

# Teaching & Learning Policy



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# Teaching & Learning Policy

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## **1. Statement of intent**

We believe in working with students with a range of abilities: all our students have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). To this end, our approach is flexible so that we can match the abilities and meet the needs of each of our students.

We encourage students to appreciate and respect personal and cultural differences among each other and the wider community. The teaching and learning environment and processes are a vehicle to bring about positive change within a student in relation to self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence. We will achieve this by:

- Encouraging students to view themselves in a new and positive way
- Enabling students to gain a realistic understanding of their potential within the activities provided by the curriculum
- Giving students the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications and awards which validate the learning taking place.

We believe that students learn best when they:

- are happy
- are interested and motivated
- are given tasks which match their ability but allow them to stretch
- clearly understand the task
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries
- are challenged and stimulated.

## **2. The learning environment**

The learning environment is organised to ensure that students have the opportunities to:

- work individually and in groups
- make decisions
- work co-operatively
- solve problems
- be creative
- discuss their ideas
- develop their social skills
- develop independence
- use initiative
- receive support
- achieve recognised awards.

We believe that the best learning takes place in an environment which:

- is challenging and stimulating
- is peaceful and calm
- is supportive and caring
- is well organised
- is well resourced
- makes learning accessible
- is encouraging and appreciative
- is welcoming
- provides equal opportunities and promotes diversity and difference
- provides a working atmosphere.

We believe that students should be encouraged to develop organisational skills and independence through:

- appropriate tasks
- confidence building
- good examples
- co-operation
- suitable opportunities
- being given responsibilities.

## **3. Our programmes**

Within Releasing Potential School there are two key programmes a student may be registered on. These are:

- Releasing Potential School (7-11)
- Releasing Potential Post-16 (12-13)

All timetables are bespoke to the individual needs of the student and will depend on which programme they are registered. However, each timetable may be made up of a mixture of the following elements:

- 1:1 sessions
- Small group work (1:2 ratio)
- Distance learning
- Work placements

#### **4. Referrals**

- In order to make a referral parents should contact the Local Authority SEN Service in their area. The child should have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) so that funding is in place. The local authority will consult with Releasing Potential, as well as other settings, if the parent has named the school on the EHCP as parental preference.

The referral route is via the local authority purchasing system who will consult settings they consider appropriate. The local authority will provide the school with a copy of the child's Education, Health and Care Plan and any additional information they feel is relevant. The local authority referrals are filtered at RP according to the need, the geographical location and age of student, then discussed by the RP Referral Panel, which will decide what RP can offer. If appropriate the Panel will then make a formal expression of interest to the local authority. The RP Referrals Panel will consider the information in the EHCP and any additional information provided by the local authority and decide what capacity is available.

- Each student whom the Panel decides RP has capacity to work with will be invited, with parent or carer, to an interview with RP staff and given the opportunity to look around the site. In the case of one-to-one students, or those who are extremely anxious, the interview may take place at their home. If the interview results in RP being able to offer a place, Releasing Potential will confirm the offer to the local authority. and once the placement has been confirmed by the local authority, the school will contact parents to arrange a start date.

#### **5. Post-16 provision**

Releasing Potential offers a small post-16 provision for students who are emotionally vulnerable and find it difficult to engage in a larger or more mainstream setting.

Releasing Potential's Post-16 programme runs as a one-or-two-year provision. Students' programmes are based around work placements which are set in Releasing Potential businesses, or in external organisations, arranged by RP or independently. In the case of independently organised placements, parents/carers need to authorise their child's participation; RP staff will make checks on the suitability of external placements and will visit students on site.

Students on our Post-16 programme study English and Maths up to Level 2, Duke of Edinburgh Bronze/Silver and ASDAN Employability up to Level 2 with the possibility to study further qualifications alongside these, for example Level 2 Food Studies and Level 2 CDT.

Students who are able to progress onto further education or training, work placements or apprentices after year 1, will do so. Those who need further support will remain for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year where further training and time is given to preparing students for an appropriate next destination. For full details of our post-16 programme, see our [website and post-16 programme specification](#).

## **6. Special Educational Needs (SEND)**

All students registered to attend Releasing Potential School on one of two core programmes will have registered Special Educational Needs and will have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). All our processes are designed to support students with SEND who have struggled to succeed in other educational settings.

Our curriculum seeks to be flexible to meet the individual needs and interests of the students. By working 1:1 and in small groups of only 3 or 4, each student will get the support that they need to complete the work to an appropriate standard. It is important that poor literacy skills are not a barrier to learning in other subjects such as Outdoor Education, Sport, Food Studies and CDT. Timetables are set each half term and students with additional learning needs who require extra support are assessed at point of referral and such needs are entered on our register of Special Educational Needs by the School SENCo. Additional needs may entitle the student to additional support during exams. These may include :

- Extra time in examinations
- A scribe
- Special technology such as laptops and specialist programmes
- Additional support with reading (specialist phonics provision)

## **7. Key skills development**

The focus of our key skills curriculum is to provide students with the skills they will need for life, with a particular focus on communication and numerical skills. Students will present with a range of abilities and confidence levels, so we focus on overcoming barriers to reading, writing, speaking and listening and maths by focusing on small manageable tasks provided with a high level of support.

Students are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills throughout their time in the school, through conversations over break times and lunch times as much as within formalised class discussions and debates. The staff will model a range of ways of speaking in different contexts and pick up on inappropriate ways that students may express themselves. Students are also encouraged to interact with technology where this is possible and appropriate, with many activities designed around accessing computers and developing skills and knowledge in typing, researching, and online safety.

## **8. Fundamental British values**

Within all aspects of the school day we seek to address the personal, health and social needs of our students. This is done through formalised lessons as part of the PSD curriculum, and through responding to students' conversations during lessons, breaks and tutor group sessions. Display boards are visible around both sites on which information about new current events is shown; this encourages discussion and debate. Students and staff take part in a range of charitable activities throughout the year, including Comic Relief, Children in Need, and the Save the Children Christmas Jumper event.

Releasing Potential has a high standard of conduct when working with students, with a focus on taking responsibility for one's own actions. Staff are expected to model the mantra 'clean, decent and honest' in their conversations and actions in the workplace. The same is expected of our students. This applies across the curriculum and provides many opportunities for spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

Where there are opportunities, the curriculum will reflect the cultural diversity of the UK, particularly through the PSD and Food Studies curricula. Deputy Heads and Subject Leads work together to co-ordinate whole school events and activities and advise on delivery strategies.

Staff work hard to challenge students to use appropriate and respectful language when talking about people and practices different from their own. When appropriate staff may arrange a visit from or to a particular place or people to challenge the prejudices students may have; for example a visit to the local mosque, or a visit from local police officers.

## **9. Social & emotional learning**

At Releasing Potential (RP), given the difficulties faced by our students, there is an emphasis on achieving outcomes in terms of social and emotional learning.

Baseline assessments are made in relation to social emotional learning and self-awareness through the Outcomes Star system, which helps the student to recognize her/his own strengths and improvement areas. This produces a visual representation of the current situation as they see it. The assessment is repeated termly and allows students, staff, parents and referrers to measure and record distance travelled over time.

Additionally, our SHAPE rewards system is fully embedded in all aspects of curricular and non-curricular learning. SHAPE scores are recorded daily, weekly and half termly (see 13.2 of this policy). They are analysed informally by staff and individual students after every session in order to recognise achievements. The data is recorded on the web-based portal weekly and evaluated formally on a half termly basis and reported in writing to parents and referrers.

## **11. Careers guidance**

We work to Gatsby benchmarks as a general guide to our practice around careers support for students. We seek to develop students' understanding of their future career options in a number of ways, these include:

- Looking through college prospectuses
- Visits to local colleges
- Support with making college applications and attending interviews
- Interview practice
- Advice from specialist careers advisor (*Find it Out Service* in West Sussex, *Hampshire Careers and Employability Service* in Hampshire)
- Online careers options packages (*e4s*)
- Releasing Potential Enterprises which allows students to participate in all aspects of running a small scale business
- Visits to a range of work places
- Talks by visiting experts in various career areas
- Work placements and work experience (including Employability in Y12-13)

In Year 11 students take part in work experience tasters; in Years 12-13 students take part in work placements which can lead to paid employment.

## **12. Safeguarding recording**

A safeguarding log is completed online if there are concerns about a student's wellbeing and this is automatically flagged to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies.

13. Earwig is used to track progress of learning outcomes against the schemes of work and planning (by the subject) with notes added to show what academic progress is being made and what needs to improve.

## **14 . Routines and rules**

Routines and rules contribute to a healthy learning environment for both staff and students. To be effective rules and routines should be:

- agreed by students and clearly understood
- fair and consistent
- realistic and positive
- kept to a minimum but observed and enforced
- embedded in daily activities with which all students are familiar.

All rules should result in the students knowing the boundaries of behaviour and should be set within the terms of the **Behaviour Management Policy**.

#### **14.1 Attendance**

All student attendance is monitored to record improvements made in this area as well as concerns. Promotion of attendance is high profile throughout the school on the understanding that regular, consistent, punctual attendance is a key factor to positive learning and engagement. We aim for all students to raise to achieve 95% attendance by the time they finish at Releasing Potential. We also aim to minimise absenteeism and out school target for this is less than 7.5% persistent absenteeism. We use a clear **Attendance Policy**, which includes systematic monitoring and review of absenteeism; working closely with parents to convey the importance of good attendance and its links with achievement; and strategies to support and integrate students to full inclusion. For full details please consult our **Attendance Policy**.

#### **14.2 Behaviour**

Our behaviour monitoring system, SHAPE, measures student's behaviour from years 7-13. SHAPE stands for the following:

**S** – Safe

**H** – Healthy

**A** – Achieve

**P** – Positive

**E** – Enterprising

The system works so that after each lesson, students and tutors reflect on the student's work, attitude and behaviour, and the choices they made during the session. If students have achieved all of the SHAPE guidelines, then they achieve full SHAPE, if not, then they do not achieve SHAPE for that lesson, but have the opportunity to achieve it in the next. SHAPE scores are linked to small rewards that the students can choose each term.

Students also choose a target for the day, which is normally linked to the goals set during Target Setting (see below). These scores are recorded on a weekly basis for monitoring. For full details please consult our **Behaviour Management Policy**.

#### **15. Target Setting**

At the start of each term, students are invited along with a parent/carer to attend a Target Setting appointment, where the tutor along with the student and parent/carer are able to reflect on the previous term and how targets were or were not achieved, and discuss what new targets should be set for the coming term. These targets are based around five key areas:

1. Learning & cognition
2. Communication & interaction
3. Social, emotional and mental health



4. Sensory & physical
5. Self-awareness

Targets from students' EHCPs are broken down into realistic targets that relate to the main targets outlined in the EHCP are in question. Target setting is also an opportunity for students' work to be shared with parents/carers and any questions to be answered about the term ahead.

## **16. Progress Report**

Expectations of students are high in terms of attendance, behaviour and academic attainment. There are a number of ways in which student progress is monitored at Releasing Potential. It is important to highlight that progress is individual to each and every student and we believe that not all progress is recognised through academic achievement or through data.

Releasing Potential believes in improving academic outcomes for students. Expectations of students are high in terms of attendance, behaviour and academic progress. We are aware that Ofsted Subsidiary Guidance, published in January 2014, requires inspectors evaluating past attainment and progress to take account of the school's own assessment data. Ofsted also insists on inspectors considering the core objectives of the school's work. To this end, we believe it essential that RP assess and record attainment and progress in terms which are meaningful across the range of student needs and abilities, and of subject areas delivered.

Progress reports are completed at the end of each term as a summary of the student's progress during the last term. They are part of an open conversation with students where they have a chance to reflect on their own progress in areas including:

- Attendance
- Attitude
- Social skills
- Achievements
- How targets have been met
- Aims for the future
- Student's reflection

These reports are sent to parents/carers and may be sent to other professionals with a keen interest in the student. They provide an overview of the progress that is being made and are written with the input of a number of staff who may work with the student.

All lessons will be structured to include the following; recap, starter activity, main body of lesson, plenary.

Keyworkers will be responsible for liaising with the delivery staff to monitor student progress to enable them to communicate effectively with parents/carers.

For more information on how academic progress is reviewed and reported, please consult the **Curriculum Policy**.

**17. Links to Other Policies**

[Behaviour Management Policy.docx](#)

[Attendance Policy.docx](#)