



## **Recovering the Curriculum April 2021 – July 2022**

In June 2020, the country entered the first national coronavirus lockdown in order to manage the spread and impact of the virus. As a special needs school we remained open in accordance with government advice, however, many of our pupils were deemed clinically vulnerable and elected to shield at home whilst many others elected to remain at home and to learn remotely. This meant that the majority of our pupils remained at home during lockdown and a small number of pupils physically attended school. A comprehensive bespoke timetable was developed for each pupil to ensure a level of learning was maintained.

Following this initial lockdown we reviewed and adapted our curriculum as pupils prepared for a full return to school in September 2020. However, this return did not occur and by the end of December 2020 the UK had entered into another national lockdown with pupils directed not to attend school. We again remained open and experienced the majority of pupils electing to learn remotely. Finally, following the February half term in 2021 pupils began to physically return to school.

The common thread running through the past year plus has been the loss of routine, structure, friendship, opportunity and freedom. The routine and normality of school is now over a year in the past and, for many of our pupils in particular, this represents a significant challenge to re-introduce and resume this normality. Therefore, we have further adapted the curriculum in response to the extraordinary circumstances that have been presented in order to intelligently restore the full curriculum in a calculated and measured manner to ensure our pupils are able to adapt accordingly with the minimum amount of anxiety being caused. We have used guidance from the Department for Education and, in line with our values and ethos, we have our pupils well-being at the centre of our planning and decision making.

Accordingly, we have implemented a 'Recovery Curriculum' for the next 4 terms (from April 2021, up until July 2022).

This recovery curriculum is based on a holistic approach to children's development. It acknowledges that there have been immeasurable losses to our pupils as they stayed at home, missing out on usual routines, typical teaching and learning, social



opportunities, therapy and possibly experiencing bereavement. These losses can trigger anxiety and vulnerability that can be detrimental to their mental health and well-being, resulting in gaps in their academic and social progress. When considering that an anxious pupil is not in a place to learn effectively, we have considered the most appropriate way to support our pupils back to a full curriculum and to the wide and rich learning experience they deserve.

Our Recovery curriculum approach will encompass and support the academic expectations for our pupils while ensuring that their mental health and well-being needs are nurtured.

Our recovery curriculum will focus on:

**1. Supporting pupils to restore and build positive relationships with others, which may have been impacted by lockdown and feel part of the school community.**

We will achieve this by increasing our focus on the Six Nurture principles which are:

- the importance of transitions in children's lives,
- the importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing,
- the school offers a safe base,
- all behaviour is communication,
- language is a vital means of communication and
- children's learning is understood developmentally

We will extend our Nurture activities and Personal, Social, Health and Citizens Education and we will have a focus on adapting to a changed school environment with changes to previous rules and routines, interacting with others positively, responding to familiar and new adults, understanding their own emotions and how to ask for help and support. We will continue to practice our communication and language skills, while improving our reading and writing and mathematics.

**2. Supporting pupils to understand and manage their feelings and behaviour in relation to the impact of lockdown and adapting to the changes within school, their homes and the community.**

We will achieve this by:

- giving our pupils time to adjust to changes through clear structures, boundaries and where appropriate reduced timetables that enable time to process their experiences without demand.
- Support to share and manage difficult feelings through strategies such as zones of regulation, discussions and circle time where they can practice their communication skills.
- Opportunities to teach self-regulation strategies such as sensory breaks, movement exercise, having personal space and others identified in individual Well-being Plans, which all aim to improve their feelings of calm and safety.
- A focus on re-establishing behaviours for learning such as listening and attention, communication skills and improved focus while practicing reading, writing and mathematical skills.

**3. Supporting pupils to rebuild their confidence as learners, reskill them with abilities that they may have not practiced during lockdown and be successful in achieving outcomes set in their Education, Health Care Plans, while assessing the impact of lockdown to ensure that any learning gaps are identified and measures put in place to close the gaps.**

We will achieve this by ensuring that our pupils have opportunities where they feel success and engage in learning with enjoyment and wonder. We are giving our pupils reduced curriculum coverage, built into daily timetables that focus mainly on the core subjects of English and Mathematics. Thereby enabling pupils to focus on communication skills, listening and attention, reading and writing and Mathematical concepts. Alongside this their PSHCE development will be delivered through enrichment activities with an aim to address skills that may have diminished over the lockdown period.



During the period this recovery curriculum is in place we will be focused on restoring a full curriculum. We acknowledge the difficulties the pandemic has caused and the impact upon our pupils. We will follow government guidance which can be fluid, and will endeavour to build on our curriculum offer through the delivery of subjects while holding the safety of our pupils at the forefront of our plans. Learning will be within the pupil's individual capabilities recognising that when pupils have experienced difficult times their ability to learn new concepts and to be academically challenged is reduced. Pupils will continue to work towards their EHCP targets, which are built into their school day.

All pupils will be assessed within our usual assessment schedule to be re-baselined to identify any gaps in progress, which may be the impact of lockdown and put in place a 'catch up strategy' to close these gaps.

We will also continue to support our pupils who have taken time to return to the classroom due to self-isolating at home or heightened anxiety as a result of the pandemic. Where necessary we will continue through our remote learning platforms. Teachers have the ability to adapt to any changes in guidance and are able to upload learning for English and mathematics, together with a broad range of learning activities including scientific enquiry, art and design, technology and PE at short notice. Printed resources will be sent home for those pupils who do not have internet access or it is deemed to be a more appropriate form of learning.

Our school aim is to be conscious of the impact of lockdown for each individual pupil while working towards a robust and timely transition to a full curriculum coverage for all by September 2022, subject to further lockdowns or other restrictions to education.

We aim to develop healthy routines and practices to enable pupils to build their stamina in engaging with a full curriculum where the government guidance relating to use of equipment allows. We aim to increase curriculum coverage building on the core subjects taking safety guidance into consideration.



Our phased return to a full curriculum is as follows:

- Phase 1 – English, Reading, Maths and PSHE**
- Phase 2 – English, Reading, Maths, PSHE and Life Skills/Employability**
- Phase 3 - English, Reading, Maths, PSHE, Life Skills/Employability, Science and PE**
- Phase 4 – English, Reading, Maths, PSHE, Life Skills/Employability, Science, PE and Creative Arts**
- Phase 5 – Trial full curriculum**
- Phase 6 – Embed full curriculum.**

We will strive to continue to provide a routine and range of curriculum enrichment activities that will foster feelings of self-worth, enjoyment and continued progress with targets and aspirations whilst prioritising the need to address significant gaps in pupils' knowledge. Curriculum planning will be informed by assessment of pupils' new baselines to address the gaps in their knowledge and skills.

Our recovery curriculum will be monitored and reviewed in accordance with the coronavirus status at the time to ensure we are able to expedite a return to a full curriculum at a healthy and sustainable pace for all pupils.

This plan will be reviewed termly by the local governing body.

### **Second Review, December 2021**

The emergence of the new Omicron variant in mid-December has sent infection rates soaring. Whilst there have currently been a smaller proportion of hospitalisations reported there is a risk of large numbers of subsequent hospitalisations due to the sheer numbers involved. Whilst Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have re-imposed further coronavirus restrictions, the government in England remains reluctant to do so whilst hospitalisation numbers remain manageable.

Critically to schools, however, and particularly to small schools, is the warning from Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of Schools and College Leaders in late December 2021 where he shared concerns that staff shortages due to isolation requirements were already causing some schools to contingency plan to



send whole year groups home in order that the need for face to face teaching could be prioritised.

The school remains committed to wherever possible providing face to face teaching but we are also alert to ensuring that both pupils and staff wellbeing is maintained.

We have in place a fit for purpose covid risk assessment which reflects current DfE guidance and a remote learning policy is in place in the event of needing to provide remote learning through imposed restrictions or staff shortages.

### **Third Review, February 2022**

During this time the curriculum is between phase 5 and 6. The national situation remains fluid post-Christmas due to the omicron variant. Some restrictions are still in place such as wearing face coverings in communal areas and on public transport.

### **Current Phase of Plan**

| <b>Phase</b>  | <b>Rational</b>   | <b>Next Review</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <p>During this time the curriculum is operating between phases 5 and 6.</p> <p>The current phase may need to be advanced or retarded to match the prevailing circumstances and restrictions as set out by the Government.</p> | <p>- All pupils have experienced disruption to their learning, in both academic and social terms, over the past 12 months and many pupils have experienced regression in their levels as a result. The full curriculum is being offered but for some pupils this is not secure as there is more focus on basics and catchup to ensure gaps are identified and closed.</p> <p>- Pupils have been re-baselined to ensure accurate starting points and gaps have been identified to ensure teaching is precise and is able to maximise value. Such is the fluid nature of covid that this baselining and assessment will be a constant feature within the school for the foreseeable future.</p> | <p>Scheduled May 2022</p> <p><i>(Or as required in response to material changes in government advice)</i></p> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils will need time to re-adjust to school routines and to re-establish relationships with peers and staff.</li> <li>- Many pupils are still experiencing covid disruption, directly or indirectly, and this provides barriers to individual learning at pace.</li> <li>- The current phase of the plan is therefore considered to be the most appropriate measure of providing education whilst acknowledging the barriers to learning which are present.</li> </ul> |  |
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### Schedule of Review

The table below outlines the schedule of reviews to date.

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| Ratified by Governing Body                       | April 2021                                       |
| Reviewed, updated and ratified by Governing Body | 1 <sup>st</sup> review<br>September 2021         |
|  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> review<br>December 2021          |
|  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> review February<br>2022          |
|  | 4 <sup>th</sup> review scheduled<br>for May 2022 |