

Teaching & Learning Policy

St Piers School



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Introduction

St Piers School is a non-maintained Residential Special School, offering both residential and day provision for young people aged 5-19 primarily with Severe Learning Difficulties, Epilepsy, Autism and/or other neurological conditions and associated special educational needs and disabilities. Many of our students have additional needs, requiring complex physical and medical support. This is provided by a high-quality multi-disciplinary team

We believe our role in educating Students is more than just following a curriculum but providing a rich, supportive and fun learning environment which enables the students to develop their skills and independence and flourish as young adults. We understand and recognise that teaching is a tool to develop effective communication skills, a love of learning, a preparation for the study of qualifications and preparation for adulthood. Developing a positive sense of self is at the heart of all teaching and learning opportunities. We believe in the concept of love *of and for* learning and in the idea of working as a professional and inclusive learning community to support the students to achieve their very best, no matter what their starting points may be.

Vision, Values and Aims of St Piers School

At St Piers our vision is - "Reaching new heights, overcoming barriers, enabling learning and independence". We aim to do this through our school values, which are 'To Be Kind', 'To Empower' and 'To Inspire.'

Aims:

- *To Deliver an inclusive, innovative and ambitious **learning provision***
- *To Promote a culture of **empathy, dignity, respect and resilience** where **individuality** is valued*
- *To Foster effective partnerships with parents, external services and the **wider community** to support **successful transition and integration into society***
- *To Develop personal and meaningful learning opportunities where all students are encouraged to **reach their potential** through a **multidisciplinary approach***
- *To Empower students to develop their confidence, self-esteem and an **awareness of their own abilities** by providing a **safe and supportive environment***

Key Principles of Teaching and Learning at St Piers:

Teaching and learning at St Piers school is 'child-centred' meaning that each element of classroom practice is designed with an understanding of how each of our students learn as individuals at its heart. To ensure that all Students are able to access a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum their individual additional difficulties will need to be taken into account. This will include considering: the learning environment, planning, teaching and learning opportunities.

What makes effective Teaching

'Quality of Instruction. This includes effective questioning and the use of assessment by teachers. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely and progressively introducing new learning (scaffolding) are also found to improve attainment.' (From The Sutton Trust Report October 2014)

We ensure that Students in our setting are able to progress through a personalised curriculum which combines effective teaching practice, therapeutic approaches to learning, academic achievement and social and emotional development.

Our Learning Principles:

We have agreed on **five basic principles** of teaching underpinned by **Staff Engagement and Modelling**.

Medium Term plan and Long term plans will be required to identify planning of effective and well considered learning sequences across all phases.

Sequencing of Learning	Learning Intentions	Adaptive Practice	Personalised Learning	Assessment of Learning
Tasks are well planned and considered for the needs of all learners. New material is presented in small steps with practice after each step. The amount of material students receive at one time is limited. Explanations are clear, detailed and address misconceptions. Some students need to be prepared for the next learning sequence.	Staff are clear about the learning intentions for every lesson. Pupil are challenged to have high expectations about what they can achieve. Intended learning is fun, creative and inspiring and supports students in all levels of their development.	Resources are adapted and relevant to the learning intentions. Students are involved in the learning process. Students are given time to practice and apply what they are learning so they can improve their knowledge. Learning sequences may be adapted to support pupil's needs at that moment.	Classroom environments are well organised to provide effective learning, comfort and safety of students. Learning supports and promotes pupil independence. Learning, either inside or outside the classroom environment encourages creativity and pupil engagement.	Through effective questioning, where possible, students are encouraged to think about their learning. Effective questioning is a key element of differentiation. Progress towards EHCP outcomes are monitored. Feedback timely and effective. Effectiveness of lessons reviewed.

Staff Engagement and Modelling





We believe in a whole team approach to inspiring and facilitating learning. Inspirational and engaged staff who demonstrate knowledge of students and learning targets. Tasks should be modelled so that students know what to do with their knowledge. Teachers think aloud and provide models of worked problems and answers. Parents communicated are communicated with to inform them of classroom learning.

What this means in practice:

1) Sequence of Learning:

Students learn best when learning activities are well planned and tailored to meet the need of the individual whilst ensuring progress in the short, medium and long term.

There will be evidence in the learning environment of:

-  A clear understanding by the students of the expectations and purpose of activities in which they engage.
-  Teaching that takes account of the need for appropriate scaffolding of tasks, making learning accessible and motivating for Students. This includes the use of learning activities that enthuse Students so that they persevere when faced with difficult problems and are keen to succeed and learn more.
-  A pace of learning that is differentiated and optimised for progress and high-quality outcomes.
-  'Now' and 'next' boards to ensure students understand the sequence of tasks and activities.

2) Learning Intentions:

Students learn best where learning intentions are clear and purposeful, where the teacher uses a range of teaching and learning approaches that are varied to: enthuse, engage and motivate Students to learn and foster curiosity and enthusiasm for learning:

There will be evidence in the learning environment of:

- ✿ Effective explanation and focused learning activities with clear intentions and outcomes.
- ✿ Progress in the students' learning and development in their learning behaviours, social interactions, independence and communication skills.
- ✿ The use of a range of teaching approaches and interventions.
- ✿ The use of a range of strategies and approaches to gain and maintain students' attention.
- ✿ Opportunities for Students to be supported to work alongside and collaboratively with peers.
- ✿ Students enjoying their learning and being motivated to achieve and engage in adult directed tasks for extended periods.
- ✿ Creative teaching and creative learning opportunities.
- ✿ Students following individualised timetables.

3) Adaptive Practice:

Students learn best when the staff working with the child recognise the needs of the individual and are able to adapt their teaching practice accordingly.

There will be evidence in the learning environment of:

- ✿ Students who are motivated to learn through differentiated learning activities-activities that build on their prior learning and issue challenge that is pitched at a level that is achievable when they work hard and try their very best.
- ✿ Clear differentiation and the implementation of a range of approaches.
- ✿ Opportunities for learning independently, in small groups and on a 1:1 basis.
- ✿ Staff adapting the direction and flow of the lesson to maintain pupil's engagement and support in pupil's regulation of behaviour.
- ✿ Teachers responding 'in the moment' to the students' needs and preferences, modifying lessons accordingly to meet the ever changing needs of the students.

4) Personalised Learning:

Students learn best when the learning environment is ordered, the atmosphere is purposeful, and they feel safe and are safe.

There will be evidence in the learning environment of:

- ✿ A flexible class structure in each phase that allows for learning groups to be organised on the basis of need and level of attainment where possible.
- ✿ The learning environment being organised into different areas to meet the needs of individuals (group areas, leisure areas, sensory areas, quiet areas).
- ✿ An atmosphere of mutual respect between adults and Students.
- ✿ Calm and well-ordered teaching environments.
- ✿ Students who feel secure to communicate and act freely, enjoying freedom from bullying related to special educational needs, gender, race and religion or additional diversities.
- ✿ A nurturing environment where all Students feel valued and secure, supporting self-esteem.
- ✿ Students taking risks in their learning and learning from their mistakes.
- ✿ Students engaged and gaining enjoyment from the learning activities.
- ✿ Students' learning outcomes displayed appropriately around the classroom and the school for others to appreciate and admire.
- ✿ Organisation of classroom routines and resources that take into account the needs of individuals.
- ✿ Classroom resources that are accessible and labelled visually to optimise learning opportunities.
- ✿ Exams and accreditations are planned to ensure all individuals are on track to achieving certification in Years 10 and 11 at a level which is appropriate for them. Students are able to work towards certificates for OCR, Functional Skills and Equals qualifications as well as BTEC in Foundation subjects.

5) Assessment of Learning

Students learn best when assessment informs teaching so that there is provision for support, repetition, and extension of learning for each child, at each level of attainment.

There will be evidence in the learning environment of:

- ✿ Students being supported to reflect on their learning and enjoyment in lesson.
- ✿ Frequent feedback from teachers to improve their learning.
- ✿ Students receiving targeted support at the time and level it is required to optimise their learning.
- ✿ Students supporting one another.
- ✿ Where appropriate, independent learning, where Students use previously taught skills to direct their own learning activity.
- ✿ Students have the opportunity to revisit key themes and bodies of knowledge to enable both mastering skills and the embedding into the long-term memory.
- ✿ Consistent language is used to remind students about what they are learning, highlight what the teacher is looking for in terms of learning, and to support those who can reflect in the moment about their learning.

Staff engagement and modelling:

Students learn best when there are strong teams around the learner, as well as links between home and school, and the importance of parental involvement in their students' learning is recognised, valued and developed. The 'Whole team approach' to supporting Students in their learning also includes the whole class team, Occupational health, Psychology and residential staff. Professionals work together as a multi-disciplinary team to further support students' individual needs.

There will be evidence in the learning environment of:

- ✿ Staff modelling learning to the students in the classroom.
- ✿ Staff working collaboratively as a team to ensure consistency of approaches.
- ✿ Multi-agency teams working collaboratively with the school staff to ensure consistency of approaches.
- ✿ Clear and effective lines of communication.
- ✿ Research approaches/interventions evident across the school.
- ✿ Individual education targets being incorporated in to learning.
- ✿ Advice from professionals disseminated and available to relevant staff.
- ✿ Staff trained in specific approaches/interventions.
- ✿ Peer collaboration, role modelling and mentoring.
- ✿ Monitoring and evaluation procedures carried out by members of the SMLT to inform future development.
- ✿ Parents, carers and residential staff being informed of their child's school experiences in a regular basis through home/school books.
- ✿ Parents and carer being regularly informed about what is going on in school via the newsletter.
- ✿ Information being shared with parents and carers at the start of each term which outlines the topics that Students will be studying in school.
- ✿ Parents and carers being fully informed about their child's progress through annual review meetings and termly reports.
- ✿ Parents and carers being helped to support Students in the home.
- ✿ All information given by families being kept in confidence.
- ✿ Parents and carers being supported with behaviour management in the home;
- ✿ Parents and carers being asked their values on the performance of the school.

Learning in a Residential Setting:

Some of our students access a 'Waking Day' curriculum and learning continues in the home environment when students finish school. This can include learning life skills, socialising, interacting with peers, as well as reinforcing school learning. For example, through reading. It is the responsibility of teachers and residential staff to ensure learning continues in the home environment and that staff between the two settings communicate progress made. House Managers and Teachers share joint responsibility for the monitoring of the curriculum and tracking of student progress towards achieving EHCP targets and outcomes.

Behaviour for Learning:

St Piers demonstrates a culture of respect and consistency in approaches to behaviour for learning. Staff are expected to model good practice and support students to self-regulate and manage their behaviour. We understand that some students may not be ready for learning until they have regulated their emotions and behaviour and feel safe and happy. Staff will always adapt their approach to supporting students to learn. Every moment of learning a new skill, communicating with a peer for the first time, achieving a small step towards an EHCP outcome is valued and recognised as key moments of learning in addition to academic learning.

Differentiation/Adaptive Practice:

This is not just through outcome and extension activities but through elements of differentiation in teaching e.g. targeted questioning, the make-up of groups, the level of support given to individual students/groups of students to enable them to learn and achieve. Teachers use data and information on students' EHCP targets and medical details to plan so they respond to the strengths and needs of all students.

Assessment for Learning:

This applies throughout the lesson and at each stage of learning, where possible, teachers use feedback from questioning and assessment tasks to inform teaching and to direct the course of the lesson. Planning backwards, identifying the outcome of the learning ensures assessment towards achieving the outcome can be realised. Developing success criteria, modelling, creating a positive learning environment, promoting independence, providing continuous effective feedback (to staff as well as to students) further impacts on learning.







Person-Centred Approach:

Learning is significant across the school not just for students but for staff also. Working together to identify which learning opportunities will support students best is a learning opportunity for staff to come together and share best practice. Providing opportunities for teachers to observe each other and learn together strengthens subject knowledge, skills and expertise. The use of language for learning ensures the process of learning is explicit across the school.

Professional Learning Community:

We aim to develop the qualities to make our students effective and independent learners. We support our learning to persevere, to develop resilience, to become independent, to be curious, to take risks, to develop an eagerness for learning, to work with others and to understand their own learning. We encourage staff to take ownership of their own professional development and learning and identify further opportunities for growth and development.

The school's senior leaders and middle managers will support both teachers and learners by:

-  Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning
-  Providing a quality CPD programme which is responsive to both the needs of teachers and students
-  Providing opportunities for sharing of good practice both through meetings and INSET sessions and through peer observations
-  Supporting individuals (through coaching and INSET)
-  Through ensuring early career teachers have full access to weekly mentoring and training sessions
-  Ensuring all new staff joining St Piers, whether employed as teacher, learning support assistant or student support worker, are made familiar with the contents of the Teaching and Learning policy.

