Ambitious Approach – Our Approach to Education Practice

Ambitious about Autism's mission is to stand with autistic children and young people, champion their rights and create opportunities. We believe all autistic children and young people have a right to the best education that meet their needs and enables them to learn, thrive and achieve. In addition to our direct work in schools and colleges, we work to transform policy and practice in autism education nationally.

We have high aspirations for our pupils and learners. Our goal for all our pupils and learners is that when they leave our settings, they will have the opportunity to access employment, further education or training and to live as part of the communities of their choice.

The Ambitious Approach is the educational approach we have developed and adopted to put quality of life at the centre of all we do. It is based upon a learner's indisputable rights to be:

- treated with dignity and compassion
- valued
- listened to
- supported to have the best quality of life possible
- empowered to make choices and decide on how they want to live their life.

The Ambitious Approach has three areas of focus:

- **The curriculum**: The curriculum in our settings focuses on equipping learners with the knowledge and skills they need for quality of life. Learning is tailored to support autistic children and young people to live the life they want to lead.
- **Curriculum delivery**: We recruit and train staff in our settings to provide high-quality teaching. This includes having a deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, specialist knowledge of how autistic children and young people learn best and creating environments that support and nurture physical and psychological needs.
- **Collaboration:** We afford dignity, respect and compassion to everyone in our settings' communities. Young people are placed at the core of our settings so their voices are heard and so we can support them with what is important to them. Staff in the settings work closely together, sharing their expertise to address barriers to learning and support the best possible outcomes.

Learning and Development

We have an Ambitious Approach competency framework that details the skills and knowledge that staff need to have or acquire. We have a comprehensive learning and development programme to support them with this. There is a standard level of competence that all staff need to pass their probation period when joining the settings.

The Ambitious Approach evaluation cycle involves collecting and reviewing data each academic year. This data is used at an individual level, to celebrate positive changes for children and young people and to identify areas for development; at a setting-wide level, to celebrate progress and development in our education offer and to identify where and how to improve; and at an organisation level, to evaluate the impact of the Ambitious Approach. Each setting has an Ambitious Approach Development Team who use this data for their action planning.

Personal development, behaviour and safety
The safety, wellbeing and positive behaviour of pupils and learners is paramount. We have child and adult safeguarding policies and procedures in place, which are implemented holistically and rigorously and reviewed at least annually to ensure they reflect latest requirements and best practice. We focus on creating a whole organisational approach to safeguarding, which includes checks, training, information and briefings for all trustees, governors, staff and volunteers. Pupils and learners are also supported to understand these issues via the curriculum. For further information, see the relevant Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and the Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. These are available on the settings' and Ambitious about Autism/Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust's websites.

Progress and attainment
Children and young people in our education settings have Education, Health and Care Plans, which outline their aspirations, outcomes, needs and support. Our trans-disciplinary teams work collaboratively with the young people and their parents/carers to input into and develop these plans and ensure they are implemented. Progress is regularly and comprehensively monitored, evaluated and reported. We tailor how we teach to match the individual child or young person, and we also measure whether the approach is working. This helps to ensure that pupils and learners make the best progress they can. Pupils and learners have access to a range of qualifications, as well as non-accredited learning, depending on their interests, desired outcomes and abilities. For more information, please see the individual settings' Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.

Accountability
The Director of Education has overall responsibility for the Ambitious Approach with the Education Executive Management Team. reporting to the Director of Education on a half termly basis.

Each setting has a Governing Body comprising a range of people with the knowledge, skills, experience and perspectives needed to support and challenge our services. The Governing Bodies meet regularly and visit the settings to review and monitor their performance.
We also have a board-level Education and Care Committee that oversees performance across all settings. Information on progress and outcomes is made available at annual reviews, to parents/carers and Local Authorities, and reported termly to the Governing Bodies. We welcome visitors to our services and regularly hold open days for parents/carers and professionals. Our services are subject to Ofsted inspections, which are published online, both on our website and by Ofsted.

Useful Linkshttps://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/education/our-educational-approach
https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/about-us/organisation-policies-and-reports
https://treehouseschool.org.uk/
https://theriseschool.com/
https://www.springschool.org.uk/
https://ambitiouscollege.org.uk/
https://www.st-johns.co.uk/

Key Policies

- Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policies
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policies and Procedures
- Behaviour Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy