

FOOTSTEPS TRUST CURRICULUM POLICY

Introduction

Footsteps Trust Academy is an Independent School and Alternative Provision supporting students in Years 8 to 11 who may have experienced barriers to learning within mainstream education.

The curriculum is designed to provide a broad, balanced, ambitious and personalised education that enables students to:

- Achieve academically.
- Develop socially and emotionally.
- Improve attendance and engagement.
- Build resilience and confidence.
- Develop independence.
- Prepare successfully for further education, employment and training.

The curriculum reflects the school's commitment to safeguarding, inclusion, equality, personal development and positive post-16 destinations.

The Academy recognises that many students may have:

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Interrupted educational experiences.
- Additional vulnerabilities requiring targeted support.

The curriculum therefore combines academic achievement, personal development, wellbeing and employability to meet the needs of individual learners.

Curriculum Principles

The Footsteps curriculum aims to:

- Be ambitious for all learners.
- Promote high aspirations.
- Address gaps in prior learning.
- Support literacy, numeracy and communication skills.
- Promote attendance and engagement.
- Develop emotional literacy and resilience.
- Prepare students for adulthood and employment.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Support positive mental health and wellbeing.

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- Develop students' understanding of British Values.
- Equip students with the knowledge and skills to stay safe.

Safeguarding is embedded throughout the curriculum and contributes to students' understanding of:

- Online safety.
- Healthy relationships.
- Exploitation.
- Grooming.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Extremism and radicalisation.
- Substance misuse.
- Criminal exploitation.
- Consent.
- Personal safety.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

Footsteps Trust will ensure that students receive access to:

- English.
- Mathematics.
- Science.
- Physical Education.
- Religious Education.
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE).
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).
- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG).
- Creative and vocational learning opportunities.

The Academy will additionally:

- Promote British Values.
- Present political issues in a balanced manner.
- Make suitable provision for students with SEND.
- Promote literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- Support preparation for post-16 education, employment and training.

Curriculum Ethos

Footsteps adopts a trauma-informed and relational approach to learning.

We recognise that many students have experienced challenges that may impact engagement, confidence and achievement.

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The curriculum is delivered through:

- Positive relationships.
- Small teaching groups.
- High levels of pastoral support.
- Consistent expectations.
- Adaptive teaching strategies.
- Personalised learning pathways.

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning while receiving the support necessary to succeed.

Safeguarding Through the Curriculum

In line with KCSIE 2026, safeguarding is woven throughout the curriculum.

Students receive education on:

- Online safety.
- Cyberbullying.
- Harmful online content.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Consent and healthy relationships.
- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Knife crime and gangs.
- County lines exploitation.
- Substance misuse.
- Extremism and radicalisation.
- Financial exploitation.
- Personal safety.

Learning is delivered through:

- PSHE.
- RSHE.
- Assemblies.
- Workshops.
- External speakers.
- Curriculum lessons.

Implementation

Will aim to:

- Address statutory elements of the curriculum
- Allocate time for teaching elements of the curriculum
- Adopt procedures for assessment meet
- Inform pupils and their parents/carers indicating progress made
- Address individual needs of some pupils by permanent or temporary disapplication from the National Curriculum

Systems put into place will aim to:

- set statutory targets
- publish examination results
- monitor standards of attainment in each subject
- monitor pupil progress
- present political issues in a balanced way

Academic Protocols, Performance and Progress:

- Baseline testing is performed when students arrive at Footsteps
- ILPs are also written on students' arrival and tracked, assessed and updated every half term
- Student reports are produced every term and sent to parents/carers and referrers
- Academic assessments are performed every half term
- Weekly conduct reports display student performance during academic lessons.
- Student progress is continually monitored via Tracking Grids
- Academic levels, Targets, and Predicted Grades are explained to students and are accessible to them inside their academic books.
- Homework is set by Teachers
- GCSE questions and papers are performed prior to GCSE examinations in order to prepare the students for the examination format

Class Structure:

- Footsteps classes are known as Pods
- There are up to 3-6 Pods per site each with an assigned staff member, known as a Learning Mentor
- Each Pod averages 3-6 students, the numbers are kept deliberately small to optimise students' learning
- Footsteps prides itself on the pastoral support we offer our students and the role of the Learning Mentor is the foundation of this support. With a student's Learning Mentor often being the first port of call if they feel they need someone to talk to

- During lessons students can struggle to keep to the classroom conduct rules, due to their social, emotional and behavioural problems. Learning Mentors support the teachers in disciplining any poor behaviour and removing students from class temporarily should that be deemed necessary. Students are only removed from the remainder of the lesson as a last resort
- On occasion a student may change Pod or Site if it is thought a change in environment would be beneficial to their learning. If this is being considered the student and their referrer are kept informed, and any transition is made to be as smooth as possible

Content:

Students are offered a wide variety of courses based around a flexible options programme. A range of teaching and learning styles is encouraged, to ensure a richness of educational environment that enhances the experience of students and teachers alike.

For a brief synopsis of our curriculum content please see attached flow chart.

Footsteps offers a wide range of activities across its centres. Activities include Football, Basketball, Boxing, Wrestling, Athletics, Table Tennis, Badminton, and Tennis, some of which are timetabled into school activities for all students while others remain as an option.

Key Stage 3 Provision

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is designed to:

- Secure core literacy and numeracy skills.
- Support successful transition to Key Stage 4.
- Re-engage students with learning.
- Develop personal and social skills.

Students typically access:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Religious Education
- Physical Education
- Art
- PSHE and RSHE
- Careers Education
- Personal Development
- Enrichment Activities

The programme is adapted to individual needs while maintaining high expectations for achievement and progression.

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Key Stage 4 Provision

All students follow personalised programmes that combine academic, vocational and personal development opportunities.

Qualifications may include:

GCSE Qualifications

- English Language
- Mathematics
- Combined or Separate Sciences
- Religious Studies
- Business Studies
- Art
- Physical Education (where appropriate)

Functional Skills

- English
- Mathematics

Personal Development

- PSHE
- RSHE
- Careers Education
- Employability Skills
- Citizenship
- British Values

The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant to student needs and post-16 progression routes.

The accredited courses we deliver at Footsteps have been chosen very much in line with our cohort's needs and abilities. There is a heavy coursework element allowing students to be offered more guidance and support in their work without the pressure of an examination to assist the students in getting the best grades possible.

Examination preparation is taught within individual subject lessons, as well as part of our PSHE scheme of work. To ensure students are more familiar with examination practice half-term assessments are performed in exam conditions and a mock exam week takes place every December or January.

Our students' well-being, personal development and independence are paramount at Footsteps and our PHSE topics are selected to support this ethos. Students are informed of their academic

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choices, educated on personal health issues, including sexual health, made aware of and taught to be respectful of different cultures and religions. Students are also educated regarding aspects such as FGM and Extremism via our PREVENT lessons. They are encouraged to be a good and active citizen within their community, supported through college applications and prepared for an independent life in the working world.

Whole school activities:

Footsteps invites professionals and experts to visit us and deliver workshops on issues that affect young people. These include healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, gangs, knife crime, substance abuse, and sexual health and relationships.

Creative writing workshops provide an in-depth look at another way of working and provide the students with skills that assist them throughout all subject areas.

Educational school trips e.g. The Science Museum, The Tate Modern re-enforce the information they are taught in class while reward trips such as fishing, Go-karting and Thorpe Park allow the students to socialise and put into practice the soft skills they are taught at Footsteps.

Individual Curriculums:

Footsteps is able to personalise the curriculum on an individual basis. With the cohort that we work with, this is an important aspect of our delivery. All students are offered English, Business Studies, Mathematics, Biology, RS, PE, and Art GCSE qualifications as well as the added benefit of completing a Maths and English Functional Skills Qualification. The minimum number of GCSEs to be taken is by any student is 5. Additionally, students referred to Footsteps can request to continue studying a GCSE subject not offered by Footsteps, and this will be facilitated and supported wherever possible.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Footsteps is committed to ensuring that all students have equal access to learning opportunities.

The curriculum is adapted through:

- Differentiated teaching.
- Reasonable adjustments.
- Individual learning plans.
- Additional adult support.
- Assistive resources.
- Specialist interventions where required.

Curriculum planning will take account of:

- EHCP outcomes.
- SEND Support Plans.
- Student strengths and needs.
- Professional advice.

The Academy promotes inclusion and high aspirations for all learners.

Assessment, Progress and Reporting

The Academy uses assessment to identify needs, inform planning and support progress.

Students receive:

- Baseline assessment upon admission.
- Ongoing formative assessment.
- Half-termly progress reviews.
- Termly reports.
- Individual target setting.
- Progress tracking linked to qualifications and personal development.

Assessment information supports:

- Curriculum planning.
- Intervention programmes.
- Post-16 planning.
- Identification of additional support needs

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Careers education is embedded across the curriculum and supported through the Academy's CEIAG programme.

Students receive:

- Careers guidance interviews.
- College and training provider engagement.
- Apprenticeship information.
- Employability education.
- Workplace learning opportunities where possible.
- Application and interview support.

The Academy supports all students to secure a positive destination into:

- Further Education.
- Sixth Form.
- Apprenticeships.
- Employment with training.

Student destinations are tracked and reviewed to support continuous improvement.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The curriculum promotes:

- Equality of opportunity.
- Respect for diversity.
- British Values.
- Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Anti-discriminatory practice.

Students are encouraged to understand, respect and celebrate differences within modern British society.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Principal and Head of Teaching and Learning will monitor:

- Curriculum quality.
- Student progress.
- Attendance.
- Engagement.
- Personal development outcomes.
- Post-16 destinations.
- Curriculum relevance and effectiveness.

Monitoring activities may include:

- Learning walks.
- Work scrutiny.
- Progress reviews.
- Student voice.
- Parent feedback.
- Quality assurance activities.

Curriculum provision will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains responsive to student needs.