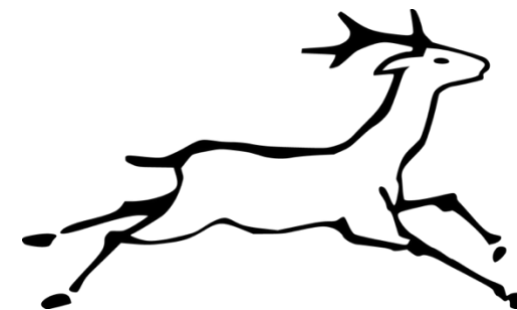




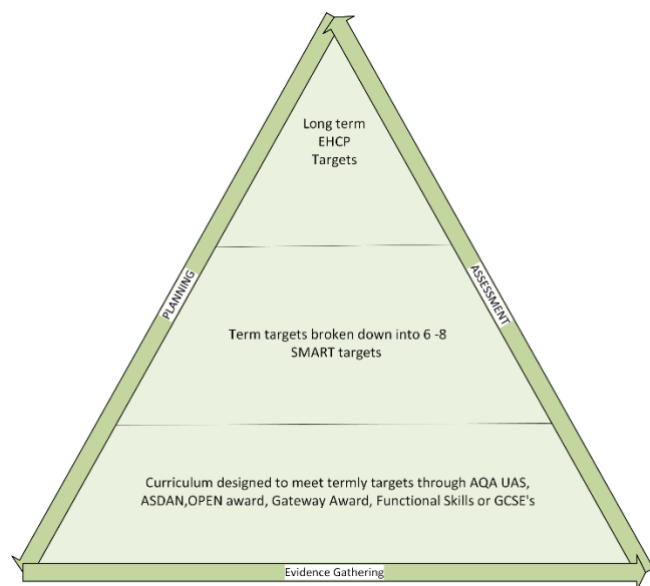
Curriculum Policy and Plan

Reviewed: 1/9/26 | Next date for review: 1/9/27

Time, space, and careful observation are key to the Running Deer approach. The curriculum has been organised in a way that reflects the dynamic nature of learning at Running Deer, it ensures all elements, whatever they are or however they look or happen, can be captured and celebrated.

This person-centred approach has significant advantages for our young people who have struggled in a traditional classroom-based environment. Learning at Running Deer is not a tokenistic gesture, it is carefully planned, recorded, and delivered so that students can optimize their time therapeutically and learn without the risk of being traumatized.

Our aim is to capture as much of this learning as we can and link it to subjects, frameworks, objectives, but primarily EHCP targets.



EHCP targets are broken down into termly targets based on one of 6 areas:

1. COG and Learn Academic
2. Cog and Learn Pastoral
3. Com and Int. Academic
4. Com and Int Pastoral
5. SEMH Academic
6. SEMH Pastoral.

This has the option of an ASDAN or Open Awards targets. Where appropriate.

The Bespoke offer is then built through UAS, ASDAN, Open and Gateway Awards, Functional skills and GCSEs (these build on the core offer)

Curriculum Approach

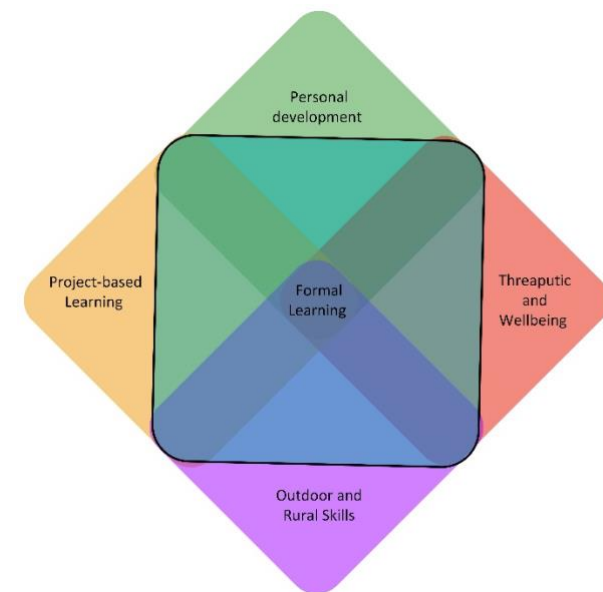
There are also 5 areas of intent and 3 modes of delivery of the curriculum.

- Intent: Therapeutic and Wellbeing, Personal development, Formal learning, Project-based learning, Rural and Outdoor skills.
- Delivery: Taught, Staff Led and Learner Led

This model is influenced significantly by complex systems theory and the idea that nothing exists in isolation. One thing may be the primary focus, but it will benefit all other areas.

Intent

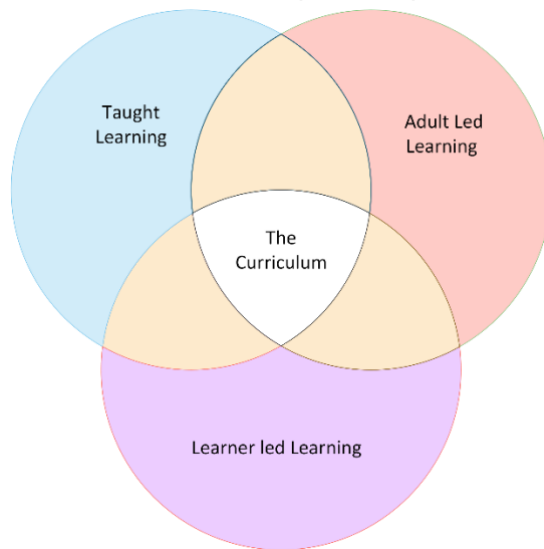
- Therapeutic and Wellbeing linked to SEMH- this is any activity that is linked to the wellbeing of the young person either in the moment or the longer term. It is often Guided learning to reflect the journey the student is on and relies on staff relationships to recognise when therapeutic work may be beneficial. Creative therapy - Including: art therapy; music, storytelling and Sandplay. Nature Play - Using the natural environment for play, Ecotherapy - Utilising the natural environment as a therapy tool to improve mental health and wellbeing and physical health and wellbeing. For example, going for walks, animal tracking, tree and plant identification, sensory development.
- Personal development Linked to Communication and Interaction - Adult led, it encompasses PSHE, and numerous other more specialist interventions including adventurous activity delivered by a subject specialist and this is to encourage social skills, Communication and Interaction, Social, emotional, and mental needs. PSHE also encompasses the Rights, Respecting Schools agenda, giving students an opportunity to learn about the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, how these relate to British Values, and to develop their understanding of issues around inclusion and diversity. Adventurous Activity seeks to develop self-esteem, resilience, personal responsibility, and organisational skills through the following programmes:



1. Ten Tors (14+) (Feb-May)
2. Duke of Edinburgh (14+) (May-Feb)
3. Focused activity- (Climbing, sailing, paddle boarding, kayaking etc) (14+)
4. Key stage 3 experience days
5. Expedition skills Checklist
6. Orienteering course in the woods
7. Archery
8. Hiking (linked to curriculum based)

- Formal Learning-Cognition and Learning. This covers the Taught subjects which are planned, assessed, and delivered based on academic learning such as National Curriculum, GCSE or accredited outcomes. One-to-one lessons are provided in Maths, English and Science. For Key Stages 2 and 3, formal learning in English, Maths and Science follows the AQA unit award scheme which aligns the National Curriculum, and this is individually tailored to the student's age and stage.
- Student progress is measured using AQA UAS scheme criteria against the relevant National Curriculum outcomes in Key Stages 2 and 3, and against the appropriate KS4 qualification syllabus. Students are assessed at the beginning of their time at Running Deer in Reading, Writing and Maths and their programme of study is adapted accordingly. For students in Key Stage 4, formal learning in English, Maths and Science follows the Functional Skills / AQA GCSE / AQA ELC syllabus and the associated syllabus timetable.
- Students will also complete ICT and digital literacy units which they can build to towards an accredited qualification (implemented September 2026)
- Project-based learning Cognition and Learning - a cross-curricular approach based on individual interest and need. Person-centred projects also enable the student to develop other skills such as planning, communication, and teamwork. Progress is measured against the individual goals for the project. This will be specific to individual needs. Included in the core offer is ASDAN personal development programme and a range of accredited open award units.
- Rural and Outdoor skills Sensory and Physical. Conservation in theory and practice - Including: animal habitats, protection of animal species, trees and plants, encouraging habitat, Woodland Management - Coppicing, Coppice crafts, Plant and Tree identification, Timber including types and uses, Rural Skills - Hedge laying, Stone walling, Charcoal burning, Green Woodworking and carpentry, Working with Heavy horses, Health and Safety - Safe use of tools, Using the right tool for the job, Maintenance of tools, PPE, Health and safety in the workplace, Bushcraft and Survival - The 4 cornerstones of survival: Fire, Shelter, Water, Food; Foraging for food; Tools and equipment; Safe use of tools; Using the correct tool for the job; Health and Safety, John Muir Award - Some students will work towards the John Muir Award, an environmental

award scheme encouraging people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places. It comprises four main challenges: discover a wild place; explore it; conserve it; share experiences. <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award>



Delivery

- Taught: planned, delivered, recorded, and reported on my teachers. This will be Maths, English, Science etc.
- Adult Led: planned or targeted sessions prepared and delivered by Caseworkers with specific interests or responsibilities, such as ASDAN or specific interventions.
- Learner Led: co-created learning or experiential learning which is inspired by an initiative or interest of the learner and supported by a caseworker, working alongside and with input from the student. This may include personal projects, outdoor activities, or offsite visits.

Subject statements

Delivery of Curriculum	Purpose of Curriculum	Subject	Curriculum Statement
Taught	Formal learning.	English	English and Literacy are key skills, but often hold the most barriers to learning. English at Running Deer is often interest-based but skills led. This means no two students will have the same offer but their programme of learning will be built on Objectives from the National Curriculum or other recognised accrediting bodies.
	Formal learning.	Maths	Maths and Numeracy are delivered in many cross-curriculum ways as well as through formal learning. Objectives for this will be built on the Nation Curriculum or other recognised accrediting bodies. They may be delivered in a number of different ways.
	Formal learning.	Science	Students work towards Gateway Level 2 Science Award at the end of Key Stage 4. In KS2 and 3 students work towards National Curriculum objectives but with a particular focus on working scientifically. This may not be done in a linear fashion, as on paper, but comprises fully taught sessions guided by the interest of the student. There is a heavy emphasis on experimental and experiential learning related to the intended objectives.
	Formal learning.	PSHE inc British values	This is based on schemes of learning from the PSHE Association. It provides the base coverage to ensure that all students have the same base knowledge and core skills.
Adult Led	Project-based learning	ASDAN	Students will work towards ASDAN CoPE or AoPE in Key stage 4. To build up to this in Key stage 3 they will follow the personal development Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards. This allows them to have a breadth of topics in both academic and non-academic subject areas. It also allows us to structure and acknowledge that all therapeutic and

			wellbeing, English and literacy are key skills, albeit, for many, the most challenging.
	Formal learning.	Reading (cross curricular)	Reading at Running Deer is offered in different ways. More able readers have Everybody Reads timetabled where they share reading time with a caseworker - they will share a book, read alongside each other, or read too each. Other readers have targeted interventions with a literacy specialist which are targeted at known barriers to learning. Other readers will have supported and led reading sessions to develop their skills.
	Personal Development	Outdoor Activities	These are adventure activities that are designed to take students to the edge of their own personal comfort zone. Once there they will demonstrate to themselves that they are capable of more than they think they are or that backing down from a challenge is not a failure. Both are vital to understanding of self-worth and high self-esteem. It also encompasses risk awareness, mitigation, and management of risk, self-advocacy and emotional regulation.
	Formal learning.	Writing (cross curricular)	Similar to reading, writing and recording of ideas is integral to so many things. Students will be encouraged to write and record in many different ways: Trough ASDAN, Personal development, and formal learning. This will be recorded so that it can be monitored and can inform the holistic picture of the student.
	Therapeutic and Wellbeing	Emotional Curriculum/Therapeutic Development	Many of our students have limited knowledge, understanding and vocabulary to process their emotions and how they experience the world. The Emotional Curriculum and Creative Personal Understanding is a structured programme to help give students the tools to process emotions and support strategies to help them manage moving forward.
	Personal development	Planned interventions	These interventions can be very closely linked to the emotional curriculum or formal learning. They are designed to target specific areas of development in students. This could range from Literacy, Numeracy, Speech, and

			Language, Turn-taking to Drawing and Talking, Sand Play, or Gaming and Talking.
	Formal Learning	Led PSHE	This encompasses No Outsiders, Big Q's, Expect respect, and any other topical and relevant PSHE. It's the main way SMSC and British Values are covered in the curriculum It is often dynamic and flexible to respond to current events.
Learner Led	Therapeutic and Wellbeing	Individual Development	Targeted at individual's needs, often dynamic to the student's situation. Staff will rely on their relationships with students to create ad hoc learning and therapeutic sessions based on interests expressed by the learner, so engaging the student in a positive and productive way.
	Personal development	Personalised PHSE	This is co-created, based on a student's needs and wishes. Often students have pre-conceived ideas or vulnerabilities. These may require support or challenge not to create uniformity or to change minds but to ensure that students have the fullest knowledge around their beliefs and ideas.
	Rural and outdoor skills.	Rural skills, bushcraft, and arts and crafts	As we are set in 16 acres of woodland it plays a massive role in what we do. This, linked with the known impact of biophilia, rural and outdoor skills, plays a huge part in what we do. Students can access several different programs to help develop their skills and understanding of our environment and how to co-exist with it.
	Project-based learning	Personal projects	Similar to Led Project Based Learning students may have specific interests or ideas which they may wish to develop. They can work alongside staff to develop these into projects which will have a cross-curricular brief.
	Personal development	Outdoor Activities	As with Led Outdoor activities many students will have a preferred activity in which they can lead their own learning and development alongside staff. This will develop resilience, perseverance, and self-esteem.

Assessment

As a therapeutic setting which provides education, we work closely with the Local Authority 0-25 teams and parents to ensure that all interested parties are satisfied we are working in the best interests of the child. Evidence of student progress will be recorded through on-going formative assessment of learning captured against the 6 termly short-term targets to build a holistic picture of the learner's progress. From September 2026 Maths and English will be able to be captured using the unit award, Entry Level Certificate and functional skills/GCSE assessment objects to create qualitative summative assessment data.

Evidence for learning (pastoral targets) captures a wide variety of information on a daily basis and is used to create trends about the student to create a holistic picture of where the student is. It allows us to track progress in terms of the whole curriculum and 'soft skills' in small steps, remaining person-centred in our approach.

Evidence for learning (academic targets) is completed by teachers after every lesson and identifies the location of the work, a photo of any evidence of learning and makes explicit the links back to the planned Outcomes or underlying Curriculum.

The Informal Learning Log is completed for any learning that has happened outside a "formal" lesson. Links to one of the 5 intentions and any subjects it is related to are made explicit.

Attainment and progress in the Formal Learning strand is measured against National Curriculum expectations for English and Maths for students in Key Stages 2 and 3. For students studying at Key Stage 4, we follow and track progress against the relevant ASDAN, Functional Skills or Entry Level/GCSE syllabus.

Formal Reports to parents are provided twice yearly, focusing on academic attainment in core National Curriculum subjects and on progress and attitude across the whole of the Running Deer curriculum.

Moderation of learning at Running Deer School.

There is a rigorous structure to ensure that all learning opportunities are recorded, monitored, and captured accurately.

The SLT will monitor EFL at least half termly to ensure there are no gaps and they are satisfied the work is being completed to the required standard. This will be moderated by Running Deer CIC (proprietor) to ensure they are aware of the work that is going on and they are satisfying their due diligence responsibilities as proprietor. This moderation is then checked by governors to ensure that both the school and the Running Deer CIC are effective in their practice. This is then reported back to the Board of Directors body which will hold the School and the Proprietor accountable. Alongside this there will also be Internal and external qualification verification to ensure that accredited project-based work is meeting the required standard.

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