

# The Link Secondary School

## Curriculum Policy

For review September 2021  
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### CURRICULUM POLICY

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#### Introduction:

Professor Michael Young describes the curriculum as an entitlement to ‘powerful knowledge’ and asks if schools offer this entitlement to all<sup>1</sup>. At The Link Secondary School, we believe this entitlement is for every student on our role. As a specialist provision for SLCN and ASC needs, we must reflect upon what powerful knowledge means for our students and ensure they can access this fundamental entitlement. Our curriculum is designed to provide ‘powerful knowledge’ for all students as both learned academic information and an acquired set of social and life skills. Whilst for some, knowledge and skills are two separate yet inextricably linked concepts, for our students they are more often one and the same thing. For many, social skills are not something naturally, gradually acquired through life, but are something which must be learned the way one may regard the learning of algebra or grammatical structure.

#### Intent:

Our vision is for all students to leave our school with enriched and developed **wellbeing, independence, communication and achievement**. This is what drives everything we do at The Link. Our curriculum is designed with a view to help students develop each of these aspects over their time here and ultimately we want to see:

- Students gaining up to nine external accreditations including English and Maths
- Students equipped with skills to enable them to look after themselves in the wider community

- Students leaving with the ability to complete straightforward aspects of everyday living
- Inclusive curriculum content to provide all with academic knowledge in formal and physical expressive curriculum areas
- Inclusive curriculum content to provide all KS5 students with a robust external independent curriculum offer
- An extensively researched and fully embedded appropriately tailored SRE curriculum which meets all new DfE requirements

All teachers are trained in their subject specialism and deliver high quality subject-knowledge driven content. In a collaborative approach to curriculum aims, all teachers have collectively reflected upon and developed a robust sense of curricular direction; demonstrated in measured long term plans and subject specific statements of curriculum intent. These statements consider how the curriculum promotes school values and in turn British values, as well as noting any rationale behind the sequencing of topics, learning, skills and ideas.

### Implementation:

Our curriculum structure is tailored to each pathway:

Three classes in KS3 in which both year 7 and year 8 students are taught together:

**Yates** – a nurture based class who stays with the same tutor for most subjects.

**Tomlin** – a class with a greater level of targeted support.

**Fuller** – a class with a greater level of monitored independent learning.

Three classes in KS4 in which years 9, 10 and 11 students are taught together:

**Rowsell** – with a greater level of targeted support.

**Weir** – with a slightly lower level of targeted support than Rowsell.

**Wood** – with a greater level of monitored independent learning.

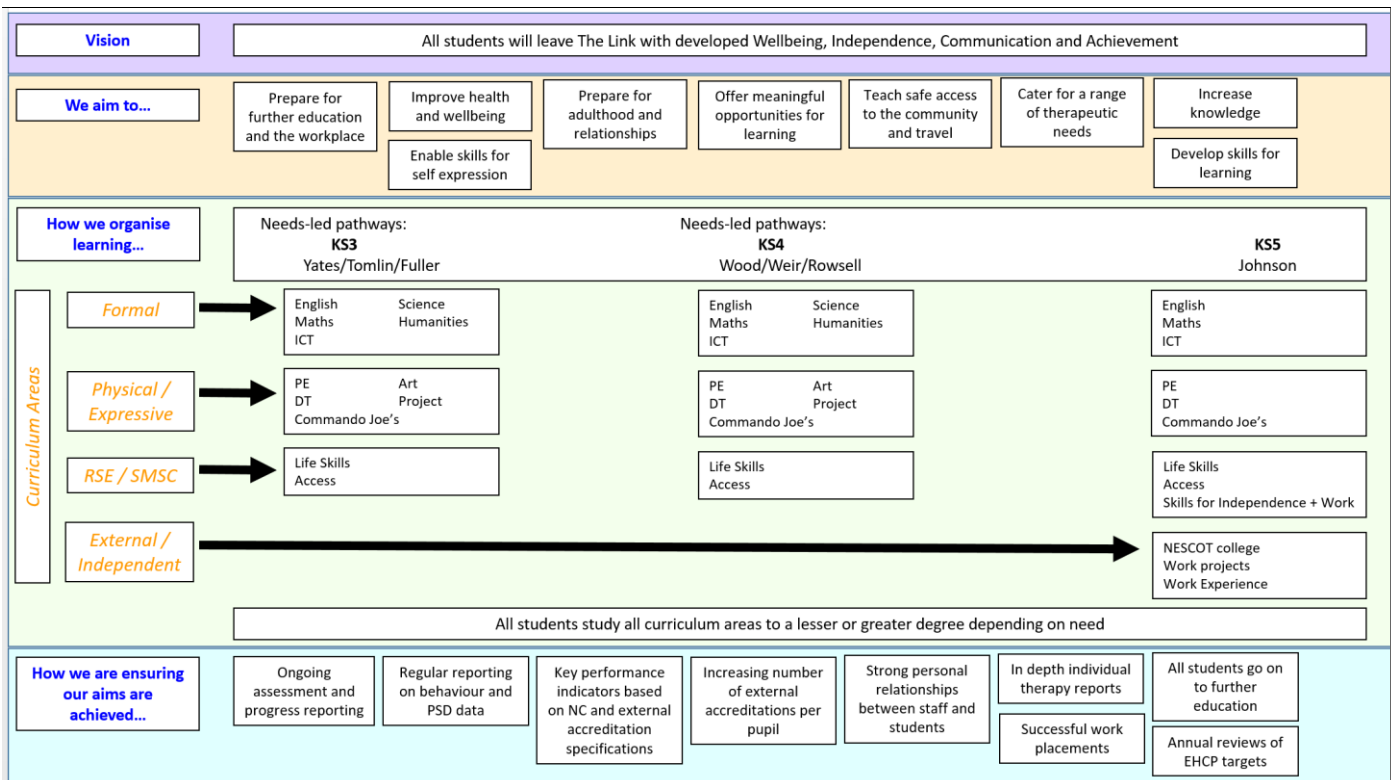
One class in KS5 in which years 12 and 13 students are taught together:

**Johnson** – a highly differentiated curriculum with greater opportunities for external independent learning and preparation for college.

All subjects come under one of the four curriculum areas:

***Formal, Physical Expressive, SMSC and External Independent***

### How we organise learning:



Aside from External Independent learning at NESCOT college which is available at KS5 only, all students study all curriculum areas to a lesser or greater degree depending on pathway. This is determined by arranging all curriculum area subjects into Core, Foundation, and Access. All students receive the same number of Access sessions. All students at KS3 and KS4 receive the same number of Core sessions and all students receive different numbers of Foundation sessions depending on need:

|                | Core    |       |         |     |    | Foundation |    |     |       |             |         |                | Access                 | Total |           |
|----------------|---------|-------|---------|-----|----|------------|----|-----|-------|-------------|---------|----------------|------------------------|-------|-----------|
|                | English | Maths | Science | ICT | PE | Humanities | DT | Art | ASDAN | Life Skills | Project | Commando Joe's | Careers and Enterprise |       | Access    |
| <b>Yates</b>   | 4       | 4     | 2       | 1   | 2  | 2          | 3  |     |       | 7           | 2       | 1              |                        | 2     | <b>30</b> |
| <b>Tomlin</b>  | 4       | 4     | 3       | 1   | 2  | 3          | 3  | 2   |       | 3           | 2       | 1              |                        | 2     | <b>30</b> |
| <b>Fuller</b>  | 4       | 4     | 3       | 1   | 2  | 3          | 3  | 2   |       | 3           | 2       | 1              |                        | 2     | <b>30</b> |
| <b>Rowsell</b> | 4       | 4     | 3       | 1   | 2  | 3          | 3  | 1   | 2     | 2           | 2       | 1              |                        | 2     | <b>30</b> |
| <b>Weir</b>    | 4       | 4     | 3       | 1   | 2  | 3          | 2  | 2   | 2     | 2           | 2       | 1              |                        | 2     | <b>30</b> |
| <b>Wood</b>    | 4       | 4     | 3       | 1   | 2  | 3          | 2  | 3   | 2     | 2           | 2       |                |                        | 2     | <b>30</b> |
| <b>Johnson</b> | 2       | 2     |         | 1   | 2  |            | 2  |     |       | 2           |         | 1              | 4                      | 2     | <b>18</b> |
|                | 26      | 26    | 17      | 7   | 14 | 17         | 18 | 10  | 6     | 21          | 12      | 6              | 4                      | 14    |           |

### Impact:

The impact of our curriculum is measured and evidenced in both formative and summative forms of assessment. Using assessment monitoring software SOLAR, we use a series of levels called 'Link Steps' loosely based around National Curriculum P-Levels however using far more personalised criteria. This criteria is in the form of written key performance indicators created by our own subject specialists. We also use the specification criteria from all of the externally accredited courses taught in school for our key stage 4 and 5 students. This system is updated by teachers as an ongoing process and each term a progress report is generated and sent home to parents. Alongside this report is a personal development

report detailing the positive behaviour achievements attained by our students, these relate to our school's values and are a way for us to measure the progress our students make, not only in academia but in moving closer to securing the aim we hold for all our children as set out in our whole school vision of **wellbeing, independence, communication and achievement**.

We believe that student progress towards this vision is also underpinned by the work they do with our therapy team. Our therapists annually report the progress made by all students and this is also reflected in the updated annual reviews.

Overall, each individual student is closely monitored by all staff, whether this is in the form of subject based criteria, therapy reports, annual reviews, intervention progress or just the verbal discussions which form part of everyday life at The Link, particularly in structured professional and team meetings. One of the strongest indicators of the impact of our curriculum is the fact that one hundred percent of our students go on to further education.

#### How we are ensuring our aims are achieved:

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|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing assessment and progress reporting</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular reporting on behaviour and PSD data</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key performance indicators based on NC and external accreditation specifications</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing number of external accreditations per pupil</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong personal relationships between staff and students</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In depth individual therapy reports</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful work placements</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate pace to the lesson;</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking time before answering questions</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open-ended, thought provoking, challenging questions of the children;</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students go on to further education</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual reviews of EHCP targets</li> </ul>   |

#### SMSC, Work Experience and SRE:

Our SMSC curriculum area is comprised of Life Skills and Access. The Life Skills course has been designed to cover all national requirements and build on the existing knowledge of students to varying degrees. This begins with exploring the notion of 'identity' and a 'personal action plan' which allows the students to immediately relate the topics to themselves and their own lives moving forward. This is then built upon by topics covering 'risk and safety' and then 'emotional well-being' to identify how well-being may be compromised and in turn how it can be developed. This is extended further in the following topic of 'healthy lifestyles' which gives a practical application for the knowledge gained so far throughout the course. At KS4 this also incorporates direct learning in relation to college courses and applications. The idea of wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle both physically and emotionally is then developed further in the next topic of relationships. After looking at relationships the students go on to study personal finance and managing money, this ties into the functional numeracy learned in maths and links back to risk and safety. Finally, students explore Britain and British values, looking at how the ideas they have studied fit in with our democracy, rule of law, personal liberties, rights and responsibilities etc.

The topic of SRE is currently under development in preparation for the statutory government guidelines in place in September 2020. A team of staff including the Headteacher, Deputy Head for Teaching and Learning, Head of Foundation and Life Skills and Science Teacher/Post 16 Tutor are, between them, receiving external training and meeting to discuss how the SRE curriculum will be gradually trialed and rolled out to all students by the Summer term. As our students have social needs and a high degree of vulnerability, it is vital to ensure the program is as effective and appropriate as possible. We aim for all students to be appropriately prepared for 'real life' scenarios without increasing existing anxieties.

