



MacIntyre
Providing support...your way



MacIntyre School

Curriculum Policy

Policy Date: September 2019
Review Date: September 2020

At MacIntyre School we believe that potential is limitless and that every child can and will 'Achieve Above and Beyond'. We recognise that learning begins at birth and continues throughout life. We know that everyone has the ability to be a competent learner, regardless of disability or other special needs.

We believe in, and strive for, continual development and progress, seeking to stretch and challenge all our learners.

Our aim is to develop confident, inquisitive learners. The skill of learning is as important as acquiring an ever increasing knowledge and understanding. Independence, problem solving and thinking skills are the cornerstones that support effective learning.

We aim to provide inspirational teaching and learning experiences that lead to a consistently higher level of individual achievement.

We are committed to providing consistency of approach for our students so that learning takes place throughout the waking day and in all environments: in school, in houses, in the community and at home. We have a shared approach to assessment, target setting, intervention and evaluation. Education, residential and therapy team members work together to identify key areas of development for each student and wherever possible we include parents and carers in the identification of key outcomes for their child or young person. In this way each young person has the optimum opportunity to develop their communication, academic, independence and self- help skills to levels beyond what may have been expected.

Scope

This policy covers Macintyre School and its children's homes, including the off-site separately registered children's home Hillside.

As described above the school operates a waking day learning philosophy and as such all of those who work directly with its children and young people are considered to be educators regardless of other job titles.

Aims

- To deliver stimulating, challenging and highly effective learning, centred around the needs and preferences of each individual
- To provide a caring, sensitive and learning environment
- To provide a highly individualised education, enabling each child and young person to achieve above and beyond what may have been thought possible
- To provide safe environment; ensuring each young person's wellbeing and allowing them to excel in everything they do
- To ensure that each child and young person is motivated, and able, to effectively communicate wherever they are
- To facilitate each child and young person's ability to understand their needs and be able to self-regulate and self-advocate
- For each child and young person to be constantly developing independence skills in all areas of their life
- For each child and young person to leave school able to engage with and contribute to their community

In order to achieve our aims we recognize we must:

- Provide a stimulating, challenging and appropriate curriculum that engages and equips our students to be able to live the most fulfilling life possible.
- Provide learning environments that develop an enthusiasm for, and positivity toward, learning.
- Recognise that our children and young people are individuals and build upon their successes.
- Enable students to feel valued and respected so they can be confident and secure: willing to seek help in the understanding that overcoming difficulty is part of the learning process.
- Develop, through example and explanation, a sense of responsibility, self-discipline and respect for: one another; the school; and the community.
- Encourage aesthetic and spiritual awareness.
- To lay the foundations for a lifetime of learning through providing active, challenging and enjoyable **learning experiences**. Students will be involved in and will be aware of the process of learning and, where appropriate, become responsible for their learning
- To enable students to make **progress** in their learning
- To train, develop and support **educators** in their vital role of enabling students to overcome barriers to learning and make **progress** in their learning
- To ensure that children, staff, parents, Local Advisory Board (LAB) members and the community feel a sense of belonging and ownership and take a pride in the school
- Ensure our students make better than expected progress

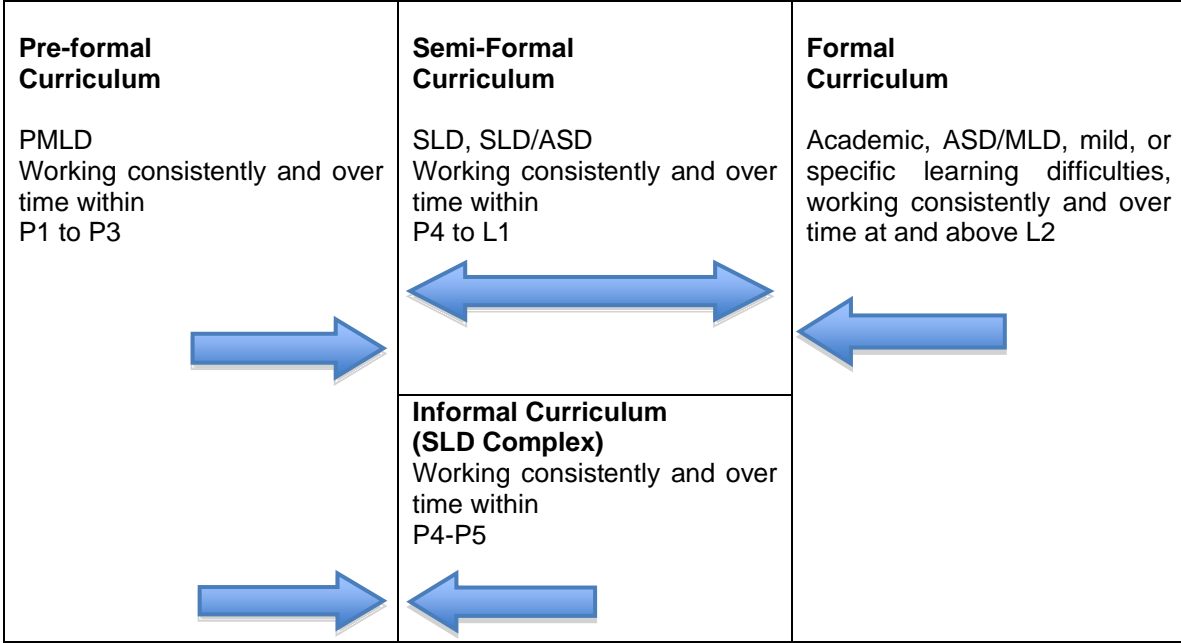
Curriculum

Macintyre School acknowledges that there is a strong benefit in the concept of a multi- tiered curriculum approach which sees Pre-Formal and Semi-Formal curriculum models working in with a Formal model that is partly based on the Literacy and Numeracy of the National Curriculum.

A number of English special schools, including Ofsted rated 'outstanding' schools, run the Equals Semi-Formal Curriculum (Equals, 2018) and we feel that this model, which Equals believes to be the only curriculum in the world written specifically for children, young people and adults with severe learning difficulties, gives us a solid base on which to move forward.

In the model described in Figure 1, it is neither necessary nor advisable to adopt a hard line on which curriculum might be appropriate for each learner as it is evident that learners on the edges of a learning difficulties spectrum, such as are described by the terms PMLD, SLD or MLD, may benefit from some involvement in the adjacent curricula. That is, those assessed as P3 (i) and (ii) may benefit from some elements of a semi-formal curriculum; those on P4 or P5 from elements of an informal curriculum; learners working at P8 or into the early reaches of the National Curriculum, may well cover some elements of a formal curriculum. Similarly, learners working consistently and over time at levels at or even above this (what used to be described as L2) may still benefit greatly from elements of a semi-formal curriculum, especially in for example, independence.

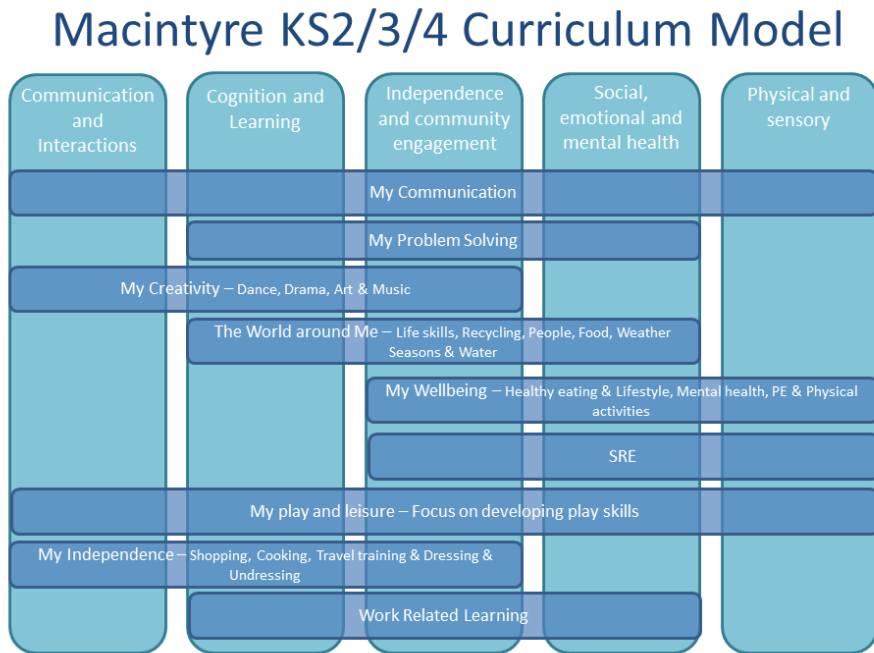
Fig 1. The relationship between curricula in a multi-tiered curriculum approach



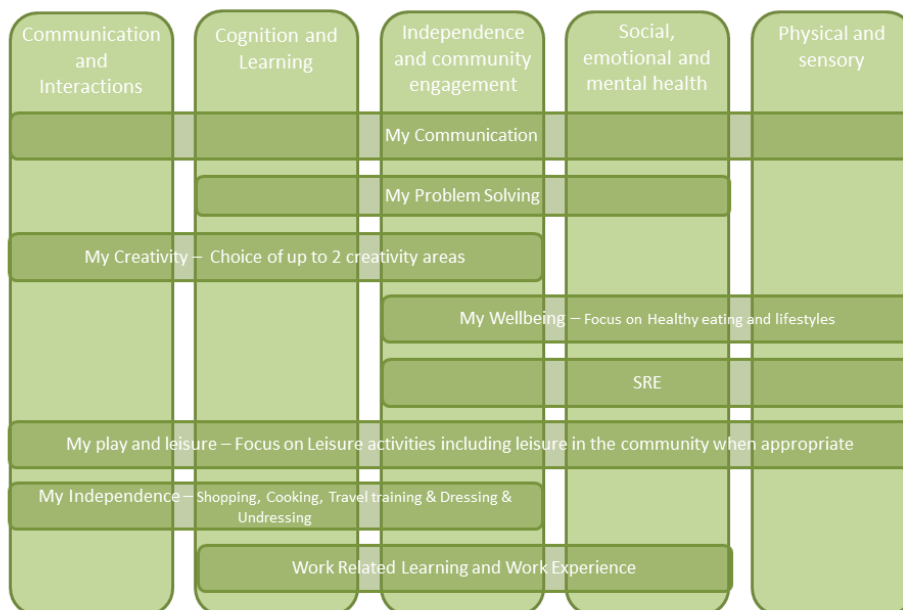
There is a fluidity about this model which both allows for and encourages a personalised (or individualised) approach, whilst still recognising that core elements of each curriculum will broadly fit the learning needs of all learners within the PMLD and SLD spectrums. The logic behind this approach comes from the sure and certain knowledge that our learners can make progress within curricula specifically designed for them, but will struggle to do so within curricula that is not (Imray and Hinchcliffe, 2014).

The base of the multi-tiered curriculum is the Equals Semi-Formal Curriculum (Equals, 2018). All areas of learning are carefully considered and individualised to fit each of our learners and link to the main areas of need in their EHCPs as shown Figure 2.

Fig 2. Curriculum overview



Macintyre Post 16 Curriculum Model



Learning

We believe that learning is an active process and that children and young people learn through being motivated and engaged in exciting, relevant activities. Everyone has their own individual learning style and learning needs and we recognise the importance of developing strategies that allow the individual to learn in the ways that suit them best. Learning styles may be visual, auditory and/or kinaesthetic. Our teaching styles are adapted to reflect the different ways in which each student learns.

Learning should develop a sense of students' responsibility for their own learning. Wherever possible they are able to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach, work independently and assess their achievements.

- Students make better than expected progress
- Students display a strong desire to contribute the effort and concentration required to match the teachers passion for learning
- Differentiation enables all students to succeed beyond expectations
- Assessment is used to involve students in their learning in an active and useful way (see Assessment Policy)
- Individuals show interest in improving their own learning around life skills and independence within their residential setting

Learning Environment

An effective, appropriately stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and may include:

- A well organised formal learning environment where sensory stimuli can be modified in order to overcome sensory barriers when acquiring new skills.
- Independent, co-operative and adult supported learning.
- Individual, pair, small group, and whole class learning
- Opportunities for research, experimentation and finding out.

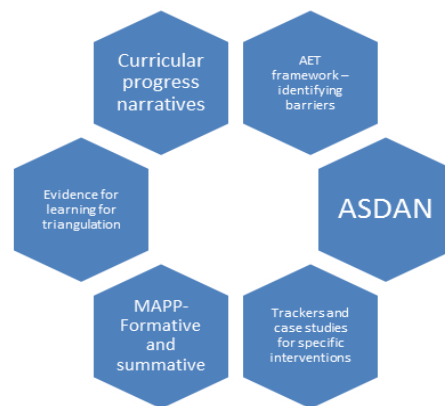
- Opportunities for creative exploration and expression.
- Using actions and words to ask and answer questions.
- Well organised, clearly defined learning areas with easily accessible resources to encourage independence.
- A variety of locations, for example: inside and outside the school, in the wider community, at home, and in a range of natural environments.

The importance we attach to an effective, stimulating learning environment is reflective of the ethos of the school.

Assessment

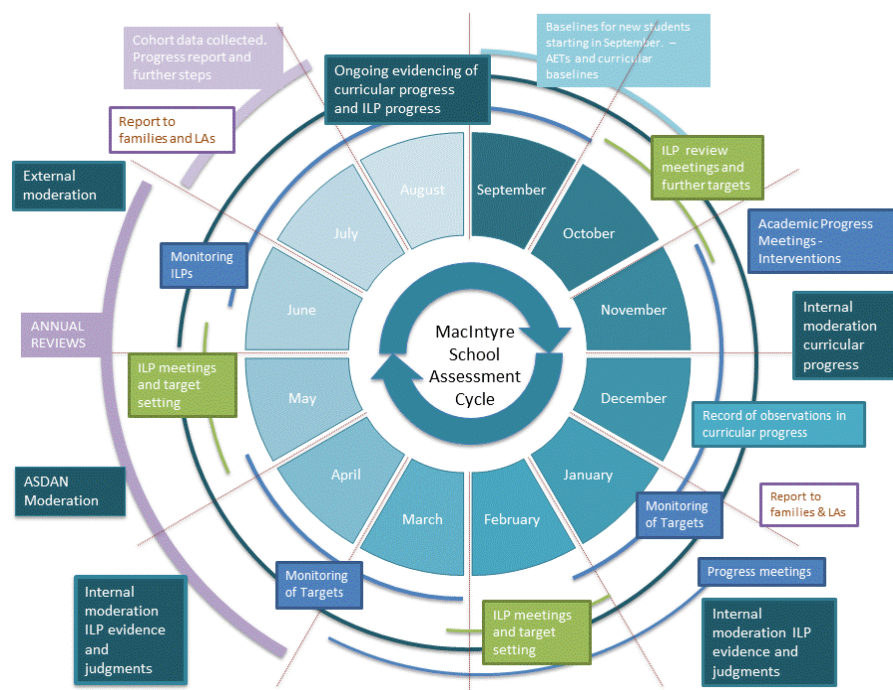
It is very important to us to ensure each student is assessed accurately and to know exactly where they are in their learning at any given time. This enables us to develop targeted strategies and learning programmes so they can achieve the best outcomes possible.

We use a basket of assessments to ensure our judgements are accurate and agreed in a multidisciplinary way. This enables us to report on the aspects of learning that are relevant and meaningful for each learner.



The assessment model enables the possibility to tailor the learning intentions to the individual's needs and his or hers unique profile, taking into account the stage the learner is in his or hers cognitive development and learning. This model is based on ipsative assessment. This means that performance is assessed against the starting point of each learner and taking into consideration his or hers very unique journey, rather than judging against external criteria and standards. This makes the assessment process a lot more flexible as any changes in performance and needs are taken into consideration when assessing a learner. It also enables teachers to better assess smaller changes over time, for example looking at fluency or maintenance of a skill over time.

In order to collect data accurately, consistently and ensure the data and evidence collected is monitored on a regular basis, we follow the MacIntyre School assessment cycle.



Our core belief is that if the input to each learner’s learning is the very best it can be, then the progress made by that learner, whatever that is, will be the very best that the learner could have made. It is therefore essential that teachers fully understand each learner’s needs and are able to collect data and robust evidence to be able to build a narrative of progress and be able to accurately judge the progress made by each learner.

We do not use any system of measurement of progress to compare any one learner with other learners and the numerical data we collect is only used to see the progress being shown within each learning intention. This data can only be understood directly related to the context, learner and learning intention.

The learning intentions set are broad to enable students to show additional lateral progress so the progress can be seen as a whole rather than as very specific measurable steps. This also enables to better see any emergent skills and to set up further learning intentions based on the previous learning and the learners’ interests and talents.

All students who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Statement of Special Educational Needs must, by law, have an Annual Review. Every internal and external specialist that works with the student (Social Workers, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Music Therapist, etc.) provides a report and input to the review as appropriate. The review highlights the achievements made during the year by the child and this forms the basis of the projection of the next year’s curricular aims and objectives.

Effective Teaching

Everyone has an important role to play in contributing to learning; therefore the term educator as used in this policy equally applies to, support staff, therapists, teachers, the

extended schools activity coordinator, parents/carers, other children etc. Effective educators support learning by being alongside the child or young person: modelling, scaffolding, validating and extending.

Teaching should be relevant, creative, inspirational and enthusiastic, within an atmosphere of trust and respect. We believe that educators teach best when they:

- have a good knowledge of the individual's abilities, learning styles and attainments;
- use evaluations of individual children/young people's learning to inform future planning;
- set clear expectations for what the learner is expected to achieve;
- share learning objectives with the child/young person;
- are able to relate learning intentions to learner's own interests and life experiences;
- develop the learner's ability to independently think and problem solve;
- actively promote positive behaviours which create an environment in which learning can take place;
- challenge stereotypes and promote a positive appreciation of difference;
- share a sense of enjoyment and excitement with the children and young people.
- work collaboratively together to ensure a consistency of approach across the school, house, community and home environments
- use a variety of specialised approaches that provide strategies to meet the specific needs of our students such as TEACCH, PECS and Intensive Interaction.
- reinforce and extend what students have learned across a variety of environments to ensure generalisation and maximum independence.
- Use assessment to inform planning and target setting to meet the needs of the individual students and groups

Planning and Assessment

Planning and assessment are an intrinsic part of the teaching and learning process, with each constantly informing the other in an ever-evolving cycle.

Roles and Responsibilities

Local Advisory Board

Our Local Advisory Board (LAB) agree, support, monitor and review the school's policy on teaching and learning. They keep themselves informed of teaching and learning practice through meetings with staff and visits to the school.

Role of the Head of Education and Deputy Head of Education

Monitor the implementation of this policy;

- Monitor student achievement;
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
- Ensure that the school's buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- Ensure optimum use of community settings for developing student's learning;
- Monitor teaching and learning strategies in the light of health and safety;
- Ensure that the school's policies promote high quality learning experiences;
- Support staff development through the performance management system and provision of high quality, relevant professional development.

Role of Teachers

- Provide a balanced, stimulating and relevant curriculum and that recognises and meets the needs of the individual.
- Work with all educators to develop effective, relevant and motivating learning plans (ILPs, curriculum targets etc)
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's curriculum and learning plans.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's achievements and progress by ensuring that trackers and learning journeys are up to date and available, and by holding informal conversations;
- Track individual student progress and, with other educators, collaboratively plan intervention strategies that ensure all students make expected or above expected progress.
- Provide evidence of progress
- Remove barriers to children's learning opportunities and thus raise expectations and achievements

Role of Educators

To give children the best possible learning experiences we will:

- provide a caring, inspirational and happy learning environment;
- discuss with teams any concerns;
- fully utilise the student's waking day to enhance learning and life chances;
- where appropriate work with parents to support their child's learning at home;

Parents' Role

To support their child's learning by:

- contributing to Annual Review, EHCP and other meetings;
- expressing their opinions about their child's learning by participating in annual questionnaires;
- keeping the school informed about concerns or problems which may affect their child's behaviour, well-being and learning;
- attending parent consultations and taking advantage of other opportunities to support the school.

We will assess the impact of this policy by:

- monitoring children's achievement;
- taking part in external moderation;
- reviewing the policy annually.

Criteria for Success

- Data collected shows the vast majority of students are achieving expectations or achieving beyond expectation across all areas of learning. (External moderation validates data). Data to be audited by Quality Board annually.
- Observation by LAB members with responsibility for curriculum and learning shows that students are purposefully engaged.
- Parents' comments, gathered via annual questionnaires, leavers questionnaires and contribution to Annual Review/EHCP meetings, show high levels of satisfaction regarding their child's learning and development.
- A student representative in each class is able respond appropriately to the question "What have you been learning about?" when the question is posed using the child's preferred mode of communication. (Communication is likely to require the use of visuals and/or electronic communication devices) Data to be gathered termly by Governor observing child contact staff talking to children.