



Curriculum Policy

Name of policy	Curriculum
Review committee	SLT
Last review date	September 2025
Next review date	September 2026

Purpose

This policy sets out the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum at GUST Independent School. Our learners present with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, alongside a wide range of additional learning needs that has made access to mainstream education inaccessible to them. We are committed to providing a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that meets statutory requirements while responding flexibly to the needs, interests and aspirations of each learner.

Our curriculum aims to enable every learner to experience success, develop independence, and prepare for adulthood. It combines academic learning with vocational opportunities, personal development, and therapeutic support, ensuring that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, skills and resilience to thrive both within and beyond school.

Curriculum Intent

Vision and Principles

At GUST Independent school, our curriculum is designed to re-engage learners with education and empower them to make excellent progress both academically and personally. We recognise the diverse needs of our pupils and provide a broad, balanced, and aspirational offer that ensures every learner can access meaningful opportunities for success.

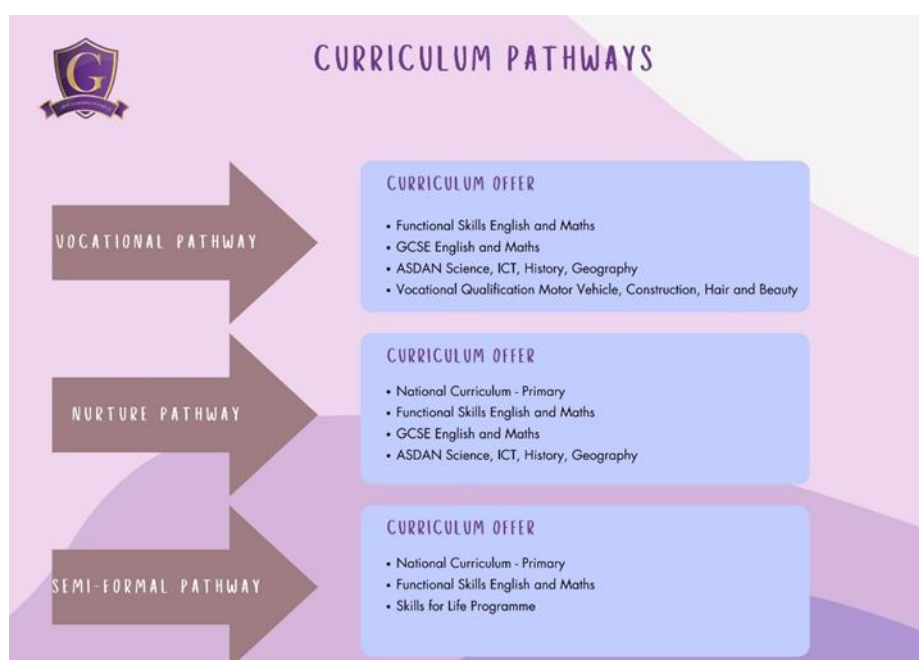
We deliver the National Curriculum alongside vocational learning, functional skills and ASDAN qualifications. Our three distinct curriculum pathways – Vocational, Nurture, and Semi-Formal – enable us to personalise learning so that each student can thrive, build confidence, and achieve their full potential.

Beyond academic achievement, we are committed to preparing our learners for life beyond school. Through an extensive personal development and well-being offer, we equip students with the skills, experience, knowledge, and resilience needed for further education, training, and employment.

Our intent is to create a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment where students with social, emotional, and mental health needs are encouraged to develop a love of learning, build positive relationships, and become confident, responsible citizens ready for the challenges and opportunities of adult life.

Curriculum Pathways

We offer a range of pathways to ensure all learners can access a curriculum appropriate to their needs:



Secondary Vocational Pathway:

On our Secondary vocational pathway learners will follow the National Curriculum to achieve Functional Skills qualifications in English and Maths at a level appropriate to their needs, with the opportunity for all learners to sit GCSE Maths and English in Year 11, where appropriate. Over the course of their studies learners will have the opportunity to work towards ASDAN qualifications in ICT, History and Geography as well as having access to Vocational Qualifications in Motor Vehicle, Construction and Hair and Beauty. All students will receive an extensive PSHE and RSE offer to prepare them for life beyond school.

Nurture Pathway:

Our Nurture Pathway also follows the National Curriculum and is specially adapted to meet the needs of learners in a nurturing, calm and supportive environment. Learners will have access to English, maths, science, humanities, computing, languages and the arts at a level that suits their individual needs. Learners are prepared for accredited outcomes including GCSEs and Functional Skills in both English and Maths, as well as working towards ASDAN qualifications in Science, ICT, History and Geography when the time is right. They will receive an extensive PSHE and RSE offer to prepare them for life beyond school and specialist intervention to support their emotional wellbeing. A trauma informed nurture-based approach underpins all practice on the nurture pathway.

Semi-Formal Pathway:

Our Semi-Formal Pathway is designed for learners who benefit from a highly personalised, developmental approach to learning. It focuses on building functional skills, communication, independence, and real-life application of knowledge in ways that are meaningful and accessible.

The pathway emphasises play-based and experiential learning, alongside the development of essential life skills and holistic growth. Learning is carefully adapted to ensure that pupils make progress at their own pace, developing confidence, resilience, and the skills needed to thrive both in school and beyond. Learners will aim to achieve a functional skills entry level qualification in English and maths and will have access to ASDAN qualifications in ICT, History and Geography, if and when appropriate.

Curriculum Implementation

At GUST Independent School we design learning experiences that are engaging, accessible, and highly personalised, enabling pupils to overcome barriers, build resilience, and rediscover a love of learning. High-quality teaching across our three pathways ensures that pupils make progress through National Curriculum subjects, vocational learning, ASDAN, and GCSEs at a level appropriate to their individual needs and aspirations.

Our school provides a nurturing and inclusive environment where strong, trusting relationships are at the centre of everything we do. This consistency and care give learners the security and confidence they need to succeed.

Personal development is woven throughout the curriculum, enriched by therapeutic approaches, creative and cultural opportunities, outdoor learning, and meaningful family engagement. Staff work collaboratively to monitor progress, celebrate achievement, and adapt provision so that every pupil is fully supported and well prepared for their next steps in education, training, or employment.

Curriculum Structure

At GUST Independent School, we provide a broad and enriching curriculum carefully tailored to the individual needs of our learners. Upon joining the school, each student is placed on one of three distinct pathways—Secondary Vocational, Nurture, or Semi-Formal—ensuring they can access learning in a way that reflects their personal learning style, supports their academic development, and aligns with their interests.

Secondary Vocational Pathway:

Learners on this Pathway follow the Pearson Functional Skills programme to ensure they are fully prepared to sit formal examinations at Entry Level, Level 1, Level 2, or GCSE in English and Maths. A baseline assessment identifies the most appropriate starting point for each learner, and progress is tracked through regular termly assessments. These assessments not only prepare pupils for external accreditation but also provide valuable insight into progress and attainment. Learners receive regular, targeted feedback so that misconceptions are swiftly addressed and understanding is consolidated. Teaching is carefully scaffolded to build confidence, promote independence, and make strong connections to prior learning.

Alongside their core studies, pupils work towards ASDAN qualifications through project-based learning. These projects provide a broad and practical understanding of subject areas, encouraging the development of problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills. Staff work closely with learners to provide individualised support, ensuring that knowledge is secure and that time is given to reinforce learning where necessary.

Specialist vocational qualifications are delivered in our dedicated departments following the Pearson and ABC programme; these are led by experienced and skilled staff in each vocational area. Learners build portfolios of evidence that demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and achievements, enabling them to secure recognised Level 1 qualifications. This pathway not only equips pupils with academic and vocational outcomes but also prepares them for the next stage of education, training, or employment.

Nurture Pathway:

Upon joining the Nurture Pathway learners complete baseline assessments to determine what academic level they are working at. This allows staff to tailor provision to individual needs, focusing on each learner's starting point and stage in their learning journey rather than their chronological age. Learners are then taught the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to their ability, with carefully structured support to ensure engagement and progress.

On the Nurture Pathway, learners working within the primary curriculum follow the Pearson Wordsmith Scheme of Work for English, providing a structured, sequential approach that ensures full curriculum coverage. Phonics is taught explicitly using Toe-by-Toe and the Read Write Inc programme. Additional support in literacy acquisition and reading fluency is offered through the Lexia intervention which all learners take part in 3 times a week. In maths, learners engage in daily Big Maths sessions, which offer targeted support to address gaps in understanding caused by disrupted or missed education, as well as making progress through the national curriculum at a rate that suits individual needs. Regular assessments ensure staff can accurately monitor progress, identify misconceptions, and scaffold learning effectively.

In addition, pupils studying at a primary level receive explicit instruction in Science, History, and Geography using the Pearson Scheme of Work, and ICT through the STEM Learning Scheme of Work. This ensures learning is carefully sequenced, scaffolded, and accessible, enabling pupils

to make excellent progress across a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the National Curriculum Framework.

Learners working beyond the primary curriculum follow the Pearson Functional Skills programme, ensuring they are well prepared to sit formal examinations at Entry Level, Level 1, Level 2, or GCSE in English and Maths. Alongside their core studies, pupils also work towards ASDAN qualifications through project-based learning. These projects promote practical understanding across subject areas while developing essential skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and communication. Staff provide close, individualised support to secure knowledge, reinforce learning, and enable pupils to grow in confidence and independence.

All learners on the Nurture Pathway have regular access to the arts throughout the term, and they also benefit from a Collapsed Curriculum week each half term. During this time, teaching is dedicated to music, art and design, and languages, ensuring learners have rich opportunities to explore creativity, develop cultural awareness, and express themselves in meaningful and enjoyable ways.

Semi-Formal Pathway:

Learners join the Semi-Formal Pathway when traditional teaching approaches are not meeting their needs, and they require specialist intervention to make progress in small, carefully structured steps. Teaching is highly differentiated, personalised, and scaffolded, ensuring that every pupil can access learning and experience success.

The curriculum is tailored to each learner, focusing on progress within EYFS and Key Stage 1 frameworks of the National Curriculum in English and Maths. This approach ensures that pupils work at a level appropriate to their stage of development rather than chronological age. A holistic approach underpins the pathway, with individualised support provided where needed to address barriers to learning and promote emotional, social, and academic growth.

All learners complete baseline assessments on entry to identify gaps in knowledge and establish a clear starting point for their learning journey. This informs individual targets and personalised planning. Progress in Maths is further supported through Big Maths, a structured approach that enables pupils to develop core numeracy skills and build confidence step by step. Progress in English is further supported through participation in the Lexia intervention, Colourful Semantics and using Toe-by-Toe Phonics and RWI approaches to support literacy acquisition.

Learners on the Semi-Formal Pathway also engage in real-life learning experiences and a structured Skills for Life programme beyond the classroom. This includes practical activities such as cooking, budgeting, work-related projects, community visits, and independent living tasks, designed to develop essential life skills and personal confidence. By learning through meaningful, hands-on experiences, pupils build communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and resilience, equipping them with the knowledge and independence needed to thrive in adulthood and prepare for life beyond school.

Personal development and wellbeing:

Fundamental to the curriculum offer at GUST Independent School is the personal development and wellbeing of our students. We offer an enriched personal development curriculum which ensures that we are supporting the holistic wellbeing of all learners to enable them to participate as active members of society upon leaving GUST.



All students, regardless of their pathway, take part in our Personal Development and Wellbeing curriculum. This provision equips learners with the essential skills, knowledge, and experiences they need to thrive both during their time at GUST and in life beyond school, supporting their personal growth, resilience, and preparation for adulthood.

Curriculum Impact

At GUST Independent School, the impact of our curriculum is measured not only in terms of academic outcomes but also in the personal growth, resilience, and wellbeing of every learner. By offering highly personalised pathways—Secondary Vocational, Nurture, and Semi-Formal—we ensure that all pupils can access learning that is meaningful, engaging, and tailored to their individual needs.

Through high-quality teaching, therapeutic support, and a nurturing environment built on strong relationships, learners are empowered to overcome barriers, rediscover a love of learning, and make sustained progress from their individual starting points. The breadth of our offer—from National Curriculum subjects and vocational qualifications to ASDAN, GCSEs, and Skills for Life—provides a rich foundation for future education, training, and employment.

Equally, the integration of personal development and wellbeing across all pathways ensures that learners are not only academically prepared but also socially and emotionally equipped to thrive in life beyond school. We view success holistically: achievement is measured by the qualifications our learners gain, the confidence they develop, the independence they build, and the positive transitions they make into adulthood.

The impact of our curriculum can be seen in how learners:

- Make measurable progress in English, Maths, and across the wider curriculum, from individual starting points.
- Gain nationally recognised qualifications (e.g. Functional Skills, GCSEs, ASDAN, vocational awards) that reflect their abilities and aspirations.
- Develop practical, transferable skills such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and resilience.
- Build independence through structured opportunities to practise life skills, vocational tasks, and real-world experiences.
- Demonstrate improved emotional regulation, confidence, and self-esteem through consistent therapeutic and relational support.
- Engage positively with their peers, families, and the wider community, becoming active participants in society.
- Transition successfully to their next stage of education, training, or employment, equipped with both academic knowledge and personal confidence.

In essence, the impact of our curriculum is that learners leave GUST Independent School, not only with the qualifications and skills they need, but also with the resilience, independence, and wellbeing required to succeed in the next chapter of their lives.

Evaluating Effectiveness

The impact of our curriculum is evaluated through a range of robust quality assurance processes, including termly assessments, lesson observations, learning walks, book reviews, learner voice activities, and feedback from parents and carers. Governors are provided with regular reports on pupil progress and curriculum outcomes, ensuring strong accountability and oversight. To maintain relevance and effectiveness, the

curriculum is reviewed annually and adapted where necessary, so it continues to meet the evolving needs of all learners.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Our curriculum is fully inclusive and designed to remove barriers to learning. Learners working well below age-related expectations are supported through the semi-formal curriculum, ensuring they access a personalised and meaningful education that allows small steps of progress to be made. Equality and diversity are embedded throughout the curriculum to promote respect, tolerance and cultural awareness.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Senior Leadership Team: Overall responsibility for curriculum design, implementation and evaluation.
- Subject Leaders/Pathway Leads: Responsibility for curriculum planning, delivery and monitoring within their areas.
- Class Teachers and Support Staff: Responsibility for high-quality teaching and personalisation to meet learner needs.
- Governors: Monitor the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum and hold leaders to account.