



# Curriculum Policy and Procedures

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## **Mission Statement and Aims**

The school supports the following mission statement:

*“Ysgol y Rhos provides a safe and stimulating learning environment in which young people are offered a fresh start every day and empowered to achieve and fulfil their true potential.”*

And the following associated set of Aims:

### **At Ysgol Y Rhos we aim to:**

- provide opportunities that compensate for earlier missed experiences
- enable young people to distinguish right from wrong
- support young people in learning to manage their own behaviour
- support improved self-esteem and self-image
- enable young people to develop the skills for positive social interaction
- empower young people to participate in their own education
- provide a safe, secure learning environment
- help young people to begin to enjoy learning
- help young people to achieve their potential
- prepare young people for success in adult life in British society
- empower young people to invest in their own future development and that of the school community

## **Our Ethos**

At Ysgol y Rhos we cater for both boys and girls in the age range of 8 to 16 years. We understand that many of the learners who come to the school have had a turbulent and often disrupted past education experience. Most have been to a number of schools. They also may have been excluded from school and struggle to maintain their learning in more mainstream settings, often resulting in low self-esteem, low confidence in learning and a high level of disengagement from the education system. Further, the risks presented by their Adverse Childhood Experiences, and associated problematic and complex interpersonal skills development, have impaired their ability to be integrated into, and be educated by, mainstream schools. Many of our learners come with a range of additional learning needs, some with Statements of Educational Needs (IDP) or Education, Health and Care Plans. At Ysgol y Rhos we seek to offer a fresh start for all our learners and work to provide an experience of education that is commensurate with each individual's needs and abilities. We support learners to re-engage, to address gaps in their previous education and empower them to both participate in, and take responsibility for their education, and their future.

## **The Pupils**

- All young people at Ysgol y Rhos have a history of emotional, behavioural difficulties, arising from early childhood trauma. Almost all experience social, emotional and mental health needs. These predominant needs can be accompanied by a range of additional learning needs.
- Most of the young people have had interrupted histories in education and, in some cases, in care. There are a wide variety of attainments on admission, with

some young people demonstrating a very low level of ability, acquired knowledge and skills, while others are proficient in a number of areas of the curriculum.

- On entry to school, many have fragile self-esteem and poor self-image, placing a low value on themselves as individuals in society and as learners.
- Many demonstrate difficulties with authority and a lack of trust in adults. They often experience difficulties in forming and maintaining appropriate, positive relationships with other young people and adults and thus have limited ability to work cooperatively, in groups or in the classroom.

Young people attending the school are:

- aged 8 to 16.
- boys and girls.
- placed within the residential setting of Unique Care;
- from a number of placing authorities in England and Wales;
- many are in receipt of an IDPs or an EHCP.

Teachers are well qualified and committed to working with the young people at Ysgol Y Rhos, to provide the best opportunities to make up for previous missed opportunities and support transition to adult life.

### **Policy Objectives**

- To stimulate and support re-engagement with the learning process, using research based, active learning approaches wherever possible and engaging in a significant number of real-life learning experiences.
- To promote accelerated learning in order to compensate for previous missed opportunities and enable young people to gain the best outcomes possible in the time they spend in Ysgol Y Rhos.

### **Philosophy**

The curriculum in Ysgol y Rhos School is *needs-led*: it is based on the reality of the assessed needs of the young people that the school serves. It takes account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of all young people, including those with an IDP or an EHCP.

### **The curriculum:**

- takes account of up-to-date *national* guidance (2023), requirements, expectations and good practice.
- is *dynamic*: it is continuously evolving and improving to meet individual young peoples' needs.
- supports the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.
- provides the necessary *structure* around which decisions are made about daily organisation, timetabling, staffing and student grouping.
- enables young people to gain skills, experiences, knowledge and understanding about the subjects they study and about themselves, each other and how the world works.
- prepares young people for the world beyond school, including the world of work and their possible futures.

- enables young people to develop skills for learning, working towards becoming independent life-long learners.
- supports young people to access appropriate external accreditation and to develop skills to become independent and effective adults in life beyond school, taking part in British society.

### **Definition**

The curriculum at Ysgol y Rhos is holistic, with education, care and therapy available to all young people, working together to promote learning and increased self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem. It is the sum total of all the experiences that young people have from the moment they arrive at school in the morning until they leave at the end of the school day. It includes subjects, areas of learning and aspects of personal and social development, which are organised and delivered by staff and partners. The curriculum is characterised by breadth, balance, continuity, progression, differentiation, inclusion and relevance – each interpreted in relation to the context of Ysgol y Rhos, and the particular features of its learners.

Academically, all young people access the curriculum areas as stipulated by The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2024 and the new Curriculum for Wales implemented September 2023.

### **Areas of learning**

The taught curriculum is based on Progression Steps within the new Curriculum for Wales and covers English, Welsh, mathematics, science, PSHCE (personal, social, health and citizenship education including sex education), humanities (history, Geography, R.E), information and communication technology (ICT)/Media, expressive arts, SWEET, Health and social care, Global citizenship, physical education and outdoor education. This curriculum is further enhanced through enrichment activities, which include a range of cultural and educational visits and visitors coming into school, and by Y10 and Y11 work experience placements. All of this supports the development of the cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

### **Individual Learning Needs**

- Every student has a Personal Learning Pathway (PLP) that identifies a small number of priority targets, suited to their individual needs, taken from literacy, numeracy and personal/social development in conjunction with the GL assessment's.
- Individual targets reflect the objectives agreed at the Annual Review of the student's IDP or EHCP where applicable.
- IEP and IBP targets are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed). They are discussed by the teaching team, reviewed and revised each term reflecting the progress made by the young person.
- These will then be considered for intervention sessions where students are taught 1:1 or in small groups depending on need and targets identified. The assess, plan, do, review cycle will then begin.
- All teachers consider how these targets can be pursued across the curriculum, by reflecting them in their planning for lessons.
- Where an individual young person has particular needs that cannot be addressed through the breadth of the curriculum, arrangements are made, as far

as possible, for individual tuition.

### **Baseline assessment**

Young peoples' access to the curriculum is dependent on individual needs for learning, identified at point of admission to school through a comprehensive suite of baseline and diagnostic assessment tools, covering literacy, numeracy, cognitive skills and personal-social development.

These assessments are administered as part of the planned process for induction to school.

Young people's learning programmes are then tailored to meet the individual needs within small-group teaching situations.

### **Inclusion**

Ysgol y Rhos School caters for young people with significant and complex emotional, behavioural needs for whom appropriate and effective provision has not been, or cannot be, made in other settings, including in mainstream schools. Ysgol y Rhos School intends to be fully inclusive for all its young people and cater for their needs as follows:

All Young People have equal access to full-time education. The education is designed to be suited to the young peoples' ages, abilities, aptitudes and additional learning needs. The goal is for every student to be actively engaged in effective learning. Every student has a right to involvement in their own Personal Learning Pathway and reviews and Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings alongside access to nationally accredited routes and qualifications.

### **Curriculum principles and rationale**

#### **Curriculum Principles**

The Education (Independent Schools Standards) regulations 2024 requires schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that:

- gives young people experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education;
- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of learners at the school and within society;
- actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- effectively prepares learners at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

In order to facilitate these requirements, the Curriculum in Ysgol y Rhos aims to enable all young people to become:

- **Successful learners** who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- **Independent learners** who are able to take responsibility for their own learning
- **Confident individuals** who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- **Responsible citizens** who make a positive contribution to British society

### **In particular the curriculum aims to:**

- raise attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy and ICT
- ensure entitlement for all learners to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that offers continuity and coherence and secures high standards;
- induct learners into the essential knowledge, skills and understanding of subject disciplines and to develop specialism appropriate to aptitude;
- prepare young people for the world of employment and/or further and higher education;
- allow young people to access and make best use of accurate, up-to-date, impartial careers guidance that enables them to make informed choices about career options;
- make learners more aware of, and engaged with, their local, national and international communities;
- encourage learners to take responsibility for their own health and safety, and appreciate the benefits and risks of the choices they make;
- acknowledge, promote and pass on the core knowledge and skills, and fundamental values of British society.
- provide suitable modification that:
  - ✓ is focused on Young People' individual needs, learning baselines and gaps in knowledge and skills
  - ✓ gives a good time-balance between academic subjects and personal development needs.
  - ✓ accommodates Young People's individual interests and aptitudes.
  - ✓ builds self-esteem and confidence in accessing learning.
  - ✓ helps young people to have a positive experience of achieving and learning at school.

### **Learning about learning:**

At Ysgol y Rhos we believe the young people should be taught to think about what they are learning because:

- research demonstrates that learning about learning (meta-learning) leads to great retention of knowledge and great understanding, leading to a better ability to apply knowledge in new contexts.
- young people learn to exercise active and positive control over their environment, both now and in the future.
- young people understand themselves as learners; realising they have power as a learner, and in changing their approach to learning they can change their lives.
- young people develop skills to learn, problem solve and think creatively as an independent learner.
- becoming empowered to take responsibility for their own learning, young people are able to make the most of the opportunities presented.

### **Enrichment opportunities real life experiences:**

At Ysgol y Rhos we believe in providing enrichment activities and real-life experiences to young people because:

- young people are able to safely experience learning opportunities in the wider community.
- these experiences exploit interests and talents.

- these experiences increase the probability of success.
- these experiences help build routes to future options.
- these opportunities build self-esteem and confidence in learning in a wider context.
- these opportunities offer different avenues and styles of learning and achievement.

## **Curriculum Bias**

### **An emphasis on literacy and numeracy:**

- overcomes the real deficiencies in young peoples' learning profiles in terms of literacy and numeracy skills.
- shows young people the importance of literacy and numeracy skills to everyday personal life, and their importance to future options and choices.
- improves and facilitates ease of access and understanding in other subject areas thereby increasing opportunity for engagement, learning and progress.

### **An emphasis on Social Skills and Personal Development:**

- allows young people to explore the dynamics of working with others and develop appropriate and relevant skills to do so successfully.
- allows young people a safe environment in which to explore their own feelings about being with other people and developing relationships; giving them the opportunity to learn skills to enable positive relationship building now, and in the future.
- allows young people the opportunity to explore the reasons for and behind their behaviours and empowers them with the skills to effect change to these behaviours.
- allows young people the opportunity and resources to reconnect with the skills needed to play and learn and the feelings evoked in different situations.
- allows young people to develop a greater understanding of their place in society and the skills needed to maintain and improve this effectively, so that they can make a positive contribution as adults.
- empowers young people with the skills needed to live as independently as possible.

## **Planning**

Staff use a variety of tools to support planning including Taith 360.

Subject Development Plans are currently in development. The aim is to have more detailed planning covering a three-year period as staffing and leadership is stabilised.

Progress in **Cross Curricular Skills** is starting to be recorded to support **Continuity** and **Progression** and planning for the delivery of the broader curriculum.

## **Outcomes**

### **Routes to Accreditation:**

WJEC Entry Level 1, 2, 3 Certificates and GCSE, at an appropriate level in English, Welsh (as a second language) and Mathematics.

WJEC GCSE in Art and Design.

Functional Skills Entry Level 1, 2,3 Certificates L1 & 2 in English, maths and ICT.

BTEC in Applied Science.

Prince's Trust Achieve Award at Entry Level 3 and Certificate Level 1 and 2

Sweet (PSHCE) – BTEC Awarding Body – at Level 1 (equivalent to GCSE Grades D to G) and Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE Grades A\* to C)

Health and Social Care and Childcare at Level 1.

All award schemes and accreditations are available to young people at an appropriate time, in accordance with aptitude, individual needs and progress, and as a tool to promoting achievement and self-esteem.

Given the indeterminate length of many care placements it is important that young people have access to a wide range of accreditation that they can achieve when ready, so that whenever they leave the school, they will have something positive to take with them.

### **Tracking Student' Progress:**

Systems are developing to track pupils' progress using a range of less tangible outcomes, often related to personal social development. These include:

- continuity in full time education, including attendance data
- achievement of targets in Pupil Learning Pathways (PLPs), reviewed on a regular basis.
- progress and success factors identified in Annual Review reports.
- observations and feedback from stakeholders (e.g. at Annual Review meetings); includes personal progress indicators as measured by individual actions on the PEP / One Page Profile.
- regular review and assessment of literacy, numeracy and social skills, using standardised and whole-school approaches.
- success of Work Experience opportunities and other opportunities in the wider community.
- weekly 'in-school' recognition of progress, linked to individual and rewards schemes

### **Resources: Education Based staff**

The education staff team comprises qualified teachers. They have a wide variety of qualifications and experience, including working with young people with Additional Learning Needs.

The school promotes and supports the continuing professional development of its whole group of teaching staff through use of internal training sources and external providers.

### **Resources: Residential Care Staff**

- Care staff, known as Support Staff in school, work alongside educational staff to support individual young people with learning but, more particularly, to offer an



intensive level of support to help manage incidents that prevent learning taking place.

- A growing number of these support staff are trained Teaching Assistants, holding Level 3 qualifications. Some are also training, or have trained, to act as substitute invigilators.
- There is a significant, in-depth induction package of courses that all new staff are expected to take part in and regular update/refresher training, particularly focused on different areas of the safeguarding agenda and their role in school.
- Daily information exchange between the young person's home and the school is essential in managing the individual young person's programme.
- Ysgol y Rhos tutorial meetings (staff/young people) focus on celebrating success as well as reinforcing behavioural boundaries.
- Residential Care Staff support young people in completing tasks set for home-working when a young person is unable to attend school for any reason.

## **Resources: Time**

### **Time Allocations**

- The day starts at 9am and finishes at 3pm.
- Tutor Group meetings take place each day and last 15 minutes which is the beginning of the day.
- Most lessons are 60 minutes in length although some lessons are 45 mins.
- Two hours per week are spent travelling to off-site activities (Outdoor Education and Games).
- PE is for 90 minutes per week.
- Outdoor Education lasts approximately 2 hours depending on the activity.
- Young People have a morning break of 15 minutes and a lunch break of 30 minutes.

The school is open to teaching staff for 195 days per year, including 6 professional development days and 3 additional days focused on paperwork for individual young people, due to the level of tracking and progress reporting necessary and the loss of PPA time due to focused meetings for each young person.

The year is divided into 3 terms, with each term being split into half-terms following as far as possible the Denbighshire school term plan.

### **Resources: Resources and Accommodation**

Ysgol y Rhos School is set in extensive grounds.

The main school building houses a primary classroom and an English/ICT room, a domestic science / life skills room, 1:1 work room reflection room, head teacher's office, staffroom with small staff kitchen and the reception/administrator's office.

A second building houses an expressive arts room, and a mathematics/science room.

Plans exist for a third building to house two more classrooms and a larger multi-purpose room.

Classrooms can accommodate 4 to 5 young people a teacher and two support staff. Three rooms each have a large wall-mounted television and the primary classroom has an interactive white board facility.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring of the implementation of the school's curriculum intentions is done via

- teachers' planning;
- informal visits to classrooms;
- learning walks focusing on a particular aspect of teaching and learning each half term;
- formal learning and teaching observations using set observation criteria followed by critical feedback;
- an annual appraisal system for all teachers linked to TLO and supervision, alongside regular whole-school assessment procedures form the basis for evaluation of performance and progress;
- formal action planning and performance management of staff falling below observed acceptable standards of teaching and learning;
- weekly staff meetings and daily briefings;
- team around the child meetings, whereby a core team of professionals, from care, therapy and education discuss the progress of individual young people and develop strategies to further progress;
- feedback from stakeholders at review meetings;
- termly review and development of supporting documentation, and risk management strategies;
- baseline assessment and continuous tracking of young people' progress;
- analysis of data forming part of evidence base for the school's self-evaluation process.

### **Review and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher and teachers.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum provision and policy will involve:

- consideration of how settled and engaged in learning the young people are.
- how well young people are making progress in the work they do.
- how well young people are making progress in cross-curricular skills.
- revisiting the PLPs once a term for each pupil.
- specific outcome measures related to externally accredited courses.

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