



RIPPLEVALE
SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

Secondary

Date of issue: 27.07.2022

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: January 2026

Ripplevale School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of School policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the School's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this.

Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole School is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values:

Ripplevale School provides a caring learning environment where our students make meaningful progress, relative to their individual starting points. Our aim is to encourage them to develop appropriate personal, social and employable skills enabling them to become confident, independent and aspiring young people

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Ripplevale School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the School's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The School employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)

Ripplevale School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Ripplevale School.

The policy documents of Ripplevale School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

Our Aims and Purpose

Our overall aim is to be an outstanding School and service for children with autism and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). To do this, our main aims are to:

- *Ensure through our academic, vocational and pastoral curricula that every child is kept safe at school, at home and online.*
- *Provide a relevant, broad and balanced education for every individual pupil.*
- *Create a culture of achievement - by stimulating a desire to learn - raising aspirations, opening up a wide range of opportunities and working towards external accreditation for all our pupils.*
- *Value and respect individuals: recognising their strengths; encouraging them to develop their interests and abilities; and helping them show positive attitudes towards others.*

- *Be proactive in developing, using and promoting consistent ASD-specific approaches, with a focus on social interaction and communication and the reduction of anxiety and unnecessary stress.*
- *Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils within the School within a stimulating, yet safe, secure and caring, environment.*
- *Invest in the long-term quality of life of our children, by preparing them for an independent and purposeful role in society as adults through: explicit teaching of life skills and socially acceptable behaviour; and by fostering confidence, self-esteem and a realistic understanding of themselves as people affected by autism or SEND.*
- *Prepare our children for the challenges and opportunities of a complex and technologically advanced society, through creative and motivating approaches to teaching and learning.*

We believe that we can achieve these aims because Ripplevale is an inclusive, accessible, friendly and approachable organisation, where teamwork is central. We are proud of our successes, whilst remaining committed to self-evaluation and professional growth. We believe in cooperation and partnership with families, as well as with others in the local community and further afield, who share our commitment to improving the lives of anyone affected by autism or SEND.

Putting our Aims into Practice – The Curriculum

The Wider Curriculum

Our aims inform decisions on creating the School curriculum, writing policies, managing pupil behaviour, arranging lunchtime activities, classroom organisation and everything else that affects the pupils' experience of school.

Key Stage 3

We believe that our pupils benefit from access to the National Curriculum, which is differentiated to meet individual needs. In Key Stage 3, we group pupils largely according to their year groups, but there are exceptions where a pupil would benefit from working in a slightly different combination of ages or academic/social skills, and whilst we aim to provide age-appropriate learning experiences, some of our planning draws on programmes of study from earlier key stages to ensure relevance to the learning needs and prior attainments of our pupils.

All parents will be informed of the class their child will be in in September of each academic year, allowing them to look at the timetable and the **Key Stage 3 schemes of work available on the School website before the term begins.** (True?)

Subjects undertaken in Key Stage 3 (2024-2025) are:

Subject	Hours per week	Curriculum area
English	4	Linguistic
maths	4	Mathematical
science	3	Scientific
PE	2	Physical and aesthetic
PSHE/careers	1	Human and social
RE	1	Human and social

IT	1	Technological
history	1	Human and social
geography	1	Human and social
MFL (French)	1	Human and social
literacy/numeracy	1 Yr 7 only	Human and social
art	1	Creative education
food technology	1 Yr 7/ 2 Yrs 8&9	Human and social/ Creative education
design technology	1	Technological/ Creative education
LBS/outdoor learning	1	Human and social/ Physical and aesthetic

Long-term plans and medium-term plans and allied schemes of work for all elements are all stored on the School network.

Key stage 4

Subjects undertaken in Key Stage 4 are:

Subject	Hours per week (ELC/functional skills track)	Hours per week (GCSE track)	Curriculum area
English	4	4	Linguistic
maths	4	4	Mathematical
science	4	4	Scientific
PE	2	2	Physical and aesthetic
PSHE/careers	1	1	Human and social
RE	1	2	Human and social
IT/computer science	1	2	Technological
history	1	2	Human and social
Food technology/ Design technology (on a termly carousel)	2	0	Human and social/ Creative education/ Technological
LBS/outdoor learning	1	0	Human and social/ Physical and aesthetic
Option	3	3	Depending on choice

Options for year 10 are chosen in term 3 of year 9. Current options for 2024-2025 are:

Year 10: art (silver award); geography (GCSE); media studies (GCSE); PE (GCSE)

Year 11: art (silver award); business (GCSE) ; creative industries (level 1); media studies (GCSE); unit award scheme.

Long-term plans and medium-term plans and allied schemes of work for all elements are all stored on the School network.

Qualifications

Depending on the academic strengths of our pupils, they will be timetabled to take a combination of the following qualifications:

GCSE

We follow a range of GCSE courses where students can achieve grades from 1-9. In 2024-2025 we offer English Language, English literature, maths, combined science trilogy, history, RE, computer science, business*, geography*, media studies*, PE* and art* (silver award - GCSE equivalent). (Those marked * are options - students choose one option. There are also non-GCSE options available.)

Functional skills

This course looks at the 'functional' side of maths or English. It is aimed at students who are likely to achieve a GCSE grade 2 or below and helps students move towards attaining a GCSE grade 4 in their post-16 education. Some GCSE groups take functional skills examinations on route to their GCSE, partly to experience taking examinations under formal conditions.

Entry Level 1, 2 or 3

These qualifications are targeted at different types of learners and are intended to be accessible and relevant for pupils who may struggle to attain above a grade U at GCSE. They are also useful indicators of progress and can give some students a confidence boost before going on to a higher level qualification. The highest Entry Level award is entry level 3. ELC is studied in English and maths, and by all students in science as part of their standard syllabus.

Numeracy and Mathematics

Our teachers strive to incorporate aspects of numeracy and mathematics into every subject area, wherever there is relevancy. We recognise that confidence in numeracy and mathematical skills is a precondition of success across all areas of the National Curriculum. Understanding the importance of mathematics is key to success, and pupils are therefore taught to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem-solving activities wherever possible. Some pupils benefit from additional 1:1 support to develop numeracy skills, which is delivered in our individual student provision classes.

Language and Literacy

Developing pupils' ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing is an integral part of the teaching of every subject within the wider curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success and is, therefore, a high priority for teaching and learning at Ripplevale. The National Curriculum in English is taught separately as a subject area, as are literacy classes. We particularly recognise the importance of reading for pleasure and have invested heavily in the School library. Being able to understand the nuances of the English language is of especially high importance for pupils with autism, which is why we teach a social use of language programme in our PSHE scheme of work and in our intervention classes. Learning accurate spelling, use of grammar and developing a wider vocabulary are also important aspects to focus on, and our intervention programme ensures these needs are met.

The School has implemented the systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP) Little Wandle for those students in key stage 3 whose reading ages are below their chronological ages. This is in line with government initiatives from the Department for Education and Ofsted - which include the Reading Framework and the Phonics Screening Check.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/664f600c05e5fe28788fc437/The_reading_framework_.pdf

Target Setting and Attainment

Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning. We believe that assessment should be fair, honest, ambitious, appropriate and consistent. We are committed to improving standards of achievement for all our pupils. We set ambitious targets for each individual's future attainment and use our own internal systems for measuring progress. These systems provide us with data about different stages of learning. Teachers assess pupil skills within these stages and use the outcomes of assessments to summarise attainment for their class groups. They then use this data to plan the learning for every pupil to ensure they succeed. Progress data is analysed by teachers and leaders with the aim that all pupils are meeting or exceeding expectations.

PSHE

We want our pupils to develop as happy, safe and confident individuals, who respect others and who want to look after themselves. We deliver a structured programme of PSHE for our pupils including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), careers and on-line safety. Our pupils have a trusting relationship with staff, which allows pupils to talk privately about personal issues when and where such concerns arise. We recognise the increased need that our pupils have within PSHE and dedicate a substantial amount of time to teaching and learning within this area from KS1 through to our post-16 provision. PSHE (allied with general SMSC, see below) also ensures that students learn about protected characteristics and British values – learning how to respect the individuality, beliefs and views of others.

Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Social (SMSC) Education

Our approach with Religious Education is non-denominational and covers Christianity and other major world religions. We are sensitive to the range of beliefs among members of staff and pupils and their families. Our teachers take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that cover the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation.

We actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These concepts are explored during RE and PSHE lessons and are also addressed whenever there is relevancy during other subjects. Assemblies, trips and visitors provide opportunities to celebrate individual achievement and diversity, as well as a forum for discussing respect and tolerance regardless of background. The school council meetings provide a forum for pupils to express their views and play an active role in the School development. We aim to ensure that our children become valuable and fully-rounded members of society, who understand the importance of respect and leave school fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

Off-site Visits and Activities

We supplement work in the classroom with a variety of visits and activities out of the school environment. Pupils have the opportunity to study the local environment and use facilities in the community. This provides a way of linking real life, meaningful and concrete experiences with more abstract concepts that are explored within classroom lessons. Visits have included Dover Castle, Imperial War Museum, War and Peace show, Canterbury Cathedral and local areas of historical interest. We have also organised residential trips to Bewl Water. This enables our pupils to experience independence beyond their home environment and incorporates a wide range of life skills such as cooking, organising resources and managing themselves.

A focus on developing independent living skills is vital for our pupils to ensure they are equipped for life beyond Ripplevale. Real-life experiences, such as shopping, journeys on public transport, and using leisure facilities form part of our curriculum. To prepare for future employability opportunities, our older pupils also have access to work experience out of school.

On-line safety

Being aware of how to be safe when interacting with the wide range of ICT resources available to the School is an entitlement of all members of our School community. As part of their curriculum, students are taught how to recognise and avoid danger when using ICT resources. Staff work to prevent any member of Ripplevale becoming the victim of online exploitation and/or cyber-bullying. Information and resources to use at home are available on our website.

Working with Parents to Monitor and Review Progress

Annual Statement Reviews and EHCP reviews

Annual Statement Review (ASR) meetings are held once a year, and involve considering the pupil's statement of educational need and the provision that is in place to meet these needs. This process ensures that each and every pupil receives an appropriate curriculum with the support and additional interventions necessary to make meaningful progress. It provides a forum for all stakeholders to come together: the pupil, parents/carers, school staff and external professionals that may be involved with the education and health of the individual such as Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers and School Nurses. Priorities for pupils are identified by setting aspirational goals. These long-term goals can then be worked towards by setting smaller targets within medium-term outcomes. Outcomes form the basis of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that are worked on within School as part of each child's provision plan.

Provision plans are reviewed three times a year. The annual review is held during the school day, and there are three parents' evenings: in January, April and June. Information regarding these dates is on our website.

Reports

Reports detailing attainment within each subject area are provided to parents three times a year. Teachers have high expectations for every pupil and set targets that are deliberately ambitious. Each report shows a flightpath for each examination subject and provides a measure of how well the pupil is achieving their expected progress within their flightpath, along with a measure of behaviour and effort during lessons. These provide parents/carers with an overview of pupil performance that highlights areas of success, as well as areas that need further support and suggested tasks for home.

School/home liaison

An effective home-school partnership is essential for maximising pupil potential. The School operates an "open door policy" whereby we welcome parents and carers into the School for constructive dialogues with class tutors, pastoral and academic leads (PALs)*, subject teachers, members of our Senior Leadership Team and with our **Education and Family Liaison Officer (title?)**. School staff and parents/carers contact each other through regular phone calls and emails as necessary, sometimes on a daily basis. These measures foster an open, trusting relationship between pupil, home and school.

Pastoral and academic leads (PALs) are qualified teachers who have extra responsibility for a particular year group and function as a head of year. PALs conduct regular meetings with tutors, teachers and teaching assistants within their year groups and scrutinise student behaviour, progress and social and emotional wellbeing - keeping in regular contact with parents and carers to ensure that communication between the School and home is as effective as possible.

Homework

We do not routinely provide homework for every pupil (as this can be a cause of stress and anxiety for pupils with autism). Pupils are encouraged to share any interests - such as poetry, story writing or art work that they choose to do at home.

Where there is a clear benefit to learners, we can provide more formal and personalised homework by agreement. Sometimes our older students or parents/carers request specific homework activities to revise what they have learned in preparation for exams. Staff will aim to provide activities that are motivating and manageable and will make a genuine contribution to progress.