



# Ochil Tower School



## The Curriculum: Rationale and Development (including Senior Phase & Outdoor Education)

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2018-2020

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### **a) Context:**

Ochil Tower School is a residential school for twenty eight pupils and ten day pupils. The school provides care and education to young people between the ages of eight to eighteen, who have a range of complex additional support needs.

Most of the young people have experienced a disrupted and fractured education, and have been referred to the school because it has a reputation for successfully meeting the needs of young people who have been unable to access other educational resources. The majority of learners are at the Early level of the Curriculum for Excellence. In response to the pupils' high social and educational needs, the school has focused on creating imaginative and flexible approaches to develop self esteem, confidence and an interest in broad learning and educational aims. This is facilitated by a flexible social pedagogical approach which combines care and education as mutually affecting arenas of lifelong learning.

### **b) Values and Aims:**

As a Camphill Community our vision for Ochil Tower School is grounded in the ethos of the Camphill Community where people can live and work together in healthy social relationships based on mutual care and respect. Central to this is valuing each person as a unique being of intrinsic worth, with potential for spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development and change.

Ochil Tower School aims to deliver the highest level of care and education based upon individual needs, in a safe positive and enriching environment, in which every pupil is encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential. (Comprehensive list of aims: see Appendix )

### **c) Entitlements:**

The Curriculum for Excellence states that all children and young people are entitled to:

- a coherent curriculum, with smooth and well paced progression
- a broad general education, including well planned experiences and outcomes across the curricular areas
- A senior phase where he/she can continue to develop the four capacities and gain qualifications
- opportunities for developing skills for learning, life and work, with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and well-being
- opportunities to achieve the highest levels they can through appropriate personal support and challenge
- Opportunities to move into positive and sustained destinations beyond school

Social pedagogy states that all children are entitled to:

- support to develop as individuals and social beings who will be capable of having positive futures and responsible roles as adults in the wider community.
- Supportive relationships which help them to grow and develop



The well being indicators of Getting it Right for Every Child are that children should be supported to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, responsible, respected and included.

As a school, we aim to support our pupils to become confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors through the creative and innovative application of the above entitlements across the 24 hours.

#### **d) The Curriculum:**

Ochil Tower offers an holistic approach to education through Social Pedagogy which supports children and young people across the 24 hour curriculum.

Because care and education are continuously evolving disciplines, at any given point in time we are simultaneously maintaining current values and practices whilst experimenting with the innovations and structures which will become the mainstay of our curriculum framework in the future. The curriculum is therefore being continuously monitored and evaluated to ensure that it accurately reflects current policy and remains relevant to the needs of the pupils.

We believe that education has to be for life, that all young people should be helped to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors and that we need to be creative and flexible in finding ways of making learning meaningful and accessible for all our young people.

To this end we have created a curriculum framework, which covers all the curricular areas but which also allows the teacher, in both class and house, considerable freedom in how he/she will interpret and organise the associated experiences and outcomes.

Although the teachers are encouraged and expected to be creative and innovative in their teaching they are responsible to the teachers' group who meet on a weekly basis to work on curriculum development, to share best practice, and to plan themes and topics for each term.

A central aspect of curriculum delivery is the Individual Care and Education Plan. This is compiled annually with SMART aims being chosen, worked on and assessed on a termly basis. The SMART aims and related achievements are brought to the 6 monthly reviews attended by pupil, parents, teacher, house-co-ordinator, speech therapist, key worker and other relevant professionals. Where possible pupils have an ownership of their own learning aims which extend through house and class, and are clear and confident about these and their success criteria.

The Care and Education Plan covers all the curricular areas, with a particular focus on Health and Well-being, as the basis for the development of further academic learning, and includes a profile of the pupil's abilities in each area, as well as a progress report.

The experiences and outcomes in the curricular areas are used for planning individual aims and tracking progress.



To support the young people to achieve these aims we are using a range of interdisciplinary experiences, projects and activities. These are:

**i) Whole school projects:**

**Eco School:** We gained our first Green flag in December 2010, a second one in 2013 and a third in 2015 and a fourth in 2018

**Fair Trade:** We were awarded Fairtrade School status in March 2014 and have received the Fair Achiever Award in 2017

Examples of enterprise activities related to these projects are:

- Reduce, reuse, recycle initiative
- Plastic bag free initiative
- Litter picking through involvement in the Keep Scotland Beautiful Campaign
- Eco Bricking
- Global Poverty project
- Committing to Fairtrade Bananas and Coffee
- Marine Conservation Society
- Green Britain Day

These are worked on throughout the school year through interactive school assemblies, individual project work, Eco school and Fairtrade committees, the use of drama in the end of term school festivals, and associated fundraising activities, which encourage enterprise and citizenship.

**ii) Class and personal projects:**

- Woodland Project
- West Highland Way
- Rob Roy Way
- Rebox project
- Send a Cow Appeal
- Eco School and Fairtrade research
- Fundraising for the Scottish Refugee Council
- Walking a Marathon for the Fairtrade Foundation
- Yearly contributions to Food Banks



### **iii) House life:**

Homely welcoming and beautiful environment

- Life sharing
- Development of relationships of trust
- Support in developing range of life and social skills

### **iv) Interdisciplinary Learning:**

Interdisciplinary learning is encouraged through the creative interweaving of the following throughout the above projects.

- Outdoor learning, including outdoor pursuits
- Arts and Crafts
- Cooking
- Music and Drama
- Celebration of religious and seasonal festivals
- Science
- PE
- Archery
- ICT: enabling young people to have a voice through preparing and presenting power point presentations at their own reviews, or presenting personal projects to the whole school. Regular use of iPads and touch screens also facilitate their ability to make choices
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Colour Light and Listening Space Therapy

### **e) Principles:**

The principles of curriculum design have been the benchmark around which these projects and activities have been arranged. We believe that the in depth and comprehensive experience of working with these projects over a period of time, has helped to deepen understanding and provided pupils with the opportunity to develop confidence, motivation, resilience, and a consolidation of their learning.

#### **i) Breadth and Depth:**

Young people participate in a broad range of experiences and learning activities, with sufficient time spent on deepening knowledge and understanding through a variety of methods.



**ii) Challenge and Enjoyment:**

Range of experiences which support young people through well planned challenging and enjoyable activities, which give them a sense of achievement.

**iii) Coherence and Relevance:**

Young people develop an understanding for the links and connections between themselves and the world around them.

**iv) Personalisation and Choice:**

Young people involved in planning of general activities as well as making choices on personal projects.

**f) Arrangements for Assessment and Support for Transition:**

**Tracking and assessment of progress is undertaken in a number of ways:**

- Personal Profile, Post placement Review and initial Care and Education Plan in the first 8 weeks after admission.
- Social and Behavioural profiles
- Daily feedback/review. Pupil self assessment and teacher feedback
- Weekly reports
- Personal aims books
- Care and Education plans
- Termly SMART aims for both house and class
- 6 monthly reviews
- Annual School Reports
- SQA (National 1-4) and ASDAN

**Support for post school transition starts early and involves:**

- Collaborative work with all other professionals through the Review process
- Contributing to assessments for Adult Services
- Acting as advocates for young people
- Speech and Language therapist works closely with young people to gain their views on the future
- Work with young people on developing communication passports
- Accompanying young person on transition visits
- Maintaining contact once young person has moved on



## g) Senior Phase:

For the majority of pupils coming to Ochil Tower their Broad General Education (BGE) has been an experience fragmentation, fracture and interruption. This is due to a number of complex and interweaving factors including the complex learning needs of the pupils, their previous learning environments, ill health and other factors. For this reason, most pupils will not normally commence the Senior Phase until they reach 16 years of age. Although the agreed starting date for the start of the Senior Phase is at the end of S3 when a pupil is turning 14/15 years of age, by delaying this for a period of 1 or 2 years allows pupils to experience aspects of the BGE which they would otherwise have missed and provides a more solid platform to build the Senior Phase in an active, engaging, creative, enterprising and challenging way.

The Senior Phase is characterised by a focus on *an achievement and attainment pathway*. Achievement and attainment describes an individual's progress through successes, awards and qualifications. This is delivered through programmes which ensure *progression* in knowledge, understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities. Programmes are delivered flexibly to meet the needs of individual pupils, with a focus on *personalization and choice*, where possible. A flexible, person-centered approach to learning takes account of the attributes, abilities, interests and needs of the pupil, providing them with essential skills for *learning, life and work, literacy, numeracy and health and well-being*. Improving a pupil's achievement in a wide range of *personal and independent living skills* is of primary importance. The rich learning environment of Ochil Tower and the local community allows *progression* in learning to be set in a *real-life* context further embedding the 4 capacities.

In order to ensure that pupils achieve their *entitlement*, a close working *partnership* between the pupil, care providers, teachers, parents and local authorities is developed to plan, implement and review agreed learning aims over the course of the Senior Phase. This takes place when the pupils has reached 16 years of age and is reviewed twice yearly. Engagement with other partners may include involvement with local employees, colleges and adult services.

Ochil Tower is able to provide the following qualifications and awards:

**Scottish Qualifications Authority:** National 1-4. National 5 qualifications can be offered in partnership with Auchterarder Community School

**Scottish Qualification Authority:** Personal Development Award, Personal Achievement Award

**ASDAN Qualifications:** Towards Independence, Transition Challenge, 'Short Courses', Workright

**ASDAN Awards:** Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards, Focus Awards

**Youth Development Scotland:** Dynamic Youth Award, Youth Achievement Award  
Royal Caledonian Society: Grow and Learn – Roots Award



## **h) Outdoor education: curriculum rationale**

### **i) Values and Practices**

In being able to live and work in an environment congruent to the ethos of Ochil tower school, creative and child centred policies need to be arranged. Some young people find the class environment too difficult to manage successfully and as such are vulnerable to exclusion and less educational achievement; challenging and disruptive behaviours can be prevalent. Flexible working arrangements like the outdoor education group intend to make such assumptions redundant.

The group seeks inspiration from the current curriculum for excellence, GIRFEC and the long-standing values of positive social relationships evident in the Camphill movement and in particular the ongoing commitment to care in Ochil tower school.

The group intends to develop better working relationships with the young people involved through close support in most tasks, taking responsibility and working together on necessary life skills for post school life. The process of group work helps realise potential and help tackle any difficulties that arise: support is there for both staff and young people alike in completing the task. This helps create a safe, secure and nurturing environment.

### **ii) Curriculum**

Each work period (three per day) is used to work jointly on a particular task where there is a recognisable end goal which results in an award or qualification.

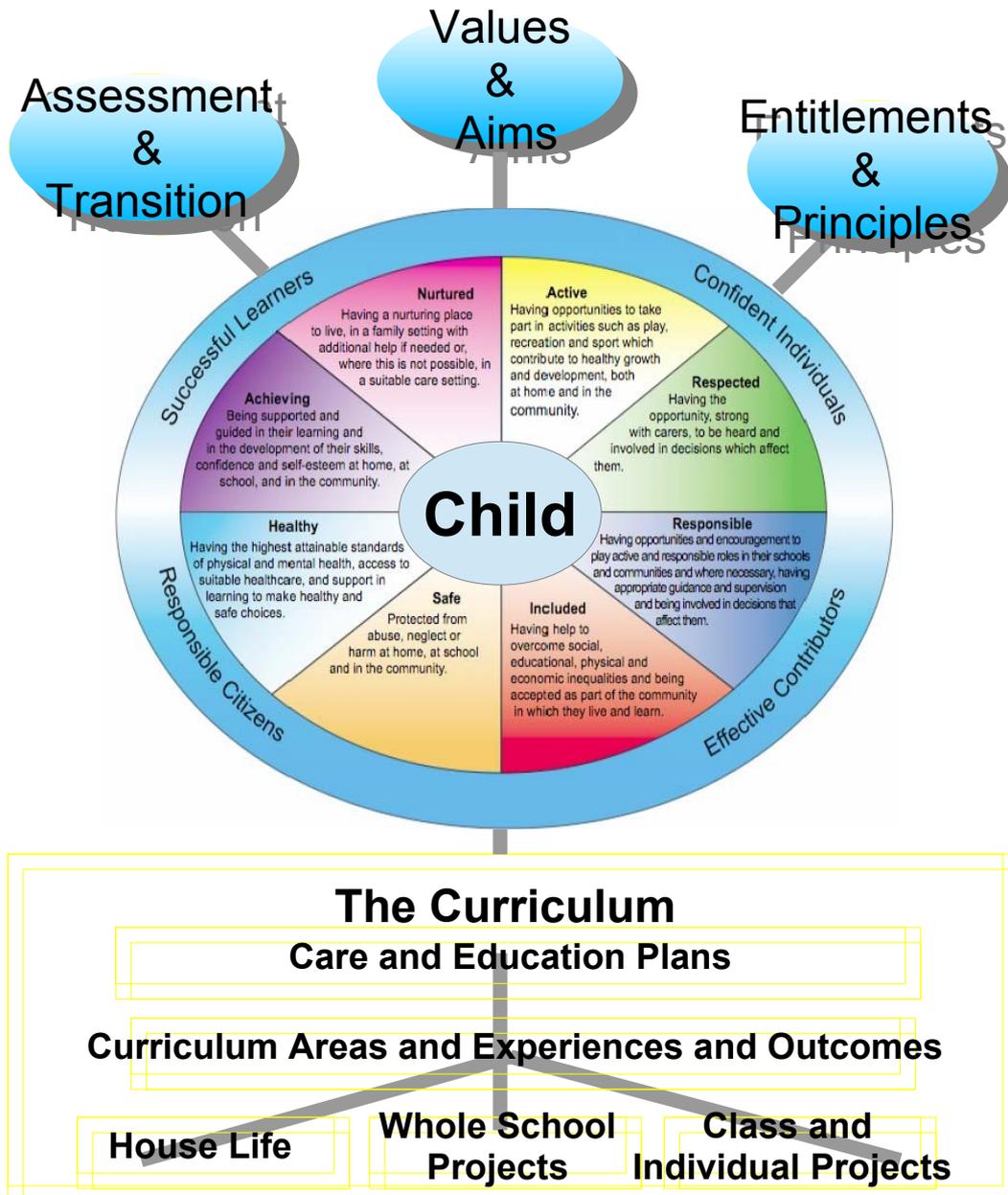
Group work is an essential part of the work in that each young person is encouraged to support others and share in all aspects of the activity whenever possible. Aspects of group leadership are also valued as is gaining self knowledge of when to take a suitable break. Working together is key to any success.

### **iii) Outcomes for young people**

Practical group work with experienced care and education staff offer a secure and dynamic approach to learning. Success in this not only offers hope to seemingly intractable difficulties but is also essential to the well-being of the young people involved. Dynamism and creativity is more easily found in projects like this and can keep staff well motivated to meet this challenge.



h)



*living, learning and growing together*



## Appendix: Aims

### We aim:

- To support children to fulfil their own potential
- To support children to find their place in society
- To support children in developing strong identities based on self-respect, secure values and beliefs
- To promote social, mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being
- To enable children to participate in and contribute to social, cultural, political and economic life where ever possible
- To support children in developing the capacity and resilience to meet uncertainty and change
- To support children to become successful in life. To waken children's curiosity in learning about themselves, their social, cultural and natural environment and to instil an interest in life-long learning.

### By:

- Placing the child at the centre and adopting a holistic approach to care and education
- Providing children with strong, reliable and trusting relationships as a basis for self-confidence, empowerment and resilience demonstrated through positive role modelling
- Instilling confidence and a positive sense of self by focusing on individual strengths and positive experiences
- Realising the 24-hour-curriculum through creative and interdisciplinary learning which take the sharing of everyday life as the starting point
- Using the extensive resources available in the school grounds as well as the great Scottish Outdoors
- Being empathic - understanding the children's lives and problems by looking through their eyes in their everyday context and accepting children as experts in their own lives.
- Supporting children in exercising their rights through advocating for them where necessary.
- Creating a high quality therapeutic life-space
- Embracing multidisciplinary practice including medical, psychological, sociological, theological and philosophical perspectives
- Using close observation and critically reflective practice to understand each individual's potential and to evaluate how support and nurturing can realise their full potential.
- Building a future by taking account of the past and the present
- Working in collaboration with families and other professionals to achieve the best outcomes



*living, learning and growing together*