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St Dominic's School Curriculum Policy

In this policy:

- Our innovative curriculum, including therapies
- Teaching, learning and assessment
- English, literacy and handwriting, including how we support pupils and students with English as an additional language
- Mathematics and numeracy
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and pupils and students' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)
- Impartial careers information, advice and guidance
- Assessment, marking & feedback

Date Written: September 2020

Next Review Date: September 2022

This document outlines simply, efficiently and clearly the key things we do at St. Dominic's to ensure that our pupils and students access an outstanding quality of education and make accelerated progress. All pupils and students at St Dominic's School have special educational needs including (as examples) speech & language difficulties, social communication difficulties, specific learning difficulties, motor planning, co-ordination and perceptual problems, emotional vulnerability and some health problems. All of our pupils and students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

OUR CURRICULUM INTENT

Context

Pupils and students learn in many different ways. Many of our pupils and students have particularly complex needs. This often manifests itself in difficulties accessing learning and becomes a barrier to them making progress. Pupils and students often arrive with negative experiences of learning, which can include a history of poor attendance, placement gaps, exclusions, and they have therefore missed significant periods of education. As a result of this, they frequently experience very low self-esteem and consider themselves failures initially. Our curriculum is therefore flexible to respond to individual needs and ambitions.

Intent Statement

In a society where it is increasingly challenging for people with 'hidden disabilities' to be fully included, we are presented with a moral responsibility to ensure pupils and students are able to: live with meaningful independence; secure paid employment in a career that is of interest and relevance to them; and enjoy social inclusion throughout the whole of their lives.

Curriculum Values

The foundation of our curriculum is our six pupil-centred core school values, underpinning everything we do:

- I am me
- I matter
- I am unique
- I belong
- I am safe
- I am prepared

Ethos and Aims

- **Needs Led Curriculum:** Giving pupils and students an individualised curriculum that helps them develop the skills and knowledge they need to learn and succeed in life
- **Teaching and Learning:** Helping pupils and students access the national curriculum in a way that works for them as individuals and is the most useful and ambitious it can be
- **Reading:** Making sure pupils and students have access to information and books that challenge them and engage them
- **Outcomes:** Providing pupils and students with the best learning opportunities so they develop a strong sense of their own identity and can celebrate what makes them who they are and understand what they are capable of achieving
- **Transition:** Working with pupils and students to navigate their pathway through our school as they progress towards their chosen destination

Curriculum Design

- The curriculum design is strongly differentiated to meet pupils and students' needs and to incorporate the various therapies and other provisions on offer. **This is the needs led curriculum and underpins everything we do**

- **St Dominic's School teaches all national curriculum subjects** to pupils which includes art, computing, design technology, food technology, English, expressive arts, humanities, mathematics, personal, social, health education (PSHE) (which incorporates careers, citizenship and relationships and sex education), physical education (PE) and science and can vary depending on the key stage the pupil is in.
- **The Sixth Form curriculum** supports students to shape their academic and functional learning towards their preferred destinations. We ensure that all students leave the Sixth Form with further relevant qualifications as well as the appropriate independence skills to take their next steps.
- **Our curriculum model enables pupils and students' learning to be developed sequentially over time, where learning builds from one year/key stage to another.** This ensures that pupils and students are well prepared for life after St Dominic's School.
- **Teachers have real flexibility to adapt their planning to meet the needs of the very complex and challenging pupils and students** whom they know and understand well.
- **Our focus is on facilitating quality opportunities for pupils and students to learn and make progress.** Teachers produce curriculum planning which is carefully planned to build from one term to the next. Clear differentiation in meeting the needs of all individual pupils and students in the class is shown. These plans are available on the school's shared drive and in teachers' planning files. Pupils' and students' learning is evaluated regularly and activities amended accordingly, so as to plan for real progression.
- **Co-curricular activities** provide a range of rich experiences that support and nurture the personal development of pupils and students. All parts of the school day are utilised to the full to deliver the curriculum, including SMSC through the needs led curriculum. Activities are varied and carefully-planned to meet the needs of individuals and small groups. The activities offered are guided by the Student Council, and a number of activities are led by students themselves, under the supervision of staff.
- **Our leisure curriculum** allows pupils and students to learn more about the things they enjoy doing. These are linked to rewards for being 'on task' in all lessons teaching pupils and students the value of work/life balance. Through leisure activities, pupils and students are also learning how to self-manage during periods of less structured time and, crucially, learning more about themselves and what they find enjoyable and fulfilling. These are essential skills for mindfulness and in preparation for self-management in adulthood.

Key stage 2

Throughout key stage 2, St Dominic's School offers a broad curriculum that builds on pupils' knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects delivered by a core group of primary and SEN trained specialists who offer a class-based approach. The daily needs led curriculum input in key stage 2 is focused on learning to learn, myself and others and language and communication so that pupils are able to enter the school and overcome significant barriers to learning at an early age Pupils undertake the following subjects at key stage 2:

- Art
- Computing
- Cooking
- Design Technology
- English
- Food Technology
- Forest Schools
- Humanities (including religious education)
- Mathematics
- Music
- Needs led curriculum (including SMSC, citizenship and FBV)
- Science
- PE (including swimming and horse riding)
- PSHE (including SMSC and careers)

Key stage 3

The key stage 3 curriculum offer comprises a range of academic and vocational subjects for Years 7, 8 and 9. Years 7 and 8 are taught by a key teacher in the mornings and in the afternoons access a range of practical lessons taught by subject specialists. By Year 9, pupils follow a secondary style model, transitioning to subject specialist teachers for all subjects. Key stage 3 needs led curriculum is delivered across the school through four discrete lessons designed to give pupils a broad range of support; this is both planned and flexible so it can be suitably responsive to changing needs in the school and for individuals.

These subjects comprise of:

- Art
- Careers
- Computing
- Design Technology
- English
- Expressive Arts
- Food Technology
- Forest School
- Humanities (including Religious Education)
- Mathematics
- Needs led curriculum (including SMSC, citizenship and FBV)

- PE
- PSHE (including SMSC and careers)
- Science

Key stage 4

At St Dominic's School, the key stage 4 curriculum offer comprises of a range of academic and vocational qualifications for Years 10 and 11. Key stage 4 NLC is delivered across the school in two discrete lessons to allow greater time to focus on a range of accredited courses; interventions are planned to address anxiety, revision strategies, transition, etc. appropriate to age and stage.

The core curriculum includes:

- Computer Science GCSE or Entry Level
- English GCSE or Functional Skills
- Maths GCSE or Functional Skills
- Needs led curriculum (including SMSC, citizenship and FBV)
- Religious Education GCSE (short course) or ASDAN
- PE
- PSHE (including SMSC and careers)
- Science GCSE or ASDAN

Pupils can then choose two to three options subjects:

- Art and Design GCSE
- Design Technology GCSE
- Construction BTEC
- Food Technology BTEC
- Health and Fitness BTEC
- History GCSE
- Photography GCSE
- Performance Arts BTEC

Key stage 5

At key stage 5, St Dominic's School offers a range of academic and vocational qualifications for Years 12, 13 and 14 pupils and students. Key stage 5 needs led curriculum is focused on independence outcomes in readiness for transition to a range of destinations. Students can also select from a wide range of qualifications:

- English GCSE/Laser
- Maths GCSE/Laster
- Information Technology BTEC
- Home Cooking Skills BTEC or Laser
- AS Level Art and Design
- Creative Media Skills BTEC
- Construction BTEC
- Sport BTEC
- Performing Art BTEC

THERAPY

The range of therapies we offer are:

- Speech & Language Therapy (SaLT)
 - This may include interventions such as Lego Therapy, Social Thinking Therapy, Attention Autism
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
 - This may include intervention such as Sensory Integration Therapy, Zones of Regulation, Independence Training
- Counselling
- Emotional Literacy Support (ELSA)
 - There may also be additional wellbeing interventions offered such as one to one music sessions, sessions with the therapy dog and creative art sessions
- Therapeutic Play and Play Therapy
- Drawing and Talking

Who can access therapy?

All pupils and students at St Dominic's School receive a range therapeutic interventions tailored to meet their individual needs and this includes interventions that are delivered as part of the Needs Led Curriculum.

Therapy works to:

- Help to remove barriers to learning and facilitate better engagement with the curriculum.
- Support pupils and students with their social interaction and communication skills.
- Develop their functional independence and help them work towards living and supporting themselves independently in the future.
- Provide pupils and students with the skills to manage their sensory needs so that they are able to access a range of opportunities.
- Enhance emotional well-being and encourage creative problem solving.
- Improve self-esteem, confidence and self-worth.
- Help pupils and students achieve their potential and reach their desired destination.

Whilst therapists keep confidential records part of their role is to ensure that knowledge about need is shared in an appropriate way so that all staff are able to support pupils and students to overcome their barriers to learning. Therapists may also need to disclose information to the safeguarding team in some circumstances.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM

We implement the curriculum at St Dominic's School in a number of ways:

- **We teach using precise learning objectives and differentiated success criteria** for each lesson
- **We teach using an Autism friendly, uniform structure and approach** to presenting lesson content
- **We facilitate learning using a wide range of activities** and strategies borne out of in-depth knowledge of our pupils and students
- **We train staff to deliver teaching to all based on four principles: Challenge, flow, feedback and independent learning**
- **We check for prior understanding and use plenaries to check that our pupils and students have fully understood their learning**
- **We plan and teach in reference to our assessment milestones, curriculum plans and individual pupils and students' learning**
- **We teach according to our pupils and students' preferred learning styles** (visual, auditory and kinesthetic) and forms of intelligence (mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal, musical)
- **We ensure that the best possible environment for learning** by developing a positive atmosphere in which pupils and students feel safe and that they belong, enjoy learning and being challenged, trust that they can take risks with their learning and know that they can and will succeed
- **We ensure that teaching builds on previous learning through a learning sequence** and that constant praise, engaging learning tasks and positive use of our behaviour for learning system keeps pupils and students motivated
- **We ensure that learning tasks are varied and tailored to individuals**, and include investigation and problem-solving tasks, use of ICT, debates, role-plays, design and making activities, critical thinking tasks and time for reflection. Pupils and students work in a variety of ways – in groups, pairs, with the whole class or independently, depending on the task and the individual
- **We encourage pupils and students to take responsibility for their own learning**, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way in which they learn, and to reflect on how they learn best – what helps them learn, and what makes it difficult
- **Teachers deploy support staff effectively**, tailoring what they do to the learning activity and pupils and students' needs. They work with individuals, small groups and support whole-class learning. Whilst they may be used to help a pupil/student to calm down or take time out, their focus is primarily one of supporting learning
- **We ensure our classrooms are attractive learning environments**. We change displays regularly so that the classroom reflects the subject themes and current topics being studied by the pupils and students. All pupils and students have the opportunity to display their work. We believe that a stimulating yet calm environment sets the climate for learning, and that an organised classroom promotes focus and independent use of resources, which results in high-quality learning
- **Extra-curricular activities** are carefully-planned and draw on feedback from pupils and students to ensure they both meet the needs of pupils and students, and complement the formal learning that takes place every day.

- **Leaders and governors monitor the quality of education** through learning walks, lesson observations, workbook scrutiny, workbook moderations, pupil/student progress meetings, pupil/student, teacher and parent interviews and feedback to staff with constructive developmental targets
- **We believe that families have a fundamental role to play in helping pupils and students learn** which is why we have, pupil and student progress afternoons where families can meet staff to discuss their child's report, achievement and progress; these are written in accessible language with clear explanations about effort and expected levels of progress related to progress made in years and months
- **We support pupils and students with English as an additional language (EAL)** through planning differentiated tasks during lessons, offering focused vocabulary support and also provide targeted literacy support on a 1:1 basis if this is appropriate. In addition, we ensure that our classrooms are vocabulary rich and that classroom displays reflect and support the current learning topics in order to reinforce new vocabulary.

ENGLISH: LITERACY, READING AND WRITING

Raising pupils and students' literacy levels is of fundamental importance to us. Our pupils and students have missed out on crucial parts of their education as a result of exclusion, isolation and lack of support. Working with families, we facilitate their accelerated progress in their phonics, reading and writing despite the multiple challenges they face.

With this in mind, we provide:

- **Daily English lessons**, which focus on **literacy outcomes** through developing core skills and working towards being independent and successful readers and writers at every age and stage.
- **Pupils and students who are in need of additional one-to-one or group intervention** access this with either a member of the support staff team or a qualified teacher. This includes intensive phonics, reading and writing support.
- **Pupils and students have access to a variety of engaging fiction and non-fiction texts** in their classrooms. The teaching of writing encompasses a wide range of genres, both fiction and non-fiction, which prepare pupils and students for later life (for example writing reports, recounts and letters).
- **Achievement in reading and writing is celebrated**
- **Reading is given a high profile** across all subjects, and cross-curricular opportunities to develop reading skills are planned throughout the week. Strong links are made between reading and other subjects.
- **Pupils and students who have a diagnosis of dyslexia** are supported through targeted literacy support using resources specifically designed for them. Their progress is closely monitored and interventions put in place.
- **We believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and the presentation of written work helps to raise standards.** Pupils and students should take pride and have a sense of ownership in their work.
- **At St Dominic's School, pupils in Years 10 and 11 will work towards GCSE English** or the highest level of functional skills qualification in English they are capable of.
- **Students in key stage 5 continue to work towards English qualifications** if they have

not been attained by the end of key stage 4.

- **A whole school policy on marking spelling and grammar.**

MATHEMATICS & NUMERACY

Pupils and students arrive with us displaying varying degrees of competency in mathematics, many with large gaps in their knowledge of basic concepts due to disrupted periods of schooling. Often, pupils and students have missed out on the early learning experiences necessary to cement key mathematical skills and concepts.

With this in mind, we provide:

- **Daily mathematics lessons**, which focus on **mastery** of concepts and skills but take into account each pupil and student's unique starting points.
- **High quality, practical resources** which help mathematics to 'come alive' for our pupils and students. Teachers strive to present each new skill within a practical context that has relevance for our pupils and students. For example, measuring may be taught through the medium of cooking and food technology or probability may be taught in the context of a favourite football team's predicted performance.
- **Displays in classrooms** which support and scaffold pupils and students' knowledge of mathematics concepts. Mathematics prompts on learning walls in classes reflect key functions and cross curricular practical application. Other displays in classes (such as multiplication tables) help to immerse pupils and students in a number rich environment.
- **Regular problem-solving activities** are planned in order to provide pupils and students with the opportunity to apply their mathematics skills in different contexts, and begin to develop abilities for higher order thinking.
- **A variety of interactive resources** to help pupils and students to learn and cement complex mathematical concepts. ICT is used in different ways to demonstrate key concepts and allow a range of opportunities for pupils and students to explore their own mathematical understanding. Online teaching tools such as BKSB are used, where appropriate, to offer pupils and students the opportunity to master mathematical skills.
- **St Dominic's School**, pupils and students in Years 10 and 11 work towards GCSE mathematics or the highest level of functional skills qualification in mathematics they are capable of
- **Students in key stage 5 continue to work towards mathematics qualifications** if they have not been attained by the end of key stage 4

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE); SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSC) AND RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Developing our pupils and students' social communication and functional independence skills and teaching them about healthy living, preparing them for life in modern Britain and enabling them to make positive life choices is of considerable importance.

This is why we have developed a Needs Led Curriculum (NLC) that sits alongside our PSHE curriculum to ensure that pupils and students have maximum opportunity to practice the skills required to “achieve ambitious goals and live life to the full”.

In addition to a weekly PSHE lesson, pupils in KS2 receive a daily NLC session. Those in KS3 receive four sessions a week, while KS4 receive two. This reflects the growing emphasis on the GCSE curriculum in KS4. KS5 study an AQA PSE qualification that is the basis of the core offer within Sixth Form. Students have five lessons a week alongside further Needs Led Curriculum lessons. This qualification also includes discrete Transitions teaching that is delivered jointly with the Careers Guidance Practitioner.

We cover a range of topics across both PSHE and the NLC including but not limited to:

- Social Interaction
- Emotional Resilience
- Careers and destinations
- Relationships and Sex Education
- e-safety and the Prevent agenda
- Equality and Diversity (including Fundamental British Values)
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Functional Independence.

We track progress in these skill areas in the same way as academic attainment to ensure that pupils and students are achieving their full potential in all areas.

We support pupils and students to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in the following way:

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (S)

- ability to be **reflective** about themselves and their place in the world
- use of **imagination** and **creativity** in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

MORAL DEVELOPMENT (M)

- understanding of **right and wrong**
- respect for the **rule of law** in modern Britain
- understanding of the **consequences** of their behaviour and actions

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (S)

- use of a range of **social skills** in different contexts
- willingness to participate, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (C)

- understanding and appreciation of the **range of different cultures** within the school, local communities, the United Kingdom and overseas
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system
- positive participation to **artistic, sporting and cultural** opportunities
- developing understanding of and showing respect for **different faiths, beliefs and cultural diversity**.

Relationships and Sex Education

We teach Relationships and Sex Education at varying levels throughout the Key Stages. The content of these lessons reflects the development level of the pupils and students, with an emphasis on relationships, permission seeking and giving (consent) and puberty in KS2. We also ensure that all pupils and students understand about the importance of protected characteristics and to value equality and diversity, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights. St Dominic's School applies Stonewall training and principles to our practices. Nominated pupils and students are equality champions in the school and represent equality, diversity, respect and tolerance.

IMPARTIAL CAREERS INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE

The Careers programme is part of the St Dominic's School planned curriculum and is designed to provide students with a range of qualifications and skills to lead successful and fulfilled lives when they leave St Dominic's. The programme includes these elements:

- learning derived from current career and labour market information
- addressing the specific strengths and needs of each student in the form of personal guidance
- placing careers education within the curriculum as a whole
- mapping careers activities to evidence meeting the statutory requirements of the Gatsby career benchmarks:
 - encounters with employers and employees
 - experiences of workplaces
 - encounters with further education
 - personal guidance.

All staff contribute to the Careers and Employability programme through their roles as tutors, therapists, subject teachers and support staff. There is also a planned programme of Careers Education that is taught within the PSHCE curriculum in Key Stage 2, 3, 4 and 5. Careers and enterprise activities also take place within the Needs Led Strand.

With support from the Careers Guidance Practitioner all Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 pupils and students use KUDOS, a careers diagnostic tool to help them identify their skills, interests and personality types. The results are matched to possible careers of interest, allowing the young person a base from which to start and continue their personal career research and planning. Both KUDOS and the eCLIPS careers information database can be accessed at home so pupils and students can share their career planning with families.

A whole school careers week is held every year that includes visits to local businesses, guest speakers from a variety of occupational fields and visits to further and higher education establishments giving pupils and students opportunities to learn about the specific skills and qualities needed for different types of work.

Pupils and students in Key Stage 4 and 5 have the opportunity to attend both the annual National School and College Leavers Show and the National Apprenticeship Show enabling them to have to have direct contact with employers, education and training providers.

All Year 11s take part in a week of work experience accessing placements within the local business community. Students in Key Stage 5 have the opportunity to access bespoke work experience packages. Mock job interviews for Key Stage 5 are held annually in conjunction with one of our local businesses.

Our Careers Leader and Careers Guidance Practitioner attend regular local and national training events and work closely with local authority officers, education and training providers, and businesses, to ensure that the school is compliant with the Gatsby benchmarks.

ASSESSMENT, MARKING & FEEDBACK

We use our own bespoke assessment framework, which tracks the progress of pupils and students in national curriculum subjects and needs led subjects.

Pupils and students are graded against learning and thinking skills. These levels run in conjunction with GCSE grading. Each grade is divided into 4 sub-levels: emerging, developing, mastering and consolidating. Pupils and students in the emerging category are at the bottom of the respective grade, whereas consolidating are at the top of the grade. Pupils and students work across these levels throughout Key Stages 2-5. Pupils and students' progress is tracked in their book through their story of progress.

BASELINE

- Pupils and students often arrive at St Dominic's School with limited or no assessment data, which is often unreliable.
- We assess pupils' and pupils and students' knowledge during their first weeks with us in order to baseline their level of skill in English and mathematics.
- We immediately begin gathering evidence of work across the curriculum in order to track the student's progress and to develop them as a person.
- During their first term at St Dominic's School, pupils and students baselined using a range of standardized assessments that inform academic assessments and assessment of soft skills

MARKING PUPILS AND STUDENTS' WORK: KEY POINTS

Marking and feedback is the *dialogue* that takes place between teacher and learner, in order to ensure that learning objectives are met and that pupils and students are secure in their knowledge. This may take a number of forms, including a written dialogue for older pupils and students, or a verbal dialogue for younger pupils and students.

- The process of marking and offering feedback is positive and marked in a positive colour (green).

Pupils and students work is marked according to St Dominic's School marking policy.

We mark pupils and students' work and offer feedback in order to:

- show that we value the pupils and students' work, and encourage them to value it too
- boost pupils and students' self-esteem through use of praise and encouragement (WWW)
- help pupils and students learn. If pupils and students' work is well matched to their abilities, then errors that need to be corrected will not be so numerous as to affect their self-esteem (EBI). This means that in some cases, teachers will focus on marking against learning objectives, electively omitting corrections in other areas if appropriate to a

positive overall approach.

- promote self-and-peer assessment
- provide pupils and students with specific information on the extent to which they have met the lesson objective and success criteria/or the individual targets set for them
- provide a basis both for summative and formative assessment
- provide the ongoing assessment that should inform future lesson-planning
- provide pupils and students with evaluative and task based opportunities (EBI) to respond to the feedback they have been given (demarcated in purple pen).

We ensure that:

- comments are appropriate to the age and ability of the student
- comments focus on the most significant strength and weakness for improvement, at any one time (WWW, EBI)
- ticks are normal where work is correct, and annotations where errors have been made. Other symbols may be used once their meaning has been explained
 - please refer to our marking and feedback policy
- wherever possible, teachers should establish direct links between oral or written praise and the class or school rewards systems
- when self or peer assessment has been undertaken (i.e. pupils and students may mark their own or another student's work) the teacher must always review this marking
- teaching assistants are permitted to participate in marking and giving feedback provided they have been prepared/briefed on the teacher's expectations of the lesson and outcomes and that their input is reviewed by the teacher
- At St Dominic's School, marking is bespoke to the subject being taught and specialists' professionalism takes priority - a hospitality and catering teacher is likely to take a different approach to an English teacher. However, there is consistency in so much that feedback to pupils and students must be high-quality, regular and accurately recorded in books, folders, or electronically. Staff are as responsible for pupils and students' rapid progress in all their chosen and core subjects and in emotional wellbeing and skills for life.

POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

This policy at St Dominic's School will be reviewed and updated by the leadership team and governing body as per our annual policy review cycle.