Curriculum Policy

Written by: Simon Berkley Date: March 2019

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*In this policy “parents” shall always refer to parent, parents, guardians and/or carers; “pupil” shall refer to students and pupils.*
# Contents

1. Rationale .......................................................................................................................... 4
2. Aims ................................................................................................................................... 4
3. Legislation and guidance ................................................................................................. 6
4. Roles and responsibilities ............................................................................................... 6
5. Inclusion .......................................................................................................................... 8
6. Monitoring arrangements ............................................................................................... 8
7. Links with other policies and documents ..................................................................... 9
8. Review ............................................................................................................................ 10
Rationale

South Devon Steiner School (SDSS) practices a curriculum adopted by over 1,000 Waldorf/Steiner schools worldwide, which has been successfully implemented since 1919 and adapted to meet local conditions. We are committed to offering an education designed at every level to meet the needs of the pupils at their various stages of emotional, intellectual and physical development.

At SDSS, there is an understanding that: All students are entitled to, and should be offered, a comparable range of equal educational opportunities. Every child is unique, having individual aptitudes, abilities, interests and other characteristics, which need to be catered for.

The interplay between what lives within the pupils and what is to be brought to them as lesson content and skills requires constant flexibility, and how a topic is presented to one particular class by one particular teacher will be quite individual. This relationship to the class is a crucially important factor; it allows the teacher to be aware of each child’s inherent capacities and of how these are being fostered through what is taught. The teacher can then set expectations which are appropriate for the pupil’s ability and developmental stage.

Steiner education is divided into three phases corresponding to three seven-year phases of childhood as Rudolf Steiner outlined. i.e. Kindergarten for young pupils up to age seven, lower school from age seven to fourteen and upper school for fourteen plus. SDSS comprises a Kindergarten and lower school (known as the Primary School) up to age 11.

Our Curriculum policy is an essential part of our Safeguarding practice. SDSS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. We believe the welfare of the child is paramount and that no child should suffer harm of any form, either at home or at school. Everyone who works at or visits our school has a responsibility to make sure all our pupils are safe. For the purposes of this policy, ‘staff’ also includes agency staff, volunteers, and students working in our Schools, and ‘parents’ includes carers and legal guardians – unless this is clarified further within the text.

Aims

SDSS aims to provide an education according to the understanding of the developing human being as set out in the education lecture cycles and books by Rudolf Steiner. The traditional Waldorf Steiner curriculum has been developed to include content relevant to life in the 21st century. Our education delivers age-appropriate content, building on the connection between each child’s personal development journey and humankind’s shared cultural heritage and development. Our education is rooted in the belief that healthy and sustained enthusiasm for learning is achieved by introducing the right content and developing the right skills at the right time: not always at the earliest opportunity.
The Steiner Waldorf Curriculum is not prescriptive. It is used as a source of inspiration and guidance to stimulate the creativity of the teacher. While doing our utmost to remain true to the spirit of Steiner Waldorf Education, we recognise that modifications to the curriculum may be necessary to meet the needs of the present children in our school. The academic, social, moral, and spiritual growth of every child is held as a central objective of our education. Children’s capacities and personal abilities are helped to unfold by providing them with a rich and carefully planned curriculum that enhances their own natural developmental growth.

- To provide our pupils with a broad and integrated curriculum, paying attention to the social and emotional development of the pupils alongside their academic achievement, with a creative and explorative approach to learning

- To deliver an integrated curriculum where cross curricular links are made in different lessons and which ensures that pupils are engaged and motivated in their learning, that they feel involved and listened to, that they have valuable opinions and that the things that they study are relevant in their lives.

- To ensure all pupils receive an active and experiential learning program which involves the development of practical skills as well as academic learning.

- To give pupils responsibility in their own learning through a project based approach. To stretch and challenge each child in an age appropriate and relevant way. Promote a positive attitude towards learning

- To develop healthy young humans who are confident and conscious of their own uniqueness, skills and abilities and who have a healthy orientation to the world that they are moving into.

- To make possible the experience of life as a purposeful journey on which everyone may discover their gifts and talents and their capacity to bring relevant and worthwhile contributions to the world.

- To enable pupils become free, resilient, creative human beings who lead lives of purpose and direction, who encourage independent thought and the pursuit of truth and are respectful of the rights of others.

- To develop the highest human capacities and become citizens of the world, respecting and celebrating diversity. The School aims to implement this Curriculum Policy through the objectives detailed in the school’s Curriculum Framework for Numeracy and Literacy and, once completed, for all other subjects detailed within their own Subject Frameworks.

- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations

- Support pupils’ physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active

- Ensure equal access to learning, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
• Provide subject choices that support pupils’ learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their goals

• Develop pupils’ independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for further/higher education and employment

• Promote the learning and development of our youngest children and ensure they are ready for Class 1

Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for independent schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of Council of Trustees set out in the Department for Education’s Governance Handbook.

It also complies with our Articles of Association.

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Council of Trustees

The Council of Trustees will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Education Manager to account for its implementation.

The Council of Trustees will also ensure that:

• A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets

• Enough teaching time is provided for pupils

• The school is compliant and teaching a broad and balanced curriculum which includes English,
maths, and science, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the school’s Curriculum and other statutory requirements

• Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)

• All courses provided for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications are approved by the secretary of state

• The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements

• It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum

• Pupils from year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

4.2 Education Manager

The Education Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

• The curriculum is developed and overseen effectively, supported by the Senior Management Team

• All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met

• The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Council of Trustees

• They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate

• The school’s procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements

• The Council of Trustees is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum

• The Council of Trustees is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions

• Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

4.3 Other staff
This policy is the responsibility of everyone who works at, volunteers for or visits SDSS. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that arrangements will be made to bring this policy to the notice of all staff (including new, temporary, and part-time employees), agency and other contract staff, volunteers, visitors and students during Induction and throughout their time at the School so that they fulfil their duties to co-operate with this policy. This policy and procedure will apply in all these contexts, including school activities taking place offsite. SDSS delivers services at various venues, and this policy will apply in all these contexts. SDSS expects services delivered by partner organisations to have safeguarding procedures in place. This policy should appear on the School website.

See our EYFS policy for information on how our early year’s curriculum is delivered.

Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

*Further information can be found in our Equality and Diversity Policy, Accessibility Policy and in our SEND Policy.*

Monitoring arrangements

Trustees monitor whether the school is teaching a “broad and balanced curriculum” which includes the required subjects, through:
- School Visits
- Learning Walks
- Meetings with senior leaders and key teaching and administrative staff
- Meetings with pupils including with the Student Council

The Education Manager, Heads of department, subject leaders and other key staff monitor the way subjects are taught throughout the school by conducting:

- Learning Walks
- Book Scrutinies
- Pupil Progress Meetings
- Planning Scrutinies
- Analysis of key assessment data

The Education Manager, Heads of department, Subject Leaders, SENDCo and other key staff also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Education Manager. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full Council of Trustees for its input and final sign off.

**Links with other policies and documents**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Details of EY Exemptions DfE Application
- DfE Approval of Early Years Exemptions for SW Settings in UK
- Assessment policy (to be updated)
- Curriculum Statement (to be updated)
- SEN policy
• Equality and Diversity policy
• Anti-Bullying Policy & Cyber Bullying Policy
• Guidelines for Supporting Positive Behaviour in Kindergarten
• Behaviour Policy for classes 1 - 3
• Behaviour Policy for Classes 4 - 8
• Behaviour Policy for Classes 9 - 12
• Serious Behaviour Incident policy
• Concerns and Complaints policy
• Plus other relevant policies and documents to be found on our website here

Review

SDSS will seek to continually improve all its policies, procedures and guidelines. SDSS will review this policy on a regular basis to confirm that content and approach is still appropriate. The review will take place whenever there are significant changes and no later than 12 months from the previous review date.