

Heart of the Forest School Further Education Department

A main aim of our department is to prepare students for adult life. The ethos of our department is to treat the students as young adults. We strive to create a relaxed atmosphere in which students are encouraged to make choices and take as much responsibility for their own decisions as possible. We challenge the students to be the best that they can be. Our goal is for each individual to leave us with the skills and tools needed to move on to their next steps.

The timetable and programme of study considers individual student needs and abilities by differentiating through pathways. This enables all students to work at a level appropriate to them, achieve their full potential and receive the level of support they require. It also allows for personal choice and interests and slots of independent learning where students are encouraged to socialise with staff & peers, choose resources for self-occupation or take time out from the group if they need it. The result is a personalised curriculum for every student, aimed at preparing them for life beyond school.

Functional skills: Students will have opportunities to develop their academic skills in the areas of literacy and numeracy in a functional and meaningful way. Activities and lessons will focus on skills being learned in context, with practical hands on activities, differentiated appropriately for the individual learner. Students will have the opportunity to practice these skills within their familiar learning environment, during offsite community access and with greater independence.

Independent living: At Heart of the Forest we believe it is vitally important that young people develop their living skills and are able to become more independent and prepare them for the future. We aim to build on previous skills that have been achieved and offer them a greater understanding to enrich their quality of life and reach their full potential. They develop skills for independent living, such as problem solving, decision making, risk management and communication. Students gain practical experience of budgeting, shopping, preparing meals, carrying out domestic chores and taking responsibility for their own personal care.

Moving on & work experience: We recognise the importance of preparing our young people for their adult life. Our programme of study focusses on learning to cope with changes, enterprise, work experience if appropriate and having a say in the choices regarding their future. The opportunity to develop and apply learning within and about the workplace is important so that students will be enabled to generalise previously taught skills and learn new skills within meaningful workplace contexts. This will combine work experience placements alongside work related and work based skills.

Community & social skills: Learning within the community is highly important for all young people and helps to establish a suitable range of learning opportunities in functional and meaningful contexts. This allows the transferring of skills used in the classroom environment. Learning the skills and having the opportunity to explore real life situations is fundamental to students' independent development and will support them in becoming active members of the local community. Students may plan and organise trips and activities and will also experience managing money. It is essential that the students are provided with age appropriate and socially relevant situations which require them to learn and display the necessary attributes needed for everyday living, both in and out of school. The students will not only learn the practical skills for living, but will also develop the understanding of why and when to best use them and how to do so safely. These sessions will focus on learning how to safely negotiate woodland, towns and villages either on foot, school transport or using public transport. It will also involve learning the social etiquette that is required in various community facilities. E.G library, museum, shopping centres, cafes, parks, leisure centre etc. It is about learning how and when to queue, ask for assistance and be polite. The students will make informed choices about services and products that they require, perhaps ordering from a menu in a restaurant or waiting for turns in a park. In essence, the students will learn how to be an active citizen in their own community.

Sensory Learners: In FE, timetables are personalised; based on need, students' interest and transition. For some students, a personalised sensory curriculum is appropriate. Students are offered group, whole class and individual opportunities for learning on a daily basis. For these students, their timetables are highly individual and sessions are

personalised to offer a breadth of experiences both in school and the community, providing an appropriate level of challenge and stimulation. This curriculum is designed to ensure that students' physical, medical, communication and sensory needs are met. Independence is promoted at a personal level. For some, this may be evidenced through the development of communication and for others it may be choosing clothes to wear for example. Students are supported to develop their communication at a level appropriate to them. This may be using an iPad, switches, PECs, intensive interaction, eye gaze, signing or gesture. Development and promotion of communication will always underpin every session. Where appropriate, students will access specific sessions such as; hydrotherapy, Rebound therapy, music therapy, intensive interaction, discrete communication sessions, physiotherapy and VI programmes. These are selected based on pupils' needs, and will vary year to year. We learn about our environment and ourselves through our senses of vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch and movement. We aim to encourage more awareness of visual, auditory and tactile experiences. They will understand that their actions have consequences which not only affect themselves but others around them. This method gives rise to new learning, using all the senses to access the curriculum and makes learning fun! We endeavour to ensure that the work provided is age appropriate in terms of both the learning contexts and the resources used.

Accreditation: Students' progress will be evidenced through ASDAN 'Towards Independence' modules, and OCR Life & Living skills units. Individual targets and achievements along with EHCP outcomes will be monitored through Milestone levels, Solar & MAPP.

We offer a discrete and different learning environment that distinguishes itself from the main body of the school. This gives FE a strong and positive identity with an age appropriate approach to learning; a stepping stone to post 19 provisions and life after school.