Curriculum Policy

Conquest School

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Date:	October 2025
Ratified by Chair of Proprietors:	October 2025
Review Date:	September 2026

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Safeguarding at Conquest School

At Conquest School, we are committed to providing an environment in which students feel safe and secure to access their education. All stakeholders are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff are encouraged to maintain an "it could happen here" attitude. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. Conquest School are dedicated to creating a strong safeguarding culture, and that the safety and well-being of children is the central thread that embeds itself through all aspects of the school. If a person is concerned about anything they read, witness or hear with regards to the school, they should contact the school's designated safeguarding lead immediately or Headteacher. Safeguarding, and the safety and well-being of all pupils at Conquest School is carefully considered and a central theme through all school policies.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) at Conquest School

At Conquest School, we are passionate about providing an inclusive education to children with special educational needs. We recognise and celebrate the individuality of our pupils and use personalised approaches, allowing pupils with SEND to feel supported during the school day. We strive to provide pupils with the same opportunities and experiences that pupils would have received at a mainstream school, believing passionately that in the right environment, with the right support,

pupils will flourish in education. We do this by focusing on providing a SEND friendly environment, a differentiated curriculum and a strong focus on developing pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The special educational needs and disabilities of all pupils at Conquest School is carefully considered and a central theme in through all school policies. For more information, please read the school's SEND Information Report.

1. Introduction and Vision

1.1 Our Commitment

All children have the right to be healthy, happy, safe, and secure, to feel loved, valued and respected and be given the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of barriers they may face.

We aim to provide a school in which the priority is to meet the needs and provide the opportunity to develop the academic, practical, and social skills needed to thrive and develop from a young person into an adult.

We believe that our school will nurture all individuals in their journey to achieve their full and unique potential. We are committed to developing an inclusive, welcoming, safe, and stimulating learning environment that will enable our students to be happy and become responsible, community-aware citizens and lifelong learners. Conquest School is a specialist provision for students aged 7 years to 19 years with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. Our curriculum is designed to enable every pupil to achieve their potential, develop independence, and prepare for successful transition to adulthood.

1.2 Legal Framework

As an independent school for pupils with SEN, we are not required to follow the National Curriculum but must offer a balanced and broadly based curriculum. This policy ensures compliance with:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 Relationships and Sex Education Statutory Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- The Equality Act 2010

2. Curriculum Intent

2.1 Our Curriculum Aims

Our curriculum will:

- **Build strong foundations** in communication, language, literacy, and numeracy to enable pupils to access learning across all areas
- **Develop emotional literacy and self-regulation skills** to support pupils in managing their SEMH needs
- **Provide therapeutic support** integrated within the curriculum to address barriers to learning
- **Promote independence and life skills** to prepare pupils for adulthood, employment, and independent living

- **Be ambitious yet accessible**, with high expectations for all pupils regardless of their starting points
- **Support positive relationships** and social skills development
- **Ensure safeguarding** is embedded throughout all aspects of school life

2.2 Curriculum Breadth

Our curriculum is balanced and broadly based covering:

Core Subjects:

- English (reading, writing, speaking and listening)
- Mathematics
- Science
- Religious Education

Foundation Subjects:

- Humanities
- Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama)
- Design and Technology
- Physical Education

Personal Development:

- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) - compulsory for secondary-age pupils
- Health Education Relationships and Sex Education Statutory Guidance
- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education)
- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
- Social and emotional learning

3. Curriculum Implementation

3.1 Curriculum Design and Sequencing

Our curriculum is:

Carefully sequenced - Building knowledge and skills progressively, with regular opportunities to revisit and consolidate learning

Flexible - We are free to choose how we organise our school day and weekly class timetables The Key Leaders, allowing us to adapt to individual pupil needs and therapeutic requirements

Trauma-informed - We use a trauma-informed approach which often works best for pupils with SEMH needs, with consistent approaches from all staff

Individualised - Each pupil has a personalised learning plan that addresses their specific needs, interests, and aspirations

3.2 Teaching Approaches

High-Quality Teaching:

- We address work pupils find hard through high-quality teaching (quality first teaching), which is a requirement in the SEND Code of Practice, and adaptive teaching
- Teachers present information clearly, check understanding systematically, and adapt teaching to correct misunderstandings
- We prioritise 'keeping up' rather than 'catching up', quickly addressing gaps in knowledge

Communication Support: When addressing the class, we:

- Consider the level of background noise
- Use visual clues to aid understanding
- Frontload instructions with useful information
- Avoid idioms that pupils might take literally
- Get pupils' attention before speaking to them
- Ask pupils to repeat back what was said

Behaviour Support:

We have a consistent approach to addressing challenging behaviour, with all staff implementing strategies consistently. We use individual behaviour plans to help ensure all staff understand pupils' needs and respond consistently.

3.3 Staffing Ratios

Staffing ratios are based on pupil need. We look at each pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan to ensure we have the staffing levels necessary to meet individual needs. Pupils are typically taught in groups of 6 to 8.

3.4 Foundational Skills

Literacy:

- Daily reading opportunities with age-appropriate texts
- Systematic phonics teaching for pupils who need it, regardless of age
- Explicit vocabulary development across all subjects
- Use of visual clues and clear communication strategies

Numeracy:

- Sufficient teaching and practice for pupils to become fluent in number facts and calculations
- Real-life application of mathematical skills
- Use of concrete resources and visual representations

Emotional Regulation:

We give pupils tools to recognise when they are feeling angry or low, including:

- Daily check-ins on how pupils are feeling
- Visual cues such as 'mood meters' to help pupils express their feelings
- Teaching the language needed to express feelings through PSHE lessons and appropriate resources

4. Curriculum Content by Key Stage

4.1 Key Stage 2 (Ages 7-11)

Focus:

Building foundational skills in literacy and numeracy; developing emotional literacy; establishing routines and positive relationships

Core curriculum includes all National Curriculum subjects adapted to pupil needs, with additional focus on:

- Social skills development
- Emotional regulation strategies
- Sensory circuits to help pupils focus and feel alert
- Nurture groups to improve behaviour, academic attainment and social skills

4.2 Key Stage 3 (Ages 11-14)

Focus:

Developing subject knowledge; preparing for Key Stage 4; building independence; exploring interests and strengths.

Curriculum includes:

- Broad and balanced subject curriculum
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) - compulsory for secondary pupils
- Enhanced careers education
- Preparation for qualifications
- Increased focus on independence skills

4.3 Key Stage 4 (Ages 14-16)

Focus: Working towards qualifications; developing employability skills; preparing for post-16 pathways

Curriculum includes:

- Core subjects: English, Mathematics, Science
- Option subjects based on pupil interests and career aspirations
- Accredited qualifications (GCSEs, BTECs, Entry Level, Functional Skills)
- A careers programme that meets the Gatsby Benchmarks, including impartial advice and guidance from a qualified careers adviser, opportunities for workplace experiences, and engagement with employers, colleges, training providers and universities
- Work experience opportunities

4.4 Key Stage 5 (Ages 16-19)

Focus: Transition to adulthood; vocational and academic pathways; independent living skills; employment preparation

Study Programme includes:

- Substantial vocational/technical or academic qualifications
- English and mathematics (where pupils have not achieved GCSE grade 4/C)
- Work experience or industry placements
- Non-qualification activities (tutorials, enrichment, volunteering)
- Support for pupils with SEND to develop independence, contribute to their community, make positive friendships and be as healthy as possible

5. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

5.1 Statutory Requirements

Relationships education is compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and relationships and sex education (RSE) is compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. Health education is compulsory in all schools except independent schools, though we choose to provide comprehensive health education.

5.2 Our Approach

Our RSHE curriculum is developed with the following key principles:

- Engagement with pupils to ensure relevance
- Engagement and transparency with parents
- Positivity - focusing on building positive attitudes and skills
- Careful sequencing to support pupils before experiences occur
- Relevant and responsive to local needs
- Skilled delivery by trained staff
- Part of a whole school approach to wellbeing Relationships and Sex Education Statutory Guidance

5.3 Policy and Parental Engagement

We have an up-to-date written policy for RSE which sets out the subject content, how and when it will be taught, and who is responsible for teaching it. We proactively engage and consult parents when developing and reviewing our policy, and the policy is published on our school website.

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. In secondary, headteachers can refuse a request in exceptional circumstances, for example because of safeguarding concerns or a pupil's specific vulnerability. From three terms before the pupil turns 16, a pupil can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal.

6. Assessment

6.1 Assessment Principles

We have a clear assessment policy and understanding of our assessment requirements, and how we will assess our pupils, before deciding what to teach.

Our assessment approach:

- Identifies pupils' starting points accurately
- Tracks progress from individual baselines
- Informs teaching and intervention
- Recognises achievement in all its forms
- Involves pupils in understanding their progress
- Provides meaningful information to parents and external agencies

6.2 Assessment Methods

We use a range of assessment approaches including:

- Formative assessment (ongoing, in lessons)
- Summative assessment (end of unit/term)
- Standardised assessments where appropriate
- Work scrutiny and moderation
- Pupil voice and self-assessment
- External accreditation and qualifications

7. Inclusion and SEND

7.1 Meeting Individual Needs

Where pupils cannot access knowledge, skills and understanding from their current or previous Key Stages, aspects of the curriculum can be modified. Any modifications to the curriculum are set out in the pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan, including:

- The aspects that will be modified
- The provision that will replace modified aspects
- How a "balanced and broadly based" curriculum will be maintained

7.2 Therapeutic Support

Our curriculum is enhanced by therapeutic interventions including:

- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Educational psychology support
- Mental health support

- Family support services

7.3 Physical Environment

We adapt the physical environment to support pupils with SEMH needs:

- Reducing opportunities for overstimulation (neutral display backgrounds, reduced clutter)
- Co regulation spaces to support pupils to self-regulate
- Sensory zones for pupils who have trouble with sensory processing
- Safe spaces for physical regulation

8. Personal Development and Wider Opportunities

8.1 Personal Development Programme

Our personal development curriculum ensures pupils:

- Develop character, resilience and self-confidence
- Understand how to keep physically and mentally healthy
- Build positive relationships
- Develop respect for others and appreciation of diversity
- Understand British values
- Prepare for life in modern Britain

8.2 Enrichment and Extra-Curricular Activities

We provide a range of opportunities including:

- Sports and physical activities
- Creative arts and performance
- Educational visits and residential experiences
- Community engagement and volunteering
- Leadership opportunities
- Clubs and interest groups

9. Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

9.1 Statutory Requirements

We ensure that all secondary-age pupils are well prepared and supported to progress in education, employment or training, including continuing in education or training until at least their 18th birthday. We provide an appropriate careers programme that meets the Gatsby Benchmarks and includes impartial advice and guidance from a qualified careers adviser, opportunities for workplace experiences, and engagement with employers, colleges, training providers and universities.

9.2 Our Careers Programme

Our careers programme:

- Starts in Key Stage 2 with awareness of different jobs and careers

- Develops through Key Stage 3 with exploration of interests and pathways

- Intensifies in Key Stage 4 with work experience and qualification choices

- Focuses on transition planning in Key Stage 5

- Involves parents and external agencies

- Provides impartial, individualised guidance

- Includes encounters with employers and further/higher education providers

10. Safeguarding

10.1 Curriculum and Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Our curriculum supports safeguarding by:

- Providing help and support to meet needs as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, including online
- Preventing impairment of mental and physical health
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes Keeping Children Safe in Education

10.2 Teaching About Safety

Our curriculum explicitly teaches pupils:

- How to keep themselves safe, including online safety
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Consent and boundaries
- Who to talk to if they have concerns
- How to access help and support

Pupils understand how confidentiality will be handled in lessons and what might happen if they choose to make a report. They also understand where they can report any concerns and seek help, including to external services. Relationships and Sex Education Statutory Guidance

11. Use of Reasonable Force

11.1 Policy Statement

Our behaviour policy includes the power to use reasonable force. We acknowledge our legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN). We do not

have a 'no contact' policy as this might place staff in breach of their duty of care or prevent them taking action to prevent harm.

11.2 Staff Training

We consider whether members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, taking into account the needs of our pupils as set out in the Restrictive Intervention Policy

When pupils behave aggressively towards themselves or others, we refer to our behaviour policy and individual behaviour plans. We use reasonable force as a last resort to prevent pupils from harming themselves, others or damaging property. We train teachers to calm pupils and defuse situations without handling pupils where possible.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

12.1 Quality Assurance

We monitor and evaluate our curriculum through:

- Regular learning walks and lesson observations
- Work scrutiny and moderation
- Pupil progress meetings
- Analysis of assessment data
- Pupil voice activities
- Parent feedback
- External reviews and inspections
- Governor/proprietor monitoring visits

12.2 Curriculum Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or school circumstances. Reviews will involve:

- Staff consultation
- Pupil feedback
- Parent engagement
- Analysis of outcomes and progress data
- Consideration of emerging needs

13. Roles and Responsibilities

13.1 Headteacher

- Provides strategic leadership for curriculum development
- Define and communicate the curriculum's intent, ensuring it reflects the school's ethos, therapeutic approach, and commitment to holistic development.

- Ensure the curriculum is broad, balanced and supports progression, engagement, and readiness for life beyond school.
- Ensure the curriculum meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Part 1: Quality of Education), SEND Code of Practice, and other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure the curriculum promotes safeguarding, emotional literacy, and positive relationships.
- Ensures the curriculum is reviewed annually as a minimum

13.2 The Proprietor

- Ensures the curriculum meets legal requirements
- Monitors the effectiveness of curriculum implementation
- Ensures sufficient resources are available
- Holds leaders to account for curriculum quality