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# Curriculum Policy

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<b>Date of Policy</b>	October 2023
<b>Date of next review</b>	October 2024
<b>Lead member of staff</b>	Emily McCormack

## **Introduction**

One of the principles underlying Medway Green School's approach is the belief that students' self-esteem, confidence, and emotional stability can be greatly improved through a strong balance of academic achievement and personal development. Students are encouraged and supported to achieve in terms that they recognise as success. As the school grows, the curriculum will continue to be a major area for development. The underlying belief that governs developments is that learning should be useful, relevant and enjoyable. We seek to gain accreditation for the courses the student's study during Key Stages 3 and 4 having built firm foundations in the Lower School. We fundamentally believe that any academic achievements will increase our students' chances of living a happy life as independent, responsible members of society.

## **AIMS**

All children have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences into account. Pupils at Medway Green School will have access to an adapted curriculum which takes account of the National Curriculum as well as being relevant to individual need. In addition, we focus on the core difficulties that lie at the heart of Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH). These include problems with rigid thinking, managing uncertainty and change, social interaction and understanding and managing emotions. These are the difficulties that are at the root of distressed (challenging) behaviour.

At Medway Green School, our curriculum involves academic learning but our first priority is to work on these core difficulties. Our priority is to support the social and emotional development of children.

We take the view that academic achievement without appropriate social and emotional development leaves children with a poor quality of life, as well as poor life chances. We therefore focus our work on the difficulties that lie at the heart of SEMH.

At MGS, our emphasis is on rate of progress that is measured against the pupil's starting point, rather than age related expectations. We carefully assess our students' levels of tolerance so that we are sure that they can successfully meet appropriate challenges. It is of the utmost importance to us that our pupils do not have experiences of failure as these are usually what have led them to withdraw from learning and have contributed significantly to poor emotional wellbeing in their previous educational settings.

We want children to be independent learners. Creating their own self-motivated adventures which enable them to learn and/or generalise work skills. Learning outside the classroom children can learn different curriculum aspects in a fun, meaningful way. Outdoor learning can challenge the children exposing them to new and/or different environments. Allowing them to take risks and communicate freely. Learning outdoors meets different learning styles, enhances confidence and self-esteem. As educators we are always thinking about what the children need to learn and where the best place for this to happen may be. To be open to new learning opportunities and have the resilience to see them through.

## **How our KS1, KS2 and KS3 Curriculum works.**

All pupils at Medway Green School have a curriculum that is adapted to their individual needs wherever possible. Focussing on academic as well as social and emotional development. Students are taught in small groups of no more than 8 and with a high level of adult to child supervision. Lessons are limited to 45 minutes as we have found through trial and error that this seems to be the optimum length of time that students can focus for. Lessons can be 1.5 hours or even whole days where there is creative or physical activity involved too. For example, Topic lessons can be very hands on and the time is needed for practical work. Studies have shown that interaction with nature for lengthy periods of time e.g. a whole day have a calming and grounding effect which is extremely relevant to our students as they learn to manage their moods and behaviours.

<b>Primary Curriculum (KS1 and KS2)</b>	<b>Secondary Curriculum (KS3)</b>
<b>English (and Phonics if required)</b> – 45 mins, 8 x fortnightly	<b>English</b> – 45 mins, 8 x fortnightly
<b>Maths</b> – 45 mins, 8 x fortnightly	<b>Maths</b> – 45 mins, 8 x fortnightly
<b>Topic: Science, Geography, Art, DT</b> – 1.5 hours, 2 x weekly	<b>Science</b> – 1.5 hours, 2 x weekly
<b>PSHE</b> – 45 mins-1 hour, 1 x weekly	<b>Humanities: History/ Geography alternated termly</b> – 1.5 hours, 1 x weekly (not Leeds)
<b>Beliefs and Values</b> – 45 mins, 1 x weekly	<b>PSHE</b> – 45 mins-1 hour, 1 x weekly
<b>Cooking</b> – 1.5 hours, 1 x fortnightly	<b>Beliefs and Values</b> – 45 mins, 1 x weekly
<b>Skills 4 Life</b> – 45 mins, 1 x weekly	<b>Cooking</b> – 1.5 hours, 1 x fortnightly
<b>DEAR time: Drop Everything and Read</b> – 15 mins, daily	<b>Citizenship</b> – 45 mins, 1 x weekly
<b>SEMH</b> – 20-30 mins, 2-3 x weekly - lessons that specifically target the needs of the students as identified through Boxall Profiling.	<b>DEAR time: Drop Everything and Read</b> – 15 mins, daily
<b>Guided Reading</b> – 30 mins, 1 x weekly	<b>PE</b> – 1.5 hours, 1 x weekly
<b>PE</b> – 1.5 hours, 1 x weekly	<b>Art</b> – 1.5 hours, 1 x fortnightly
<b>Outdoor Education</b> – 1 day, fortnightly	<b>Outdoor Education</b> – 1 day, fortnightly
<b>Intervention times</b> – 30 minutes x 10 per fortnight – specific academic and physical, sensory S & L interventions for students according to their needs.	<b>Intervention times</b> – 30 minutes x 10 per fortnight – specific academic and physical, sensory S & L interventions for students according to their needs.
<b>Rewards</b> - 45 – 2hrs15, 1 x weekly (accessed if not accessing Enrichment)	<b>Rewards</b> - 45 – 2hrs15, 1 x weekly (accessed if not accessing Enrichment)
<b>Enrichment</b> - 45 – 2hrs15, 1 x weekly – activities linked to the Core Value of the Term (accessed if not accessing rewards)	<b>Enrichment</b> - 45 – 2hrs15, 1 x weekly – activities linked to the Core Value of the Term (accessed if not accessing rewards)

The curriculum that is in place is based largely on the national curriculum and encompasses a breadth of academic subjects that can be studied all the way through to KS4. By the time our students reach KS4, they would have been able to access a thorough curriculum in KS1, KS2 and KS3 and will therefore be able to progress onto their qualifications to facilitate their future lives. This is complimented with activities that help them with their specific academic, behavioural and sensory needs such as SEMH sessions and morning intervention sessions.

Many of our students have missed large chunks of their education and have gaps in their learning and social / emotional development. After an initial baselining period to ascertain the learning that they have or have not received, teaching and activities will be targeted at their level. This period of time includes two weeks of transition and time taken to adjust to MGS routines and expectations as they approach being ready to learn.

There is a strong focus on English and Maths as these give the skills to access the rest of the curriculum. Morning intervention is key to filling in gaps and addressing misconceptions. We appreciate that there may be many different abilities within one classroom. Therefore, to be able to allow the pupils to access a full and focused English and Maths curriculum, we have assessed and grouped students by their ability in English and Maths. This is to ensure that lessons can remain focussed on specific objectives and enable pupils to make the best progress they can.

## KS4 Curriculum

From September 2023, our pupils will be beginning their learning in KS4. Throughout KS3 into KS4, we aim for our pupils to become successful learners who develop confidence and the skills required to achieve at least a Functional Skills qualifications in English and Maths, along with other Functional Skills and BTEC qualifications, which will support them in leading successful adult lives. We recognise that our pupils will need to follow different pathways according to their ability levels and interests. This means that there will be options available to all students in the cohort, which will be reviewed yearly based on the needs and abilities of the students reaching KS4 each year. In addition to this, we believe that is important for our pupils to have an understanding of ethics and the beliefs of others so that they are able to make informed choices and have a deeper understanding of the society we live in, therefore Religious Education will be a compulsory KS4 subject, which pupils will study at the appropriate level. By the end of KS4, we aim for pupils to have the qualifications required to enable them to progress to their personal Post 16 Pathways.

To give our learners the best chances of achieving as many qualifications as possible, the KS4 programme of study will begin in Year 9. Some of the learning students will be undertaking in Year 9, will be specifically to support them with the rest of their studies (Preparing to Learn Functional Skills).

Below, is an example of a qualification offer overview which will be adapted when necessary.

Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language (GCSE/ Functional Skills Level 1)</li> <li>• Maths (GCSE/ Functional Skills Level 1)</li> <li>• Science (BTEC Firsts Applied Science Level 2)</li> <li>• PSHE (RSE) (BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Personal Growth and Wellbeing)</li> <li>• Physical Education (non-examined) incorporated with Sports Leaders I can Lead</li> <li>• NCFE Preparing to Learning (NCFE Level 1)</li> <li>• Citizenship (non-examined)</li> <li>• Religious Education (non-examined)</li> <li>• Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award</li> <li>• Art (GCSE, NCFE Level 1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language (GCSE/ Functional Skills Level 1)</li> <li>• Maths (GCSE/ Functional Skills Level 1)</li> <li>• Science (BTEC Firsts Applied Science Level 2)</li> <li>• PSHE (RSE) (BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Personal Growth and Wellbeing)</li> <li>• Religious Education (GCSE Short Course)</li> <li>• Physical Education (non-examined) incorporated with Sports Leaders Level 1</li> <li>• Citizenship (non-examined)</li> <li>• Food and Cookery Skills (NCFE Level 2)</li> <li>• English Literature (GCSE)</li> <li>• History (GCSE)</li> <li>• Art (GCSE, NCFE Level 1)</li> <li>• Health and Fitness (NCFE Level 1/2)</li> <li>• Creative Media (BTEC Tech Award)</li> <li>• Health and Social Care (BTEC Tech Award)</li> <li>• Child Development (BTEC Tech Award)</li> <li>• Animal Care (BTEC Tech Award)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language (GCSE/ Functional Skills Level 1)</li> <li>• Maths (GCSE/ Functional Skills Level 1)</li> <li>• Science (BTEC Firsts Applied Science Level 2)</li> <li>• PSHE (RSE) (BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Personal Growth and Wellbeing)</li> <li>• Religious Education (GCSE Short Course)</li> <li>• Physical Education (non-examined) incorporated with Sports Leaders Level 2</li> <li>• Citizenship (non-examined)</li> <li>• Food and Cookery Skills (NCFE Level 2)</li> <li>• English Literature (GCSE)</li> <li>• History (GCSE)</li> <li>• Art (GCSE, NCFE Level 1)</li> <li>• Health and Fitness (NCFE Level 1/2)</li> <li>• Creative Media (BTEC Tech Award)</li> <li>• Health and Social Care (BTEC Tech Award)</li> <li>• Child Development (BTEC Tech Award)</li> <li>• Animal Care (BTEC Tech Award)</li> </ul>

Core

Additional

## Therapeutic provision

Medway Green School recognises that for many of our students, their previous experience of school has been unsuccessful. Many come to us with anxieties and trust issues alongside their diagnosed behavioural conditions. Many of our students, the mainstream experience has been frightening and confusing, often leading to severely reduced timetables or school refusal. Therefore, one of our key aims for the curriculum is engagement, supporting, and encouraging students to be ready to learn. That is why activities such as SEMH and Outdoor Education are an integral part of our curriculum to support our students and help them to become self-reliant in terms of their emotional regulation.

The curriculum is further underpinned by our therapy provision. The majority of our students have sensory and physical needs, which are addressed through OT. We have trained OT assistants in school who have supported staff in classes to deliver universal interventions for pupils. They also deliver Social Skills and Zones of Regulation sessions weekly for all classes.

We have specialist speech and language intervention one and a half days per week. This also includes training for our class teams to support Speech and Language issues in class.

Furthermore, we employ a counsellor 3 days per week. She is highly experienced and extremely effective in a range of therapies including play therapies. She has a positive impact on those students that she sees. The counsellor also provides support to parents and staff upon request. Her work also enables us to unearth and address safeguarding issues that we may not have been aware of without her input.

The current curriculum will change and evolve as the school grows to further meet the needs of current and future learners. For example, adapting the curriculum to best prepare the pupils for their future learning – such as, qualifications and careers.

All staff plan and set out their own schemes of work, which are based on objectives from the National Curriculum. Planned schemes may use documents or commercial schemes / websites, adapted for use with individual pupils. The schemes of work set out the range of learning objectives taught over the year and how they are incorporated into individual subjects. Teachers meet regularly to discuss the planning and share expertise. We have a range of subject specialists that support colleagues with expertise and planning ideas, creating consistency in teaching across the curriculum. As part of Outcome First Group we also have access to subject specialist forums that we are signed up to allow our teachers to further discuss and develop ideas with their peers nationally.

Schemes of work have been created that follow National Curriculum objectives and therefore build on previous learning. They also allow opportunities for consolidation of learning. Teachers plan their lessons using the schemes to ensure that there is no repetition and that learning follows a logical and sequential route. The curriculum lead monitors planning and teaching to ensure that the schemes are being followed or to understand the rationale for any temporary deviations.

Senior Leaders will carry out work scrutiny and learning walks on a regular basis in order to monitor effective teaching and learning and ensure consistency in planning, delivery marking and feedback to pupils. This will be supported by observations linked to the appraisal cycle and regular peer observations to support and challenge.

### **Adapted Learning**

Differentiation is defined by the Training and Development Agency for Schools as ‘the process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning’.

At Medway Green School we use a range of differentiation techniques. One method is, differentiation by task, involving setting different tasks for students of different abilities. An alternative method is to use a single worksheet or task list that becomes progressively more challenging. The more advanced students will quickly progress to the later questions whilst the less able can concentrate on grasping the essentials. The style we encourage teachers to adopt will allow a wide range of abilities to be able to access the same learning. Small, mixed-ability groups allow lower achievers to take advantage of peer support whilst higher achievers gain the opportunity to organise and voice their thoughts for the benefit of the whole group (known as peer modelling). Grouping also allows roles to be allocated within the team which cater for each member’s skill set and learning needs. However, we recognise that for English

and Maths lessons, it benefits the pupils to be grouped by ability. Some lessons will have differentiated tasks – such as, completing a more difficult set of questions – but in some groups, tasks may not need to be differentiated as this depends on the cohort in a class.

Resources are also used to differentiate in the classroom. This means that while some may require quite basic texts with illustrations, others are capable of working with more advanced vocabulary and complex ideas. Differentiation of this kind allows a wide spectrum of materials to be used to attain a single learning outcome. It's a method that is greatly assisted by advances in technology which our students really enjoy using. In the differentiated classroom, rather than assessment taking place at the end of learning, students are assessed on an on-going basis. There are of course other methods of differentiation and we adjust our approach according to the students' needs.

At Medway Green School we understand that we are dealing with a group of diverse individuals and have adapted our teaching to ensure that all of them have access to learn. This is an on-going and flexible process which not only profiles students initially but also recognise progress and areas for improvement and adjusts accordingly to ensure learning needs continue to be met. In short, it shifts the focus from teaching a subject to teaching the students.

### **Child Centred Learning**

All teaching is child centred; the child is at the heart of what we do. Social, emotional and academic qualities are promoted. Throughout the school this approach is used. This helps adults prepare children and young people for life's emotional ups and downs. We can work with children's differing and sometimes challenging behaviour. As a result, children become more self-assured and ready to engage with life and learning.

Medway Green School seeks to promote a curriculum that is accessible to all our pupils and which enables them to achieve as highly as possible and to experience academic as well as personal success.

- Take different perspectives and think flexibly
- Collaborate
- Cope with Setbacks and challenges
- Solve Problems creatively

Many of our activities, projects and areas of study can readily be located within the framework of the National Curriculum but the way that Medway Green staff relate to pupils and the range of interactions between staff and pupils is what makes the school so different. Whilst we anticipate measured progress in academic subjects, we view the real test of progress as the ability of Medway Green children to make and maintain meaningful relationships; to adapt their thinking and behaviour to everyday real-life challenges and to lead a happier and more fulfilling life.

Our aim is to deliver measurable outcomes that demonstrate, over time:

- Improved self-regulation (managing own emotions and behaviour)
- Improvement in coping with uncertainty and change (decreasing anxiety)
- Increased ability to make and sustain meaningful reciprocal relationships
- Increased independence
- Improved quality of life with reduced stress for pupils and their families

In planning and delivering a holistic curriculum, the school will endeavour to:

- Cater for the needs of individual children from all ethnic and social groups including the more able and those who experience learning difficulties.
- Facilitate children's acquisition of knowledge, skills, qualifications and qualities which will help them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically and morally, so that they may become independent, responsible, useful, confident and considerate members of the community.
- Create and maintain an exciting and stimulating learning environment in which pupils feel valued, safe and able to learn.

- Enable all pupils to experience a sense of personal achievement by encouraging them to fulfil their potential in different areas relevant to their abilities, skills and interests.
- Make every effort to encourage parental awareness and involvement in the educational and emotional development of their child.
- Ensure that each child's education has continuity and progression which enables them to progress with confidence to the next stage of their lifelong learning in preparation for adult life.

**Pupils should:**

- Learn to be adaptable, how to deal with and solve problems in different situations, how to work independently and as a team member.
- Begin to acquire a set of moral values such as honesty, sincerity, personal responsibility, on which to base and improve their own behaviour.
- Be expected to behave in a dignified and acceptable way and learn to become responsible for their own actions.
- Care for, respect and take pride in their school, work and their peers and staff.
- Learn to communicate their knowledge, feelings and thoughts in the appropriate way.
- Know how to apply the basic principles of health, hygiene and safety.

**Pupils should be given opportunities to:**

- Think and solve problems mathematically in a variety of situations
- Read, write and listen for a variety of purposes
- Develop an enquiring mind using a scientific approach to problems
- Develop and use technological skills
- Know about geographical, historical and social aspects of the local and wider environment.
- Have some knowledge of the beliefs of the major world religions
- Develop agility, co-ordination and confidence in movement.

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