

Curriculum Policy	
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## 1.Context

Ruskin Mill Trust provides children and young people with holistic learning by role modelling positive relationships in the fields of arts, crafts, agriculture, nutrition, living skills and the environment with pathway support onto further education and careers bespoke to the individual child and young person.

Since 1987, the Trust has developed its own method and expertise through research and practice, working with children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, including the autistic spectrum and other conditions and complex behaviours. Our provisions offer both day and residential placements and each school has a 24-hour curriculum.

Each RMT School is unique and exciting. Clervaux Garden School is situated on our 100-acre biodynamic farm in Darlington. Our Steiner, Ruskin, and Morris-inspired holistic Practical Skills Therapeutic Education curriculum provides the skills, experience and character necessary for young people aged 10 - 19 years old with complex needs to flourish and thrive in modern society. Our school is a place of therapeutic learning and growing which brings together hand, head, heart and place to support personal development and progression.

### Genus Loci (History of Place)

Over the years a specific method has been developed and practiced by Ruskin Mill Trust when entering a new locality. This practice is known as the Genius Loci Audit and has been performed when a new site has been acquired. This audit supports the discovery of how the local 'genius' of the place and informs the Trust's curriculum with living and skillful practice.

There are four steps to the audit and can be summarised as follows:

#### Step 1: Rocks to Physical

Physical land (geography, geology, mineralogy) what does the land look like? Geology of Land, Weather/ Climate

#### Step 2: Plants to Bio Region Plants, water influence of light and warmth

#### Step 3: Animal to Cultural History, Early settlers, 13th Century, War years, a contemporary map

#### Step 4: Human Destiny to Biography of location Young people of the millennium, the influences of obstruction

## 2. Our Vision and Values

That each individual has the potential to shape their own future through experiencing meaningful relationships with universe, earth and people.

We value inclusive learning and living activities that integrate practical activity, thinking and our emotions.

We value mutual respect and we strive to understand all people's differences and uniqueness.

We value the capacity for re-imagination present in all people, towards positive change and development.

We value openness, goodwill, tolerance and treating individuals with dignity and respect.

### 3. Statement of Intent

At the schools operated by Ruskin Mill Trust, we ensure access to the curriculum areas that are listed in the Independent School Standards (2014). In accordance with this, we undertake to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of each child and young person based on these standards and the contents of the individual Education, Health and Care Plans. All children and young people receive full-time supervised education, in which they experience a curriculum that includes a range of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative aspects appropriate to their age, aptitude and stage of development.

All children and young people receive Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education, including SRE and those of secondary school age receive impartial careers guidance where applicable. The overriding aim of the curriculum is to achieve the best possible outcomes for child and young persons in terms of individual learning, independence, personal growth and development and to ensure that they are able to contribute to society and participate to their fullest potential.

### 4. Curriculum Intent

*“The right of all children to the highest quality education is not only a social ideal but a social necessity” Rudolf Steiner, 1919*

Through engaging with crafts and the land, many of which are specific and connected to the history and the location, the learner is immersed in a whole therapeutic process from beginning to end. Through these processes, in addition to academic and functional skills they learn transferable work skills, independent living skills and, most importantly, they learn to value themselves and others again.

By immersing the child and young persons within the productive aspect of our curriculum, they learn to care for their own well-being and development and overcome their barriers to learning. This is so that the child and young person learns to recognise their capabilities and positively contribute to society, which is continuously celebrated through cultural events and arts festivals for staff, children and young person and the wider community.

Inspired by Aonghus Gordon using the insights of Rudolf Steiner, John Ruskin and William Morris, Ruskin Mill Trust works with hand, head, heart and place to provide the child and young person with the tools to transform material and in doing so transform themselves. In this way the child/ young person come to recognise themselves and others, they develop self and social awareness and are empowered to achieve and make positive contributions to society at large, giving back in a self-directed, productive and enjoyable way.

We value inclusive learning and living activities that integrate practical activity, thinking and our emotions.

Clervaux Garden School we believe that all children and young people are entitled to engage in meaningful learning, which can give them the confidence and skills to participate in their lifelong development and to contribute to their community. It is our duty as educators to identify the barriers they experience and to help them overcome these, re-imagining themselves, fostering their curiosity and realising their potential. Through effective education, we can help our young people to re-engage not only with learning but also with the wider social community.

The School is committed to ensuring each child and young person can flourish in modern Britain by providing a curriculum that will:

- provide a high-quality education that is tailored to individual needs and is child and young person centered
- ensure every child and young person achieves their potential

- help each child and young persons to develop positive feelings of self-worth and confidence
- enable each child and young person to interact and communicate with a wide range of people
- develop successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- provide a broad, rich and deep curriculum, including a focus on independence skills that is inclusive and accessible to all
- help children and young people to be confident learners who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- help prepare children and young people for the next stages in their life
- encourage children and young people to become responsible citizens who are able to contribute to society
- deliver activities that provide suitable learning challenges, giving every child and young person the opportunity to experience success and achieve as much as possible
- devise individual approaches and interventions, in response to the curriculum, to match Child and young persons' diverse learning needs, interests and strengths
- teach children and young people to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, understand right from wrong and have an appreciation of British values
- provide a curriculum that is free from partisan political views.

The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school is strictly prohibited. All staff have a responsibility to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of children and young people they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. The school's leaders will monitor timetables and schemes of work across the curriculum. Rigorous monitoring of lessons will ensure balance in the presentation of all subject matter.

Four key principles underpin these aims and are embedded in our provision and day-to-day working:

- We are committed to valuing and respecting each young person as a unique individual- listening to children/ young people and inviting their views
- Helping children and young people to achieve self-determination - we support them to make choices and be responsible for decisions around their own lives and thus attaining self-generated conscious action
- Be included - we support children and young people to engage in the school and the wider communities, celebrating seasons, cultures and diversity through our curriculum, the land and festivals
- Supporting our children and young people to develop positive relationships and interactions within the school and wider communities

Our curriculum meets the expectations of the independent school standards.

- Our curriculum is designed so that it can respond to an individual's needs or abilities and fulfils the requirement of Education, Health Care Plan
- Our curriculum is therapeutic in its design and staff are trained in Practical Skills Therapeutic Education which is delivered by our internationally recognised Hiram Education and Research Team. Staff are also trained in Attachment Disorder, Autistic Spectrum Conditions, Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and de-escalation. The staff team

and Child and young persons are supported by a Speech and Language Therapist, and Occupational Therapist and a Clinical psychologist along with a range of holistic therapies.

- The school works collaboratively with local businesses, activity centres, groups and schools, alongside the Trust's own social enterprise projects, to give the Child and young persons a well-rounded experience and engage with the local communities.

## 5. Curriculum Implementation

As children and young people will be admitted at any point in their primary or secondary education care is taken to recognise each child and young person's own previous experience of schooling. On-entry baselines are taken and interests are understood to plan Learning Pathways. A personalised transition will be put in place. Over time the balance of therapeutic, practical and academic learning may change depending on the individual needs. There will be opportunities for learning new knowledge and skills and to apply these skills to a range of experiences. Individual sessions are designed to consider prior knowledge, gaps in learning or misconceptions.

Our Curriculum is designed to allow our children and young people to re-step through experiential learning, drawing on Steiner's insights of human phasic development.

### Planning and Organisation

The learning experiences of each child and young person are carefully planned and structured to ensure continuity and cohesion so that each child and young person is enabled to make the very best progress in overcoming their barriers and in the development of their knowledge and skills. Senior leaders and teachers write curriculum plans, schemes of work, medium and short-term plans in collaboration with the wider staff team, including craft tutors, teaching assistants, therapists and residential staff. The joint planning, assessment and review are all driven by the individual child and young persons' needs. The curriculum is delivered throughout the day, including through extended activities within the local community, and within the 24-hour curriculum for day and residential child and young persons.

The school aims to provide a curriculum shaped by the method of Practical Skills Therapeutic Education and a 21<sup>st</sup> Century approach to Steiner's insights. The teachers approach this task with imagination, enthusiasm, creativity and through using the craft and land curriculum. Each child's curriculum is tailored to meet their needs and is under regular review through the Child Study and review meetings

We are committed to working with Steiner's developmental insights:

- Each child/ young person is a unique individual with his or her own path in life;
- The teachers' aim is to support the emerging human beings in our care in developing inner freedom, with healthy physical and emotional well-being, so as to enable them to make their contribution to society while at the same time unfolding their own human potential;
- All learning mirrors the child and young persons' developmental stage, through adaptation and flexibility in the approach to gain understanding of the individual, where children's development is often not commensurate with their chronological age;
- Lesson content is always related to real life practical experiences and understanding, addressing moral issues and challenges within the community through a nurturing and therapeutic approach;
- The child and young persons' motivation arises from enthusiasm and self-motivation rather than ambition or fear;
- Education addresses the development of thinking, feeling and the will as equal and integrated partners.

Each child and young person has an Individualised Education Plan which supports the outcomes of their EHC plans and personal aspirations. Senior leaders are responsible for monitoring the planning and delivery of the curriculum. This monitoring is organised into an annual cycle of lesson observations,

learning walks and evaluation, which informs training and development, as well as outlining any changes to the curriculum and the planning and provision of resources.

Our therapeutic curriculum can be accessed on different levels according to each child and young persons' need, previous experience and level of attainment.

The curriculum is developed with therapeutic intent, understanding and research. Teaching and learning approaches used are designed to support the child and young person to overcome barriers to learning and to engage in a curriculum tailored to meet their needs.

## **6. Assessment for and of learning**

### **Curriculum: Summative Assessment**

The School uses a system of targets and objectives to help us build up a more detailed picture of the progress of each Child and young person. These targets are set in discussion with the teacher, the land and craft tutors and the therapists.

The School utilises a variety of materials and guidelines to inform our teacher assessment in order to provide information on attainment both for individual child and young persons and for the school. We use teacher assessment each term to monitor and assess progress in the seven areas of learning and against their ILP.

This information helps us to evaluate our own effectiveness, including the impact of the curriculum, timetables and therapies.

The children and young people, at an appropriate stage also have opportunities to accredit their learning through GCSE, or OCN programmes and modules.

At the end of each term, the head of school/ provision leader holds a meeting to review the progress of each child and young person with their class teacher and tutors as appropriate. These meetings ensure that the curriculum is meeting child and young person need and is ambitious in relations to each child and young persons' abilities and outcomes.

### **Curriculum: Formative Assessment (assessment for learning)**

Assessment for learning is continuous and embedded into our everyday practice. Daily planning is adapted and reflects the prior learning, to ensure that Child and young persons are secure in their understanding and that they are able to access the next steps.

All staff are supported and encouraged to capture learning as and when it happens and to evidence the learning to adapt daily planning. Feedback to children and young people is ongoing and presented in a variety of ways. This feedback is designed to enable Child and young persons, where appropriate, to reflect on their learning and their barriers, and to further encourage engagement in their learning.

### **Evidence of and Recording Progress**

Staff teams work to collect a range of evidence in learning journals and accreditation files, including carefully annotated photographs, video footage and witness statements, so that we can demonstrate the progress that the child and young person makes with confidence to parents, trustees, other professionals from the placing Local Authority and to Education Ofsted teams, who we also work closely with to inform outcomes.

Child and young persons' Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes also inform the target setting process, ensuring that the targets set in ILPs support Child and young persons to work towards the areas of identified need in their EHCPs.

Where appropriate, the child and young person are asked to contribute to their progress meetings and termly reports. This is captured through a variety of ways.

## 7. Daily Rhythm

The school day begins at 9am, with a handover from families and residential staff. The day is divided into three main sessions. Class teachers and tutors plan sessions and activities in line with the land and the seasons, and the child and young person's ILPs. There is a morning break, and the school provides lunch in line with the Trust Food and Nutrition Policy, for each child and young person and staff member. The children and young people and staff eat as a community in the dining room.

During the day, the school strives to establish a familiar daily and weekly rhythm. The sessions will be planned to utilize all areas of the site through the land and craft curriculum; the farm, garden, and craft workshops are all in use. In addition, therapists will hold sessions that are both embedded in the activities and in a one to one format. Teachers, farmers, craftspeople, therapists, care staff, leaders, and the child and young person together plan a learning journey through the Child Study.

The children and young people also attend sessions with tutors, who use their practical skillsets to enable them to interact and develop their practical skills in land and craft-based sessions.

The seven areas of learning are interwoven and braided throughout the land and craft curriculum, reflecting seasons and festivals. This allows greater flexibility and impact and enables the child and young person to join learning from different areas, including transferrable skills such as building relationships or completing tasks.

Successful learning requires reflection, and sessions are structured around the hands-head-heart approach in which child and young person do, reflect and feel. This is mirrored in the daily structure and teachers allot specific times and spaces for practical and reflective learning.

The school day ends at 3pm with a handover to families and residential staff.

## 8. Key features of the practical skills therapeutic curriculum (PSTE)

PSTE adopts a "descent into matter" approach that allows the child and young person to experience processes from beginning to end, for example the production of food from seed to table, making items of service such as slippers and vessels from the sheep's fleece, the presence of compost (useable for planting), wool dye planting, wool dyeing, animal husbandry (e.g. shearing), wool carding, wool craft, and craft shop.

It is intended, that by utilising all of these experiences a child or young person is involved in every process, resulting in a member of the public being able to buy a pair of felted slippers from one of our Trust's social enterprises.

This enables each child and young person to become part of the school as well as the wider community and society as a whole. In addition, it helps them experience the processes that connect them with the earth and the universe.

The inclusion of land work in the curriculum promotes the development of physical, emotional and reflective capacities and has a positive impact on the mental wellbeing as a whole.

Joint projects and activities allow for development of social skills through problem solving and teamwork.

The residential setting provides an environment of acceptance, rhythm, warmth, nourishment, trust, constancy, culture and enjoyable recreational experiences with others. Day and residential experiences will complement and enhance each other through effective planning between teaching, therapy and care staff.

The curriculum supports each child and young person's transition into the next stage of learning including work experience and the practical application of literacy and numeracy, as well as many of the transferrable skills acquired.

### 9. Key features of the additional therapeutic curriculum

Therapy forms an integral part of the individual bespoke curriculum package of each child and young person and is delivered both embedded within the curriculum and in additional therapeutic sessions.

The schools offer additional therapeutic sessions in speech and language therapy, eurhythmy (movement therapy developed out of anthroposophical insights), music, colour light, art therapy, rhythmical massage and occupational therapy in line with individual Child and young person needs

### 10. Structure of the curriculum

The School's curriculum covers all major subject areas. Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education and SMSC are present as an integral part of the general social life in the school and embedded within the curriculum. This is because the school seeks to make the question of human values the central element of the curriculum. Respect for the individual within the group is an attitude underpinning and interlinking every aspect of the curriculum. The teacher helps the children and young people to build group cohesion and social awareness and role models this. Each class teacher's ongoing commitment to self-development and to the relationship with their class is very important because it brings a depth of knowledge, continuity and trust, which enriches and adds warmth to the delivery of the curriculum.

All areas of learning listed in the Independent School Standards are delivered in a practical way, enabling the child and young person to experience the learning first hand. This means that a math's lesson may be delivered through cooking and green woodwork, or literacy through learning to feed the animals.

Crafts such as green woodwork, textiles, pottery and work in the farm or garden afford the teaching teams with numerous opportunities to embed learning in this practical context. The cycle of festivals anchors this learning in the seasons and process of gathering and celebrating as a community.

### 11. From Being to Contribution

Though each child and young persons' journey is unique, the schools' PSTE curriculum enables all children and young people to journey from simply being present in the community to the ability and willingness to contribute to the community. Within this journey are a multitude of resources and activities in which a child and young person can engage. The broad outline of each stage is:

- Be: feeling safe and supported, being present, reflection
- Play: engaging, moving, interacting, having fun
- Explore: enquiring, adventuring, taking risks
- Create: becoming skilled, working with material, using tools
- Contribute: stepping in to community, working, belonging

This format is mirrored in the configuration of the site as our child and young persons are guided to venture from the secure space of the classroom out into the wider world of the garden, forest, farm, and community, meeting and overcoming challenges and learning along the way. We recognise that children and young people at the school may work simultaneously across stages and may move between Being and Contributing depending on the activity, their age and stage of development, for example a child and young person may need to be within Being but also able to deliver veg boxes to the residential homes and thus contribute to the community.

### 12. Post 16 pathways and Preparation for Adulthood

Our children and young people work with staff, including the Pathways Coordinator, Advocacy Service and an independent careers advisor to plan their individualised post-16 provision.

The aim of the Trust is to support the child and young person growing into adulthood and raising their aspirations by placing an emphasis on them developing independence knowledge and skills to prepare them for life in the wider community. The trust supports the child and young person in a variety of a work experience and social enterprise tailored to the young persons interests and aspirations where appropriate.



#### **a. Accreditation**

The child and young person will follow an individual accreditation pathway depending on their individual learning needs and future aspirations.

The school works with a full range of destinations beyond the provision, including schools, colleges and universities. Transitions are well planned and supported.

A range of qualifications and accreditation is offered; for each child and young person there will be a mixture of vocational qualifications and functional skills. Where a child and young person wishes to take a qualification that we do not offer we will endeavor to provide the opportunity where partnerships are available.

#### **b. Extended learning**

The formally delivered curriculum is interwoven with practical activities and trips into the community, as well as particular activities tailored to meet Child and young persons' changing needs. These may include culture immersion days, health, ecological or religious/spiritual activities. The aim of such events is to broaden Child and young persons' experience as well as giving them an opportunity to apply their skills in varied situations.

#### **c. Staffing and resources**

The school team consists of senior leaders, administrative team, teaching staff, craft tutors, teaching assistants, therapy team, human resources, admissions, health and safety, maintenance, catering and cleaning team, and the IT/ data team.

The residential team consists of the head of care, house managers, and residential support workers.

The connections between the school and residential provisions work together to ensure consistency of approach and cooperation is embedded as part of the 24-hour curriculum.

#### **d. Working with parents/carers**

We encourage parents/carers to attend Statutory Annual Reviews/EHCP meetings. Parents/carers are provided with updates on progress in the termly report that comments on all areas of the curriculum and includes learning targets for the term ahead. Schools also hold Parents Evenings/Days and training opportunities, including safeguarding, to give an opportunity for dialogue between the child and young persons, parents/carers, education staff and care staff and for parents to understand and discuss the curriculum, safeguarding and support. The majority of these meetings are held face to face, but in line with COVID restrictions these are held virtually.

### **13. Impact and Review**

Ruskin Mill Trust will review the curriculum annually to ensure it meets the needs of all children and young people.

The impact of our Curriculum will be threefold:

- **Through the Method of Practical Skills Therapeutic Education and our Biodynamic environment we will help our Child and young person's flourish and engage with their developmental, sensory and therapeutic needs.**
- **Through our bespoke Curriculum our Child and young persons will have the opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and creativity, to gain appropriate qualifications.**

- **Through our PSHRE, Equalities & Diversity and Preparation for Adulthood curriculum we will provide our Child and young persons with the Personal Development and Behaviour & Attitudes needed to thrive in Modern Britain.**

#### 14.Measuring Impact

The methods of monitoring and QA above are superseded in importance by the outcomes for our students, measured through the following mechanisms.

- 9 Assessment Steps Framework - gives both a baseline for the ‘academic’ subject areas and a quantitative measure by which to assess progress
- National examinations - GCSEs, Functional Skills, Entry Level Certificates
- Three stage process - assessing the student journey through to independence, including their ability to employ practical skills
- Award Board Accreditation - ASDAN and OCN qualifications predominately at Entry Level 3 and Level 1, with opportunities to achieve Level 2. Broadly speaking, joining the concepts of the three-stage process and the OCN framework, the equivalencies are:
  - Entry-level 3 à Stage 1
  - Level 1 à Stage 2
  - Level 2 à Stage 3
- EHCP and intervention targets and outcomes
- Social and Emotional Profile (SEP)

#### 15.Research Base

Because of external and internal research on the pedagogic value of land-work including food growing and craft, rooted in natural materials, the unique education offer of Ruskin Mill Trust has been defined by the term Practical Skills Therapeutic Education (PSTE). PSTE is used as a both method and vehicle for delivering curriculum and a framework to provide a robust education for learners. The Trust, through the Hiram Education and Research Team, has a dedicated team of local coordinators who work to develop continually our staff in all statutory, mandatory and in the key area of methods training as part of their practice. Furthermore, we have a designated research facility, the Field Centre, where a space for living research is held. Through operational training combining living research and human developmental themes, PSTE methods create a pragmatic, child and young person centred education at Clervaux Garden School. Through the aforementioned action research, we develop the transformative educational method for our not only learners and staff, but also members of the wider community through courses available to the public, as well as cultural events.

File Path:	
Dissemination (who will receive the policy):	Senior Managers, teaching staff, therapy staff, support staff and residential staff, parents/ carers and local authority placing teams, available on website
Associated Training Requirements:	Training in RMT’s method of PSTE, assessment and recording training

#### 16.LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

PSHE and SRE Policy  
 Teaching and Learning Policy  
 Preparation to Adulthood Policy