

Curriculum Policy

Releasing Potential Independent Special School



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Curriculum Policy

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1. Statement of intent

The curriculum at Releasing Potential School is bespoke and has been designed to take into account the needs of our students. Core subjects have been chosen because they are meaningful and relevant to the lived experience of our students and to equip them to achieve their aspirations at school and in the future. All our students are dis-applied from the National Curriculum due to their Special Educational Needs and require specialist provision to help them engage with education.

The curriculum provides learning across a range of diverse areas and aims to give students a well-rounded education where tutors can be flexible in responding to students' needs, interests, and motivation. The aim of the curriculum is to balance practical learning with key skills development while helping support students' social, emotional and mental health needs. Through the range of subjects offered we seek to provide an education that allows the young people to develop linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative skills. The curriculum has been designed to meet the students' five needs as identified by William Glasser's Choice Theory: survival, love and belonging, power and self-worth, freedom and fun.

2. Focus and ethos

Releasing Potential takes a holistic approach to teaching and learning. We aim to address the basic moral, spiritual and domestic needs of our students, whilst recognising that not all our students are 'ready to learn'. There is a focus on encouraging students to make healthy decisions for themselves through student-led and tutor-guided activities. Releasing Potential believes firmly in a reflective practice model and this is incorporated into the curriculum to

improve practical skills and knowledge and to recognise the development of emotional intelligence and resilience.

3. Curriculum structure

Our aim is for all students to work towards accessing a full timetable of subjects. A student will only access the full curriculum when they:

1. Have the social-emotional and mental health capacity to access a group teaching environment
2. Can show progress / achievement in core subjects

The curriculum consists of five core subjects as well as up to four additional subjects. Each subject has been chosen to meet one or more of the needs identified by William Glasser's Choice Theory.

4. Core subjects

Core subjects are:

- English
- Mathematics
- Outdoor Education
- Food Studies
- Personal Social Development (PSD).

English

English is a particular area of focus, with opportunities for communication, reading and writing embedded across all formal subjects and activities throughout the school. A whole-school approach to phonics is key to our approach, with all staff working to find opportunities for children to read in context. Weekly “reading for pleasure” or phonics sessions are added to each student’s timetable and students are encouraged to choose books and other reading materials based on their individual interests.

Formal English sessions are broken down and assessed in 3 skills areas:

- Speaking, listening and communication
- Writing
- Reading

These areas give students a balance of literacy skills to help them progress to further education, training or work. Other areas include:

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Presentation
- Handwriting
- Creative writing

Students work to their own level, ensuring that progress on an individual basis and any gaps in learning can be addressed by the tutor. Students on full time provision will access at least two dedicated English sessions per week. Students have the option to be entered for an English Functional Skills (exam based) qualification.

Mathematics

Maths teaching and learning is embedded across all subjects in the curriculum, in both theoretical and practical senses. Students on full time provision will access at least two dedicated Maths lessons per week. All functional skills in Maths are covered at each level according to the student's abilities. Other areas include:

- Notation and lay out
- Presentation
- Breakdown of steps
- Terminology
- Using a calculator
- Estimating – checking procedures
- Multiplication tables

Students have the option to be entered for a Maths Functional Skills (exam based) qualification.

Outdoor Education

Outdoor Education is a vital element in the ethos and culture of Releasing Potential which enables students to connect with the natural environment, respect the planet, be healthy and active, build confidence and self-esteem through taking managed risk, and learn practical and leadership skills.

Outdoor Education is both part of the core curriculum and a vehicle for delivery of a range of other subjects such as CDT and Food Studies. For some students, Outdoor Education can also be a vehicle for delivering English and Maths. Formal assessment in Outdoor Education takes place through the Level 1 qualification accredited by NCFE (see qualifications list). Students are also given opportunities to achieve National Governing Body awards in various activities, for example sailing, canoeing, and kayaking.

Personal and Social Development (PSD)

Releasing Potential School specialises in working with children who have SEMH difficulties. All our students struggle with social and emotional issues which have been barriers to their full inclusion in mainstream education and society. For this reason, PSD is a crucial element in the core curriculum. Through teaching and learning in PSD students can gain insights into the possibilities available to them in the wider world and can develop the knowledge and skills they need to access them and achieve to their full potential.

PSD is also the main subject through which formal learning on the following takes place:

- Relationships and Sex Education
- Fundamental British values
- Careers guidance

PSD is delivered across years 7-11 and is formally assessed in Year 10 through the Level 1 NVQ award accredited by NCFE (see qualifications list).

Food Studies

The majority of students at Releasing Potential school have problematic relationships with food. It is an essential part of our provision to meet the survival needs of students by feeding them healthily whilst at school; for this reason, cooking happens often and is not limited to formal Food Studies lessons; a session in any of our core subjects could be embedded in a cooking or growing activity. Activities include:

- Budgeting and shopping for food
- The food chain
- Preparing a meal for others
- Food from other cultures and faiths

Food Studies runs across years 7-11 and is assessed in Year 11 via the Level 1 NVQ qualification accredited by NCFE (see qualifications list). There is also the option to undertake this at Level 2 in Post 16.

5. Additional subjects

The core curriculum is supplemented by optional subjects:

- Craft Design Technology (CDT)
- Sport
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- Employability
- Duke of Edinburgh (Bronze)

CDT is levelled from years 7-11 with their own bespoke schemes of work and with respective qualifications (see below).

CDT

Many of our students are interested in and have the capacity to excel at practical and engineering activities. The CDT curriculum allows students to develop their knowledge and skills in a range of activities including woodwork, metalwork and electronics. CDT can be delivered across years 7-13 and can be assessed in Year 11 through the Level 1 award accredited by NCFE. There is also an option to undertake this at Level 2 in Post 16.

6. Post-16 subjects

Post-16 students staying on for years 12 & 13 at Releasing Potential School continue to study Mathematics and English up to Level 2, usually via the NCFE Functional Skills qualification. Additionally, students work on Employability (up to Level 2), Duke of Edinburgh (Silver) and there is also the option to study Level 2 in CDT or Food Studies.

7. Cross curricular aims

The curriculum links systematically with the theoretical framework underpinning the School's Behaviour Management Policy, namely the five genetic needs set out in William Glasser's Choice Theory:

- Survival
- Love and Belonging
- Power and Self-worth
- Freedom
- Fun.

Emphasis on addressing these needs run throughout curriculum delivery and are linked with progress within core subjects.

8. Fundamental British Values

Releasing Potential recognises its responsibility to promote an understanding in its students of British values, namely:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of people of all faiths and none.

This essential element of student learning is addressed through a range of curricular and non-curricular activities. Students are encouraged to explore the rights and responsibilities involved in being a member of a family, of Releasing Potential, the wider community, the UK and the world at large. This occurs through all aspects of the curriculum, including PSD, English

and. A range of delivery strategies are used including formal debate, role play and workshops and through additional trips, visits and activities; these include:

- Prison visits
- Council chamber visits
- Participation in local events (such as Remembrance Day services)
- Mock elections and debates to coincide with General/By/Local elections
- Talks by Police and magistrates.

9. Levelling?

As part of the referral process, staff will visit the student at home and will discuss with them and their parent(s) the needs set out in their EHCP and whether /how Releasing Potential may be able to meet them. The focus of this will especially be on the Cognition & Learning Targets set out in the student's EHCP. A decision on levelling will be made at the point of referral and adjustments made in the first half term where necessary.

At the midway point in each half term school leadership will liaise with the Curriculum Lead to review progress for each student against the SOW for the programmes they are following. Adjustments will be made where necessary to ensure each student is working at the appropriate level and can be challenged to fulfil their potential. The Curriculum Lead will gather information from Subject Leads to guarantee that judgements are based on accurate data.

At the end of each term, students in years 10, 11 and 13 are encouraged to complete practice papers for English and Maths in preparation for formal assessments. Completed work is marked on a regular basis against the criteria for English and Maths, these levels are recorded throughout the year and used as a measurement of pupil progression on our database system.

10. Curriculum Planning

We have long-term plans for all subjects delivered. In English and Maths, when possible, a baseline assessment will take place when the student joins on roll and the programme followed in these subjects will be based on the starting point identified. In other core and additional subjects students will start on programmes according to year group expectations and taking into account their age, what we are aware of about their aptitude, previous experience and other additional needs.

Schemes of Work are in place for all subjects and all year groups with differentiation for varying abilities included. Individual subject tutors organise their short-term planning in their own way. However, medium-term (half-termly) planning is submitted by teaching staff to Subject Leads and reviewed, with amendments suggested and support given to staff where appropriate.

11. Curriculum delivery

At Releasing Potential School, we value a group setting very highly and this will always be the goal for students. Our curriculum is delivered through two distinct programmes:

- RP School placement
- Post-16 placement

Timetables are comprised of a combination of elements depending on what best meets the needs of the student and allows for the curriculum to be delivered successfully. Within the above listed programmes the options include but are not limited to:

1. Small group classroom teaching
2. 1:1 sessions
3. Distance learning
4. Work placements (years 10-13 where appropriate)
5. External specialist provision

12. Evidencing

All work completed by students, including reflective journals and workbooks, are part of the evidence of their own work and learning during all subjects. Journals, worksheets and other evidence on Earwig are a way for staff to monitor any changes in the student's awareness of self, self-esteem, ability to recognise achievement, positive and negative attitudes with the aim to make students more self-reflective and understand their own actions, achievements, ability to enjoy and socialise. This evidence is a record of student's progress and achievements across subject areas.

13. Pupil Assessment procedures

Student work is assessed by teaching staff on an ongoing basis with work assessed at the end of each day where possible. Staff are encouraged to give formative feedback as lessons progress, but also to provide a comment on work produced, indicating whether the work has been produced independently (I) or with support (S). Teaching staff assess student work by commenting on:

- Student subject journals
- Worksheets
- Other resources (annotated photographs, video evidence, practical artefacts)

Subject Leads check that students' assessed work evidences the planned learning outcomes for each subject. This is done through a journal/Earwig check for each child for each subject at least once per half term. Subject Leads flag issues with staff and suggest improvements; if necessary, Subject Leads will support teaching staff to amend planning and will support by joining lessons / providing extra student support.

Moderation of assessed work takes place termly where work contributes to a formal qualification. A register of Special Educational Needs is kept up to date with information on additional requirements for student assessment. An [Access to Fair Assessment Policy](#) sets out our responsibility to ensure students access assessment in the best way possible during their time with us.

14. Qualifications

Students are given the opportunity to achieve a number of formal qualifications during their time at Releasing Potential. Achieving these formal qualifications is a clear indicator that students are on track to succeed onto the next stage. We are registered with the Northern College of Further Education (NCFE) to deliver National Vocational Qualifications up to Level 2 and with ASDAN to deliver qualifications from Entry Level 1 to Level 3.

Formal Qualifications are listed below:

Subject	Qualification
English	NCFE English Functional Skills EL1-L2 NCFE English Life Skills EL1-L2
Mathematics	NCFE Maths Functional Skills EL1-L2 NCFE Maths Life Skills EL1-L2
Outdoor Education	NCFE Level 1 Award in Professional Development using Outdoor Activities
Personal & Social Development	NCFE Level 1 Award in Personal & Social Development
Food Studies	NCFE Level 1 Award in Creative Craft – Food NCFE Level 2 Award in Creative Craft - Food
Creative & Design Technology	NCFE Level 1 Award in Creative Craft – CDT NCFE Level 2 Award in Creative Craft - CDT
Employability	ASDAN Employability L1-L2

Releasing Potential recognises achievement throughout many areas of the curriculum and students are able to gain additional Awards and Certificates. This helps to recognise progress and skills accomplished by students in many areas. Additionally, we are accredited to deliver and assess a range of National Governing Body (NGB) awards in outdoor activities:

Examples include:

- British Canoeing Union Awards
- RYA Powerboat L1-L2
- RYA Sailing
- Forest Explorers Award

15. Progress data

Releasing Potential is committed to keeping accurate and up-to-date records of attainment in subjects for all students. Progress across the curriculum is recorded in a range of ways:

- Student progress reports (termly)
- Student attendance and behaviour progress across individual subjects
- Curriculum progress tracking on Earwig by subject (% towards complete by Level)
- Past-paper achievement and predicted outcomes
- Qualification data since school registration
- Student destinations data at 3, 6, 9 & 24 months

For information on Teaching & Learning, Personal Development, Careers Provision and Fundamental British Values at Releasing Potential School, please consult the **Teaching & Learning Policy**.

[Teaching & Learning Policy.docx](#)