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PARKWOOD HALL CO-OPERATIVE ACADEMY

Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy

"Growth through Personal and Social Learning"

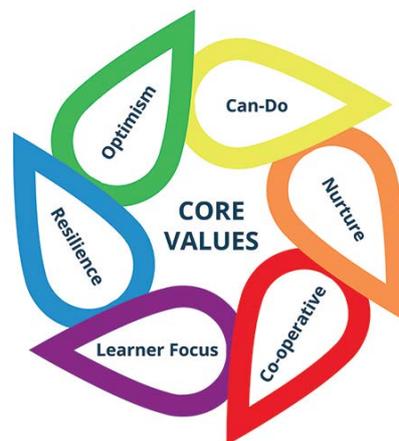
Non-Statutory Policy File

LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

Index No: 14

Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment'

Our Core Values



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LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

1 AIM

At Parkwood Hall we offer all students an education that enables them to achieve as much as they possibly can and which aims to prepare them for adult life. We refer to our boarding provision as “Residential Education” and elements of this are very much part of our educational offer for all.

This policy aims to lay out what good and outstanding learning looks like at Parkwood. Our students learn in individual ways and we aim to respond to these by adapting the curriculum to meet their individual needs throughout their time with us. We aim to develop students’ life-skills to their fullest potential and to prepare them for life beyond Parkwood

When students are learning at their best they:

- Are happy and engaged in their learning
- Know the purpose of their learning and the outcomes they are working towards
- Are able to undertake tasks with increased confidence and competence
- Understand what they need to do
- Communicate their understanding through signing/verbal communication/pictures/photos with peers, staff and other adults in the school and wider community
- Use and transfer the skills they are taught, developing the capacity to use them independently and appropriately
- Learn alongside others and interact with others appropriately
- Learn in a variety of contexts; individually, with partners, as part of a group, with direct support and as part of the whole class

In addition:

- Staff build relationships which support students to feel safe secure confident, cared for and wanted - so that they are able to learn.
- Staff ensure they have knowledge of a student’s personal situation, needs and circumstances; so they can support them effectively

Teaching is effective when:

- Learning is realistic, relevant, and rewarding.
- There is an appropriate level of challenge
- Learning starts promptly
- Social skills are explicitly taught and practiced in a range of environments and contexts

- It is well planned, ensuring that activities are purposeful, with clear objectives and outcomes
- There are high quality resources that are well-organised, supportive and accessible
- All staff are effectively deployed to support learning
- Staff listen to what students communicate to them, in the most appropriate form and behaviour is considered as communication
- There is mutual respect evident in the interactions seen between all members of the class, including those modelled by staff
- Staff know how to best support students, understanding what they can do and where they need challenging
- Teachers are engaging with all students across the lesson so that they can quickly respond to learners needs and amend or modify tasks if required
- Positive feedback is given across a lesson and following task completion to support students in consolidating and extending their skills (in line with the feedback and marking policy)
- Teachers' plans are differentiated by need and ability, taking into account students' personal objectives and targets.
- Learning is supported by the use of signing and symbols and graphics to enhance understanding.
- Staff know students' individual learning targets and can identify opportunities for individuals to work on these across the learning day
- Behaviour is managed well, in line with the school's behaviour policy and individual plans, creating and maintain a positive learning atmosphere.
- Pace of learning is varied to ensure students are engaged and make progress.
- Opportunities are grasped to broaden students learning and life skills, encouraging engagement whilst maintaining learning objectives.
- All classroom staff have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes.
- Student-led learning is encouraged and their interests are drawn-on to facilitate engagement.
- Staff ensure the classroom is a safe and secure environment, nurturing students' so that they can thrive
- Students work towards knowing their individual targets and are able to identify when they have achieved them

2 CLASSROOM ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- TEACCH principles are employed throughout the school to ensure that all students can engage with the environment, routines and activities with greater ease, reducing anxiety

and allowing them to be ready to learn (e.g. work schedules, timetables, now/next boards etc.) [See Appendix for summary of TEACCH principles and key features]

- Resources should be clearly labelled using words and symbols and readily available to students to support guided independence
- The environment is comfortable and temperature, light and noise are managed to enable students' to focus on learning
- Work areas are provided to support student focus, these may be a work bay, a designated space at a shared table or an individual space.
- Staff work spaces should be a good model for students (i.e. tidy and well kept)
- Teacher notices should be kept to a minimum and notice boards uncluttered
- Grouping should change depending on student needs and activities and be varied.
- Displays should support learning and celebrate achievement but not be over-stimulating or distracting for those with ASC (Autistic Spectrum Condition).
- Visuals resources should be used to support learning e.g. Prompts, Symbols, timetables work schedules, PECS folders, now and next boards, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) should be used when advised as part of learning activities and to enhance student progress.
- Reading materials should be presented in an accessible and purposeful manner and treated with respect
- Provision and use of specialist resources as advised by specialists eg OT, EP, Physio. Should be linked into learning activities whenever possible.

3 EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Learning is a change in a student's ability, social skill or approach to learning - which is evidenced.

We evidence learning in a variety of ways, including:

- Valuing all student's responses, be they verbal, written, gesture, indication of agreement or not, likes and dislikes and choices between alternatives, however these are communicated
- Art work
- Creative outcomes
- Using photographs
- Making choices and demonstrating their skills.
- Annotated photographs (If annotated by students, then also with teacher feedback/comments)
- Written work with feedback in accordance with our agreed Marking and Feedback Policy, (indicating the level of support and achievement)

- Choices and responses made using signing or symbols – recorded by a variety of means/media
- Witness statements and/or observations by a range of staff linked to learning areas
- Video with a witness statement to indicate what it evidences and where to find it
- End products, supported by feedback / observations
- Displays which show the learning journey of the group/class/individual
- Posters or displays which summarise learning produced with students
- Self-reflection and assessment activities
- Evidence of learning collected from outside agencies (e.g. college)
- Feedback from therapists, music teachers and other visiting professionals
- Minutes from reviews and meetings where progress is summarised

4 LEARNING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

- When learning occurs or is planned for outside of the classroom the same expectations for planning, resourcing and evidencing apply
- Risk assessment policies and best practice must be adhered to; copies must be taken along with Student information sheet.
- Students should be involved in planning for the trip, including: considering clothing and resources needed, learning to apply life-skills.
- Planning must show what skill or objective is being learnt or practised whilst engaging in learning out of the classroom.

5 OUR CURRICULUM

Our curriculum has been specifically developed to meet the varied and complex needs of our students. Our curriculum is based around 10 areas of learning +RE (organised into 8 key areas – 4 core and 4 periphery) and prepares our students for life beyond Parkwood. Core curriculum areas are taught through cross curricular learning contexts which engage students. Physical activity and health and creative and performing Arts are linked where possible to themes but also include subject specific elements.

6 PLANNING

Teachers undertake planning of the long and medium term planning collaboratively. Pro-formas are used to ensure consistency

7 LONG TERM PLANNING

- Students are grouped according to a variety of criteria, including social interaction, intellectual ability and developmental stage (not by National Curriculum year group). This has implications for long-term planning and requires a higher emphasis on planning for individual needs rather than by group.
- We have a rolling 3 year OCN framework which guides the thematic content of learning of our students who are able to access the framework at 14+ years
- For students younger than 14 or who are not at the level of accessing OCN, they follow a three-year cycle of thematic learning.

8 MEDIUM TERM PLANNING / SCHEMES OF WORK

Two schemes of work are written at the start of each term. One focuses on the thematic strand and the other looks particularly at the next set of basic skills which individual students need to acquire

9 SCHEMES OF WORK INCLUDE (SOW):

- Overall objectives for the unit (possibly differentiated across the 3 entry levels)
- Potential learning activities to meet the objectives
- Evidencing opportunities across the term
- Specific learning beyond the normal timetable eg Day trips, story tellers, theatre groups. (These ensure greater engagement with the proceeding work, therefore it is expected that these will occur at the start or mid-way through a unit)
- Basic skills SOW is written to address the numeracy and literacy skills of the individuals and group being taught.
- SOW are submitted at the start of each term by agreed dates.

10 SHORT TERM PLANNING:

- Planning needs to be completed weekly and be on the server by Monday by 4pm in the designated planning folder.
- Planning is a working document and may change across a week. Changes may be made by amending the server document or by hand on your working copy.
- Planning needs to be accessible in the classroom in a known location (this is very important when someone else is taking your class for any reason)
- When changing planning staff should use their professional judgement and be aware of lesson 'creep' where an engaging activity is continued but adversely impacts on curricular coverage.

- It is good professional practice to reflect and review progress against your medium and short term planning to ensure pace and coverage.

Short-term planning should include:

- Clear learning objectives which underpin the learning activities
- Easily understandable by others so that in the teacher absence learning continues
- Provide a level of detail that allows all staff to deliver effective learning as set out in this policy

11 INDIVIDUAL OBJECTIVE PLANNER:

- This must be updated at a minimum once a term.
- Where students are making better than expected progress the targets will be updated more frequently.
- Every area needs to have a target. Joint Review /annual Review targets must be transferred onto the target grid.

12 MONITORING

How do we ensure this is in place and applied consistently?

- Wherever possible by peer reviews of classroom environment and practice; via collaborative working on planning, buddying systems, ad hoc support and planned peer review visits.

The Wider Leadership Team monitoring through:

- Drop ins (these can be unannounced) with feedback
- Observations with feedback
- Work scrutiny
- Learning walks
- Governor's visits
- Student council
- Weekly teacher/cluster meetings
- Peer evidence reviews in staff meetings

13 GOVERNORS

- Challenge the school to meet its commitment to ensure learning is of the highest standard, thereby ensuring that students are best prepared for life beyond Parkwood.
- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively

- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are effective in supporting successful teaching and learning;
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes. These include the Principal's reports to governors, the self-evaluation forms (SEF) and review by link governors
- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality learning
- Act as critical friends to the Senior Leadership Team and Wider Leadership Group and report back on visits with a particular focus on learning outcomes at a strategic level.
- To promote and ensure at all times equal opportunities in relation to race, gender, class and belief.

14 PARENT AND CARER INVOLVEMENT

- Carers and families are partners in learning, Joint Reviews are held termly where targets are set collaboratively - which take into account the next learning steps needed at home and school.

Parents and families support learning by:

- Reinforcing the school's learning ethos, including supporting any home school agreement(s)
- Making pertinent comments in the contact book which inform staff about the student's achievements, activities and changes in circumstances which may impact on learning
- Informing us of upcoming appointments which may impact on attendance and learning
- Returning the contact book to school regularly
- Informing school of any issues causing their child distress in school so we can address these swiftly
- Providing extended learning activities which may be suggested for the student to undertake outside of school so learning and skills are generalised outside of the school environment
- Reading with their child regularly and helping them apply their learning outside of school

We will always contact parents if we are concerned about any aspect of their child's welfare, progress or behaviour and we hope and expect that parents will let us know of any problems or anxieties, which might affect their child.

APPENDIX 1. TEACCH KEY FEATURES

	Physical Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas defined & labelled • Clean, tidy & ready • Clear purpose
	Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff schedule • Half day routine • Clearly displayed
	Work System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear expectation • Clear duration • Clear layout • What comes next
	Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular schedule checks • Uniform method of support
	Visual structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear visuals • Personal visuals • Supportive visuals

APPENDIX 2. HOMEWORK POLICY

Parkwood Hall is a day and residential school for students aged 7 to 19 with significant learning difficulties and complex needs. Our curriculum is focussed as much on developing skills such as independence skills, self-confidence and social behaviour as it is on academic subjects.

The school day is a tiring one for many of our students and often they leave home between 7am and 7.30am to get to school. They can arrive home as late as 5pm. We take the view that, for most students, it would be counter-productive to set homework. They will be tired, they will need constant support and encouragement, and only a few parents have the resources to support them.

Boarders take part in a wide range of activities, some of which are designed to extend learning acquired in the classroom as well as teach new skills. These would include cooking, washing clothes and self-care, which are accredited through the Open College Network (OCN).

Where parents request it, and where it is clearly in the student's best interests, we will set appropriate homework tasks for them to complete with relatively little support.

We encourage all students to develop their reading skills (both decoding and comprehension) and we encourage students to take books home and into the residential provision.

We also provide activity packs for the longer school holidays, again on request, in order that students can maintain and practise skills they have learnt while in school.

When students are off for a long period of time, for medical reasons such as an operation, we will liaise with families over providing suitable activities and learning opportunities.

APPENDIX 3. SCHOOL POLICY ON EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND CLASS TRIPS

1. Any off-site trips and educational visits are part of the curriculum for all of our students. They should be planned and structured in such a way that they build upon prior learning (whether in school or off-site) and they should be aimed at developing one or more of the main areas of the Parkwood curriculum. In many cases they enrich and add relevance and realism to the students' learning experiences.
2. As a special school, it is of great importance that we strive to ensure that no student is excluded from off-site learning, especially as a result of any disability they have. Consideration must be given to any reasonable adaptations which will facilitate their full participation. We have a long and honourable tradition of being a fully inclusive school, which has included taking students with complex needs on residential school journeys to Disneyland Paris.
3. In view of the above, it follows that students should not be prevented from going on educational trips of any kind during the school day (and in the case of boarders, during the "waking day curriculum") without good and relevant reasons. This means that it is not acceptable to stop a student from going out on an educational trip on the basis that they have misbehaved in class or in school or with you. You should not use trips (which are always or should be educational) as if they are treats to be withheld as a punishment.
4. Apart from very unusual circumstances, the only exceptions to this should be (a) there is a genuine concern or anxiety that they will be a risk to themselves or to others on the trip, in which case we are still obliged to consider what preventive or protective "control measures" can be put in place to enable their participation. Alternatively (b) the trip is one to buy "tuck" as part of the residential education programme, in which case there will be a structured system linked to rewards and withholding the reward of shopping for tuck is a known consequence of poor behaviour in general.
5. It is acceptable to consider stopping a student from going on a school trip as a direct consequence of their behaviour on a previous trip. This should be made clear to them before the trip is due to take place (i.e. at least one day before). You should discuss the issue with the appropriate manager (e.g. Cluster Lead) and ensure that proper arrangements are made for supervising the student while the rest of the group are out. Normally this will mean leaving a member of your class team behind to assist with supervision of the student in question.

APPROVAL

Approved by Nick White on behalf of Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy on:

Signed _____

Principal