

# **Elysian**

## **Curriculum Policy**



**Date Agreed: July 2020**

**Date of next review: July 2021**

**For the purposes of this policy, where the term Elysian is used, it refers to Elysian Animal Assisted Therapy & Learning CIC including Elysian School and Elysian Assisted Therapy & Learning.**

## **Curriculum Statement**

Elysian offers a broad, balanced and highly differentiated curriculum in a farm setting making use of the environment to offer a range of subjects. On a fundamental level all curriculum areas will be taught through the farm, the animals and its operation. The teaching is based around a sound knowledge and understanding of each young person's needs and is shaped around how the different young people learn. This means taking care to nurture the unique talents, interests and aspirations of every pupil and by doing so creating a highly personalised learning environment. Pupils who attend Elysian do so because mainstream education and alternative provisions have not worked. The range of issues that the young people at Elysian face mean that they aren't able to access traditional educative methods. The result is that the young people often come not only starting some way back, but with additional issues that are likely to further prohibit their education. Elysian's response is to develop a bespoke learning package for each pupil using the full farm environment as the learning medium.

Where there is an EHCP, this will set the parameters and requirements of the educational offer. These requirements will always be held in balance with the needs of the individual. The starting point for the curriculum is the individual child with a programme designed to meet his/her needs, delivered in a way that is enjoyable and will engage each child or young person.

All teaching will be carried out in a therapeutic way and additional therapies will be an integral part of the offer and timetabled accordingly. Many of our pupils require and benefit from professional input around Occupational Therapy and Speech & Language Therapy; Elysian's Care Co-ordinator will oversee this and ensure that it retains a central place in the broader curriculum.

Where relevant, each academic year a pupil's EHCP is reviewed. The long-term targets for this are used to populate a pupil's individual learning plan. Each plan is set at the beginning of the academic year, or at the point of admission for in-year placements and covers each curriculum area. The plan is broken down into 3 shorter term sets of goals, to be reviewed 3 times per year. These goals are incorporated within the curriculum subject areas each term and the topics that are being studied, making it entirely pupil led. Where a pupil is working on a specific qualification, the scheme of work will be broken down into sections in such a way as to ensure that there is coherence across the syllabus.

The curriculum is delivered primarily in small groups, not normally exceeding 4 pupils. Care will be taken to ensure that the mix of pupils in a group is appropriate. Where a pupil is unable to manage in a group, or where their EHCP requires it, we will put in place a supportive package that allows for either 1-1 teaching or to work primarily on their own under very close supervision. This is designed to enable each pupil to succeed and feel comfortable. A blended, interesting and relevant curriculum is created for each individual pupil to ensure that their academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are addressed in a way that captures their interest and motivates them to learn. Pupils are given the opportunity to achieve up to GCSE level equivalents where appropriate, using NCFE functional skills as well as ASDAN and Forest School accreditation depending on their ability, engagement levels and what is most suitable for the individual. The Functional Skills route enables pupils to achieve in 'bite size chunks' which is often more suitable to their needs if they have previously struggled with a more formal route.

Due to the previous school history experienced by our pupils, they may be working below the expected levels for their ages and have many gaps in their knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. A focus is put on this part of the curriculum in order to help them fill these gaps and give them the foundations

to access all subjects, so KS2 National Curriculum for core skills is also followed for those needing to catch up. There may also be complex historical issues associated with accessing a more traditional school setting and many of our pupils will have been out of formal education for anything between 1 and 5 years. To this end we will ensure that there is a full package of support and additional therapy put in place designed to enable each pupil to have the highest possible chance of engaging successfully in the opportunities that Elysian provides.

Elysian will also assess the skills and needs of children who are learning English as an Additional Language so that they can access appropriate provision within the school. Pupils are supported with progress into further education in the next stage of their lives and are supported with careers advice and transition.

Pupils have the option to complete various NCFE qualifications for vocational subjects such as Art and Craft subjects, Animal Care, Design & Technology and Enterprise Skills. Elysian also has regular access to a professional musician who has several years of experience of working with children and young people with complex needs. Various music skills can be explored such as learning to play drums, guitar, keyboard etc. Music Tech is also available at the school.

To ensure the individual needs of Elysian pupils are met we will:

- Provide for individual needs; responding to age, aptitude and additional educational needs
- Provide access, at an appropriate level, to a relevant curriculum
- Promote learning and personal growth and development within the context of the extremely complex lives the pupils have so far experienced
- Meet the needs of young people, promoting care and respect and expecting high standards in all aspects of school life which continues into their home life
- Prepare pupils for their adult and working life both with skills and knowledge but most importantly with their personal development and independence skills

Where a pupil would be able to access mainstream education, with a possible return to mainstream, they will be fully supported with this by Elysian.

## Curriculum Areas

The diagram below shows the curriculum areas that we offer:



Elysian adopts a cross curriculum approach to learning as opposed to the discrete teaching of Science, My World (Geography, History, Religious Studies) and Creativity (Art, Music, Drama). Research tells us that interdisciplinary/cross-curricular teaching can increase students' motivation for learning and their level of engagement. In contrast to learning skills in isolation, when pupils participate in interdisciplinary experiences, they see value of what they are learning and become more actively engaged (Resnick, 1989).

These areas are broken down in the following ways:

|                            |                |                     |  |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>Routes to Success</b>   | <b>Therapy</b> | Mathematics         | Using NCFE Functional Skills qualification at Entry level to Level 2. Covering: number work; measures shape & space; handling information & data.  |
|                            |                | English             | Using NCFE Functional Skills qualification at Entry level to Level 2. Covering: communicating; reading; writing.   |
|                            |                | Design & Technology | Using the NCFE Occupational Studies in the Workplace qualifications. Much of this will be delivered on the farm, using everyday tasks to design and complete practical solutions.  |
|                            |                | ICT                 | Using the NCFE Occupational Studies in the Workplace qualifications. This will be tied into the work on the farm by using ICT methods to find solutions to everyday farm tasks.  |
| <b>Project Based</b>       |                | Creativity          | 'Creativity' will include art, music, drama and will be covered by bringing subjects together in a project-based approach through the farm environment.  |
|                            |                | My World            | 'My World' will include geography, history, parts of religious studies/philosophy and combine with sciences. It will look at the world around us and help to make sense of it. British values will run as a theme throughout this section.   |
|                            |                | Sciences            | 'Sciences' will combine to form a project-based approach. A range of topics will be delivered that will cover all the sciences alongside the 'Creativity' and 'My World'. This will be done using the farm environment.  |
| <b>Supplementary Areas</b> |                | Farm Skills         | This will look at the specifics of the running of the farm. Project based learning for other sections will run closely in combination with Farm Skills. This section will provide the source of material for the projects.   |
|                            |                | Physical Education  | Physical Education will be delivered on site, either in fields or the riding school. Where possible, Physical Education will involve the farm animals.   |
|                            |                | Forest School       | We will be using the Forest School curriculum and schemes of work in and around the farm grounds. This will link into many of the other curriculum areas.  |
| <b>PSHE</b>                |                | My Self             | Starting to explore emotions and discover about self. This will also cover adolescent development, sessions on drugs/smoking, sexual health, careers advice, etc. Social skills and communication will be brought in here as well as in 'My Community'. This will be covered using the ASDAN PSHE Short Course syllabus.   |
|                            |                | My Community        | This will cover 'how to stay safe on the streets' through the 'Prevent' scheme of work which promotes and ensures that all pupils are aware of the fundamental British values of democracy, and mutual respect for and tolerance. Spiritual. Moral, Social and Cultural development is encouraged. Communication skills will be developed here. This will be covered using the ASDAN PSHE Short Course syllabus. |

## **Co-ordination and Communication**

The Head of Education is responsible for overall co-ordination of the curriculum with individual staff taking further responsibility for specific subject areas. Communication takes place daily through briefings and weekly meetings, supervision and termly reports. Informally, communication happens during the school day through the high degree of contact that all staff will have with each other on the farm. Due to the small size of the team, and the collaborative way we work, ensuring communication across all staff is achievable.

## **Involvement with Parents and Carers**

Elysian will establish a close working partnership with parents/carers in order to support their child's progression in all areas. This will include initial home visits from the Therapy team where appropriate.

Training, coaching, advice and support will be offered to parents/carers through Elysian's therapy team. This will enable them to implement effective strategies at home outside of school hours.

Elysian will ensure that parents/carers are informed of their child's progress and will encourage them to participate in their child's development.

Elysian will encourage sharing of knowledge and expertise between parents, carers, teaching staff and other professionals.

## **Other relevant Documents**

This Curriculum Policy sits alongside the following Policies and Procedures:

Pupil Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy

Schemes of Work for English; Mathematics; The Farm Environment

**This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Education and the Management Committee**