701AHS

Alderwasley Hall School and Sixth Form Curriculum Policy

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Related Policies and Guidance Documents	Curriculum Policy Marking and feedback policy Assessment policy Literacy and Numeracy Policy SENAD's Disability and Accessibility policy Positive Behaviour Support policy
Related Regulations	
Annexes and Supplementary Info	
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June 2025	Significant review/rewrite to reflect development

Alderwasley Hall School and Sixth Form – Curriculum Policy



The curriculum is the framework for everything we do in school. It combines everything that is planned and delivered in or out of lessons with other learning opportunities. Through the curriculum, we develop students' knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence to prepare them for their futures.

Introduction to Alderwasley Hall School

Alderwasley Hall School and Sixth Form provides exceptional education for day and residential students aged 5 to 20. We transform the lives of young people with Autism and Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). We are also highly experienced in working with associated diagnoses such as Selective Mutism and mental health needs, such as depression and anxiety.

Our goal is for every student to be happy, healthy, valued and purposeful. Teachers, therapists, Learning Support Workers and care staff work together to promote a sense of belonging, a sense of productivity and good emotional and physical wellbeing.

Context of the school

Students attend Alderwasley Hall when it is determined that other provisions do not adequately meet their needs. Typically, students join Alderwasley Hall later in their schooling, often after facing prolonged absence from previous schools or struggling with attendance issues. Many students arriving in Year 9 and 10 lack adequate coverage of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, while those entering Year 11 and 12 may not have covered GCSE syllabuses or sat any exams by Year 12.

Our curriculum is designed to narrow any gaps caused by fragmented educational journeys. It offers flexibility in qualification timings, allowing students to take exams from Year 11 onwards. The provision encompasses a range of academic pathways to encourage progress for all abilities. Despite being a smaller institution compared to mainstream secondary schools, we maximise resources to provide a comprehensive educational experience.

Intent

We recognise that students attending Alderwasley Hall School have specific needs. Our curriculum aims to meet these needs and, as a result, is bespoke to our setting. It blends therapeutic input with functional life skills and academic subjects. Our goal is that students are enabled to be active learners, who fulfil their potential academically, socially and independently. Therefore, we give all students opportunities to make informed choices so they can develop their own pathway. Each individual pathway will be destination-led to maximise individual progress and lead to appropriate next steps.

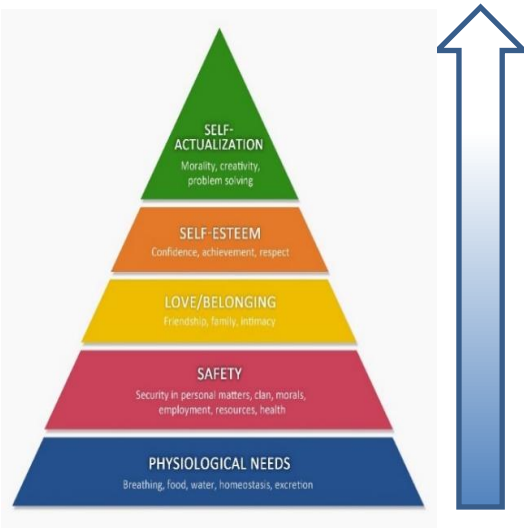
The intent of our curriculum is to ensure that every young person becomes:

- **Independent**
- **Literate**
- **Numerate**
- **Creative**
- **Problem solvers**



These broad areas are the foundations for further learning. To ensure each young person has robust foundations for learning, we can adapt to the learner's needs if one area requires more development than the others. However, it is still vital that our broad and balanced curriculum offer has a proportionate element of each of the 5 areas within each Key Stage. In Key Stage 4 and 5, students can increasingly choose which areas of study and qualifications they want to study and achieve, while all students continue to work in the development of independence as relevant to their career pathway.

The AHS curriculum establishes, or re-establishes, a love of learning and preparation for adulthood. We provide appropriate challenge and experiences supported by highly specialised staff.



Enriching Curriculum

Core (Academic and non-Academic) Curriculum

Therapeutic Curriculum

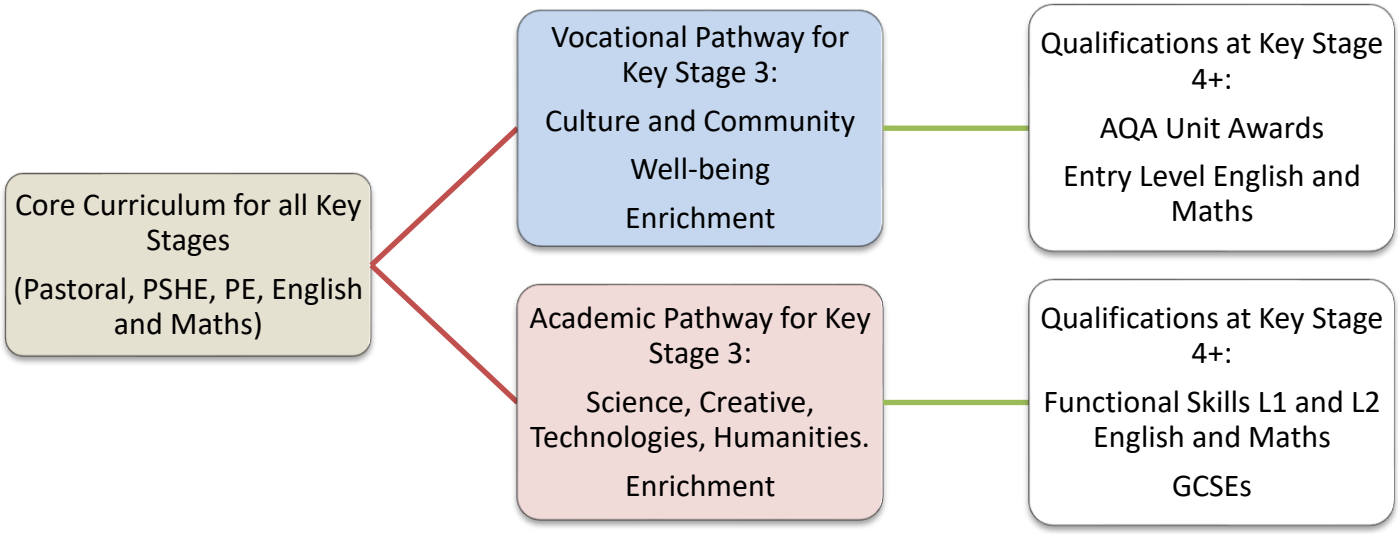
Implementation

Our Curriculum has 3 distinctive areas to it The ***Therapeutic*** Curriculum; The ***Core*** Curriculum; and the ***Enriching*** Curriculum. It is informed by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, as seen in the figure above.

The **Therapeutic** Curriculum is designed and implemented by our specialist therapy team. Therapists provide support individually, in small groups and out in the community. Targeted interventions foster self-regulation, sensory processing, emotional literacy and social communication. Tailored to each student's starting point, therapeutic provision promotes independence, well-being and the foundations for learning. These elements are guided and planned by our highly specialised Therapy Team. These sessions respond to the needs of the learners. There are individual and group sessions, which occur in specific therapy areas and are then transferred to the classrooms.

The **Core** Curriculum provides a balanced base to support academic and personal development. It includes English and Mathematics for all learners to develop students' functional literacy and numeracy. Pastoral lessons, alongside PSHE and Skills for Life/Preparing for Adulthood promote wellbeing, social understanding and independence. Physical Activity is embedded throughout to support regulation, engagement and physical wellbeing.

The **Enriching** Curriculum may look different depending on the students' pathway. The **Academic Pathway** largely aligns with the National Curriculum and may include a range of subject areas including science and technology, creative lessons and humanities. This pathway often leads to formal qualifications at Level 2 and beyond, resulting in college or university placements. The **Vocational Pathway** is designed to equip students with the skills and the confidence needed for greater independent and meaningful participation in adult life. Through structured sessions on healthy living, daily routines, personal care and community access, students develop employability skills, increased autonomy and future readiness.



Cultural capital is developed, regardless of pathway, through Global Days, trips, work experience, Forest schools and the Enrichment programme on a Friday afternoon for Key Stage 4 and 5.

Courses are delivered by dedicated teachers using research-informed practice to support students and promote meaningful engagement. Key approaches include retrieval practice to strengthen memory, chunking tasks to reduce cognitive load and the use of scaffolding and visual prompts to support understanding and independence. Movement breaks, sensory tools, and structured routines are embedded throughout the day to promote self-regulation and maintain focus.
Classrooms are inclusive, low-arousal environments, often with personal adaptations to furniture, tools or resources, to ensure barriers to learning are reduced. All learning is rooted in personalised pathways, EHCP outcomes and a shared belief that every student deserves to flourish.

Organisation and Planning

At Alderwasley Hall School, our curriculum is designed to meet the complex and individual needs of our students, most of whom have autism, speech, language and communication needs, or associated difficulties. Our curriculum is broad, balanced, creative and flexible, ensuring statutory requirements are met while being carefully adapted to suit our local context and the needs of each learner.
We adopt a thematic and therapeutic approach in the primary phase, linking subjects through creative and meaningful topics that embed communication, emotional understanding and sensory regulation. In the secondary phase, subject teaching becomes more specialised, offering both academic and vocational routes that support progression and promote engagement.
Our curriculum is underpinned by a clear rationale: to promote wellbeing, belonging and productivity. This is achieved through a highly personalised offer, detailed individual learning plans, and close collaboration between teaching, therapy, and care teams.
Subjects are sequenced progressively across key stages, informed by robust subject-specific approaches and long-term overviews. Medium- and short-term plans ensure learning builds on prior knowledge and prepares students for life beyond school. Teachers plan collaboratively, with input from therapy teams and under the guidance of subject leads. Lessons are designed to be accessible, multi-sensory and responsive to EHCP outcomes.
We deliver statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education through a bespoke, adapted PSHE curriculum that reflects our students' cognitive and social needs. This is closely aligned with our wider programme of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development, which is embedded across the curriculum. Fundamental British Values are actively promoted through Collective Though, Global Days, trips, thematic work, and everyday interactions.
Careers education is delivered from primary onwards through tailored lessons, work-related learning opportunities and personalised guidance. Our Gatsby-aligned careers programme is mapped to ensure it meets statutory expectations and supports positive post-16 transitions.
Planning is structured around:

- **Long-term plans** that outline curriculum coverage and progression.
- **Medium-term plans** that break down topics or schemes into coherent units.
- **Short-term plans** that consider individual learning needs, EHCP targets and therapy input.

Resources to support curriculum delivery include access to well-equipped specialist classrooms, vocational workshops, assistive technology, sensory spaces, and a comprehensive library of differentiated materials. The multidisciplinary team ensures that academic learning is reinforced by therapeutic strategies and pastoral support.

Together, our carefully organised and responsive curriculum supports students to make meaningful progress, achieve positive outcomes, and prepare for adulthood with confidence. To this end, we enable students to access a range of external qualifications where appropriate. At Key Stage 3, some learners may begin working towards AQA Unit Awards to extend their thinking, build confidence, and develop early accreditation experience.
In Key Stage 4, students can work towards up to five GCSEs, depending on their individual strengths, interests, and readiness. Our curriculum is designed to be flexible, allowing us to carefully balance academic progress with each student's holistic, therapeutic, and developmental needs.

We recognise that some learners may benefit from a reduced exam load to support emotional wellbeing, regulation, and access to broader life skills and personal development. To ensure long-term success, students can continue to build on their qualifications in Key Stage 5, where additional GCSEs, Level 2 awards, and selected Level 3 qualifications are available as part of our extended curriculum offer. This personalised approach ensures are well-supported to achieve meaningful outcomes over time.

The table below outlines our external qualifications offer for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students, which is dependent on staffing, resources and class sizes.

Key Stage 4	**Key Stage 5**
Entry Level English and Maths Functional Skills Level 1 and 2 English and Maths GCSE English Language* GCSE Mathematics* GCSE S or D Science / Design Technology 1 further option at GCSE Level* (e.g. Food Technology/Art/History/Music)	GCSE Biology GCSE History GCSE Food Preparation GCSE Psychology BTEC Health and Social Care L2 BTEC Animal Care L2 GCSE Design Technology GCSE Photography Project Qualification (L1, L2 or L3) Arts Award (Bronze, Silver or Gold) A Level Art A Level Photography A Level English (specific course may vary) A Level Maths (English and Maths qualifications/resits as required)

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met

- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Director of Education
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- Appropriate provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including pupils with SEN

Other staff

The Senior Leadership team will ensure the curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy by monitoring learning activities, participating in school-wide quality assurance processes, gathering and responding to student and parent/carer feedback.

Subject Leaders will ensure the curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy by collaborating with subject teachers, providing long term plans, and participating in quality assurance processes. They will also monitor how resources are stored, shared and managed. Subject Teachers will ensure the curriculum is implemented in accordance with policy by planning appropriate learning activities that align with provided long or medium terms that can be accessed and adapted for every student in their class.

The impact of the Curriculum

Our curriculum isn't just about grades – it's about transformations. We measure success through:

-External qualifications: Functional Skills Certificates, AQA Unit Awards, GCSEs, BTECs and A Levels
-EHCP targets
-Successful transitions to college, university, employment and independent living
-Increased attendance and engagement
-Reduced behavioural incidents
-Transferable skills
-Student voice
-Leavers' Destinations.

Our impact is reviewed and evaluated further through progress reports and Annual EHCP Reviews, feedback from parents and carers, internal quality assurance and Ofsted or other school monitoring visits.

Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- Non-examination assessment policy
- SEN policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or after a significant chance to the curriculum, by the Senior Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be shared with relevant staff.