

## Curriculum Policy

<b>Date:</b>	Autumn 2017
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	M McLeod
<b>Ratified by:</b>	School Improvement Committee
<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
<b>Frequency of review:</b>	Annual
<b>Date for next review:</b>	Autumn 2018

# Curriculum Policy Document

NHESC offers education to young people in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 3, for those who are excluded from mainstream and for whom education within a mainstream school is no longer appropriate. Students come to the Centre for a variety of reasons: disaffection, poor attendance, school phobia, school refusal, in fact any problem that causes them to become unable to succeed in the mainstream setting.

The purpose of the Centre is to prepare our KS4 students for life beyond school and to prepare KS3 students for reintegration into another mainstream setting where this is deemed appropriate. To this end, the curriculum is designed to offer the students, within the constraints of staffing and resources; a curriculum tailored to the needs of the students with either an academic or vocational bias depending on students' aims and needs. There are opportunities to continue with some GCSE, Entry Level and other qualifications, to develop literacy and numeracy skills, and to prepare for the world of work through vocational accreditation and Work Experience. A number of students, who require a more individualised programme, are offered the opportunity to develop a variety of interests as part of a suite of accredited qualifications. For KS3 students the curriculum is designed to generally follow the KS3 curriculum from mainstream school along with additional social skills focussed activities.

The curriculum at NHESC is 'twin track' with social skills and personal development as central areas of the work of the Centre. The academic thread runs in parallel with the teaching of social skills, the development of resilience, character and support with mental health issues. Both threads are important, as without the SEMH work, the students are unable to even access the academic thread of the curriculum.

Students are encouraged to act as young adults, to listen to each other, to offer support and encouragement to each other and to take responsibility for their actions. Staff work as a team with shared and common goals and strategies to provide a structured environment for these skills to develop.

## **The Centre provides:**

- Programmes for permanently excluded pupils, supporting if appropriate their return to mainstream or their entry into Special School through a reintegration programme
- Education for dual registered KS4 pupils and KS3 pupils;
- North Herts Support Service work in schools with pupils in Key Stages 1- 4 who are at risk of exclusion;
- Reintegration support for KS3 (liaising with Stevenage ESC and Student Services) and KS4 (liaising with Student Services) students;
- Work Experience;
- Advice for teachers in mainstream schools;
- A source of advice for parents/carers.

## **Curriculum Aims**

The aim of the Centre reflects the aims of the Local Authority. The overall aim is to establish a broad and balanced curriculum which provides educational opportunities enabling students of all abilities to experience success achieve high standards and as appropriate, reintegrate into mainstream schools.

The NHESC Curriculum Policies and Schemes of Work reflect, where appropriate exam/course specification guidance and programmes of study.

The Centre aims to provide an education for students comparable with that for mainstream peers in the same key stage; to support the principle of reintegration; and to ensure that, as far as is possible, they have the same access to Further Education and employment opportunities as their peers.

At NHESC however, the curriculum is firmly based around the development of the students' emotional and behavioural issues. here are different waves of intervention, Wave One being the high quality basic provision, Wave Two offers a range of interventions, numeracy, literacy and SEMH/attendance and Wave Three are bespoke programmes for students who are currently unable to access education in a safe and appropriate fashion. For further information please refer to NHESC SEND Policy.

As stated above, the central facets of the work of the NHESC are; the raising of self-esteem and developing responsibility and independence; encouraging students to work with others, and to develop understanding and tolerance of others' needs and opinions. Careers and PSHE are integrated as part of the Tutor Periods. PSHE forms the basis of all the social skills work which also takes place in less formal

settings throughout the school day (for example pre-lesson time, break and whilst the students are eating and also during extended activities outside of timetabled hours).

As part of the curriculum at NHESC, students are encouraged to:

- Exercise personal responsibility and develop positive, co-operative relationships with others;
- Deepen their awareness of their own and others' moral development and emotional and spiritual needs;
- Read and write both for pleasure and information, presenting their work in suitable ways for a variety of audiences and purposes;
- Speak clearly and with self-confidence, giving facts and opinions and distinguishing between them;
- Listen attentively to others, acknowledging others' rights to their opinions and beliefs;
- Develop good numeracy skills and the ability to understand and apply mathematical knowledge and concepts in a variety of situations;
- Develop the skills of scientific inquiry, make and test hypotheses, conduct experiments safely and extend scientific knowledge;
- Develop ICT skills and develop an awareness of their importance in today's technological society;
- Develop their technological skills through design, practical activity and evaluation;
- Use varied resources in their research, investigations and projects, including books; artefacts, electronic aids and information technology;
- Develop independence in their studies and researches;
- Produce, appreciate and enjoy variety in artistic expressions and creations;
- Understand some of the physical and human influences that shape the world and appreciate people's aspirations and achievements both historically and now;
- Participate in and enjoy physical activities, developing skills, both as individuals and as part of a team;
- Develop an awareness and have some experience of employment possibilities and training opportunities;
- Extend knowledge and experience a range of varied opportunities for recreation and leisure;
- Be informed of economic, environmental, political, cultural and social issues in a pluralistic, multi-ethnic society;
- Develop critical and evaluative faculties, including those of self-evaluation.

### **Organisation of Provision**

Curriculum planning is designed to provide a broad and balanced curriculum allowing staff to meet the needs of the individual pupils, both socially, emotionally, behaviourally and academically. There is a liaison with schools, FE colleges and other agencies e.g. police liaison workers, health care and Careers. Work experience placements, where appropriate and possible form a part of the KS4 students' curriculum.

When a student has been offered a place at the Centre, they are placed on one of the on-site programmes. The first few weeks are a period of assessment, allowing students to become familiar with the ethos and routines of the Centre and staff to get to know the students.

The Centre offers four different programmes across two sites which are designed to meet the varying needs and interests of students;

### **Briar Patch GCSE Programme**

Our more academically able students and those suited to learning in a more formal classroom setting are placed on our GCSE Programme at the Briar Patch Site. Here students have the opportunity to follow a range of accredited GCSE Courses. These include; English, Maths, Science Biology GCSE, Cambridge Nationals Level 1 or Level 2 in ICT, AQA Awards in PE with a further option of either a GCSE in Art, a GCSE in Leisure and Tourism, a Level 2 Award in Understanding Business Enterprise or Edexcel BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Sport or BTEC Entry 3/Level 1 in Sport and Active Leisure.

All students study PSHE, Citizenship and elements from Preparing for Working Life during their Tutor Periods.

Students on this programme are also able to choose one of the following Level 1 vocational courses to study for an afternoon per week at the Bancroft site; Hair and Beauty, Catering, Construction, Music or Mechanics (Mechanics is held on our Briar Patch site on Monday mornings).

### **Bancroft Vocational Programme**

Students are based at this site from Monday to Friday, where they have the opportunity to follow a vocational course accredited by either City and Guilds or BTEC in: Construction, Hair and Beauty, Catering or Mechanics (based at Briar Patch on Tuesday and Thursday). A GCSE qualification is also possible in Catering. In addition students have a further option of either a GCSE in Art, Leisure and Tourism, a Level 2 Award in Understanding Business Enterprise or Edexcel BTEC Entry 3/Level 1 in Sport and Active Leisure.

All students study PSHE, Citizenship and elements from Preparing for Working Life during their Tutor Periods.

### **Briar Patch and Bancroft New Horizons Programme**

Students who are unable to manage successfully on our Vocational and GCSE programmes and require more assessments in order for us to meet their needs are placed on our New Horizons programmes. They have lessons in English and Maths and have the opportunity to gain GCSE, Entry Level or Functional Skills qualifications in English and Maths. There is also the opportunity for every student to gain a Functional Skills qualification in ICT. These students also have a choice of which practical subjects to follow which include cycle mechanics, music technology, art, cooking, sewing, craft and horticulture, and are able to gain accredited qualifications in each at a range of levels as appropriate. AQA Awards in PE can also be gained after following a range of sports and outdoor pursuits activities. Students are also offered the opportunity to take part on our Saddle Up Horse Riding provision the Right Trax motorcycle course. All students study PSHE, Citizenship and elements from Preparing for Working Life during their Tutor Period sessions. If they are interested in a vocational pathway they are placed on the Bancroft New Horizons programme where they have access to a vocational subject, hair dressing, catering and construction. The work on the New Horizons programmes is far more focused on the students' complex and frequently severe emotional, behavioural, social and mental health needs.

A number of students from across all Programmes are offered the opportunity to join our Saddle Up, Horse Riding provision at a local Stables.

### **Key Stage 3**

Our Key Stage 3 provision which opened in September 2012 and offers respite placements for up to six students in years 7, 8 and 9. This provision offers young people the opportunity to follow a very similar curriculum to the mainstream schools. Students placed with us will study English, Maths, Science, Art and Craft, ICT, Worldwide, Life-skills, Horticulture, Working with Food and PE.

Students are offered the opportunity to study for several Short Course Awards, depending on the amount of time they spend with us.

Students are also assessed to establish the major reasons for their troubled time in their mainstream school. Whilst much of the time is spent on academic work, there is just as much emphasis on personal and social education.

Students' placements at the Centre are often a time for them to relax a little and to take time out of a situation that is not working for them or for their school and to gather strength and ideas to move forwards. We are in a position to give students the time and space to reflect on the way they operate in mainstream school, try out new ways of approaching problems and if necessary refer them services that we feel will help them to make a success of their time in compulsory education.

### **Bridge 29**

Our Bridge 29 provision is for aims to improve the attendance of the most vulnerable and damaged young people in Hertfordshire; those that are Children Looked After and live in the Hertfordshire Children's Homes. The programme helps students to access education, staff from Bridge 29 travel to the children's homes each day, build close relationships with the young people, bring them to the Bridge 29 school building and support them with accessing as much of the curriculum as they can cope with. Once they are confident in Bridge 29, they are eased into the onsite groups at NHESC. This way the student can access more qualifications and experiences. The Bridge 29 support is always there, if the student deteriorates then we move them back into the Bridge 29 sessions until once again they can access the NHESC groups.

The programme introduced 1-1 work experience for the students where the member of staff stays with the student at the work placement, gradually removing themselves once the student

had built up their confidence. Recent work experience placements have been in a boutique, a dog kennels, Canine Holidays, which provides care and exercise for pets while their owners are away and a plumbing company.

### **North Herts Alternative Solutions (NHAS)**

NHAS offers English and Maths exams to Functional Skills, Entry Level and GCSE standards and generally all young people would be expected to follow the syllabus requirements of all three, in order to leave with as many qualifications as possible and would be expected to leave with at least one of these. We also follow the programme for PSHE, particularly the Careers and Further Education module, in order provide discussion and target setting for their post 16 planning.

Young people are all offered Construction, Catering and PE options; on site they can study towards any qualification currently offered by NHESC. This means that it is also possible for young people to follow Science and ICT Entry Level or GCSE courses should these be appropriate. The integration of programmes from mainstream and other Educational and Recreational Providers (horse riding, motorbike skills, climbing and Go Karting for example) are always explored and implemented if they are deemed to be beneficial.

AQA units in a whole variety of subjects are also available including Cooking, and PE. NHAS personnel have used their own contacts within the community to establish work experiences for young peoples in Mechanics and retail work and these options continue to be available.

The Young person's timetable is a minimum of 5, half day sessions. This amounts to a minimum of 15 hours, young people often attend for considerably more.

Careful consideration is given to the young person's situation and capabilities in determining the timetable. Wherever possible NHAS groups young people in order to best facilitate the development of positive relationships with Peers as well as adults, when behaviours make this impossible young people are taught 1-1.

In most cases, Young people are picked up and dropped home by a member of NHAS staff. Journey time is seen as an important time of the day and staff use it to give feedback, reinforce messages and gather information on the young person.

Whilst much of the time is spent on academic work, there is just as much emphasis on personal and social education. This is described as a twin track system. There are frequent trips such as to local places of interest, for leisure activities, the Zoo and frequent trips to the gym and at the end of each term, to places of particular interest to the young people. They are usually planned by the young people themselves to encourage the understanding of public transport timetables, budgeting and timing.

## **Methods and Ethos for the Delivery of the Curriculum**

### **1. Groupings**

Student groupings are discussed by the staff, taking into account the academic abilities as well as personalities of the students involved and any particular personality clashes which might occur. There are four teaching groups on the Briar Patch GCSE Programme and on the Bancroft Vocational Programme, consisting of a maximum of 6 students in each. The Briar Patch and Bancroft New Horizons Programmes are organised in a more flexible way according to student needs. All groups are a mixture across the Key Stage.

Groupings change as the need arises, for example as new students join the Centre, or if staff find that certain students cannot work well together.

### **2. Life Skills and Social Skills Work**

#### Break-times

Students are encouraged to eat, drink and act appropriately both in the kitchen and lounge areas. Behaviour in the kitchen is closely monitored. Students who are eating are expected to do so sitting at the table. Students are guided and supervised closely whilst preparing, cooking food and then clearing up. Life skills are developed and health and safety in the home instilled. No food or drink is allowed upstairs in the teaching areas. Both students and staff are expected to either wash up their own cups and plates or load them neatly into the dishwasher as appropriate.

Students have the opportunity to play pool, table tennis, computer games, tennis, basketball and indoor board games, with staff supervision, which they can negotiate; setting up situations for staff/student relationships to develop and to encourage fair play and co-operation. They are encouraged to talk both to each other and to members of staff.

If a student seems unwilling or unable to integrate with others, a member of staff will go and sit with them, talk about what might be worrying them, or just encourage them to talk about themselves, what they've been doing, what they've watched on TV, and so on.

During this time, basic life skills and social skills work takes place, based mainly around the kitchen, lounge and eating areas. However there is also considerable co-operative group work planned and encouraged around the area of the kitchen and during the eating of food together.

#### At the end of the day

Staff supervise students and monitor their behaviour as they leave the site, chatting with them about anything which seems appropriate. This involves accompanying students down the drive at the Briar Patch site, and watching students as they cross the road on both sites. If there seems to be any reasons for concern, these can be discussed by staff and talked through with the student/s concerned at the next opportunity. The walk down the drive at the Briar Patch site and seeing the students off home is a time when much social skills and road safety work happens.

### **3. Variety of Teaching Approaches**

- There is both text based and whole group teaching, with many activities having a practical emphasis requiring students to undertake investigations and research
- Many lessons are self-contained, but there are opportunities for longer pieces of work which require planning, redrafting and the gathering and editing of several sources
- Students have opportunities to present their learning in a variety of ways, including oral presentations, video and record, displays, portfolios and creative events such as presenting a play or movie at Christmas, and through modules which offer external as well as internal certification, for example, canoeing
- Students are offered opportunities to work in 1:1 situations with staff who will focus on literacy and numeracy needs but will also offer support with other Curriculum areas as appropriate

### **4. Whole Centre projects and initiatives and the development of a sense of community**

- Students can undertake some form of community work as part of the wider curriculum
- Students have been involved in whole Centre projects such as our wall hanging, making a mosaic plaque, creating a large painting which is displayed by the entrance and planting small trees and shrubs
- Once a year in the Autumn Term, all students take part in Activities Week which includes activities as diverse as dry-slope skiing, visiting a Birds of Prey Centre and a sponsored walk
- Once a year, students and staff organise and hold a Christmas Fayre and Drama Production
- Through Student Council meetings, students play a part in the decision making process of the Centre

### **5. Using the interests and experiences of students beyond the Centre**

- Staff try to ensure that students' interests are catered for and extended when possible. Additional activities such as fishing, bird watching and local history have all been enhanced by students' own enthusiasm, and willingness to take the rest of the group to see or do what they themselves have found interesting
- Students have the opportunity to organise an annual trip for the Centre
- Students organise tournaments such as tennis or pool for staff and students at the Centre
- Students and staff often participate in a sponsored walk round Grafham Water to raise funds for the Centre
- Staff and students often organise and enjoy a residential trip
- Work Experience takes place on an individual basis according to student interest

### **6. Resources**

There are two main sites for the KS4 students: Briar Patch in Letchworth and Bancroft in Hitchin. Bridge 29 is based next door to Bancroft in Hitchin and the Alternative Solutions base is on the Valley School site in Stevenage. The KS3 site is based next to the Briar Patch Site in Letchworth. Where accommodation allows, furnishings and teaching room organisation reflects the ethos of a Centre for students; areas are carpeted where appropriate and the lounge has soft furnishings to reflect a relaxed and homely feel. The Centre's facilities for Outdoor Pursuits and PE are extended by making

use of the local facilities. The Centre takes as much opportunity as possible to use community resources such as the Leisure Centre, swimming pool, golf range and so on. Staff also draw on their own personal contacts to enhance work done, for example to support the Careers Conference.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

The development of these attributes is promoted within the curriculum and through the quality of relationships, by the role models provided by staff and by the quality of life in the Centre. Much of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is done as part of the 'hidden' curriculum times before school starts, at break-times or during lessons when appropriate.

- As part of the Centre's ethos, there is an emphasis on building trust and openness, sharing common problems in a climate of respect for self and others. Activities such as Student Council and other semi-structured or informal discussions, such as break times and lunchtimes assist SMSC developments
- Mini assemblies can take place at the end of break-times and can be used by staff to talk about an item of news, national or local, religious days/celebrations, National Days/celebrations such as Remembrance Day
- Students are can also be brought together at the beginning or end of the school day and at the end of breaks. At these times, notices are given out, awards and certificates are presented, and any comments about work and behaviour are made. The students are encouraged to feel good about themselves and what they are doing, and these times are used for setting a positive tone to the day
- Part of the ethos of the Centre encourages students to work collaboratively with staff. Students are encouraged to help each other as well as staff. Students take part in whole Centre community events such as the Christmas meal
- The Centre has adequate social areas and facilities for students where they have opportunities to socialise with others
- Students are encouraged to take part in constructive leisure pursuits which can provide opportunities for developing levels of responsibility for themselves and others, a high degree of co-operation and teamwork, new skills, self-esteem and confidence and constructive reflection upon their own and the teams' progress
- Art, music and drama events have provided opportunities to enhance cultural and perhaps spiritual development as well as a sense of community, shared experience and teamwork. The students have thoroughly enjoyed doing them and they have both increased their own self-esteem and the general profile of the Centre itself
- Students make visits to art galleries, museums and theatres as part of their Curriculum course. This enhances the appreciation of the contributions of other cultures and religious groups

### **Planning and Monitoring**

Staff write Schemes of Work and Lesson Plans for their curricular areas. Schemes of Work are monitored through Performance Appraisal and Curriculum Reviews, and new schemes will be based on what has been achieved in the previous term. Staff endeavour to mark students' work during the class as much as possible, so that students can see and hear comments made, and respond to them. Students are monitored each lesson for both academic progress and for their behaviour, with staff making notes on daily record sheets.

Students are made aware if there are any great difficulties or there is great progress. These notes form the basis of any discussions about the students, which take place at daily staff meetings, at which daily notes are made in the tutor files. Generally it is students who are giving cause for concern who are particularly discussed at the meetings, and staff are able to pool their knowledge and decide on strategies for resolving the situation.

Students have their Interim Review Meeting about 8 weeks after they have started at the Centre. Parents/carers and the students' mainstream school are both invited to attend as are any other outside agencies involved with that student. All staff contribute to the written reports and at the Meeting the Tutor talks through how the student has been progressing during their first 8 weeks, and the targets which have been set for them. The student's place at the Centre is confirmed. Parents/carers are also asked to complete the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire.

Reports on students' academic progress are sent home on a regular basis. All students have at least one full written annual report.

## **Assessment and Records**

The Centre has an Assessment and Marking Policy – see policy file. Baseline assessments are carried out to ascertain starting points and whether there are any additional learning needs for students and to enable a programme of support to be put in place.

Students' progress is also monitored and evaluated through a combination of teacher assessment and summative assessment of the planned curriculum. Students' Records of Achievement are integral to the process and support progression and continuity.

- At Admission the Centre asks students' previous schools for clear assessment information about prior attainments upon which to base the planning of the curriculum for individual pupils and from which to gauge progress. This information is included in the student's profile file
- The Centre's own baseline assessment in Reading, Spelling and Numeracy is used to identify strengths and gaps in prior learning, and to decide which students would benefit from additional support
- Teachers assess students regularly – both in terms of behaviour and academic progress – and keep records of their completed work indicating both progress and attainment
- Detailed progress within curriculum areas is recorded through the Doodle 'I Can' statements. Progress towards end of Key Stage Targets is monitored through our STEPS Database and shared with parents/carers each term.
- Clear, regular, encouraging discussions are held with students about their achievements, progress in meeting targets and in setting new ones. This strengthens motivation and helps to identify the next learning objective. Each student has an Interim Review Meeting approximately 8 weeks after joining the Centre. There are Parent/Carer events for students each academic year where reports are also written. A Leavers' Report is written when a student moves on from the Centre.
- Records of Achievement form a very important part of the recognition process for student progress and achievement. Student self-assessment and involvement in compiling a Record of Achievement enhances a sense of achievement. Records of Achievement are appropriate and valuable and are used to record their interests, skills, abilities and goals as well as academic attainments
- Students receive certificates for modules completed, outside activities and also for good attendance, and these go into their Progress File. For staff, they provide a valuable analysis of pupil progress and achievements helping them to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and the Centre's provision

## **Links with Parents/Carers**

- The Centre tries to maintain close links with parents/carers to ensure that the students' needs, both social and academic are met. Any concerns that arise through these contacts are discussed at the weekly staff meetings and noted in student files
- Parents/carers are informed as to the group of Staff that have been assigned as their daughter/son's Tutor Group. The members of the Tutor Group will be the first people to contact with concerns that parents/carers may have
- The Centre has a Parents' Brochure, which is given to parents of all new students
- A Newsletter written by both staff and students is produced on a termly basis. All parents/carers receive a copy
- We attempt to have Parent Representative on the Governing Board
- We have two Parent Support Workers at the Centre who work on providing enhanced support for some of our parents with the greatest need for support and who also signpost and encourage parents to attend courses and workshops aimed at parents on topics of interest or concern
- Parents/carers are contacted in the event of unexplained absence by a student and the reason noted in the student's daily notes
- Parents/carers are invited to attend Parent Carer Events.
- Parents/carers come to the Interim Review Meeting. At this time parents/carers are invited to comment on any changes which they have seen so far in their son/daughter, and how they feel we could support them further
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Centre with any worries or concerns they may have about their son/daughter
- The Centre will invite parents/carers in to discuss a student's progress if it is giving concern. The meetings are always held in a supportive and friendly way, to encourage parents/carers to see us as a support to them with their son/daughter

- Parents/carers are invited into the Centre for special occasions, such as the Christmas Fayre.
- Parents/carers are rung regularly with positive feedback

### **Networks**

- The Centre maintains close links with a network of colleagues from different organisations, such as the Connexions Service, employers and local places of interest. These can be called upon to support our work with the students
- Through the Governing Board and Support Service, attendance at the local partnership meetings the Centre has access to local mainstream schools, and maintains close links with them. In addition the Centre has been fortunate in the past to receive money from the Heritage Foundation to fund important projects which it would not have been able to fund on its own, or through fundraising. The Centre bids for a variety of grants that become available throughout the year

### **Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation**

Curriculum Leads will oversee marking and assessment practice within their areas of responsibility. Detailed progress within curriculum areas is recorded through the Doodle 'I Can' statements. Progress towards end of Key Stage Targets is monitored through our STEPS Database. Full Lesson Observations, Work Trawl and Curriculum Area Reviews are carried out by the Head and SLT. The Leadership Team and the Management Committee will evaluate the success of the policy by asking for feedback from students, teachers and parents.

The Head will report annually to the Governing Board on:

- the outcomes of monitoring and changes in practice that have resulted from them
- the overall standards achieved in each Curriculum Area
- the overall standards achieved at the end of KS4 by vulnerable group and key stage
- the impact of external intervention or support on standards
- the views of staff about the action required to improve standards
- feedback received from students and parents