



Local Procedure/Protocol

School/Home Name:	Hartwell School
Local Procedure/Protocol Title:	Curriculum Protocol and Procedures
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Procedure/Protocol Lead:	Claire Dinsdale and James Small
Procedure/Protocol Sponsor:	Brin Kelleher – Regional Director

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Witherslack Group is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, GOVERNANCE (ESG) STATEMENT

Witherslack Group is committed to responsible business practices in the areas of: Environmental Stewardship, Social Responsibility, Governance, Ethics & Compliance. An ESG impact assessment has been completed on this procedure/protocol to ensure it can be implemented successfully without adverse implications on Group goals.

To ensure that this procedure/protocol is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, please email the named policy lead.

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 1
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

CONTENTS

1. CONTEXT
2. VISION, AIMS AND INTENT
3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
4. IMPLEMENTATION
5. IMPACT, ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING
6. CURRICULUM MODEL
7. REFERENCES
8. ASSOCIATED FORMS
9. APPENDICES

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1** Hartwell School is an independent special school and part of the Witherslack Group. Our pupils are aged 5 to 19, with varied strengths and interests, along with complex educational needs, such as social communication difficulties, trauma and behaviours which provide a challenge and, historically, a barrier to their social and academic development. Hartwell School caters for the individual needs of our young people who have been diagnosed with a range of complex difficulties, which have affected their ability to reach their potential in previous settings. We strive to remove barriers to our young people's social, personal and academic progress by offering a nurturing learning alongside a flexible, targeted curriculum which is underpinned by the National Curriculum Framework. The majority of pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- 1.2** Hartwell School benefits from spacious grounds within an urban location within walking distance of Teesside Park in Stockton-on-Tees. The school grounds and facilities contributes to making our school a positive place in which to learn, work and live and we make full use of the environment e.g. our Forest School setting. Hartwell School is well-resourced and has a comprehensive range of facilities including a science laboratory, a food technology room a DT workshop and Forest School. Class sizes are deliberately small in order to ensure pupils feel well supported by our highly skilled staff team of education, pastoral, care and therapy staff. We have no more than eight students per class with no fewer than one teacher and one teaching assistant.

2. VISION, AIMS AND INTENT

- 2.1** Hartwell School believes that the curriculum embodies all that is learned via lessons, social times, therapeutic input and role modelling by the adults and peers around them. There is a clear thread of skills built into planning focusing intent, implementation and impact of learning in all areas of the curriculum. With this in mind, we are promoting an ethos of respect, responsibility and resilience in all that we do by encouraging pupils to look after themselves, look after each other and look after the place they are in. We aim to teach our young people to grow into citizens who are able to work and co-operate with others, whilst developing their knowledge and skills so that they make progress from their different starting points and celebrate both academic and personal success.

The curriculum at Hartwell consists of three key focus areas which are consistent across all key stages. The delivery of these focus areas are reflective of age, stage, and carefully selected learning programmes based on individual needs. These three areas promote academic/vocational achievement, personal development and preparing for adulthood.



Academic/Vocational Achievement

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 2
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

This element focusses on the specific learning pathways that pupils will study across all key stages:

- Deliver a broad range of subjects that addresses the needs of all pupils
- Subjects and learning pathways that support future aspirations, interests and strengths
- Pupils achieve functional reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills

Personal Development

This focus draws attention to the personalised work and potential interventions required to reduce barriers to learning and therefore enhancing the opportunity to learn and progress. This area draws upon the expertise of a wide range of professionals in addition to teaching staff such as clinical services, the pastoral team and external agencies. The holistic care will:

- Support learning needs and reduce barriers to learning
- Enable pupils to manage their emotions effectively and achieve optimal well-being
- Enable pupils to acquire a sense of well-being along with positive social skills
- Ensure EHCP outcomes are achieved

Preparing for Adulthood

The focus builds on transition across all key stages and preparation into adulthood so that pupils are given the best chance to maintain success beyond their time at Hartwell School. This includes Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) support and developing independent living skills. Embedding preparation for adulthood allows our pupils to:

- Develop functional living skills
- Receive high-quality independent Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance, transition support.
- Develop employability skills through the Futures and Careers programme
- Prepare themselves for their next steps in education, training or employment
- Take responsibility for the management of their own health
- Become a part of their school and local community

At Hartwell School we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that supports pupils to develop their knowledge and skills as appropriate to their age, ability and stage of development. The curriculum has been developed to prepare pupils for life beyond Hartwell School and to encourage them to develop a love of learning. We aim to prepare pupils with life skills that will allow them to become independent adults. We promote spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils which are developed through our whole school PSHE curriculum.

Moving forward

The curriculum builds upon the learning, progress and changes implemented last academic and offers a broad and interesting range of subjects and learning opportunities for all. We have high expectations of all pupils to ensure that they leave Hartwell with a range of qualifications that will support them on the next stage of their educational journey. Our current offer is a mix of GCSE/ vocational/functional skills qualifications.

A whole school approach to reading has been further developed. The Reading Strategy outlines the whole school approach to reading to ensure we are a 'reading school' which recognises the world as a whole is more accessible and open to an individual if you can read. Hartwell School has invested significantly in a range of resources and training to prioritise reading as a whole school focus. Primary pupils are engaged in daily sessions of Read, Write Inc. and secondary pupils engage in the Fresh Start programme for those who require intervention at this level. Reading is a focus of morning tutor sessions whereby students may read independently, partake in a whole class reader or engage in small group phonics work. Our 'Word of the Week' also helps extend vocabulary and decoding skills as a whole school approach.

Implementation

All subject areas are taught with our pupils' needs as the focus of the delivery. Each subject area uses a variety of approaches to ensure the curriculum is adapted to individual pupils, supporting pupils to remember what they learn, transfer skills and develop as independent learners.

For example:

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 3
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

- Learning aimed at incorporating special interests
- Modelling, role-play or speaking and listening activities
- Explaining and extending ambiguous language to aid understanding
- Templates and examples of expected outcomes
- Individualised worksheets
- Visual aids
- Relating skills/information to functional situations
- Adaptive teaching of tasks and outcomes
- Mind mapping to aid sequencing and planning
- Collaboration with different subject areas
- A mixture of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning, to support all pupils
- Scaffolding to break down skills into smaller steps, to ease learning

Delivery of our curriculum begins as soon as pupils arrive at school. After being greeted, pupils have a Tutor session until 9.30 a.m.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 *Leaders at Hartwell School ensure that:*

- Staff in the school are involved in decision-making processes that relate to the vision, intent and development of the curriculum.
- Regular monitoring activities are carried out to ensure that the curriculum offered is progressive and appropriate, enabling all pupils to achieve positive outcomes.
- All teaching staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities, including high quality planning and teaching methods, use of regular assessment and consistent implementation of the agreed school policies and procedures
- Teachers are provided with opportunities to sustain strong subject knowledge and pedagogy as required and the whole-staff team remain upskilled in supporting the needs of pupils.
- Parents/carers receive regular communication from staff, including information about the curriculum and school strategies, their child's progress and next steps.

3.2 *The teaching staff at Hartwell School ensure that:*

- The curriculum is planned and delivered to support pupils to develop skills, knowledge and vocabulary, helping pupils to know more and remember more and to be prepared for their adult lives.
- The curriculum is planned and devised to best suit the needs of each individual pupil and takes account of outcomes and strategies outlined in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), PEPs and other key documents.
- A range of teaching and differentiation strategies are used to ensure all our pupils are stretched and able to progress at their own pace.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to experience safely planned activities outside of the usual classroom environment.
- Pupils know their next steps and how to get there, with opportunities to discuss their own learning.
- Parents/carers are provided with high-quality reports which reflect what their children have been learning and how they will be supported to progress.
- The procedures for assessment are used to support the learning and development of the pupils, including identifying gaps in knowledge and next steps.

3.3 *Clinical staff ensure that:*

- Appropriate clinical support is provided to assess and meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils.

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 4
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

- Suggestions, strategies and bespoke interventions are provided to support pupils' learning, competencies, development and preparation for adulthood.

3.4 All staff ensure that:

- High expectations are maintained for pupils and themselves at all times
- Reading, learning and high aspirations are role-modelled by all members of the school community
- Positive contributions are made to the whole-school Internal Team Around the Child (ITAC) approach
- Pupils are supported to express themselves appropriately socially and emotionally
- Pupils are helped to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and achieve their next steps with increasing independence
- Pupil achievements are celebrated and positivity is promoted in all aspects of school life

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Curriculum Delivery

Our school timetable comprises of thirty teaching periods per week for each year group. Small class sizes with a high staff to pupil ratio supports effective implementation of the curriculum, along with clinical support from the Speech and Language Therapist, Mental Health Practitioners, Occupational Therapist, Assistant Educational Psychologist and Clinical Psychologist. Most pupils at Key Stage 4 are taught by subject specialists. Some pupils may have bespoke timetables that take account of particular strengths and areas of need. Individual interventions are planned as required in order to close gaps in knowledge and skills, supporting pupils to make progress.

Our timetable has been carefully designed to meet the individual needs of the existing cohort. This includes careful planning in order to reduce transitions and plentiful opportunities to support sensory, social communication and mental health needs. As such, Emotional Check In, Wellbeing Clinical Interventions and Life Skills have all been included in the curriculum.

Through high quality teaching of knowledge, skills and vocabulary across core and foundation subjects, all pupils are challenged to achieve the best possible outcomes and make progress across all Key Stages. Detailed medium term plans are used to ensure pupils cover the content for their key stage and close any gaps in knowledge, so they are prepared for the following key stage and transition. The delivery of key focus areas related to learning, work and life are reflective of age, stage, and carefully selected learning experiences based on individual pupil needs. A range of specific approaches are used to implement and deliver the curriculum, such as:

- Learning outside of the classroom and personal development activities
- Interdisciplinary approaches, using strategies from education, care and therapy
- Real-world and functional activities
- Interactive activities and games
- Exploration of new vocabulary and ambiguous language
- Recall tasks
- Worksheets/work books/extended writing opportunities
- Role-play and discussion
- Practical activities
- Modelling, questioning and scaffolding
- Inquiry and project-based tasks
- Collaborative and independent learning
- Cross-curricular learning

4.2 Key Stages 1 and 2 (Years 1 - 6)

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 5
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

KS1 and KS2 pupils start their school journey in designated primary classrooms and are taught most of their lessons by their class teachers.

Those pupils working below year 1 level will access Hartwell's primary steps curriculum which focuses on specific and prime areas. Pupils will have lessons in PSHE, Mathematics, Communication, literacy and Language, Understanding the World, Expressive Art and Design and Physical Development. Classrooms will be designed to encourage learning through play.

Pupils working at Year 1 and above will access the National Curriculum, with additional interventions offered as required. There is a focus on reading, including the teaching of phonics to early readers using the Read, Write, Inc. programme.

Pupils access:

English, Maths, Science, Computing, PE, PSHE/Careers/Citizenship (including Relationships and Health Education), Topic (Geography, History, Art & Design, Design Technology, RE) Personal Development and Enrichment. Individual pupils access clinical/therapeutic input as appropriate to their needs.

4.3 Key Stage 3 (Years 7 – 9)

Pupils at KS3 continue to be taught for most subjects in their own dedicated form classrooms. They access National Curriculum subjects with a continued focus on reading. Pupils are taught by their form teachers for English, Maths and PSHE/Careers/Citizenship but progress to being taught by a wider range of other subject specific teachers for the rest of the curriculum. They visit specialist teaching rooms as appropriate to the subject eg the Science Lab and the Art Room.

Pupils access:

English, Maths, Science, Computing, PE, PSHE/Careers/Citizenship (including Relationships and Health Education), Topic (RE, Art, Geography and History), Design Technology, Personal Development and Enrichment. KS3 pupils continue to access clinical/therapeutic input as appropriate to their needs.

4.4 Key Stage 4 (Years 10 – 11)

Our current Key Stage 4 offer is a mix of GCSE, vocational and functional skills qualifications, from Entry Level to GCSE, depending on pupils' level of attainment. In Year 10 and Year 11, pupils follow a core curriculum of English, Mathematics, Science, PE, Computing, PSHE/Citizenship/Careers (including Relationships, Sex and Health Education), Personal Development and Enrichment. Pupils select additional 'option' subjects to cater to their individual interests and career aspirations and these include Construction, Humanities, Catering, PE/Sport, Separate Science and Computing. KS4 pupils continue to access clinical/therapeutic input as appropriate to their needs.

4.5 Key Stage 5 (Years 12 – 14)

At Post 16, learners would follow the WG Futures Curriculum which ensures every student is equipped with the academic, personal, and employment-related skills needed for a successful transition into adulthood and the world of work. There are three key foci - Academic, Personal Independence, and Preparation for Employment, which encompass targeted, aspirational, academic, technical, and vocational qualifications, life skills programmes, industry engagement, and community participation. The provision will develop essential literacy and numeracy skills, wellbeing, financial capability, independent travel, employability, Power Skills, alongside employer-led and real-world experiences. The individualised curriculum will align all learning with individual aspirations and destinations to enable students to make informed choices and achieve sustained success in their chosen careers.

KS5 pupils continue to access clinical/therapeutic input as appropriate to their needs.

4.6 Residential Pupils

Residential pupils access their class group during the school day, and they will also have the opportunity to gain further accreditation where appropriate to their needs. This is specific to the individual pupil and linked

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 6
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

to the development of key life skills.

4.7 Homework

Hartwell School does not set formal, required homework. The young people at our school are very often not in emotional or physical 'places' that are going to allow them success in this area and we do not wish to penalise pupils for being unable to complete homework tasks. Therefore, we provide suggestions for Extended Learning opportunities that pupils can complete, perhaps with parent / carer assistance, which will complement the Theme being taught. Pupils are also encouraged to read and learn spellings at home, for example. Pupils' independent work will be recognised and celebrated. Any resources required for independent study, e.g. reading books, revision packs and so on are provided by school.

4.8 Reading

At Hartwell, reading is integral to the curriculum. We are committed to ensuring that all pupils leave us as 'a reader' and we have a robust reading strategy in place to achieve this. For pupils with early reading skills, explicit teaching of phonics is provided. Reading interventions are provided when necessary, in line with a pupil's individual needs. Reading skills are taught explicitly in English lessons, as well as other areas of the curriculum where appropriate. Reading for pleasure is actively promoted through staff and pupil role-models, on-site library, classroom reading areas, class texts and story-time and regular pupil reading challenges.

4.9 Oracy & pupil expression

Oracy is a fundamental component of our curriculum, integral to students' cognitive, social, physical and emotional development. It encompasses the ability to communicate effectively using a multi-modal approach including spoken language, engage in dialogue, and listen actively. We recognise oracy as a vital skill that underpins not only academic achievement but also students' ability to participate fully in a democratic society, both within and beyond Hartwell School..

We believe that Oracy skills are essential for students to articulate their ideas, feelings and needs, collaborate with others, and engage critically with diverse viewpoints. Developing these skills prepares students for future personal and professional success, enhances their capacity to learn across the curriculum, and promotes well-being by fostering confidence and self-expression.

- Develop students' ability to [express themselves], speak fluently, coherently, and confidently in a range of formal and informal contexts.
- Equip students with the skills to use their voice to express ideas and feelings whilst considering the perspectives of others.
- Teach students to listen actively and respond appropriately to the contributions of others.
- Encourage students to use spoken language [choice boards/word mats] to reason, question, and challenge assumptions and opinions.
- Provide opportunities for students to present information and ideas clearly, using appropriate language [word choices] and tone for different audiences and purposes.
- Work closely with Speech and Language therapists to consider the best approaches for developing confident speakers.
- Plan opportunities for integrated structured talk activities, such as discussions, debates, presentations, and role-plays, into lessons and throughout the school day.
- Ensure that classroom environments are conducive to effective communication, encouraging respectful dialogue and valuing every voice.

4.10 Therapeutic Provision

On-site clinical teamwork with teachers and support staff to provide a 'Zones of Regulation' curriculum, which is delivered by classroom staff throughout the school day. This helps pupils to understand and regulate their own emotions, develop appropriate coping strategies and achieve personal targets as set out in pupil EHCPs, PEPs and Boxall profiles. Pupils have access to on-site sensory areas and safe spaces throughout the school day in order to support their self-regulation of emotions and behaviour. Pupils are offered group or individual therapeutic sessions, as appropriate to their needs.

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 7
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

4.11 Physical Education

All pupils access PE lessons at our School with physical well-being being seen as a priority. Lessons mostly take place on the Multi-Use Games Area but some may also take place off-site e.g. swimming. We also offer PE as an option subject at KS4 for those pupils who would like to pursue a related qualification.

4.12 PSHE, Citizenship and Careers Education

All pupils access PSHE and Citizenship at our School and this aims to be needs-led whilst gaining coverage across three core themes:

1. Health and wellbeing (including statutory Health Education)
2. Relationships (including statutory Relationships and Sex Education)
3. Living in the wider world (including Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural Education, Economic wellbeing, Careers Education and Citizenship).

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Sex Education delivered as part of PSHE/Citizenship/Careers up until three terms before a child's 16th birthday (please refer to the school's RSE Policy). RSE lessons are carefully planned and taught in a sensitive and age-appropriate way using a variety of resources.

There is a focus at all Key Stages on the development of skills and attributes such as resilience, self-esteem, risk-management, team-working and critical thinking. Pupils are prepared for life, learning how to become responsible citizens, how to manage their money well and make sound financial decisions. They learn how to keep themselves safe and well.

Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 have access to impartial careers advice from IAG. They provide up to date careers guidance which allows pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options, helping pupils to fulfil their potential and prepare successfully for further learning and work.

4.13 Handwriting

In line with Ofsted expectations and the DfE's The Writing Framework (2025), we recognise fluent, legible and automatic handwriting as a foundational skill. Writing depends on both transcription (handwriting and spelling) and composition. When transcription is not automatic, cognitive load increases and limits pupils' ability to communicate ideas effectively. Our aim is for all pupils to develop handwriting fluency, speed and legibility so they can focus on planning, structuring and expressing their thinking.

Handwriting is explicitly taught and practised through a consistent, evidence-informed approach. Pupils will receive short handwriting sessions where needed, beginning with posture, grip and paper positioning before letter formation. Teaching follows a clear progression from motor-skill development and pre-writing patterns to accurate letter formation, legibility, speed and stamina. Dictation activities provide opportunities to practise transcription separately from composition, reducing cognitive demands for developing writers.

Adaptations might include sensory-motor activities, specialist equipment and individualised support, with alternative recording methods used where appropriate. High expectations for handwriting are maintained across all subjects, supported by staff modelling.

4.14 Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural (SMSC) Education, British Values and Protected Characteristics

At our School, SMSC and British Values are promoted in so much of what we do, not least during school assemblies and in PSHE/Citizenship/Careers lessons.

We encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. As well as actively

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 8
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

promoting British Values in school, the opposite also applies: we would actively challenge pupils, staff or professionals expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views.

As part of the wider SMSC curriculum, pupils are engaged to experience awe and wonder, act responsibly and support their community. In addition, we help pupils to learn about the protected characteristics as defined in The Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

4.15 COVID-19 Recovery Curriculum

At our School, we recognise that pupil well-being is at the forefront of recovery from the Covid19 crisis. Specific support from education, pastoral, care and clinical staff is offered to pupils where required. We continue to overcome the impact of any lost learning time and isolation periods by re-visiting key concepts, knowledge and skills in each subject area, provide high-quality learning strategies and personalised support as required.

5. IMPACT, ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

5.1 Impact

The impact of the curriculum at our School is evidenced by the work that the pupils produce, their progression over time and how well-prepared pupils are for further learning, work and life. We recognise that we may never see the long-term impact of curriculum, but we make every attempt to find out the wider impact using key indicators (outlined below) which relate directly to curriculum intent:

- Pupils will be enthused by learning and achieve positive outcomes
- Pupils will remember what they learn and make progress in all subject areas
- Pupils will leave us with a reading age beyond a functional level and they will be well-prepared for the next stage of learning
- Pupils will achieve a range of nationally recognised qualifications, including English and Maths, and will have achieved the outcomes and targets outlined on their EHCPs and PEPs
- Pupils will have identified possible career pathways in line with their strengths and interests
- Pupils will have an understanding of different workplaces
- Pupils will have developed a range of skills transferrable to the workplace
- Pupils will be far less reliant on adult support and will be working towards independence in many ways
- Pupils will be socially and emotionally prepared for transition to further education, employment or training
- Pupils will feel accepted and valued and will demonstrate improved self-esteem and confidence
- Pupils will know how to keep themselves safe and healthy and they will have developed a range of positive coping strategies
- Pupils will have an awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and they will be able to express their own views effectively
- Pupils will demonstrate respect, kindness and pride, an ability to form positive relationships with others and they will be well-prepared to contribute positively to their communities

5.2 Assessment

We use assessment as a key part of our approach to inform the next steps for pupils and to monitor the wider impact of curriculum. Achievement of key concepts and skills are tracked three times a year using our assessment system.

The expectation is that all Key Stage 4 pupils will achieve externally recognised qualifications and accreditation which are both ambitious and reflective of their abilities.

Softer skills are tracked using the Boxall Profile. Experiences related to the teaching of protected characteristics, British Values and SMSC activities are all tracked using SMSC Gridmaker.

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 9
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

5.3 **Monitoring**

The school's usual monitoring activities ensure that the curriculum offered is progressive and appropriate, enabling all pupils to achieve positive outcomes. Such monitoring activities include planning and work scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks, which are carried out by leaders.

Our School will review this local protocol annually to ensure it continues to reflect its best practice and that it meets the requirements of the Witherslack Group Curriculum Policy.

6. **CURRICULUM MODEL**

6.1 The school operates a 30-period week. There are 6 periods per day of 40 mins each. Students start the day with their form teacher in their classroom base for independent reading/phonics sessions and they also end the day in the same way, following the scheduled tutor programme. One tutor session per week is replaced by an assembly which focuses on a Rights Respecting/SMSC topic.

In primary and Keys Stage 3, students are taught in classroom bases in static classes with their class teacher and at least one teaching assistant. Visual timetables, rewards boards and classroom layout (with input from the clinical team) are used to support the learning.

The curriculum model in primary is that students have daily sessions of English and Maths. They also cover Science, PSHE, Computing, PE and Topic throughout the week.

In the secondary provision, core subjects are taught for 4 sessions per week with a key focus on developing knowledge, skills, vocabulary and closing the gap on English, Maths and Science. Students are also taught PE, ICT and PSHE as part of the core offer alongside Humanities, Art, Food and DT weekly. While largely students are taught in their classroom bases, for Food, DT, Maths and some Science lessons they are taught in specialist rooms to enhance their skills and use of specialist equipment.

In KS4, students also take 2 additional accreditation/options. Currently, we offer a range of courses including: Construction, Engineering, Art, ICT, Geography, D of E, Sport, Home Cooking, English literature, Computer science. Each option subject has 2 double sessions per week.

All students participate in an afternoon of SPARK on a Friday afternoon in which they can choose from a range of skills-based activities. These groupings are designed to allow for students to develop social skills and work with a range of students across the school and the programme is aligned with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

7. **REFERENCES**

None

8. **ASSOCIATED FORMS**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school documentation:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
- SEN Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- All subject Policies
- Gatsby Benchmarks

9. **APPENDICES**

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 10
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		

None

Document Number: HWS-V01-0926	Issue Date:	July 2026	Version Number: 05
Status: FINAL	Next Review Date:	July 2027	Page 11
Linked to Policy Number:	OPSP11		