

# **Elysian**

## **Curriculum Policy**



**Date Agreed: July 2021**

**Date of next review: July 2022**

***Elysian is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.***

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**

### ***Introduction***

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 young person and by doing so creating a highly personalised learning environment. The range of difficulties that the young people at Elysian face mean that they aren't always able to access traditional educative methods. The result is that the young people often arrive with significant gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding. Elysian's response is to develop a bespoke learning package for each young person, using the full farm environment as the learning medium.

### ***Aims***

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

- put young people at Elysian's core, putting their interests above those of the institution.
- promote a positive attitude towards learning so that young people enjoy coming to school.
- develop young people's resilience in a happy and safe learning environment
- strengthen self-esteem, self-confidence and promote a strong sense of self worth
- have a curriculum that is fit for purpose, offering differentiation and personalisation.
- prepare all young people for a successful adult and working life in a 21st century global society.
- ensure that the young people understand and do not undermine fundamental British values
- be committed to excellence and continuous improvement.
- value vocational and academic routes equally.
- nurture the talents of all and celebrate success.
- recognise the crucial role which parents/carers play in their children's education and make every effort to encourage parental involvement in their educational process
- work with the young people's previous and future setting and parents/carers to ease transition.

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

It is the Young Person's responsibility to;

- attend the provision when required
- try their best to be involved in the learning opportunities
- accept help and guidance
- ensure they do not stop others from learning

It is the responsibility of all staff to;

- ensure staff and young people are safe
- follow policies
- encourage young people to engage in learning opportunities, wherever appropriate to do so

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

- plan engaging and motivating sessions, based on individual learning pathways
- have clear, relevant and targeted objectives for each session
- have all materials and resources ready at the start of each session
- assess and record learning which takes place
- evaluate effectiveness of sessions on a regular basis, making changes where needed

It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team to;

- support the staff who deliver sessions in any way required
- ensure staff have appropriate training and resources to facilitate sessions
- monitor and evaluate teaching, learning, curriculum content and outcomes

### **Content**

Due to the previous school history experienced by our young people, 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. The provision of a range of activities allows for limited choice for the young people, ensuring motivation and enthusiasm are not lost. Young people sometimes opt to complete projects of their choice. The desired learning outcomes are provided and the young person will be involved in planning the activities which are required to achieve the outcomes.

A full package of support and additional therapy are put in place to enable each young person to have the highest possible chance of engaging successfully in the opportunities that Elysian provides. The skills involved in accessing education are taught both directly and indirectly. We recognise that each young person must be emotionally regulated in order to learn. We are aware of the importance of Maslow's hierarchy of need in ensuring young people are ready to learn and to achieve self-actualisation. Bespoke activities which promote development of the skills and aptitudes required to learn are planned and delivered. These activities form the core of our curriculum. Once a young person has developed these skills and aptitudes, they may be ready to learn. However, we recognise that the young people may slip back into crisis at any point. At these times, we will revisit the core activities to 'reset'.

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

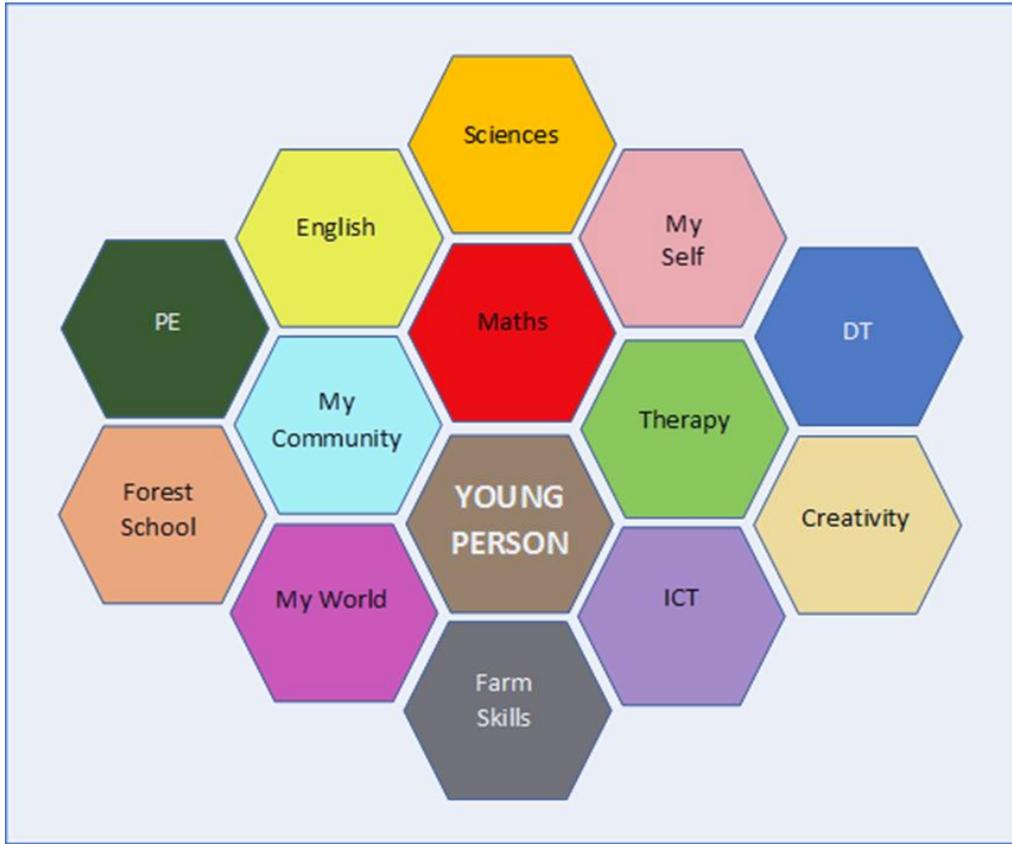
Young people have the option to complete various qualifications for a range of subjects, both vocational and academic in nature. These include, but are not limited to;

- NCFE Entry Level 1, 2 & 3 Maths and English
- NCFE Level 1 & 2 Maths and English
- NCFE vocational qualifications relating to animal care and other occupational studies
- ASDAN Science, PSHE and COPE awards
- AQA unit awards, recognising the achievements of a range of skills gained in our environment

Due to the tailored approach taken to each individual's learning pathway, we are able to ensure appropriate challenge is encouraged, taking into account ability, age, SEMH needs and motivation.

## 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 young people's motivation for learning and their level of engagement. In contrast to learning skills in isolation, when young people 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. |  |

### ***The role of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)***

All young people at Elysian have 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 young person.

Due to the unique environment and opportunities on offer at Elysian, the suitability of the EHCP will be reviewed 1 term after the young person has begun their placement. If required, an Interim Annual Review Meeting will be called to ensure the EHCP reflects the current needs of the young person and the methods used by Elysian to meet these needs. Thereafter, the EHCP will usually be reviewed annually.

The long-term outcomes from the EHCP are used to populate a young person'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 young person led. Where a young person 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.

### ***Delivery of Learning***

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 young people require and benefit from professional input around Occupational Therapy and Speech & Language Therapy. Elysian's Head of Therapies and Interventions will oversee this and ensure that it retains a central place in the broader curriculum.

The curriculum is delivered primarily in small groups, not normally exceeding 4 young people. Care will be taken to ensure that the mix of young people in a group is appropriate. Where a young person 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 young person to succeed and feel comfortable. A blended, interesting and relevant curriculum is created for each individual 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. When a young person requires 1:1 teaching to access education, the aim will always be to support them in developing the skills needed to be able to access education in a group setting.

At Elysian, we recognise the value of teaching through the use of animals. The working life of the farm is a non-confrontational conduit through which many skills can be taught. Many young people find the presence of the animals a calming influence. Learning in this way gives context and meaning to the knowledge, skills and understanding being taught.

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

### ***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:

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**