



# Manchester Young Lives Curriculum Policy

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Manchester Young Lives offers full-time education at Years 10 and 11 for young people who have been either permanently excluded from mainstream school, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Our student cohort have experienced barriers to accessing mainstream education for a wide range of often complex reasons, and we take in students at any point throughout the academic year.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced, and ambitious. It empowers our students to access a wide range of learning experiences so that they can become more resilient and more able to make informed choices on their next steps. A core theme that our curriculum is designed around is one of wellbeing. As per the 2017 report by Scotland government into attainment for young people, 'Tackling the attainment gap' it was found that:

*"Nurturing approaches in schools which focus on building strong relationships with children and families has been found to improve social, emotional and educational attainment."*

We understand that to become successful adults, young people need to feel emotionally secure so that they can make positive choices in the future. A core part of what we do is to spend time building trusting relationships with the students based on mutual respect, as well as providing a curriculum that reignites students confidence and curiosity for learning.

It is linked to the following policies:

- SEN
- Gifted & Talented
- Relationship, Sex & Health Education
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural
- Post 16 & IAG

## 2. AIMS AND VALUES

The aims of our School are to:

1. Offer a high-quality programme of education to young people not attending mainstream secondary school, which includes the core subjects for the National Curriculum so that they are not disadvantaged from achieving comparative outcomes from their peers in mainstream school.
2. Identify, address, and provide knowledge and skills to work with the barriers to education that our young people face. This can include, but is not limited to, behaviour issues, relationships and attitudes to school, bullying, school avoidance, anxiety and mental health issues, learning difficulties (that may or may not be undiagnosed), caring responsibilities, safeguarding and complex home lives.
3. Develop individual routes for an appropriate next step in learning. For some this may be re-integration into mainstream school, for others it may be further specialised provision. This also includes routes into post-16 education and training.

### 3. REVIEW

The curriculum will be reviewed annually, with approval from our Board of Trustees, taking into account any changes to legislation and the changing requirements of our diverse cohort.

It is recognised that curriculum planning is a collaboration between senior leaders, the Board of Trustees, school staff at all levels, plus the students themselves. Staff, students, and parents/carers will be consulted in order to provide a curriculum which directly reflects their needs.

### 4. INTENT

It is likely that a student will spend a relatively short amount of time with us, in many cases students join us in the midst of their GCSE years, so it is important that our curriculum has a strong focus on embedding the core skills that a person needs to achieve good outcomes and to participate positively as active, safe and healthy citizens.

The attainment levels of our student cohort are typically very low, with predicted grades from their home schools normally being below a Grade 4 and in many cases expected to achieve entry level or Grade 1 at GCSE. In many cases our students have been out of education for a long time, sometimes missing several months or even years from a full-time educational setting.

Overall, the intent of our curriculum is to balance a solid core education alongside work to support their personal, social, and emotional development.

The curriculum:

- Takes into account current legislation, as well as local and national priorities.
- Is broad, balanced, relevant and engaging to allow students to maintain contact with key areas of the National Curriculum.
- Develops literacy and numeracy, utilising opportunities in subject areas to develop students' mathematical and language fluency.
- Is well sequenced, so that students can build on learning as they move upwards throughout the years.
- Is consistent with British Values of democracy, the rule of law, tolerance and mutual respect for other cultures, as well as supporting equality and diversity.
- Promotes all students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Makes account for individualised learning plans as identified through any EHCP's, other SEND learning requirements, as well as any barriers to education the student may be facing at that moment in time such as effects of ACEs.
- Sets challenging targets, so that students know how to improve.
- Provides opportunities for students to celebrate success and achievement.

- Supports students towards the Gatsby benchmarks and the world of work

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION**

We aim to deliver our curriculum through a wide offer that provides opportunities to gain qualifications and accreditation wherever possible to enable good outcomes for post-16.

Our current curriculum offer includes core subjects in English, Maths & Science, additionally History, Physical Education, Food Technology and PSHE & Citizenship including Relationship, Sex & Health Education. We aim to give our students a fully rounded education that will support them as they progress on to further education, training or apprenticeship.

Upon arrival with us at Manchester Young Lives, which may be at any point through the school year, we undergo a robust assessment of the student's ability level so we can set meaningful targets for their improvement. Baselines will be conducted in all subjects, as well as SEND baselines for reading, spelling, visual processing, and mathematical ability where appropriate. Gaps in learning will be identified so that individualised learning plans in the form of the Pupil Support Plan can be generated.

Please see our SEND policy for further details of how we support special educational needs in our offer.

We recognise the impact of various adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) and multiple safeguarding concerns, plus any social, emotional or mental health difficulties that our young people may be facing in their daily lives. Therefore, our delivery is designed around, small nurturing learning groups at all three sites, with groups of no more than ten per lesson. All sites have access to a dedicated pastoral manager that will lead on the students' behaviour, wellbeing and maintaining an inclusive learning environment. All sites also benefit from a dedicated keyworker as HLTA that is trained to support teaching and learning as well as students' personal development.

Our team of qualified teachers are all trained in SEND and ACEs, so that lessons can be differentiated to support students as well as stretch and challenge them. Please see our Gifted and Talented policy for further details.

Staff will receive CPD throughout the school year in order to make sure the delivery methods for implementing the curriculum are up to date and effective.

Students will follow an agreed timetable that matches the requirements for the National Curriculum in terms of contact time. Their timetable also includes organised trips and visitors to enrich their learning across different subjects, particularly in the world of work, their community, and the world they will grow up in. Practical and creative learning experiences are encouraged wherever possible.

Student feedback is implemented via our weekly 'Student Voice' sessions that involve them with school life. Students will also receive regular feedback from

their teachers in the form of constructive marking, verbal feedback, 1:1 feedback and target setting. Further details can be found in our Marking and Feedback Policy.

Staff meetings take place twice daily, so that staff can discuss the learning that should be taking place, and how it is implemented, to ensure it directly reflects what the students' need and what will engage and excite them with learning. We work closely with parents, carers, and other external agencies, which includes communicating about their learning and how best to support them.

## **6. IMPACT**

The effectiveness and impact of our curriculum plan is evidenced in the following ways:

### **Monitoring and feedback – Staff**

The Curriculum Lead is responsible for the progress and effectiveness of the teaching team and will lead on deep dives at a subject and centre level, book scrutinies, and also lesson observations to ensure a high quality of teaching is taking place.

Other members of the school management team, as well as the Board of Trustees, will take part in regular learning walks to effectively monitor the quality of the learning environment and so that they can offer their own insights into the running of the school.

Student feedback will also be utilised by school management team to check the impact of our delivery on the pupils. Strengths and areas to work on are noted and fed back to staff in 1:1s.

Staff all have specific appraisal targets that are linked to these quality measures so that they can improve their practice and receive further training and support.

### **Monitoring and feedback – students**

Students will receive timely feedback from their subject teachers in accordance with our marking and feedback policy. Feedback will be given that sets challenging targets and details how they can improve.

Students will undergo baseline assessments to set targets, and half termly assessments to check attainment towards achieving their qualifications. The results of these are tracked and analysed regularly.

Students who are struggling to meet their targets are given 1:1 intervention in a subject or topic area, these run in accordance with our Academic Interventions Policy and can be very diverse. The plan, do and review of these interventions

are recorded and collated by the Curriculum Lead to analyse the impact of this targeted work.

## **Outcomes**

Exam and attainment results are analysed by characteristic and group to compare the impact of learning over time, and to spot any gaps in achievement so plans can be made to address it.

Overall, our students go on to achieve a good number of qualifications with us (at least four GCSEs) given their very low starting points. This information is tracked and analysed annually so we can measure the impact of what we do.

Other measures than attainment are also taken into account to assess the impact of our curriculum, including attendance, SEND outcomes, FTE's and improvement in personal development outcomes such as communication, confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Examples of student work are displayed across the sites and through our social media channels to celebrate achievement in creative and physical areas as well as academic pursuits.

Destinations for our students is important for measuring impact, and we track our students for a period of up to one year after they leave, so their progressions into education, training or employment are recorded. Those who are NEET or at risk of NEET will be given extra support after they leave, further details are available in our Careers Policy. The majority of our students reduce their risk of becoming NEET whilst they are with us and go on to remain in education, training or employment. Please see our most up to date Destinations report for current data.