



**ALT BRIDGE SCHOOL**

**Curriculum, Assessment, Teaching and Learning  
Policy**

**Reviewed by N. Menagh  
Approved by Governors 07.03.24**

## Introduction

Alt Bridge School is specialist learning environment for students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). We cater for students with a broad ability range and some of our students achieve GCSE level qualifications by the end of Key Stage 4.

This policy draws together our whole school approaches to curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning. Through these approaches, we aim to provide a high quality of education to our students and to ensure that they achieve their best possible outcomes.

## Aims of Policy

- To ensure a broad, balanced, enriched and ambitious curriculum which is accessible for all students
- To hold high expectations for our learners and carefully plan their learning journeys to ensure that they are well prepared for their next stages of education, employment or training
- To ensure students are successfully prepared for adulthood
- To enable those students, for whom it is relevant, to access qualifications which support their aspirations and planned outcomes
- To assess student progress and take action to improve learning outcomes for individual students where difficulties have been identified
- To capture evidence of learning and enable regular access to progress information for parents/carers
- To ensure students understand and remember key concepts through the application of effective teaching and learning strategies
- To monitor the progress students make towards their individual EHCP outcomes throughout the full range of our provision and work closely with parents and carers to plan and personalise support
- To monitor whether the outcomes for students are improving as a result of the additional provision being made for them
- To maintain regular continued professional development opportunities for all staff and ensure that teachers maintain strong subject knowledge for the subjects they teach

## Curriculum

### Curriculum Vision

The curriculum at Alt Bridge School has been designed to be ambitious and to ensure that all students access a broad range of skills and knowledge. It has also been designed to prepare students for their next steps and to enable them to lead successful adult lives.

We consider the whole child and personalise learning to suit the needs of all our learners from their individual starting points. We ensure that students can access the curriculum by adopting an individualised approach to enhance our provision. Within our curriculum there is also strong emphasis on reading. Throughout the curriculum we focus on the following:



## Curriculum Aims

The curriculum intent for Alt Bridge students is that they access a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum which is adapted where needed, in order to meet the holistic needs of students. We ensure that our students are well prepared for adulthood and are supported to achieve personal success in their chosen pathways. We aim to equip them with the relevant knowledge they need, whilst ensuring they have the skills to apply this knowledge widely and the ability to retain it.

We place importance on the development of personal skills and utilise a wide range of opportunities in order to build cultural capital, thereby enhancing their learning experiences. We place further emphasis on building the communication skills of our students so that they may find and use their voices to steer their course towards their best possible outcomes in adult life.

Our students can expect equal opportunities through our educational provision, high quality teaching and learning, a broad range of subjects and support to develop positive mental health and well-being.

The curriculum prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences which they will encounter in adult life and promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is enriched with a range of extra-curricular activities to promote health and well-being, provide challenge, engagement and social interaction.

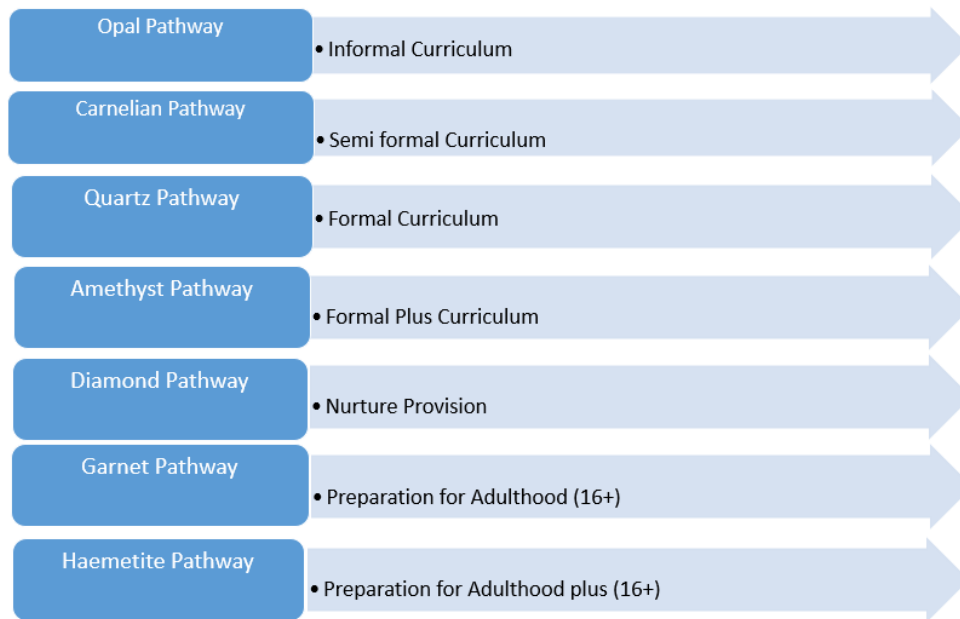
## Curriculum Structure

Our whole school curriculum is divided into clusters of subjects and provisions which hold a complimentary theme. Subjects within clusters work collaboratively to ensure coverage of the national curriculum. There is a curriculum leader for each of the clusters. The structure of the curriculum and the leadership is outlined in the table below.

Cluster name	Subjects	Leader
Innovation and Discovery	Maths, science, design technology	Mrs Clare Winstanley
Language and Literature	English language and literature, MFL, Drama	Mr John Buxton
Thriving	PSHCE and SRE	Mr J Reynolds
Global	Geography, history and RE	Mr J Cook
Virtual	Computing	Mr G Reddin
Physical Development	PE, forest school and Duke of Edinburgh award	Mr J Lamb
Arts	Art & design, performing arts (KS4) and music	Mrs L Beddows

## Curriculum Pathways

Alt Bridge caters to students with a wide variety of educational needs and abilities. Our curriculum is designed to provide an appropriate level of challenge to all learners. The curriculum is available in seven pathways currently which are outlined below;



## KS4 options planning and implementation

In year 9, during the spring term, students select their options subjects for key stage 4 during a school options event. Staff gather pupil voice in the lead up to this event by identifying the options available and designing the offer. Staff offer tailored advice to students and their parents/carers in order to support decision-making.

Year 9 students benefit from careers advice from our careers leader in preparation for and during EHCP reviews in order to support their options for KS4 subjects.

## Enrichment

Enrichment throughout the curriculum is an approach to ensure that we provide a range of engaging activities. The opportunities provided aim to continually build on the resilience of students, their cultural knowledge, develop behaviour for learning and increase engagement overall.

Our available activities continue to be developed and are up-dated regularly. Some of the opportunities which have been available to students include;

- Duke of Edinburgh
- Forest School
- Outdoors learning
- Catering
- Enterprise activities
- Horticulture
- Hair and beauty
- Karate
- Performing Arts
- Boxing

## **Our unique approach**

At Alt Bridge School we consider the whole child and will continually evaluate provision and respond to needs which arise at a given time. We adopt a person-centred approach, carefully selecting and planning provision to meet need and to enhance a student's access to the full curriculum.

We believe that our students will be well-prepared for adulthood by developing their knowledge of self-regulation tools and where possible, learning to apply them in different contexts. We therefore use a whole school approach to teach self-regulation skills.

We believe that a focus on communication skills will support our students to develop their confidence and independence and we look for frequent opportunities to highlight achievements, promote positive mental health and wellbeing, support social connections and enhance thinking skills. We weave a range of approaches into our curriculum and enhance the offer through our specialist packages of support.

The full offer of specialist services and support is outlined within our annual SEND Information Report and on our website.

## **Assessment**

### **Curriculum and assessment**

Our assessment practices focus on understanding how successfully our students are progressing through the curriculum. Our assessments enable us to reflect on the quality of our curriculum, our teaching and learning practices and also respond to needs of individual students, as they progress through the topics in the curriculum.

### **Baseline assessments**

When pupils begin with us at Alt Bridge on their learning journey, we carry out a range of assessments in order to provide a baseline and identify starting points for our students. We also gather assessment information from other settings prior to entry to contribute to our knowledge of student's abilities and needs.

### **Education, Health and Care Plans and reviews**

Our students are entitled to an annual review of their EHCPs which provides an opportunity to assess their progress towards the specific outcomes outlined in their plans. The outcomes for our students cover the four broad categories of SEND. The four categories of SEND according to the SEND code of practice include;

- Cognition and learning
- Communication and interaction
- Sensory and/or physical
- Social, emotional and mental health

Depending on a student's individual needs, they may have outcomes concentrated in particular areas from the above list. The annual review is held in school and is chaired by the student's form teacher. Parents/carers, the student themselves and any outside agencies involved are also invited to attend the reviews along with representatives from health and social care where appropriate. The designated SEND officer from Knowsley SEND team is also invited.

We track student progress according to their individually set outcomes through a continuous process of plan, do, review which involves planning individual support, implementing the support and then reviewing the impact before planning for the next steps. The individual student profiles provide an update of the support in place and the strengths and difficulties of each student.

### **Student Holistic Progress Reviews**

Holistic progress reviews take place regularly throughout the year to consider the needs of students, agree expectations and plan provision. Reviews are attended by the head of year, inclusion and engagement leader, allocated learning mentor, form teacher and form teaching assistant. These reviews consider the holistic needs of students and may involve the allocation of support processes and interventions to meet pastoral needs.

### **Reading assessment**

In order to access the full curriculum, it is essential that our students are able to read fluently and accurately. We therefore rigorously track their progress in reading and provide reading development sessions in order to target our teaching to ensure the best possible outcomes.

The phonological knowledge of students is assessed using key tests from our selected phonics programme Lexonic Leap Phonics. Student reading abilities are also assessed using Star Reader assessments. Using our assessment information and knowledge of how students acquire reading skills, students are allocated to specific reading development groups in order to access the appropriate level of support.

### **Online learning journals**

Teaching staff are able to use the SeeSaw learning platform to upload examples of work, provide feedback and communicate directly with parents/carers.

At Alt Bridge School, we recognise that learning is not only demonstrated by the work students have produced in books. The acquisition of new knowledge and skills can be seen in how our students talk about their experiences, physical activities they undertake, what they make and in various other expressions of their thoughts. We aim to capture as much of this learning as possible so that students will continue to make links across lessons and through topics within the curriculum.

Class teachers use technology in class to capture demonstrations of learning via video or image recording. We provide students with opportunities to add to their own online portfolio also in order to update this evidence of their learning journey. This portfolio then enables students to continually reflect on their learning and make links with new knowledge and experiences.

## Teaching and learning

### Classroom practice and pedagogy

The main consideration for Alt Bridge School is to firstly ensure that our students achieve access to the curriculum. Access requires that their individual needs are met so that each student can flourish within our setting. This requires a complex combination of approaches, strategies, interventions, specialist input and support mechanisms which must work together to enable each child to achieve their best outcomes.

Furthermore, our approaches to teaching and learning are rooted in cognitive science. This means that we consider the best ways in which students learn and retain information and implement research-based approaches to achieve the best outcomes for learners.

We continually strive to develop classroom practice through ongoing;

- Continued Professional Development (training)
- Collaborative coaching
- Utilising pupil voice
- Implementing specialist approaches
- Assessing the impact of the curriculum and reviewing regularly

### Teachers' Standards

*"Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils"*

*Teachers Standards, Department for Education (2011)*

All teachers are required to meet the criteria outlined in the Teacher's Standards document from the point of being awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

All teachers are responsible for the safety, welfare and progress of the students they teach and implementing whole school resource approaches.

### Monitoring

At Alt Bridge School, we regularly monitor how effective our teaching and learning approaches are in achieving the learning outcomes we have planned for our



students. Senior Leaders and cluster leaders do this through the following approaches;

- Visiting classes and seeing the curriculum in action
- Speaking to teachers about the curriculum, how it is implemented, the purpose within lessons and the responses of the learners
- Speaking to students about their learning experience
- Meeting regularly with curriculum cluster leaders to review the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum within their clusters
- Looking at work produced by students in books
- Looking through student learning portfolios on SeeSaw
- Analysing the achievement and progress profile of students across year groups, subjects, key stages and the school

### **Collaborative coaching**

Collaborative coaching is in place to provide teaching staff with the opportunity to explore specific teaching and learning strategies alongside a coaching partner.

Collaborative coaching involves the provision of personalised support for teachers through discussions about their practice. Teachers are given the time to reflect on their practice, identify new research-based approaches which may achieve positive outcomes and then develop this practice with the support and involvement of their identified 'coach'. This approach enables teaching and learning at Alt Bridge to be continually reviewed and developed.

### **Moderation**

Moderation sessions will take place regularly throughout the year within subjects and will be coordinated and led by the curriculum cluster leaders.

Moderation is a positive part of a teacher's professional development as it offers the opportunity to compare student performance with the requirements of the national curriculum. It also ensures that accurate and fair marks are awarded to students by comparing them to others in the same class and are consistent with those made in other classes.

Moderation will also take place externally with similar special educational settings to further strengthen the accuracy of assessments.

### **Feedback and marking approaches**

The feedback and marking used with students in lessons should ensure that students are aware of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Our aim is for our students to develop their ability to receive feedback well and make adjustments according to the guidance of teachers. It is important that feedback takes place between students, peers, teachers and support staff during the lessons. The ability of our students to discuss and reflect on their learning and articulate how they will apply the knowledge and skills acquired is an essential part of their development as a learner.

Marking takes place in every subject, however it may be quite different depending on the subject. Different subjects (as specified by curriculum leaders) will therefore, employ variations on the method of marking, as long as the whole school principles are adhered to which are outlined in this policy. The individual approaches will be included in the curriculum cluster policy.

### **Effective marking and feedback**

Ongoing verbal feedback during lessons (live marking), in 1:1 discussions with students and at the end of units of work are key to providing essential guidance to students in relation to their learning.

Effective marking celebrates pupils' knowledge and effort and maps a clear route towards improvement. Marking is best understood to be a process of creating a supportive and challenging learning dialogue in which feedback can be exchanged and questions asked and answered.

Effective marking;

- Is matched to the subject and individual student within the class
- Addresses misconceptions in learning
- Supports the student in reflecting on their work and becoming aware of strengths and areas for improvement
- Is fully accessible to the student
- Aims to motivate and engage students in the learning process
- Includes peer and self-assessment methods

### **Learner support within class**

The ongoing goal of effective teaching and learning within the classroom is to ensure students make progress and acquire the knowledge and skills to develop independent learning skills. Students attend Alt Bridge School because they do require ongoing and additional support to develop independence in their learning and to acquire new knowledge and skills.

Teachers are responsible for selecting appropriate resources for use during lessons. The curriculum cluster leaders provide long and medium-term planning with references to appropriate materials. If teachers select other resources, the resources must be appropriate to the age and developmental level that students within the class are working at.

Teachers are responsible for completing their Learning Intention for the lesson and 'Now, Next, Then' Boards. These class resources are consistent across the school and are visual task boards which allow pupils to see at a glance what is coming next. This helps pupils to cope with transitions and to make the lesson's activities easier to process. They are also used to schedule movement / sensory / choosing time breaks for pupils who need them.

It is essential that students access the curriculum without significant frustration but also at an appropriate level to achieve suitable challenge. When challenged at the

appropriate level, students will engage in active learning which will enable them to make progress. We achieve this through providing consistency with cross curricular resources and the appropriate scaffolding that individual students need in order to successfully learn what is intended for them to learn within each lesson.

A guidance sheet which outlines scaffolding techniques to use when questioning students in class, is available within the appendices to this policy.

### **Reporting to parents/carers**

We report to our parents and carers with regards to progress pupils are making three times annually in the following ways;

1. Autumn term parents evening for all students with a focus on pastoral support
2. Spring term parents evening for all students plus a brief pupil progress report detailing progress in core subjects, details of what content has been covered in the curriculum and form tutor pastoral comments
3. End of year report detailing progress across all subjects along with details of what content has been covered in the curriculum and form tutor pastoral comments

Our reports include a comment for their progress over the academic year, and also pupils engagement within lessons, for each subject across the curriculum.

We report regularly to our parents and carers regarding the progress students make towards their EHCP outcomes in the following ways;

- EHCP annual reviews
- Updates to student profiles termly with details of planned interventions
- SeeSaw evidence of learning linked to SEND categories of need
- Details of intervention programmes in place to offer targeted support and the progress made by students

We provide access for parents and carers to the work produced by students, their views and our feedback all via SeeSaw which parents/carers are able to log on to daily.

### **Deployment of Teaching Assistants**

Alt Bridge School employ a large number of teaching assistants who provide essential support to our students in all aspects of school life. It is important to our students that they are provided with the right amount of support to succeed, whilst also ensuring that they are motivated and enabled to become as independent as possible.

Our teaching assistants access regular training to refresh their knowledge and skills in relation to teaching and learning, supporting mental health and wellbeing, first aid, specific medical needs, Team Teach physical intervention approaches and intimate/personal care.

We value our support staff team highly at Alt Bridge and have fully outlined the ways in which we deploy our TAs within our TA policy.

**Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the teaching and learning committee. The monitoring of this policy will take place regularly throughout the year.