



Curriculum Policy

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Action	Name	Date
Created by	Aaron Mulhern	February 2023
Reviewed by	Lisa Tharpe	March 2023
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Curriculum Policy – Skeleton Draft

- ***The Ian Mikardo High School Curriculum:***

Ian Mikardo High School is a specialist academy pioneering the way in which our society approaches the education of our most vulnerable young people. We put the individual at the centre of what we do, adapting our curriculum according to their social, emotional and educational needs. We are widely respected as leaders in SEN and trauma-informed practice, and are passionate about continually evolving to empower each and every one of our students.

Where we differ from some other special schools is our provision of not only tailored academic education, but our focus on the practical life, vocational and social skills which are the key to ensuring that our students leave here with the tools they need to be fulfilled and productive in all aspects of their lives.

- ***Holistic approach***

The flexibility and breadth of our curriculum allows every student to excel according to what inspires and motivates them. The strictures of a mainstream education have proved alienating and ill-suited to the specialist needs of our students. At IMHS, we believe in adventuring beyond the conventions of the classroom, opening up the wider world along the way.

We strike a balance between formal class-based learning and practical exercises away from desks. We revel in the opportunity to be creative, innovative, and imaginative. Preparing our students to live independently as healthy, happy, fulfilled adults is the driving force behind all that we do.

- ***Curriculum Intent:***

‘Equipping learners with the social, emotional and educational skills to live fulfilled lives at home, in the workplace and within the community’.

Key Curriculum Areas:

Our curriculum comprises three areas: ‘My Foundation’, ‘My Being’ and ‘Our World’.

Each area is designed to develop analytical, social and practical skills. Each area offers the opportunity to work towards qualifications. Each area addresses an essential aspect of an individual’s existence, both in relation to themselves and to the wider community and our curricular approach is informed by Bronfenbrenner’s model of Childhood Development.

No area is entirely discrete, as we combine the skills of our Education colleagues thoughtfully to explore and implement cross-curricular themes and skills to provide wider contexts to learning and also through devised projects that allow students to work together whilst continuing to work on the areas and interests best suited to them.

- ***Educating the Whole Child***

The curriculum at Ian Mikardo is a *'Needs Based, Skills Focused and Learner Centred'* model, focused on the development of skills and personal attributes that combine to *'equip learners with the social, emotional and educational skills to live fulfilled lives at home, in the workplace and within the community'*.

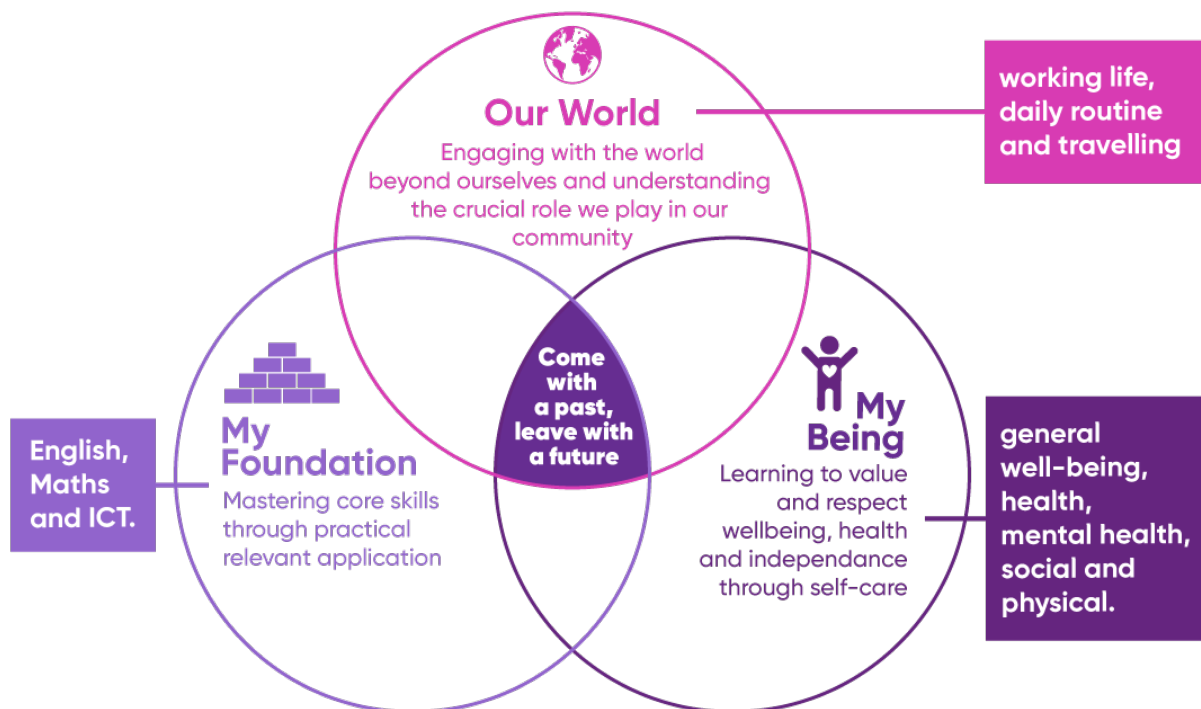
Our curricular approach is based on the principles of Bronfenbrenner's 'Bio-ecological Model of Child Development'. The model describes human development as a transactional process through which growth is influenced by interactions with various aspects and 'spheres' of the environment.

Bronfenbrenner's model encourages us to consider how the interaction between the individual and their environment shapes and moulds perceptions, attitudes and aspirations, as they progress through the developmental phases of their lives.

As well as the key subjects of English, Science and Maths, we provide opportunities for our students to gain qualifications in ICT, Hair & Beauty, Food and Nutrition, Science, Sports Leadership, Art and Music amongst others.

The Social Curriculum is a further essential element of our developmental model and is the mechanism through which the basis of our relational model is realised.

2. CURRICULUM AREAS:



- **Curriculum areas:**
- **‘My Foundation’** – Encompassing English, Mathematics and IT. A focus on mastering core skills through practical relevant application.
- **‘My Being’** – Encompassing PE, PSHE, Salon. A focus on learning to value and respect wellbeing, health and independence through self-care
- **‘Our World’** – Encompassing Humanities, Science, Media, Art. A focus on engaging with the world beyond ourselves and understanding the crucial role we play in our community
- **Thematic Approach:**

3. Curricular Themes

At Ian Mikardo, we believe that student’s learn best when they find their learning relevant and meaningful. In order to contextualise subject specific skills and content for students, learning takes place through overarching, cross-curricular termly themes.

These themes provide opportunities for Scenario Based Assessment and real world application of skills and knowledge. This increases the relevance of learning for the young people and further prepares them for the world beyond school. The Curricular Themes support the inculcation of British Values of Democracy, The Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Faiths and Beliefs into our curriculum, further supported through delivery of our Tutorial Curriculum.

The Curriculum Themes include:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing (Autumn Term 1)
- Community and Diversity (Autumn Term 2)
- Justice and Law (Spring Term 1)
- Environment (Spring Term 2)
- Financial Health and Security (Summer Term 1)
- Enjoy, Explore and Achieve (Summer Term 2)

Teachers at Ian Mikardo are required to link the content of their learning and syllabus, to the theme for each term. Teachers are required to contextualise and demonstrate the relevance of learning to the wider community, personal and societal aspects influencing and impacting on students’ lives.

The curricular themes are focused on aspects particularly relevant to students’ wider experiences and help them to connect how their education is preparing them for adulthood, allowing them to approach their emerging world with confidence.

- Teachers must link the subject content of their learning to the curricular theme in a variety of ways, both conspicuously through directly linked lessons and through more implicit links, drawing attention to benefits of education to participating as valuable members of their communities and engagement with society as a whole.

Skills:

Skills Focus:

Each student at Ian Mikardo High School has an Educational Health Care Plan, which outlines the range of specific and complex needs each student has. Many of these complex needs have led to significant difficulties in students developing the core skills necessary for successful learning.

Each term's learning is underpinned by a particular '*skills focus*', through which there are opportunities for students to focus on a particular skill for learning. The '*skills focus*' is intended to highlight the relevance of each particular skill, however is not intended to be taught to exclusion of other learning skills. An example of this may be 'No pens day Wednesday' when focusing on Speaking & Listening.

Implementation & Responsibilities:

- Teachers must include opportunities for skill development and assessment as part of their curriculum planning and lesson delivery.

The '*skills focus*' assists us in taking a truly holistic approach to the curriculum. Through the explicit teaching, modelling and measuring of transferrable skills as a termly focus, staff are able to build student capacity to demonstrate specific skills for learning.

Skills for Learning:

- Speaking and Listening (Autumn Term 1)
- Resilience (Autumn Term 2)
- Extended Writing (Spring Term 1)
- Collaboration & Group Work (Spring Term 2)
- Digital Literacy (Summer Term 1)
- Creativity, Imagination & problem solving (Summer Term 2)

The concentrated nature of our skills focus areas helps students to develop confidence in each of these essential areas, and gives them ample opportunity to acquire the skills that will enable them to confidently access further education and employment in due course.

5. Careers

- **Careers: Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers**

Ian Mikardo is a member of the Careers Enterprise Company and provides an excellent standard of careers education. The school has successfully established practices to support implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks and our commitment to delivering high quality careers development and support for our students is infused throughout our curriculum.

Implementation & Responsibilities:

- The Sixth Form & Post Sixteen Leader will provide regular training and updates relevant to careers education and learning for education colleagues.
- All teachers must link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways and establish conspicuous links between the learning taking place within the classroom and its application/relevance to careers pathways.
- Teachers must include links to careers and employment opportunities within planning documents and include conspicuous links for students to explore opportunities throughout the academic year.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for students in KS4 to access careers sessions provided by professionals related to their area of study either by accessing the school site or through educational visits.

(Links with Sixth Form Curriculum Specification)

6. Cultural Capital

- ***Building Cultural Capital***

Building on Students' cultural capital involves exposing them to knowledge, which is outside of their daily experiences and enriches their understanding and appreciation of the wider aspects of the human experience. Practitioners and teachers often teach about aspects of life, which children have not directly experienced. The IMHS curriculum seeks to widen experiences for our students, ensuring our students are exposed to as many enriching, experiential opportunities in their lives as possible.

Cultural Capital has many descriptions, however it is described by Ofsted as;

'The essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said, and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement', (Ofsted Inspection Framework, 2019)

- ***Implementation & Responsibilities:***

All subject Teachers at IMHS must plan and deliver at least one educational experience beyond the classroom. This may include theatre visits, museum experiences, educational experiences facilitated onsite through external partners or excursions/activities that directly expand the horizon of experience for the students of Ian Mikardo High School.

- Teachers must ensure that such experiences are made available to as many students as is reasonable or possible, however we realise that particular experiences may only be available to specific groups for particular reasons. The subject leaders will liaise with colleagues and leadership to ensure that all students have access to a variety of cultural experiences throughout the academic year.

7. Social Curriculum

The Ian Mikardo Social Curriculum is fundamental to our model of practice and is the space in which we come together as a community to explore our talents, share our experiences and learn through sharing and doing things together.

Central to our ethos at IMHS is the development of social, emotional and mental health skills that promote resilience and wellbeing within our community. The Social Curriculum provides a schedule of self-select activities that encourage students to engage with a variety of experiences including music production, Chess & Board Games, Digital Media, Salon Skills, Reading Club, Draw & Talk amongst other activities including Forrest School and the Green Wood Guild.

(Links to Social Curriculum Policy)

Implementation:

At Ian Mikardo we realise that not all of our students have benefitted from stability in terms of family or school life in their early years of education and development.

As such, we understand that our role as educators requires us to teach, model and explain the social skills and expectations that will be required of our students as they progress towards increasing participation within their communities, relationships and further education and employment.

This teaching begins each morning and throughout the day, as the students arrive for Breakfast & the morning Social Curriculum. Staff members model pro-social behaviours, appropriate communication, demonstrate positive and humorous attitudes, positive body language and interactions with others.

We understand from Social and Situated Learning Theory (*Bandura, 1977. Lave, 1991*), how important modelling is for the development of appropriate social behaviours among children and young people, providing a framework and reference point that supports the fostering and maintenance of positive relationships with individuals and within groups.

The Social Curriculum is the vehicle through which we encourage students to share food appropriately, to take turns, to demonstrate empathy, to practice communication, speech & language skills, to form meaningful relationships, to engage with restorative processes and conflict resolution and ultimately to feel connection, meaning and purpose as part of a caring and nurturing learning community.

Assessment:

The social, emotional and mental health of students at Ian Mikardo is a high priority and we assess this through the implementation of our '*Social Curriculum Assessment Framework (SCAF)*'. The SCAF is the tool that allows us to track and monitor student SEMH progress over time and is recorded three times a year at the end of each full term. The SCAF has been developed specifically for use at Ian Mikardo and represents three key areas; Relationships, Interpersonal Skills & Concept of Self.

Through the process of goal setting at the beginning of the academic year, consideration of learner profiles and intelligent observation from staff and contributions from allied professional colleagues, students receive support to develop a repertoire of skills specific to their emerging needs.

Implementation & Responsibilities:

Social Curriculum activities are scheduled sessions and as such, teachers are required to plan, facilitate and deliver activities as part of their teaching load and as directed by the Head Teacher and delegated Senior Leaders.

- All staff must ensure that they take opportunities to share breakfast and lunch with students, using the opportunity to facilitate engaging conversations and model appropriate manners for sharing food.
- Staff allocated to particular activities must ensure that they are on time and prepared for the arrival of students to the session. Resources and apparatus for the session must be prepared and available with staff focused on engaging the students and encouraging of participation.
- Social Curriculum sessions carry the same expectations for practice and behaviour as academic curriculum lessons. Staff must be attentive in supporting students to be kind and tolerant towards others and to uphold the high standards as expressed in the school Behaviour and Discipline policy.
- Staff must be 'present' and actively engaged during Social Curriculum sessions, understanding that their duties are not simply supervisory.
- Tutors & Co-Tutors must agree and set Social Curriculum Goals with students at the beginning of the academic year and are responsible for saving these goals to the student's MIS profile and sharing with students.
- Tutors & Co-Tutors are responsible for assessing and recording the SCAF score for their students at the end of each full term.
- All staff are required to record student progress using the multi-media 'Earwig Academic' app. Tutors are responsible for ensuring that records of progress are updated regularly and appropriately.

8. Tutor Curriculum

- *Rationale and purpose*

Tutor time is an invaluable part of the day for all students, accounting for 2.5 hours of weekly timetabled sessions.

As a result, the role of the Form Tutor and Tutorial Time at Ian Mikardo, represents the perfect opportunity for enrichment, inculcating deeper understanding of culturally relevant issues and British Values into our curriculum.

The Tutor Curriculum is furthermore an opportunity to explore and discuss matters related to emotional wellbeing and mental health, topics of significant relevance to our learning community.

- **The Tutor Curriculum schedule:**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
'Our Thoughts'	'Our Society'	'Our World'	'Our Progress'!	'Our Fun'
Thought for the week - MHWB	SMSC & British Values <small>(Linked to theme & Skills Focus)</small>	Current Affairs	Learning Conversations - Careers	Trivia, Games & Puzzles
<i>Tutorial Sessions are utilised for Reading & Phonics interventions</i>				

- ***Encouraging Connections between Ourselves and Our World***

Our philosophy of providing an holistic education and supporting the development of our students through our relational model, is implemented through our nurturing approach during tutor time and our focus on promoting supportive group dynamics and enriching our students' appreciation of their community and society in general.

The Tutor Time Curriculum is designed to facilitate engagement with each other, relevant cultural and topical issues and promoting self-care and responsibility.

- ***Responsibilities of the Tutor:***
- Tutors must provide a supportive and caring atmosphere within their classroom and have intimate, up to date knowledge of the family structures, friendships, specific needs and aspirations of individual students in their groups.
- Tutors must individualise the session resources and implement the structured programme of learning to support students' understanding of SMSC issues, understanding of fundamental British Values, engagement and appreciation of cultural themes and engagement with societal issues/current affairs. Tutors know their groups best and are responsible for the pitch and differentiation of topics and learning activities within their groups.

9. Sequencing

- *Curriculum Planning & Sequencing*

The Ian Mikardo curriculum has been carefully sequenced so that rather than present students with random lists of stuff to be learnt, we have examined the pedagogical links between knowledge and concepts, providing students with an expandable portmanteau which enables them both to draw on prior knowledge, include new knowledge and seek further knowledge.

The identification and explicit teaching of concepts supports students to make rich connections and will support them in identifying new concepts over time.

Implementation & Responsibilities:

- Teachers must update the 'sequencing document' annually, ensuring that they have sequenced the knowledge and concepts to be learned logically and coherently both within year groups and across Key Stages.
- Teachers must develop 'curriculum maps' that will be published to parents and on the school website for the perusal of external partners or those interested in learning about subject specificities of the Ian Mikardo Curriculum.

10. Mental Health & Well-being

There are many ways that information about mental health and wellbeing is integrated across the curriculum and throughout our culture at Ian Mikardo and it is important for us to make sure that students have regular opportunities to talk openly about mental health and their emotional well-being. The Ian Mikardo Curriculum includes scheduled Mental Health & Well-being sessions, delivered by the Whole School Mental Health Lead and our Mental Health & Well-being Practitioner.

We have implemented a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, meaning that we are well placed to respond to the individual needs of our community and have created a culture that supports emotional wellbeing and resilience within their setting.

We teach our students about the importance of mental health, how to talk about their feelings and where and how to seek help when needed.

The Mental Health & Well-being sessions support our students through the pastiche that evolves from the emotional challenges for young people co-existing within peer groups. The development of resilience, tolerance and empathy are a key focus, through which we support our students to navigate their often complex worlds, seeing themselves in others and acting with kindness and care as a result.

The themes covered in the Mental Health & Well-being Curriculum include:

- *Physical health and mental wellbeing*

Healthy eating - linking body & mind.

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco - the impact drug use can have on mental health.

Health and prevention - the importance of sleep hygiene to mental wellbeing.

The changing adolescent body - emotional changes experienced as 23 grow

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Next review: March 2024

- ***Relationships***

Families and people who care for me – what is a healthy family life and how to ask for help if family life is making them feel unhappy or unsafe.

Caring friendships - how to create and maintain healthy friendships and resolve conflicts/issues with friends

Respectful relationships - the importance of respecting others even if they come from different backgrounds

Bullying – what are the various forms of bullying and how do I seek help when I see it or feel it

Online relationships and Social media – the risks of talking to people on the internet, viewing harmful content online, and the impact of viewing pornography

Being safe - teaches students about consent, boundaries and the laws around this

Intimate and sexual relationships - developing healthy intimate relationships, and identifying and managing sexual pressure or sexually problematic behaviour

11. Educational Trips & Learning beyond the Classroom

Educational trips and visits are an integral element of the school curriculum that make learning exciting, interesting and meaningful.

The students at Ian Mikardo benefit greatly from learning opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom and into the outdoors. The benefits of such learning experiences are numerous, with social and educational developments being woven together in a way that is difficult to achieve in the classroom environment.

Subject leaders and teachers are expected to plan and deliver one trip per year group per academic year.

Please read the 'Educational Trips Planning' document available in the staff shared area.