



Ochil Tower School
Camphill Community

Curriculum Rationale
Ochil Tower School
2022



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CONTEXT

Over the past few years we have responded to local authority requests for extended residential placements which has seen us move from a 38 week to a 52 week provision. This evolution has now been consolidated into our core focus. As a result the time is now right to update our curriculum rationale to ensure we provide an integrated education and care experience for all our children and young people by drawing on and extending previous experience and practices. This rationale meets the expectations of Curriculum for Excellence and GIRFEC and reflects our Charitable Purposes as a non-denominational school which promotes inclusion and diversity.

In pursuing this objective we will, over the next 3 years, deliver a Strategic Plan which will see ongoing investment in our built estate, a clear focus on sustainability in the living environment and the creation of a comprehensive professional development programme covering induction for all new staff and a progressive CPD programme which will ensure appropriate professional capital within the community.

SCHOOL ETHOS: PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE

Our Charitable Purposes underpin our intentions to provide an inclusive, child-centered provision fully fit for purpose in accordance with current statutory and policy imperatives, ASL Legislation & GIRFEC, while reflecting our own approach based on Social Pedagogy and Camphill Values with its emphasis on shared living and learning experiences.

Extract from the Articles of Association of Ochil Tower School Limited incorporated on 26 July 1972 and amended on 19 November 2012 and again on 19th May 2021.

The Charitable Purposes of the Trust ("the Charitable Purposes") are to educate and support young people at Ochil Tower School, Auchterarder, and elsewhere as appropriate, within the principles of the Camphill Movement, by adopting and administering a holistic approach to the support for and education of young people with a complex range of needs, so that those young people may find meaning in their lives and have the chance to develop their social, spiritual, cognitive and practical skills and potential, with the aim of helping them to integrate not only as fully as possible in the school community, where everyone has something to offer no matter what their ability, but also as far as possible within society more generally

In adhering to our Charitable Purposes we will adopt a practice which recognises the principles of the Camphill Movement but reflects our own approach, summarised as:

- upholding and respecting the dignity and integrity in 'our' children and young people, and to extend this to all involved with Ochil Tower in whatever capacity.
- developing a holistic social pedagogical approach so it becomes an inner attitude alongside good practice by actively supporting self-reflection and personal development
- creating a therapeutic environment in an ecologically sustainable manner where 'our' children and young people can live, learn and thrive; be nourished, nurtured and safe, realise their potential and meaningfully contribute to it
- creating a community which is engaged with the therapeutic rhythms of the day, the week, the month and the year through the implementation of a rich cultural life and so create a sense of orientation, peace and a feeling of safety
- recognising and working with the principle of mutuality – that we can learn from the person with additional support needs just as they can learn from us– we grow and learn together



- understanding the deeper meaning behind what we do and ask of others
- developing a 24-hour curriculum which reflects the above.

52 WEEK RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL & THE 24 HOUR CURRICULUM

We have made the conscious decision to be a **52 week residential school** rather than distinct education and care provision which happen to share the same grounds. In doing so, we aim to maintain an active sense of community in which every colleague is recognised for their contribution to each child and young person's growth and in which mutuality is valued across the community, and to respond to the expectations within Curriculum for Excellence and GIRFEC: both of which sit well with us fulfilling our Charitable Purposes.

"All involved should agree what the learning routes are for children and young people, recognising that not all...will follow the routes in the same way or in the same place." BC3

The **24 Hour Curriculum** is a phrase which is often used but not always clearly defined. For our purposes it will reflect an overarching social pedagogical approach in which our residential children and young people will enjoy learning experiences in a range of settings across the Ochil Tower Estate and beyond, from dawn till dusk which will provide them with, as defined in CfE

- Challenge & Enjoyment/Breadth/Progression/Depth
- Personalisation & Choice/Coherence
- Relevance

and which will reflect

- a shared understanding amongst colleagues in the Ochil Tower community and the wider community, of the nature of their complex additional support needs
- an agreement on how they are best addressed in the school, home and external environments throughout the year
- where there is a need for uniformity of approach eg in an agreed communication strategy
- where variations in approach are appropriate

A balance is constantly sought between devising a syllabus which allows our children and young people to interact regularly with their peers and setting highly specific targets where a child's complex additional support needs require significant differentiated interventions. The professional confidence of colleagues allows them to adapt planned learning experiences to respond to the presenting needs of the children and young people while keeping a focus on the longer-term learning objectives.

An annual review of the impact of the 52 week curriculum against the stated objectives will be led jointly by the Head of Education and the Head of Care in recognition that the learning experiences are grounded in health and well-being, numeracy and literacy and are an ongoing process rather than exclusively taught and experienced elements within a standardised school session. Contributions from teachers and the wider education team, colleagues in the care setting and other partners, including parents and carers will be essential.



C&YP PROFILE & ASSOCIATED LEARNING FOCUS

The complex additional support needs which we address at Ochil Tower arise from a range of factors, including communication disorder, challenging behaviours and learning difficulties. These profiles permeate every aspect of the child and young person's life experiences and require a consistent yet flexible response from both education and care staff and the wider on-site community, often over 52 weeks.

Learning will focus on the key areas of health and wellbeing and literacy & numeracy up to National 2 Level with the concentration around Early and First Level. The learning profile of the children and young people who have been referred to us as requiring 52 week provision reflects this spectrum of cognitive ability and in discussions with residential authorities we see no likelihood of this profile changing.

Learning opportunities are tailored to individual need and reflect the expectations within Curriculum for Excellence guidance:

Children and young people will be supported and challenged to become:

- *more independent*
- *more successful*
- *more confident in tackling new and challenging tasks and dealing with new situations*
- *gain a better understanding of their responsibilities in society*

Underpinning these intentions will be a focus on health & wellbeing, building personal resilience, participation and engagement, and communication skills and literacy and numeracy.

These objectives are pertinent to both school and home settings and provide the foundation for our 24 hour curriculum.

C&YP PLANNING AND REVIEW

Our Child and Young Person's Planning and Review process will ensure that there is a comprehensive profile of the child/young person's complex additional support needs, the priority learning outcomes being addressed, the range of experiences to be considered to support the learning, the approaches taken jointly and discretely by education and care and the agreed hallmarks of progression or consolidation as appropriate to the individual. Where appropriate, targets will also be shared with other members of the community to support holistic responses to the children and young people.

A comprehensive assessment profile will be determined through a range of means: formative assessment (observation, interaction), formal assessment activities, therapy reports, information from previous establishments and the residential authority. Pupil self-evaluation is also a key measure of progress and the suitability of the learning experiences which they have accessed.

TIMETABLE

The nature of the complex additional support needs of our children and young people requires colleagues to be able to support learning through a variety of contexts and timeframes which are personalised to the individual. While aspects of traditional class based learning is highly valued, we recognise that the



location and estate of Ochil Tower provides a rich and varied learning environment which can offer opportunities for extended learning, consolidation and safe risk taking and challenge.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We define the Learning Environment as both the built and living environment of the school and houses and the opportunities to be found by living in Auchterader which affords our C&YP easy access to real life situations which can complement the experiences in the school and houses.

We will therefore continue to explore the best balance between traditional school based learning and exploiting and expanding the options available across the immediate Ochil Tower Estate and beyond, It recognises that intentional learning is a core feature of 52 week residential provision.

Our learning spaces lend themselves to both structured and experiential learning across the 52 week provision whilst recognising the distinct and diverse intention of the school term and holidays, weekday and weekend, schoolday and home time along with the immediate interconnection of education and care/school and home.

COLLABORATIVE WORKING & PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

We recognise that the changing profile of staff, in terms both of a move from co-worker to employee and the increasing numbers, necessitates a more structured and formal approach to shared planning, review and professional learning as we respond to the presenting complex additional support needs of the children and young people who live at Ochil Tower.

To achieve this aim we will ensure a synergy in the approach taken by all colleagues, irrespective of their core discipline. This is not to deny that teachers and care workers have their own professional identities which should be respected- for example SSSC and GTCS Professional Update requirements. We also value the essential contribution made by other colleagues employed at Ochil Tower in supporting the quality of life within the community. We are also very fortunate in the commitment shown by the international volunteers who work with us on an annual basis.

In strategic terms, the Heads of Education and Care will have an overview of the process but the operational lead will be taken by the Education Manager and the Residential Care Manager who will co-manage the process. This will ensure that there is a shared approach to addressing and reviewing the identified complex additional support needs and to recording progress and “next steps”.

In terms of professional learning, the Heads of Education and Care will be responsible for creating and monitoring a professional learning framework which will reflect both the discrete expectations in GTCS Professional Update and SSSC systems and inform and support ongoing practice in Social Pedagogy and Camphill Values. The Education Manager and the Residential Care Manager will have an overview of everyday practice and fulfill the roles of mentor, coach and provide supervision/reflective professional discussions as appropriate. Fuller details are provided in our Professional Learning Policy.



STAFFING PROFILE

The recent appointment of a Residential Care Manager and the imminent appointment of an Education Manager are evidence of our commitment to revise and enhance the staffing model to best address the complex additional needs profile of the C&YP. The staffing model will be kept under review by the Executive Director and the Heads of Service with the aim of ensuring that it delivers the most effective combination of skills and experience to deliver on our curriculum rationale.

ACTION POINTS & TIMESCALE

Short term

- Review of the current job description of Residential Care Manager to reflect expectations within the job spec for the Education Manager re collaborative working - April 2022
- CPD calendar & delivery options (on-site & external) which reflect both discrete and collaborative learning opportunities - June 2022
- Share the refreshed and restructured Curriculum Rationale with the House Coordinators and Teachers in the first instance and form a working group to explore and co-design intentional learning experiences outwith school hours
- “Piloting” of record keeping over the summer holiday during which the education staff are on holidays - June 2022 for format and August 2022 for completion
- Review of current planning and review documentation - September 2022

Medium term

- Review of learning experiences over the day & residential settings with the aim of identifying the key areas in which there must be consistency of approach (eg in the use of communication aids) and where interventions can vary but still have the same learning outcomes in mind
- Identify the particular aspects of the town and wider environment that contribute to the holistic 24 hour curriculum - December 2022

Long term

- Review assessment and tracking tools - explore software which combines profile, engagement, assessment and sharing platform
- Review of cultural practices in the light of being a non-denominational residential school, ensuring to build on the current form of the day/week/year, keeping it meaningful and linked to spiritual experiences/welfare
- Expand learning spaces both indoors and outdoors to allow for expanded learning and experiential opportunities



APPENDICES

Approach - Person Centred, Whole School Approach, Social Pedagogy, Camphill Values

Resources - Learning Environment, Staffing Structure

Learning Focus - Resilience, Health & Wellbeing, Communication, Numeracy & Literacy, Skills for Learning, Life and Work (positive onwards destinations) Qualifications

Delivery - Curriculum for Excellence & Waldorf Curriculum, Interdisciplinary Learning, Eco-Schools and Sustainability Goals, Outdoor Learning, Therapeutic Interventions

Assessment, Planning and Transition - Care & Education Plan, Behaviour Intervention Plan, Learning Pathways across 24h

Actions for Timeline - Short term, Medium Term, Long Term

Criteria for Admission