

# The Waking Hour Curriculum

## AIM

To provide each pupil or student with a planned and integrated programme of activities across the school day so that each pupil/student's potential for enjoyment and learning is fully realised.

## DEFINITION

The Waking curriculum is a term that describes all that St. John's plans to teach its pupils and students during the time they are at our school and all that they learn. It includes all that happens in formal teaching situations as well as during mealtimes and in both planned and informal leisure activities. Some of this curriculum is 'hidden' in the sense that it is not written down and there is no conscious intention to teach it. The term 'hidden curriculum' most often refers to those values and beliefs that are held by the staff and are offered consciously and unconsciously to the children through our verbal language, body language, social interaction, dress etc.

## RATIONALE

1. Describing the Waking curriculum acknowledges, in a formal way, that not all learning takes place inside school hours:-
  - skills (e.g. technology and craft skills);
  - knowledge (e.g. trips out, conservation);
  - understanding (e.g. practical experience repeated or re-inforced of classroom knowledge);
  - personal (moral, spiritual, cultural, emotional & physical);
  - social (as for personal but applied to living in groups);
  - independence training;
2. Acknowledging the Waking curriculum gives practical expression to the view that not all formal learning takes place within school hours or that all informal learning takes place in the residential setting.
3. Planning and delivering the Waking curriculum will enable staff to maximise the learning potential of the care setting, both within the school and the community, as a learning environment.

4. The school needs to demonstrate that there is a clear 'value added' element for those children and young people with special needs who receive residential education.

## RESIDENTIALITY

The need for pupils and students to be admitted to St. John's on a residential basis should have been clearly outlined during the referral process and in the papers that are sent to the school before that pupil or student is admitted. St. John's must then be able to show that there are systems and resources in place to meet the referral requirements for residentiality.

- the reasons why a pupil or student might need to be residential include:
- parents living and working abroad where there are no appropriate day school facilities
- the normal domestic arrangements are not capable of supporting the social, behavioural and / or medical needs of the child or young person whilst attending a day school.
- the need for consistent behaviour management across the Waking period cannot be provided at home
- there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a pupil or student's language development would benefit significantly from the consistency and linguistic richness of a residential environment that the additional costs are justified
- there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a pupil or student's medical condition is so severe or would benefit sufficiently from the additional supervision of a residential environment that the additional costs are justified

Having identified each child's need for being residential the school's planning must then be able to demonstrate that we have put into place effective strategies and sufficient resources for meeting those needs. The school will also be able to show that we are able to set appropriate targets, monitor progress and review success on a regular basis.

## THE CURRICULUM IN THE CLASSROOM

The curriculum as delivered by the teaching staff within recognised 'taught time' is defined in its broad content by the National Curriculum.

This covers the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science also the foundation subjects of Technology (including Information Technology and Food Technology), History, Geography, Modern Foreign Languages, Art, Music and P.E. Although a National Curriculum foundation subject the content of R.E. is not defined. Our teaching of R.E. is formulated within statutory guidelines and the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus. Our teaching of Personal and Social Education is formulated within statutory guidelines (including those for sex education) and the needs of our pupil and student group.

## KEY CURRICULUM WORDS

- Broad:** Refers to a wide range of subject areas and a wide coverage within subject areas, eg. Mathematics should consist of data handling, algebra, shape and area, mathematical language, measures and problem solving as well as teaching the basic rules of number.
- Balanced:** Describes the range of learning activities that are employed to deliver a specific subject, eg. in teaching number a range of useful activities would include multi-sensory approaches, use of IT, as well as paper and pencil exercises.
- Relevant:** Describes the requirement for curriculum content and learning tasks to relate in a direct way to the experience of pupils. So teaching concerning river valleys would include field trips in the locality of the school.
- Challenging:** Describes the need to present pupils and students with learning tasks that extends their current level of skill and/or understanding. It is relatively easy to underestimate the abilities of pupils and students with special needs. Sometimes a 'challenging' task may involve an element of risk. This is a necessary and important part of our work. Situations such as those that occur in independence training will have to be carefully planned and be part of a progressive scheme the success of which is regularly evaluated.
- Differentiated:** This refers to the need to match the requirements of the teaching programme to the abilities and interests of the pupils. Lessons and evening activities that are designed for the whole group should, wherever possible, be inclusive so that no pupil is excluded from taking part on account of physical or intellectual ability. There may need to be several points of access into an activity and differing routes within the activity but the core experience should be open to all.

## THE CURRICULUM IN THE CARE SETTING

A major advantage of residential special schooling is the ability to offer consistent management across the day and the week. It also offers the opportunity to use a variety of settings to:-

- deliver curriculum experiences;
- teach new skills;
- reinforce and rehearse previously taught skills;
- enhance self esteem and develop understanding.

In order to maximise such opportunities it is important that all staff are aware of the areas of overlap between the formal and informal curriculum.

## PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. It will be necessary to have a mechanism (coordinator's role) that ensures each pupil/student's **entitlement** to a varied, relevant, enjoyable and challenging range of activities. Such activities should be based within the community as well as in the school.
2. Taking part in such a range of varied activities should involve the pupils themselves in a progressive degree of **choice** and informed decision making. Increased choice would need to relate to measured growth in self-confidence, personal responsibility and independence. Can pupils choose to do nothing?
3. It will be necessary for there to be an overview (coordinators role) to ensure that there is a **balance** in the range (type) of activities across the formal school curriculum and those activities available in the care setting.
4. **Access** to the activities will depend on efficient and flexible use of care, teaching and volunteer staffing but within a regular time table.
5. Care staff should be informed of the topics that children in their groups will be experiencing within the formal curriculum so that with **liaison** with the subject teacher extension activities can be planned effectively. Although care groups and class groups are not identical, extension activities could be undertaken individually, in pairs or across care groupings. (A National Curriculum topic on WW2 could be extended by model making, story telling visits etc.)
6. Individual care plans and individual education plans need to be cross referenced to ensure that behavioural, independence, personal and social targets are **reinforced** within informal as well as structured situations.
7. The effectiveness of many activities will be enhanced by some understanding of the desired **outcomes** from an activity. The time and effort involved in organising a trip to Body Shop will be repaid to a greater extent if staff are clear about general outcomes for the group and perhaps more focused outcomes for individual children.
8. Staff should be aware of individual **targets** within care plans when organising and supporting children's choice of activities, eg. some children will want to avoid activities that will encourage the development of necessary personal and social skills.
9. Informal **assessment** procedures should be available to care staff. Such assessments will enable them to assess the success of children in relation to given activities, record their achievement and report such achievement to parents, eg. swimming, conservation.

10. It is important that the knowledge, skills, experiences and achievement of all our pupils in whichever context it occurs is **appreciated, recorded and accredited**.
11. An annual **audit** of available activities, relevant staff skills, equipment and resources will need to be built into the coordinators role.
12. The implementation of the Waking curriculum will be supported by the allocation of a budget to team leaders and the curriculum coordinator. Staff will be advised on how the budget will be allocated by their line manager.

### INSET

Inset will be provided for all staff at all stages of the implementation of the Waking curriculum. Individual requests for training should be made to either the Head of Care or Assistant Headteacher (Waking curriculum coordinator).

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**Don Kent**

**Principal / Chief Executive**

See also "The Waking Curriculum"

"St. John's College, Provision of Youth Centre and Youth Leader" and "St. John's School, Provision of Activity Centre" due for publication Spring 2000