

Ambitious College – Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

This policy merges and replaces:

- 112a– Assessment Policy
- 110a – Curriculum Policy
- 116a– Teaching and Learning

It should be read alongside:

- 119a – Remote/Blended Learning

1. Objectives

1.1 Ambitious College is a specialist autism College. Our learners follow a specialised curriculum at broadly age-related expectations. Teaching staff plan learning for the small classes of up to 10 learners. They will be supported by trained Learning and Behaviour Specialists (LaBS) as well as specialist input from the transdisciplinary team consisting of Occupational Therapists (OTs), Speech and Language Therapists (SaLTs) Employment Specialists (ES) and Positive Behaviour Support Specialist (PBSs) (BA's)

1.2 The Ambitious Approach underpins all our thinking and practice. It is an approach to education created by Ambitious about Autism to support young people with autism. It has been developed to provide high-quality education whilst affording dignity, respect, and compassion, in all aspects of our provision, including the consideration of mental health and wellbeing. The Ambitious Approach is based upon a person's indisputable rights to be:

- Treated with dignity and compassion;
- Valued;
- Listened to;
- Supported to have the best quality of life possible;
- Empowered to make choices and decide on how they want to live their life.

We enact our Ambitious Approach and aim to ensure learners have improved quality of life during, and beyond, their time in college through:

- Our Curriculum;
- Curriculum Delivery, including College-Wide Positive Behaviour Support;
- Collaboration.

Dual pillars underpin our work: social and academic progress for all learners. This policy articulates our approach to our academic curriculum.

1.3 Our curriculum and assessment model aims to:

- Prepare learners for their identified destinations post Ambitious college.
- Give learners the opportunity to learn in functional settings and in the community where relevant and possible.
- Skills build and progress through rigorous baseline assessment and target setting.

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- Use ‘Steps for Learning’ to sequence and understand where learners are on their journey towards target achievement.
- Prepare learners to work with greater independence in all areas of their life.
- Support and increase quality of Life for all learners by linking our Quality of Life model to the curriculum.
- Attain accredited achievement, where relevant and meaningful.

1.4 Our curriculum process

- All learners are assessed for a suitable course curriculum during the admissions process.
- When learners first start with Ambitious College they are baselined in all subject areas for their course.
- In the first six weeks of term year one learners are assessed as to the appropriateness of the course and class group they are in.
- Where it is necessary, and after a full TDT consultation, year one learners are moved to more appropriate groups/courses at mid-term in Term 1.
- After the first 6 weeks of assessment, year one learners are set targets which draw on outcomes from their EHC plans, our own baseline assessments and the destination plan (North Star).
- Progress towards targets is evidenced by LaBS and teachers on a weekly basis and reviewed half termly by the TDT through the review and reset process.
- Learners not making expected progress at the half termly review and reset have intervention plans written and recorded on Databridge through the Event Log system.
- Learners are assessed for progress against their baselines on a termly basis and this is recorded on the individual baseline documents.

2. Legislation and guidance

2.1 This 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, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education’s Governance Handbook.

2.2 It also refers to statutory reporting requirements set out in the Education (Learner Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1.

3. Principles

Curriculum and assessment are inextricably linked and are integral parts of the teaching and learning process.

3.1 Curriculum Principles

The term curriculum relates to both the *range* of subjects that are offered at Ambitious College and the *content* delivered within each subject.

In terms of the range, the curriculum is divided subject areas, each of which contributes to the development of the 5 or 10 key skills (academic and personal) in order to be successful in each subject area. We have 4 course curriculums to suit the differing aspirations of our learners: Engagement and Interaction, Maximum Independence, Preparing for Employment and Vocational Studies.

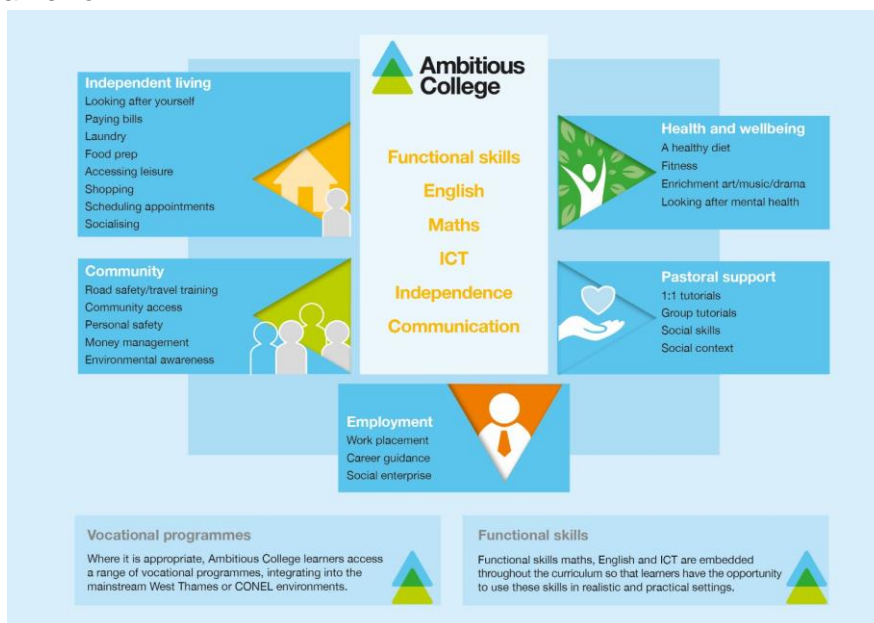
Where appropriate learners will work toward accredited learning in functional skills maths and English.

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Sex and relationship education is addressed at age-appropriate detail through standalone sessions and through the Personal Development curriculum. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the promotion of British values, is addressed via Personal Development sessions also.

In terms of curriculum content, Ambitious College delivers a centrally planned curriculum that builds coherently throughout a learner’s time at college. Teachers are expected to follow this curriculum which is set out in the long-term plans and the curriculum overview documents. Teachers devise individual Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) in order to achieve the learning goals set out in the curriculum overview.

Our Curriculum Framework:



We exist to support young people with autism achieve the life they want. For this to happen, we devise and deliver personalised learning opportunities reflecting the outcomes set out in a young person’s Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The skill levels of our learners are varied and therefore a differentiated offer underpinned by person centred planning and individualised approaches is needed.

Our curriculum offer is framed within the four pathways of the Preparing for Adulthood Agenda:

- Employment.
- Independent Living.
- Better Health.
- Friends, relationships and community.

Regardless of the course a young person enrolls onto, aspects of all of the above will be integrated into the learning week. Functional skills such as English, Maths and ICT and Independence Skills are fostered and embedded throughout the curriculum. Where appropriate we fully support learners to gain qualifications that will further their interests and help them achieve their goals.

Learners are also supported to understand Personal Development Themes via the curriculum during group tutorials, 1:1 tutorials and Personal Development sessions. Personal Development topics include e-safety, friends and relationships, personal safety, saying ‘No’ and feeling safe in College.

Fundamental to our approach to curriculum at Ambitious College is the ability and commitment to adapt delivery to the unique qualities and needs of each learner. This is informed by knowledge of the strengths and difficulties associated with autism in general.

The Ambitious College curriculum is designed to be personalised to build the skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable all learners to be:

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- Successful learners: *who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve. Learners acquire the skills they need to progress to their onward destinations*
- Confident individuals: *who can lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives with appropriate autonomy and independence and.*
- Participative citizens: *who meaningfully participate in their communities*

Our ultimate aim is that our learners enjoy, learn from, and participate appropriately in the world around them whilst at college and ultimately as an autonomous adults, empowered through their education to lead a full and enjoyable life.

Ambitious College provides:

- A rich, relevant, broad and balanced curriculum personalised to meet each learner's needs;
- Teaching and learning approaches and interventions supported by research evidence;
- Teaching and learning approaches and interventions for each learner based on evidence of their progress and learning outcomes;
- Learning strategies and a teaching and learning environment that is enjoyable;
- Planned interventions to overcome potential barriers to learning;
- Opportunities for learners to be involved in the decision making about their learning including choosing their vocational pathways;
- The teaching and learning of functional skills, knowledge and understanding including access to vocational pathways;
- Opportunities for learners to receive accreditation (where appropriate) in vocational areas, areas of interest and Key Functional Skills;
- Planned opportunities to generalise skills, understanding and knowledge to natural situations and settings, such as the home and the community;
- Planned opportunities for local community involvement and participation, featuring accessing colleges, workplaces and local projects run at Ambitious College;
- Planned and supported vocational placements/work experience or community leisure opportunities (where appropriate);
- Preparation for next steps and a life that is as independent and fulfilled as possible.

Ambitious College uses evidence-based practice to identify the unique strengths, needs and learning profile of each learner. We then personalise the college curriculum with an emphasis on developing functional, life-enhancing skills and knowledge; and on teaching and learning appropriate behaviours.

Our curriculum has the flexibility to address the individual and very specific needs of each learner and is characterised by providing learning which is:

- Personalised;
- Specialised;
- Intensive;
- Goal-directed and outcomes focussed;
- Guided by learner performance;
- Evidence -based methods.

Ambitious College strongly supports innovation to increase the effectiveness of its teaching and learning. All innovation in education practice and general autism intervention must have a sound rational basis and be subject to continuous evaluation.

3.2 Teaching and Learning Principles

Ambitious College has high expectations of, and is ambitious for, all its learners in all aspects of college life. We recognise that many learners may have significant gaps in their learning based on a turbulent previous experience in education.

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Learners are encouraged to use Information Communication Technology as a learning tool across the curriculum, including the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices. The Core Curriculum subject statements are broad descriptions of the content of each curriculum area. Learners attend designated sessions in core curriculum subjects and extend and apply these skills through cross-curricular learning and incidental learning opportunities throughout the day.

Assistive technology, led by our dedicated Assistive Technologist is used to enable learners to access and get the most out of the curriculum offer. Learners are tiered, based on their level of assessed need, as follows

Level 0	Grid player recipes, Google translate, alterations to iPad settings (teachers refer)
Level 1	Specialist equipment which is implemented by LaBs (termly check in)
Level 2	Personalised app and resources implemented by LaBs (termly check in)
Level 3	direct support (bi/weekly sessions)

3.2.1 Planning

All planning should be based on prior learning, differentiated to meet all learners' needs and carefully sequenced to lead to progress.

3.2.2 Learners' work

Learners will be encouraged to maintain high standards when it comes to the presentation of their work – this will look different in different subjects.

3.2.3 Feedback

Ambitious College promotes the importance of regular feedback/feedforward to help a learner make progress. This can take many forms including:

- Self and peer assessment (using answers, checklist criteria, key word lists, model examples);
- Teacher led feedback on strengths/areas for development verbally or written;
- Exemplar work shared with the class;
- Analysis of whole class performance to inform future teaching;
- 1-1 verbal feedback during the lesson.

Given the small size of our classes, the latter is expected to form a frequent part of the teachers' feedback repertoire.

3.2.4 The Learning Environment

The classroom should promote effective learning. We expect that all learners will experience consistently high-quality learning environments:

- Displays with information that is helpful for learners on their current topics;
- Quality displays celebrating the learner's work;
- Behaviour prompts and expectations;
- All classrooms will be clean, tidy and uncluttered.

Corridor displays change every term.

3.2.5 Functional Skills

Ambitious College is committed to providing high quality Functional Skills learning to support progress and achievement. This relates to improving the quality of teaching and learning and learning of Functional Skills English and Maths and ICT at the college.

Ambitious College believe that Functional Skills are important to educational and personal development for learners because they are:

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- Essential for individuals to function in everyday life, work, leisure and education.
- Necessary in developing a commitment to lifelong learning to enhance the lives of individuals, improve employability in a changing labour market and to create the skills that our economy and employers need.
- Help towards meeting the Government’s drive for improvements in the maths and English skills of all learners.

Successful delivery of Functional Skills is achieved through having

- A comprehensive baseline and initial assessment process;
- A co-ordinated approach;
- Defined support system (managerial, resources, learner support, staff development)
- Procedures for initial, formative and summative assessment and the review and monitoring of learners’ progress;
- Effective internal verification and moderation;
- Procedures for sharing good practice;
- Standards set by the assessment, moderation and external examination process;
- Quality assurance processes by external awarding bodies (NCFE/OCN)
- Comprehensive continuous quality assurance processes in place.

All learners will have an initial assessment of their current level of English and Maths. The completion of this initial assessment and diagnostic assessment will ensure that each learner’s current levels of skills will be identified and will allow us to monitor progress

Learners working at Entry 1 and above will use the online diagnostic and initial assessment tool Skills Forward so teachers gain a robust understanding of their levels and areas for development. Learners who are Pre-Entry will have their key skills in maths and English baselined and reviewed termly.

- Learners for whom it is appropriate, who have not achieved GCSE Grade A – C in English or Maths will be given the opportunity to complete a programme of study that leads to them acquiring an appropriate Functional Skill, GCSE qualification or other steppingstone qualification.
- All learners will have access to appropriately trained and qualified Functional Skills teachers.
- Wherever possible, the teaching and learning of Functional Skills should be delivered in the context of the learner’s course and/or individual needs.
- Teachers need to plan delivery and assessment of Functional Skills according to the needs of their learners.

The Quality Assurance of Functional Skills will be through Ambitious College’s standard procedures, such as Course Review, Standardisation and Evaluation and Observation of Teaching and learning and Learning and the Awarding Bodies external moderation process.

3.3 Principles of assessment

In the creation of this assessment, tracking and reporting system, we intend to create a system that:

- Is functional for small cohorts;
- Is in line with current educational thinking/research;
- Is accurate (or honest about what it can’t be) and has internal integrity so that when learners complete accredited assessments then the outcome is predictable/coherent;
- Is sustainable (workload);
- Produces information that makes sense/useful to a range of stakeholders. Each stakeholder has different ways they engage with the system/information and different priorities;
- Uses a range of assessment tools (bespoke assessments on a case-by-case basis e.g. descriptive functional assessment, PBS Quality of Life Questionnaire)) to provide a comprehensive baseline of barriers to learning which will inform learners’ CRW (Communication, Regulation and Wellbeing) Passports.

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4. Assessment approach

Initial Assessment, in the form of baselines, are conducted for all learners in all subjects in the first six weeks of a learner's time at college. These are then reviewed each term for progress.

Formative Assessment is conducted throughout the teaching week and is individualised by teachers appropriate to their learners needs.

Summative assessment takes the form of accredited examinations where appropriate.

Learners have EHCP, which outline their aspirations, outcomes, needs and support. We also embed these EHCP targets within our curriculum delivery to ensure that the learners' educational needs are at the centre of our curriculum offer. They form the basis of the learners' Personalised learning Plan . Progress is regularly and comprehensively monitored, evaluated and reported. We tailor the courses of the college to match the individual learner, and we also measure whether the approach is working through auditing and consistent ongoing review and resetting. This helps to ensure that learners make the best progress they can. Learners have access to a range of qualifications and accreditation depending on their interest and desired outcomes. We also use non-accredited learning and quality assure this through a robust RARPA process.

5. Roles and Responsibilities, including monitoring:

	Curriculum	Teaching and learning	Assessment
Governing Body	Oversee that a robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities, which are ambitious, complies to its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes Functional English and maths, RSE and Personal Development and enough teaching time is provided for learners to cover the requirements of the funding agreement.	<p>Ensure proper provision is made for Ambitious college learners with their special educational needs and range of abilities.</p> <p>Monitors the improvement of T&L via the SAR and implementation of the QIP</p> <p>Carry out focus visits to observe T&L in practise.</p> <p>Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively</p> <p>Monitor learner attainment</p> <p>Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote outstanding quality teaching</p>	<p>Be familiar with, and ensure implementation of, statutory assessment systems as well as how the college's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all learners</p> <p>Hold college leaders to account for improving learner and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data</p>
Head of College	<p>Ensure that all subjects which the college chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the overall aims of the college</p> <p>Ensure the amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board</p> <p>Involve the governing board in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum</p> <p>Ensure Proper provision is in place for learners with different abilities and needs.</p>	<p>Ensure that the college buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning</p>	<p>Ensure that the policy is adhered to</p> <p>Ensure the college's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements</p> <p>Report to governors on all key aspects of learner progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years</p>

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Assistant Principal for curriculum	Review and update this policy annually. Ensure the policy is adhered to. Manage requests to withdraw young person from curriculum subjects, where appropriate	Lead the observation processes. Review and update "Ambitious Approach" Organise the sharing of termly reports with parents and parents' evenings. Ensure a high quality CPD provision for all aspects of C,L,T&A is in place.	Monitor standards in core subjects Analyse learner progress and attainment, including individual learners and specific groups Prioritise key actions to address underachievement
Wider Leadership Team/Subject Leads	Ensure that long term planning and medium term curriculum overviews are in place. Lead the review and adaptation of these documents.	Undertake regular supportive, ungraded observations.	Ensure that high quality summative assessments are in place. Monitor that formative assessment is taking place. Analyse summative assessment data and input into the college review process.
Teachers	Follow the centralised curriculum. Participate in the review and adaptation the centralised curriculum.	Deliver excellent, well planned engaging lessons that support progress. Respond to observation of T&L feedback and proactively improve practice.	Follow the assessment procedures outlined in this policy
Parents	Ensure their young person has the best attendance possible Inform the college if there are matters outside of college that may affect a young person's performance or behaviour Promote a positive attitude towards college and learning Fulfil the requirements set out in the home/college agreement.		

6. Continuing Professional Development

Ambitious College is a research-engaged college.

- Senior and middle leaders are expected to engage with the developments in assessment through reading widely (books, blogs), attending conferences and CPD opportunities and then curate the key findings for teachers. Teachers are encouraged to be equally proactive in developing their understanding of assessment.
- The overall responsibility for the quality of CPD is with the Head of College.

7. Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all learners, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of learners' special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all learners. However, this should account for the amount of effort the learner puts in as well as the outcomes achieved.

For learners working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to learner starting points and take this into account alongside the nature of learners' learning difficulties.

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8. Learner Voice and Participation

Our learners are the centre of their own learning journeys, and it is crucial we consider and act upon their wishes, thoughts and feelings at all times. Learners are involved in decisions about their learning, support and future. Their voices and opinions are valued. We continuously invest skills and resource in enabling learner participation in a variety of ways. All learners inputted into a learner charter which sets out expectations of the learners at college. We have a learner council that inputs into the curriculum, assistive communication technology, learner surveys, interest assessments, suggestion box and a range of dynamic and ongoing practice-based ways in which to receive learner feedback. Resulting from learner input changes can be made within the college and the curriculum should reflect the aspirations, interests and supported life journey of our learners. We also have a learner charter produced by the young people at our College which sets out what we need to all do to keep ourselves and others safe.

We also recognise the enormous importance of working together with families to ensure that the partnership between college and home works for the learner to plan for the future.

8.6 'North Star' and Destination Planning

We are clear that from the moment learners come to Ambitious College we seek to identify and target positive destinations. In conjunction with learners, parents/carers and other stake holders we identify a North Star for each young person. This document focusses in on what the learner wants to gain from being at Ambitious college and where they see themselves post College. The Transdisciplinary Team then set targets that both draw from baseline and work towards North Star goals. With this approach we seek to set meaningful targets from the outset that give the learners the skills they need to thrive and achieve their desired outcomes post College.

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