

## Curriculum Policy

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Heathermount School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular, it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core value: 'building confidence and preparing students for life.'

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Heathermount School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility updated August 2023](#), considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part-time, and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school contracts the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for:

- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety Guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Data protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover

Where this policy refers to 'employees', the term refers to any individual who is classified as an employee or a worker, working with and on behalf of the school (including volunteers and contractors).

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Heathermount School.

The policy documents of Heathermount School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasion, a significant revision, although promulgated in school

separately, may have to take effect between the republication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

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## 1. Introduction

Heathermount is a non-maintained special school catering for children and young people aged 5–18 with autism. The school is owned by Cavendish Education and works closely with several local authorities to provide specialist education.

We are committed to realising our vision of **building confidence and preparing students for life beyond Heathermount**, enabling them to take their next steps into further education, training, or employment. We also aim to prepare our students to contribute positively to society and to live effectively beyond the specialist support and understanding of Heathermount School.

## 2. Curriculum Intent, Implementation, and Impact

### 2.1 Intent

Our curriculum intends to provide an inclusive, child-centred, broad, and balanced education focused on developing the whole child. This holistic approach means deliberately providing opportunities to meet academic, non-academic, and personalised autism-related needs.

Our vision is *“Building confidence and preparing students for life.”* In partnership with students and families, we aim to:

- Equip students with the skills for independent living, academic and vocational excellence.
- Support strong mental health and well-being as a foundation for learning.
- Tailor the curriculum to meet individual needs and interests.
- Provide high-quality, inspirational teaching and learning.
- Integrate therapeutic approaches across the curriculum.
- Set high expectations of behaviour and responsibility.
- Develop communication skills, resilience, and social understanding.
- Create stimulating, memorable, and fun learning opportunities.
- Build positive relationships with families and communities.
- Develop independence, employability, and social skills linked to British values.
- Promote greater understanding of autism through outreach and awareness.
- Ensure smooth transitions between phases, including Primary to Secondary, and beyond.
- Equip students with the knowledge, cultural capital, and transferable skills they need to succeed in life.

### 2.2 Implementation

Our curriculum is structured around both *what* we learn and *how* we learn. Learning is made accessible by meeting autism-specific needs through a **Total Communication Approach** and our bespoke **READY framework**.

#### The READY Framework

READY is an autism-specific, hierarchical approach that underpins teaching, learning, and therapy at Heathermount. It provides consistency while allowing flexibility to recognise the uniqueness of every student.

## READY stands for:

- **R – Regulating emotions and sensory needs**
- **E – Environment**
- **A – About my autism and the autism of others**
- **D – Developing social communication skills**
- **Y – Your successes and independence**

The READY framework is embedded across all aspects of school life. Staff use it to support regulation, build confidence, develop social skills, and promote independence, ensuring that students are ready to learn and make progress.

### 2.2.1 Pathways

We offer differentiated pathways to meet a range of needs:

- **Discoverers (Functional Pathway):** focusing on communication, independence, and preparation for adulthood. Working at Entry Level 1-3.
- **Explorers (Blended Pathway):** following an adapted National Curriculum with opportunities for progression to qualifications at Level 1.
- **Adventurers (Core Academic Pathway):** following an adapted National Curriculum with opportunities for progression to qualifications at Level 2.

### Primary (EYFS to KS2):

- Builds on the EYFS framework and uses play-based and thematic approaches.
- Focuses on literacy and numeracy while also covering adapted Science, Art, History, Geography, Computing, PE, PSHE, Forest School, Music and Drama.

### Key Stage 3:

- Students continue with English, Maths, and Science, alongside adapted History, Geography, Computing, PSHE, PE, Catering, Horticulture, Art, Drama and ASDAN.

### Key Stage 4 and Post-16:

- Students access qualifications including Functional Skills, GCSEs, ASDAN, BTEC, and NCFE.
- Subjects include English, Maths, Science, Employability, Enterprise, Catering, Horticulture, Computing, iMedia, Geography, History, Business Administration, PSHE, Construction, Art, Drama, Child Development, and Sport.

### 2.2.2 How this looks in practice

Implementation at Heathermount is visible through:

- **Learning Environments** – structured, autism-friendly classrooms with visual timetables, calm spaces, and predictable routines.
- **Total Communication** – staff use speech, visuals, PECS, and assistive technology to ensure every pupil can understand and be understood.
- **READY in Action** – pupils are taught to regulate emotions, understand autism, and develop social communication before returning to learning.
- **Personalisation** – lessons are scaffolded and differentiated; tasks are linked to individual interests and strengths.
- **Therapeutic Integration** – therapy strategies are embedded into daily lessons rather than delivered separately.

- **Broad and Balanced Delivery** – National Curriculum subjects sit alongside life skills, enterprise, and vocational learning.
- **Vocational and Life Skills** – particularly in KS4 and Post-16, students engage in enterprise projects, work experience, and employability training.
- **Enrichment** – including Forest School, Duke of Edinburgh, Satro mobile construction, trips, and project days.
- **Whole-Day Learning** – tutor times, break times, and social clubs are structured to develop social and emotional learning.
- **Celebration of Success** – achievements are recognised through assemblies, displays, certificates, and family events.

### 2.2.3 Enrichment

Our curriculum is enriched through curriculum-linked opportunities such as trips, outdoor learning, Duke of Edinburgh, and enterprise projects. We treat the whole school day as a learning opportunity, embedding social and independence skills across structured and unstructured times.

### 2.2.4 Key Components

Key elements of the curriculum include:

- PSHE and RSE
- Zones of Regulation for well-being
- British Values and citizenship
- Healthy living and leisure
- Safeguarding as a golden thread through all learning

### 2.3 Assessment

- **KS1 to KS3:** Progress tracked using Earwig against curriculum objectives.
- **KS4 and Post-16:** Students receive a two-year target grade (GCSE or vocational) and progress is tracked termly using the categories: *Cause for Concern, Below Track, On Track, Exceeding*.

### 2.4 Impact

The curriculum prepares students with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and resilience needed for adulthood. Impact is measured through:

- Progress against personalised academic and therapeutic targets.
- Achievement of qualifications.
- Development of communication, social, and independence skills.
- Positive destinations into further education, training, or employment.
- Student, parent, and staff feedback.

## 3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects:

- National Curriculum programmes of study.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014).
- Equality Act (2010).
- Governance expectations in the DfE Governance Handbook.

## 4. Organisation and Planning

Effective planning ensures that the curriculum is coherent, progressive, and responsive to the needs of all students. At Heathermount, planning takes place at **long-term** and **short-term** levels, with clear expectations for all staff.

- **Long-Term Planning:**

- Curriculum Overviews provide the scope and sequence of learning across the academic year within each pathway and subject.
- They ensure progression, alignment with statutory requirements, and continuity across year groups.
- Long-term plans are reviewed annually to reflect student needs, assessment outcomes, and curriculum developments.

- **Short-Term Planning:**

- Weekly and daily lesson plans translate long-term plans into sequenced lessons.
- Teachers identify learning objectives, success criteria (e.g., “*I can*” statements), and differentiated tasks to enable all students to make progress.
- Plans detail scaffolding, the role of teaching assistants, and the integration of therapeutic strategies.
- Opportunities for assessment and feedback are clearly identified to inform future planning.
- All short-term planning is recorded in Google Classroom for accessibility by senior leaders, support staff, and therapists.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective delivery of the curriculum at Heathermount relies on clear roles, responsibilities, and collaboration between all members of the school community.

### 5.1 Governing Board

The Governing Board has strategic oversight of the curriculum and ensures it is broad, balanced, and ambitious. Governors will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold leaders to account for its implementation.
- Ensure a robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.
- Check that sufficient teaching time is allocated to cover statutory requirements.
- Ensure appropriate provision is made for all pupils, including vulnerable groups, those with additional needs, and the most able.
- Confirm that qualifications offered at KS4 and Post-16 are approved by the Secretary of State.
- Monitor compliance with statutory assessment arrangements.
- Participate actively in decision-making about the breadth, depth, and balance of the curriculum.

### 5.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the intent, implementation, and impact of the curriculum. They will:

- Ensure that all statutory elements of the curriculum are taught.
- Guarantee that subjects offered have clear aims and objectives that reflect the school’s vision and values.
- Ensure the curriculum is personalised to meet the diverse needs of students.

- Allocate appropriate time for each area of learning, and review this regularly.
- Consider requests for withdrawal from curriculum elements (e.g., RSE) in line with statutory guidance.
- Ensure assessment procedures meet all legal requirements and inform planning.
- Advise governors on whole-school targets and report on curriculum performance.

### **5.3 Deputy Headteachers**

Deputy Headteachers play a central role in the operational management of the curriculum. They will:

- Lead on curriculum development, planning, and quality assurance across the school.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the curriculum through observations, data analysis, and staff feedback.
- Work with Assistant Headteachers to ensure progression and consistency across pathways and phases.
- Ensure assessment and reporting systems are used effectively to measure pupil progress.
- Provide professional development opportunities for staff linked to curriculum priorities.

### **5.4 Assistant Headteachers**

Assistant Headteachers are responsible for the leadership of curriculum delivery within their phases (Primary and Secondary). They will:

- Support subject leaders and teachers with curriculum mapping, sequencing, and resource planning.
- Train, coach, and mentor staff to improve classroom practice and subject knowledge.
- Monitor teaching and learning, providing feedback and targeted support.
- Ensure curriculum adaptations meet the needs of pupils within their phase.
- Contribute to whole-school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

### **5.5 Class and Subject Teachers**

Teachers are the primary drivers of curriculum delivery. They will:

- Plan engaging lessons using school templates for long-, medium-, and short-term planning.
- Differentiate learning to meet a range of abilities and autism-related needs.
- Provide lessons with pace, rigour, and challenge that build on prior knowledge.
- Use a variety of teaching approaches and resources to support personalised learning.
- Assess learning continuously, adapting planning to address gaps and misconceptions.
- Foster independence, resilience, and self-regulation within lessons.
- Ensure smooth progression for students across year groups and phases.
- Provide meaningful feedback to students and families on progress and achievements.

### **5.6 Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and Teaching Assistants (TAs)**

HLTAs and TAs play a vital role in enabling pupils to access the curriculum. They will:

- Support teachers in preparing and resourcing learning environments.
- Deliver targeted interventions under the guidance of teachers or therapists.
- Promote independence, scaffolding learning without creating over-reliance.
- Provide behaviour and regulation support, applying strategies consistently.
- Model positive communication, social interaction, and resilience.
- HLTAs may also cover lessons, ensuring continuity of provision.

### **5.7 Therapy Team**

Our in-house therapy team (including Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) work in partnership with teaching staff. They will:

- Contribute to curriculum design by embedding therapeutic strategies into daily teaching.
- Deliver specific interventions where required.
- Provide staff with training, strategies, and resources to meet pupils' individual needs.
- Monitor pupils' progress against therapeutic goals and share outcomes with staff and families.

### 5.8 Students

Students are active participants in their learning. They will:

- Engage fully with the READY framework to support regulation, communication, and independence.
- Participate positively in lessons and school life.
- Communicate their needs, concerns, and achievements to staff.
- Show perseverance, adaptability, and resilience when faced with challenges.
- Demonstrate respect and responsibility towards others.
- Develop pride in their achievements and in their school community.

### 5.9 Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are essential partners in supporting learning. They will:

- Work in partnership with the school to reinforce learning at home.
- Support children in applying skills across community and home settings.
- Communicate regularly with staff to share insights about progress and needs.
- Encourage positive attitudes towards school and learning.
- Celebrate achievements and successes alongside the school.

## 6. Inclusion

At Heathermount, inclusion is at the heart of our curriculum design and delivery. We believe that every pupil has the right to access a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum that enables them to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our approach is rooted in high expectations for all, combined with flexible support and personalised pathways to meet individual needs.

### 6.1 Personalisation

- Learning is carefully planned to reflect each student's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes.
- Teachers use adaptive planning to provide multiple entry points to learning, ensuring all pupils can succeed.
- Differentiation is embedded into lesson design, including scaffolded tasks, visual supports, and extension opportunities.
- Pupils are supported to work towards aspirational targets in line with their starting points, ensuring challenge is balanced with accessibility.

### 6.2 Autism-Specific Approaches

- The **READY framework** underpins daily practice, ensuring students are regulated, confident, and prepared for learning.
- Visual schedules, timetables, and task boards provide predictability and structure.
- Lessons are broken down into manageable steps to avoid cognitive overload.

- Staff use clear, consistent language and explicit instruction to reduce ambiguity.
- Social stories, role-play, and modelling are used to support understanding of social norms and expectations.
- Structured opportunities are provided to develop communication, interaction, and independence.

### **6.3 Therapeutic Integration**

- Our in-house therapy team works collaboratively with teaching staff to embed therapeutic strategies into everyday lessons.
- Occupational therapy input ensures the sensory environment is enabling rather than overwhelming.
- Speech and Language Therapy supports the development of functional communication and social skills.
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) deliver programmes that promote resilience, confidence, and self-esteem.

### **6.4 Environment and Sensory Needs**

- Classrooms are designed to minimise sensory overload, with calm and low-arousal spaces.
- Access to regulation areas and sensory equipment is built into daily routines.
- Staff are trained to recognise early signs of dysregulation and intervene proactively.
- Flexibility within the timetable allows pupils to regulate before returning to learning.

### **6.5 Removing Barriers to Learning**

- We prioritise high-quality teaching strategies over withdrawal, ensuring pupils access the full curriculum wherever possible.
- Interventions are targeted, time-limited, and measured for impact.
- Assistive technology, visual supports, and specialist resources are used to increase access and independence.
- Staff collaborate closely with parents and external agencies to ensure a joined-up approach.

### **6.6 Celebrating Diversity**

- We actively promote acceptance, respect, and understanding of differences.
- Pupils learn about autism — their own and that of others — as part of the READY framework.
- Inclusive enrichment opportunities (e.g., clubs, trips, performances) are adapted so all pupils can participate.
- Success is celebrated in multiple ways, including assemblies, displays, newsletters, and personalised rewards.

### **6.7 Preparing for Life Beyond School**

- The curriculum is designed to equip pupils with the skills they need to thrive in adulthood, including independence, resilience, and employability.
- Pupils have access to work-related learning, vocational pathways, and life skills opportunities.
- Transition planning is personalised, ensuring pupils move into appropriate and ambitious next steps in education, training, or employment.

## **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

At Heathermount, we are committed to continuous improvement in the quality of teaching, learning, and curriculum implementation. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes ensure consistency, high standards, and accountability across the school.

## 7.1 Purpose

The aim of monitoring and evaluation is to:

- Ensure the curriculum intent is being implemented effectively across all subjects and phases.
- Evaluate the impact of the curriculum on pupil outcomes, progress, and engagement.
- Identify strengths in practice and share them across the school.
- Provide targeted support and professional development where improvement is required.
- Ensure statutory requirements are met and progress is aligned with school improvement priorities.

## 7.2 Processes

We use a layered approach to quality assurance:

### Formal Lesson Observations

- Conducted **twice a year** for each teacher.
- Focus on the quality of teaching, use of autism-specific strategies, curriculum delivery, and impact on learning.
- Observations follow a structured proforma linked to school priorities and Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction.
- Feedback is developmental, with clear next steps and follow-up support where required.

### Learning Walks

- Conducted **termly** by members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Provide a snapshot across a range of lessons, subjects, and phases.
- Focus on consistency, classroom environments, engagement, and the application of the READY framework.
- Findings are collated and shared to celebrate strengths and identify whole-school development areas.

### Book Looks (Work Scrutiny)

- Conducted **termly** alongside learning walks.
- Review the quality, consistency, and progression of pupils' work.
- Check that feedback is meaningful, curriculum sequencing is evident, and pupils' achievements are being recorded and celebrated.
- Ensure adaptations and scaffolds are in place to meet individual needs.

### Planning Reviews

- Medium- and long-term planning is reviewed regularly to ensure sequencing, coverage, and progression are in place.
- Phase leaders and subject leads provide feedback and support with refinement.

### Data Analysis

- Termly analysis of assessment outcomes is undertaken to monitor progress against targets.
- Trends are tracked for different cohorts (e.g., by year group, gender, SEND profile) to ensure equity and inclusion.

### Pupil Voice

- Student views are gathered termly to inform curriculum development.

- Pupils contribute to reviews of their own learning, providing insight into engagement, challenge, and support.

### **Parent Feedback**

- Parental views are sought through surveys, review meetings, and informal feedback.
- Findings are used to shape curriculum planning and provision.

### **7.3 Reporting and Accountability**

- Outcomes from monitoring activities are collated into termly reports for the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Board.
- Findings inform whole-school self-evaluation and the School Improvement Plan.
- Successes are celebrated and areas for development are addressed through CPD, coaching, and targeted support.
- Governors monitor progress against curriculum priorities through link visits and regular updates from leaders.

Appendix A  
School Values



## Appendix B: Curriculum Overview

Whole School Curriculum Overview 2025-2026			Compiled By	Craig Drummond	Reviewed By	SLT
			Latest Update	4th September 2025		
	Year Group	Key Stage	Discover (Life skills and ASDAN)	Explorer (Entry Level and Level 1)	Adventure (Level 2 and GCSE)	
<b>P R I M A R Y</b>	Year R	Foundation	National Curriculum English Phonics- Read Write Inc Maths for Life Curriculum Life Skills ASDAN Short Courses Non-Core National Curriculum Subjects (Science/Art/History/Geography/Computing/PE/Drama/ PSHE) RSE READY Sessions Forest school Catering	EYFS Curriculum (Year R Foundation) EYFS English/National Curriculum English (Year 1- Year 2) Phonics- Read Write Inc National Curriculum Maths- White Rose Scheme Forest school/Outdoor learning RSE READY Sessions Catering Computing (Year 1-Year 2)	National Curriculum English Phonics- Read Write Inc National Curriculum Maths- White Rose Scheme Non-Core National Curriculum Subjects (Science/Art/History/Geography/Computing/PE/Drama/ PSHE) RSE READY Sessions Forest school Catering	
	Year 1	KS1				
	Year 2			KS2		
	Year 3					
	Year 4					
	Year 5					
	Year 6					
<b>S E C O N D A R Y</b>	Year 7	KS3	City & Guilds Functional Skills Entry Level 1,2 & 3 ASDAN Short Courses ASDAN Towards Independence ASDAN Work Right ASDAN Personal Progression ASDAN Key Steps ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness ASDAN Wider Key Skills PSHE, RSE, READY Forest school/Outdoor learning	NC English NC Maths NC Science Adapted NC (History, Geography, ICT/Computing, PSHE, RSE, PE, Art, Drama) Music 1-1 Forest School/Horticulture Catering	NC English NC Maths NC Science NC (History, Geography, ICT/Computing, PSHE, RSE, PE, Art, Drama) Music 1-1 Forest School / Horticulture Catering	
	Year 8					
	Year 9					