



**‘Building Resilience for Future Success’
Curriculum Policy**

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Consultation Process (<i>if needed</i>)	SLT

OUR SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ancora House School is a medical pupil referral provision operating across two sites in Cheshire West and Chester. We believe that every child and young person deserves an education that enables them to fulfil their potential, and we are committed to supporting them in achieving this. The children and young people we work with face significant challenges in their lives, and it is our role to ensure that these barriers are addressed. Through a personalised curriculum, we support all learners to make strong personal, social, and educational progress.

Ancora House School: Hospital Site

Coral and Indigo Wards:

Ancora House School is a short stay hospital education provision; we provide education and support to young people who are admitted to Ancora House across two wards: Coral and Indigo. Ancora House is the Northwest Tier 4 Psychiatric in-patient service for young people between the ages of 13 and 18 years old. Access to the school provision is directly because of admission to hospital. The team of teachers, teaching assistants, transition staff, and administration staff work closely with home schools and colleges so that young people remain engaged with their learning despite their admission to hospital.

Ancora House School: Sapphire Day Unit

Also, on the grounds of Ancora House is Sapphire; a day unit for young people aged 13 to 18 following an intensive intervention programme under the Cheshire Eating Disorder Service (CHEDS). Young people in Sapphire attend education between 10am and 1pm and engage in therapeutic work offered by the clinical team in the afternoon. The Sapphire programme lasts around 6 weeks depending on the young person's needs and an education programme is followed to support transition back to the young person's home school where possible.

Ancora House School: Sapphire Ward

Sapphire ward is an Integrated Eating Disorder Unit (IEDU) which opened in April 2026. Young people admitted to Sapphire Ward are inpatients under the Cheshire Eating Disorder Service (CHEDS) and attend education between 10am and 1:00 pm in the Sapphire Day unit.

Ancora House School: Community Site

The school's community Site provides education for young people across Key Stage 3, 4 and Post 16 within the Cheshire West and Chester locality. This element of the school operates from Castle Park House, in Frodsham and maintains close working partnerships with our locality schools. Referral to the community provision is via the local authority who commission places for children unable to access their home school because of their medical needs or as a named provision on their EHCP.

Across our provision, we support young people from a wide range of educational backgrounds, from those who are NEET to those studying at A Level. However, their current presentation may impact the young person's ability to engage with or maintain their usual educational routine or academic level of work and engagement. As many young people have experienced disruption, trauma or barriers to learning, their ability to engage is closely

linked to how safe and understood they feel. For this reason, education sessions may begin with low-demand activities such as games, puzzles or mindfulness colouring to help young people build trust, develop relationships and support emotional regulation and cognitive readiness. As these foundations are established, sessions can then gradually progress to more structured and academic learning tasks.

Curriculum Intent Statement – ‘Building resilience for Future Success’

OUR CORE VALUES

At Ancora House School we believe in providing a tailored curriculum that meets the diverse needs of our learner group. Our Vision communicates our intent; our curriculum is designed to ensure that all learners, no matter what their starting point, can access their personal curriculum and make progress, within an environment and culture of high warmth and high expectation.

At the heart of our curriculum is the premise that to succeed in their futures, learners need to build on Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education to develop the resilience and the skills that will scaffold their next steps.

All staff utilise evidence informed, adaptive teaching with the aim of firstly securing ‘readiness to learn’ and then to establish and build on prior knowledge. Preparation for Adulthood, PSHE and skill-building underpin our curriculum, which is designed to develop both skills and knowledge and ‘build resilience for future success’.

PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

Our learners are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences; it is critical to establish how the gaps in experience and knowledge may impact on their ability to progress. Our approach to teaching and learning provides learners with access to a variety of subject areas, experiences and creative arts; promoting the character and skill-building qualities that lead to creating well-rounded, global citizens; we aim to build on preparation for adulthood that in turn will optimise the potential for our young people to achieve recognised and meaningful qualifications that will broaden opportunities in later life. Staff deliver ‘Life Skills’ and individual sessions to promote and scaffold the knowledge and skills needed for learners to make their next steps and sustain their transitions.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR CURRICULUM

The primary goal for learners referred to our school is to identify barriers, provide intervention and ultimately to re-engage them with learning, their communities, and the wider world. Because we are an in-patient, day unit and community Medical Needs provision it is even more important that we offer a broad, balanced, and rich curriculum within the context of each learner’s mental or physical health needs:

- All learners experience equity within a curriculum that embraces diversity

- All learners have access to the opportunity to make progress in line with their peers in core subject areas
- Content of curriculum is specific to each learner
- Our curriculum addresses social disadvantage powerfully and provides young people with new opportunities

Both our approach to education and the educational environment helps young people to increase attendance, build trusting relationships, and develop the skills and experiences they need to support their future progression.

THE RECOVERY CURRICULUM – Building Resilience for Future Success

Ancora House School recognises that our learner groups have often faced significant challenge. Our curriculum embodies a trauma informed approach that supports our learners to gain understanding of their experience and difficulties; to understand the impact of their development and learning and to then acquire the skills of recognition and self-managing. As a school we work closely with Child and Adolescent Mental Health teams and other agencies to secure a joined-up approach in coproduction with families.

Permeating through our assemblies; tutorials; whole class work and interventions, the skills of reading, writing, thinking, compositional skills, mathematical knowledge and discussing individually and collaboratively promote small but significant incremental progress.

IMPACT - WHAT WE WANT OUR LEARNERS TO KNOW AND DO BY THE TIME THEY LEAVE AND WHY:

- Learners leave with transferable academic, social, emotional and life skills
- All learners acquire the skills that support their readiness to learn
- All learners make considerable progress from their starting points
- Learners leave with raised aspiration and renewed confidence for the future
- The majority of learners transition safely and sustainably to their home schools, colleges, or alternative provision
- Support learners to read to their working at level as appropriate

ASSESSMENT

We recognise that the experiences and emotional readiness of our young people vary significantly; therefore, assessment is adapted to the individual and may take the form of a quiz, shared task, discussion or a more formal method. This ensures it is appropriate, supportive and enables young people to demonstrate their understanding in a way that feels safe and accessible.

Our approach of using low demand tasks to engage learners, also provides valuable opportunities for close observation and assessment. Education staff will, for example, consider aspects such as working memory when recounting items gathered in a short challenge, cognition in terms of the ability to learn and retain information when the rules of a game are explained and fine motor skills during activities such as colouring. This is

particularly important when young people's mental health is having a significant impact on functioning and their baseline ability is unclear.

Observations and comments are recorded after each education session and shared during staff briefing and debriefing meetings, informing future planning and supporting discussions around appropriate lesson length and level of academic challenge, which are continually reviewed and adapted. This information often supports work carried out by clinicians both in the inpatient unit and in the community.

TRANSITION

Our learners often struggle with change; we recognise that transition points can feel very risky for our young people and their families. The Transition Team work with young people, the home school and families to re-engage learners who have been unable to access a learning environment; close collaboration with the families and professionals around them produces a thoughtful plan that is paced and sequenced with the young person at the centre. Our teaching staff work closely with each young person's home school to understand how best to support their needs, and upon discharge, an education information report is shared with the destination setting to ensure continuity of support and a smooth transition.

When they leave us, our Transition Team contact provisions or Young People's Services for yr 11, 12 and 13 at set points during the following academic year to ensure placements are sustained. Very occasionally, a young person may not be ready for education, employment, or training (EET) at the point of discharge. In such cases, the transition team will liaise with the family to determine whether continued contact would be beneficial in providing support at a later stage, as appropriate

Learners have access to the following subject areas:

Therapeutic Art, Art GCSE; Mathematics; Sciences; English Literature; English Language; STEM group; PHSE; CEIAG; Outdoor Curriculum; Life Skills; Cross-curricular Projects, AQA Unit Awards, and Physical Education as an intervention where appropriate. External speakers and workshops allow us to 'bring the outside in' offering valuable opportunities to extend the experience of learners who are typically socially isolated and often marginalised.

RSE, SMSC, BRITISH VALUES AND PHSE

The wellbeing curriculum is embedded throughout all aspects of school life. Through assemblies, tutorials, external speakers, and the wider curriculum, we ensure that the content provided is relevant, purposeful, and responsive to the needs of our learners. Through our curriculum, we develop appreciation of human creativity and achievement in learners; we celebrate successes however small; we take every opportunity to expose them to stimulating and innovative art, concepts and ideas and encourage questioning and healthy debate so they can take their place as valued citizens in their home communities and beyond.

Equality is actively promoted and learners are encouraged to question and challenge both their own views and the views of others. Diversity is celebrated and our school community embraces difference, and this is supported and promoted through visiting speakers. Our learners often have lived experience of prejudice and stigma, and this has to a lesser or greater extent shaped their understanding of the world so far; strengthening resilience is therefore a key priority; our learners feel validated and heard.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

The school recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an increasingly important part of modern learning and working environments. Within our provision, AI can be a valuable tool to support engagement, personalise learning, and remove barriers for pupils who may have experienced disruption to their education.

Our approach ensures that AI is used to enhance learning without replacing the development of independent thinking, communication and core skills. The School promotes high standards of academic integrity, and learners are taught that work presented as their own must genuinely reflect their own knowledge, understanding and skills. This includes an understanding of plagiarism and the inappropriate use of AI-generated material.

Where applicable, teaching will reinforce the importance of appropriate referencing and acknowledgement of information and ideas obtained from other sources, including AI tools. For formal examinations and assessments, including non-examination assessments (NEAs), learners and staff must follow the School's examinations policies and the current requirements of JCQ and the relevant awarding organisations.

Within our curriculum, the understanding and safe use of AI is primarily delivered through **PSHE**, where pupils explore:

- The role of AI in everyday life
- Online safety and responsible technology use
- Ethical considerations, including bias and reliability
- The impact of AI on decisions, information, and future employment

Opportunities are also taken across other subject areas to reinforce these messages where appropriate.

DISADVANTAGED AND MINORITY GROUPS

By the very nature of the referral to our service, many of our learners fall into the categories of 'disadvantaged' and 'minority' groups.

Mental Health problems; social disadvantage and physical health conditions have adversely affected our learners; many have experienced stigma, social isolation and bullying and so are often significantly behind with their learning as a result.

Some learners admitted to our in-patient service are diagnosed with chronic mental health, for example schizophrenia or schizo-affective disorder; for these young people; statistics tell

us that they are less likely to continue education; find employment or build positive personal relationships. For this group in particular, support around transition is critical.

IN CLASS SUPPORT AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS

We often teach in pairs to provide a consistent, relational approach and ensure strong support for both learning and wellbeing. Teaching assistants may be deployed in a range of purposeful ways, including as an additional adult in the room to support the safeguarding of vulnerable young people, working in a 1:1 capacity when appropriate, helping to ease social pressure by maintaining conversation and reducing awkward silences, and at times deliberately positioning themselves as a learner who “does not know the answer” in order to reduce pressure and encourage young people to take risks, share ideas, and build confidence.

POST-16 OFFER

Our post-16 curriculum supports young people with SEMH and neurodiverse needs. Learning is supported with robust intervention. At the hospital site, the Post 16 offer is dependent on the young person and will range from supporting young people who are NEET to supporting A Level subject. At the community site, Post 16 young people are single rolled and typically stay for a period of one or two years to complete GCSE subjects to support transition to college and focus on preparation for adulthood. The offer is totally dependent on the young people attending the provision.

The curriculum offers:

- English Language, English-Literature, Mathematics, Science and Art (CS) at GCSE and Functional Skills Maths and English (CS)
- CEIAG support to re-engage, motivate, and raise aspiration
- Support for independent learners to access online education
- Transition support to secure safe and sustainable destinations
- Social Skills – Art groups; outdoor curriculum, STEM and PHSE/wellbeing, AQA Unit Awards, Life Skills, Preparation for Adulthood.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

All staff support our SENDCos in ensuring:

- Barriers to accessing learning are identified
- Strategies to support learning are added to education information document
- Assessments are undertaken to inform EHCP requests
- Care Education Treatment Reviews (CETRs) are attended and information shared to inform the package of care on discharge
- Feedback to clinical teams contributes to the care planning approach
- The staff team receive regular training and access to formulation sessions

Appendices

1. Statutory guidance

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school

Statutory guidance for local authorities and departmental advice for others ensuring children with health needs receive education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>