

CURRICULUM POLICY



Legislation / guidance that informs this document

- Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

Other Red Balloon policies that should be read in conjunction with this one

- Student Wellbeing
- Behaviour for Learning
- PSHEE

Responsibility for Implementation

Headteachers and trustees must ensure that a staff group is appointed that is able to 'deliver' the policy described here. It is the responsibility of every member of staff to enable students to access appropriate learning opportunities within their subject(s) area(s).

Statement of intent

Red Balloon Learner Centres usually provide for approximately 20 students. The reason for referral to a centre is that the young person has reached a crisis point in accessing education and requires alternative provision for a period of time. Thus Red Balloon Centres seek to:

- provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum that enables students to re-engage with education and catch up on missed learning;
- enable students to develop a positive view of themselves as learners and members of society through a wellbeing curriculum;
- place student voice at the heart of a bespoke learning provision – students are involved in negotiating their learning programme, evaluating their progress and planning future learning in light of that evaluation.

Values that underpin Red Balloon provision

- *worth* - all students should be treated as of equal value whatever their gender, race, ability, background or other characteristics;

- *equality* - all students should have equal access to resources and opportunities;
- *individuality* – students have a right to learn in the way that best suits them and to contribute to the design of a curriculum that prepares them for the next stage of their education;
- *FBVs* – Red Balloon Centres will work to always actively promote fundamental British values (respect for the law, democracy, liberty, tolerance);
- *the rights of students to:*
 - *access learning that is pertinent to them and acknowledges their learning history* – Red Balloon Learner Centres build on the previous positive learning experiences of students to negotiate new areas of learning;
 - *grow emotionally and intellectually* – what students learn should contribute to their emotional, physical, intellectual, and social growth, enabling them to develop and test their personal values and attitudes;
 - *make informed decisions about their lifestyle choices* – students should be enabled to make positive decisions regarding their physical, emotional and sexual health.

Red Balloon staff have to understand and work with the paradox that learning is extremely unlikely to take place until a young person feels emotionally ready and resilient enough to learn, yet successful learning will be a key factor in enabling them to develop maturity and resilience.

Centres will work to support students to:

- be healthy, and make informed decisions to maintain personal health;
- stay safe, and respect the right of others to be safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution across their community;
- achieve independence and economic well being.

Curriculum content

Our core intentions through curriculum delivery are to:

- offer bespoke provision to each student;

- ensure that students' emotional needs are met so that they are 'ready to learn';
- prepare a student for successful transition (to next placement);
- (where a student's aim is to return to mainstream) ensure that s/he studies the relevant curriculum so that s/he is able to learn alongside her/his mainstream peers upon return;
- (where a student is to complete KS4 courses) ensure that an appropriate range of study and qualification is available so that s/he will have the skills, knowledge and qualifications required to progress into her/his desired KS5 placement.

The curriculum will:

- include the core subjects of mathematics, English, and science;
- ensure that all students develop skills in computing;
- utilize technology effectively to support learning in all areas of the curriculum;
- include a comprehensive programme of PSHEE (as a key part of the 'wellbeing' programme);
- offer access to humanities and modern foreign languages;
- provide access to a range of creative arts experiences to include drama, music, art, dance and literature;
- include broader elements of spiritual, moral, cultural, ethical and social development – this will include active promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- provide access to aesthetic and practical experiences;
- provide opportunities to engage in planned physical or other activities for personal and social development as well as for their intrinsic value;
- provide appropriate career planning and guidance;
- provide students with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England;
- encompass opportunities for independent work according to students' age, ability and aptitude.

The seven required fields of knowledge (for independent schools)

Subject area	General description and requirements
Maths	Make calculations, understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space.
Linguistics	Develop communication skills and increase command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Offer a modern foreign language.
Scientific	Increase knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and physical processes.
Technological	Use of ICT, working with tools, equipment and materials to produce good quality products.
Human and social	People and how they live, how human action now and in the past has influenced events and conditions.
Physical	Develop physical control and coordination; acquire knowledge of basic principles of fitness and health.
Aesthetic and creative	Develop students' capacity to respond emotionally and intellectually to sensory experience and to appreciate beauty and fitness for purpose – there are aesthetic elements to all subjects, but some, such as art, music, dance, drama and literature offer greatest opportunity.

Red Balloon is committed to ensuring that high standards of numeracy and literacy are developed throughout the curriculum and that all members of staff understand their responsibilities in these areas.

Numeracy and Literacy

All teachers are expected to develop students' skills in the core areas of numeracy and literacy. Confidence in numeracy and other mathematical skills is a precondition of success across the curriculum.

Red Balloon teachers will seek to develop the following areas as described within the revised curriculum.

Spoken language

Students will be encouraged to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using 'Standard English'. They will learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication. They will be taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculation, hypothesis and the exploration of ideas. This will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as to organise their ideas for writing.

Reading and writing

Teachers will develop students' reading and writing in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge. Students will be encouraged to read fluently, understand extended prose, both fiction and non-fiction, and be encouraged to read for pleasure. We will encourage students to visit and use public libraries. We will support students to develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation, and correct use of grammar. All teachers will seek to enable students to write in varied and appropriate styles, such as narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations.

Numeracy and mathematics

Teachers will seek to develop students' numeracy in all subjects so that they understand and appreciate the importance of mathematics. Students will be taught to apply arithmetic to problems, understand and use measures, estimate when using calculators and other technologies to produce results, and then

interpret them appropriately. Students should apply their geometric and algebraic understanding, and relate their understanding of probability to the notions of risk and uncertainty. Teachers will also seek to enable students to understand the cyclical process of collecting, presenting and analysing data. Students will be taught to apply their mathematics to both routine and non-routine problems, including breaking down more complex problems into a series of simpler steps.

NB Given the learning preferences, and, on occasion, the 'learning blocks' (eg "I hate maths, I can't do it and I won't do it!") of some students, their maths and numeracy provision may be offered in the areas in which they have shown particular interest, rather than being presented as 'stand alone' skills and knowledge.

Individual timetable design

In designing a programme that meets a student's needs, Red Balloon Centres aim to:

- gather as much information as possible at the point of referral, and during the student's induction period, regarding attainment levels and preferred styles of learning (ie carry out a thorough baseline assessment);
- generate both long and short term outcomes - identifying the skills, knowledge and qualifications (if necessary) required for the student to successfully achieve the desired outcomes;
- identify a work programme that is likely to enable students to achieve those outcomes;
- consistently monitor, review and, if required, modify the programme;
- engage 'student voice' centrally within the whole process.

At KS3

Students will have a timetable that ensures access to:

- maths,
- English,
- science,
- computing,
- humanities,
- creative arts,

- physical activity.

At KS4

Centres work to provide a range of suitable qualifications.

Given that there is no selection in terms of ability or attainment of students, it is essential that we provide relevant and accessible but challenging qualifications across the ability and attainment range.

Centres aim to offer GCSE and other appropriate qualifications in a broad range of subjects, including:

- maths,
- English,
- science (these can be individual subjects – physics, chemistry, biology, double awards or general science),
- computing,
- humanities,
- modern foreign languages,
- music,
- art,
- media,
- business and economics,
- food technology.,
- design technology,
- child care.

NB The range offered will vary from centre to centre.

Centres seek to accommodate any other desired subject option either through online learning or by accessing an appropriately qualified teacher locally (presuming that funding allows).

In addition centres are developing access to a range of diplomas, such as travel and tourism, construction and other qualifications (eg ASDAN). These are sometimes offered in-house, on other occasions through a local provider (appropriate safeguarding checks are always carried out when such an arrangement is entered into).

All centres consider alternative accreditation in core subjects in cases wherein

students are deemed unlikely to achieve any grade at GCSE.

This range meets student need in that it enables students to access examinations that are realistic in terms of their attainment levels (many students have missed considerable amounts of education). It also meets need in that it provides students with the possibility of accessing their desired 'next step', be that further education, employment or training.

Given the bespoke nature of each student's learning programme, it is sometimes possible for them to complete GCSE courses within a year (sometimes less), something that is of great benefit to students referred late in year 10, or at the beginning of year 11.

NB. On occasion a centre may admit an 'over-age' student. This may be because s/he has missed a significant part of their secondary education, or simply that the commissioning agent believes that RB provision is the best matched to the student's needs (that student will inevitably be studying at KS4). In such cases the individualised nature of the provision will enable the relevant centre to respond to identified needs. In addition to the curriculum diet (which will include the opportunity to cover missed learning at KS3 or 4), an 'over-age' student will have access to:

- preparation for employment – developing the necessary skills and confidence;
- familiarisation with FE provision – visits to geographically accessible colleges, and preparation for admission if appropriate;
- tutor support specifically targeted at identifying the skills and knowledge required for the student to take the next step in their learning journey.

Careers guidance

Red Balloon has a careers guidance, a work placement policy and a transition policy posted on the website that detailing provision that will be made.

Careers guidance will be made available to all students aged 13 and over. For those planning to return to mainstream education appropriate support will be provided.

The wellbeing curriculum

Whilst centres seek to offer the best possible learning opportunities in the range

of academic subjects described, the development of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem are key elements of the Red Balloon experience. Students are referred because they have self-excluded from mainstream provision and frequently have significant anxiety attached to school, learning and developing relationships with peers and adults. Thus centres aim to provide a nurturing, supportive environment that enables each student to re-develop a positive view of themselves as a learner through:

- belonging to the Red Balloon community;
- exploring their anxieties and seeking ways to enable them to manage the emotions that lead to those anxieties;
- contributing to the community (a community should be both supportive and demanding);
- developing positive relationships with staff and students;
- experiencing success as a learner;
- engaging with a comprehensive PSHEE curriculum.

See the 'Student Wellbeing Policy' (available on the website) for greater detail about this element of the curriculum.

Meeting the needs of SEN students

Bespoke learning programmes are provided for all Red Balloon students. Once the individual needs of a referred student with a statement or EHC plan have been identified, their learning programme is developed to match those needs. Each headteacher or SENCo will:

- ensure the centre is able to meet the needs specified in the EHC plan;
- commission additional support if required to meet those needs;
- meet with parents and the student to ensure that they feel that the needs will be appropriately met;
- produce a learning plan (as for all students) and identify desired outcomes;
- ensure all staff are aware of the identified needs and projected outcomes;
- monitor progress against set outcomes;
- ensure that all reviews are held promptly.

What students learn from staff

It is a core Red Balloon tenet that ‘modelling’ on the part of adults (ie setting an example of the ways to behave) is a key element in all student learning. It is therefore essential that all staff provide positive role models for young people at all times. This means:

- displaying a pride in themselves and their appearance;
- always being punctual and well-prepared;
- having a sound mastery of subject areas and conveying a genuine appetite for learning;
- managing their own emotions;
- wanting to listen to those things that interest ‘others’, rather than focusing solely upon personal interest areas;
- modelling positive conflict resolution.

(see staff code of conduct for further detail)

Core Curriculum entitlement

All students will have access to a minimum of three hours per week in each core subject: maths, English and science (although, as stated above, this may not always appear on the student’s timetable as such). In cases where students either cannot or will not engage in group learning (or are disruptive of the learning of others within a group), and so need one-to-one lessons, their access may be reduced to accord with the available resources and staffing levels. On occasion (according to identified need) students will engage in activities intended to enable them to develop pro-social skills and the self efficacy to access academic learning opportunities. Centre staff will always be clear as to the dual purpose of such activities (ie enjoyment of the activity itself and development of intra and interpersonal skills).

All centres will provide students with access to learning about computing and the use of technology.

Red Balloon’s business plan ensures that all students and staff have access to good quality technology to support the full range of learning.

Beyond this core, centres will ensure that the provision offered to students reflects the requirements of this policy.

All staff are required to have a framework for monitoring student progress in their subject area(s) and to report against student progress using that framework.

Through that assessment framework centres hope to be able to illustrate that students have made good progress according to their ability. We are working to enable staff to match academic progress with wellbeing progress to identify where emphasis is required on the latter. Where progress is not 'good', we will always seek to modify practice to enable students to make such progress.

Policy updated by Bob Sproson, Director of Education, Sept 2019 - for annual review.