

Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is designed to meet the principles of Study Programmes in a highly individualised way that enable students to make substantial progress against the outcomes stated in their Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

The principles of the study programmes are that they;

- Enable students to **build on existing skills and knowledge, and represent progression** (lateral or vertical) from their assessed starting point.
- Provide stretch and challenge and support students to **progress towards their intended outcomes**
- Include relevant aspects of **English and maths**
- **Include work experience** to support the development of employability skills and create potential employment options (except where this is demonstrably inappropriate)
- Enable students to **develop the skills, attitudes and confidence** that support progression

The Oakwood curriculum is delivered holistically and is highly individualised based upon the learners starting points and intended outcomes, however broadly they are comprised of the following component parts;



#mygoals bespoke curriculum

Each student's #mygoals curriculum is designed to enable them to meet the goals as outlined in their Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs).

The goals of each learner will inevitably differ based upon their own EHCPs, however the intended outcomes are reviewed by the class teacher and used to shape and sequence the curriculum on a termly basis in a way that enables similar themes to be covered by the class (usually 5 learners) with each learner working on individualised targets.

The #mygoals curriculum is linked to termly College themes that help to expand learners' horizons and learn about the wider world. This also provides a framework of shared activities, trips, visits, displays and events that bring together the College community in their learning.

Not all EHCP outcomes will be targeted concurrently, and teachers, with the support of the SENCO and therapy teams, will sequence the targets (and thus the objectives of the termly curriculum) so that they build logically the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need over time.

Initial assessment against these targets are completed at the beginning of the academic year. Some learners will be evaluated against the Autism framework which provides a balanced assessment against a range of skills, knowledge and behaviours. Others will have a starting point assessment against the outcomes stated in the EHCP with the support of therapy reports and assessments.

Literacy & Numeracy

All students are required to develop their literacy and numeracy skills as part of their study programme.

- Those students that have prior attainment of formal qualifications in maths and/or English will continue to study these subjects at a higher level up to functional skills Level 2. Sessions are taught by subject specialists, and where appropriately competent, qualified and supported class teachers.
- Those students that have not yet taken formal qualifications are supported to do so.
- Learners working below entry level 1 develop literacy and numeracy skills in a way that is bespoke to them and their learning needs and level of understanding, and this is usually embedded into the curriculum.

Students will complete a BKSB diagnostic assessment, or a basic skills assessment for those not able to complete this with a subject specialist or therapist.

The results of the assessment are used to inform teachers about what the learner can already do, knows and understands, and enables them to focus learning activities (the curriculum) on developing new knowledge and preparing them for examinations.

Teachers use the information from the BKSB, subject teacher feedback, and other initial assessment activity to further develop maths and English skills in a variety of ways and as an integrated part of all learner's curriculum.

Personal Growth Programme (PGP)

Personal Growth Programme (PGP) encompasses all topics from the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education Framework. PGP will teach young people a range of skills and attributes, such as resilience, self-esteem, problem-solving, and risk management, which are fundamental for adulthood.

The PGP curriculum is tailored around each student's needs and their ECHP outcomes, as well as their personal aspirations and including what they would like to learn. The curriculum consists of three key areas: (1) Health Education (physical and mental health); (2) Relationships and Sex Education; and (3) Living in the Wider World.

By the end of their learning programmes, students will be equipped with the tools they need to form safe, positive, and meaningful relationships, to lead a healthier lifestyle (both physically and mentally), and have a greater understanding of themselves and the world they live in. Students will feel prepared for their next steps into adult life, will be able to keep themselves safe and will identify who they can talk to if they need help.

Staff will follow the curriculum using the college's PGP Calendar, which focuses on a different PGP theme each month, also incorporating annual world events and safeguarding themes. Students will reflect on what they have learnt in tutorials and will apply the skills they have learnt in other areas of their curriculum. Each year, the students will re-cap and build on their prior learning.

Vocational Learning

Vocational learning at Oakwood offers students the opportunity to explore the world of work and in-turn develop work-readiness skills. Vocational training generally refers to instructional programs or courses that focus on the skills required for a particular job function or trade. At Oakwood we do this but more, as we also ensure students acquire and develop skills and knowledge in relation to independence and self-reliance, we use vocational subjects as the vehicle to nurture and develop these skills. This also includes development of soft skills such as communication, confidence, teamwork and problem-solving. The combination of focus on independence and work-based learning ensures that students are fully prepared to go into employment, supported employment, further education or simply feel empowered to lead a more independent life.

In year one, students attending vocational lessons will firstly establish skills in general occupational health and safety but will also have the option to explore vocational avenues. In year two, students will look to focus on specific goals relating to individual pathway plans and vocation interests, this is where students start to narrow their focus and start to look closer at one particular vocation. In year three students will look to consolidate skills, knowledge and training in a particular vocational area, ensuring that they have the tools needed to succeed with life post Oakwood. Vocational based lessons are supported by work experience opportunities in the same vocational field.

Work Experience

All learners are encouraged to participate in work experience. We value the impact that working, paid or unpaid, has in terms of self esteem, meeting other people, establishing networks, being independent and part of a community.

Learners begin by organising or being supported to organise work experience opportunities within our three campuses or in their local community. This allows learners to feel comfortable in their initial experience of work. These experiences could include: Administration tasks, Grounds and Gardening, Maintenance and hospitality for example.

They will develop skills such as how to address people, technical competency in completion of different tasks, and asking for help and guidance if they don't understand.

Learners will apply for and use their bus pass to travel into neighboring towns and cities to gain confidence on public transport. They will also experience walking or cycling to different places if they are within a comfortable distance. This will help learners to practice road safety and awareness.

Learners will undertake organised visits to potential employers in the relevant industry of interest. The College will also arrange companies to come in and speak with the students and take part in question and answer sessions.

Learners will then apply for and undertake a placement in an area of interest and potential employment. This could be within local companies, including those who are self-employed, National companies such as Waitrose, Train4all and Iceland and charity-based providers such as The National Trust and Heritage Centres.

Enrichment & Expressive Arts

All learners are offered the opportunity to access a range of enrichment and expressive arts curriculum activities. The intention is to enhance their experience, and compliment their main programmes of study and therapeutic support, during their time with Oakwood. The activities are both onsite and offsite. Where possible we aim to offer enrichment that takes into consideration our learners' areas of interest and skill but also to provide other avenues to explore within a safe college or community context.

The aim of enrichment and expressive arts is to further strengthen the range of transferable skills emerging and developing in other areas of the curriculum, but with a less formalised curriculum approach. It is also important to Oakwood staff that our learners have access to other creative forms of expression and purposeful endeavour that goes beyond the realms of formalised education setting.

Staff have forged strong links with local community ventures and companies to support the enrichment and expressive arts. To date, learners access: Outdoor Learning, Sport, Performing Arts, Gaming, Arts and Craft and Sing and Sign to name but a few. Learners have been involved with the Shaftsbury Theatre and local press who review our termly Performing Arts Productions, local council engagement for social action projects to combat litter and dog fouling and the Special Olympics: Gaming for Inclusion.

Duke of Edinburgh

We are so proud of our Duke of Edinburgh offer. Students can choose to progressively complete their bronze, silver and gold awards. The DofE programme has many benefits including the development of the skills and attitudes our learners need to become more confident and well rounded adults. Learners develop in the following areas as they work through their DofE programme:

- Self-belief and self-confidence
- A sense of identity
- Initiative and a sense of responsibility
- A real awareness of their strengths
- New talents and abilities
- The ability to plan and use time effectively
- Learning from and giving to others in the community
- Forming new friendships
- Problem solving, presentation and communication skills
- Leadership and teamworking skills.

Health & Wellbeing

Being healthy and feeling well are fundamentally important for our learners at Oakwood. We place high importance on providing opportunities for learners to access community sports and physical activities such as going to the gym, playing boccia, and taking part in activities such as mindfulness and yoga. Teachers work with learners to identify the kinds of activities they may be interested and also to discover activities they may not have yet experienced.

Employment and partners

At Oakwood we aspire for all our learners to be able to progress in to paid or unpaid work after College. To help them to prepare for this we offer a wide range of work experience opportunities that are linked to our learners' careers interests. In some cases, our learners go on to secure work at their placement or in a related role in another company because they have built the skills that employers need.

All learners are supported to engage broadly with the world of work throughout the talentino programme (<https://www.talentinocareers.co.uk/>) and by accessing work experience. We work with each learner to discover their interests and talents, and match up work placement opportunities with them. This can be a bit daunting at first, so some learners will undertake a range of placements to find out what they like and to build up their skills. Others have a clear idea already, and if they do we work quickly to set up a placement with them.

We have a dedicated work experience team that spend time with employers understanding what opportunities may be available. We also provide training for potential employers and placement offers to help them to understand the kinds of support our learners may need to be successful.

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Partnership Working

At Oakwood we work with a range of employers and voluntary organisations across the South West. We have a specialist Information Advice & Guidance and Careers Lead that works closely with all learners and we also have a contract with Careers South West (CSW) who offer impartial careers advice and guidance to all our learners.

Links

Some useful links to help our learners to prepare for work include:

Careerpilot

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

A free website that provides impartial careers information to young people in the South West region.

National Careers Service

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

Information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work.

A to Z of finding a job

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job>

Information on finding a job and your rights

DSA Workfit

<http://www.dsworkfit.org.uk/>

Workfit is the Down's syndrome Association's employment programme which brings together employers and job seekers who have Down's syndrome.