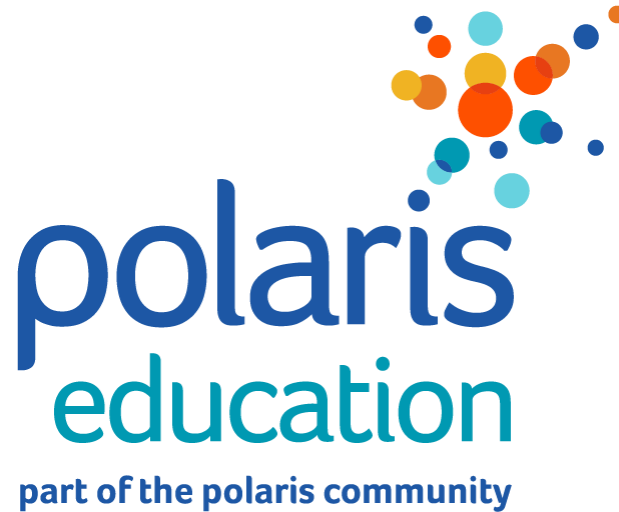




Curriculum Policy

This policy sets out the Polaris Education curriculum model: ambitious, inclusive, therapeutic, personalised and focused on preparing pupils for adulthood and future success.

Policy owner:	Polaris Education
Approved by:	Managing Director of Education, on behalf of the Proprietor
Applies to:	All Polaris Education schools, leaders, teachers, support staff, volunteers and relevant stakeholders
Date approved:	August 2026
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Version No:	4
Associated Documents:	This policy should be read alongside all other relevant policies, procedures and guidance documents, including: Assessment, Teaching and Learning, SEND, Safeguarding, Behaviour, Equality, RSHE, Careers, Complaints, Health and Safety, Curriculum Maps
Regulatory alignment:	Independent School Standards; SEND Code of Practice; Equality Act 2010; statutory safeguarding requirements

All group companies are detailed in the current legal structure.

This policy forms part of the Group Quality Management system ISO 9001.

Contents

Contents	2
1. Purpose and Scope	3
2. Definition of Curriculum	3
3. Curriculum Vision.....	3
4. Curriculum Intent	4
4.1 Core Aims	4
4.2 Foundation Skills.....	4
5. Curriculum Principles.....	5
6. Areas of Learning Required by the Independent School Standards	5
7. Curriculum Structure and Pathways	6
7.1 Subject Coverage.....	6
7.2 Curriculum Pathways	6
8. Curriculum Implementation.....	7
8.1 Adaptive Teaching	7
8.2 Therapeutic, Trauma-Informed and Attachment-Aware Practice	7
8.3 Communication-Centred Curriculum.....	7
8.4 Cognitive and Metacognitive Supports	8
8.5 Enrichment and Real-Life Learning	8
9. Inclusion, SEND and Equality of Access	8
10. Assessment, Progress and Reporting	8
10.1 Assessment Approach	8
10.2 What Assessment Covers.....	9
11. Curriculum Impact.....	9
12. Preparation for Adulthood and Wider Opportunities.....	9
13. Governance, Accountability and Leadership	10
14. Resources, Staffing and Professional Development	11
15. Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Review	11
15.1 Policy Review	12
16. Evidence of Curriculum Quality and Impact	12
17. Compliance and Linked Expectations	12
18. Final Strategic Statement	12
Appendix A: One-Page Staff Summary	13
Appendix B: Communication Approach Summary	13
Appendix C: Review Dates	13

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how Polaris Education designs, implements, monitors and evaluates a high-quality curriculum across all education settings. It establishes the shared expectations for curriculum intent, implementation, impact, assessment, quality assurance, resources and accountability.

The policy applies to all Polaris Education schools and to all staff involved in curriculum leadership, teaching, assessment, pupil support and quality assurance. It is intended to support consistency across the group while allowing each school to adapt curriculum delivery to its local context, pupil profile and specialist provision. The curriculum across Polaris Education schools is designed to ensure that it:

- meets the Independent School Standards and supports schools to evidence compliance at all times;
- is broad, balanced, ambitious and relevant to pupils' needs and aspirations;
- provides access to National Curriculum subjects, adapted where necessary;
- addresses barriers to learning arising from SEND, SEMH, trauma, disrupted attachment and gaps in prior learning;
- supports pupils to make progress from their starting points, including towards EHCP outcomes;
- prepares pupils for adulthood, independence, further education, employment and positive participation in society.

2. Definition of Curriculum

Polaris Education defines the curriculum as the totality of pupils' experiences that occur through the educational process. This includes what is formally planned and taught, and also what pupils learn through relationships, routines, culture, expectations, environments and enrichment.

Curriculum element	Meaning in Polaris Education
Explicit curriculum	The planned sequence of teaching, learning objectives, subjects, qualifications, schemes of work, timetables and assessed learning.
Hidden curriculum	The values, behaviours, routines, relationships, communication expectations and social norms pupils experience and learn within school.
Therapeutic curriculum	The planned and embedded relational, emotional, communication, sensory and regulatory support that enables pupils to feel safe, engage and learn.
Enrichment curriculum	Experiences beyond formal lessons, including community learning, outdoor learning, cultural experiences, careers encounters, visits, clubs and wider opportunities.

3. Curriculum Vision

The Polaris curriculum is inclusive, ambitious and transformative. It recognises that pupils may arrive with complex needs, disrupted educational histories, gaps in learning, reduced confidence, communication barriers, social and emotional difficulties, or experiences of trauma and adversity. The curriculum therefore addresses both academic learning and the developmental foundations needed to access learning successfully.

- Every pupil can learn, progress and succeed when the curriculum is matched carefully to their needs.
- Relationships, regulation and communication are central to learning readiness.
- Academic ambition and therapeutic support are complementary and should operate together.
- Pupils should leave Polaris with stronger knowledge, skills, confidence, independence and resilience.
- Curriculum design must be purposeful, sequenced, assessed and reviewed for impact.

4. Curriculum Intent

The intent of the Polaris curriculum is to enable pupils to access, engage with and make progress through an ambitious, carefully adapted curriculum that develops knowledge, skills, communication, independence and wellbeing.

4.1 Core Aims

- secure and strengthen foundation skills that enable pupils to access wider learning;
- provide a broad and balanced education that includes all required areas of learning;
- support pupils to make measurable progress from their individual starting points;
- promote literacy, numeracy, communication, social understanding and independence;
- develop pupils' self-regulation, resilience, confidence and ability to form positive relationships;
- ensure curriculum pathways support qualifications, accreditation and meaningful next steps where appropriate;
- prepare pupils for adulthood, employment, further education, community participation and life beyond school.

4.2 Foundation Skills

Foundation skills are prioritised as both curriculum content and enabling skills. For many pupils with SEND, gaps in these areas can present significant barriers to learning. The curriculum therefore explicitly teaches, practises and generalises these skills across subjects and settings.

Foundation skill	Examples	Why it matters
Communication	Expressive/receptive language, AAC, Makaton, vocabulary, choice-making, self-advocacy	Enables pupils to express needs, engage socially, access learning and reduce frustration.
Literacy and numeracy	Reading, phonics, writing, functional literacy, number, money, time, measurement	Supports independence, qualifications, employment and daily living.
Cognitive development	Attention, memory, processing, problem-solving, sequencing, metacognition	Improves learning behaviours, task completion and application of knowledge.
Social, emotional and behavioural skills	Self-regulation, emotional literacy, resilience, interaction, repair, cooperation	Promotes readiness to learn, wellbeing and positive relationships.
Physical and sensory development	Fine/gross motor skills, sensory integration, regulation strategies, movement breaks	Supports access to learning, participation and emotional regulation.

5. Curriculum Principles

- **Personalised:** Curriculum planning begins with pupils' needs, strengths, interests, starting points, EHCP outcomes and aspirations.
- **Broad and balanced:** Pupils experience the required areas of learning and access National Curriculum subjects, adapted appropriately.
- **Ambitious:** Staff hold high expectations and design learning that builds knowledge, confidence and independence.
- **Inclusive and equitable:** Barriers are identified and removed through adaptive teaching, assistive resources, specialist support and reasonable adjustments.
- **Therapeutic and relational:** Safety, relationships, co-regulation and attachment-aware practice underpin engagement and learning.
- **Communication-centred:** Communication is prioritised across every lesson, environment and interaction.
- **Preparation for adulthood:** Learning is connected to real-life application, independence, community participation and next steps.
- **Evidence-informed:** Assessment, QA, moderation and evaluation are used to refine curriculum design and improve impact.

6. Areas of Learning Required by the Independent School Standards

Polaris Education ensures that pupils experience the areas of learning required within the Independent School Standards. These areas are delivered through discrete subjects, cross-curricular learning, enrichment, therapeutic provision and personalised pathways.

Required area	Curriculum focus	Subjects / provision that may contribute	Examples of evidence
Linguistic	Speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, communication and interaction.	English; literacy; phonics; reading; writing; MFL where appropriate; Makaton; AAC; SALT programmes; communication interventions; language development across all subjects.	Curriculum plans; reading records; writing samples; communication targets; AAC/Makaton use; SALT recommendations; pupil voice.
Mathematical	Number, calculation, reasoning, problem-solving, shape, space, measure and functional numeracy.	Mathematics; functional skills; life skills; science; DT; food technology; enterprise; money, time, measurement and data activities.	Maths assessments; functional numeracy tasks; pupil work; accreditation; applied numeracy evidence.
Scientific	Knowledge and understanding of nature, materials, forces, health, enquiry, observation and investigation.	Science; environmental studies; outdoor learning; food technology; STEM; practical investigations; health education.	Science books; practical investigation records; photographs; teacher assessment; pupil explanation.
Technological	Use of technology, digital literacy, design, making, evaluating and problem-solving through tools and systems.	Computing/ICT; Design and Technology; assistive technology; creative media; vocational	Computing portfolios; DT products; digital work; e-safety learning; project evaluations.

		pathways; food technology; practical projects.	
Human and Social	Understanding people, communities, cultures, history, geography, belief, citizenship, relationships and society.	History; Geography; RE; PSHE/RSHE; Citizenship; careers; community learning; life skills; British Values and SMSC.	PSHE records; humanities work; careers logs; community learning evidence; pupil discussions.
Physical	Physical skills, coordination, health, fitness, movement, sensory regulation and wellbeing.	PE; sport; outdoor learning; sensory circuits; OT-informed programmes; movement breaks; physical development interventions.	PE assessment; OT targets; sensory plans; participation logs; health and fitness records.
Aesthetic and Creative	Imagination, creativity, expression, performance, design, appreciation and personal response.	Art and Design; music; drama; dance; creative writing; photography; enrichment activities; cultural visits.	Creative portfolios; performances; displays; photographs; pupil reflections.

7. Curriculum Structure and Pathways

Each Polaris school provides a curriculum structure that reflects its pupil profile, phases and specialist context, while maintaining group expectations for breadth, balance, ambition, assessment and review.

Across Polaris Education schools, pupils are taught within developmental and curriculum stages rather than strictly by chronological year groups. Curriculum organisation reflects pupils' learning needs, readiness and progress, ensuring that teaching is appropriately matched to individual profiles.

Pupils follow different curriculum pathways according to their developmental needs, cognitive ability and the gap between current attainment and age-related expectations. Placement within pathways is reviewed regularly through assessment and professional judgement.

7.1 Subject Coverage

- English and communication
- Mathematics and functional numeracy
- Science and enquiry
- Computing, digital literacy and online safety
- Humanities, including history, geography and religious education
- PSHE, RSHE, citizenship, SMSC and British Values
- Physical education, sport, health, sensory and movement opportunities
- Creative and aesthetic subjects, including art, music, drama and design
- Design and technology, practical and vocational learning where appropriate
- Careers, life skills and preparation for adulthood.

7.2 Curriculum Pathways

- engagement and readiness-to-learn pathways for pupils requiring intensive relational, regulatory or communication support;

- foundation skills pathways focusing on communication, literacy, numeracy, cognition, independence and regulation;
- subject-based pathways linked to National Curriculum expectations and school curriculum progression;
- accredited pathways, including GCSEs, Functional Skills, vocational qualifications or alternative awards where appropriate;
- preparation for adulthood pathways with life skills, community access, careers, independence and transition planning.

8. Curriculum Implementation

Implementation is the process by which curriculum intent is translated into high-quality teaching, learning, experiences, support and assessment. Polaris expects curriculum implementation to be purposeful, adaptive, relational and consistently evaluated.

8.1 Adaptive Teaching

- beginning with a clear understanding of each pupil's starting points, needs, EHCP outcomes and barriers;
- using scaffolding, modelling, guided practice, worked examples and accessible resources;
- adjusting pace, task design, communication method and level of support;
- planning opportunities for overlearning, retrieval, rehearsal, generalisation and independence;
- providing stretch and challenge in line with pupils' abilities and aspirations.

8.2 Therapeutic, Trauma-Informed and Attachment-Aware Practice

- predictable routines, clear transitions and emotionally safe environments;
- co-regulation, emotion coaching and restorative/relational repair;
- connection before correction and an understanding of behaviour as communication;
- consideration of trauma triggers, sensory needs, attachment needs and emotional histories;
- close working with therapeutic professionals and consistent implementation of recommended strategies.

8.3 Communication-Centred Curriculum

- Makaton used consistently where appropriate to support understanding and expression;
- AAC systems, including low-tech and high-tech options where appropriate;
- visual supports, symbols, objects of reference, communication boards and visual timetables;
- structured talk, modelling, vocabulary teaching and language-rich environments;
- emotion-focused communication to help pupils label, share and regulate feelings;
- staff responding positively to all communication attempts and creating frequent opportunities for pupils to communicate.

8.4 Cognitive and Metacognitive Supports

- chunking and task breakdown;
- repetition, retrieval practice and overlearning;
- visual scaffolds, checklists and prompts;
- explicit teaching of thinking strategies, problem-solving and reflection;
- structured routines that reduce cognitive load and increase independence.

8.5 Enrichment and Real-Life Learning

- community-based learning where appropriate;
- educational visits, cultural experiences and outdoor learning;
- enterprise, careers and vocational experiences;
- opportunities to practise communication, independence, travel, money, social interaction and self-advocacy in meaningful contexts.

9. Inclusion, SEND and Equality of Access

The curriculum is designed to remove barriers to learning and promote equity of access and opportunity for all pupils. Most pupils within Polaris Education have individual needs that require careful planning, adaptation and specialist support.

- use EHCP outcomes, assessments and professional advice to plan provision;
- make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act;
- differentiate content, resources, communication, environment and assessment methods;
- ensure SEND, EAL, medical, sensory, communication and mental health needs are considered;
- review the impact of interventions and adapt support where progress is limited;
- work collaboratively with families, carers, placing authorities and external professionals.

10. Assessment, Progress and Reporting

Assessment at Polaris is ongoing, highly individualised and used to inform teaching, intervention, curriculum design and next steps. Assessment recognises academic progress and wider developmental progress, particularly in foundation skills, engagement, regulation, independence and communication.

10.1 Assessment Approach

- baseline assessment on entry, including prior attainment, gaps, needs, EHCP outcomes and readiness to learn;
- daily formative assessment through questioning, observation, work, interaction and pupil response;
- tracking of small steps of progress, including foundation skills and EHCP outcomes;
- use of Key Performance Indicators or equivalent tracking where appropriate;
- termly/periodic reporting to families, carers, leaders and relevant stakeholders;

- moderation to support accuracy and consistency of teacher assessment.

10.2 What Assessment Covers

- academic knowledge, skills and understanding;
- communication, interaction and language development;
- functional literacy and numeracy;
- engagement, motivation and readiness to learn;
- self-regulation, emotional literacy and relational progress;
- independence, life skills and preparation for adulthood;
- progress towards EHCP outcomes and individual targets.

11. Curriculum Impact

The impact of the curriculum is judged by the extent to which pupils make meaningful progress from their starting points and are better prepared for their next stage of education, training, employment, independence and adulthood.

- develop effective communication appropriate to their needs;
- gain functional literacy and numeracy skills that support independence;
- increase engagement, confidence and readiness to learn;
- improve emotional regulation, resilience and social interaction;
- make progress towards EHCP outcomes and individual targets;
- access relevant accreditation, qualifications or recognised outcomes where appropriate;
- develop independence, life skills and community participation;
- transition successfully to next placements, further education, training, employment or adulthood pathways.

12. Preparation for Adulthood and Wider Opportunities

Preparation for adulthood is woven through the curriculum and is not limited to a single subject or phase. Pupils are supported to apply knowledge and foundation skills in meaningful contexts.

- independence and daily living skills;
- communication and self-advocacy;
- friendships, relationships, community participation and social understanding;
- careers education, employability, enterprise and vocational learning;
- health, wellbeing, physical activity, safety and online safety;
- community learning and enrichment;
- transition planning and next-step preparation.

13. Governance, Accountability and Leadership

The Proprietor retains ultimate accountability for ensuring that the curriculum is compliant, effectively implemented and delivering positive outcomes. Operational responsibilities are delegated through a clear leadership and quality assurance structure.

Area	Proprietor / Managing Director of Education	Senior QA Education Lead	Executive Headteacher	Headteacher	Teacher
Curriculum	Sets strategic vision; assures statutory alignment and group consistency; approves policy.	Quality assures intent, implementation and impact across schools.	Ensures coherence, ambition and consistency across schools within remit.	Designs, leads and implements school curriculum based on pupil need.	Plans and delivers lessons aligned to curriculum and pupil needs.
Teaching and learning	Defines group expectations for high-quality teaching and pedagogy.	Evaluates teaching quality through reviews and evidence triangulation.	Drives consistency and develops leadership capacity.	Leads, monitors and improves teaching quality.	Delivers adaptive, engaging and effective teaching.
Assessment	Sets expectations for assessment, data use, reporting and outcomes.	Assures accuracy, moderation and data integrity.	Ensures consistency of assessment systems across schools.	Implements tracking, moderation and intervention systems.	Assesses learning, gives feedback and adapts teaching.
Policy	Accountable for approval, review and ISSR compliance.	Audits implementation and identifies gaps.	Ensures consistent application across schools.	Implements and monitors policy locally.	Applies policy in classroom practice.
Resources	Allocates strategic priorities and ensures sufficient capacity.	Evaluates effectiveness of resource use through QA.	Supports deployment across schools to drive improvement.	Manages staffing, timetable, CPD, interventions and resources.	Uses resources effectively to support access and progress.
R/A	A – group-wide standards and compliance.	R/A – QA accuracy and evaluation quality.	A – performance across schools within remit.	A – school-level quality and outcomes.	R – classroom delivery and pupil progress.
Monitoring activities	Strategic QA reviews; dashboards; board/proprietor reporting; external benchmarking.	Lessons and intervention observation, work scrutiny; moderation; QA visits; triangulation.	Cross-school reviews; leadership meetings; data analysis; coaching headteachers.	Observations; learning walks; work scrutiny; pupil voice; data reviews; intervention reviews.	Formative assessment; marking/feedback; reflection; moderation; CPD.
Frequency	Termly reports; annual strategy review; ongoing data monitoring; 3-year policy review.	Cycle of in person visits. Online support and moderation	Half-termly data reviews and meetings; termly reviews.	Weekly informal monitoring; half-termly data/scrutiny; termly formal reviews.	Daily assessment; weekly reflection; termly moderation.

Expected outcomes	Consistent compliance, reduced variation and improved outcomes across provisions.	Accurate self-evaluation and targeted improvement.	Improved outcomes and consistency across schools.	Effective curriculum delivery, good teaching and strong progress.	Pupils engage, progress and address gaps quickly.
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14. Resources, Staffing and Professional Development

Polaris Education recognises that effective curriculum delivery depends on appropriate resources, skilled staff and ongoing professional development.

- appropriate staffing structures, including teachers, support staff and specialist input;
- access to therapeutic expertise and external professional guidance where required;
- communication resources, including visual supports, AAC and Makaton training where appropriate;
- sensory, regulation and specialist SEND resources matched to pupil needs;
- curriculum materials that are age-appropriate, accessible and ambitious;
- CPD in adaptive teaching, SEND, trauma-informed practice, assessment, subject knowledge and safeguarding.

15. Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Review

Monitoring and quality assurance are designed to ensure that curriculum intent is implemented effectively and leads to positive impact. Evidence is triangulated so that evaluation is accurate, fair and improvement-focused.

Activity	Frequency	Lead responsibility	Evidence
Formative assessment and responsive teaching	Daily	Teachers	Planning adjustments, pupil work, observations, assessment notes.
Staff reflection and curriculum discussion	Weekly	Teachers / Subject leads / SLT	Meeting notes, planning, intervention adjustments.
Progress tracking and intervention review	Half-termly	Headteacher / SLT	Data, EHCP target review, intervention impact records.
Learning walks, work scrutiny and pupil voice	Half-termly / termly	Headteacher / SLT / QA	Monitoring records, action points, pupil feedback.
Moderation and assessment QA	Termly	Senior QA Education Lead / SLT	Moderation records, assessment validation, exemplification.
Curriculum deep dives and QA reviews	Termly / as scheduled	Senior QA Education Lead	QA reports, triangulated evidence, improvement actions.
Whole-school curriculum evaluation	Annual	Headteacher / Executive Headteacher / MD Education	SEF, school improvement plan, annual curriculum review.

15.1 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, regulation, inspection expectations, pupil need, organisational structure or best practice. Local curriculum content and implementation remain under continuous monitoring and review by school leaders.

16. Evidence of Curriculum Quality and Impact

- curriculum maps, progression documents, schemes of work and subject plans;
- individual pupil plans, EHCP outcomes, target reviews and annual review evidence;
- assessment data, KPI tracking or equivalent progress information;
- pupil work, portfolios, photographs, practical outcomes and accreditation evidence;
- learning walk, observation, work scrutiny and pupil voice records;
- moderation records and assessment validation;
- QA reports, school self-evaluation and improvement plans;
- attendance, engagement, behaviour, wellbeing and transition data where relevant;
- parent/carers, pupil, placing authority and professional feedback.

17. Compliance and Linked Expectations

This policy supports compliance with the Independent School Standards, particularly the quality of education and leadership and management standards. It should be read alongside relevant statutory guidance and internal Polaris policies.

- Independent School Standards;
- SEND Code of Practice;
- Equality Act 2010;
- statutory safeguarding guidance and safeguarding policy;
- assessment, teaching and learning, behaviour, SEND, RSHE, careers, complaints, health and safety and equality policies.

18. Final Strategic Statement

The Polaris curriculum is inclusive, ambitious and transformative. It enables pupils with complex needs to develop the knowledge, communication, confidence, resilience, independence and life skills required to thrive in education and beyond.

Appendix A: One-Page Staff Summary

Our curriculum is designed to meet the diverse and often complex needs of pupils, ensuring that every learner can access, engage with and make progress from their individual starting points.

- Start with the pupil: needs, strengths, EHCP outcomes, communication, regulation and starting points.
- Teach foundation skills explicitly: communication, literacy, numeracy, cognition, regulation, physical and sensory skills.
- Use trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice: safety, predictability, co-regulation and relationships.
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum across required areas of learning.
- Assess small steps of progress and use assessment to adapt teaching.
- Prepare pupils for adulthood through independence, life skills, community learning and next steps.

Appendix B: Communication Approach Summary

Communication is at the heart of the Polaris curriculum. Every pupil should have a voice, be able to make choices, express needs and feelings, and interact meaningfully with others.

- Makaton, where appropriate, used consistently across the school;
- AAC systems, both low-tech and high-tech, used where appropriate;
- visual supports such as symbols, schedules, choice boards and objects of reference;
- modelling, structured talk and vocabulary development;
- emotion-focused communication to support self-regulation and self-advocacy;
- staff respond to all communication attempts and create communication-rich environments.

Appendix C: Review Dates

Date	Version	Summary of Changes
August 2026	4	Updated to reflect current guidance