

Elysian

Curriculum Policy



Date Agreed: January 2024

Date of next review: January 2025

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 is applicable across all sites on which Elysian operates.

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.

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.
- keep themselves, others, and animals safe.

It is the responsibility of all staff to;

- ensure staff, animals 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.

Intent

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.

The vision for our school's curriculum is that we meet each Learner's diverse and unique needs through an inclusive, farm-based curriculum that offers each student the opportunity to reach their full potential socially, emotionally and academically. At Elysian, there is recognition of the daily barriers to learning each Learner faces. There is a strong understanding that these affect learning and behaviour, and the focus of the curriculum is to reasonably adjust all aspects of the educational day to meet the Learner's needs. The Elysian curriculum places a great deal of emphasis on sensory processing and makes full use of the rich sensory environment of the farm setting. Young people are supported to manage their sensory needs in order to remain regulated for engagement and learning.

Our curriculum content covers 8 areas of learning, often through cross-curricular sessions.

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

In addition to these areas, Sex & Relationships Education and PSHE are taught in a range of ways which considers Learner needs, either linked to our animals, or taught explicitly in small, developmentally appropriate groups. Opportunities for Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Development is woven through the Curriculum content, placing an emphasis on the promotion of British Values.

Implementation

The way in which we structure the delivery of our Curriculum recognises the different starting points each Learner joins us with, as well as the specific challenges faced by those with high anxiety in a school setting. Whilst we recognise the need to adapt our approaches to reflect these needs, we are also aspirational in our goal to support every learner to be able to re-engage with more traditional learning methods, in readiness for the next stage in their learning journeys. Through careful consultation between Learner, Therapists and Education staff, learners begin their journey on one of three pathways. Depending on progress, mental health and needs, learners can move between pathways as needed. These pathways are illustrated below.

The Engage Pathway

The Engage Pathway is a highly individualised support led curriculum for learners who are in crisis. The Engage Pathway is highly differentiated and focussed on supporting learners who have become disengaged with learning or need crisis intervention support. Learners access fully personalised

intervention, which is discussed with a solution-focused approach. The curriculum is entirely adapted to enable a continuum of provision to promote and meet the needs of the learner and enable them to gain confidence and to re-engage back into the learning community. There are opportunities to gain AQA Unit Award Certificates and begin working towards a practical project that can facilitate an Integrative Education (IE) Award. This pathway allows Learners to grow and develop so that they are mentally and socially ready to undertake more formal education or training, either as one of the other Pathways with Elysian, or opportunities post placement.

The Explore Pathway

The Explore Pathway aims to meet young people at their point of learning. The Explore Pathway offers the opportunity of a more vocational curriculum with overarching themes that are of significance for individuals and provide relevant learning contexts. Learners are given opportunities to pursue project-based learning opportunities with a kinaesthetic approach to engage young people onto the positive pathway of learning through positive achievement. These can build towards achieving the IE Award, and as preparation for undertaking Functional Skills qualifications.

The Inspire Pathway

The Inspire Pathway aims to stretch and challenge learners by raising their aspirations for achievement. The Inspire Pathway enables opportunity for our high attaining learners to access a challenging academic curriculum, which allows their learning journeys to develop.

The Elysian curriculum is spiral, meaning that key skills and knowledge are revisited throughout the academic year, to allow Learners to build upon what they know, reinforcing key concepts and skills over time. Subject planning promotes a process whereby Learners are initially immersed in a specific concept or piece of work to understand what it looks and feels like. Practical, hands-on opportunities are encouraged so that Learners can practise new skills. Teaching builds upon existing knowledge, along with opportunities for Learners to guide their learning, and units of study culminate in the application of knowledge and skills to everyday contexts. Learners are prepared for undertaking Functional Skills exams and also have opportunities to guide their own learning in the form of projects, culminating in achievement of the IE Award.

Impact

To measure the impact of our curriculum, the Teaching Team carry out a range of assessment strategies during learning sessions, through observation, use of questioning, mini challenges, 'show me' exercises, invitations to explore and experiment, as well as completion of written tasks. This evidence is recorded on Seesaw and rated against key learning outcomes taken from each curriculum area. Staff revisit evidence of learning on Seesaw to identify what a Learner knows, how confident they are, and what their next step will be. Activities are then planned to extend this learning, considering the Learner's own view, where appropriate. Over time, the evidence logged on Seesaw, along with the ratings against learning outcomes on our database provide a learning journal for each Learner, where progression can be tracked.

Regular assessment against the learning criteria of the Functional Skills programme of study for English and Maths keeps track of pupil progress. For other subject areas, progress is demonstrated in Seesaw skills ratings, along with the acquisition of a range of AQA unit awards, demonstrating work on specific areas of learning relating to that subject. These progress in complexity and output demands, ranging from pre-entry level up to level 2. Progress against the learning outcomes of the IE Award are also documented on Seesaw, through the uploading of evidence and use of inter-project review sessions.

Progress is also monitored against a specific set of criteria that recognises the crucial link between the way in which Young People learn, their social/emotional knowledge and their behaviour. 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.

Staff rate Learners against these criteria in each session, allowing for progress to be monitored. Elysian recognises that each of our Learners come to us with a complex history and differing level of 'readiness to learn.' Educational and Therapeutic staff work closely to monitor engagement and ensure that delivery of the curriculum is via an appropriate style for each Learner. Where appropriate, Learners discuss their preferred learning style with Staff, and these views, together with Staff feedback help shape choices in terms of timetable, activities offered, and teaching approaches utilised. Progression, therefore, can also be measured in terms of engagement in sessions and the Learner's ability to be able to cope with increasing social, emotional and behavioural demands. Our curriculum consequently helps learners develop emotionally and intellectually, building the behavioural and learning skills required to smoothly transition into new learning levels and experiences in life.

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.

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, Integrative Therapy and Speech & Language Therapy. The Therapy Team meets on a regular basis with education staff to ensure the Therapeutic Approaches needed retains a central place in the broader curriculum. Opportunities for joint working are identified and planned in where possible.

Age Range

At our sites, Elysian will operate a registered Independent Special School for ages 11-17. Elysian often receives referrals for education provision for Young People in Year 11. We recognise that work is needed over a longer period of time to enable these Young People to receive support in developing readiness to learn skills and in transitioning to a college placement. It is not our intention to accept Young People who are referred to us solely for a Year 12 placement. However, there may be specific circumstances where this is appropriate and a decision to undertake a placement of this type will be agreed with the Chair of

Governors. The Elysian Curriculum outlined in this policy has the scope to facilitate personalised learning at a level which is appropriate for all abilities and ages from 11 – 17.

Group sizes and 1:1 support

The curriculum is delivered primarily in small groups, not normally exceeding 6 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 and Learning 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. The use of a secure App to communicate planning and assessment is used by all staff.

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.

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

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