

## **Addington Valley Academy – Curriculum Policy**

*Procedure date – May 2020*

*Review date – May 2021*

This document outlines simply, efficiently and clearly the key things we do at Addington Valley Academy to ensure that our students access an outstanding quality of education and make accelerated progress. All students at Addington Valley Academy have an EHCP.

### **OUR CURRICULUM INTENT**

Addington Valley Academy will specialise in providing a high quality learning environment, curriculum and support for students with autism and a range of complex needs. We recognise that children and young people with autism have a range of other needs, including social communication, cognitive, sensory and social, emotional and behavioural and our new school and its staff will have the expertise to support these students.

Our provision and curriculum will be underpinned by a communication and positive behaviour based model that includes therapeutic approaches to incorporate sensory integration, supports our learners to access the core and wider curriculum and understand their world.

Our vision for Addington Valley Academy is to provide a positive environment where children and young people access specialist support so that they can learn and achieve.

Our Vision:

- To work with students, families and the community to provide a kind, caring and collaborative environment that engages, inspires and challenges
- To ensure and develop independence, communication and meaningful outcomes for all students
- To ensure everything supports the students prepare for adulthood
- To ensure everyone is valued and respected

Our Aims:

At Addington Valley Academy we strive to develop the full potential of everyone within our community. We aim to:

- enable our students to achieve their full potential
- create a happy, kind school where students and adults work hard and enjoy their school life in a secure and caring environment
- provide each child with access to the National Curriculum within a broad, balanced, differentiated, supported and relevant curriculum
- emphasise the development of communication, literacy and numeracy within the curriculum

- foster respect for the rights of individuals irrespective of their race, disability, gender, age or creed
- create a school ethos which supports all of its members
- develop students' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence to enable them to become independent and to prepare them for adult life
- Addington Valley Academy teaches all national curriculum subjects (with the exception of Modern Foreign Languages) including:
  - English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities (incorporating Geography, History and RE)
  - Computing,
  - Relationships and Sex Education (incorporating Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship)
  - Physical Education (PE) to all students.
  - Expressive and creative arts , eg Music, Drama and Art

This is underpinned by our values which are to:

- provide a service which offers equality of opportunity and respect to all children, young people and staff
- build quality relationships and interactions which respect an individual's potential to learn
- provide real life learning opportunities within a framework that is flexible, safe and responsive to individual needs
- enable and empower children and young people to identify and work towards their personal aspiration

The curriculum covers all subject areas, but the programme of study is suitably adapted to cater for our students.

- The curriculum design is strongly differentiated to meet students' needs and to incorporate the various therapies on offer, particularly Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy.
- The curriculum content is taught using a Pathways approach, grouping students by need, to ensure that the curriculum intent meets the needs of each student appropriately.
- Our curriculum model enables students' learning to be developed sequentially over time, where learning builds from one year to another. This ensures students are prepared for life after school
- Teachers have real flexibility to adapt their planning to meet the needs of the very complex and challenging students whom they know and understand well.
- Our focus is facilitating quality opportunities for students to learn and make progress. Teachers produce curriculum overviews which are carefully planned to build from one term to the next. Clear differentiation in meeting the needs of all individual students in the class is shown. These plans are available on the school's shared drive. Students' learning is evaluated regularly and activities amended accordingly, so as to plan for real progression.

- All parts of the school day, including breakfast, break times, lunchtimes and assemblies are utilised to the full to deliver the curriculum, including SMSC and British Values.

### ***EYFS/Primary Curriculum***

At Addington Valley Academy we believe that high standards result from an emphasis on child centred, creative, cross-curricular and skills-based learning. We strive to provide a curriculum that is flexible, exciting and personalised that fits each and every one of our pupils rather than making our pupils fit the curriculum.

Our curriculum will consist of three curriculum pathways. These curriculum pathways support our recognition that pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties face learning challenges that can't be supported unless they are immersed within a curriculum that demands us to provide a personalised and varied approach to our teaching in order to prepare them for life after Addington Valley.

The 'EYFS/Primary curriculum' has a themed approach. A thematic approach ignites pupils' motivation to learn and take ownership for their own skills and development. It has capacity to inspire a highly personalised, broad and balanced curriculum with stimulating cross curricular links as well as support a skill based learning approach. We know that it is through these themes that our learners have opportunity to make connections from one area of learning to another as well as deepen and transfer skills learnt at school to their home and local community.

Teachers plan personalised units of work in correlation to a pupils' curriculum pathway. Learners will also have their own 'personal development' outcomes which will be devised from their EHCP further ensuring that all dimensions of learning are explored and developed.

Our cross curricular approach incorporates all National Curriculum subjects and builds on students' knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. Students follow a themed approach grounded in the following,

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Art and Design
- Relationships Education (PHSE/Citizenship)
- Computing
- Food Studies (Design Technology)
- Humanities (History, Geography, RE)
- Expressive and Creative Arts (Music, Dance, Drama)
- Physical Education

### ***Key Stage 3 and 4***

The Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum comprises a range of academic subjects delivered through an approach centred on delivering CORE skills and supported with SPECIALISED teaching,

CORE – Therapy, English, Maths , Relationships and Sex Education (PHSE/Citizenship), Digital Literacy

SPECIALISED - Science, Food Studies (Design Technology) ,Humanities (History, Geography, RE) , Physical Education, Expressive/Creative Arts

### ***Key Stage 5***

Students in the Sixth Form follow a personalised curriculum, around their Pathway. Students work towards a range of BTEC qualifications and appropriate external community based projects/opportunities.

### **THERAPY AND SUPPORT**

The range of therapies we offer, include:

- Speech & Language Therapy (SaLT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Canine Therapy
- Emotional Literacy Support (ELSA)

Depending on the needs of the students, other therapies could include

- Music Therapy
- Drama Therapy
- Drawing and Talking Therapy
- Lego Therapy

### ***Who can access therapy?***

All of our students may benefit from having some form of therapy. SaLT and OT provision will be specified on students EHCPs. Other therapy is accessed following a request from staff, parents or students.

The support can be accessed on a day-to-day basis or through more regular one-to-one or group sessions. Our range of therapies is not entirely dependent on spoken language. For example, sessions in which art, play, drama and movement are a primary means of communication, can be helpful to students who find it difficult to express their thoughts, emotions and feelings verbally.

### ***How can therapy help?***

Students who have endured (and continue to endure) adverse childhood experiences and/or associated mental health difficulties will likely have high stress levels and low self-esteem. Therapy works to:

- provide students with an opportunity to express and reflect on their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a safe environment
- allow students to build a positive therapeutic relationship with the therapist, which raises self-esteem and can alter negative attachment strategies
- enhance students' emotional well-being and encourage creative problem solving
- improve self-esteem, confidence and self-worth
- help to develop students' emotional vocabulary, encouraging and enabling them to identify and name their emotions
- help to develop effective strategies for students to manage their behaviour and their ability to self-regulate their emotions
- help to remove barriers to learning and facilitate better engagement with the curriculum.

### ***Who can benefit from therapy?***

Students who may benefit, include those:

- who have experienced adverse childhood experiences and/or high levels of stress
- who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- with social communication difficulties
- who experience low self-esteem and fear of failure
- who are struggling with life events, such as grief and loss, changes within the family or home, illness
- who have suffered abuse, bullying or other trauma

### ***Confidentiality***

Typically, therapists ensure that all sessions are kept confidential in order to maintain trust within the therapeutic relationship and to create a space that feels safe to explore sensitive and meaningful aspects of the student's life.

A therapist may break confidentiality if they become concerned about a safeguarding risk. The decision to break confidentiality is subject to the professional judgment of the therapist but will always be made with the best interests of the student in mind and with full consideration given to the full context within which the disclosure was made and the foreseeable risks surrounding the concern. Where possible, the therapist will seek consent from the student before making an external disclosure or reporting a concern, unless there is an immediate risk of harm.

### ***Sharing of Information***

Therapists keep records securely and confidentially. Records are kept in order to ensure that actions are conducted in a timely manner and that an ongoing chronology is maintained. Information about students' progress in therapy sessions (in terms of their social and

emotional wellbeing and development) is provided to the leadership team on a regular basis.

### ***Supporting Families***

Addington Valle Academy helps families in a targeted and supportive way. Senior staff meet parents/ carers when their child joins our school to gain a picture of family life, the needs of the student and how we can best support them. We are able to offer parents emotional and practical advice to support their child's journey at Addington Valley. We are also able to act as a strong link between the family, health and social care, we have a dedicated Family Lead who can support with a range of issues.

### ***Home Visits***

Home visits are part of our practice, with their core aims being to:

- gain greater insight into the student's home environment in order to understand the whole child. This is non-judgemental and arranged purely to better meet our students' needs
- reduce anxiety and increase attendance
- build positive relationships with the family
- offer time to the family in their own environment to show a greater sense of support.

## **TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

Students learn in many different ways. Most of our students have particularly complex needs. This often manifests itself in poor behaviour and becomes a barrier to them making progress.

Our job as staff is therefore a significant challenge but one that is faced with enthusiasm and energy. We achieve this in a number of ways:

- We teach using precise learning objectives and differentiated success criteria for each lesson
- We facilitate learning using a wide range of activities and strategies borne out of in-depth knowledge of our students
- We check for prior understanding and use plenaries to check that our students have fully understood the learning objective
- We plan and teach in reference to our assessment milestones, curriculum plans and individual students' learning
- We ensure that the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which students feel safe and that they belong, enjoy learning and being

challenged, trust that they can take risks with their learning and know that they can and will succeed

- We ensure that teaching builds on previous learning through a learning sequence and that constant praise, engaging learning tasks and positive use of our behaviour system keeps students motivated
- We ensure that learning tasks are varied and tailored to individuals.
- We encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way in which they learn, and to reflect on how they learn best – what helps them learn, and what makes it difficult.
- We ensure our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We believe that a stimulating yet calm environment sets the climate for learning, and that an organised classroom promotes focus and independent use of resources, which results in high-quality learning
- Leaders monitor the quality of education through learning walks, lesson observations, workbook scrutiny, student progress meetings, student, teacher and parent interviews and feedback to staff with constructive developmental targets
- We believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role to play in helping students learn which is why we provide weekly updates, set targets together at the start of the year and review overall progress through a detailed Annual Review.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSC)**

Developing our students' social skills and teaching them about healthy living, preparing them for life in modern Britain and enabling them to make positive life choices is of considerable importance. This will include the importance of careers education and independent preparing for adulthood work.

Although relevant across the curriculum, PHSE will also focus on developing knowledge, awareness and understanding of 'protected characteristics'.

Students have a number of "RSE", Relationships and Sex Education lessons each week, alongside Tutor Times and Assemblies. We will track SMSC across the curriculum.

We aim to develop all students':

### ***SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (S)***

- ability to be reflective about themselves
- develop use of imagination and creativity
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

### ***MORAL DEVELOPMENT (M)***

- understanding of right and wrong
- respect for the rule of law in modern Britain
- develop an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions

## ***SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (S)***

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts
- willingness to participate, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- understanding of, and engagement with, the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Develop an understanding, knowledge and awareness of the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, i.e. age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
- NOTE:
  - AVA will ensure that there is no promotion of partisan political viewpoints in the teaching of any subject in the school and that a balanced view is always presented to students.
  - We will take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils while they are in attendance at the school, while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school, or in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

## ***CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (C)***

- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within the school, the local area, the United Kingdom and overseas by:
  - students participating through assemblies in celebrations of different cultures
  - students learning about costume and food from around the world and their links to different religions
  - the school menu being varied to take account of cultural foods of the season or to celebrate a festival
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system
- positive participation to artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities
- improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity
- arranging visits from the police and fire fighters to develop the students' knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a British citizen.

We do the following:

Formally teach a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) scheme of work to all our students which aims to:

- help students develop an understanding of the different types of relationships, including family relationships and protected characteristics
- help students to develop skills in forming and maintaining relationships with others, including their peers
- teach students about the changes to their body that occur during puberty
- introduce students to reproduction.

Formally teach e-safety to students of all ages across the school, according to age and ability.

- Formally and informally teach through RSE lessons, Tutor Times and Assemblies:
  - the development of social skills, including managing anger and emotions, building relationships, dealing with conflict and making positive choices, including online as part of e-safety education
  - the development of anti-discriminatory understanding including knowledge and understanding of bullying, cyber-bullying, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and religious tolerance
  - preparation for life in modern Britain and knowledge of fundamental British values, including cultural diversity, mutual respect, the rule of law, democracy, right & wrong, consequences and the range of faiths, religions and values in Britain and London
  - providing opportunities for reflection, thinking, discussion and formal argument
  - helping our community, supporting charity and helping others
  - personal health and how to stay healthy with specific focus on nutrition and exercise
  - the development of the understanding of risk and keeping safe in everyday life
  - an understanding of the world of business and consumers through enterprise projects and fundraising for projects and/or charities.
  - Wider focus on careers, preparing for adulthood and the Gatsby benchmarks

## **STUDENT COUNCIL AND PUPIL VOICE**

The student council will consist of one representative from each class. Reps will be elected or selected as appropriate. The student council will meet every two weeks and work under the leadership of the senior class teacher. The student council will represent the school and have the opportunity to share pupil voice with an appointed governor and the principal.

## **IMPARTIAL CAREERS INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE**

The Careers programme is part of the AVA planned curriculum and is designed to provide students with a range of qualifications and skills to lead successful and worthwhile lives when they leave AVA. The programme includes these elements:

- learning derived from current career and labour market information

- addressing the specific needs of each student in the form of personal guidance
- placing careers education within the curriculum as a whole
- mapping careers activities to evidence meeting the statutory requirements of the Gatsby career benchmarks:
  - encounters with employers and employees
  - experiences of workplaces
  - encounters with further education
  - personal guidance.

In addition, the careers programme promotes and develops the confidence and skills that will benefit the young people in their future careers. It enables students to participate in real-life working environments, for example to garden centres or local cafes. Visits from guest speakers from industry and local businesses give pupils opportunities to learn about the specific skills and qualities required for different types of work.

Our Careers Leader works closely with local authority officers and the Careers Enterprise Advisor to ensure that the school is compliant with the Gatsby benchmarks.

Key stage 3 students investigate possible future career paths in timetabled careers lessons.

As they move through the school, older students access additional careers experiences such as the opportunity to attend careers fairs in order to make contact with future potential employers and to find out about the world of work.

### ***National Careers Service (NCS)***

Each student is required to complete the NCS skills and health assessments. These enable students to find out about themselves and the different career pathways open to them.

## **ASSESSMENT, MARKING AND FEEDBACK**

We use SOLAR to mark progress of students in national curriculum subjects, alongside short term EHCP Targets that are agreed in consultation with parents to support students EHCP Outcomes.

### **MARKING STUDENTS' WORK**

Marking and feedback is the dialogue that takes place between teacher and learner, in order to ensure that learning objectives are met and that students are secure in their knowledge. This may take a number of forms, including a written dialogue for more able students.

We mark students' work and offer feedback in order to:

- show that we value the students' work, and encourage them to value it too
- help students learn. If students' work is well matched to their abilities, then errors that need to be corrected will not be so numerous as to affect their self-esteem

- promote self-and-peer assessment