

# **Elysian**

## **Curriculum Policy**



**Date Agreed: August 2025**

**Date of next review: August 2026**

## Safeguarding Commitment

Elysian is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy applies across all sites on which Elysian operates.

## Curriculum Statement

### Introduction

At Elysian, we provide a personalised and cohesive curriculum that integrates the natural farm environment with age- and ability-appropriate learning materials. Our approach prioritises knowledge progression through a well-sequenced, two-year rolling programme, tailored to different year groups and supported by AQA Unit Awards. A key focus is on embedding Functional Skills in Maths and English across all areas of learning, ensuring young people develop essential skills for everyday life and future opportunities.

Our curriculum is **skills-based**, with planning beginning from the key skills we want young people to acquire. Activities are then carefully designed to support the teaching and learning of those skills, with meaningful, contextual links made to the farm environment. This ensures that learning is relevant, practical, and engaging, while also deepening understanding.

We implement a **spiral curriculum model**, ensuring knowledge and skills are revisited, reinforced, and extended over time. Rather than focusing solely on what young people are *doing*, our curriculum is centred on what they are *learning*—what they know, remember, and can build upon. Each session, regardless of subject, begins with a recap activity to revisit prior learning. This helps young people connect existing knowledge with new concepts, supporting the principle that “if they know more, they remember more.”

By grounding learning in hands-on, contextual, and experiential activities, abstract concepts are made tangible and memorable. For example, mathematical ideas such as measurement and ratio are applied practically through animal care routines, weighing feed, and managing resources. Literacy skills are developed through writing care guides, storytelling inspired by the animals, and documenting observations.

At Elysian, many young people have uneven learning profiles, with varying strengths and challenges across subjects. Initial assessments, background reports, and ongoing observations provide a clear picture of each young person’s current abilities and needs. This informs mentoring and curriculum planning, allowing for tailored support and targeted progression.

Through bespoke learning packages and therapeutic engagement with the farm and animals, we address gaps in knowledge while promoting both personal and academic growth, as well as equipping young people with essential life skills for the future. This allows every young person to progress in a way that is meaningful, achievable, and reflective of their individual journey.

The curriculum is designed and delivered through a three-tiered planning model that ensures progression, depth, and appropriate challenge for all learners. Each tier builds upon the previous stage, enabling young people to develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence in a carefully sequenced way. Differentiation is embedded within each level, allowing us to tailor provision to meet the individual needs of every learner.

- **Connect Curriculum:** This stage focuses on engagement and re-establishing positive relationships with learning. It provides accessible and supportive opportunities for young people who may have experienced disrupted education, ensuring they can connect meaningfully with both the curriculum and the wider learning environment.
- **Grow Curriculum:** At this stage, learners begin to consolidate and extend their skills and knowledge. The Grow Curriculum provides increasing levels of challenge while still offering support and guidance. It encourages curiosity, resilience, and the development of more independent approaches to learning.

- **Thrive Curriculum:** The final stage is designed to stretch and challenge learners further, enabling them to apply their skills in a variety of contexts and prepare for future pathways, whether academic, vocational, or personal. The Thrive Curriculum promotes higher-level thinking, problem-solving, and independence, ensuring learners are well-prepared for the next stage of their education or transition into adult life.

Through this structured approach, the curriculum offers a clear progression pathway, ensuring that every young person receives a personalised and purposeful learning journey.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Young People**

It is the responsibility of young people to:

- Attend the provision when required.
- Strive to be actively involved in learning opportunities.
- Accept help and guidance.
- Ensure they do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Keep themselves, others, and animals safe.
- Engage fully with opportunities for growth and learning.
- Approach their learning with a positive, 'can-do' attitude.

### **All Staff**

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Ensure the safety of young people, colleagues, and animals.
- Follow policies consistently.
- Embed PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) into everyday practice to nurture positive relationships and support emotional wellbeing.
- Encourage young people to engage in learning opportunities wherever appropriate.
- Respect and consider the learning needs of others.
- Manage their own behaviour to support a positive learning environment.

### **Teaching Staff, Instructors, and Session Leaders**

It is the responsibility of teaching staff, instructors, and session leaders to:

- Plan engaging and motivating sessions based on individual learning pathways.
- Set clear, relevant, and targeted objectives for each session.
- Ensure all materials and resources are prepared in advance.
- Assess and record learning outcomes.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of sessions regularly, making adjustments as needed.

### **Leadership Team**

It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team to:

- Provide staff with comprehensive support and appropriate challenge in delivering sessions, offering both practical presence and emotional encouragement so they feel confident, valued, and fully equipped in their roles.
- Ensure staff have access to appropriate training and resources.
- Monitor and evaluate teaching, learning, curriculum content, and outcomes.

Senior leaders at Elysian implement a detailed and structured monitoring schedule to ensure consistency, quality, and progression in teaching and learning across all sites. This includes the regular review of half-termly and weekly planning, alongside systematic monitoring of young people's work. These processes enable us to track curriculum delivery and individual progress effectively, while also informing clear and purposeful next steps.

We also monitor progress against Functional Skills targets, ensuring that all young people are making measurable progress from their starting points, with particular focus on literacy and numeracy development across all learning areas. This includes monitoring within the equine pathway, land and animal care pathways, and our therapeutic approach, ensuring that progress is embedded across both academic and holistic aspects of the curriculum.

In addition, leaders provide on-the-ground coaching to support staff in real time, offering guidance, modelling, and reflective discussions to strengthen everyday practice. Weekly targeted CPD sessions are delivered in response to identified needs, and constructive feedback is provided to the team to support ongoing professional development.

This monitoring schedule is shared and implemented across all sites, promoting a collaborative approach where staff support one another, share best practice, and work together to ensure every young person receives a consistent and high-quality educational experience.

## **Intent**

### **Aims**

Through the effective delivery of the curriculum at Elysian, we aim to:

- Provide a welcoming, safe, and nurturing environment.
- Place young people at the heart of everything we do, ensuring their needs, voices, and aspirations shape our provision and drive our practice.
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning so that young people enjoy attending and feel motivated to succeed.
- Develop resilience in a happy and safe learning environment.
- Strengthen self-esteem, self-confidence, and foster a strong sense of self-worth.
- Ensure all young people feel valued and safe.
- Deliver a curriculum that is fit for purpose, differentiated, and personalised.
- Prepare all young people for successful adult and working lives.
- Ensure that young people understand and uphold fundamental British values.
- Commit to excellence and continuous improvement.
- Value vocational and academic routes equally.
- Nurture the talents of all and celebrate success.

- Recognise the crucial role of parents and carers in their children's education, encouraging strong collaboration and involvement.
- Work closely with previous and future settings, as well as parents/carers, to support smooth transitions.

## Curriculum Vision

Our vision is to meet each young person's diverse and unique needs through an inclusive, farm-based approach, providing opportunities for every learner to reach their full potential socially, emotionally, and academically. At Elysian, we recognise the daily barriers to learning that many young people face and the profound impact these challenges can have on learning and behaviour. Our curriculum is designed to flexibly adapt throughout the day, aligning with and supporting individual needs.

Elysian's curriculum also emphasises sensory processing, making full use of the rich sensory environment provided by the farm. This supports young people in managing sensory needs, staying regulated, and remaining engaged, ensuring that learning can flourish.

Our curriculum content covers eight main areas of learning, often delivered through cross-curricular sessions:

- Linguistic
- Mathematical
- Scientific
- Human and Social
- Technological
- Aesthetic and Creative
- Physical
- PSHE

Alongside this, we integrate bespoke elements: the **equine pathway**, **land maintenance**, **animal care**, and our **therapeutic offer**. This holistic approach ensures young people experience personalised, meaningful learning that develops them academically, socially, and emotionally, while also preparing them with practical skills and confidence for the future.

We also integrate Sex & Relationships Education (SRE) and PSHE in diverse ways tailored to individual needs. These subjects are often taught through animal interactions or in small, developmentally appropriate groups. Opportunities for Social, Moral, Spiritual, and Cultural (SMSC) development are embedded throughout the curriculum, with a strong emphasis on British Values.

## Implementation

Our curriculum delivery acknowledges the unique starting points of each young person and the additional challenges they may face, particularly those with high levels of anxiety around education. While adapting to meet individual needs, we remain aspirational in encouraging young people to re-engage with more traditional learning, preparing them for their next educational stage.

Through close collaboration between young people, therapists, and education staff, learners are supported through one of three tailored pathways—**Engage, Explore, Inspire**—with the flexibility to move between pathways as their needs evolve. In addition, specialist vocational and therapeutic pathways (Equine, Land & Animal Care, Therapy) run alongside these to ensure breadth and depth.

## The Engage Pathway

The Engage Pathway offers a highly individualised, support-led curriculum designed for young people in crisis. This pathway is meticulously differentiated, focusing on young people who have disengaged from education or require crisis intervention. Through a fully personalised approach, each intervention is planned with a solution-focused perspective to meet the immediate needs of the young person. The curriculum is tailored to provide a continuum of support, promoting confidence-building and facilitating re-engagement within the learning community.

Young people on the Engage Pathway have opportunities to achieve AQA Unit Award Certificates and to begin working on practical projects toward an Integrative Education (IE) Award. This pathway enables young person to grow and develop, ensuring they are mentally and socially prepared to transition to more formal education or training, whether that means advancing to another Elysian pathway or exploring post-placement opportunities.

### **The Explore Pathway**

The Explore Pathway is designed to meet young people where they are in their learning journey. It offers a more vocational curriculum with overarching themes that resonate personally with each young person, providing meaningful and relevant contexts for learning. Through this pathway, young person engages in project-based learning with a strong kinaesthetic focus, encouraging them to experience success and develop a positive relationship with learning. These hands-on projects not only support young person in working towards the Integrative Education (IE) Award but also serve as preparation for undertaking Functional Skills qualifications.

The Explore Pathway also enables young people to concentrate on developing their functional skills alongside all other curriculum areas through a focused and targeted approach. This pathway provides structured support that tailors learning experiences to each young person's needs, helping them build core competencies while engaging in broader curriculum content. By combining vocational and academic learning, the Explore Pathway supports well-rounded growth and prepares young person for future educational and career opportunities.

### **The Inspire Pathway**

The Inspire Pathway at Elysian presents a robust approach to fostering high achievement among young person by providing them with access to a challenging academic curriculum. Designed for high-attaining young people, this pathway not only raises aspirations but also actively supports young people in reaching new heights in their educational journeys.

The Elysian curriculum's spiral design allows young person to continuously revisit and build on essential skills and knowledge throughout the academic year. This approach reinforces learning by helping young people to solidify core concepts over time, creating a strong foundation for future learning. Lesson planning within the curriculum emphasizes immersion in specific concepts or tasks, enabling young people to explore and understand what success looks and feels like in each subject area.

Practical, hands-on activities are a key feature of the curriculum, giving young person ample opportunity to practice and refine new skills. This experiential approach is complemented by teaching that not only builds on prior knowledge but also encourages young person-led learning. Each unit concludes with young person applying their acquired skills and knowledge to real-life contexts, fostering relevance and deeper understanding.

As they progress, young people are prepared for Functional Skills exams, which play a critical role in their academic achievements. Moreover, the Inspire Pathway promotes autonomy in learning, enabling young person to pursue self-guided projects that culminate in the accomplishment of the IE Award, a significant milestone recognising their dedication and growth.

### **The Equine Pathway**

At Elysian, our Equine Pathway provides young people with a comprehensive understanding of horse care, behaviour, and management, combining both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience. This pathway is designed as a single level with extension exercises available for those who have a more advanced knowledge of equine studies.

Alongside this, we offer a structured **Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum** award scheme for our riding and groundwork curriculum, allowing learners to develop their skills in a clear progression.

To ensure a well-rounded educational experience, we integrate Functional Skills in Maths and English throughout the pathway. In Maths, young people apply numeracy skills in real-world contexts such as measuring feed quantities, working out costs involved in looking after horses, calculating horse weights and rations, working with time and schedules for stable management, and measuring distances for pole exercises. Data handling is developed through tracking horse health indicators such as temperature, pulse, weight and respiration rate and recognising what is normal for each horse, averages, and anomalies. In English, young people build literacy skills through writing information about horse topics in the form of leaflets, posters, reading and interpreting worksheets and other activities, and engaging in discussions or presentations on equine topics.

We also promote cross-curricular learning by linking the Equine Pathway to Science (exploring anatomy, biology, digestion, and health conditions), PSHE (focusing on teamwork, responsibility, understanding social dynamics and emotional regulation through animal care), and Physical Education (enhancing core strength, balance, and coordination in riding, equine management and groundwork). This interdisciplinary approach ensures that learning is practical, relevant, and engaging, equipping young people with the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed to explore future career pathways within the equine industry. Working with horses helps to develop the core emotional intelligence skills needed to successfully engage with learning, such as emotional regulation, interpersonal skills and resilience.

Through this structured and progression-focused approach, learners develop the confidence competence, and independence in a meaningful, hands-on environment. The equine pathway utilises the young person's interest in horses to enable them to access learning.

### **Impact**

The Elysian curriculum's impact is assessed through a comprehensive set of strategies that allow the teaching team to monitor and support each young person's progress. During learning sessions, teachers employ varied assessment techniques such as observations, targeted questioning, mini challenges, "show me" exercises, exploration invitations, and written tasks. All evidence is systematically logged on SEESAW, and individual progress is recorded on functional skills tracking sheets, categorising young person as emerging, embedded, or secure for each objective. This approach provides the teaching team with detailed insight into each young person's current understanding, identifies areas yet to be covered, and highlights gaps in learning, empowering young person to take ownership of their progress and set personal goals.

Staff regularly review SEESAW entries and the functional skills trackers, to assess each young person's knowledge, confidence level, and next steps, which directly inform future planning. This reflective practice allows the team to tailor activities to each young person's needs, often incorporating the young person's perspective in planning where appropriate. Over time, SEESAW evidence, coupled with "readiness to learn" ratings from the database and the trackers, builds a personalised learning journal for each young person, allowing staff to track individual growth and progression.

Progress in English and Maths is measured against the criteria of the Functional Skills program, providing a structured approach to monitoring achievement in these core subjects. For other areas, progress is demonstrated through functional skills tracking sheets and the completion of AQA unit awards, covering learning objectives from pre-entry to Level 2. These awards are tailored to meet specific learning outcomes in each subject area, building in complexity as young person advance.

Additionally, progress is documented against the IE Award outcomes on SEESAW, supported by inter-project review sessions that help young person reflect on their growth. Elysian also evaluates progress through a unique set of criteria that recognise the integral connection between young person's learning styles, social and emotional development, and behaviour. This holistic approach ensures that both academic and personal development are supported and celebrated throughout each young person's journey.

The Readiness to Learn criteria covers the following areas:

- ability to work independently;
- ability to work in a group;
- social and communication skills;
- ability to carry out directed learning;
- ability to direct own learning;
- level of resilience; and
- ability to regulate emotional and sensory needs.

Elysian's assessment framework includes session-by-session ratings of each young person against a set of social, emotional, and behavioural criteria. This approach enables continuous monitoring of progress, acknowledging the varied backgrounds and unique readiness levels that each young person brings. Collaboration between educational and therapeutic staff is central to this process, ensuring that each young person receives curriculum delivery in a manner tailored to their individual needs.

Young people have the opportunity to discuss their preferred learning styles with staff, whose observations and insights further shape the educational experience. Together, these perspectives inform decisions about timetables, activities, and teaching methods, creating a more personalised approach. Progression is not only measured through academic achievement but also in terms of engagement and the young person's capacity to handle increasing social, emotional, and behavioural challenges. This approach facilitates young person's emotional and intellectual growth, equipping them with the skills necessary to transition smoothly to new stages of learning and life experiences.

In this way, Elysian's curriculum supports holistic development, fostering resilience and adaptability while building foundational skills for future learning and personal success.

#### **Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)**



Every young person at Elysian has an EHCP, which underpins our personalised approach. Plans are reviewed before placement begins by senior leaders, the teaching team, and the therapeutic team to ensure a deep understanding of how best to support each learner.

If adjustments are needed, an **Interim Annual Review Meeting** is held to align the EHCP with current needs. All EHCPs are formally reviewed annually. Long-term EHCP outcomes are translated into **individualised learning plans** with clear goals and milestones.

Therapeutic input—including Occupational Therapy, Integrative Therapy, and Speech & Language Therapy—is fully embedded in timetables, with education and therapy staff working collaboratively to deliver holistic support.

### **Practical Arrangements**

- **Age Range:** Elysian supports young people aged 11–17. While Year 12 placements are rare, exceptions may be made with Governor approval.
- **Group Sizes:** Small groups of up to six ensure individual attention. Bespoke 1:1 teaching is provided where required.
- **Farm Context:** The working farm setting provides unique animal-assisted learning opportunities, supporting regulation and life skill development.

### **Coordination and Communication**

Elysian delivers its curriculum, by teachers and support staff, in small groups, typically with no more than six young people, to maintain an environment where each young person receives individual attention and support. Groups are thoughtfully composed to ensure compatibility, and for young person who cannot manage in a group setting or whose EHCPs specify it, a tailored plan is implemented. This may include 1:1 teaching or close supervision to allow them to work individually. This approach ensures that every young person feels secure, engaged, and capable of succeeding within their learning environment.

The curriculum is blended and customised for each young person, addressing their academic, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural needs in an engaging way. For young person who need 1:1 support to participate in education, the goal remains to help them gradually build the skills necessary to access group learning, enhancing their readiness for more integrated settings.

Elysian's unique setting on a working farm further enhances learning, using animal-assisted teaching to support emotional regulation and skill development. The animals provide a calming presence, offering a non-confrontational pathway to engage young person and impart valuable life skills. This context-rich learning approach makes lessons more meaningful, as young person can see the relevance of their knowledge and skills in real-world scenarios

### **Parent and Carer Involvement**

Elysian is committed to fostering a strong partnership with parents, carers, and any professionals involved in supporting each young person's development.

This collaborative approach begins, where appropriate, with initial home visits from either a member of the Therapy team or a member of staff, providing an opportunity to understand the young person's environment and needs more fully.

Elysian's Therapy team also offers training, coaching, advice, and ongoing support to parents and carers, equipping them with effective strategies to reinforce progress and learning at home. Regular updates on the

young person's progress ensure that families stay informed and feel encouraged to take an active role in their child's journey.

By promoting open communication and sharing knowledge among parents, carers, teaching staff, and professionals, Elysian creates a supportive network around each young person, enhancing their overall development and success.

**This policy will be reviewed annually by the Heads of Education and Learning.**

**For the purposes of this policy, where the term Elysian is used, it refers to Elysian Providing Animal Assisted Therapy and Learning**

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## **Appendix A – Assessment**

### **AQA Awards:**

The AQA Unit Award Scheme (UAS) is a flexible program designed to recognise and celebrate learners' achievements.

Through AQA UAS, learners receive a certificate for each completed unit, enabling them to build a portfolio that evidences their skills, knowledge, and experience.

This formal recognition not only celebrates their achievements but also enhances confidence, engagement, and motivation, supporting ongoing progress and inspiring a commitment to lifelong learning.

### **Functional Skills:**

Functional Skills qualifications are essential certifications in practical skills like numeracy, literacy, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking, which are highly valued by employers and universities.

A Level 2 Functional Skills qualification is equivalent to a GCSE grade 4 (C), making it a recognised alternative to GCSEs for entry into further education, apprenticeships, and university programs, where a Level 2 in Maths or English is often required.

Functional Skills exams are designed with a focus on practical application, covering less content than traditional GCSEs, which makes them particularly suitable for adult learners with limited time or those needing their Level 2 certificate quickly.

Unlike GCSEs, which are scheduled twice a year at exam centres, Functional Skills exams are offered year-round and can even be taken from home, providing flexible options that fit around busy schedules.

### **Crossfields Integrated Project:**

The Crossfields Integrated Project is a qualification for 14-16-year-olds, designed to deliver a broad, transdisciplinary curriculum through collaborative and individual project work.

It consists of one to three core modules and between five and ten additional modules, offering students a blend of formal, non-formal, and informal learning experiences.

Key features of this qualification include an Independent Project module, enabling students to explore a personal passion or career interest in depth, and then the options of completing other modules with a strong emphasis on problem-solving, creative thinking, and the development of personal and social learning skills

This qualification equips young person with essential life skills such as effective communication, teamwork, situational awareness, and the ability to generate new ideas—qualities that are valuable for higher education, employment, and entrepreneurship. Through this process, young person also develop into more analytical, independent, and reflective learners, prepared to navigate future challenges with confidence and resilience.

The Crossfields Integrated Project thus supports young person in developing the competencies needed to thrive in various future pathways and gives value to their individual interests and skills. In doing so, it can nurture the seed of an interest into the foundation of a potential future career.