

SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

Curriculum Intent Statement

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*SES Avocet Ltd (4926028) and SES Turnstone Ltd (7972485)
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1 OUR VISION STATEMENT VALUES

Specialist Education Services is a forward-looking company, adopting a “learning without limits” philosophy. This means that adults in our establishments have a passionate conviction that all our students are able to achieve; adults are optimistic about success and accept no restriction on what is possible with the students in our care, and whose education is in our hands.

- ✓ we believe in a ‘no limits’ approach to helping children
- ✓ we believe in children’s abilities and potential
- ✓ we believe in unconditional positive regard
- ✓ we believe our children deserve fun and happiness in childhood
- ✓ we believe in a ‘can do’ philosophy
- ✓ we believe in success and learning from mistakes
- ✓ we believe intelligence is multifaceted
- ✓ we believe learning is a lifelong process
- ✓ we believe creativity and imagination are the keys to developing passions and talents, and preparing for life in a rapidly changing world
- ✓ we believe assessment of progress is based on improvements on ‘previous best’
- ✓ we are future orientated

We constantly strive to integrate health, social work and educational perspectives and incorporate best practice from the different approaches in a holistic, nurturing, learning environment.

2 THE EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

The stated educational purpose of SES establishments is to achieve the highest possible standard of educational achievement, as measured by:

- ✓ A movement from disaffection to engagement in the learning process
- ✓ Improvements in behaviour conducive to learning
- ✓ A growing enthusiasm for learning
- ✓ Specific and generalised achievements
- ✓ Tangible accredited outcomes
- ✓ Emerging gifts, talents and passions
- ✓ National accreditation

In doing this our philosophy is to make the curriculum fit the child not the child fit the curriculum.

Our curriculum aspires to broaden students’ horizons, stimulate their interest and discover a love of learning. Irrespective of their personal challenges and starting points, we believe all students have the potential to learn, be happy and become successful within society. Our intention is to foster a sense of optimism that prepares them for their journey through life.

Specifically, our curriculum aims for all students to:

- Experience learning opportunities that provide a rich childhood, building their aspirations, hopes, gifts, happiness and sense of fun.
- Have the necessary personal, emotional and social developmental skills for a successful life.
- Be a functional reader and writer, alongside an increasingly broad and rich vocabulary to describe the world.
- Possess functional maths and computing skills.
- To be physically fit and healthy.
- Achieve positive mental health and well being.
- Be prepared for purposeful and fulfilling working lives.
- To be equipped with practical life skills in the areas of finance, home management, self care, travel, and social skills and relationships.
- To develop experience and knowledge of enterprise, recognising the opportunities it affords.
- Be ready to access further education, training or employment.
- Understand how to develop friendships and sustain healthy relationships, transferring these skills into adulthood.
- Develop a sense of resilience and determination, allowing them to overcome personal barriers.
- Understand appropriate risk taking, make safe choices and foster a willingness to try new challenges.
- Possess respect for self and others identity, views and beliefs.
- Know who they are and can be, discovering their personal potential and how they can contribute to society.
- Experience the outdoors as well as creative and expressive arts to unlock a sense of exploration.
- Try new things, visit different places and meet different people.

3 OUR BELIEF IN A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Most if not all students admitted to our establishments will have been in repeated failure situations both in mainstream settings and possibly in previous special school settings. They generally arrive with a history of poor attendance, placement gaps and a multitude of exclusions from school, and have therefore missed significant periods of education. They will almost certainly have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

Students often come from backgrounds of deprivation and have experienced significant adversity and trauma throughout their lives. These adverse childhood experiences and high levels of adversity potentially impact on longer term health in adulthood, mental health, social skills and their stress regulation systems. As a result, they are likely to have missed out on significant chunks of learning experience due to the secondary behavioural barriers created.

Therefore, the starting points for our students are almost inevitably extremely low relative to their cognitive potential. There may well be a complicated picture of educational dysfunction and mental health issues labelled under such headings as:

- Complex Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties
- Attachment Difficulties

- General Learning Difficulties
- Specific Learning Difficulties
- Developmental Delay
- Attentional Problems

All of these require targeted individualised support. At the centre of this is a 'no limits' highly personalised education recovery package developed from their Portfolio of Achievements and Needs (see Appendix A). Our students need an holistic framework of care, support and guidance for them to start to re-engage in the learning process. Turnstone House and Avocet House provide such a framework of high quality care and therapeutic intervention embedded in a highly personalised learning experience.

Our Development and Learning PAN planning structures summarise the young person's achievements and needs, as well as identifying desired outcomes, in six dimensions:

- Education training and employment
- Social emotional and mental health
- Physical health and medical conditions
- Family relationships and identity
- Practical life skills for independent living
- Living arrangements and support beyond SES

The Learning Centre create a bespoke pathway that feeds into the Learning dimension of their Development and Learning Plan.

We accept no barriers to innovation, creativity and response in order to reawaken a passion for learning in each student.

4 LEARNING CENTRE CURRICULUM

Our curriculum places a high priority on the core skills of Literacy, Numeracy, Personal, Emotional and Social Development, and Relationships and Sex Education, as well as a broad exposure to stimulating spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences. Beyond that the curriculum response is specific and individually tailored to make it relevant and motivating.

As a result of their fragmented educational and care, our students are likely to have missed positive early childhood learning experiences and may not have attained age related developmental milestones. Focusing on concepts including information processing, development of language and memory, and reasoning is essential to build the necessary skills for learning. Therefore, a focus on play, early reading and writing, maths, language acquisition and social interaction may be essential to enable students to progress to their next stage of development.

In most circumstances, students coming to SES will likely exhibit language and communication difficulties. This is especially apparent with their vocabulary, with significant deficits and gaps in emotionally language creating barriers to accessing the curriculum. Providing an extensive range of learning opportunities, including

experiential learning, helps address these deficits and develop the language skills needed to be successful into adulthood.

Teachers should plan for the development of personal and social capabilities in every area of personalised curriculum studies. Sound development of individuals in the areas of; attention, organisation and working with others, are viewed as precursors of an ability to access the broader curriculum.

Teachers should develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects. We aim to develop reading skills through building understanding using a range of strategies, including synthetic phonics and other key approaches, such as disciplinary and reciprocal reading.

Teachers should use every relevant subject to develop pupils' mathematical fluency. Confidence in numeracy and other mathematical skills is a precondition of success across the curriculum.

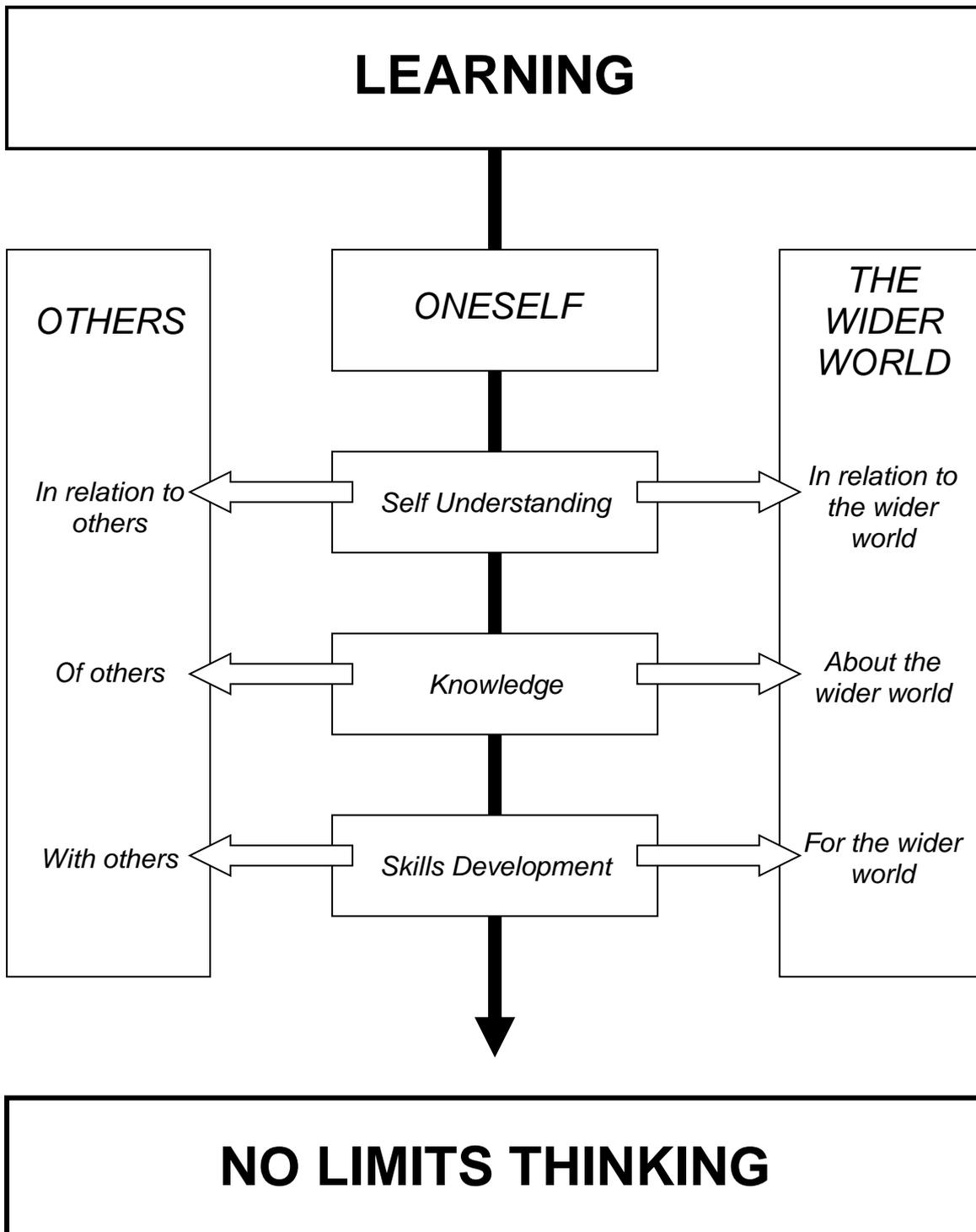
In recognition of the needs of the students, the curriculum looks to identify and prioritise a core body of knowledge and skills within core subjects, reinforced across all topics, ensuring that students both master and commit them to long term memory. The intention is to identify key themes and skills for each subject recognising what is most important, most readily accessible and what will best support children's access to wider learning and experiences and expand their cultural capital. For example, teaching in maths will prioritise an understanding of time, knowledge of times tables, simple measurements of volume, weight and length, accurate addition and subtraction.

SES is strongly committed to being at the forefront of educational thinking and practise, continually developing our pedagogical approaches to best suit the needs of all students.

5 24 HOUR LEARNING: A TOTAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Learning is a life-long pervasive process not just a 'classroom' or 'school' process. It's not even just the 'academic' process. Our students learning has been compounded by moving from school to school and resettling in a variety of residential settings including foster and children's homes. SES believe it is essential that all students are provided access to a variety of experiences beyond the formally taught learning curriculum, for example experiential learning, learning in the outdoors, visits to theatres, concerts, museums, trips to historical, geographical and religious places of interest. These experiences also build cultural capital for our children.

When we talk about a total learning environment we mean learning about oneself, others around you and the world around you. When you couple this with our "no limits" philosophy it is therefore unsurprising that at SES we take advantage of all opportunities open to us for extending learning across the 24 hour cycle (See diagrammatic representation on overleaf).



This means that all staff will be ‘educators’ in the broadest sense and that all experiences relating to individual children can be planned, monitored and used to ‘accredit’ learning with Personal, Emotional and Social development being but one obvious example. Indeed there will be skills and experience across the care team that cannot be replicated in the Learning Centre team. We will take full advantage of this when planning and accounting for learning.

6 **PERSONALISED LEARNING – CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

Personalised Learning is at the heart of SES philosophy. Personalised learning means:

- setting high expectations and giving every learner confidence they can succeed
- establishing what learners already know and building on it
- structuring and pacing the learning experience to make it challenging and enjoyable
- inspiring learning through passion for the subject
- making individuals active partners in their learning
- developing personal learning and thinking skills and personal qualities
- enabling children to develop the skills they will need beyond school

We demonstrate high expectations of every student, given practical form by high quality teaching based on a sound knowledge and understanding of each students' needs, as outlined in their EHCP (the legal document that describes their additional special educational needs). It means shaping teaching around the way different youngsters learn; it means taking the care to nurture the unique talents of every child.

At SES we incorporate our “no limits” philosophy with personalisation. This relies on re-exciting children with the idea of learning starting from the child’s strengths, interests, talents and passions as the gateway to success. Learning becomes something one does for oneself rather than something someone else does to you.

We are not bound by logistical structures that timetable large groups of students and classes – we can literally individually timetable each student with a personalised learning package. We are equally not bound by a ‘standard’ teaching day, but we do guarantee to provide 25hrs per week of planned learning opportunities. At times, our approach may require a timetable that incrementally leads towards the full 25 hrs, especially after sustained periods without accessing education prior to their admission, or through periods of challenge and personal crisis.

Our schemes of learning are highly personalised, derived from National Curriculum frameworks and tailored to each young person, in order to support them in future pathways. Policy and Practice documents exist for all National Curriculum areas and subjects. These documents carefully outline how the subject is integrated into practice and how they interrelate.

We believe that an individual’s capacity for learning is linked to their emotional well-being and that people learn in a variety of ways. We espouse an approach that allows for innovation and flexibility while guaranteeing an entitlement to high-quality educational outcomes. This embraces every aspect of school life including teaching and learning strategies, IT and Computing, curriculum choice, organisation and timetabling, assessment arrangements and relationships with the local community.

A hallmark of Turnstone House and Avocet House is high quality teaching and learning, and relationships between adults and children.

6.1 PERSONALISED CURRICULUM PATHWAYS

At SES we believe that the mainstream curriculum is only just catching up with what highly specialised environments have delivered for very damaged and disaffected youngsters where the priority has to be relevance and response to individual learning needs. The educational programmes and indeed wider learning experiences (24 hr learning) have to be holistic and therapeutically orientated, but rigorous in their evidencing of progress and outcomes.

On arrival, a student's initial curriculum will focus on establishing secure relationships through varied personalised experiences. Following curriculum pathways for younger students, and those with significant learning needs will be primarily designed to develop early communication and language, physical, personal, social, and emotional skills, literacy and mathematics, understanding of the world, and expressive arts and design. This may embrace imaginative learning projects, in a cross curricular approach, building on knowledge and help making sense of concepts.

As students' progress at SES, most are ready for their next stage of personal learning and development. This includes more choices and opportunity to access academic and vocational study in areas of interest and skill, whilst still providing access to core subjects and the wider curriculum areas. There is also a strong emphasis on career pathways, work experience and vocational courses, which raise aspirations and re-motivate children and students. Some of our students access bespoke learning and development packages and are supported off site at local education and skills providers.

7 MEASURING PROGRESS - CURRICULUM IMPACT

We believe that progress in learning should be judged against the National Curriculum and the usual range of accreditation available to all students. Access to the National Curriculum is an entitlement across all key stages and the relevant areas of the framework are used to assist in planning curriculum delivery. This means that despite pursuing individualised learning through students' strengths, gifts, talents and passions in an innovative and creative way, outcomes can still be mapped against the National Curriculum.

Due to the nature of their specific needs and often difficult backgrounds, many students will experience periods when their progress will stall or even regress. This has to be a factor when designing a curriculum which will identify and reinforce the essential knowledge and skills which pupils need if they are to successfully access learning in KS4 and post 16.

At SES, across both SES establishments, we are continually evolving a 'fit for purpose' assessment framework to support staff in planning for progress, and to ensure an effective, consistent and quantifiable measure of student progress.

Our SES tracking systems are guided by, but not limited to, the National Curriculum framework, referencing Age Related Expectations, to ensure the needs of our learners are met on an individual basis. Key additional progress measures also include engagement and attendance, and baseline standardised assessment. SES

have a bespoke assessment framework for Personal, Emotional and Social Development.

Progress at SES is not limited to academic progress, and so each student's progress should be considered in line with their individual Development and Learning planning structures. A wide range of systems, structures and processes support and inform views of both qualitative and quantitative progress.

8 POST 16 EDUCATION

As part of the personalised learning response delivered by SES, the opportunity for students to continue their education beyond key stage 4, when appropriate, is critical. Post 16 learning is tailored directly to the individual needs of the student, with a continuing emphasis placed on their transition towards independence. We develop pathways using extensive baseline assessments and discussions with our students, which are then tailored to an individual's needs and aspirations. Throughout this process we deliver high quality independent careers advice, which enables individuals to make free and independent choices.

At the point of admission, we create a Development and Learning Overview with six different areas of focus:

- Education, Training and Employment
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Physical Health/ Medical
- Family Relationships and Identity
- Practical Lifeskills for Independent Living
- Living Arrangements and Support Beyond SES

A full range of accreditation is available, alongside increasing opportunities to develop life skills, links with employment and access to college courses. The aim is to ensure the appropriate continuation of learning for all post 16 students. Turnstone House and Avocet House work in close liaison with college providers to ensure that suitable arrangements are made to support each individual through specific post 16 programmes of study, and further develop the personalised 24 hour curriculum to best ensure success at this stage of education.

9 APPENDIX

The Pan Process: Portfolio Of Achievement And Needs: Integrating Learning And Care

**THE PAN PROCESS: PORTFOLIO OF ACHIEVEMENT AND NEEDS
INTEGRATING LEARNING AND CARE**

