

Curriculum Policy

Last reviewed: September 2025

Next review due by: September 2026

We do things differently.....

H.E.R.E

*High Standards
Empathy
Resilience
Emotional Response*

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Curriculum policy aims at Kassia

High Standards – Empathy – Resilience – Emotional Response

The aim of the curriculum policy at The Kassia Academy is to provide bespoke, high quality and engaging education using trauma informed approaches, which inspires pupils to re-engage with education, has a positive impact on all young people and results in fostering empathy, resilience and strategies to cope with their emotional responses. We believe this prepares our students for the future.

Policy development

The policy has been developed through:

- SWOT analysis of curriculum Autumn 2021

- Ofsted feedback Spring 2022
- Consultation from Director of Teaching and Learning with Kassia staff
- A SWOT analysis of Teaching and Learning policies and practices at Kassia using feedback from staff and parents/carers.
- Self-evaluation tools from associations such as Educational Endowment Fund and The Key
- Contextual analysis of learners needs
- Pupil voice
- Curriculum feedback from ex HMI
- Ofsted feedback
- Consultation with T& L middle leaders
- All teachers and governors have been consulted in developing this policy, which summarises expectations and common working practices.

Curriculum Policy – Rationale

The aim of this policy is to provide a clear and effective instructional leadership model for developing a clear vision and positive culture towards a curriculum that:

- Ensures consistently high standards of Teaching and Learning through an evidenced based, shared pedagogical model.
- Engages learners on an individual basis
- Provides a bespoke curriculum offer which meets our learners needs and supports them in the next steps in education, employment or training.
- Maintains rigorous leadership and management to monitor and evaluate the quality of Teaching and
- Learning on pupil's outcomes.
- Ensures that pupils who have experienced trauma or have other barriers to learning receive opportunities to learn, retain knowledge and succeed.

Please note that further policies relating to Teaching and Learning, and subject specific pedagogies, have more in-depth policy development information in the respective policies

Teaching & Learning Policy – Vision

Our vision and purpose for our Teaching and Learning and curriculum stems from Biesta (2009) who states these key components for success for learners:

- Qualification – this can be work, citizenship or further study
- Socialisation – learners become a part of society, learning norms, knowledge and values
- Subjectification – making sense of themselves, others and their place in the world

Biesta's values underpin our Curriculum and Teaching and Learning approaches at Kassia. These are based on establishing a clear vision that inspires and helps create a unified set of values and beliefs to drive an ambitious learning culture where aspirations for learners is high.

We will lead our vision by successfully implementing an instructional leadership model, which will result in consistently high standards of teaching practice, embedding a positive culture between staff and hence improved educational outcomes for pupils at our school

Background

Our pupils face a number of barriers to their education, as written in our Curriculum Policy and contextual analysis. One of the barriers our children face is having a high number of ACES (adverse childhood experiences) or traumas.

Research

Research has demonstrated that childhood trauma is associated with a range of potential difficulties at school, such as low academic performance; low attendance rates; memory and attention problems; language difficulties; and higher exclusion rates (Perfect, Turley, Carlson, Yohanna, & Saint Gilles, 2016).

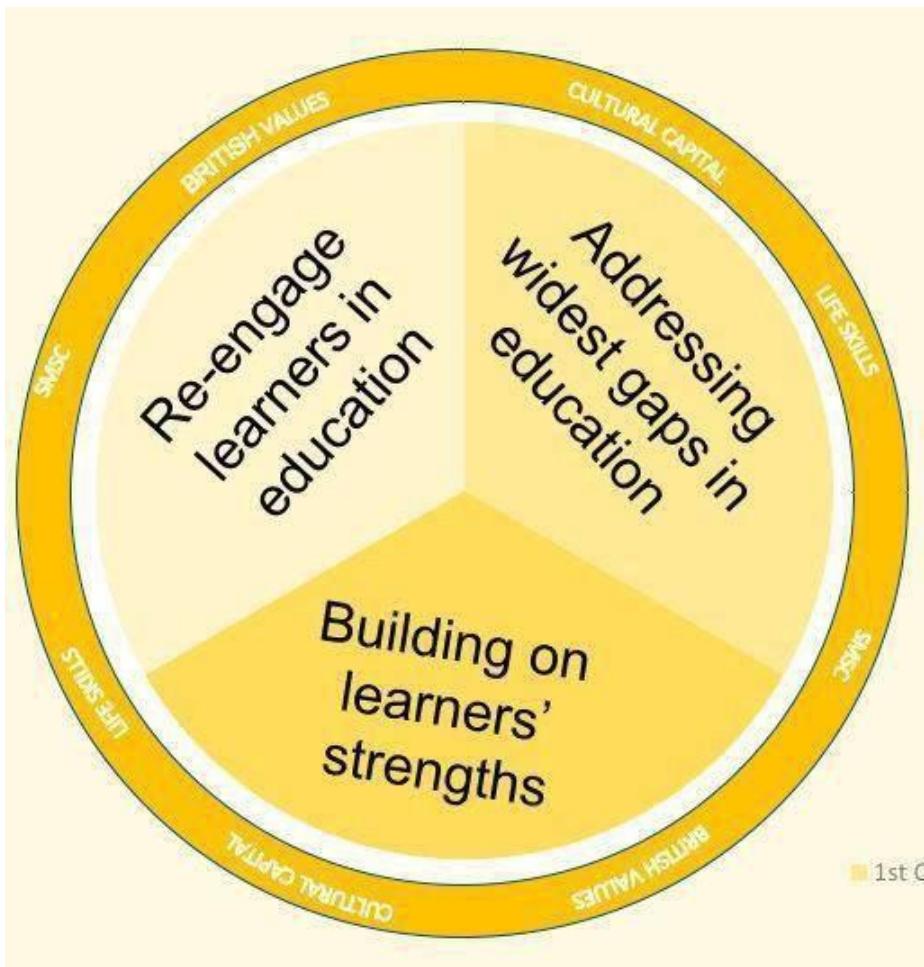
Trauma can further negatively affect a pupil's ability to self-regulate and utilise executive functions (ie. Working memory, organisation, emotional control, Dawson and Guare 2009), which can therefore affect a pupil's ability to engage with their learning and engage emotionally and socially throughout their education (Perfect et al., 2016).

This is because trauma changes the architecture of the brain, by triggering harmful inflammation in the brain and the body, which can negatively affect the development of core physical and cognitive functions (Bomber, 2020; Perry, 2009). Physiological factors, such as stress, play a significant part in how well we retain information, whereas our brains are good at storing information that helps us to avoid physical or psychological harm. We also tend to remember experiences that trigger powerful emotions – such as fear – for longer. This evidences the challenge our learners face in overcoming our brain's natural responses, making learning more difficult.

So What?

As a whole, our pupils have difficulty learning to learn, retaining and retrieving memories and having the oracy and literacy skills needed to succeed in later life. Our learners have had negative experiences in education and their lives (ACE's), we aim to re-engage our learners with learning through a bespoke tailored curriculum and a wide range of trauma informed strategies. Therefore, these are the areas in which our curriculum focuses on throughout school.

Main aims of the Kassia curriculum



To re-engage the most disengaged learners with an education that is bespoke to them and provide them with a curriculum that will support their further education, training and their employability.

To address learner's widest gaps in education by developing basic skills in literacy and oracy across the curriculum in order to prepare our learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

To ensure that we have a broad and balanced curriculum offer for our learners to build upon learners' strengths and interests to inspire them to hold high aspirations for their future

To develop our learners' cultural capital, for us this is providing learners with the opportunities to experience people, places and things that contribute towards the essential knowledge that learners need in order to be educated citizens. To promote learners' physical health and personal development which includes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental development of learners at the school in order to prepare our learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life outside of Warrington.

The guiding principles of our curriculum

Trauma informed focus

- Trauma informed research and practices have been used in the curriculum design. The curriculum has been designed to peak learners' interest, engage and motivate them in learning and provide opportunities within their areas of interest. This means both formal and vocational qualifications are offered at KS4.

Cultural Capital and diversity

- The curriculum content has been chosen specifically for its appropriateness for our learners, this is driven by a rigorous curriculum content which gives learners the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in future life, with aspirations of being able to leave their local area (Warrington) if they choose.

Locality

- Where fitting, the curriculum content will have a focus upon teaching learners about their locality and influential figures with a link to their local area to create cultural capital for our learners. We believe that learners need to see themselves within the curriculum to inspire them to succeed regardless of barriers they may face.

Evidence informed curriculum design

- Our curriculum is evidence informed through rigorous application of the best practice and the science of learning.



On entry assessment

In order to ensure our learners, have the best possible chances of being successful at The Kassia Academy we conduct a thorough baseline assessment of their needs once they are referred to us and before they start their journey at The Kassia Academy.

Assessments and screening in speech and language, dyslexia and dyscalculia, emotional literacy, cognitive ability, processing, reading and spelling alongside our own core subject assessments ensure that staff are fully equipped with the information they need to support the learner and their needs. In addition to this our pastoral team complete a detailed induction meeting with our learners and parents to gather information around ACES (adverse childhood experiences) and discuss their individual, emotional needs. This alongside the information we gain from their mainstream setting and a completed behaviour progress matrix enables us to place learners in the correct centre and onto the best pathway to engage learners and meet their needs from the offset.

Our centres

Our centres have been carefully developed over time to ensure learners have safe, caring and calm environments in which they feel comfortable and their needs can be met. Within each centre there is a choice of pathways to further tailor our curriculum offers for every individual.

Willows & Sycamore	Oaks	Redwood
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialising in emotional and mental health needs, ASD and complex SEND• Class sizes of 10• 3 classes across KS3 and KS4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialising in behaviour, social and emotional needs of KS3 learners• Class sizes of 10• 2 classes of mixed KS3 learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialising in behaviour, social and emotional needs of KS4 learners• Class sizes of 10• 2 classes of mixed KS4 learners

Willows/Sycamore

Our Willows/Sycamore Centres offer a small nurturing environment to our more vulnerable KS3 and KS4 learners across 3 classes. Offering a broad and balanced curriculum, it is the vision of the Kassia to provide vulnerable learners with a quiet and calming environment where they can access therapeutic support and pastoral care to help them re-engage with their learning.

Oaks

The Oaks Centre consists of two classes with up to 10 learners in each class. Learners in this centre range from year 7 to year 9 and placements can vary from short term 12-week placements to longer placements to support learners whilst going through the Education Health Care Plan process. Learners enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum delivered through discreet subjects and project-based learning (PBL), alongside a wide variety of personal development extra- curricular activities and community projects. Pastoral care and therapeutic support are woven throughout our curriculum and all learners have 1:1 access to our learning mentors and external agency support.

Redwood

Redwood is our KS4 provision and consists of two classes with up to 10 learners in each. Learners in Redwood join us at varying times throughout the year and whilst the majority of these learners complete their education with us some are only with us for a short- term placement and with support re-integrate back to their mainstream school. Again, learners in Redwood study a broad and balanced curriculum alongside a wide range of vocational subjects, alternative provision and extra-curricular activities. Pastoral care and therapeutic support are embedded in the day-to-day delivery of our curriculum with all learners having full access to the support they need to re-engage in their education and achieve their qualifications.

Curriculum pathways

The table below explains the coverage of qualifications we offer at The Kassia Academy across the different pathways. Learners on both pathway 3 and pathway 4 have the opportunity to study up to 8 GCSE (or equivalent) qualifications however if upon entry learners are working at a level significantly lower than their chronological age, they may be offered the opportunity to study entry level and functional skills.

Some learners will require access to a range of vocational qualifications alongside their core qualifications of English, Maths and Science. Our broad and balanced curriculum offer is one of our key strengths and gives our learners opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications giving them the skills they need to succeed in post 16 life.

	Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3	Pathway 4
Centre	Key Stage 3 Willows	Key Stage 3 Oaks	Key Stage 4 Sycamore	Key Stage 4 Redwood
Core Subjects	English, Maths & Science	English, Maths & Science	Eng. Lit, Eng. Lang, Maths, Statistics, Science (double award) G.C.S. E's, functional skills & entry levels	Eng. Lit, Eng. Lang, Maths, Science (double award) G.C.S. E's, functional skills & entry levels)

Foundation subjects, delivered through project-based learning (PBL)	RSE, History, Geography, P. E, Design & Tech, Languages & Computing	RSE, History, Geography, P.E, Design & Tech, Languages & Computing	Computing (Ed-Excel Func Skills)	Computing (Ed-Excel Func Skills)
Option Qualifications	N/A		D of E	D of E
Personal Development	PSHE (Inc CEIAG) SMSC, Forrest School)	PSHE (Inc CEIAG) SMSC, Forrest School)	ASDAN, CEIAG, SMSC, D of E, Sport & Enrichment	ASDAN, CEIAG, SMSC, D of E, Sport & Enrichment
NCFE			Catering - Level 1 & 2 Caring for Children - Level 1 Exercise Studies - Level 1	Catering - Level 1 & 2 Caring for Children - Level 1 Exercise Studies - Level 1
AP			Hair & Beauty - Level 1 Construction - Level 1	Hair & Beauty - Level 1 Construction - Level 1

Interventions at Kassia

The Kassia Academy provides a wide range of interventions that benefit our learners, networking with a range of local community agencies. Some of these include:

- Speech and Language – (Elklan strategies) delivered by our experienced HLTA's
- Speech and Language external support
- 1:1 Counselling delivered by our Trust counsellor with a full day spent on Longbarn and Orford every week.
- External agency support in Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol, Domestic Violence, Youth crime and anti-social behaviour.

A range of SEMH interventions including:

- Mindfulness
- Growth mindset
- Animal therapy
- Talk therapy
- Art and music therapy
- Life story work
- Emotional Literacy Intervention

Gifted and Talented Provision

The majority of learners arrive at Kassia with gaps in knowledge and skills, and are working below age-related expectations. For learners working at or above age-related expectations we provide specific interventions with teaching staff where learners can access additional or higher- level qualifications, making their time at Kassia truly bespoke.

Our offer of a minimum of 5 (more dependent on individual learners' ability) GCSE's is ambitious and learners who show strengths in areas such as math's may be offered an additional qualification in Statistics, for example, learners who wish to study subjects independently are supported and actively encouraged to do so. Appropriate resources and support from staff to enable learners will be provided.

Social Moral Spiritual Cultural opportunities across the curriculum (SMSC)

Meeting requirements for collective worship, establishing a strong school ethos supported by effective relationships throughout the school, and providing relevant activities beyond the classroom are all ways of ensuring learner's SMSC development. Learners must be encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance.

- Spiritual: Explore beliefs and experience; respect faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity; reflect.
- Moral: Recognise right and wrong; respect the law; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues; offer reasoned views and have an appreciation of British Values.
- Social: Investigate and moral issues; appreciate diverse viewpoints; participate, volunteer and cooperate; resolve conflict; engage with the fundamental values of British democracy.
- Cultural: Appreciate cultural influences; appreciate the role of Britain's parliamentary system; participate in culture opportunities; understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity.

At Kassia, we ensure that all learners are provided with SMSC opportunities both within the planned curriculum and through form time, independent study, assemblies, whole school events and theme days. We also plan and lead many enrichment activities organised by external providers, which benefit learners SMSC development, such as D of E or school trips.

The Kassia curriculum has been designed specifically to grow learner's SMSC knowledge and opportunities. This can be seen through the project-based learning, PD curriculum and English chosen texts.

Fundamental British Values across the whole school curriculum

"To create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs." (DfE)

The Kassia Academy is committed to serving its community. We recognise the multi-cultural, multi-faith and ever- changing nature of the United Kingdom. We also understand the vital role we have in ensuring that groups or individuals within the school are not subjected to intimidation or radicalisation by those wishing to unduly, or illegally, influence them.

Challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to fundamental British values.

Despite our school culture, many of our learners may arrive at Kassia with viewpoints that do not initially align with fundamental British Values of respect and tolerance. Our curriculum has been purposefully designed to improve learners' experiences of the diversity and world around them. We use challenging questions to provoke thoughts, conversations and potential changes of opinion within our Project Based Learning and during unstructured time.

We follow equal opportunities guidance, which guarantees that there will be no discrimination against any individual or group, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or financial status, or similar. Kassia is dedicated to preparing learners for their adult life beyond the formal, examined curriculum and ensuring that we promote and reinforce British values to all our learners.

At Kassia these values are reinforced regularly and in the following ways:

Democracy

Democracy can be seen as a state of society characterised by equality of rights and privileges. It can also refer to our nation's electoral systems.

In our school, we promote the importance of democracy through such things as:

- Learners are involved in the staff recruitment process.
- There is a fair and consistent Behaviour Policy with agreed rewards and sanctions.
- If appropriate, learners are encouraged to consider and choose differentiated learning opportunities in lessons.
- The Democracy and Diversity schemes of work across the Personal Development curriculum focuses on topics such as MPs, voting systems, combating bullying and discrimination, as well as contemporary political issues.
- Our strong adherence to our Equality and Diversity Policy and objectives in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Parental and Carer questionnaires are distributed regularly to enable their views to be shared and heard.

The Rule of Law

All people and institutions are subject to and accountable to law that is fairly applied and enforced.

The importance of laws and rules, whether they be those that govern the country, the school, or the classroom, are consistently reinforced through the school's Rules, throughout regular school days, as well as when dealing with behaviour, and through school assemblies.

Learners are taught the value and reasons behind rules and laws, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when rules and laws are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police and Fire Service are regular parts of our calendar and help reinforce this message. Learners are taught how rules and laws are there to protect us, keeping us safe. They acknowledge their responsibility to uphold rules and laws, and understand the consequences when laws are broken. In our school, we promote the importance of the Rule of Law through such things as:

- The School's Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy.
- Display boards, which are used to reinforce school rules.
- Learners reflecting regularly on their learning during lessons and their behaviour during assemblies.
- Annual Parent / Carers questionnaires include questions which relate to behaviour, safety etc.
- Assemblies throughout the year, which make links to the law. For example, school rules, Anti-bullying Week and E-safety help learners to understand how to behave towards each other and how to be safe.
- Marking and feedback policies, which set clear boundaries, are explained clearly to learners and staff.
- Accountability, which is stressed to all, including staff (Teacher's Standards and Appraisal) and
- learners (The School Rules and Code of Conduct).
- Personal Development curriculum, PSHE and ASDAN qualifications which focus on many topics including Democracy, Anti-Discrimination, Relationships and Sexual Health education and Drugs education.
- The close working relationships we have with the local Police and the Complex Youths team as part of our pastoral care.

Individual Liberty

Individual liberty suggests the free exercise of rights generally seen as outside Government control.

Within school, learners are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. As a school, we educate and provide boundaries for learners to make choices safely, through provision of a safe environment and empowering education.

Learners are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and are given advice on how to exercise these safely, for example, through our Personal Development Curriculum. Whether it be through choice of challenge, of how they record, or of participation in our numerous extra-curricular clubs and opportunities, learners are given the freedom to make choices.

In our school, we promote the importance of the Individual Liberty through:

- Opportunities to participate in events within the community or with other schools or sporting events.
- Demonstration by learners, within the school and in the community, a clear understanding of the high expectations of behaviour.
- Taking responsibility by volunteering to be a member of the School Council.
- Parental and Carer Questionnaires are given out at every opportunity, such as Progress review days and Annual Reviews, in which they are able to share their views and any concerns, as well as the values they think are important.
- Valuing and celebrating learners work and progress through displays in classrooms and around the school.
- Student participation in centre assemblies.
- Encouragement to participate in charitable events e.g., Children in Need, Sport Relief, NSPCC, Comic Relief, and various charities, etc.
- Our robust and clear Anti-bullying culture and Behaviour Policy for all learners and staff, which allows the opportunity for individual choices in a safe and supportive environment.
- The Personal Development curriculum includes a focus on areas such as managing risks, financial wellbeing and careers.
- Active encouragement to express views and opinions in lessons in a formative manner.
- Offering learners choices for their future academic and vocational pathways as they move from KS4 to KS5 and beyond.
- Opportunities for freedom of speech and expression through mediums such as the School Council, regular student voice and student-led assemblies.

Mutual Respect

The proper regard for an individual's dignity, which is reciprocated. Part of our Code of Conduct and behaviour policy has revolved around Core Values such as 'Respect', and learners have been a part of discussions and assemblies related to what this means and how it is shown.

Posters around the school promote respect for others and this is reiterated through our classroom and learning rules, as well as our behaviour policy. Mutual respect is at the heart of our values.

Learners learn that their behaviours have an effect on their own rights and those of others. Learners develop an understanding of tolerance and mutual respect. All members of the school community treat each other with respect.

At our school, we promote the importance of mutual respect through such things as:

- A balanced curriculum that keeps a wide range of life opportunities for our learners.
- Strong Life Skills, PSHE and Citizenship education provision through our Personal Development Curriculum allowing planned opportunities to develop topics such as personal identity, anti-bullying, Discrimination, Relationships, emotional health, gender and career stereotypes, Human Rights, etc. These lessons enable learners to develop a greater understanding of themselves, those around them, and those in our local community.

- Positive relationships encouraged and modelled throughout the school i.e., child-to- child, adult to child, and adult-to-adult.
- Through PSHE, SMSC, British values and our Personal Development Curriculum learners develop an understanding of the world of religion and how beliefs affect daily lives. This helps develop tolerance and mutual respect for religious viewpoints.
- Annual Anti-Bullying Week and E-safety lessons explore how our behaviours affect others.
- Promotion of 'fair play' in PE and Sport sessions
- Clear expectations of good behaviour in all facets of school life.
- A culture that promotes the core values that learners take responsibility for their actions and recognise the implications of negative behaviour on others.

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs

A fair, objective, and permissive attitude to those whose faith and beliefs may differ from one's own.

This is achieved through enhancing pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society and by giving them opportunities to experience such diversity.

Assemblies and discussions involving prejudices and prejudice-based bullying have been followed and supported by learning in the Personal Development Curriculum. As written previously, diversity and tolerance are embedded throughout the curriculum in project-based learning, PSHE, RS and English curriculums.

Religious studies scheme of work incorporates both knowledge and understanding of different world religions and how these beliefs impact on daily lives. Christianity as the main religion of the indigenous population is taught alongside Buddhism and other world faiths.

In addition to this, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism alongside other world faiths are taught through our whole SMSC curriculum and focus assemblies based around other cultures and religions.

Furthermore, in our school we promote the importance of tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs through such things as:

- Learning about and celebrating being British, and the understanding that Britain multi- cultural country.
- Religious Studies taught to all pupils across all key stages.
- The Life Skills, PSHE and PSD education programmes focus on cultural identity, equality& discrimination, and human rights.
- External faith speakers invited into school.
- Reflection opportunities in assemblies and lessons.
- Opportunities to taste and make food from around the world.