

# Running Deer School Prospectus 2023 - 2024



# About

**Running Deer School is an Independent School for Special Educational Needs, providing high support specialist education for young people in Devon.**

Running Deer School's practical skills and therapeutic education enables young people in Devon to overcome barriers to learning; designed to stimulate and challenge them, supporting their personal development, improving confidence, self esteem, communication, social and emotional well-being.

There are various reasons why young people are unable to access mainstream education.

Our student centred approach, individual timetables and high support programmes provide the best opportunities for young people to thrive in a nurturing environment.

We specialise in working with young people with learning, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, ADHD, those on the Autistic Spectrum, Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, Attachment and Trauma, mental health issues and those considered hard to reach.





# Values

Our values are based on respect.

- Respect for self.
- Respect for others.
- Respect for the environment.

We strive to:

- Be ethical in everything we do.
- Be user led and transparent at all times.
- Promote inclusiveness.
- Make a positive difference to people's lives.

# Vision

Running Deer School know that young people can reach their full potential given time, the right opportunity and the support they need. Running Deer School believe that a young person centred approach to learning will offer the best outcome to each and every individual.

The task of our case workers and teachers is to provide a holistic and inclusive approach to the social, emotional and learning development of the young person, to promote independence with the emphasis on enabling them to become confident and self reliant, be happy and contribute to society in a positive way.

Our aims are for students to develop a sense of self worth by:

- Staff valuing each student as having something unique to contribute to the school and wider community by involving every young person in group discussions, having a young person led curriculum, and providing opportunities for the young people to be involved in community projects.
- Staff supporting the students to recognise that their behaviour does not define who they are and that their behaviour can change.
- Staff developing positive relationships with the students so that they experience a caring environment in which they feel valued.
- Staff treating students with respect.
- Students being involved in management of the woodland owned by Running Deer CIC so that they get a sense of being a force for good in the local environment.

For students to believe in their capacity to reach their full potential:

- By having a young person centred project based approach to learning, so that students experience being industrious and able to realise their aspirations to make or create something they are proud of.
- To have highly skilled workers capable of teaching students the skills they need to attain these goals.
- By having clear safety procedures for using tools so that students can be trusted to use tools independently whilst keeping themselves and others safe.

- To work with the students to reduce any possible social, emotional, behavioural and mental health barriers to reaching their full potential.
- To create individualised plans and learning goals to ensure that these are achievable.
- To provide opportunity for students to set their own goals.
- For students to feel safe.
- For students to feel inspired by the learning environment and the enthusiasm, expertise and energy of the staff.

This is only possible if it is facilitated by a genuine partnership between school and home, student and staff, based on a relationship of openness and trust.

Our wish is for students and parents, both current and former, to be our biggest advocates.



# Curriculum

Running Deer School operates as a full-time school placement for our young people on roll, or as a short-term therapeutic placement for young people on roll at other schools and settings.

We provide activities and therapeutic learning placements for young people facing a variety of issues in our woodland near Moretonhampstead. Working closely with a wide range of outside agencies, we can provide an individually tailored programme for young people from 8 - 16 years of age. Our referral sessions are structured around the needs of the young person, whilst working collaboratively with the on-roll school or outside agency at all times. We can take cases at short notice if necessary; and will also work with agencies to provide a transition period between schools.

Our activities include land-based studies such as woodland management, conservation and green woodworking, bushcraft, equine studies and interventions, dog therapy, nature therapy and arts and crafts. Students are also encouraged to set personal goals and to pursue personalised, multi-discipline projects.

The majority of the young people referred to Running Deer, either on roll or on short term placement, have social, emotional and behavioural issues; some also have identified conditions including ASD, ADHD, PDA, ADD, OCD, ODD, learning difficulties, mental health issues, are survivors of domestic abuse, and so on. Many of the young people referred to us are at risk of exclusion from school, or have already been excluded, or need therapeutic support in a nurturing outdoor environment.

## Curriculum Approach

As an on-roll school, we provide our students with opportunities to follow a broad and balanced curriculum, to achieve formally recognised qualifications based on their needs, and to develop their social, emotional and behavioural skills, in order to transition successfully to further study or training on leaving school. As an alternative therapeutic provider our main aims are to help the young person develop their social, emotional and behavioural skills to enable them to transition back into their existing school, or into a new school where appropriate.



The curriculum at Running Deer School is divided into five strands: Formal learning; Project-Based Learning; Emotional Curriculum; Land-Based Studies; Therapeutic Learning. Most students on roll with Running Deer School will engage in each strand across an academic year. Young people with us on a therapeutic placement will have an individualised learning plan encompassing different strands as appropriate.

Our curriculum is personalised to the individual student.

Many of our young people have gaps in their education, so will often lack confidence in formal curriculum subjects, or face other barriers that make engagement in a formal classroom setting very challenging. In order to build confidence, students may only engage in the more practical strands of the curriculum when they first begin at Running Deer School, moving on to a broader curriculum involving formal lessons once they have developed effective relationships and are ready to learn.

Almost all the activities our young people engage in, outside of the formal lessons, are practical, so each session is multi-disciplined, combining several subjects into the activity and allowing the young person to learn in a practical and logical way. Students are encouraged to identify personal goals and undertake projects that help them to develop personal and practical skills, as well as advancing their knowledge and understanding. We also work with the local community to provide experiential visits, for example to a local pig farm to support a Key Stage 2 history project on farming.

With the support of their case worker, each young person sets small achievable goals as part of the 'journey log' process each day, which helps to engage them, and also enables them to complete tasks giving a sense of achievement, improving self-esteem and confidence and enabling them to stretch themselves when they are ready to do so. This person-centred approach has significant advantages for young people who have struggled in a traditional classroom-based environment.



# Qualifications

Running Deer School offers a suite of qualifications which are matched to each individual students' needs. These range from traditional GCSE and Entry Level qualifications in English, Maths, and other subjects, to vocational and technical awards and qualifications.

Running Deer School is really pleased to be an approved centre for ASDAN, Gateway Qualifications and Open Awards. This is a really important step for us, as it increases the opportunities for our young people to leave us with a range of qualifications which reflect their interests and goals. Through these awarding bodies, we can offer qualifications and awards in land management, animal care, work-related learning, and Functional Skills in Maths and English (for students who need an alternative to GCSE).

All students at Running Deer follow ASDAN programmes in each Key Stage, culminating in either the Award of Personal Effectiveness (AoPE) or Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) in Key Stage 4. ASDAN CoPE comprises modules across different areas of the curriculum, life skills, and work-related learning, can be taken at Level 1 or Level 2, and is equivalent to a GCSE.





# The School Day

Here at Running Deer our days are diverse, individual and unique. They are personalised based on where you are on your journey in education, however there are typical things that you can expect on the average day.

An example day at Running Deer:

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|-----------------|--|
| 9:30 am         | You will arrive at camp, and be greeted by your caseworker and the rest of the staff.  |
| 9:30 - 10.00 am | You will have some settling time with your caseworker, this may be in camp, at a den or around the woods. It might involve fire-lighting to make hot drink or finding somewhere to shelter from the elements.              |
| 10.00 - 10:45am | A lesson in the classroom. This will be 1:1 with one of our teachers, everyone has English and Maths lessons, some choose a more formal type of learning and have the offer of other subjects done in a classroom setting. |

- 10:45 - 11.00 am A bit of free time to relax and enjoy the surroundings in camp, tend to the fire and chop some wood for later.
- 11.00 - 12.00 pm ASDAN- Everyone at Running Deer takes on the ASDAN challenges. These are projects that you will undertake that are led by you based on what you want to find out in but in a framework laid out by ASDAN. These are accredited projects at every level through Key Stages 2-4
- 12.00 - 1.00 pm Lunch, typically you will bring a lunch from home, either something that can be enjoyed cold but if it can be warmed easily on a campfire. It can be really satisfying in the colder months to bring something warm to eat such as soup.
- 1.00 - 2:30 pm Equine assisted learning. You will spend time with the horses looking after and caring for them. Learning how to be around these animals and learning what they can teach us about ourselves. If horse aren't your thing maybe an afternoon of Bushcraft or land based studies. Learning how to fully enjoy our surroundings.
- 2:30 pm - 3.00 pm At the end of every day we like to reflect back on the day, its successful and less so successful moments. You will record these in your "Journey Log" a diary of you time at Running Deer School.

Days for everybody are different and dynamic, they can be changed and adapted based on how you develop at Running Deer School.



# Referrals

Running Deer School accepts applications all year around

The referral process for young people attending Running Deer School is as follows for 2022-2023:

- Initial enquiry received by Running Deer School
- Arrangements made for a pre-referral, on-site visit to Running Deer School.
- Following a successful pre-referral visit to Running Deer School, an application form and accompanying risk assessment will need to be completed and returned.
- On receipt of a completed application, potential students will be invited to attend a more formal visit where their individual needs and desired outcomes will be discussed.
- Once the application is accepted and funding has been confirmed a start date will be agreed.

# Term Dates

## School term dates: 2023 – 2024

Term	Starts	Ends
2023 Autumn Term 1	Wednesday 6th September	Friday 20th October
Half Term	Monday 23rd October	Friday 27th October
2023 Autumn Term 2	Monday 30th October	Friday 15th December
2024 Spring Term 1	Wednesday 3rd January	Friday 9th February
Half Term	Monday 12th February	Friday 16th February
2024 Spring Term 2	Monday 19th February	Wednesday 27th March
2024 Summer Term 1	Monday 15th April	Friday 24th May
Half Term	Monday 27th May	Friday 31st May
2024 Summer Term 2	Monday 3rd June	Tuesday 23rd July

# Key Information

Running Deer School offers a unique combination of education and therapeutic intervention.

Situated just outside of Moretonhampstead in 16 acres of beautiful woodland our school consists of two main camps where our young people are based and can build camp fires.

Dotted throughout the woods are a number of individual “dens” which students have made as breakout spaces away from the main areas. It has three dedicated teaching spaces in which more formal lessons take place with one of our experienced teaching staff.

There is access to vehicles so that students can participate in community activities as well as visiting our horses that are stabled only a short distance away.

At Running Deer School the staff wear the uniform so the young people don't have to! It is however a good idea to wear sturdy boots, lots of layers and, in the more wintery months, a good set of waterproofs.

## Key Staff

Head of Running Deer School: Nick Hurst

School Administrator: Martin Hibbs

Designated Safeguarding Lead (proprietor) Jo Winterburn

## Contact Running Deer School at:

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[www.runningdeerschool.org.uk](http://www.runningdeerschool.org.uk)