

Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

This policy merges and replaces:

112a– Assessment Policy

110a – Curriculum Policy

116a– Teaching and Learning

It should be read alongside:

119a – Remote/Blended Learning

Curriculum Statement

1. Objectives

1.1 TreeHouse School supports all pupils to achieve their maximum potential whilst having an excellent quality of life. All our pupils and young people at Treehouse school have a primary diagnosis of Autism and have a wide range of needs, from those who benefit from a more sensory based curriculum to others who can access aspects of the National Curriculum for specific subjects. They all have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) that outlines the outcomes that are to be achieved at the end of each Key Stage and follow the curriculum pathway (pre-formal, semi-formal and formal) that is most appropriate to their needs which they are assessed against. The assessment framework for each pathway overlaps at the start and end, allowing for accurate assessment for pupils who transition between two pathways.

1.2 Teaching staff plan learning for the small classes of up to 8 pupils. Most pupils require at least 1:1 support. They will be supported by trained teaching and behaviour specialists (TABs) as well as specialist input from the transdisciplinary team consisting of occupational therapists (OTs), speech and language therapists (SaLTs) and behaviour specialists (BAs).

1.3 The Ambitious Approach underpins all our thinking and practice. It is an approach to education created by Ambitious about Autism to support children and young people with autism. It has been developed to provide high-quality education whilst affording dignity, respect, and compassion, in all aspects of our provision, including the consideration of mental health and wellbeing. The Ambitious Approach is based upon a person'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.

We enact our Ambitious Approach and aim to ensure pupils have improved quality of life during, and beyond, their time in school through:

- Our Curriculum.
- Curriculum Delivery, including School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support.
- Collaboration.

1.4 Our assessment model aims to:

- To provide up to date information about progress of individuals and groups of pupils and where applicable the attainment data.
- To establish what pupils can do, know, and understand.
- To assess the readiness of pupils for future learning – to inform planning.
- To identify patterns over time (useful when pupils learn in very small steps.)

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- Complete baseline assessments as a basis from which to set targets for improvement.
- To promote rigour and pace.
- To give an insight into the curriculum received by the pupils.
- To enable the school to review the effectiveness of the curriculum and models of delivery and use the data to support decisions for developing teaching and learning.
- To assess the progress of specific groups of pupils, e.g., such as pupils from a range of different gender groups, ethnic groups etc.
- To assess the need for additional, specialist support.
- To help motivate pupils and staff.
- To encourage pupil motivation and self-esteem.
- To provide information to discuss with parents, teachers, and stakeholders.
- To satisfy statutory requirements.

1.5 Our curriculum model aims to:

- Individually planned
- Specialised
- Intensive
- Goal-directed
- Guided by pupil performance.

2. Legislation and guidance

2.1 This policy reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010 and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

2.2 It also refers to statutory reporting requirements set out in the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1.

3. Principles

Curriculum and assessment are inextricably linked and are integral parts of the teaching and learning process.

3.1 Curriculum Principles

The term curriculum relates to both the *range* of subjects that are offered at TreeHouse and the content delivered within each subject.

Learners will study qualifications where appropriate and will balance academic rigour with other important curriculum offerings such as the social curriculum, PE, swimming etc.

Sex and relationship education is addressed at age-appropriate detail through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, including the promotion of British values, is addressed via PSHE, assemblies and class discussions.

In terms of curriculum content, TreeHouse delivers a centrally planned curriculum that builds coherently throughout a learner's time at school. Teachers are expected to follow this curriculum which is set out in the long-term plans and the curriculum overview documents. Teachers devise a detailed scheme of work in order to achieve the learning goals set out in the curriculum overview.

We offer three different curriculum pathways to our pupils:

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- Pre-formal
A sensory based curriculum, with an emphasis on engagement and early development rather than subject specific study.
- Semi-formal
For students who can access learning through slightly more formal subjects, although not yet at National Curriculum level.
- Formal
Subject specific study is undertaken (Some of which is at National Curriculum level) and Entry Level Qualifications are achieved where appropriate from KS4.

The pathways are not necessarily sequential, neither are they linked to chronological age. The pupil follows the pathway that best meets their developmental needs rather than their age.

For example, an 8-year-old pupil could follow the Formal pathway whilst a 15-year-old pupil may follow the pre-formal pathway.

Each curriculum pathway has elements which overlap and are embedded into each other to allow easy transition for pupils who may transition from one to another.

For further details, see TreeHouse’s Curriculum Statement.

3.2 Teaching and Learning Principles

- Improve the quality of life, through outstanding teaching and learning underpinned through an evidence based behavioural approach, of children affected by autism and those of their families
- Develop the necessary pivotal skills as building blocks for future skill acquisition and independent learning in other settings
- Enable every pupil to achieve their academic potential and aspirations
- Enable our pupils to develop knowledge, skills and understanding
- Ensure that each pupil is motivated to maintain, apply and generalise the skills that they have learned, beyond school and in the natural environment
- Nurture each pupil’s functional independence with self-help and daily living skills
- Equip each pupil with the tools necessary to positively influence and manage their own life, with as great a degree of independence as possible
- Enable each pupil to develop the skills and strategies needed to participate in and meaningfully contribute to their local community
- Develop in each pupil an awareness of self and others
- Ensure that each pupil is equipped as fully as possible for adult life: including confident use of a functional communication system; self-management of any behaviours that act as a barrier to learning or participation; development of vocational and careers skills and a portfolio of independent life and leisure skills
- We’re proud to stand with autistic children and young people.

3.2.1 Planning

All planning should be based on prior learning, differentiated to meet all pupils’ needs and carefully sequenced to lead to progress.

3.2.2 Learners’ work

Learners will be encouraged to maintain high standards when it comes to the presentation of their work – this will look different in different subjects.

3.2.3 Recording & Reporting

- Value all pupils equally and free of bias
- Recognise and give credit for pupil achievements in and outside school.
- Involve pupils in self-assessment where appropriate.
- Form an integral part of learning and teaching.

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- Use a variety of approaches to assessment.
- Provide valid and reliable evidence of achievement.
- Measure and monitor performance against agreed criteria.
- Identify positive achievements.
- Provide opportunities for contributions from all involved in pupils learning.

3.2.4 The Learning Environment

The classroom should promote effective learning. We expect that all learners will experience consistently high-quality learning environments:

- Displays with information that is helpful for pupils on their current topics;
- Quality displays celebrating the pupil's work;
- Behaviour prompts and expectations;
- All classrooms will be clean, tidy and uncluttered.

Corridor displays change every term.

3.3 Principles of assessment:

- Assessment is both formative and summative.
- Planning is led by learning intentions not activities
- Assessment is not one thing it involves a whole range of activities and strategies.
- Assessment involves both pupils and their parents.
- Assessment takes account of the unexpected as well as the intended learning.
- The individual needs of our pupils are paramount.

4. Assessment approach

4.1 Definitions

Assessment methods at TreeHouse school vary depending on the profile of each pupil, however there are some common definitions which apply to all:

- **Initial/diagnostic assessment** determines the learner's starting point for their learning journey. It is the process of identifying an individual's learning and support needs to establish their pathway and a behaviour support plan.
- **Formative assessment** or assessment for learning is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures during the learning process to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment.
- **Summative assessment** is used to evaluate learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined timeline —typically at the end of a project, unit, course, term, or school year.
- **Attainment** is the academic standard that pupils/learners reach in, for example, assessments and exams. It's usually recorded as grades, scores, or levels, and it indicates a pupil's/learner's result at the end of a Key Stage.
- **Progress** is a learner's/pupils' achievements over a period of time, for example from KS2 to KS4, or between Y1 and Y2 in school or termly.
- **Recording** is the selection and retention of significant and relevant information on the pupils' experiences and achievements, including what the pupil, knows and can do. This informs planning.
- **Reporting** is the communication of significant and relevant information on the individual pupils' experiences and achievements.

4.2 Baseline Assessment

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On entry to the school, baseline assessments are conducted by the class teacher. The data from these assessments are recorded on the school assessment software 'Earwig'.

The class Teacher undertakes baseline assessment in the following curriculum areas:

- Pre-Formal:
Communication & Language, Personal Social Emotional Development and Physical Development
- Semi-Formal:
Communication & Language, Literacy & Mathematics.
- Formal:
English & Mathematics

The TDT members undertake their own bespoke baseline using the formative assessment tools listed below. This information is then used to support planning and target setting.

The TDT have further assessment tools available which are used on a case-by-case basis. This list of assessments used in each field is non exhaustive and can be updated at any time when the professional deems there to be a requirement to use a more suitable tool for assessment.

- Our Behaviour Analysts do a range of assessments depending on the needs of the individuals, this could include VBMAPPs or EFLS + Barriers (Secondary).
- Our Allied Health Professionals (AHPS), including SaLTs and OTs do a range of assessments depending on the stage and needs of the individuals, this could include COMFOR and/or Derbyshire Language Scheme, Adult/Adolescent Sensory profile (adapted), Therapy Outcomes Measures (TOMs) and Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM).

Follow up assessments using the same assessment tool helps to evidence progress over time.

4.3 Formative assessment

- Informal observations
- Observation of practical activity
- Pupil folders- TABs comments
- Pupils' work in books
- Peer assessment
- Use of questioning
- Discussion / Plenary
- Marking policy

4.4 Summative Assessment

- Baseline assessments for pathway.
- Termly curriculum assessments.
- Rag rating of EHCP outcomes.
- Termly EHCP assessments.
- Annual review- reviewing the long-term outcomes and their relevance and making changes where necessary.
- External accreditations.

The final combination of Assessment for Learning strategies used for any single pupils is dependent on which one of the 3 pathways the pupil is on (Pre-Formal, Semi-Formal and Formal), as well as the content of their EHCP and their individual needs.

The TDT members at Treehouse school will undertake ongoing assessments of their pupils using the most appropriate tools for the pupil.

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Evidence of progress through the curriculum framework (Recorded by Teachers) and evidence of progress against individual EHCP targets (Recorded by all TDT members) are captured then recorded on the Earwig software termly.

The Earwig software holds banks of statements for each curriculum area, as well as individual EHCP targets. These statements are scored as follows:

- 0= Unachieved
- 1= Achieved with full physical support
- 2= Achieved with model / gestural support
- 3= Working towards independent
- 4= Independent

Any other assessments (Such as SALT / OT / Behavioural) should be uploaded to Earwig as a PDF under the pupil's timeline. This ensures that all pupil assessments undertaken by the school are in one central location.

External Accreditation:

- We offer on a case-by-case basis external accreditations, such as Entry Level and Functional Skills qualifications in English and Maths.
- We comply with the assessment policies and procedures from the awarding body.
- Once a qualification is achieved, it is uploaded to the pupils Earwig timeline, and tagged accordingly as 'Accreditation'.

4.5 Reporting

Once the data and evidence is recorded within Earwig, we can use the software to generate reports on progress against both the individual (EHCP) targets and the pupils' relevant curriculum framework.

EHCP Progress:

- Sent home to parents at the end of each term (3 x Per Year) using the 'END OF TERM EHCP PROGRESS REPORT TEMPLATE' within the Earwig Software.
- Reported at the Annual Review meeting using the 'ANNUAL REVIEW EHCP PROGRESS REPORT TEMPLATE' within the Earwig Software.

Curriculum Progress:

- Regular parent updates are provided through the creation of timelines in the 'Earwig App' Parents who sign up have access to these regular snapshots 24/7.
- Curriculum progress is reported in greater depth at Parents evenings or parent meetings up to 2 x Per year.
- A full and comprehensive report is sent home to parents using the 'END OF YEAR CURRICULUM PROGRESS REPORT TEMPLATE' within the Earwig Software.

5. Teaching and Learning

5.1 Our Behavioural Approach - School Wide Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)

An evidence-based Behavioural approach underpins all teaching and learning at TreeHouse School. This approach is based on our values and enables learners to access learning opportunities across their personalised learning plan and to achieve their full potential. The focus of all behaviourally based intervention is on the individual and their learning needs. We work closely with the child or young person and their families to identify the things that are important to them, and use these aspirations, in combination with a robust assessment of their abilities, interests, prior learning and experience, to plan an appropriate learning programme. It is this personalised and collaborative approach which enables us to provide the highest quality teaching, learning and support.

We support the pupil to identify the eventual outcome he or she wants to achieve. Individual or group learning plans underpinned by behavioural teaching methods are then designed for each pupil or group of pupils with behavioural principles used to strengthen the successful achievement of appropriate

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learning goals. These plans ensure that consistency in teaching approaches is achieved, research indicates this is important for successful learning for children and young people with autism. Tasks are analysed and considered alongside the pupil's learning style (identified through assessment of learning) in order to identify the most appropriate and effective teaching technique to use for each target. The model of school wide behavioural support determines the degree of input each pupil requires to successfully complete each task.

5.2 Our Delivery of Teaching and Learning

Personalisation and Differentiation

In accordance with statutory inclusion guidelines, each pupil's curriculum at TreeHouse takes account of the type and extent of any difficulties associated with their SEN. All pupils at TreeHouse are working at a level below the age-related norm. This means that pupils are working towards targets drawn from Programmes of Study relevant and meaningful to them; below those accessed by their typically developing peers. Skills and knowledge are taught using age-appropriate resources and learning opportunities. Each pupil's curriculum is personalised and drawn from their EHC plan and initial assessments inform the pupils most appropriate pathway of study. The breadth and weighting of individual, paired and small group, teaching is individually planned for each pupil based on on-going assessment of the learning style. The school ethos is that all learners should be enabled to participate in small group settings as their learning skills develop and therefore the acquisition of group skills forms part of each learners personalised curriculum

5.3 How we decide what and how to teach each individual pupil

Each pupil's progression and the appropriate model for meeting their needs is identified through a person-centred planning process. Decisions are driven by the pupils EHCP which should reflect what is important to the individual and the family concerned. Targets are regularly reviewed termly by teachers and recorded on Earwig and through statutory annual reviews.

5.4 When and Where is Teaching and Learning planned?

Routines: A pupil's personalised curriculum also includes incidental learning opportunities, both through regular routines within school and through introducing new learning opportunities.

Events: All events create opportunities for pupils to rehearse skills, learn curriculum content, generalise skills into different contexts and/or develop their personal characteristics. Events include the Christmas Show, Sports Day, Healthy Eating events, Black History Month, LGBTQ+ week and pride day, British Values, visits, reverse inclusion, vocational placements and residential.

Contexts: Learning does not have to take place at a desk, indeed much of the best learning occurs beyond the classroom. At TreeHouse we plan for learning to take place and be generalised at internal and external locations across the school, in the community, locally or further afield, on regular trips and on irregular educational visits.

Audiences: In supporting pupils in recognising the purpose of a skill and being able to apply the skills appropriately, it is important that they have opportunities to employ their skills with a variety of clear audiences.

5.5 Who plans, leads and supports teaching and learning?

We believe that the quality of the pupil's experience is largely determined by the quality of interaction between individuals and the staff who support them and therefore we commit significant investment to the expertise of our practitioners. Our highly skilled teachers, behaviour analysts and allied health professionals work closely together to provide specialist, integrated and appropriate teaching, learning and support.

Relationships: Building a positive rapport between each pupil and teacher underpins the success of any educational programme, and a pupil's motivation to learn.

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Progression to less restrictive ratios of support: Although our pupils require the educational support of a 1:1 pupil:teacher ratio, there are many planned and incidental opportunities to work with others throughout each day.

Learning environments that encourage appropriate relationships to be fostered are carefully planned in order to give each pupil the best learning potential. Whilst being mindful of a pupil's academic year and chronological age, TreeHouse designs classes and teaching groups with peer groups in mind.

Home interventions: Research indicates that children diagnosed with autism make optimum educational gains where intervention is consistent between different environments. As such we aim to work closely with parents to enable them to continue teaching their child, to manage any behaviours that challenge learning and participation and to generalise their mastered skills to the home and community environments.

5.6 Teaching and Learning Environment and Resources

Pupils learn well when the environment in which they find themselves is well ordered, low arousal where there is structure and clarity about expectations. Environments will vary depending on the curriculum content or the characteristics that are being developed. Environments change from being the classroom, a 'quiet space', school corridors, school halls, the community, the home or play equipment in the school grounds. TreeHouse School is purpose-built with consideration of the needs of autistic learners. TreeHouse School uses elements of low arousal approach to provide the learners with the greatest possible chance to remain calm, understand their environment and reach their learning potential. It is of course important that our learners are exposed to a wide range of sensory experiences and environments to support destinations and develop their tolerance of community settings. For the learners who are able to tolerate and learn in more stimulating environment, they usually follow the semi-formal or curriculum and have frequent access to community visits and opportunities for inclusion.

5.7 Space and Furniture:

- Our building is equipped with specialist teaching areas providing an even greater range of contextual and meaningful learning opportunities for our pupils
- We believe that learning opportunities can take place in all environments, teaching is planned in outside spaces and in the community, for example at local tennis courts, parks, and swimming pools
- Space is used flexibly throughout the school.
- Multipurpose rooms are equipped with age-appropriate furniture.

5.8 Resources to deliver and support teaching and learning

- In order to maximise learning and teaching opportunities, we operate an extended school year (41weeks).
- The majority of TreeHouse staff are graduates (often with Psychology degrees), with many additionally having post-graduate qualifications, Teaching Assistant diplomas, and some with teaching qualifications.
- All staff in the organisation receive a thorough induction training, including an Introduction to Autism, Introduction to PBS, Curriculum training and practical training on our approaches to teaching and learning. Appropriate training and opportunities for professional development are on-going for staff in all roles
- There is a robust cycle of performance management which allows all staff to set targets and review and evaluate their practice.

Materials and apparatus:

- The provision of age-appropriate materials and apparatus is always a consideration.
- In order to best meet the learning needs and preferred learning style of each pupil, we design many of our own teaching resources.

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- Adapted equipment is provided as necessary to meet pupil's needs.

6. Roles and Responsibilities, including monitoring:

| | Curriculum | Learning and Teaching | Assessment |
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| Governing Body | Oversee that a robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities, which are ambitious, complies to its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" where enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of their ECHPs. | <p>Ensure proper provision is made for pupils with their special educational needs and range of abilities.</p> <p>Monitors the improvement of L&T via the SEF review and implementation of the SDP</p> <p>Carry out focus visits to observe T&L in practise.</p> <p>Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively</p> <p>Monitor pupil attainment</p> <p>Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote outstanding quality teaching</p> | <p>Be familiar with, and ensure implementation of, statutory assessment systems as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils</p> <p>Hold leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data</p> |
| Head of School | <p>Ensure that all subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the overall aims of the school</p> <p>Ensure the amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board</p> <p>Involve the governing board in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum</p> <p>Ensure Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs.</p> | Ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning | <p>Ensure that the policy is adhered to</p> <p>Ensure the school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements</p> <p>Report to governors on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years</p> |
| Deputy Head and/or Assistant Head Teacher | <p>Review and update this policy annually.</p> <p>Ensure the policy is adhered to.</p> <p>Manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate</p> | <p>Lead the observation processes.</p> <p>Review and update "Ambitious Approach"</p> <p>Organise the sharing of termly reports with parents and parents' evenings.</p> <p>Ensure a high quality CPD provision for all aspects of C,L,T&A is in place.</p> | <p>Monitor standards in core subjects</p> <p>Analyse pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups</p> <p>Prioritise key actions to address underachievement</p> |
| Wider Leadership Team/Subject Leads | <p>Ensure that long term planning and medium term curriculum overviews are in place.</p> <p>Lead the review and adaptation of these documents.</p> | Undertake regular supportive, ungraded observations. | <p>Ensure that high quality summative assessments are in place.</p> <p>Monitor that formative assessment is taking place.</p> <p>Analyse summative</p> |

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| | | | assessment data and input into the school review process. |
| Teachers | Follow the centralised curriculum. Participate in the review and adaptation the centralised curriculum. | Deliver excellent, well planned engaging lessons that support progress. Respond to snapshot feedback and proactively improve practice. | Follow the assessment procedures outlined in this policy |
| Parents | Ensure their child has the best attendance possible Ensure their child is equipped for school with correct uniform and kit. Inform the school if there are matters outside of school that may affect a child's performance or behaviour Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning Fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement. | | |

6.1 For whom are we assessing and reporting?

- The class teacher, all teachers and TDT members within the school.
- Pupils.
- Parents / Carers
- The Leadership Team.
- Governors.
- External bodies e.g., LA, Ofsted

7. Continuing Professional Development

TreeHouse is a research-engaged school.

- Senior and middle leaders are expected to engage with the developments in assessment through reading widely (books, blogs), attending conferences and CPD opportunities and then curate the key findings for teachers. Teachers are encouraged to be equally proactive in developing their understanding of assessment.
- This takes place via our weekly L&T bulletin, L&T platform, the development of a staff library on SharePoint, and reading that takes place in fortnightly training-focused teacher meetings.
- The overall responsibility for the quality of CPD is with the Deputy Head of School.

8. Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all learners, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of pupils' special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all pupils. However, this should account for the amount of effort the pupil puts in as well as the outcomes achieved.

For learners working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to pupil starting points and take this into account alongside the nature of pupils' learning difficulties.

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