# Curriculum Policy

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**Our vision**

***Dibden Park School supports every child and young person to feel safe, be heard, discover their worth, develop their strengths and create a limitless future.***




**Respect | Engage | Belong | Independence | Ambition**

***Learn Now, Succeed Together, Grow Forever***

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## 1. Introduction

Dibden Park School strives to protect and educate students with social, emotional, behavioural, and mental health with associated intellectual and complex difficulties. We provide care, education, therapy, welfare, support and related services of the highest standard. We establish strong links, collaborative working and co-operation with both placing authorities and parents/carers.

Our main objective is to facilitate full inclusion into society and prepare our students for integration into the wider community as contributing adults. Dibden Park School accommodates students with a wide range of special educational needs (SEN).

This Curriculum Policy describes the curriculum, the rationale behind it and demonstrates how the aims of the school are met and how, in meeting those aims we also provide for the specific individual learning needs of the students attending Dibden Park school. Our curriculum incorporates the National Curriculum but is not solely anchored there and embraces a significant number of contributing factors that flavour our practice, including important considerations such as, Safeguarding, Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, Risk Assessment and Health and Safety and other legislation as detailed in the Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement.

## 2. Curriculum Intent

At Dibden Park School, our curriculum is designed to reflect and support the specific needs of our student population, many of whom have experienced disrupted educational journeys, disengagement, or trauma. Our intent is to deliver a curriculum that is inclusive, ambitious, and personalised, ensuring that every pupil can access learning and make meaningful progress, both academically and in terms of personal development.

The curriculum underpins the school's ethos and provides the structure through which pupils are supported to thrive. It is built to address a full range of needs: academic, social, emotional, mental health (SEMH), and those outlined in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). We recognise that effective education for our cohort requires a flexible and responsive curriculum, underpinned by high expectations and a deep understanding of each learner's context.

### School vision, values and aim

Our curriculum is one of the main ways we put our vision into practice: Dibden Park School supports every child and young person to feel safe, be heard, discover their worth, develop their strengths and create a limitless future.

Our five values guide curriculum design, teaching, relationships and the opportunities offered to pupils:

**Respect:** We treat ourselves, others and our environment with kindness, dignity and integrity, so respectful relationships can thrive.

**Engage:** We use fun, engaging and adaptive learning, built on trust, and help pupils be in the right place, with the right mindset, at the right time.

**Belong:** We build an inclusive, empathic community where every pupil belongs and every voice is heard.

**Independence:** We develop core literacy and numeracy, life skills, vocational learning and social communication so pupils can navigate the wider world.

**Ambition:** We maintain high expectations and support pupils to work toward meaningful qualifications and their chosen next steps.

Our strapline is "Learn Now, Succeed Together, Grow Forever". It expresses the way learning, relationships and continued development connect across a pupil's time at Dibden Park.

The school aim is that every young person will leave Dibden Park with four good Level 2 qualifications, enabling them to move on to a college course or apprenticeship of their choice. Individual curriculum pathways and support are planned around pupils' needs, strengths, EHCP outcomes and aspirations.

In line with the aims of the National Curriculum and wider educational objectives, our pupils are supported to:

- Become successful learners who enjoy learning and are motivated to improve;
- Achieve and become confident, resilient individuals;
- Lead healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives;
- Develop into responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

The curriculum remains broad and balanced for as long as possible. At Key Stage 4, pupils transition to clearly defined, appropriate accreditation routes designed to equip them for appropriate post-16 destinations including further education, employment, and independent living. Long-term curriculum plans carefully sequence knowledge and skills from KS2 to KS4, ensuring coherent progression.

SEND learners have full access to the curriculum and are supported to achieve accreditation appropriate to their needs and abilities. Enrichment and personal development opportunities are interwoven throughout, enabling pupils to access experiences and develop skills they may have previously missed. These opportunities also promote the school's strong focus on British Values, SMSC development, and SEMH support.

Assessment is used diagnostically to identify gaps, inform teaching, and track progress. Our overarching aim is to provide structured, consistent, and engaging learning experiences that help pupils re-engage with education and develop the confidence to succeed.

# 3. Curriculum Implementation - Dibden Park School

The implementation of our curriculum is structured to balance academic rigour with creative, practical, and therapeutic opportunities. We provide a full suite of traditional academic subjects alongside Outdoor Education, Personal Development, and enrichment activities. The timetable is designed to be flexible and responsive, enabling pupils to engage meaningfully with the curriculum and to prepare for their next steps beyond school.

At Key Stage 4, curriculum planning includes preparation for post-16 transitions, with a clear focus on pathways into further education, training, and employment. Pupils are supported through careers education, access to an independent careers adviser, and partnerships with local colleges.

Lessons are planned in alignment with pupils' EHCPs, individual provision maps, and subject-specific objectives. While some lesson planning is more informal in delivery, all teaching is underpinned by clear medium-term planning, learning intentions, and identified outcomes. These form the basis for effective assessment and monitoring.

Dibden Park provides for pupils aged 8–16, all of whom have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Teaching may follow a primary or secondary model according to pupils' age, starting points and pathway. Small classes, high staff-to-pupil ratios, specialist staff and the on-site clinical team support access to learning and personalised provision.

The staff handbook describes a school day of six 40-minute lessons. Teachers use the Dibden Park Common Board Framework to make the learning intention clear and structure each lesson with a starter, taught learning and a plenary. This shared structure supports consistency while allowing teachers to adapt pace, scaffolding and support to pupils' needs.

The school uses long-, medium-, and short-term planning frameworks to ensure coherence and progression across all subjects. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum, with subject leaders ensuring consistency and adaptation as needed.

Holistic development is a key feature of implementation. In addition to academic subjects, the school promotes healthy lifestyles, emotional regulation, communication skills, and social development through:

The tutor-time programme also supports curriculum goals through literacy and numeracy activities, current affairs, weekly assemblies and careers and next-step planning.

- Personal Development sessions and tutor time,
- SMSC opportunities and themed enrichment,
- CWRE (Careers and Work-Related Education),
- Regular visits from external speakers and practitioners.

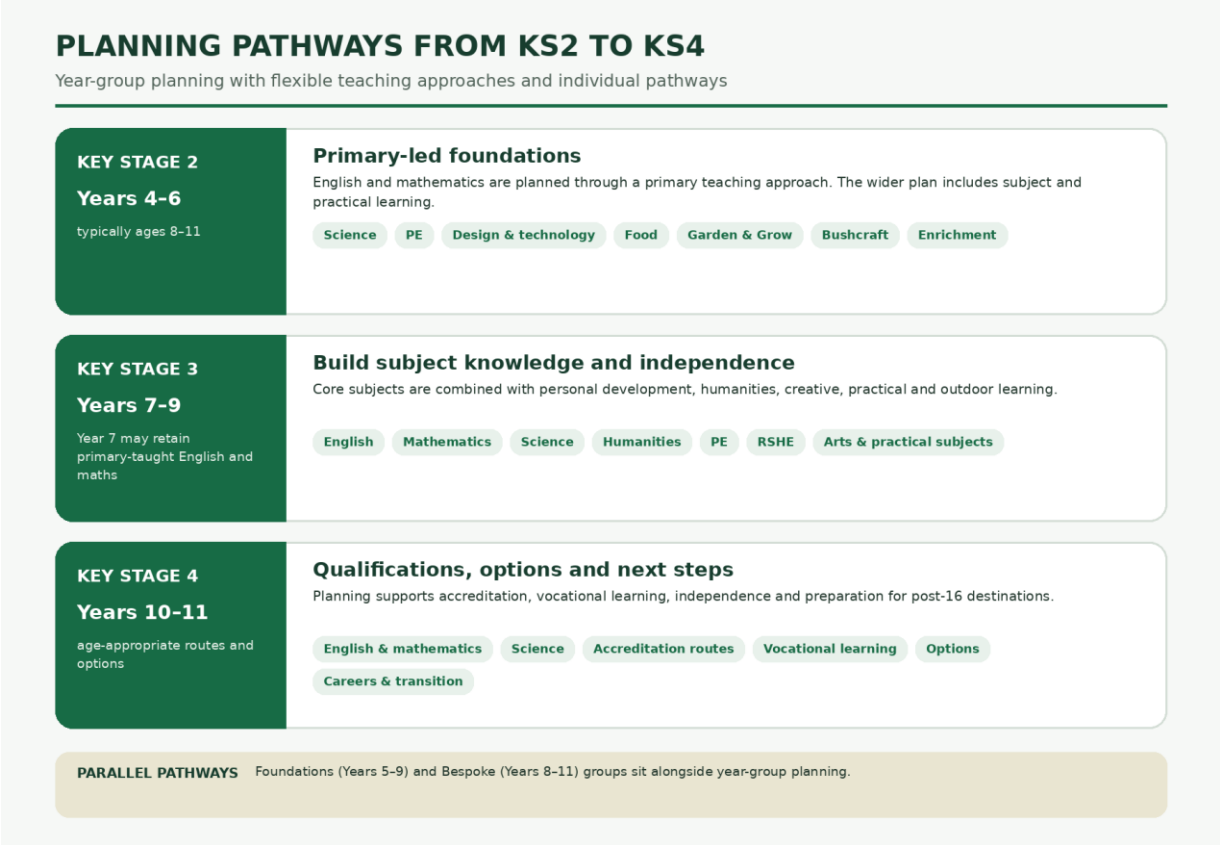
Targeted interventions are delivered where necessary. For example, pupils with identified communication or social interaction needs can access 1:1 or small group interventions with a Speech and Language Therapist or support staff. We also deliver phonics to those that require. These may be delivered individually or to whole groups depending on need. Staff also receive training from the clinical team and other practitioners to support their development and to ensure a universal offer is provided wherever possible.

Our enrichment offer is diverse and meaningful, including individualised programmes such as horse riding, AFC Totton, Forest School, garden & grow, music tuition and fishing. These activities are not seen as ancillary but are a core part of our approach to fostering engagement, building confidence, and supporting SEMH needs.

Our vulnerable learners require time to feel safe, to trust staff, and to adjust to expectations. Therefore, our curriculum is increasingly bespoke where needed, allowing for overlearning, repetition, and scaffolded practice to ensure skills can be internalised and transferred. The school's learning environment and resources are tailored to support this model, with appropriate facilities to deliver both academic and therapeutic provision effectively.

## 3.1 Curriculum Planning Overview

The planning overview below reflects the year-group and pathway structure in the school curriculum planning spreadsheet. It shows the broad progression from primary-led foundations through KS3 and KS4. Teaching and subject balance are adapted to pupils' starting points, EHCP outcomes and next steps.



## 3.2 KS2 Curriculum Overview

### Approach

Dibden Park provides for primary-age pupils in Years 4 to 6, typically ages 8 to 11. The curriculum planning spreadsheet identifies a primary-taught approach to English and mathematics across these year groups. Teaching is adapted to each pupil's prior learning, EHCP outcomes, communication needs and readiness for learning.

### Curriculum experience

Alongside English and mathematics, the planning spreadsheet places science, physical education, design technology, food, Garden and Grow, bushcraft and enrichment within the Years 4 to 6 programme. The balance of these opportunities is planned around pupils' needs and may vary by group and individual pathway.

### Progression into KS3

The spreadsheet also shows Year 7 pupils following primary-taught English and mathematics. This allows the teaching model to respond to pupils' starting points as they move into KS3. Progression to a more subject-specific approach is planned when appropriate, with continuity of relationships, routines and support.

## 3.3 KS3 Curriculum Overview

### Introduction

This curriculum overview outlines the educational framework for Key Stage 3 (KS3) pupils within a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provision, supporting learners aged 11 to 14. At its core, this approach prioritises emotional wellbeing, therapeutic support, and strong relational practices, ensuring all students have access to a broad, balanced, and inclusive curriculum. With a firm emphasis on individualised support, the curriculum also seeks to prepare pupils for Key Stage 4 (KS4) and adult life by fostering resilience, independence, and essential life skills.

### Core Principles

The curriculum is underpinned by a trauma-informed, attachment-aware pedagogy that recognises the complex needs of SEMH learners. It balances high levels of structure with flexible, individualised support to meet a wide range of emotional and academic needs. A therapeutic approach is embedded throughout the school day, ensuring a balance between academic progress and emotional development. The overarching aim is to develop skills for independence and facilitate a smooth transition to KS4 pathways and adulthood.

### Curriculum Areas

#### *English*

The English curriculum focuses on developing reading fluency, comprehension, and critical discussion skills. Pupils engage in both creative and functional writing, with targeted literacy interventions and phonics support provided where necessary to address individual learning gaps.

#### *Maths*

Mathematics teaching covers core areas such as number, algebra, geometry, and data handling. Learning is contextualised through real-life applications, including budgeting, time management, and money skills. Differentiated pathways and intervention groups ensure personalised support.

#### *Science*

Science is delivered through practical and investigative learning, covering biology, chemistry, and physics. Lessons are designed to be accessible and relevant, often linking scientific concepts to real-world contexts to enhance engagement and understanding.

#### *Humanities*

History, Geography, and Religious Education are taught thematically or through project-based approaches. These subjects encourage emotional awareness and personal reflection by connecting historical and geographical knowledge to pupils' lived experiences and social understanding.

***Computing***

The computing curriculum aims to develop digital literacy and online safety awareness. Pupils also gain basic coding skills and learn to use digital tools for presentations and everyday IT tasks.

***PSHE, RSE, and SEMH Support***

Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE), alongside Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), plays a central role in supporting SEMH development. Daily check-ins help students regulate their emotions, while weekly PSHE lessons explore key themes such as mental health, relationships, and consent. Therapeutic group work—such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and resilience-building activities—is delivered alongside restorative practices to support behavioural development and emotional growth.

***Creative and Expressive Arts***

Art and music are used as powerful tools for therapeutic expression. Integrated projects allow students to develop their creativity while working towards portfolio-based outcomes that reflect their individual journeys and talents.

***Physical Education and Outdoor Learning***

Physical education supports health and wellbeing through team games, fitness activities, and personal targets. Outdoor learning is enriched through forest school programmes and challenge-based activities, encouraging teamwork, self-confidence, and physical resilience.

***Vocational and Life Skills***

Practical life skills are prioritised through lessons in cooking, hygiene, and self-organisation. Pupils are supported to develop social skills and undertake travel training, budgeting, and enterprise projects. Career awareness and work-related learning help prepare students for the world beyond school.

## Therapeutic Support

In-house therapeutic support forms a critical part of the curriculum. This includes access to trained therapists, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), and 1:1 mentoring. Pupils have access to safe spaces, sensory regulation resources, and consistent support from trusted adults, all of which help manage emotional needs and promote a sense of security and belonging.

## Assessment and Pathways

Students' academic progress is tracked through tools such as Trackable, whereas non-academic progress is tracked through PIES – Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Social – which assesses through a range of skills/statements how students are managing different areas of skill.

By Year 9, pupils work toward Entry Level or Functional Skills qualifications. Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes are regularly reviewed to ensure provision remains aligned with each learner's needs and evidence is stored on the Evidence for Learning platform.

## Staff Development and Environment

Staff are supported through ongoing professional development in trauma-informed practice, restorative strategies, and SEMH-specific teaching approaches. The learning environment is carefully designed to be calm, structured, and low-arousal, reducing sensory overload and promoting focus.

### Family and Community Engagement

Strong partnerships with families are key to the success of the SEMH curriculum. Regular home-school communication is maintained, and our family liaison officer is on hand to offer guidance and training opportunities, support and signposting to agencies and as a bridge to parents and carers when needed. Engagement with the wider community further enriches the learning experience and supports pupil development.

### 3.3.1 Conclusion

The KS3 SEMH curriculum offers a carefully structured yet flexible framework that nurtures emotional wellbeing alongside academic progress. By embedding therapeutic support into everyday practice and fostering strong relationships, the curriculum ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to thrive, transition successfully to KS4, and develop the skills they need for life beyond school.

## 3.4 KS4 Curriculum Overview

### Introduction

The Key Stage 4 (KS4) curriculum within a Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) setting is designed to provide a highly personalised, therapeutic, and flexible learning experience for pupils typically aged 14 to 16. This curriculum balances academic achievement with emotional support, vocational training, and life skills education, equipping students with the tools they need to transition confidently into adulthood, employment, or further education. Through trauma-informed approaches and targeted support, pupils are empowered to thrive both within and beyond the school environment.

### Curriculum Intent

At the heart of the KS4 SEMH curriculum is the commitment to prioritising emotional regulation and mental wellbeing. The intent is to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their starting points, have access to meaningful qualifications that reflect their individual abilities. The curriculum supports smooth transitions into post-16 education or training and focuses on developing the independent living and employability skills necessary for a successful adult life.

### Core Academic Subjects

The academic aspect of the curriculum is centred around the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science, with a strong emphasis on functionality and real-world application.

In **English**, pupils work towards Functional Skills qualifications from Entry Level 1 to Level 2, with some progressing to GCSE English Language. The curriculum supports development in speaking and listening, practical writing, and reading comprehension, all of which are essential for everyday communication and future employment.

In **mathematics**, students also work through Functional Skills levels and may be entered for GCSE Maths if appropriate. Applied learning is a key feature, with topics such as budgeting, time management, measurement, and data analysis helping students relate mathematical concepts to daily life.

**Science** is offered through Entry Level Certificates or GCSE Combined Science, depending on individual ability and interest. The curriculum prioritises practical learning and focuses on making scientific content relevant and accessible through real-world contexts and experiments.

## Vocational and Life Skills Education

A significant component of the KS4 SEMH curriculum is the emphasis on vocational education and life skills. Pupils have opportunities to explore vocational pathways in areas such as construction, hair and beauty, horticulture, hospitality, animal care, and motor vehicle studies via local college pre-16 programmes. Subjects such as Home Cooking are delivered through nationally recognised qualifications including BTEC, providing learners with hands-on experience and practical certification that can support future employment.

Life skills education is embedded throughout the curriculum, focusing on essential capabilities such as cooking, travel training, personal hygiene, and self-care. Pupils also engage in learning around financial literacy, time management, and home maintenance. Social skills development is supported through enterprise projects and collaborative tasks that prepare students for independent and community life.

## PSHE, RSE, and SEMH Provision

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are integral to supporting the holistic development of pupils. Weekly PSHE lessons follow statutory guidance and cover themes such as mental health, relationships, consent, and personal safety.

Targeted SEMH interventions—including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) groups, emotional literacy work, and individual mentoring—are provided to address specific emotional and behavioural needs. Restorative practices and structured conflict resolution approaches help pupils develop accountability, empathy, and positive relationship-building skills.

## Enrichment and Physical Education

Enrichment opportunities play a vital role in supporting physical health, social development, and self-confidence. Physical education (PE) focuses on building fitness, encouraging teamwork, and enhancing pupils' sense of achievement. Dibden Park has a small onsite gym as well as an outdoor gym which students are encouraged to use both supported and independently. Outdoor education, including forest school activities and adventure sports where appropriate, promotes resilience, cooperation, and personal challenge.

Creative enrichment activities such as music, photography, and drama offer therapeutic outlets for expression and foster a sense of identity and self-worth in students.

## Assessment and Accreditation

Assessment in the KS4 SEMH setting is both formative and summative, using a range of tools to track progress and tailor support. Pupils work toward Functional Skills qualifications in English, maths, and ICT, with some also sitting GCSEs in core subjects. Vocational achievements are recognised through BTEC, or other suitable awards.

EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) outcomes are reviewed regularly to ensure that provision remains aligned with each pupil’s needs and aspirations. Other assessment tools include PIES, attendance records, engagement tracking, and academic progress monitoring.

## Preparing for Adulthood

A central aim of the curriculum is to prepare pupils for life beyond school. Careers education is embedded throughout KS4, providing guidance and support around college applications, CV writing, mock interviews, and job exploration. Students also participate in supported visits to post-16 providers and receive help in building links with local colleges, training services, and local authorities. This ensures a smoother transition and greater confidence in navigating their future options. Work experience is encouraged wherever possible in KS4.

### Environment and Support

The learning environment is intentionally designed to support pupils with SEMH needs. Classrooms are calm and low-arousal, reducing anxiety and sensory overstimulation. High staffing ratios and relational approaches allow for strong, supportive relationships between pupils and adults, fostering trust and stability.

Therapeutic support is available on-site and includes access to Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), trained counsellors, and key workers. Family liaison is an essential part of the support structure, with wraparound care and regular communication helping to ensure consistency between home and school.

## 4. Conclusion

The KS4 curriculum balances academic achievement, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood. Through relevant qualifications, vocational learning, therapeutic support and life skills, pupils are supported to move confidently toward independent living, further education, training or employment.