



CURRICULUM POLICY

September 2021



Safe



Respect



Effort



Learning

In this policy:

- Our innovative curriculum, including therapies
- Teaching and learning
- English and literacy
- Mathematics and numeracy
- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)
- Alternative Learning Provision (ALP)
- Enrichment

This document outlines simply and clearly the key things we do at Unified Academy to ensure that our students access a diverse and rich curriculum that enables them to make progress from their individual starting points.

Unified Academy caters for boys aged 9-16 who have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. Some students have moderate learning and attachment difficulties which makes it hard for them to build and sustain positive relationships.

It also specifically supports students with a variety of learning challenges, including dyslexia/specific learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum condition. All students have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Our Curriculum Intent

Vision

'Supporting each other, achieving together.'

At Unified Academy we will use a highly personalised approach that caters to the different needs and abilities of our students in order to secure the best possible outcomes for them. Our aim is that they develop high aspirations for the future with the skills and knowledge to achieve them so they are able to positively contribute to the wider community.

Ethos and aims

Unified Academy follows a nurture-based reflective and restorative approach with all students. Together, we have established a fun, safe and caring school that promotes the joy of learning, high

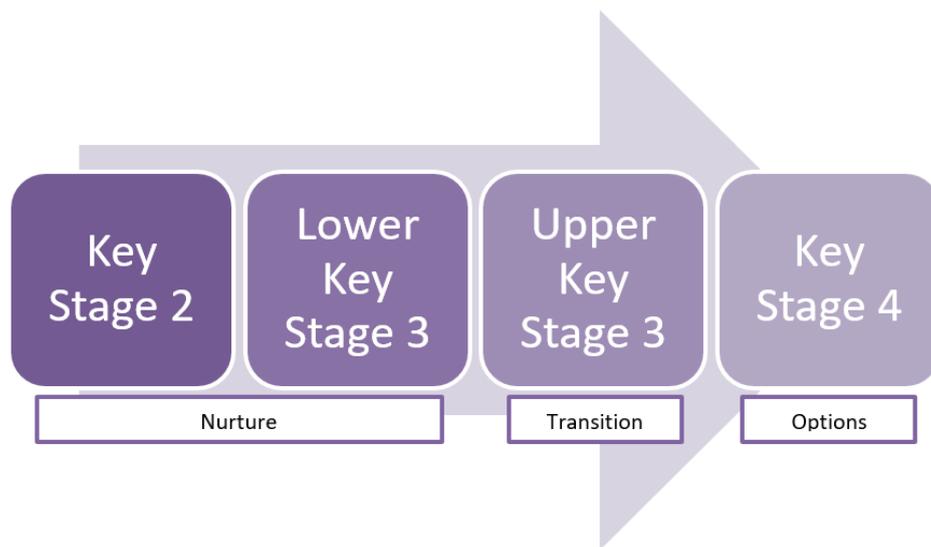
personal achievement, respect for individual differences, dignity for all and equal opportunities by eliminating discrimination.

We will nurture, encourage and listen to every voice in our community, including students, parents and carers, friends and staff. Maximising the potential of every student will be placed at the heart of all decision making. We will always be a strong advocate for Unified Academy; being proud of our school and membership of the family of schools within OHC&AT.

- Unified Academy teaches all national curriculum subjects to all students which includes art, English, mathematics, PSHE (which incorporates religious education and citizenship), science, geography, history, ICT, physical education (PE), design technology, food & nutrition and well-being.
- The curriculum design is differentiated to meet students' needs, incorporating a range of therapeutic approaches.
- Our curriculum model enables students' learning to be developed sequentially over time, where learning builds from one year/key stage to another. This ensures that students are well prepared for life after Unified Academy.
- Teachers adapt their planning to meet the needs of the very complex and challenging

- students with whom they have formed trusting relationships, know and understand well.
- Our focus is facilitating quality opportunities for students to learn and make progress. Teachers produce curriculum overviews which are carefully planned to build from one term to the next. Clear differentiation in meeting the needs of all individual students in the class is shown. These plans are available on the school's shared drive and in teachers' planning files. Students' learning is evaluated regularly and activities amended accordingly, so as to plan for real progression.
- All parts of the school day, including breakfast, break times and lunchtimes are utilised to the full to deliver the curriculum, including SMSC through the PSHE programme. Well-Being is facilitated in tutor and enrichment sessions.

School Nurture Model



The curriculum at Key stage 2

At key stage 2, Unified Academy offers a curriculum that builds on student's knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. Students undertake the following subjects at key stage 2:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Art
- Food & Nutrition
- Geography
- History
- ICT
- PE
- PSHE (incorporating religious education and SMSC)
- Enrichment

The curriculum at Key stage 3

At Unified Academy, the key stage 3 curriculum offer comprises a range of academic and vocational subjects for Years 7, 8 and 9.

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Art
- Food & Nutrition

- Geography
- History
- ICT
- PSHE (incorporating religious education and SMSC)
- PE
- PSHE
- Enrichment

The curriculum at Key stage 4

At Unified Academy, the key stage 4 curriculum offer comprises of a range of academic and vocational qualifications for Years 10 and 11. The core curriculum includes GCSEs, Functional Skills or Entry Levels in English and mathematics; as well as PSHE, PE and Careers. In the wider options curriculum, students work towards externally accredited qualifications in:

- Art
- PE
- Science
- ICT
- Food & Nutrition
- Design Technology
- Mechanics

Therapeutic interventions

The range of therapeutic interventions on offer, include:

- Speech & language therapy (SaLT)
- Canine assisted learning therapy (CAL)
- Emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA)
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Healing Together
- Drum/Music intervention
- Therapeutic Art intervention

Who can access therapeutic interventions?

All of our students may benefit from having some form of therapeutic intervention. At Unified Academy, we tailor each student's therapeutic programme so that it meets their individual needs.

The support can be accessed as and when it is required: on a day-to-day basis or through regular one-to-one or group sessions.

How can therapeutic interventions help?

Students who have endured (and continue to endure) adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), toxic stress and/or associated mental health difficulties are likely to have high cortisol (stress) levels and low self-esteem.

Therapeutic interventions work to:

- provide students with an opportunity to express and reflect on their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a safe environment
- build a positive therapeutic relationship with the therapist, which raises self-esteem and can alter negative attachment strategies
- enhance a student's emotional well-being and encourages creative problem solving
- improve self-esteem, confidence and self-worth
- help to develop student's emotional vocabulary, encouraging and enabling them to

- identify and name their emotions
- help students to develop effective strategies to manage their behaviour and their ability to self-regulate their emotions
- help to remove barriers to learning and facilitate better engagement with the curriculum.

Who can benefit from therapeutic interventions?

Students who may benefit, include those:

- who have experienced ACEs and/or high levels of stress and unpredictability
- who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- with social communication difficulties
- who experience low self-esteem and fear of failure
- who struggling with life events, such as grief and loss, changes within the family or home, illness
- who have suffered abuse, bullying or other trauma
- with learning difficulties

Confidentiality

Typically, therapists ensure that all sessions are kept confidential in order to maintain trust within the therapeutic relationship and to create a space that feels safe to explore sensitive and meaningful aspects of the student's life. A therapist may break confidentiality if they become concerned about a safeguarding risk. The decision to break confidentiality is subject to the professional judgment of the therapist but will always be made with the best interests of the student in mind and with full consideration given to the full context within which the disclosure was made and the foreseeable risks surrounding the concern.

Teaching and learning

Students learn in many different ways. Many of our students have particularly complex needs. This often manifests itself in poor behaviour and becomes a barrier to them making progress. Students arrive with a history of poor attendance, placement gaps and a multitude of exclusions, and have therefore missed significant periods of education. As a result of this, they often arrive with very low self-esteem and consider themselves a failure.

Our job as staff is therefore a significant challenge, but one that is faced with enthusiasm and energy. We achieve this in a number of ways:

- We aim to deliver personalised learning so tasks are differentiated in order to ensure that each student is supported and challenged to achieve their potential
- Cognitive abilities tests (CAT4) are completed with all students to help their teachers understand how each individual student learns and what their academic potential could be
- We plan and teach in reference to our assessment outcomes, curriculum plans and individual students' learning goals
- We teach according to our students' preferred learning styles (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic) and forms of intelligence (mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal, musical) as best we can
- We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which students feel safe and that they belong, enjoy learning and being challenged, trust that they can take risks with their learning and know that they can and will succeed
- We apply a spiral curriculum model to ensure that teaching builds on previous learning through a learning sequence and interleaved learning opportunities
- We use a positive behaviour approach through our reward and recognition system (E-Praise) in order to encourage student motivation in lessons
- We encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way in which they learn, and to reflect on how they learn best –

- what helps them learn, and what makes it difficult.
- All classes are assigned additional support through teaching assistants. Depending on the needs of the students they may work with targeted individuals, small groups or in a general supportive role in the classroom environment. While they may be used to help a student to regulate their emotions or take time out, their focus is primarily one of supporting learning
- We ensure that our classrooms are student friendly learning environments. We change displays regularly so that the classroom reflects the subject themes and current topics being studied by the students. All students have the opportunity to display their work. We believe that a stimulating, yet calm environment sets the climate for learning, and that an organised classroom promotes focus and independent use of resources, which results in high-quality learning.
- Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC), Fundamental British Values (FBV), literacy and Numeracy links are explicitly referenced in the schemes of work for all subjects across the curriculum.
- Leaders and governors monitor the quality of education through learning walks, lesson observations, workbook scrutiny, workbook moderations, student progress meetings, student, teacher and parent interviews and feedback to staff with constructive developmental targets.
- We believe that parents & carers have a fundamental role to play in helping students learn which is why we have, family days where parents & carers can meet staff to discuss their child's report, achievement and progress; these are written in accessible language with clear explanations about effort, progress made and expected levels of progress written as SMART target goals for the term ahead.
- We support students with English as an additional language (EAL) through planning differentiated tasks during lessons, offering focused vocabulary support and also provide targeted literacy support on a 1:1 basis if this is appropriate. In addition, we ensure that our classrooms are vocabulary rich and that classroom displays reflect and support the current learning topics in order to reinforce new vocabulary.

English: Literacy, Reading and Writing

Raising students' literacy levels is of fundamental importance to us. Our students have missed out on crucial parts of their education as a result of exclusion, isolation and lack of support. It is up to us to facilitate their accelerated progress in their phonics, reading and writing despite the multiple challenges they face.

With this in mind, we ensure that:

- Baseline assessments for reading and spelling ages are completed for all students using New Group Reading Test and New Group Spelling Test
- students who are in need, receive one-to-one or group interventions with either a member of the support staff team or a qualified teacher. This includes intensive phonics, reading and writing support
- students have access to a variety of engaging fiction and non-fiction texts in their classrooms. The teaching of writing encompasses a wide range of genres, both fiction and non-fiction, which prepare students for later life (for example writing reports, recounts and letters)
- reading is given a high profile across all subjects, and cross-curricular opportunities to develop reading skills are planned throughout the week.
- students who have a diagnosis of dyslexia are supported through targeted literacy support using resources specifically designed for them. Their progress is closely monitored, and interventions put in place
- teachers plan regular guided writing opportunities, which enable students to demonstrate word, sentence and text level skills in small groups or one-to-one
- students are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work which helps to raise standards.
- At Unified Academy, students in Years 10 and 11 work towards entry level, functional skills

and/or GCSE English depending on their needs and abilities.

Mathematics and Numeracy

Students arrive with us displaying varying degrees of competency in mathematics, many with large gaps in their knowledge of basic concepts due to disrupted periods of schooling. Often, students have missed out on the early learning experiences necessary to cement key mathematical skills and concepts.

With this in mind, we ensure that:

- mathematics lessons focus on mastery of concepts but take into account each student's unique starting points
- teachers strive to present each new skill within a practical context that has relevance for our students. For example, measuring may be taught through the medium of cooking and food technology or probability may be taught in the context of a favourite football team's predicted performance
- displays in classrooms which support and scaffold students' knowledge of mathematics concepts. Mathematics prompts on learning walls in classes reflect the current mathematics unit being taught. Other displays in classes (such as multiplication tables) help to immerse students in a number rich environment
- regular problem-solving activities are planned in order to provide students with the opportunity to apply their mathematics skills in different contexts, and begin to develop abilities for higher order thinking
- a variety of interactive resources to help students to learn and cement complex mathematical concepts. ICT is used in different ways to demonstrate key concepts and allow a range of opportunities for students to explore their own mathematical understanding. Online teaching tools offer students the opportunity to master mathematical skills.
- Years 10 and 11 students work towards entry level, functional skills and/or GCSE mathematics depending on their needs and abilities.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education

Developing students' social skills and teaching them about healthy living, preparing them for life in modern Britain and enabling them to make positive life choices is of considerable importance. We do the following:

- Teach values across the school as part of our wider curriculum. These values:
- form the basis of conversation during school council meetings
- form the basis for learning conversations around the school
- contribute to the planning and content of discrete PSHE lessons
- link closely with Fundamental British Values.

At key stage 3, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is delivered through PSHE lessons which aims to:

- help students develop an understanding of the different types of relationships, including family relationships
- help students to develop skills in forming and maintaining relationships with others, including their peers
- teach students about the changes to their body that occur during puberty
- introduce students to reproduction

At key stage 4, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is within PSHE lessons enabling students to build on their skills and knowledge acquired during key stage 3 so that they can discuss topics in a mature and inclusive way.

This includes topics such as 'Personal and Social Relationships' and 'Managing Social Relationships'.

- Formally teach e-safety to students of all ages across the school, according to age and ability.
- Formally teach PSHE to all students on a regular basis which focuses on:
- the development of social skills, including managing anger and emotions, building relationships, dealing with conflict and making positive choices, including online as part of e- safety education
- the development of anti-discriminatory understanding including knowledge and understanding of bullying, cyber-bullying, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and religious tolerance
- Formally teach sex education, including healthy sexual relationships and consent
- preparation for life in modern Britain and knowledge of fundamental British values, including cultural diversity, mutual respect, the rule of law, democracy, right & wrong, consequences and the range of faiths, religions and values in Britain and London
- providing opportunities for reflection, thinking, discussion and formal argument
- helping our community, supporting charity and helping others
- personal health and how to stay healthy with specific focus on nutrition and exercise
- the development of the understanding of risk and keeping safe in everyday life
- an understanding of the world of business and consumers through enterprise projects and fundraising for projects and/or charities.

Carefully planned and differentiated activities ensure that all students begin to view and understand themselves in the context of wider society, in a structured and supportive way.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Q+ Rights

- Lessons will be taught to students in line with British Values which also promote equal opportunities and an understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and Q+ rights.
- PSHE topics will be carefully chosen to ensure that students understand the facts about sexuality and gender identity and understand the damage and prejudice that stereotypes can cause.

Alternative Learning Provision (ALP)

At Unified Academy, alternative learning provision (ALP) is arranged so that every student, who for whatever reason cannot access the in-school provision, has access to a purposeful and appropriate programme of learning. The ALP offer is arranged using a range of providers who are experienced and suitably qualified to facilitate alternative learning for our students.

Our ALP programme is planned to ensure that it meets the needs of students and enables them to re-engage with learning in an alternative setting. All students receive a good education, regardless of their circumstances or the settings in which they find themselves. Provision offered will differ from student to student; however, there are some common elements we aim to achieve, including:

- academic focus, particularly in English and mathematics – with appropriate accreditation and qualifications
- vocational settings to encourage future employment aspirations
- specific personal, social, emotional and well-being needs are met alongside academic needs
- improved student motivation and self-confidence, attendance and engagement with learning

ALP Activities

Our students access a variety of external provider activities including:

- Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development (High Ashurst) – teambuilding challenges, archery, climbing, abseiling, mountain biking and orienteering.

- Skills and Integrated Learning Centre (SILC) – Construction Industry Training at a purpose-built facility leading to City & Guilds qualifications.
- Secret Garden Farm – animal care and land-based learning at a working farm
- West Drayton's Young People Centre - Motor Mechanics – develop skills, knowledge and attitudes required for work in motor industry, working towards Entry Level 3 Award in Motor Vehicle Technology and Level 1 Award in Transport Maintenance.
- Sporting Chances – using sport, DJ-ing, hair and beauty to engage students into informal learning with focus on personal and social development, inter-personal skills development and using soft skills development as a way of supporting students to self-regulate behaviour and prepare to engage in essential skills (English and mathematics).

Internal ALP takes the form of adjusted timetables to ensure students access school and develop essential skills (English and mathematics). Students attend a revised timetable and work 1:1 with staff who work on building relationships, trust and support students to re-engage with learning.

Enrichment Activities

At Unified Academy, we offer an enrichment curriculum which sees all students access a variety of extra-curricular activities in the format of bite sized tasters, facilitated by external and internal practitioners. Our students cannot access after-school clubs and activities due to their home settings being spread across a wide geographical area and the need to use individual taxis to get them safely to and from school. With this in mind, we have created an enrichment curriculum that enables all students to choose, explore and experience new activities. The offer embeds key areas of our PSHE and well-being curriculum.

These new experiences enable them to develop skills and knowledge in subjects and activities that would not normally be found on a traditional curriculum and work towards units of accreditation, for example:

- Boxing – learning self-discipline, following instructions, developing fitness and tolerance of others
- Sporting Chances – opportunity to work with ex-professional footballers, develop ball skills, football strategies and work with others
- Hair & Beauty – working with professional beautician; develop self-care routines, personal hygiene, self-expression and develop aspirations for future employment
- Mixed Sports – working with a professional coach, develop team working, ball skills, hand-eye co-ordination, and following instructions and tolerance of others
- Creative Enterprise – working with a variety of materials to create a range of decorative items, including Jewellery
- Art □ Students learn to express themselves artistically through a variety of mediums and techniques
- ICT/Gaming – utilising the ICT suite students develop skills related to online and stand- alone platform gaming
- Canine Assisted Learning (CAL) – students learn how to express their emotions in a safe and supportive environment. They also develop knowledge of animal care and welfare.

Link to other Unified Academy/OHCAAT policies:

Child Protection, Adult Protection & Procedure E-Safety Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

RSE Policy

Assessment Policy

Careers Policy

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POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

Policy ratified by governors –

Review annually