

# PRESFIELD HIGH SCHOOL & SPECIALIST COLLEGE



## TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

**Date Ratified:** 14th January 2026

**Date for review:** 14th January 2027

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "T. Smith", written over a faint horizontal line.

**Chair of Governors**

“The quality of learning in all its forms is the most important aspect of the school and the quality of teaching is one of the most important factors contributing to this”.

### **Rationale**

Presfield High School and Specialist College is a maintained high school that caters for students with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) aged between 11 and 19. Everything that we do in the school takes account of our students needs in relation to being on the spectrum.

“Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others. Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people.

If you are autistic, you are autistic for life; autism is not an illness or disease and cannot be 'cured'. Often people feel being autistic is a fundamental aspect of their identity. Autism is a spectrum condition. All autistic people share certain difficulties, but being autistic will affect them in different ways. Some autistic people also have learning disabilities, mental health issues or other conditions, meaning people need different levels of support. All people on the autism spectrum learn and develop. With the right sort of support, all can be helped to live a more fulfilling life of their own choosing.” (<http://www.autism.org.uk/card>).

All staff are trained in and have an understanding of Autism and are equipped to work out and understand why children behave in the way that they do. Additionally, all staff take note of how each child responds to their autism so that we can take an individual approach that will suit each child.

All staff share a responsibility to contribute to the delivery of the broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum we offer. In addition they individually have a responsibility to strive to deliver lessons where the teaching and learning is of the highest quality and where the learning needs of all pupils are met.

### **Aims of Teaching and Learning**

At Presfield we aim to develop the whole young person through successful teaching and learning enabling them to become lifelong learners and achieve their highest level of independence. We also believe the notion that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun.

Through our teaching we equip our students with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives. We also recognise the vast opportunities available for learning outside the curriculum and strive to provide opportunities for our young people to achieve and develop in all situations.

At Presfield staff are fully aware of the strong link between teaching and learning and understand that pupils can only achieve well if the quality of teaching is high.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- raise levels of attainment for all pupils, enabling them to achieve their personal best
- develop confident and enquiring learners who are able to make informed choices.
- make learning an enjoyable experience
- build on the pupils' natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning
- promote self-esteem and self confidence
- involve and stimulate pupils through active, multi-sensory learning
- set achievable goals and have high expectations for all pupils
- provide appropriate support
- provide opportunities for pupils to apply acquired skills, knowledge and understanding in new contexts
- create a climate of praise and positive reinforcement which enables pupils to experience success and feel a sense of achievement

### **The Curriculum**

At Presfield High School we teach the National Curriculum offering a range of qualifications from Entry Level through to GCSE's. We have introduced an AS Level in Art and Cambridge Technicals Level 3 Extended Certificate in Digital Media.

We also believe our 'Social Curriculum' is invaluable to our students progress, this is supported and informed by the Autism Education Trust (AET) targets, utilising show progress to track and analyse progress. We provide a bespoke curriculum tailored to ensure we meet the individual needs and aspirations of all our students.

Please look at the curriculum policy for more information.

### **ASC specific approaches to teaching and learning**

Presfield High School seeks to create, enhance and embed inclusivity in all areas of its work, and in particular promotes the full inclusion of students with ASC in society.

- We want to enable full social inclusion by providing a social and academic curriculum that is tailored to meet the needs and strengths of each pupil, enabling them to meet their full academic potential increasing their employability whilst also helping students to address their impairments and gain social understanding.
- We want to equip students with the skills, knowledge and understanding required to live economically successful lives allowing them to be part of and contribute to the community and society through a variety of pathways; whether through volunteering, study or employment.

- We want to ensure that students develop self-acceptance and self-awareness, knowing their own strengths and areas of need, encouraging them to show determination and resilience in addition to a tolerance for others.
- We want this to include developing skills, knowledge in the area of social understanding, social interaction, social communication and flexibility of thought as well as learning about themselves, their feelings and developing coping strategies. To gain an understanding of how they may be seen by neuro-typical people. To learn about their own sensory needs and perceptions.
- We want our learners to feel safe, confident, valued, empowered and listened to. We want them to respect themselves and others and the world we live in.
- We want our environment to reflect the needs of our students and celebrate their successes.
- We offer learning experiences that are motivating and challenging that help prepare the pupil for life. We do this through different vehicles such as Attention Autism in order to ensure that all of our students receive outstanding learning opportunities.
- We want our learning opportunities to be creative, stimulating and inclusive to engage our students, allowing each individual to fulfil their potential whilst promoting lifelong learning.
- We want our students to be able to understand and manage their own emotions and feelings by developing individual strategies, communicating effectively and appropriately.
- We promote wellbeing helping students to understand how to keep themselves mentally and physically well.
- We want our students to know how to keep themselves safe and manage risk, knowing when and how to seek help where necessary.
- We want our students to leave us as confident and competent communicators, able to take their place in society as considerate and responsible young employable adults.

Presfield High School has an eclectic approach to teaching, using a range of programmes and interventions which are proven and have evidence of effectiveness behind them. This way, we are able to combine the best of all methodologies to form a strong, cohesive learning system which focuses on positive achievement and progressions in order to ensure that each pupil reaches their maximum potential and is prepared for adult life.

Small classes and a high staff to pupil ratio are essential in order to facilitate learning and ensure that students receive considerable individualised attention and support.

Provision is highly structured, reflecting in particular elements of the following approaches:

SPELL:-This ensures that learning takes place that is

- **Structured** – with a high level of visual cues and enhanced communication systems
- **Positive** – using positive approaches, reinforcement and expectations
- **Empathetic** – staff demonstrating empathy with regards to the individual and viewpoint of the students
- **Low arousal**- teaching areas promoting a calm, non-confrontational atmosphere

- And Links – with parents, other professionals, the community and other schools

Effective learning:- takes place when:

- The learning environment is stable and secure.
- Students understand the purpose of the learning
- Students demonstrate a clear understanding of what is expected of them and the objectives of the lesson.
- Success criteria are explicit and models are provided.
- The learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding.
- Students are challenged and extended.
- The learning is active and students demonstrate the ability to and willingness to work collaboratively and cooperatively.
- Independent learning and thinking is encouraged and facilitated.
- Students are evaluating and reflecting on their own work and can self assess, know what they have to do to improve and are able to set appropriate targets.
- Student questioning and discussion are encouraged.
- There are opportunities for creativity and utilising different learning styles.
- Students have opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other concepts.
- Students have the opportunity to feedback on their learning.

*We want students to enjoy what they are doing and have fun when doing it. This is when students learn best, because their emotional state is fundamental to learning.*

### **Learning Environment**

The school strives to maintain a safe, warm, friendly yet visually clear learning environment. Students have been involved in the development of the indoor and outdoor facilities including the sensory garden, allotment and adventure areas. Displays aid learning and celebrate our student's 6 successes through both visual and written information. We are aware that our students can be hypo or hyper sensitive and so displays are kept within borders so that our learners are not distracted by stimuli.

We follow an ASC low arousal approach to the environment as this provides student support through a clear, unambiguous, visual information system. Our classrooms and other areas are clutter free. We provide structure and visual cues within specific areas of the room. We provide labels to show where equipment is kept which aids independence and promotes organisational skills.

In order to support the whole-school visual approach, staff have agreed on a consistent set of visual symbols to depict activities, events, academic subjects etc. which is regularly updated and monitored.

## **Behaviour**

We aim to ensure that every child and situation is dealt with in a fair, compassionate, safe and dignified way. Our aim is to teach children to manage themselves through positive behaviour support. The school has comprehensive policies for Behaviour and Care and Control which provide details on our approaches in these situations. Please see our behaviour policy for more information.

## **Planning and Delivery**

Planning and delivery of teaching and learning is carried out by teaching staff supported by our TAs. Teachers are responsible for creating Curriculum Overviews and Medium Term Planning documents for the pupils in their class, which will facilitate the pupils making progress.

Short-term plans will include the following:

- Groupings, organisation and use of TAs
- Differentiation & personalisation; informed by the LSP's (Learning Support Plans) and therapeutic input (SALT reports, OT assessments and Sensory Diets)
- Clear and appropriate learning objectives and success criteria
- Activity and resources required
- Evaluation of learning outcomes for pupils.

In supporting the planning and delivery of teaching and learning all teachers at Presfield will:

- be prepared for each teaching session in advance
- be flexible in terms of the organisation of the classroom, staff allocation, pupil groupings and the level to which the lesson plan is followed according to the changing needs of the pupils on a day to day basis
- plan to provide pupils with inclusive, engaging, meaningful, motivational, purposeful and challenging tasks which promote independence and self-esteem and which are both age appropriate and ability appropriate
- ensure each pupils' autism is taken into account and that their planning and teaching reflects this
- focus on the development of key skills within the areas of: communication, social awareness, behaviour, self-regulation and life skills
- take account of pupils' individual interests and use these to motivate and encourage pupils learning
- use assessment information to ensure that learning builds on previous knowledge, understanding and skills
- utilise resources in ways which encourage pupils to become more independent learners
- evaluate the impact of teaching at regular intervals
- maintain purposeful and informative planning, record-keeping and assessment documents

## **Quality of Teaching**

In order to ensure that the learning at Presfield is of a high standard, the expectation is that all teaching will:-

- enable pupils to access all aspects of the curriculum in line with their needs, aptitudes and abilities
- enable pupils to make good progress and show good attitudes to their work
- prepare and plan activities that enable pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding within both the ASC specialist curriculum and the academic curriculum
- reflect good levels of teacher subject knowledge
- engage and motivate pupils and encourage them to work independently
- challenge all pupils to achieve their best
- be based on a good knowledge of the pupils' needs using ongoing formative and summative assessment information
- be tailored to the range of pupils' individual needs and to enable success
- be delivered in a professional manner by the teaching staff
- reflect what is understood to be good classroom practice within an autism specific learning environment

## **Differentiation**

Teachers will differentiate the curriculum by:-

- task
- method of delivery
- outcome
- level of visual support required - object, photo, symbol, written
- level of prompting/ adult support required

## **Record-keeping and assessment**

In order to establish pupil progress and levels of attainment within all aspects of the curriculum, ongoing formative assessments, supported by regular summative assessments are carried out for all pupils. For the ASC specialist curriculum formative assessment is achieved via each pupils AET targets and "show progress".

For the academic curriculum formative assessment is achieved via a range of assessment methods. Classroom

## **Management and Organisation**

Presfield operates a range of teaching and learning contexts which are designed to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and also the demands of different activities.

The main types of contexts for teaching and learning are:

- wholeclass teaching
- small group work
- one to one teaching
- collaborative learning
- independent learning
- classroom based learning
- school based learning
- community based learning

The classrooms and other teaching spaces will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence.