St Hilary's Prep School Policy

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
This policy applies equally to the EYFS, Pre-Prep and Prep as taught at St Hilary's School

1. Purpose and principles

At St Hilary's School, the curriculum encompasses planned academic, practical, creative, physical, pastoral and co-curricular experiences, together with the attitudes and relationships developed through daily school life. We aim for an ambitious, broad and balanced education in which every pupil is known, challenged, supported and able to make progress from their starting points.

The school takes the National Curriculum as an important reference point while providing appropriate breadth, enrichment and specialist teaching as an independent prep school. Provision promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and respect for people with protected characteristics. The school motto remains "Not for oneself but for all."

Our curriculum aims

- Secure strong foundations in communication, language, literacy, mathematics and scientific understanding.
- Build subject knowledge and skills through coherent progression, retrieval, application and purposeful practice.
- Develop curiosity, creativity, reasoning, resilience, independence and collaboration.
- Provide appropriate challenge, support and equitable access for pupils with SEND, EAL, disabilities and high prior attainment.
- Promote physical health, wellbeing, positive relationships, responsible citizenship and readiness for the next stage of education.
- Value academic, practical, technological, artistic, sporting and co-curricular achievement.

2. Curriculum design, breadth and progression

Subject leaders and teachers plan sequenced learning that builds on what pupils already know and can do. Long-term curriculum maps identify coverage and progression; schemes of work establish intended knowledge and skills; medium- and short-term planning translate these into teachable learning episodes. Planning is responsive rather than an administrative end in itself. See Appendices 1–4 for the school's checked planning documentation.

The Prep model seeks continuity of relationships and a clear teaching point of contact, alongside specialist input where this adds value. Subject expertise and collaboration across EYFS, Pre-Prep and Prep support coherent progression and transition. Arrangements may vary by year group and staffing; the operational timetable is maintained separately.

Curriculum enhancement

The curriculum includes opportunities for reasoning and problem-solving, including verbal and non-verbal reasoning; practical design and making; engineering, food technology, art and creative work; sport and swimming; enrichment; and visits, speakers, residential experiences and clubs. DT and practical subjects contribute to the application of scientific, technological, engineering, mathematical and artistic thinking where meaningful. Practical work is delivered subject to appropriate risk assessments, staff competence, training and supervision.

PSHE, relationships and personal development

A coherent Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) programme supports wellbeing, relationships, citizenship and respect for others. Relationships Education and any sex education are delivered in accordance with the school's separate RSE Policy and applicable statutory requirements. Requests for withdrawal are considered only where the law provides for them; pupils continue to receive appropriate education during any agreed withdrawal. The school consults parents as required by the relevant guidance.

3. High-quality teaching and learning

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and use secure subject knowledge, clear explanations, modelling, appropriate practice and effective questioning. They create positive, purposeful and safe learning environments in which pupils can think, discuss, make mistakes, reflect and improve.

- Identify and activate prior knowledge, teach new content in manageable steps and check understanding regularly.
- Use adaptive teaching: adjust explanation, scaffolding, resources, pace and support without unnecessarily limiting curriculum ambition.
- Provide timely challenge, including depth and application for pupils who are ready to move further.
- Use feedback that helps pupils understand and act on next steps; avoid marking activity that does not improve learning.
- Deploy teaching assistants and other adults purposefully, promoting pupil independence.
- Use assessment evidence to revisit misconceptions and adjust future teaching.
- Model respectful behaviour, positive relationships, professional conduct and a culture of safeguarding.

Indicators of successful learning include secure knowledge and understanding, growing fluency, thoughtful pupil explanations, sustained engagement, improving independence, positive attitudes and progress over time. A single lesson or isolated work sample is not treated as a complete measure of teaching quality.

4. Assessment, feedback, reporting and intervention

Assessment is integral to curriculum delivery. Teachers combine day-to-day formative checks, pupil work, questioning and discussion with periodic assessments, including standardised and diagnostic information where appropriate. Assessment is used to identify strengths, gaps and misconceptions, evaluate the impact of teaching, inform future planning and communicate clearly with pupils and families.

Where pupils need additional consolidation or support, teachers and the learning support team plan proportionate, time-limited interventions with clear intended outcomes and review points. Support may take place in class, in small groups or individually. Decisions are based on identified need rather than a fixed intervention programme; impact is reviewed and provision adjusted. Equally, pupils requiring greater depth are offered suitable stretch and extension.

Reporting arrangements are set out in the school's Assessment, Marking and Reporting Policy and current parent communications. The school continues to develop the consistency and comparability of assessment information across cohorts; conclusions about trends are drawn only where evidence is sufficiently reliable.

5. Inclusion, SEND, EAL and greater depth

All teachers are responsible for planning and teaching pupils with diverse needs. Reasonable adjustments and appropriate provision support access to an ambitious curriculum. Teachers work with the SENCO, learning support colleagues, families and external professionals where appropriate, and take account of SEND Support Plans and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

The school has regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015) and uses a graduated assess–plan–do–review approach. Provision and targets are reviewed with parents and pupils as appropriate. Where needs are complex, the school discusses additional assessment and support routes, including EHC needs assessments, with families; statutory rights to request assessment are unaffected by school processes.

Pupils learning English as an additional language receive support to access subject content and develop language proficiency. Pupils with particularly strong attainment, aptitude or passion are identified and challenged through depth, enrichment and appropriate opportunities, informed by the school's separate policy and register.

6. EYFS and transition

EYFS provision follows the current statutory EYFS framework. Learning is organised across the three prime areas—communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development—and four specific areas—literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; expressive arts and design. Planning reflects the characteristics of effective teaching and learning: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically.

Adults provide a thoughtful balance of child-initiated play, adult-guided experiences and direct teaching, responding to children's interests, development and needs. Assessment, observation and professional dialogue inform provision. Transition between EYFS, Pre-Prep, Prep and onward schools is supported through appropriate information-sharing, relationships and preparation.

7. Digital learning and online safety

Digital technology is used when it enhances learning, accessibility, creativity, collaboration or assessment, rather than as an end in itself. Pupils develop digital literacy, critical evaluation and safe, respectful and responsible online behaviours. Teachers select age-appropriate resources and follow the school's safeguarding, online safety, data protection and acceptable-use arrangements.

The school is reviewing its longer-term approach to pupil devices and digital provision as part of a whole-school digital strategy. This policy therefore establishes principles rather than prescribing a device model or screen-time allocation. EYFS use must also reflect the current statutory framework and relevant screen-use requirements.

8. Learning environment and resources

Classrooms and specialist spaces should be safe, inclusive, organised and conducive to learning. Displays may celebrate achievement, reinforce key knowledge, provide accessible prompts and reflect the diversity of the school community. Display expectations are proportionate and should serve a clear educational purpose. Resources, equipment and practical facilities are maintained and used in accordance with applicable risk assessments and safety procedures.

9. Leadership, professional learning and quality assurance

Responsibilities

- Headmaster and senior leadership team: set strategic direction, ensure appropriate curriculum provision, allocate resources and oversee quality and improvement.
- Deputy Head: coordinate curriculum, teaching and learning development, assessment priorities and cross-school consistency, working with relevant leaders.
- Subject leaders / Heads of Department: maintain progression and subject documentation; support colleagues; review curriculum coverage, assessment evidence and resource needs (see Appendices 5–6).
- Teachers: plan, teach, assess, adapt and communicate effectively; contribute to professional dialogue and improvement.
- SENCO and learning support team: coordinate specialist provision and support teachers in inclusive practice.

Monitoring and professional development

Senior leaders and subject leaders use regular learning walks, proportionate observations, pupil voice, work and planning scrutiny, assessment analysis and professional dialogue to understand the quality of provision. Findings are triangulated over time, shared constructively and used to celebrate effective practice, identify priorities and support improvement. Staff opportunities to observe colleagues and share expertise are developed as part of a collaborative professional-learning culture.

INSET, coaching and other continuing professional development are selected in response to pupil needs, curriculum priorities, staff feedback and monitoring evidence. School development priorities and curriculum implementation are reviewed through appropriate leadership and governance processes.

10. Policy implementation and review

This policy is read alongside the related school policies listed on the front page. Operational timetables, subject maps, assessment schedules and appendices may be updated through established school processes without rewriting the overarching principles in this policy. All six appendices have been reviewed separately and are retained unchanged in this revision.

Appendices 1–6 are held in the school's curriculum documentation area on SharePoint: HYPERLINK

Statutory and guidance references

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended), Schedule, Part 1, particularly paragraphs 2–4; DfE guidance on the Independent School Standards (April 2026).
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (current framework applicable from September 2026).
- DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (revised guidance applicable from September 2026).
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015); Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026), and associated school safeguarding and online safety policies.

Reviewed: June 2019, June 2020, June 2021, June 2022, July 2023, June 2024, July 2025, September 2026, November 2026
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Person(s)responsible: Mark Parton (Deputy Head)

Related documents: SEND, EAL, RSE, PSHE, Safeguarding, Behaviour, Online Safety, Assessment/Marking/Reporting, More Able**/Gifted/Talented/Passionate policies**