocabulary and resources
- Resources that support different ways of recording learning
- Stepped instructions to support auditory processing
- Regular teaching and prompting to help pupils ask for help
- Breaking directions into small steps and allowing extra processing time
- Regular prompts to increase alertness and support focus
- Attention to classroom noise level and use of visual or auditory stimuli where helpful
- Levelled questioning and instructions matched to need

Lessons are adjusted to build in movement breaks and opportunities to refocus and calm. Staff recognise that movement can support concentration and plan for safe movement within learning. Where possible, lessons are structured to stimulate proprioceptive and vestibular responses.

The learning environment is exciting, purposeful and structured. Classrooms and shared spaces are designed to promote high standards, good working practices and a sense of safety so that pupils can learn at their best. The environment enhances the curriculum and supports both academic and social development including meaningful peer interaction and independence skills.

3.4 Specialist staff and multi-disciplinary work

Staff at Willow Park are trained in curriculum delivery and in understanding the specific needs of pupils in a therapeutic nurturing environment. Staff work closely with multi-disciplinary teams including specialist health practitioners such as:

- Speech and language therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Psychotherapists
- Mental health professionals and psychologists

Together they provide a package of support that promotes the best outcomes both educationally and therapeutically. The school has high ambitions for all pupils and recognises the importance of personal development, problem solving skills and independence for adult life.

3.5 Intervention and catch up

A high priority is placed on addressing misconceptions and gaps in learning and meeting additional needs. Where required additional focus is placed on numeracy and literacy through intervention programmes.

Numeracy intervention

- Pupils not meeting expected levels of progress are identified through termly assessment reviews using teacher assessment and Star Maths
- Personalised targets are set, and pupils follow a tailored mathematical intervention programme
- Progress is monitored through Accelerated Maths and departmental tracking
- Assessment informs planning, differentiation and intervention and includes formative classroom assessment and termly Star Maths assessments

Literacy intervention

- Pupils not meeting expected levels of progress are identified through termly assessment reviews using teacher assessment and Star Reader
- Personalised literacy programmes may include differentiated classroom teaching, structured phonics where appropriate, daily one to one reading, spelling schemes and use of resources that support reading
- Pupils with continuing difficulties receive targeted support for reading skills and may access specialist one to one programmes
- Phonics teaching using Little Wandle is provided where necessary and progress is reviewed termly

Reading is assessed using the Accelerated Reader STAR assessment. Writing is formally assessed at key stages two and three. Evidence is collected and recorded in SOLAR and targets are identified for further progress.

Therapeutic support and intervention

Additional intervention is offered at all stages through group and one to one therapeutic support, according to specific individual needs, and through a close working partnership between home and school. We have access to a range of Therapeutic Support including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychotherapy and Psychology. To take account of the differences and range of cognitive ability, preferred learning styles and learning needs all staff at Willow Park School will adapt tasks, provide a range of resources, develop extension work, provide for a variety of learning styles and environments, set individual goals, provide different levels of support and offer a variety of ways for learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. A thorough knowledge and understanding of each learner's needs and IEP targets are also crucial. At Willow Park School we are committed to meeting the needs of each child as they are expressed in their Educational, Health and Care Plan.

3.6 Access, breadth, relevance and progression

The school is responsible for ensuring that all pupils are engaged in learning, motivated and enabled to succeed. Many pupils arrive with negative perceptions of mainstream education. The school addresses this through flexible and innovative approaches that recognise strengths and interests.

The curriculum:

- Provides all pupils with a wide range of experiences across required areas of knowledge and skills
- Offers a variety of activities and approaches to secure success for pupils with different aptitudes
- Works towards National Curriculum guidelines where appropriate and consistent with need

- Is relevant to pupils' lives and prepares them for adult life
- Makes use of new technologies and the local community and environment

Continuity, pace and progression are central. Education builds on previous learning and staff seek connections across subjects. Although the curriculum reflects key stages based on age there is flexibility to address individual attainment. Teaching matches cognitive ability and is differentiated to allow consolidation of new skills.

Adaptations and gifted pupils

Despite the relatively small class groups and high levels of learning support there is inevitably a wide range of ability and need in each class. Pupils also differ significantly in their social interactions and emotional wellbeing. When organising teaching groups staff consider not only academic ability but also:

- Quality of peer relationships
- Capacity to work safely and successfully with others
- Levels of emotional regulation and resilience
- The potential impact of groupings on each pupil's wellbeing and sense of safety

Some pupils will benefit from small group or paired work. Others will require opportunities to work individually with a trusted adult or in a very small teaching group. Groupings are reviewed regularly so that they continue to support both learning and social and emotional development.

It is well documented that pupils who have a range of complex learning needs and display social emotional and mental health difficulties have a wide range of preferred learning styles. Some work well in small groups or in pairs while others prefer to work individually. Some perform best in longer term projects while others respond better to clearly defined tasks. Some respond well to oral work while others prefer written work. Some find written communication difficult but work effectively on a computer.

To take account of these differences and the range of ability in any class all staff at Willow Park School have a responsibility when planning work to meet the needs of all pupils. This will involve at different times:

- Adapting tasks and resources
- Providing different entry points and levels of challenge
- Developing extension work for pupils who are ready to move on
- Providing a variety of learning styles and environments
- Setting individual goals and success criteria
- Giving different levels of support and scaffolding
- Offering a variety of ways to demonstrate knowledge and understanding including oral responses, practical work and use of technology

A thorough knowledge and understanding of each learner's Education Health and Care Plan needs, current curriculum step of progress, preferred learning styles, individual education plan targets and social and emotional profile is crucial. This information is recorded and communicated through individual pupil profiles and is used actively in curriculum planning, grouping and classroom practice.

Pupils with particular talents or skills are identified and supported through appropriately challenging classroom tasks, enrichment activities and where appropriate links with external providers.

3.7 SMSC, Fundamental British Values and protected characteristics

All curriculum areas contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The integrity and spirituality of all faith backgrounds are respected and explored. Diversity of spiritual traditions is recognised. Adults model expected behaviour and treat all pupils and families with respect. Pupils are encouraged to differentiate between right and wrong and to value themselves and others.

The school promotes Fundamental British Values throughout the curriculum and explicitly through assemblies, PSHE and pupil participation in the school council. Pupils learn about democracy, the rule of law, the accountability of public bodies, freedom of belief, respect for difference and the need to challenge discrimination.

The school actively teaches about protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Curriculum opportunities are planned to promote understanding of diversity and to present positive role models who have overcome barriers. Inequality is challenged and no pupil is disadvantaged.

Willow Park plays an active part in the community and works closely with parents and carers who are invited into school regularly to share in learning and celebrate success.

3.8 Work experience, vocational learning and careers guidance

Willow Park School endeavours to provide all pupils with a range of opportunities to participate in a workplace environment. Careers education and guidance are taught through timetabled Careers Lessons, ICT based careers information and Citizenship. All pupils have access to tailored and external guidance.

In Key Stages 3/4 the emphasis is placed on the world of work, opportunity awareness, college experience, and work experience. All 14+ pupils are provided with opportunities to engage in practice interviews and liaise with external guidance. This process also provides the specific information required to create individual transition plans. Pupils who are ready for work experience are

supported with a suitable work placement as guided through appropriate outside agencies.

Personalised learning is supported by Individual Personal Profiles to encourage pupils to pursue areas of interest and gain experience. Teachers, instructors and learning support staff provide valuable support and guidance as they support the individual pupil needs. It is the aim of the school that all pupils should leave the school with a suitable placement matching the individual's ability and aspirations. The aim is for all Year 11+ pupils to actively apply for sixth form, college and apprenticeship placements whilst in their final year.

4. Assessment, progress and curriculum impact

4.1 Assessment and progress

At Willow Park School staff use an online platform called SOLAR (Special Online Academic Records) to record pupil attainment and assessments across all subjects taught at the school. This helps to provide staff with additional guidance on the sequence and progression of knowledge and skills within the curriculum, and to ensure that learning builds upon prior attainment. The expectation for progress for students is that they will cover 80% of the curriculum each year to achieve mastery of that step, before moving on to the next step. Within the framework, pupils are assessed at three levels against each objective – emerging, developing or secure. Teachers use their judgment and evidence from work completed to assess pupil progress. Our expectation is that no child is judged to be secure in their knowledge of an objective until there is a minimum of three pieces of evidence completing the given skill, with an appropriate degree of independence. All assessments recorded by staff are subject to both internal and external moderation practices.

Pupils are encouraged to gain external accreditation for their learning from the earliest opportunity. This can be through a range of awarding bodies, such as ASDAN short courses, AQA Unit awards, Functional Skills and Entry Level Qualifications. The aspirational goal for all pupils is that they leave with the highest level of appropriate qualifications they can access, within their ability.

4.1 Curriculum impact

We aim to:

- fulfil all statutory requirements
- provide subject breadth and progression wherever possible

- deliver qualifications that are useful for both employers and higher education
- enable pupils to fulfil their potential
- meet the needs of pupils of all abilities
- deliver the curriculum in a supportive, therapeutic environment
- provide equal access for all pupils to a full range of learning experiences beyond statutory guidelines
- prepare pupils to make informed and appropriate choices at points of transition
- help pupils develop lively, enquiring minds, an ability to question and argue rationally and an ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills
- include a range of vital characteristics- breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression, continuity and coherence
- ensure continuity and progression within the school and between phases of education, increasing pupils' choice during their school career
- foster teaching styles which offer and encourage a variety of relevant learning opportunities
- help pupils to use language and number effectively
- help pupils develop personal moral values, respect for religious values and tolerance of other races' beliefs and ways of life
- help pupils understand the world in which they live
- meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs of our pupils
- incorporate a specific curriculum which will focus on the core skills of numeracy and literacy and develop the personal, learning and thinking skills of all pupils
- incorporate a key stage 4 curriculum which meets the needs of pupils, parents and wider society

Willow Park School Offer

Core Curriculum		Curriculum Options	Extended Learning Curriculum
English Maths Science PSHE IT PE	Pastoral Connect Life Skills Themed: (Geography/History/RE)	History/ Geography PE Textiles Computer Networks STEM Baking Arts and Craft Self-study group	Movie Club Gaming Boxing Art and Craft Boardgames / RPG /Lego Parkour