



Abigail's Place

Curriculum Policy

'Educating the head without educating the heart is no education at all.'

Aristotle

Approved by: **Nina Stone Yaf yafai** Date: 2020

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Next review due by: **January 2027**

Context and Rationale

*The school curriculum comprises **all learning and other experiences** that each school plans for its students. (National Curriculum 2.2) Therefore when curriculum is discussed in this document it refers to all of the experiences that the school offers.*

Abigail's Place is a school that promotes **P**layful **L**earning in an **A**ttachment based, **C**hild focused **E**nvironment. The approach at Abigail's Place encompasses the latest research in neuroscience coupled with educational theories from, amongst others, Reggio Emilia, Montessori and Steiner.

We use research in neuroscience to specialise in supporting learners who are presenting with or have been identified as having experienced significant trauma, because of this many learners coming into Abigail's Place will have had a history of disengagement with education of varying degrees. For some this may have led to exclusions, poor attendance and disruption, all of this resulting sadly in a fractured education. This means that learners come to Abigail's Place with varying levels of knowledge, skills and understanding and many will be performing below the national average for their age.

Our curriculum model reflects this challenge and is developmental not chronological: we base the student's journey through the school on their developmental level not their chronological age or year group. Students are assessed on entry in range of ways, and a bespoke, therapeutic package is tailored to their current academic and SEMH development.

Our priority will always be to ensure that a learner feels psychologically and physically safe first. It is the foundation on which everything else depends: the ability to learn without fear and without fear of being shamed in order to relate to others and to engage in learning and in peace. Work in this area will be prioritised as a vital first building block in the learner's learning journey. In order to do this staff will use PACE and the Trauma Informed model of Protect, Regulate, Relate and Reflect with the aim of moving student from blocked trust to trust; from disengaged to curious; from fearful to hopeful.

***'...Words have the power to heal or harm; be trauma inducing or trauma reducing; be enriching or constricting...Every interaction is an intervention.'* (Triesman 2018)**

We recognise that therapy doesn't only happen in the therapy room, which is why we place an emphasis on **Playful, Accepting, Curious, Empathic** relationships. In the words of Bruce Perry ***'Relationships matter...People not programs change people.'*** As a therapeutic provision we aim to create a therapeutic milieu both in our day to day work with students and in our weekly meetings in which we discuss individual students and their progress. All student will have their own therapeutic packages which may include:

- Individual Theraplay
- Group Theraplay
- Family Theraplay
- Sensory Integration assessment and plan
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Emotional Freedom Technique
- Indian Head Massage
- Reflexology
- Sand Play

- Rebound Therapy
- Drumming
- Laughter Yoga/Yoga

Values and Purposes Underpinning the Curriculum

Abigail's Place we believe that:

- Education is about educating the mind, body and spirit and that this is the key to leading fulfilling lives.
- That learners learn best in playful, nurturing relationships.
- Play and Playfulness is inherent to child development and future happiness.
- Behaviour is a form of communication.
- The role of the adult in engaging the Care, Seeking and Play systems is vital taking the learner through the learning journey.

Curriculum Aims

Abigail's Place organises the programmes of study from the National Curriculum into themes which are rich in opportunities for 'play' and outdoor learning our curriculum aims to:

- Provide learning opportunities that promote enquiring minds that can experience joy, hope and connection-both with others and with the world around them.
- To gain the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.
- Provide happy memories and social joy.
- Encourage learners to respect and find joy in being in the natural world.
- Develop daily and seasonal rituals to develop the whole child, mind body and soul.
- Develop trust and build secure attachments to adults through playful relationships and learning opportunities
- Be flexible and fluid so that students unique interests and developmental needs can be planned for accordingly.
- Use a curiosity-based approach to promote awe and wonder and engage the seeking and play systems as described by Jaak Panksepp.
- Include opportunities for play for both therapeutic benefit and learning development.
- Support student to become citizens who will shape a hopeful, compassionate, thriving future for themselves and others.
- To use the latest neurobiological research to underpin practice.
- To develop the student's language around emotion, feelings and sensations thus improving self-regulation.
- The curriculum encourages them to recognise the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle and keeping themselves and others safe
- Recognise that student may show their understanding of ideas and concepts in multiple forms, such as print, art, drama, music, puppetry and not just through conventional forms such as writing.
- Recognise that enriched environments are novel environments which engage the child cognitively, physically, socially and sensorially.
- Offers opportunities for external accreditation.

Formal Curriculum

Our learners are provided with a personalised curriculum in a nurturing and aspirational environment. This is delivered through a thematic approach ensuring that the curriculum gives all pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education.

Linguistic (including English,) this area is concerned with developing students' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. English is taught across all Key Stages

Mathematical This area helps students to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves clearly. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematics should be developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion. Mathematics is taught across all key stages.

Scientific This area is concerned with increasing students' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and with developing the skills associated with science as a process of enquiry: for example, observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings. Science is taught in Key Stages 1 and 2. Environmental Studies is taught as a weekly subject throughout all Key Stages. The students work towards the John Muir award, which recognises all aspects of engaging in the outdoor environment. With ASDAN courses for Key Stage 3 and 4 where appropriate.

Technological skills can include information and communication technology (ICT); developing, planning and communicating ideas; working with tools, equipment, materials and components to produce good quality products; and evaluating processes and products. Food Technology is taught weekly in all Key Stages.

Human and Social This area is concerned with people and with their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. In Key Stage 1 and 2 this area is taught through topics and PSHE. In Key Stage 3 and 4 through PSHE and AQA courses where appropriate.

Physical This area aims to develop the students; physical control and co-ordination as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses, and to help them to evaluate and improve their performance. Students should also acquire knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health. All students have regular opportunities throughout the week for physical exercise through Outdoor Education opportunities.

Aesthetic and Creative this area is concerned with the processes of making, composing and inventing. There are aesthetic and creating aspects of all subjects, but some make a particularly strong contribution, including ICT and the study of literature, because they call for personal, imaginative, and often practical, responses. Students are encouraged to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. Music and Movement are also part of the therapeutic provision.

Entry Level certification Unit Awards and AQA forms the basis of external accreditation available-this is particularly good for personalised learning as it is portfolio based assessment outcomes-allowing us to take into account the difficulties our students face in this area. Young people are able to enjoy early success and these courses can be tailored to suit the strengths and interests of the student.

However, at Abigail's Place we recognise a student's entitlement to access accreditation in line with their ability and will where appropriate will be committed to pursuing the appropriate GCSE's



Informal Curriculum

The informal curriculum plays an important role in the overall provision delivered. We recognise that learning is ever present and everyday life skills have fantastic 'incidental' learning opportunities. Incidental learning observations will be recorded and fed back into weekly meetings to inform future planning in the 'formal curriculum'. Staff are also with students throughout the day, from breakfast, break and lunchtime to interact with student on a variety of levels. This allows opportunity for social and emotional learning to be addressed and for the adult to provide co-regulation and reflection to situations that arise so that student learn to effectively problem solve and respond in different ways.

Timetable

The timetable is constantly under review and is subject to changes in staff and in staff responsibility. The aims of our timetabling procedure are to ensure that every student has access to the different areas of the timetable.

When allocating lesson times, we acknowledge current best practice for students within our age range. The time allocation for ICT is incorporated into the planning for other areas of the curriculum.

PSHE, RSE and Careers Guidance

The school uses PSHE Association framework; PSHE education incorporates health education, relationships education/RSE and economic wellbeing and careers. The planning Framework is organized into six sections: and is fully aligned with the Statutory Guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health education from the Department of Education (DfE). The six areas are: • Self-Awareness • Self-care, Support and Safety • Managing Feelings • Changing and Growing • Healthy Lifestyles • The World I live in. An adapted framework for SEND student will be used as appropriate. (See PSHE and RSE Policy)

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) and Therapy

In our school we plan and provide effectively to develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Whilst SMSC is integral to all aspects of our curriculum, PSHE make a strong contribution. Students are led towards distinguishing right from wrong, to respect the law and towards acting consistently with their beliefs and with a view to the consequences of their own and others' actions. Abigail's Place builds resilience to radicalisation of its students by promoting fundamental British values. We provide a safe space in which our students can discuss and understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments or views. Any discriminatory or extremist opinions or behaviours are challenged as a matter of routine. For more details on how our school promotes SMSC and prevent extremism, please see our: '*SMSC*' and '*Safeguarding*' Policies.

Therapy plays a key role in the promotion of British Values and the development of SMSC.

Therapy is used to: • help students distinguish right from wrong • develop their self-awareness • improve confidence • help students accept responsibility for their behaviour • encourages respect for others

Curiosity

In order to fulfil our aim of being a school that promotes awe and wonder and curiosity we recognise that we need an order of flexibility to our curriculum, whilst still ensuring rigour to our broad and balanced curriculum.

- The curriculum is used as a thorough, academic guide, however it allows for flexibility and the ability to change and adapt.
- The teacher may adapt the planned sequence of learning to follow questions raised by the children
- Spontaneous learning through curiosity is encouraged and therefore it can mean that certain topic areas that are less relevant may receive less allocated time. However, children will receive a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Teachers will encourage mindfulness in the learning, allowing for questioning and immersion-not rushing through curriculum content in order to 'tick off' the learning. This may mean that not everything in the planned sequence gets taught. This will be documented in the curriculum coverage folder.

Roles and Responsibilities

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Education Lead, who is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum. The teacher monitors and reviews the planning for all staff, ensuring that all classes are taught the requirements of the courses and that all lessons have appropriate learning objectives and teaching strategies.
- The Executive Lead undertakes an annual formal review of this policy for monitoring the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than January 2025 or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Resources Relevant to this Policy

- What is Play?
- Regulatory Requirements Part 1 Quality of Education Provided (curriculum) (teaching) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations, 2014.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy (SEND) Policy, Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy, Relationships Policy, Assessment Policy, Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Policy, Safeguarding Policy, PSHE and RSE Policy
- Where relevant, Schemes of Work (Programmes of study).
- Assessment Policy



Playful **L**earning **A**ttachment based **C**hild focused **E**nvironment