




Curriculum Policy

Signed	
Position	Kas Lee-Douglas Head of School
Date Agreed	September 2024
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Equality Statement

Centre Academy London is committed to a policy of equality and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief. We provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment.

Centre Academy London is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.



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1. Our Vision:

Centre Academy London is dedicated to providing outstanding education with a curriculum that is broad, balanced, inspiring, accessible, relevant, and inclusive. Consistent with our vision, we aim for our students to have the best opportunities to realise their full potential by building their academic, social, and emotional skills so that they can be prepared for the future and become the best version of themselves.

At CAL, we recognise that every student is unique and comes to us with a personal learning journey, which is why our curriculum is not only based on the National Curriculum but also considers the students' individual strengths and needs. Our curriculum is designed to accommodate the broad range of needs that our learners face and provide them with the skills they will require in life beyond CAL. To fulfil the dreams and aspirations of all our learners and as outlined in each EHCP, our curriculum is delivered in a safe and supportive “enabling” environment that celebrates both personal and academic achievement.

The policy reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010.

2. Our Rationale:

Many of our students come to us with one, or multiple diagnoses which may be compounded by specific learning difficulties, motor skill difficulties, mental health issues, and in fewer cases, physical impairment. As a result of these complex needs, our approach is child oriented and seeks to work in conjunction with both learners and parents/carers alike. Some of our students are in a state of high anxiety or low self-esteem, which causes them to struggle with communicating their feelings and emotions. At CAL, we aim to help students manage their anxieties, build resilience and communication skills, as well as become more emotionally literate, independent and confident individuals. Thus, our curriculum is designed to provide students with the access to opportunities and experiences to build on these skills.

As a staff team we know that anxiety and presentation of behaviour, mask academic potential. We strongly believe that there is no limit to how much our students can achieve academically once their basic physiological needs, their need for safety, for security and a sense of belonging, are met. We are aware that, because of the nature of our students, these basic needs supersede the need for academic



achievement. It is within our students' interest that we provide and develop a curriculum that will empower their academic success by embedding opportunities and experiences that will build confidence, build resilience and more importantly, provide "enabling environments" where students feel safe, secure and feel a sense of belonging. Only then will our students be able to meet our high academic expectations where they are expected to develop problem solving skills, thinking skills, reasoning, enquiry and evaluative skills.

3. Our Enabling, Learning Environment:

As a school, we give equal care and show equal value to all students regardless of sex, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin, disability, social and economic status or level of attainment.

We acknowledge that all students are individuals at differing stages of physical, intellectual, emotional, social and personal development; at CAL this means that classes are set according to an individual's abilities and level of development and not necessarily to strict age or year group. Class sizes are small (maximum of 8 students per class, depending on year group) so that staff can effectively adapt strategies, differentiate, provide resources and materials to the needs of the students.

The learning of our students is supported by our strong staff team that has a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject of specialism and an excellent understanding of students' needs. To help teachers build their pedagogy in order to maintain good or outstanding teaching, the school supports the continued professional development of staff through weekly staff meetings where teachers are kept up to date with current trends in teaching and where they are given an opportunity to share good practice through our co-coaching approach.

Through a wide range of activities and strategies, teachers prioritise teaching that encourages thought, questioning, creativity and teamwork. Teachers attempt to relate lessons to everyday life scenarios, relevant topics, and makes students aware of the 'bigger picture'. Due to the diverse needs of our learners, lessons may be differentiated in a variety of ways, including by grouping, resources, scaffolding, extension reading, marking, and task.

At CAL, students are also given the opportunity to work with trained professionals in the fields of occupational therapy, counselling and speech and language therapy, to fully meet their individual needs.



4. Our Curriculum Principles:

The curriculum should be as individualised as possible, considering each student's learning challenges and learning style as well as his or her strengths and organisational weaknesses. The staff at CAL encourage the students to not be defined by their needs, and to aspire to be the best they can be.

Within this framework:

- The curriculum plan for each student should emphasise a *structured* individualised approach, making use of all the specialist techniques, strategies and systems of an enabling classroom.
- The curriculum should be as *broad* as possible; it should introduce the student to a wide range of areas of experience, knowledge and skills.
- The curriculum should be as *balanced* as possible; each subject should have sufficient time to make its specific contribution but not so much that it denies access to other essential areas. Cross-curricular links between subjects are encouraged and integrated into our planning.
- The curriculum should be as *relevant* as possible. Whilst recognising the intrinsic value of the learning experience, we believe that all areas should be taught in such a way as to clearly relate their link with the student's own experience.
- The curriculum should be *differentiated* and *flexible* as much as possible. What is taught and how it is taught should be matched to a student's abilities and aptitudes.
- The curriculum should provide *depth of learning* as possible. Students are encouraged to work with more complex tasks or material that provide a greater degree of complexity, abstraction, and high order thinking.
- The curriculum should seek to ensure equality of *opportunity*, paying due regard to a student's physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.
- The curriculum should be seen as a *continuum*, encompassing prior learning and a commitment to learning for life.

4.1 Careers Curriculum

CAL seeks to provide quality, independent, and impartial careers guidance to students from KS3 onwards, which includes information from a range of educational and training options, including apprenticeships and vocational pathways.

Our careers program is committed to:

- Learning about the career and labour market
- Addressing the needs of each pupil
- Linking the curriculum to careers
- Encounters with employers and employees
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

4.2 Literacy and Numeracy:

At CAL, literacy and numeracy are recognised as life skills required to participate in everyday life and enable them to be successful, independent adults.

Literacy is a proficiency that is developed not just in English, but across the whole curriculum. It involves students having the confidence to read, write, listen and speak competently and clearly. Within the first term of starting at the school students are given the New Group Reading Test (NGRT) in order to ascertain students' reading ages based on their reading and comprehension skills. Teachers use the information from the test to inform their planning. Students who are identified as reading significantly below their reading age are targeted with further interventions from the SENDCO.

As part of the school's literacy programme, *reading for pleasure* is encouraged. This takes the form of DEAR time (Drop Everything And Read) on Friday afternoons in which students contribute to guided reading sessions with their mentors. The school's drive for improving literacy also recognises the importance of students using correct grammatical terms and that these terms are integrated in learning across all subjects. Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) is a key focus in the school's marking policy and all teachers are expected to help students with their SPaG through their feedback.

The school aims to develop students' vocabulary through the Tier 1-3 Model. All staff have a responsibility to help students develop Tier 1 vocabulary by modelling appropriate spoken vocabulary and by seizing opportunities to correct students' spoken language in and out of lessons on a daily basis. It is the expectation that teachers will help students to build their Tier 2 vocabulary during lessons. Teachers use structured opportunities during lessons to highlight new vocabulary and to help students understand the use of this vocabulary in written and spoken language. Tier 3 vocabulary (subject specific) is pre-tutored and students are expected to use them in their work to show deeper understanding of a particular concept in a subject. In addition, the Speech and Language Therapists reinforces the use of curriculum vocabulary during her weekly group sessions with the **KS3 and KS4 students**.



Similarly, numeracy is developed not just in mathematics, but also across the whole curriculum. Teachers across all subjects are encouraged to seek opportunities to integrate numeracy related activities, so that basic mathematical skills are embedded through constant repetition. Our school has a Mathematics Prefect who encourages participation in a termly whole school competition that involves mathematics puzzles, complex questions and problems to solve.

In order to promote a cohesive learning experience, staff are encouraged to embed numeracy strategies across all subject areas, utilising a consistent and common mathematical vocabulary. This ensures that students can readily identify and understand the cross-curricular links that exist between subjects. For example, students will be guided to compare and contrast concepts using mathematical language and visuals such as Venn diagrams, enabling them to categorize and analyze information across disciplines. In the arts, students will work with concepts of scale and proportion, applying mathematical thinking to creative tasks. Similarly, in PE and other subjects, arithmetic skills will be incorporated, allowing students to measure, calculate, and interpret data as part of their learning. By consistently applying these numeracy strategies, staff foster an integrated approach to learning that enhances students' overall numeracy skills.

4.3 Social, Moral, Spiritual, and Cultural Education

SMSC is embedded throughout the curriculum. This integrated approach ensures that aspects of SMSC are considered in all subject areas. There is special emphasis in subjects such as PSHE, Citizenship, RE and History. SMSC is infused within the day-to-day operation of the school through the implementation of the school values. It is the expectation that students show an awareness and respect for diversity, take part in social opportunities, cultural opportunities and artistic opportunities. The school's SMSC programme is supported by a very diverse staff who model behaviour that demonstrates British values. Staff are trained to challenge behaviours and opinions that are contrary to those of Fundamental British Values. Students are encouraged to have a voice and develop respect for democracy through the school's Student Council.

Health education should be seen as part of personal and social education (PSHE), with relationships and sex education (RSE) being provided in accordance with statutory requirements (See PSHE/RSE policy). In addition, the school counsellor supports students with individual SMEH programmes to support their social communication skills and establishing and maintaining appropriate friendships. The school counsellor also works with groups of children, utilising the THRIVE programme to develop a positive mindset and equip the students with strategies to help them cope with their mental health into adulthood.



5. Curriculum Organisation and Management

CAL provides a bespoke curriculum tailored to each student's unique background, academic history, recent test reports, and individual talents and interests. At Key Stage 3, the curriculum remains broad and balanced, ensuring students engage in a wide range of subjects that promote both academic and personal growth. As students progress to Key Stage 4, the curriculum gradually narrows to align with their strengths, needs, and future goals, with students placed in one of several specialized study pathways.

In addition to academic subjects, time within the curriculum is allocated to specialist therapy sessions. These include speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and emotional wellbeing support, ensuring a holistic approach to each student's development. This individualized support enables students to overcome barriers to learning and thrive both in school and beyond.

Key Stage 3 (11-14)

Core subjects – English, Maths, Science, PSHE/RSE, Physical Education.

Other subjects offered– Humanities (History, Geography and Citizenship), Art, Information & Communication Technology, Religious Studies, Drama, Music, and Film studies.

Other timetabled lessons– Careers development sessions, Speech and Language Therapist sessions, Occupational Therapist sessions, and ELSA sessions.

Key Stage 4 (14-16)

At Key Stage 4, our curriculum is designed to meet the diverse needs of our students by offering three distinct study pathways: a full GCSE route, a Functional Skills route, and a hybrid route. As an SEN school, we recognize that many of our students have faced significant disruptions to their education and may require tailored support to succeed. The fully GCSE route is available for students who are ready to pursue formal qualifications, while the Functional Skills route focuses on building essential literacy, numeracy, and life skills. For those needing a blend of both, the hybrid route allows students to engage with a combination of GCSE, BTEC and Functional Skills courses, providing a balanced and flexible approach to learning. Our bespoke curriculum ensures that each student is placed on a pathway that aligns with their individual needs, abilities, and future aspirations, ensuring they receive the most appropriate and supportive education possible. At CAL, we



encourage our students to achieve as many qualifications as possible so that they may gain admission to the higher education institution of their choice.

GCSE Route: Students in this pathway are encouraged and expected to achieve five GCSEs 9-4, including English, Science, and Maths.

Core examination subjects include – English (Literature and Language), Maths, and Science (Double Award).

Non-examination subjects include- PSHE/RSE, and Physical Education.

Optional subjects include– History, Drama, Citizenship, Film studies, ICT, BTEC Sport, Creative Media, and Art.

Other timetabled lessons– Careers development sessions, Speech and Language Therapist sessions, and Occupational Therapist sessions.

Functional Skills Route:

The Functional Skills route is designed for students who require additional academic support and focuses on developing essential skills in numeracy, literacy, communication, and life skills. This pathway ensures that students build a strong foundation in these core areas, enabling them to navigate real-world situations with confidence. Alongside key subjects of English and Mathematics, students also have the opportunity to study a range of option subjects tailored to their interests and strengths, ensuring they continue to experience a broad and engaging curriculum. By prioritizing functional skills, this route equips students with the practical knowledge and abilities they need for everyday life, further education, and future employment opportunities.

Core examination subjects include–English and Maths.

Non-examination subjects include- PSHE/RSE, and Physical Education.

Optional subjects include– ICT, Art, Creative Media, BTEC Sport, and Science

Other timetabled lessons– Careers development sessions, Speech and Language Therapist sessions, Occupational Therapist sessions, and ELSA sessions.

Hybrid Route:

Some students will follow a blended curriculum, which combines both GCSE courses and Functional Skills courses to provide a balanced and flexible approach to their education. This pathway allows students to take GCSE subjects in areas where they demonstrate strength and interest, while also focusing on Functional



Skills in other areas to further support their academic development. The goal of the blended curriculum is to help students achieve the maximum number of qualifications suited to their abilities, ensuring they are well-prepared for future educational opportunities or employment. This tailored approach enables each student to reach their full potential, combining academic challenge with practical skill development.

Key Stage 5 (16+)

At Key Stage 5, students are given the opportunity to retake any core subjects they did not pass at KS4, ensuring they have the essential qualifications needed for future success. In addition to this, students can further develop their abilities through either an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), which allows them to engage in independent research, or by pursuing subjects through the American High School Diploma route. This flexible approach is designed to maximize the number of qualifications students can achieve, equipping them for a variety of post-school pathways, including higher education, careers, or apprenticeships. Our goal is to provide students with the best possible foundation for their future, offering them the support and opportunities they need to succeed.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Head of School exercises her responsibilities to ensure that agreed policies in curriculum organisation and management are in place, using staff expertise to best effect.

- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, although all children and young people at CAL have SEN.

6.2 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) ensure that long term planning is in place for all courses.

Curriculum design and planning are undertaken at a number of levels – whole school, curriculum area, subject department, group and individual teacher.

- Individual Provision Plans
- Curriculum Overviews
- Termly Schemes of Work – subject and groups
- Policies – whole school

All curriculum documents are made available to staff after being monitored and reviewed by the SLT.

Cross curriculum links are encouraged across the curriculum.

The need for progression, continuity and coherence applies between years and key stages. Attainment targets and programmes of study within the key stages help ensure progression, continuity, and coherence.

Formative and Summative Assessment enables the school to identify and respond to individual needs. Summative assessment is carried out across the school by Hodder Assessment & GL Assessment, where the results are compared to all other students of the same age, thus providing a clear explanation of where our students are currently operating, but also providing guidance to inform the teachers planning for each individual student.

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

- More able students
- Students with low prior attainment
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Students with SEND
- Students with English as an additional language (EAL)

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

Teachers will also take account of the needs of students whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help students to develop their English, and to support students to take part in all subjects. This is supported by our Speech and Language therapist.



7. Teaching, Learning and Assessment (See Assessment and Records Policy)

The curriculum for both teacher and pupil are composed of experiences organised to promote and foster progressive development. A variety and range of teaching approaches should be employed to achieve the objectives.

There are opportunities to teach and learn as a whole class, in small groups and individually, with students taking degrees of responsibility for their own learning.

It is important that teaching consistently develops knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes. All factors influencing learning should be considered and an appropriate learning environment established.

The organisation of learning includes considering the appropriateness of pupil-centred approaches, differentiated work, experiential learning, problem-solving approaches and cross-curricular, modular or subject specific teaching.

7.1. Assessment

Assessment is central to effective teaching and learning, and the school altered the process from that of National Curriculum levels to a 'Graduated Approach'. (See Assessment and Records Policy.)

However:

- Formative assessment should enhance the learner's motivation, with students being involved in evaluating their learning.
- An effective assessment system will give reliable information to parents about how their child is performing, termly.
- Schemes of work should be written termly, using formative assessment from students and internal assessment (CAL graduated Assessment) information to raise achievement.
- Assessment practice should be shared with and understood by students and parents.
- Assessments should always acknowledge and praise what a student has done well and then offer a suggestion regarding how the next piece of work can be made even better.
- Annual summative assessment will compare the student's progress with others of the same age and provide information to teaching staff for planning progression.



- Effective assessment will help drive improvement for both students and teachers, and enable teachers to establish areas of the curriculum that students may be experiencing difficulty with
- Ensure that the school is keeping abreast of best practice and innovation.

7.2 Assessment Principles DfE April 2014

Formative assessment enables the school to report to other teachers within the school during transition periods, but also when a student moves to another school, concerning their aptitude and level of working. It provides clear information about a pupil, their strengths and weaknesses and their overall progress.

The data provided from assessment, both formative and summative, will enable the school to use attainment and progress data to monitor teacher performance and to offer additional support where necessary.

However, it has been recognised by the school that it is difficult in some cases to 'adequately recognise the small steps of progress made by pupils with SEN' (DfE, Assessment Without Levels, 2018), with the result that social and emotional levels are now assessed as part of the curriculum.

7.3 Progress Tracking.

At CAL we support sound internal record-keeping arrangements, which support the monitoring of individual pupil progress. This progress is shown through 'whole school tracking' – which includes termly grades and assessment results.

The school provides full termly written reports to parents; there are also three teacher – parent conferences each year.

Additionally, teachers are happy to discuss pupil performance/assessment at other times when requested by parents. The Head of School operates an 'Open door' policy, for both students and parents alike.

8. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Curriculum Co-ordinator, the Head of School and Governance.

9. Linked Policies

- Assessment and Records Policy
- SEN Information report
- Equality opportunities policy
- SMSC policy



- PSHE/RSE policy