Curriculum Policy

Holme Court School Hampshire

September 2026

Reviewed annually

Policy Statement

Holme Court School Hampshire is a specialist school for autistic children aged 7–13. The curriculum is designed and implemented to provide a safe, predictable, ambitious and nurturing learning environment in which pupils are understood, valued and empowered to thrive. The school's values of Brave, Curious and Kind, together with Together We Rise, are reflected in curriculum design, teaching, relationships, practical learning, assessment and preparation for the next stage of education.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious, while being adapted to individual communication, sensory, physical, cognitive and emotional needs. Autism-informed practice is embedded throughout the curriculum rather than being treated as a separate curriculum. Pupils are taught to develop knowledge and skills alongside communication, independence, self-advocacy, regulation and the ability to generalise learning across people, places and contexts.

At Holme Court School we are committed to offering all pupils a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for each pupil's age and aptitudes. We use principles as detailed in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEN and Disability Code of Practise, 0-25 years 2014 (SEND Code 2014), the

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SEND(2001)) and the Equality Act (2010) including the provision of auxiliary aids and services.

Core Principles of our Curriculum

The curriculum is organised into Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 provision. The school uses two-year rolling curriculum maps so that learning is sequenced, revisited and progressively developed while allowing teachers to adapt teaching and learning to individual starting points.

The KS2 curriculum establishes knowledge, vocabulary, communication, independence, enquiry and learning behaviours that support successful progression into KS3. The KS3 curriculum provides a carefully sequenced bridge between the broad thematic learning of KS2 and the increasingly subject-specific rigour of KS4, including preparation for accredited qualifications, formal assessment and future education or training.

The core principle governing the curriculum of the school is that every pupil shall be entitled to and partake in a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets their needs and is underpinned by our core values. Holme Court School has a multi-dimensional and personalised curriculum that puts the needs of the individual at the heart of learning. At Holme Court School we believe the pupil's emotional wellbeing and happiness are of the highest importance. Learning takes into account our pupils' individual interests, aptitudes and needs.

We are committed to a holistic approach to classroom learning, therapies and home life. Teaching staff work together alongside Parents and Therapists closely to support pupil's well-being is a priority and support their readiness to learn. Therapists we work alongside include Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, as well as Educational Psychologists. These professionals form part of the multi-disciplinary team to provide universal, targeted and specialist approaches to meet each pupil's needs and to enhance their development.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on self-confidence, self-advocacy, intrinsic motivation and ensuring that our pupils are continuously encouraged and supported to develop their independence; in turn, this helps to foster self-help skills in all areas of development. Staff use a scaffolded approach, demonstrating or modelling an activity before stepping back for pupils to be successful learners.

The Head is responsible for ensuring that curriculum planning provides pupils with a wide range of challenging learning experiences, taking account of the individual learning needs of all pupils and that effective teaching motivates and inspires all pupils to achieve their best work, to learn and make progress.

At Holme Court School, we believe that the curriculum the pupils follow should enable them to become successful young people who are ready to learn, make progress and achieve, whatever their starting point may be and whatever type of special educational needs they may have.

Our curriculum focuses on developing the transferrable skills that equip pupils for each stage in education and life beyond school as confidently and independently as possible. Emphasis is placed on the areas; 'Communication and Interaction', 'Cognition and Learning', Sensory and Physical' and 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health'. To engage the pupils that attend Holme Court School to engage in learning, our curriculum is child centred with individualised learning opportunities that are skills and play based.

Teachers use individual EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) outcomes as a starting point for all learning, taking into account what the pupils are working towards in line with the starting ability of in relation to Development Matters statements and the National Curriculum. Each pupil has an individual education plan with targets, based on working towards achieving their individual EHCP outcomes. Each pupil's progress, in relation to achieving targets included in the individual education plan are closely monitored. The individual education plans are reviewed and adjusted accordingly every 6-8 weeks in conjunction with Parents and specialist external agencies.

At Holme Court School teaching and learning opportunities are not limited to 'lesson time' but throughout the day, including break times (outside learning time), snack time, personal care routines and when out in the community on trips. These opportunities are planned for and include meaningful generalisation of skills across a range of settings.

The Holme Court Curriculum

For pupils aged 7–13, the school's curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and is organised through a planned sequence of subject knowledge and thematic learning. The curriculum is not a generic life-skills curriculum: academic learning remains central, with practical, creative, communication, independence, sensory and physical opportunities deliberately embedded to remove barriers and support access.

The school has three classes: Maple (Years 3–4), Willow (Years 5–6) and Oak (Years 7–8). Each class has a class teacher and two HLTAs. Each class has its own core-learning classroom, with sensory nooks available within and outside classrooms. A shared library provides an additional learning environment for all pupils.

Core learning is taught in the mornings. Afternoons include Curious Explorer and Brave Creator. These are curriculum sessions, not co-curricular activities, and pupil progress in these sessions is assessed and reviewed as part of the curriculum. The practical and creative nature of the afternoon curriculum provides authentic opportunities to apply knowledge, develop independence, communication, problem-solving, physical skills and collaboration.

The school acknowledges the flexibility afforded to it which enables it to fashion its own curriculum in a creative and innovative way. It takes frameworks such as the individualised curriculum and assessment and National Curriculum as a basis to inform required topics, and embeds these alongside the school's values, aims and aspirations and which is right for its pupils and the whole school community.

Our curriculum is adapted from the National Curriculum dependent on each pupil's starting point and personalised depending on each individual child's needs. This tailored approach gives students the opportunity to be taught in line with their individual learning styles, giving them further opportunities to be successful, thus promoting self-esteem and self-confidence.

Life skills and independent skills form an important part of the curriculum. The objectives for each half term are planned to be practical, build on previous learning experiences to allow for consolidation and scaffold to promote progression of skills and independence. Pupils are also taught the necessary tools and a range of strategies they will need specifically with social communication and emotional regulation.

At Holme Court School we:

- promote a healthy, safe and caring environment for all pupils and staff;
- provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all our pupils, which recognises and values their individual backgrounds and special educational needs;
- promote pupils' self- esteem and emotional wellbeing and help them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community;
- prepare our pupils to engage confidently with the challenges of adult life;
- provide sufficient information and support to enable our pupils to make safe choices;
- provide pupils, through an enriched curriculum, with opportunities to develop the necessary skills to manage their lives effectively;
- help our pupils to learn to respect themselves and others and move safely from childhood, through adolescence, into adulthood;
- create a wider awareness of religious beliefs, cultural and moral values.
- promote an inclusive ethos and a culture of mutual respect where diversity and difference are recognised, appreciated and celebrated;
- work in partnership with parents and carers, and with the wider community, to support children in all aspects of their wellbeing.

The KS2 curriculum is underpinned by five curriculum drivers: Communication; Independence; Sensory Regulation & Physical Development; Community & Belonging; and Preparation for the Future. SALT opportunities are explicitly embedded within topics and OT opportunities are embedded through practical, physical, organisational and sensory learning.

Our Curriculum Policy requires us as teachers to ensure that we support pupils to achieve the following to the best of their abilities. The skills of Communication, Literacy, and Mathematics are specifically addressed through daily timetabled teaching time, continuous provision and booster sessions (where needed). Literacy and Mathematics lessons are delivered to establish all the core skills, knowledge and understanding in each strand in these subjects. Teaching for all pupils in all of these areas will be personalised by addressing the specific needs of each pupil ensuring they reach their full potential.

Science

Science is an important core subject which many learners find particularly engaging, despite the challenge of understanding some abstract scientific concepts. Most of the science teaching will be practical and focus on developing, exploring, experimenting, and questioning skills. Science lessons will also be opportunities to apply communication, English and Mathematics skills when recording and evaluating findings.

Personal, Social, Health and Moral Education & Citizenship including Sex and Relationships Education (RSE)

Within our curriculum pupils have the opportunity to develop personal skills; feelings including theirs and others; learn about other cultures and nations; learn about their bodies and how to care for them; learn about personal safety and who can help them in the community; learn about the dangers associated with every day materials; learn that all medicines are drugs; but not all drugs are medicines; share their achievements with others.

The aims and organisation are detailed in the PSHE and the RSE policy.

Humanities

Cross-curricular topics provide coherent contexts for subject knowledge while preserving the integrity of National Curriculum subject content. The KS2 curriculum deliberately uses local contexts including Yateley, the Blackwater Valley, Yateley Common, Horseshoe Lake, Blackbushe Airport, Hart District and Wellington Country Park. The KS2 curriculum map identifies Horseshoe Lake for local fieldwork and environmental studies and Wellington Country Park for investigation of plants, habitats, pollination and seasonal change.

Geography, History and Religious Education are taught through cross-curricular half-termly topics and discreet lessons e.g. learning about religious beliefs and important celebrations such as Diwali. Geography, learning about their local environment and the wider world, History e.g. Black History Month.

ICT

Our curriculum takes into account the fact that many learners have a particular affinity with ICT with respect to both learning through ICT and learning about ICT. ICT will also be used as a way to extend learning in all other curriculum areas, a resource for finding out information, and as a tool that pupils can use for communicating and recording their learning. Pupils will also be taught how to stay safe when using ICT, through online safety lessons.

Creative Subjects

Include Art, Music, Drama are an important part of the curriculum and included as part of our topic-based learning and cross-curricular learning e.g. creating artwork that incorporates the use of mathematical concepts.

Promoting British Values

The promotion of British Values is also embedded in our teaching, i.e. democracy; freedom of expression and debate within the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect; tolerance.

KS3 Provision and Progression

SALT and OT opportunities are explicitly identified within each KS3 topic. SALT opportunities include social communication, listening, discussion, explanation, subject vocabulary, presenting and persuasive speaking. OT opportunities include organisation, fieldwork, map work, practical investigation, sensory exploration, model construction, fine motor skills and team projects.

The KS3 curriculum is a two-year rolling programme for Years 7 and 8. It builds on KS2 and develops confidence, independence and curiosity through enquiry-based learning. Because pupils enter KS3 with varied prior experiences and starting points, teaching is carefully sequenced and increasingly explicit in disciplinary knowledge, subject vocabulary, enquiry skills and independent learning behaviours.

The School Curriculum profile and Curriculum Design, as well as details of time allocations for each subject, are reviewed annually prior to timetables being drawn up for the forthcoming year. The curriculum maps are maintained as two-year rolling programmes for KS2 and KS3 and are reviewed to ensure progression, coverage and responsiveness to pupil need.

The School is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils which

- promotes their spiritual, moral, social, cultural, cognitive and physical development;
- prepares them for the opportunities, challenges, responsibilities and experiences of the next stage of their education and for their adult life.

Evidencing planning and preparation
Baseline and Assessment

Assessment is used to measure progress in knowledge, skills, communication, independence and application. Afternoon practical and creative curriculum sessions are assessed in the same way as other curriculum learning; they are not treated as optional enrichment.

New pupils complete baseline Quest testing within the first term of their joining, to provide teachers with additional information about starting points and to support planning and adaptation. Baseline information is considered alongside EHCP outcomes, teacher assessment, observations, communication and sensory information, previous records and parent/carer contributions.

Planning is broken down into following documents:

Curriculum Overview document
Medium Term Planning
Weekly Planning
Weekly Plans

PSHE and RSE are taught weekly and are adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Teachers adapt the programme to meet the individual needs of pupils, with delivery by teachers and/or HLTAs as appropriate.

Phonics is taught through Little Wandle for KS2 and KS3 learners, with teaching adapted to individual starting points and communication needs.

Regulation, Sensory Support and Transfer of Learning

The Practice Room can provide a safe and supportive environment when a pupil becomes significantly dysregulated and needs time away from the classroom. This is secondary to its proactive teaching purpose. Staff prioritise co-regulation, communication, safety and a supported return to learning when the pupil is ready.

The Practice Room is not primarily a place to escape from learning and is not accessed only when a pupil is dysregulated. Strategies practised there are deliberately transferred into classrooms and other environments. Sensory tools, fidgets, visual supports, regulation strategies and trusted-adult support are embedded in classrooms and sensory nooks so that pupils can generalise and increasingly use strategies independently.

The Practice Room is a proactive teaching and learning space based around the Zones of Regulation. Its primary purpose is to teach and practise regulation when pupils are regulated. Planned one-to-one time with a trusted adult enables pupils to explore emotions, recognise what their bodies and brains need, practise sensory and communication strategies and develop a personal toolkit of strategies.

Allocation of Timetable to each Subject Area
Daily Curriculum Structure

The timetable provides a predictable rhythm that supports autistic pupils while maintaining opportunities for enquiry, choice and practical application. Timings may be adapted where an individual pupil's needs require reasonable adjustment, but the curriculum entitlement and learning intention remain central.

The school day is structured to provide predictability while allowing responsive adaptation.

The planned day is: 8:50–9:00 Arrival & Registration

9:00–9:45 Session 1 – Core Learning

9:45–10:30 Session 2 – Core Learning

10:30–10:45 Morning Break

10:45–11:05 Foodilosophy

11:05–11:50 Session 3 – Core Learning

11:50–12:35 Session 4 – Core Learning

12:35–1:25 Lunch

1:25–3:00 – Curriculum time

3:00–3:20 Together Time, regulation & home time.

Teachers are expected to be flexible with the timetable to suit the needs of extended lessons in line with the needs of the pupils and to make cross-curricular links between different subjects.

School Trips and Visits
Appropriate school trips and visits are arranged to enrich and enhance pupils understanding of the curriculum they follow. Parents receive a letter detailing events and trips taking place, newsletters and items of news.

This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises.

Curriculum Progression and Review

Curriculum review considers pupil progress, curriculum coverage, engagement, accessibility, generalisation of learning, SALT and OT opportunities, and readiness for the next stage. The school uses its rolling curriculum maps alongside medium-term and weekly planning to ensure that intended learning is implemented consistently while remaining responsive to individual pupil need.

By the end of KS2, pupils should have developed secure subject knowledge across the National Curriculum, stronger communication and vocabulary, increasing independence, practical enquiry skills and confidence in applying learning in local and wider contexts. By the end of KS3, pupils should be increasingly able to access subject-specific learning, use disciplinary vocabulary and enquiry skills, work with greater independence and be prepared for the expectations and assessment approaches of KS4.

Appendix 1 Curriculum Adaptations and SEN Reasonable Adjustments

Holme Court School provides a highly adapted curriculum that enables autistic pupils with a wide range of learning profiles to access high-quality education. While the Key Stage 2 Foundation Stage Framework (where applicable) and the National Curriculum provide the basis of our curriculum, learning is personalised to reflect each pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), developmental profile, strengths, interests and individual barriers to learning.

Individualised Curriculum Planning
Each pupil has an individual learning profile informed by:

- EHCP outcomes
- Educational psychology advice
- Speech and Language Therapy recommendations
- Occupational Therapy recommendations
- Functional assessments
- Teacher assessment
- Parent/carer contributions
- Pupil voice where appropriate

Planning focuses on both academic achievement and preparation for lifelong independence.

Communication Adaptations
Teaching is adapted to meet differing communication needs by providing:

- Visual timetables
- Now and Next boards
- Symbols and picture supports
- Written instructions alongside verbal explanations
- Simplified language
- Chunked instructions
- Additional processing time
- Predictable routines
- Alternative methods of recording
- AAC (where appropriate)
- Makaton or PECS where required
- Opportunities for supported communication

Sensory Adjustments
Learning environments are adapted to minimise sensory overload and maximise engagement.
Adjustments may include:

- low arousal classrooms
- reduced visual clutter
- controlled lighting
- noise reduction strategies
- ear defenders where appropriate
- sensory breaks
- movement breaks

- access to sensory equipment
- flexible seating
- wobble cushions
- standing desks
- weighted resources (where professionally advised)
- sensory circuits
- individual sensory regulation plans

Executive Function Supports

Teaching explicitly supports pupils who experience difficulties with:

- planning
- organisation
- working memory
- sequencing
- initiation
- task completion
- time management

Strategies include:

- task breakdown
- checklists
- colour coding
- visual organisers
- timers
- modelling
- scaffolded tasks
- explicit routines
- repetition
- overlearning

Social Understanding

Teaching incorporates explicit instruction in:

- social communication
- emotional literacy
- perspective taking
- flexible thinking
- recognising emotions
- friendship skills
- conflict resolution
- self-advocacy

Learning opportunities are carefully structured rather than relying upon incidental learning.

Behaviour as Communication

The curriculum recognises that behaviour may communicate unmet needs.

Teaching staff:

- identify underlying causes
- use Positive Behaviour Support principles

- teach replacement skills
- promote emotional regulation
- avoid punitive approaches
- use restorative conversations appropriate to developmental level

Flexible Teaching Approaches
Teachers use a range of evidence-informed approaches including:

- structured teaching
- direct instruction
- modelling
- overlearning
- multisensory learning
- practical activities
- visual learning
- play-based learning where developmentally appropriate
- small group teaching
- 1:1 intervention where required

Curriculum Flexibility
The curriculum may be adapted by:

- reducing cognitive load
- adjusting lesson pace
- pre-teaching vocabulary
- overlearning key concepts
- alternative methods of demonstrating learning
- practical rather than written outcomes
- reduced written recording
- personalised success criteria
- differentiated resources
- scaffolded learning tasks

Pupils may work significantly below, at or above age-related expectations depending on their individual profile.

Autism-Specific Learning
Additional curriculum priorities include:

- emotional regulation
- interoception
- understanding autism
- self-advocacy
- independence
- community safety
- travel training (where appropriate)
- self-care
- life skills
- functional communication
- problem solving

- resilience
- coping with change
- managing uncertainty

Therapeutic Integration
Universal SALT and OT Approach

Where individual SALT or OT therapy is provided, it is delivered on site by Sensory Smart. A designated SALT and OT space are available for therapy. Therapist recommendations are shared with relevant staff and incorporated into classroom and curriculum practice. Parents receive termly SALT and OT reports as part of their child's termly report where their child is receiving therapy.

Sensory Smart provides staff training for the school's universal SALT and OT-informed approach. All pupils are entitled to embedded opportunities to develop communication, sensory regulation, physical, organisational and functional skills through the curriculum, regardless of whether they receive individual therapy.

Therapeutic recommendations are embedded throughout the curriculum.
Where appropriate, learning incorporates:

- speech and language targets
- occupational therapy programmes
- sensory regulation strategies
- emotional wellbeing interventions
- attention and listening programmes
- fine and gross motor development
- social communication programmes

Assessment Adaptations
Assessment is flexible and may include:

- observation
- photographs
- practical demonstration
- verbal responses
- structured discussion
- work samples
- individual progress assessment
- National Curriculum assessment where appropriate
- National Curriculum assessment and appropriate individual progress measures where relevant
- individual progress against EHCP outcomes

Success is measured against pupils' individual starting points as well as national expectations where appropriate.

Reasonable Adjustments
Reasonable adjustments may include:

- additional adult support
- adapted timetables

- reduced transitions
- movement breaks
- sensory regulation opportunities
- quiet workspaces
- safe spaces
- alternative recording methods
- assistive technology
- visual supports
- extended processing time
- modified assessment arrangements
- personalised behaviour support plans

High Expectations
While learning is personalised, the school maintains high aspirations for every pupil. Staff have ambitious expectations and seek to develop each pupil's academic achievement, communication, independence, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood through a curriculum that is appropriately challenging, inclusive and responsive to individual need.

Additional elements:
Our curriculum:

- explicitly teaches self-regulation using evidence-informed approaches (e.g. Zones of Regulation or similar frameworks where appropriate).
- embeds opportunities to generalise skills across different environments and contexts, as autistic pupils may not naturally transfer learning from one setting to another.
- includes planned preparation for transitions (within lessons, between activities, across the school day, and into secondary education).
- incorporates pupils' special interests as motivators and vehicles for engagement without allowing them to narrow the curriculum.
- recognises that autistic pupils may have uneven cognitive profiles, with significant strengths in some curriculum areas alongside substantial support needs in others.

PSHE and RSE

PSHE and RSE are an important and integral part of the curriculum at Holme Court School. They are taught weekly by the class teacher, who is a trusted adult for the pupils in their class. Teaching is delivered through the Jigsaw programme, with appropriate adaptations made by teachers to meet the individual communication, sensory, learning and developmental needs of autistic pupils. The class teacher may be supported by HLTAs where appropriate, but responsibility for teaching and embedding PSHE and RSE sits with the class teacher. The consistent relationship between the class teacher and pupils provides a secure context in which children can develop self-awareness, emotional understanding, healthy relationships, personal safety, independence and confidence. Learning is revisited and reinforced through everyday school life, relationships and routines so that pupils can apply what they learn beyond the discrete weekly lesson.