

MY OASIS

Therapeutic Alternative Provision

Curriculum Policy

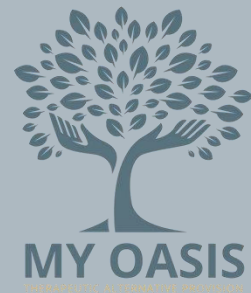
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Principles

At My Oasis our approach to the curriculum is student-centred, ensuring we develop and offer a varied curriculum which is based around the National Curriculum, but one which is also personalised to the needs of individual students. We ensure we offer a curriculum which provides opportunities for every one of our students to learn, make progress and feel a sense of achievement, which we believe to be vital in re-engaging young people in their education.

Given our main aim at My Oasis is on therapeutic skill development, a large proportion of a student's timetable will be designated to sessions focused on their 'therapeutic curriculum' in the form of one-to-one and small group sessions. The evidence-based interventions offered to students are backed up by recent academic research developments in Psychology and neuroscience, helping students to develop key skills to assist with successful reintegration, for example metacognitive skills, or the development of skills around problem-solving, self-regulation and attention training. Given the trauma-informed and compassionate approach taken with students, we are specifically focused on improving outcomes for those young people who have experienced trauma and/or are presenting with complex social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) needs.

Students come to us at various entry points in KS3 and KS4, being referred from numerous commissioning mainstream schools following varied curricula and GCSE examination boards, which results in the cohorts changing continuously as referrals are made over the course of the academic year. Although the focus of My Oasis is primarily to facilitate therapeutic skills development in young people, we also aim to help young people make academic progress by reducing any gaps in their learning within the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. Emphasis is placed on ensuring KS3 students are following the National Curriculum during their placement with us at My Oasis. However, we aim to offer a broader and more balanced curricular through our curriculum links with other subject areas which are delivered to students on a 6-8 week rolling programme, such as a 6-week Local History project or 8-week Art course we offer. Conversely, for KS4 students the academic focus is on ensuring they are following the GCSE frameworks applicable to their individual mainstream schools and reducing any gaps in their learning around the core subject in preparation for them to sit their GCSE examinations.

As many of the young people referred to us have been disengaged in education for some time, we take an alternative approach to delivering the curriculum with teachers initially acting as 'nurture teachers' and

focusing on subjects of interest to each student. This is with the aim of building a young person's confidence to encourage re-engagement in their learning, as well as highlight any barriers that may have advanced due to long periods of absence which can then be supported through the development of a student's 'therapeutic curriculum'.

Our provision has a commitment to equal opportunities for all students; therefore, our curriculum has been designed for a range of learners and to ensure all students will benefit in the following ways:

- Learning how to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Developing healthy, curious, discerning minds, fostering their skills and interests
- Learning how to communicate with confidence and express themselves effectively
 - Understanding that failure is part of the road to success
 - Acquiring a wealth of knowledge and experience
 - Becoming critical thinkers
- Achieving to the best of their ability and reaching their full potential
- Learning how to cooperate with their peers and respect one another both inside and outside the classroom
- Finding joy in a sense of belonging to the provision and its local community while gaining confidence to take up their place in the wider world
 - Being supported with their next stages in education and feeling prepared for life after My Oasis
- Becoming responsible individuals who contribute to the community in which they live and their wider environment, with every student having the opportunity to become agents for change in their community
 - Showing tolerance and kindness in their face to face and online relationships

At My Oasis we believe the key to learning lies within the quality of the relationships between students, family members, staff and the intermediate agencies with whom we work, which is why working collaboratively is one of the main values of our service. We consider the previous success of the provision over the past year as being due to the high expectations, mutual trust, and the fact staff and students care for one another and take responsibility for their learning and behaviour.

Our Tailored Support

Referrals to My Oasis generally are received by mainstream schools, Local Authorities, as well as some private referrals being received by parents and/or carers where they believe their child's needs are not being met in their current educational setting. Following the assessment process, the academic and therapeutic curriculum is intended to be tailored to the needs of individual students, whereby we ensure the curriculum offered to students aims to:

- encourage social and emotional development
- promote continuity and progression in learning
- reduce any gaps in a student's learning to facilitate their successful reintegration back into mainstream school
 - improve literacy, reading and numeracy across all curriculum subjects delivered
 - mirrors the mainstream opportunities

Students are on short-term placements with us for up to 18 weeks, whereby the number of days students are placed with us each week will vary depending on the individual student and school involved. However, teachers and staff at My Oasis will use the information provided from their assessment to prioritise any gaps or weaknesses identified in a student's learning. Although we aim to ensure students follow the National Curriculum and GCSE frameworks of schools wherever possible, their educational placement at My Oasis is going to be different to their mainstream peers in some ways and will also differ between the students on placement with us. However, by ensuring our curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced, with learning progressing meaningfully, it means our students have cumulatively sufficient knowledge, skills and attitudes for their future education and employment.

Given the diverse academic abilities of our students, we believe this personalised approach is essential to provide an educational environment that aligns with each student's needs. We set high expectations for all our students and aim to support their academic and therapeutic progress by offering the most appropriate and effective support available to them. My Oasis Staff also work closely with any SENDCo's within a mainstream school, tailoring our lessons in line with students' needs and ensuring each young person reaches their full potential. When a student is referred to us, we collect in-depth information about their academic abilities, strengths, weaknesses, the GCSE exam board and curriculums being followed in schools,

the topics their peers are currently studying on a student's reintegration back into mainstream, as well as the individual learning styles most effective for students.

At My Oasis staff also systematically work with parents and carers in guiding them in offering support to their child around attending school and managing any anxieties. We often want to change student's negative perceptions of education and/or learning; therefore, we work with parents and carers in helping them to facilitate confidence and positive self-belief in their child, encouraging them to become motivated and successful learners. We want all young people to be an integral part of their home and the My Oasis community, as well as going on to become positive members of society.

We believe structure is key to creating a safe and predictable learning environment for our students, which is why they are provided with their own personalised timetables prior to starting with us at My Oasis. Depending on a student's academic ability, they will be offered specialised teaching or tutoring in small groups or on a one-to-one basis, with there being a maximum of 6-8 students for any classroom-based learning. To ensure we adhere to student's personalised timetables, along with being taught in small group settings, a high student/staff ratio exists within any classroom-based lesson or learning activity. Classroom learning assistants are therefore present in every lesson, working in collaboration with teachers to make sure a high level of individual support is provided to all students and that lesson differentiation can be adhered to where required. Our curriculum is successfully adapted to meet the needs of different groups of students, where we are uncompromising in our ambition to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence. More academically able students are challenged further through research, debate and enquiry, with all students being given opportunities to reason and problem solve across the curriculum.

Teachers and staff at My Oasis make use of an eclectic range of teaching methods depending on student needs. Examples of teaching methodologies employed within My Oasis include teacher led/classroom-based learning, independent learning approaches, project-based and problem-based learning approaches, interactive/collaborative approaches, as well as inquiry-based learning methods. This is in addition to the many creative approaches and social emotional learning methods employed to engage students at My Oasis, which is a central focus of the curriculum delivered. Various learning strategies are also used within the provision to ensure we meet the needs of all learners, such as the use of visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and practical-based approaches.

Promoting Reintegration

Our overarching aim at My Oasis is to -re-integrate students into mainstream educational provision or alternatively try to find them a suitable Special School. We do this through various means, such as by increasing a student's attendance, re-engaging them in education using a trauma-informed, nurturing approach, improving their academic progress and reducing any evident gaps in their learning around the core subject areas, supporting them around their mental health and wellbeing, as well as providing students with numerous opportunities to develop key skills needed for successful reintegration.

Due to the variation of placement length and the staggered times in which the students join us in the academic year, we have developed our curriculums and schemes of learning in collaboration with mainstream teachers to ensure students follow the National Curriculum and GCSE frameworks wherever possible. Our curriculum subsequently aims to reduce any gaps in a student's learning around the core subjects of English, Maths and Science, but with a central focus being on the development of executive functioning and metacognitive skills. This skill development is an integral part of our curriculum as we believe these to be essential skills needed by students to effectively engage in their education. At My Oasis we view the ability to learn and sustain academic progress as working in tandem, which is why students are supported to strengthen their coping strategies to support them to thrive as learners. We also ensure we offer a curriculum which students can access irrespective of when in the year they join us in.

Cross Curricular Links

Although we aim to provide students with a broad and balanced curriculum, we recognise that given the aims of the provision and the focus being on reintegration, we primarily focus on supporting student's in making academic progress within the core subject areas. Subsequently and to ensure we can effectively support students with their return to a mainstream setting, we have standalone curriculums for the core subjects of English, maths, science and PHSE. However, to ensure we offer a balanced curriculum, KS3 students follow a rolling 6–8-week programme whereby they cover curriculum subjects such as art and aesthetics, geography, history, religious studies, as well as developing practical skills in areas such as cooking. Not only do students cover a short-term curriculum in these subjects on a rotation basis, but these curriculum areas also run throughout the themes and topics covered within the core subjects. Conversely, as well as following the GCSE framework for English, Maths and Science, KS4 students have the

option of completing various courses or qualifications within subject areas of interest to them and in line with their future career aspirations. For example, short ASDAN courses and qualifications as discussed in more detail later.

Please see our 'Cross Curricular Link Summary Table' for more information.

Our concept-based curriculums allow teachers to explore overarching themes whilst holding the students at the centre, following their interests where possible, to create an engaging and captivating learning environment that improves students' self-belief. A strong focus is placed on core subjects such as English (writing as well as reading), Maths and Science, as we recognise students require this to successfully access further education and employment more easily. We notice that reading and writing are the areas that are the main blocks to progress in learning for many of our students and which is why these are areas we focus our attention on at My Oasis. The capacity to put words to feelings understand motivations and reasoning as well as describe the thoughts and intentions of others are key factors we believe have played a part in our student's difficulties attending mainstream school. Consequently, the therapeutic curriculum at My Oasis places emphasis on the importance of students developing key skills in other areas such as self-awareness, self-regulation and self-expression.

Wherever possible, we aim to develop student's ICT skills across all curriculum areas delivered at My Oasis, given how computing is a subject which links with most other subjects. For example, the use of internet searches is a fundamental part of research in most subjects, plus the development of skills in using programmes such as excel or word to create PowerPoints and spreadsheets are skills needed to study most curriculum subjects. More information on these links is provided within our Cross Curricular Links table.

Our Therapeutic Curriculum

During the induction process, therapeutic assessments are carried out to identify a student's needs and decide on the treatment approach most suitable for them. This is following an in-depth assessment being completed upon referral to ensure My Oasis is the right provision for each student. Please refer to our Assessment Policy for more detailed information.

As noted, our therapeutic curriculum incorporates almost half of a student's timetable given the aim of My Oasis is to improve a student's mental health and wellbeing, build confidence and self-esteem, as well as

provide them with opportunities to learn the skills needed to reintegrate successfully and cope within a mainstream educational setting. The therapeutic curriculum at My Oasis therefore consists of not only access to specialised therapies and counselling, but also one-to-one mentoring and wellbeing sessions, various confidence-building enrichment activities, as well as the opportunity to take part in these skills-based groups around any areas of difficulty they might be struggling with. In addition, students are taught further ways of managing their mental health and wellbeing through the delivery of the RHSE curriculum at My Oasis.

With a therapeutic approach being at the centre of the provision, our curriculums therefore have been developed in collaboration with the therapists, students and their families. We believe that building confidence and resilience supports our students to leave with both an improved understanding and a willingness to progress in their future learning.

A Broad and Enriching Curriculum

As our curriculum is designed to align with our core purpose as a therapeutic alternative provision, students are taught various coping strategies around how to look after their mental health and wellbeing through our RHSE curriculum, but also through the delivery of our skills-based sessions, therapeutic support and the one-to-one wellbeing sessions regularly offered to students. Depending on the number of days a young person is on placement with us, their timetable will allow for the discrete teaching of English, Maths, Science and PHSE throughout the week, time for therapy or skills-based sessions, as well as further subjects being offered through the delivery of various rolling programmes to ensure as broad and balanced curriculum as possible is offered to students. However, as mentioned the primary focus for KS3 students is on reducing any gaps in their learning within the core subjects of English, Maths and Science.

KS4 students tend to follow our broad and balanced curriculums more strictly, as this allows them to follow a clearer path to reach their goals and qualifications. Our overall aim is to be able to provide our students with the necessary skills required to support them to be successful in their transition to college, training or employment, should they not be returning to their mainstream school. Although students in KS3 trial lots of different enrichment activities, it is only KS4 students who can work towards certification and qualifications in these subjects. We have signed up with external providers to be able to offer a more varied and balanced curriculum to meet the needs and interests of all the young people who are referred to us at My Oasis. For example, KS4 students can study towards an NVQ level qualification in equine

studies or beauty. All the available courses have their own curriculum plans and schemes of learning, as well as follow their own individual assessment processes. Please refer to our ASDAN Information booklet for more information.

In all areas of My Oasis, opportunities are taken to also enrich our curriculum through:

- Visitors to the provision, including artists, industry workers & leaders, craftspeople, service workers
 - Educational visits and workshops
- Special whole school days or weeks e.g. World Book Day, Women In Science week
 - Day visits and residential visits
 - ‘Meet the professionals’
 - Service (police, fire etc) days

Maths

At My Oasis, we ensure students of all backgrounds, potential and abilities are valued, included and challenged - with a goal to inspire and expand their futures. Maths is an intrinsic part of the curriculum across all subjects because we realise at My Oasis the importance of mathematical fluency in everyday life.

As many of the students we work with arrive with the perception that they “can’t do maths” we aim to change this and help our students possess a positive attitude towards all things mathematical by using engaging and inclusive teaching approaches. We understand that it can often be an obstacle for students who have previously faced difficulty within the subject to engage, therefore we aim to provide students with new positive learning experiences whilst emphasising the necessity of mathematical understanding. To do this we regularly use examples of maths in the “real world” and how different industries use maths skills in their work. Maths skills are also regularly incorporated in our life skill activities for example during cooking sessions students are required to measure the weight of the ingredients which also shows our students that maths is important in the ‘real world’.

Please refer to our Maths curriculum overview and schemes of work for more information on the topics we cover.

English

The ability to write effectively is vital for communicating with others confidently and effectively. It is also fundamental to learning in all subjects, yet many students arriving at My Oasis lack confidence in their abilities and can be reluctant to put pen to paper. Due to this, within English we focus on building confidence in fun and engaging ways, ensuring that all key skills are covered to prepare students for further education or employment. For example, having students write about a topic of interest to them.

By developing English language skills, students can choose and adapt what they write to cater for different audiences, as well as appreciate and interpret the choices made by other writers and speakers.

By developing English literature skills students can develop their creativity and imagination through reading and covering English literature texts, this also supports students in developing their reading ability.

Oral language and the development of speaking and listening skills are also important life skills, therefore discussion and group work is regularly incorporated into lessons to give students the opportunity to develop in these areas.

At My Oasis we believe that the focus on developing key literacy skills in students allows them to access the wider curriculum and makes a marked contribution to improving their confidence and self-esteem in other subjects as well.

Please refer to our English curriculum for more information on the topics we cover.

Science

The principle focus of Science at My Oasis is to develop a deeper understanding of a range of scientific ideas in the subjects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. We aim for our students to see the connections between these subjects and become aware of some of the 'big ideas' underpinning scientific knowledge and understanding. The order of the units has been chosen by thinking about the connections between topics in each subject area of biology, chemistry and physics. Our curriculum therefore ensures significant opportunities for academic progression for all young people, with the flexible content aiming to deepen a

student's scientific knowledge, ensuring key concepts are understood. Science works alongside many different subjects to support the development and understanding of our world today. During science lessons, our students also develop skills in communication and teamwork to test concepts for themselves.

Using observation and experimentation, students can carry out various practical experiments in line with what they would carry out if in mainstream school. We have found that these practical subjects greatly help in engaging our students with their learning. Our science teachers ensures students with us on a long-term placement carry out the relevant science practical experiments needed to fulfil the GCSE examination science requirements, which young people have often missed doing due to periods of absence.

Please refer to our Science curriculum for more information on the topics we cover.

RHSE

At My Oasis we cover a full RHSE which is in line with that covered by a student's mainstream peers. This includes statutory content, such as safeguarding issues, healthy relationships and online safety, as well as vital non-statutory content related to topics such as economic wellbeing and career education as we recognise the importance of these topics for our students. Although we try to ensure we cover everything outlined in the statutory RSHE guidance, given the therapeutic nature of the provision the topic of promoting positive mental health and wellbeing is one which is heavily weighted upon. This is because students are placed with us for varying lengths of time, with some only being on a part-time basis for one or two days each week, therefore this ensures they still access this mental health content to help support them.

My Oasis also promotes British values through our broad and balanced curriculum. We believe British values are those values expected of anyone living in Britain, regardless of their nationality, culture or religious belief. We are therefore committed to serving our community and recognise the multi-cultural, multi-faith and ever-changing nature of the United Kingdom by not only teaching young people about these values but also ensuring they are embedded into their daily lives. We also understand the vital role we have in ensuring that groups or individuals within the therapeutic provision are not subjected to intimidation or radicalisation by those wishing to unduly, or illegally, influence them. Great emphasis is subsequently placed on building positive relationships amongst the students themselves as well as between staff and students.

Please refer to our RHSE Policy for more information on the topics we cover.

Physical Activity/Outdoor Education

Staff at My Oasis places a strong emphasis on the importance of keeping well physically, recognising the huge role this plays in positively promoting a young person's health. We therefore offer various indoor and outdoor physical activities for students to become involved in, ranging from more general activities such as walking or hiking, to more specialist physical activities such as kickboxing, horse-riding and yoga. Weather permitting, students have previously taken part in activities such as climbing, mountain biking, forestry, paddle-boarding, as well as kayaking during their placements with us at My Oasis. We encourage those who have become disheartened in mainstream PE lessons by providing them with the opportunity to trial new activities, with an aim of trying to reignite their love for physical activity by finding alternative ways to exercise and get those positive endorphins going, such as through Yoga or Pilates.

Physical activity is encouraged as much as possible, and we are fortunate to be located within easy access to the local community park and playing fields. We generally try to follow a general weekly PE curriculum which covers various sporting activities for students attending My Oasis, which is delivered on a 6–8-week programme and students will access during their placement with us. In addition, we are currently in the process of preparing to offer the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DoE) to further support our students' development.

Our Creative Curriculum

A varied creative curriculum is promoted to all students attending My Oasis and not only to those with a strong interest in art, music or performing arts etc. Our creative curriculum also allows students to investigate sources of ideas in art and design, explore and use various art materials and/or learn musical instruments as just some examples of the opportunities available for students. All young people are encouraged to find creative ways for self-expression exploring what works for them as often they struggle to verbalise and communicate to others how they are feeling. Similarly, the teaching and use of art and beauty is evidenced across the core subject areas through our cross-curricular links, for example by encouraging students to add illustrations to any subject specific essays written.

Assessments

Following a student's assessment, they will be provided with a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) that supports their academic and therapeutic progress. Student's plans are regularly discussed and monitored at termly student progress meetings.

We carry out baseline assessments on all students on entry to use to inform our planning of a student's individual learning pathway. We work closely with staff at a student's mainstream school, their parents/carers, but most importantly the student themselves to ensure their learning journey is continual, challenging and progressive. In addition, students are assessed academically and therapeutically throughout their full placement with us at My Oasis. Their schoolwork is marked on a regular basis and written feedback is provided to help students identify the positive aspects and identify any misconceptions that may have arisen, enabling early and tailored intervention to our students. At My Oasis an emphasis is placed on encouraging our students to regularly self and peer-assess work across all subject areas. We recognise that feeling a sense of achievement in subjects motivates students, leading to further success and intrinsic motivation, with this being the fundamental basis of our teaching.

High quality CPD and SLT monitoring ensure that teachers understand what they need to do to strive for excellence in their teaching and facilitate academic progress in students. We maintain a detailed, rigorous and robust timetable of environmental walks, lesson dips, workbook scrutiny, as well as student voice to evidence this judgement and identify areas in which teaching and learning could be improved.

Along with the above, we believe features of quality first teaching provided at My Oasis includes:

- All students are challenged to do their best work and practical and interactive activities ensure their full engagement. The teacher models a 'learner-centred' attitude
 - Teachers display secure and confident subject knowledge
 - Work that the students are set is in line with our curriculum intent
- Excellent learning habits and organisational systems ensure students are encouraged to think for themselves and have the confidence and motivation to take responsibility for their learning. Our

involvement with the Trauma Informed Practise & Thrive initiatives is developing our understanding of meta-cognition (learning to learn)

- Teachers have consistently high expectations which results in exemplary behaviour
- Clear differentiated questioning ensures appropriate responses can be made by all groups of students both through support and challenge. Students' work is used to model good examples, identify next steps and sensitively address misconceptions throughout the lessons. An emphasis is placed upon peer and collaborative learning
- Students have sufficient time to respond to feedback suggestions, to understand the next steps in their learning
- An optimistic, Growth Mindset approach that promotes the characteristics of effective learning and welcomes errors as opportunities to learn more
- Trauma Informed language is used routinely to ensure students have the emotional vocabulary to explain how they feel about their learning and to promote learner well-being
- Support staff are empowered to be proactive in using their time to target groups of pupils (for example during plenary sessions)
- Formative assessment and feedback are used to good effect. Work-books are regularly marked, and students are given time to respond to teacher suggestions in helping to take their learning forward
- The progress of groups of students with similar starting points, such as the most able, are carefully tracked to provide clear insights into the effectiveness of teaching for different groups within mixed-ability classes.

We use the information gathered from these monitoring activities to construct subject specific lesson 'non-negotiables'. This enables us to ensure consistency in our teaching and across subjects. We follow up all monitoring activities with oral and written feedback detailing the strengths of the lesson and identifying up to two specific aspects of the teaching that require development. The teacher is signposted to relevant sources of advice, support and practical suggestions. Continued monitoring and evaluation of these areas then provides the focus for follow up. We re-focus previous suggestions for development along with other agreed elements of outstanding teaching in a second round of observations. Teachers continue to be given the opportunity to observe best practice and arrangements are now in place for cross school observations.

The Headteacher's termly report to governors outlines the strengths of the teaching following all observations and monitoring activities. The Marking and Feedback policy is reviewed regularly, and its standards and expectations are applied to all subjects.

Lessons are taught so that students remember their learning. We talk regularly to our learners to understand their experiences of teaching at our provision. As a result, we know that our students learn best through practical and quality 'first hand' experiences and these are routinely planned to enhance the quality of the curriculum. Teachers are determined that their students will make progress and are tenacious in seizing opportunities to practise skills and apply knowledge. This is why we provide a range of enrichment activities to ensure that students remain curious, interested and skilful learners.

We train our support staff members in targeted group teaching to ensure their full and active contribution to the teaching in all parts of the lesson, with learning assistants being part of the monitoring cycle of teaching and learning. Training for support staff compliments whole school initiatives, such as providing effective feedback to learners; spelling and handwriting; behaviour and emotional vocabulary. Teachers and learning assistants have weekly planning time in which to discuss lesson plans and share observations and feedback about students in their classes.

We engage with parents, carers, our local community and other agencies on a regular basis, believing that our parents/carers understand their responsibility to educate children in partnership with My Oasis.

Meetings, briefings, open lessons, workshops, assemblies, Student Progress Meetings (student/teacher/referring school/parent/carer/outside agency), school website and written reports all keep parents up to date with how well their children are doing and promote a student's successful reintegration back into mainstream.

Please refer to our Assessment Policy for more detailed information regarding the assessment policies and procedures followed at My Oasis.

Our curriculum aims to prevent students from being accustomed to an alternative educational culture which is why we aim to mirror mainstream education and promote reintegration back into mainstream. In addition, outreach and transitional support is offered to students for up to six weeks following their placement ending at My Oasis. This is to aid with their reintegration back into a mainstream educational environment and to provide them with consistency in terms of the therapeutic support received. We also try to offer the same enrichment activities within mainstream schools as those provided within the provision to increase the likelihood of their transition being successful. Nevertheless, through our curriculum and the therapeutic support we offer we aim to ensure all students have an opportunity to learn and make progress, regardless of which curriculum subject this tends to be. However, we do not aim

to offer a complete alternative education given our focus being on reintegration and reducing any gaps in learning within the core subject areas. In a similar light, given some students are only with us on a part-time basis, academic progress will also be determined by their attendance at mainstream school as well as My Oasis.