Pathways School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Policy Monitoring

Date policy last reviewed: June 2026

Signed by:

Neil Jones Headteacher Date: June 2026

Saima Ali Chair of governors Date: June 2026

Date of next review: June 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedure.

1. Introduction

Teaching at Pathways School is centred on the individual student, meaning that each element of whole school and classroom practice is designed with an understanding of how individual students with autism learn best. We believe that key principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis should underpin our teaching. These include high levels of student reinforcement leading to high levels of student motivation and learning.

Changes in the curriculum, teaching strategy, environment or individual programs is data/assessment driven. Most teaching involves breaking complex skills down into simpler steps and rewarding the achievement of each of those steps. We believe all of the 'teachers' in a student's life need to work in close partnership, delivering outstanding teaching to enable each student to achieve their best possible outcomes. At Pathways School this partnership includes parents, teachers, behaviour analysts, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and tutors.

2. Links to other school policies and practices.

- SEN Information Report
- SEN Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Behaviour Policy

3. Pathways School 5 Key Principles of Teaching and Learning

At Pathways we believe students learn best when:

4. learning activities are well planned, ensuring progress in the short, medium, and long term.
5. teaching and learning activities enthuse, engage, and motivate students to learn, and foster their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.
6. assessment informs teaching so that there is provision for support, generalisation, and extension of learning for each student, at each level of attainment.
7. the learning environment is ordered, the atmosphere is purposeful, and students feel safe.
8. there are strong links between home and school, and the importance of parental involvement in their daughter/son's learning is recognised, valued, and developed.

Key Principle 1

Students learn best when learning activities are well planned, ensuring progress in the short, medium, and long term.

There is evidence of:

• effective variety of and focussed learning activities with clear objectives and outcomes

• a clear understanding by the students of the method and purpose of activities in which they engage

• progress in the students learning (in their books, on the walls, in conversation, in their learning behaviour)

Teachers ensure that:

• work is planned, both half-termly and weekly and electronic plans are filed each week for shared reference (on the Staff Shared area Planning/class name)

• termly and weekly plans adhere to the progression grids and match long term curriculum plans to meet the requirements for a broad and balanced curriculum

• planning is holistic, recognising connections between areas of learning and considering the role teaching has in promoting the students spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development Implications for the whole school will be:

• there are progression grids in place that ensures continuity and progression

• there is a long-term Curriculum Map in place that is broad and balanced

• where there are agreed schemes of work in place, these are known to all and are detailed in subject specific curriculum policies

• a monitoring cycle is in place to support the progress of individuals and groups of learners: Staff to Staff modelling, Student Progress Meetings, lesson observations, planning scrutiny, book-looks, ABA data monitoring

Key Principle 2

Students learn best when teaching and learning activities enthuse, engage, and motivate them to learn, and when they foster their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

There is evidence of:

• creative teaching and creative learning

• students being praised and rewarded for their successes

• teaching that avails the construction of skill and knowledge structures, making learning accessible and motivating for students

• learning-activities that enthuse students so that they persevere when faced with difficult problems and are keen to succeed and to learn more

• a pace of learning that is optimised for progress and high-quality outcomes

• student's home-learning being valued

• student's learning independently

• student's collaborating on projects

• student's enjoying their learning

Teachers ensure that:

• well-judged and effective teaching strategies successfully engage students in their learning – a wow moment, learning journey and high-quality outcome will be in evidence in each unit/scheme of learning

• they use their expertise, including their subject knowledge, to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding in a structured way, across the range of subjects and areas of learning

• well framed questions, knowledgeable answers, and the use of discussion, promotes deep learning

• they ensure an appropriate ratio of explanation to learning-activity in their teaching

• appropriate home-learning is set to nurture student's enthusiasm and curiosity, and develop their understanding in areas under study Implications for the whole school will be:

• learning and learning outcomes, both within school and at home, are celebrated regularly in public forums such as Achievement Assemblies, newsletters, notice boards and the school website

• whole school themes provide points of shared discussion and motivate learners across the school

Key Principle 3

Students learn best when assessment informs teaching so that there is provision for support, generalisation, and extension of learning for each student, at each level of attainment.

There is evidence of:

• Student's using frequent, detailed, and accurate feedback from teachers, both oral and written, to improve their learning – e.g., redrafting writing in collaboration with the teacher

• student's who are motivated to learn through differentiated learning-activities that build on their prior attainment and issue challenge that is pitched at a level that is achievable when they work hard and try their very best

• students with specific learning needs receiving support at the time and level it is required to optimise their learning

• student's supporting one another where appropriate

• independent learning, where student's use assessment information to direct their own learning activity

Teachers ensure that:

• the pace and depth of learning is maximised because of their monitoring of learning during lessons and any consequent actions in response to students' feedback

• data collection is consistently taken around key targets and is analysed at least weekly to make any necessary adjustments to improve student progress

• feedback is meaningful to the student, frequent and regular providing students with very clear guidance on how learning-outcomes can be improved

• they have high expectations for all students, and plan, resource and direct differentiated learning activities that give support and issue challenge for all

• they keep agreed assessment records and submit summative data termly to enable Student Data Tracking

Whole school requirements:

• there is an Assessment policy in place that ensures consistency of practice

• there is an efficient system of Student Data Tracking in place; data is scrutinised rigorously in Student Progress Meetings involving year group partner teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Team; this data is utilised in the deployment of resources; external moderation takes place annually

• there is a broadly skilled and experienced staff team to support colleagues, student's and parents in their teaching and learning, providing advice and intervention where necessary

Key Principle 4

Students learn best when the learning environment is ordered, the atmosphere is purposeful, and they feel safe.

There is evidence of:

• an atmosphere of mutual respect between adults and students

• student's who feel secure to speak and act freely, enjoying freedom from bullying and harassment that may include prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability

• student's high self-esteem, with all student's feeling valued and secure

• student's taking risks in their learning, and learning from their mistakes

• student's learning outcomes displayed around the classroom and the school for others to appreciate and admire

• organisation of classroom routines and resources to optimise learning

Teachers ensure that:

• they teach student's how to behave well

• they employ positive strategies for supporting student's behaviour that help students understand the school's expectations and that these strategies are underpinned by the clear range of rewards and sanctions set out in the school's behaviour policy, and these are applied fairly and consistently

• good behaviour is modelled by them at all times in their interaction with student's and other adults with conflict dealt with in a calm and fair manner – they will not shout or lose their temper

• student's will be encouraged in their learning and their efforts will be praised both in the classroom and in assemblies

• any criticism will be constructive and student's self esteem will always be maintained

Whole school requirements:

• a clear behaviour policy is in place and all adults working in the school have a complete understanding of its content so that it is applied fairly and consistently across the whole school

• high expectations of behaviour, including student's attendance and punctuality at school, are communicated to, and shared by all students, parents, and staff

• safeguarding procedures are in place and are adhered to

Key Principle 5

Students learn best when there are strong links between home and school, and the importance of parental involvement in their students' learning is recognised, valued, and developed.

There is evidence of:

• student's home-learning being valued, both that resulting from tasks and activities set by the teacher and that occurring independently of school

• parents are visible in the school on a regular basis

Teachers ensure that:

• useful feedback about their students' learning is given regularly to parents, both informally, when appropriate, and formally, through termly parent, teacher meetings and an annual written report

• parents know how they can support their child's learning at home or in school

• they are approachable and available to parents (by appointment if necessary)

• information about class trips, class and school events, and other relevant topics are communicated efficiently to parents via text, letter, or email

• parents are welcomed to help in their classrooms and /or around school

• they set appropriate home-learning activities to develop student's understanding of topics covered in class Implication for the whole school:

• ensure parents are informed about school events and relevant topics through regular newsletters, letters, text messaging, notice boards and the school website

• facilitate parental involvement through the provision of dedicated space for formal and informal meetings and through support for a vibrant parent, teacher association.

4. Skills Focussed Teaching

Skills are taught both explicitly (for example, in group teaching or one on one) and implicitly though natural environment teaching. If a student is not currently working at a level where they will benefit from group work then they will have individual targets on their IEP, which will be taught individually by the student's teacher. They will also be taught the skills needed for them to access group teaching in the future. The skill of being independent and able to learn within a small group is also emphasised using group work. Each student's progression and the appropriate model for meeting their needs is identified through a person-centred planning process. Decisions are driven by the students EHCP which should reflect what is important to the individual and the family concerned. Targets are regularly reviewed at termly meetings and through statutory annual reviews.

A student's personalised curriculum also includes incidental learning opportunities, both through regular routines within school and through introducing new learning opportunities.

5. Events

Events create opportunities for students to rehearse skills, learn curriculum content, generalise mastered skills into different contexts and/or develop their personal characteristics. Events include the Christmas Show, Sports Day, Healthy Eating events, Red Nose Day, visitors, reverse inclusion, vocational placements and residentials.

6. Contexts

Learning does not have to take place at a desk, indeed much of the best learning occurs beyond the classroom. At Pathways we plan for learning to take place and be generalised at internal and external locations across the school, in the community, locally or further afield, on regular trips and on irregular educational visits.

7. Generalisation across a range of people

In supporting students in recognising the purpose of a skill and being able to apply the skill appropriately, it is important that they have opportunities to employ their skills with a variety of people.

We believe that the quality of the student's experience is largely determined by the quality of interaction between individuals and the staff who support them and therefore we commit significant investment to the expertise of our practitioners. Our skilled teachers, behaviour analysts and therapists work closely together to provide specialist, integrated and appropriate teaching, learning and support. Building a positive rapport between each student and teacher underpins the success of any educational programme, and a student's motivation to learn.

8. Progression to less restrictive ratios of support

Although our students require the educational support of a 1:1 ratio, there are many planned and incidental opportunities to work with others throughout each day. Learning environments that encourage appropriate relationships to be fostered are carefully planned to give each pupil the best learning potential. Whilst being mindful of a student's academic year and chronological age, Pathways designs classes and teaching groups with peer groups in mind.

9. Home Learning

Research indicates that children diagnosed with autism make optimum educational gains where intervention is consistent between different environments. We aim to work closely with parents to enable them to continue teaching their child, to manage any behaviours that challenge learning and participation and to generalise their mastered skills to the home and community environments.

10. Teaching and Learning Environment

Students learn well when the environment in which they find themselves is well ordered and well managed, where there is discipline and clarity about expectations. Environments will vary depending on the curriculum content or the characteristics that are being developed. Environments change from being the classroom, a 'quiet space', school corridors, school halls, the community, the home or play equipment in the school grounds.

Our building is equipped with specialist teaching areas, and we believe that learning opportunities can take place in all environments, teaching is planned in outside spaces and in the community, for example at local tennis courts, parks, and swimming pools. Space is used flexibly throughout the school.

11. Teaching Staff

Qualified and Unqualified Teachers, Behaviour Analysts, the Headteacher, therapists and support staff all have a role to play as teachers at Pathways School. Most staff are graduates, with many additionally having post-graduate qualifications. We run a training programme, using the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Competency Framework. The framework is divided into seven main areas:

- Autism.
- Providing high-quality education, care, and support environments.
- Functional, contextual, and skills-based assessment.
- Procedures for skills teaching.
- Developing and implementing a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).
- Reducing behaviours that challenge; and
- Professionalism.

All staff in the school receive a thorough induction training, including an Introduction to Autism, Introduction to PBS, Curriculum training and practical training on our approaches to teaching and learning. Appropriate training and opportunities for professional development are on-going for staff in all roles. There is a robust cycle of performance management which allows all staff to set targets and review and evaluate their practice.

12. Time Allocation

The school day for students starts at 9.00am in the morning and finishes at 3 pm in the afternoon. There is one hour allocated for lunch and a 15-minute break in the morning. Lunch and Breaks are important opportunities for learning, particularly for generalising skills.

The impact of the personal needs of students are recognised and recorded e.g., moving from place to place, transport, effects of medication, management of seizures, time it may take for a student to respond etc.

Routines which address personal needs are viewed as learning opportunities within the whole curriculum. Any routine such as toileting and mealtimes is recognised as a teaching opportunity and in the context of high-quality interaction will not be rushed.