

# CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT POLICY

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# RISE LEARNING ZONE

## CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT POLICY

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### **Curriculum and Assessment Policy and Curriculum Plan**

We specialise in providing young people aged 14 – 16 and 16-18 (NEET) who are struggling with ability, attendance and behavioural issues in local schools the chance to learn in a different environment with an attentive and supportive atmosphere. Our work is aimed at learners who for a number of reasons are performing below the required level for their age, and aim to progress them to Level 2 qualifications by the time they leave us.

We believe that all children and young people have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education, which provides progression to a positive future while recognising individual strengths, needs, weaknesses and talents. While taking account of legislative requirements and the needs of referrers such as local schools and the LA, we omit some aspects of the National Curriculum. This is in order to provide more time and space for our full foundation-learning package along with the need to improve literacy, numeracy, ICT, employability and social skills of young people with behavioural issues arising from a number of reasons.

### **Our Curriculum Offer**

The curriculum is delivered in conjunction with a varied support package, which engages the student by helping them to overcome barriers to learning and encourages a discovery, development and realisation of potential and talents.

We believe our curriculum is:

- Inclusive – recognising the entitlement of every student to access learning relevant to their own individual needs

- Enabling – providing students with the skills they need to achieve maximum success both in their academic futures and in their personal, physical, social and emotional needs.
- Personalised – stimulating, challenging and meeting the learning needs of every student.
- Collaborative – together providing as comprehensive a range of opportunities as possible “the whole being greater than the sum of the parts”. This will enable flexible use of highly specialist resources as well as maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of staff and organisational models.
- Developmental – does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

## **Our Learners**

We take referrals from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LA’s, Schools, PRUs, Youth Offending Teams, SENCOs, social workers, youth workers, CAMHS, Nottingham Futures, special schools and parents.

Our learners are referred to us for a variety of reasons including:

Poor school attendance

Low levels of literacy and numeracy

Displaying challenging or offending behaviours that led to, or put them at risk of, exclusion

Having some learning difficulties

Health problems, especially mental health problems or conduct disorders

Disadvantaged or challenging family backgrounds

Having complex social and emotional needs

## **What we aim to do**

Recognise that learning difficulties, personal problems and experiences may affect a learner’s concentration, energy and enthusiasm to participate in learning, we aim to:

- Embed a culture of mutual respect between tutor, learner and learning support workers
- Offer young people a learning environment of small numbers
- Be patient with young people as they learn, especially as many have been out of the learning environment for a number of months or years
- Treat young people in a civilised and dignified manner.
- Facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualities that will help learners to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, physically, morally, culturally and aesthetically, to encourage them to become independent, responsible, useful, thinking, confident and considerate members of the community.
- Challenge stereotypical, territorial and negative attitudes in young people and build up genuine confidence and self-esteem.
- All teachers will ensure opposing and balanced views are represented and on offer to pupils in lessons, or outside, by all staff.
- Encourage respect for other people, paying particular attention to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act of 2010 and described in our Equal Opportunities Policy (OP-02), Equality & Diversity Policy (OP-03), and Equal Opportunities for Young People Policy (SP-05).
- Provide an appropriate level of support to learners with English as an Additional language (EAL).
- Embed a system of wrap around pastoral support, with parental and inter-agency working that puts the learner and their education at the centre, to find practical solutions to obstacles of learning.
- Include young people in the leadership and management of the programme, with regular consultations and real positions of responsibility and influence.
- Provide opportunities to gain worthwhile, externally accredited qualifications that lead to planned progression routes into further education, training and employment.
- Work with outside agencies, the Futures service and local businesses to provide information, advice and guidance about possible career paths and support learners into their chosen destinations, and to ensure this information is impartial, accurate, and enables them to make informed choices about their career options, encouraging them to fulfil their potential.

- Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Learners who are referred to us will be encouraged and empowered to learn in a supportive atmosphere and gain:

- Numeracy, Literacy and ICT skills that are taught both independently and embedded into other subjects to ensure that they have a platform of personal key skills from which to build a future on, and one that will enable them to function effectively in the world
- Employability skills taught as a level one award or certificate in Occupational Studies, at a level appropriate to them. These skills are aimed to give young people the basic skills they need to achieve and interact successfully in the workplace.
- A full foundation-learning package by studying a level 2 award in Nutrition and Health that enables and encourages them to recognise and take seriously health choices regarding their diet, coupled with the chance to gain the knowledge to support effective progression routes towards health and catering courses and careers. Learners on this course may also have the chance to experience working on our allotment garden, alongside park rangers from Nottingham City Council.
- The chance to play sport at local venues, undertake physical activities in our gym, or take part in outdoor activities and trips based on curriculum studies.
- Creative experiences and accreditations are to be found in art, cooking and gaming, taught by experienced and qualified tutors in the relevant media.
- PSHE and PSD from our experienced life-skills tutors, mixing issues and subjects as broad as communication skills, with substance mis-use, sexual health or remembrance day and the holocaust, bringing a balance to learning, and embedding an experience of wider humanity subjects

## Assessment

We will:

- Provide a “baseline” assessment using at least one of the “key skills builder” online skills assessment, a series of assessed skills tasks and tutor observations, depending on the subject taught
- Expect to receive shared information from referral forms from referring agencies or statements of special need etc.
- Develop individual learning plans showing clear measurable objectives with strategies and success criteria.
- Involve learners in target setting and hold regular reviews (as schedule).
- Maintain records of achievement in all areas of study and generate reports to interested bodies. This will include at minimum an annual written report of each pupil’s progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught, provided to the parents/carers of that pupil.
- Share information on student progress regularly as a staff team to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
- Alert other members of staff of any issues concerning a learner that may affect their progress or behaviour within the provision.
- Carry out assessments for awarding bodies according to their criteria and procedures and update student records accordingly.
- Take part in training for this role and liaise with external verifiers on a regular basis.
- Communicate with awarding bodies to certificate learners and provide a summative record of achievement for leavers.
- Provide training to some staff members to become internal verifiers who will ensure that our assessment procedures are meeting the standards set by awarding bodies
- Implement appropriate examination conditions and requirements as set down by the accrediting bodies, and welcome external verifiers and moderators to undertake their spot checks as required.

## Examinations

### Access to Assessment

- In line with our aims to promote equality of opportunity and remove barriers to inclusion, we will comply with the terms of all relevant legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act, and with examination board agreements with regard to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments to assessment processes.
- Judging individual cases on their merits, the Examinations Officer or Project Manager will liaise with examining bodies on behalf of candidates with particular needs for reasonable adjustments to be made to the assessment requirements of specific qualifications.
- Adjustments to the assessment requirements are made before an examination or assessment to enable candidates who might not otherwise be able to do so to demonstrate their attainment.
- Where appropriate, candidates will be given facilities and support to prepare portfolios that demonstrate their attainment. This could include the use of photography, video and voice recording as well as assistance in writing reports of activities.
- Adjustments to the assessment requirements must not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates or undermine the validity and integrity of the qualification.
- The range of needs which are recognised for the purposes of reasonable adjustments are:

Physical difficulties

Visual impairment

Hearing impairment

Learning difficulties

Candidates whose first language is not English

Candidates who require alternative accommodation

Adjustment to the assessment requirements include:

- Adapted means of access to questions (e.g. modified print and Braille versions, the use of a reader, signing of questions)
- Alternative means of presenting responses (e.g. keyboard equipment, the use of an amanuensis)
- Additional time
- Alternative accommodation arrangements
- Exemption from fulfilling particular assessment objectives

### Special Consideration Policy

We will comply with examination board agreements and procedures with regard to special consideration.

Special consideration is given following an examination or assessment to ensure that candidates who suffer temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination or assessment are able to achieve an appropriate result for the overall qualification.

Special consideration must not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates or undermine the validity and integrity of the qualification.

Only events beyond the control of the candidate are recognised for the purposes of special consideration. These include recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the examination and cases where access arrangements made before the examination or assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate. In seeking special consideration, individual cases will be judged on their merits. The Examinations Officer or Project Manager will liaise with the relevant examining boards on the behalf of candidates who are considered to require special consideration.

### **Procedure for Internal Moderation**

The Development Manager, as Head of School for the purposes of matters relating to external qualifications, is accountable for the quality assurance and management of the examinations and assessments in the centre.

The Development Manager will appoint an Examinations Officer to act on behalf of the centre in matters relating to external examinations and assessments in the centre, or may personally act as Examinations Officer if circumstances demand.

We will provide an adequate invigilation team and appropriately qualified personnel (e.g. assessors and internal verifiers) for the assessment of and standardisation of centre-assessed components.

We will ensure that all candidate data provided to examining bodies is done so in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act (1988) and that candidates are aware of the data provided and its purpose.

The Examinations Officer will make arrangements to receive and to issue to staff and candidates, as appropriate, all circulars, notices, statements, instructions and regulations, specifications and support materials, mark sheets, information and advice, and other materials from time to time as supplied by examining bodies.

The Examinations Officer is responsible for being aware of and complying with the requirements and regulations of individual examining bodies and arranging appropriate liaison with external verifiers.

Internal standardisation meetings will be held regularly and well in advance of any external moderation.

It is the Examination Officer's final responsibility to ensure that all paperwork and documentation pertaining to assessment is current and completed correctly.

Assessors must not internally validate their own work and a sample of each assessors work across each skill area for which they are responsible must be available for internal validation.

## **Curriculum Plan**

Our curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age a part time or full time education (dependent on requirements of the referring agency), which gives experience in the following areas of learning:

Linguistic: Through delivery of and assessment under Functional Skills English

Mathematical: Through delivery of and assessment under Functional Skills Mathematics

Scientific: Through delivery of and assessment under L1/2 Award in Nutrition and Health

Technological: Through the delivery of and assessment under Functional Skills ICT, and also external projects like our annual Bike Workshop Skills short course.

Human and Social: Through the delivery of PSHD, PSD, Philosophy & Thinking Skills and L1 Award in Occupational Studies

Physical: Through encouragement to participate in two hours of week of physical activity including outdoor adventurous activities, sports and gym access.

Aesthetic and Creative: Through the delivery of Art and Gaming subjects, cooking vocational studies, and music/radio production short courses.

These programmes are detailed below:

## **Subject Areas**

All young people attending the provision on a full time basis will be expected to study all of the following area.. More detail is given on each of the following subjects shortly. The curriculum described below is broad and we believe that it is a well-balanced mix of the core functional skills required in work and social life, alongside a more fun and enjoyable programme of learning that is experiential and balances the more traditional learning. It does not include a traditional science. In our experience young people who are in the position of needing an alternative education programme, are at that point as they are not able to cope with the full demands of a formal education and curriculum. Science is a subject that we believe whilst very valid and of vital importance to humans and our understanding of ourselves, the world and beyond, it is not a subject that will be of benefit to the lives of many of

the young people we meet. The Environmental Science programme that we deliver contains elements of Biology and Geography, however is rooted much more in the young people's understanding of their immediate environment and understanding.

### **English, Maths and I.C.T (Linguistic, Mathematical and Technological)**

This area of curriculum currently follows the Functional Skills programme, using the NCFE or NOCN exam boards. We assess each learner's individual ability as they are referred onto the programme, and compare this with the data received from schools before eventually pitching the level they will begin at. We do have the expectation that given the nature of the provision, and the learners we expect to have referred, most of them will be starting with a low level of academic achievement / ability, and so would be pitched at one of the Entry Levels.

We are following the developments out of the Wolf report, and should the recommended method of teaching key skills to 14 – 16's be changed, we will alter our provision accordingly. We have experience of teaching Functional skills from over the last year, and we have had past experiences of teaching the Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALAN) online courses to groups of young people from previous years.

### **Functional Skills**

Functional Skills in English, Maths, ICT help young people to gain the most out of life, learning and work.

These skills are learning tools that enable people,

- To apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday life.
- To engage competently and confidently with others.
- To solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar situations.
- To develop personally and professionally as positive citizens who can actively contribute to society.

Functional Skills are available at Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3, Level 1, Level 2. At each level of the qualification, these subsume the previous levels' skill standards coverage and range, supporting a progression, based suite of skills qualifications.

Functional Skills in **English** has 3 components,

Reading, defined as the independent decoding and understanding of written language and text in a purposeful context.

Writing, defined as the independent construction of written text to communicate in a purposeful context.

Speaking, listening and communication, defined as non-written communication, conducted face to face.

Functional Skills in **mathematics** requires learners to use maths in ways that make them effective and involved as citizens, to operate confidently in life, and to work in a wide range of contexts.

Functional Skills in **ICT** requires learners to use technology in ways that make them effective and involved citizens.

At RISE we plan and facilitate interesting and absorbing sessions in English, maths and ICT. We have small groups (5-8 learners) and sufficient staffing levels to provide 1:1 support. The sessions are interactive and take into account learners at different levels within each group, this means that no learners are 'left behind'. The learners are encouraged to ask for assistance until they have grasped new topics and understand information fully.

Functional Skills qualifications successfully embed new skills for learners, which are useful in adulthood and provide a solid foundation for further learning.

**Level 2 Award in Nutrition and Health (Scientific)**

The NCFE Nutrition and Health qualification, available to pre-16 learners and above, explores the principles of healthy eating, encourages learners to consider the nutritional needs of a variety of individuals and use food and nutritional information to plan a healthy diet.

#### Course outline

This course is designed for those who wish to develop their understanding of the principles of healthy eating and the role of food in maintaining health. There has never been such a wide range of food available to us. This course will provide the knowledge to make informed lifestyle choices in relation to diet.

#### Course content

The course consists of three units:

Unit 1: Explore principles of healthy eating

Unit 2: Consider nutritional needs of a variety of individuals

Unit 3: Use food and nutrition information to plan a healthy diet

#### Progression opportunities

Having completed this course, learners may want to consider further study in diet and nutrition, such as NVQs. Alternatively, they may wish to consider qualifications around catering, food science or sport and exercise.

### **L1 Award or Certificate in Occupational Studies (Human and Social)**

These qualifications are designed for a wide variety of learners including: learners with special needs, learning difficulties or particular learning requirements, full-time and part-time students, those who are long-term unemployed, pre-16 students in compulsory education, individuals in employment looking for a career change, individuals facing redundancy.

These qualifications aim to:

- provide an introduction to the world of work
- develop learners' confidence and motivation
- develop communication skills and job search techniques
- assist learners in their awareness of opportunities available in employment
- raise awareness of progression opportunities

- highlight where learning opportunities

### **PSD (Human and Social)**

We believe that PSHE carries a large amount of significance to the learners, as a lot of emphasis in our provision is placed on the personal and social developments – life-skills – that we are trying to instil in the learners. This means that PSHE is brought into much of the curriculum that we are offering young people, however we also dedicate some time to it as a stand-alone subject. Within it, we will be studying a programme of learning around the SEAL programme, as well as a Key Stage 3 package around money and personal finance. It will also include independent living, healthy eating and cookery, all of which can be accredited through the Step Up qualification.

### **Sports (physical)**

We aim to offer young people a very flexible and informal sports programme, having a gym in the centre, and being based close to city open public park areas, which we are able to use freely. We have a member of staff who is qualified at Higher Sports Leader Award level, and one with a degree in Sports Science. All of these can be used according to how the young people want to spend their sports period. The sports period is then linked to the cooking and healthy eating programme.

### **Environmental Science (scientific)**

Today it is all too easy for youngsters, with all the high-tech media distractions of the **virtual** world confronting them, to completely lose touch with the **real** world – the fascinating nature and wildlife, which surrounds us, and which we are all an integral part of. Working closely with Outdoor Education contacts, we aim to raise awareness of our natural surroundings and engage young people in our fascinating environment through activities to challenge attitudes and perspectives and which are linked to the KS3 and 4 Science National Curriculum. These activities involve observational, handling, recording, reasoning, communications and interpersonal

skills and through introducing the youngsters to a wide range of outdoors habitats, build self-esteem and confidence.

### **Accredited Learning and the Measure of Success**

We understand the importance for all students to leave the provision having achieved a variety of qualifications alongside enjoying a positive experience of education. As such we ensure that all students are registered to sit some form of accredited learning that carries the validity of the Section 96 qualifications list. All young people will take part in English and Maths and ICT in Functional Skills, being initially assessed and placed at a Level appropriate to them, and then taught and challenged to learn and push themselves to develop their learning and achieve at levels up to Level 2. We do not imagine that many, if any at all of the young people referred to us will be coming in already capable of level 1 or 2 work. We do hope, however, that young people who are with us for a sustained period will be able to demonstrate learning and knowledge gain in Maths and English and leave us having achieved these subjects.

We also understand that we will be measured on the success of the students. Our measurement of success can be on achieving a behavioural turn-around, on improvements in attendance and punctuality, on the development of soft skills (measured through learning plans and behavioural targets within learner agreements and through a process of self-evaluation by the students). However, the main measure for our success will be on the value of accreditations gained by students, and on their progress into further educational provision. We will ensure, therefore, that all students are learning, progressing and able to achieve, are working at realistic levels and able to achieve realistic goals. Learners will be entered for exams in Maths, English and ICT, as well as for accreditation in Step-up Award, and other course work based programmes of learning from the Section 96 of qualifications.

### **Post 16**

The Post 16 offer will include vocational and motivational elements to engaging in learning and developing skills to progress into employment through the Training

Skills Development Team. The programme will operate within a common framework of engagement, assessment, delivery and progression. Connexions will provide enhanced support at the referral stage and throughout the individual's time on the project. The programme will demonstrate that they have progression opportunities in place. The activity to engage, retain and progress the young person will be specific to each individual recruited. Experience has shown that the "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate for this client group. The programmes adopt a personal, flexible and individualised approach to learning. Training will be qualification based (QCF) wherever possible and where possible will be accredited provision.

### **Organisation of Learning**

#### **Provision length**

Our full-time provision is based upon 25 hours a week for Year 10-11 pupils. Our part-time provision is based upon a minimum of 2 hours for any pupils in Years 9 – 11 who require specific study or support in a particular area of their education, but will remain in their home school for their primary source of education.

#### **Term dates**

As our provision will be based in the City of Nottingham education authority, we will be following the school term dates as set by the authority. We are doing this to ensure that we are working as closely as we can with the other schools in the local authority. Where this differs vastly, for example where we are seeking to work with an academy which is following a different series of term dates, we will seek to work as closely as we can with each referring agency.

#### **Full time vs. Part time Provision**

Schools will be able to refer students to us on a full time or part time basis. Any part time referrals will be made according to the specific area of the timetable that the

school wants the student to take part in, and whilst we will try to be flexible to accommodate as many students as possible, schools wishing to refer part time students to us will also have to exercise a degree of flexibility in order to do so. Our resources will be finite, so to be able to offer a student a maths programme when the maths tutor is not timetabled in school will not be an efficient way to run the programme. Structured short placements will also be possible, according to the needs of the young person, and what it is that the referring agency wants for each individual.

### **Personal Support**

All students on roll with us will be allocated to a member of staff who will act as their tutor. This may be a member of either the teaching or support staff. This person will ensure that the young person is attending provision, provide 1-2-1 support for the student, have regular tutorials with them, work with them to develop their individual learning plan, and act as the first point of call in any contact or dialogue between us, the young person's family and the referring agency. All staff with an allocation of learners will meet on a regular basis with the Programme Leader, who will ensure that all paperwork is correctly filled out, and all learners are being supported. This will also be the forum for any concerns about the learners' targets, behaviour or wellbeing can be aired. The personal tutor will also act as a representative for the agency should a CAF be implemented.

### **The School Day**

The day begins between 9am and 9.30am where learners are encouraged to come in for a hot drink and settle down before launching into the day's learning. This, and other times of the day such as break times, are apparently informal but are recognised by the staff team as valuable teaching opportunities where high quality interactions and interventions can take place.

School hours are spread over 5 days for full time learners, between the hours of 9.30am and 3pm. We have developed a pattern of frequent short comfort breaks to acknowledge that any learner struggles to apply concentration for extended periods. Tuition hours are split with functional skills taking a central role and

majority time of 12 hours per week, balanced with employability, nutrition and health, and the wider experiential courses taken by learners.

Part time learners will either attend part weeks, patterned in such a way to ensure they are able to receive full accreditation in the subjects or areas preferred by the referring agency.

Our school day is structured to run Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 3:50pm, with half an hour for breakfast club (optional) and half hour lunch in the middle of the day. Part time students will have the opportunity to take part in selected elements of the full time timetable.

Students will be expected to arrive at the provision, ready to start work at 9.30am, or before 9:20 if they wish to take advantage of breakfast club.

The first half an hour 9:00-9:30 is an optional extra as we recognise that many learners who are referred to alternative provision may have to travel further, and are likely to have more chaotic home lives, for example, many are involved in the care of siblings or parent, and this initial half hour allows students the time to arrive and settle into the day before beginning their learning.

Given our experiences running educational provision to date, we believe in implementing a long morning incorporating learning from the statutory elements of our curriculum (Maths, English, ICT, and Level 1 Step-up) and in the afternoon provide a more relaxed programme focusing on health and wellbeing, along with the opportunity to undertake learning in digital media. This is due to our experience of young people being more willing to learn in the morning session, and prone to lapse into more disruptive frames of mind following lunchtime.

The Enrichment day is designed to give learners a day of further experiential learning, along with the chance to work on a community-based project, to link them into the local community. The expectation is that learners will work towards the Duke of Edinburgh award on this day. There will be an element of choice associated with this, from the digital media, outdoor education and life-skills programmes, as well as graphic arts, healthy lifestyles and cooking, healthy eating and sports. The

aim of the day is to widen the educational experience. It is envisaged that in Year 10 this is the sole use of the day, however in year 11, it may be used for further learning, catch up sessions and one to ones with youth / support workers and subject leads. Enrichment activities will provide added value, but will not be taught as part of the basic curriculum offer.