



Curriculum Policy

Last updated: September 2025

Next update: September 2026

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Intent

Curriculum Aims

At Hove Micro-School our curriculum is designed to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education which is coherently planned, sequenced, and ambitious for all pupils.
- Rebuild trust in education for children who have previously experienced school-based anxiety, trauma, or negative educational experiences.
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, skills, and cultural capital for future learning, employment, and independent life.
- Prioritise emotional wellbeing (SEMH), creativity, curiosity, and resilience alongside academic achievement.
- Ensure learning is personalised, flexible, and responsive to children's individual needs, interests, and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) targets.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of:

- The Education Act 2002 and Independent School Standards (2014).
- The National Curriculum programmes of study (which we use as our framework).
- The Equality Act 2010 and SEND Code of Practice (2015).
- The statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (DfE, July 2025).

Rationale for Our Curriculum Approach *(see appendix for detailed rationale)*

Child-Led Topics with Teacher-Led Objectives

Our pupils often arrive at Hove Micro-School with high levels of school-based anxiety or disengagement from learning. Allowing pupils to contribute to the choice of half-termly topics provides them with a sense of ownership, reduces anxiety, and increases motivation. This approach builds trust, fosters curiosity, and ensures learning feels relevant to their lives.

However, qualified and experienced teachers remain responsible for selecting and sequencing the National Curriculum learning objectives. This ensures academic rigour, progression, and breadth, while still allowing pupils' interests to shape the context in which these objectives are taught.

Four-Day School Week Model



We operate Monday to Thursday, 9.30am–3.30pm, offering 24 hours of structured learning per week. This flexible model has been designed deliberately to meet the needs of our cohort, many of whom experience EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance), autism, and PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance). A slightly reduced timetable provides a manageable structure for re-engagement, reduces overwhelm, and supports steady reintegration into education.

Importantly, the 24 hours delivered meet the requirement for full-time education. Our approach balances statutory expectations with the wellbeing needs of our learners, ensuring they can access education consistently and successfully. From September 2026, we plan to expand to a 5-day week (30 hours per week) as our provision grows and stabilises.

Consultation and Responsiveness

Our flexible curriculum model has been developed in close consultation with:

- Parents and carers, to reflect the needs and aspirations of families.
- The local authority, in recognition of the increasing number of referrals and EHCP consultations we receive.
- Pupil voice, ensuring our curriculum is co-created with learners in mind.

This collaborative approach ensures our curriculum is responsive, inclusive, and aligned to the specific needs of our community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership team

- Ensures the curriculum is coherently planned, ambitious, and responsive to pupil need.
- Oversees assessment, monitoring, and curriculum reviews.
- Engages with parents and carers in curriculum planning and policy development.

Staff

- Plan lessons using the National Curriculum as a foundation, adapting for SEND, SEMH, and EHCP targets.
- Ensure lessons are well-sequenced and knowledge builds over time.
- Record and assess progress using formative and summative methods, including IEPs and SEMH trackers.

Pupils

- Contribute ideas for half-termly themes and take ownership of their learning.
- Engage with visual planning boards and project boxes to make learning visible and motivating.



Organisation and Planning

- Topic-Based Learning: Half-termly themes chosen collaboratively with children to ensure engagement and relevance.
- National Curriculum Coverage: Teachers map objectives to ensure full coverage and progression across EYFS, KS1–3.
- Personalisation: Small-group and 1:1 provision allow adaptation for individual learning styles, EHCP targets, and SEMH needs.
- Visual Planning Boards: Topics and projects are displayed so that intent is clear to pupils, parents, and staff.
- Project Boxes: Bespoke learning resources to support children with PDA and anxiety, promoting choice and independence.
- Clubs and Enrichment: Yoga, art, gardening, and other activities enhance wellbeing, creativity, and life skills.
- Home and Remote Learning: Home learning challenges extend topics; remote access is available if needed.

Inclusion

We welcome pupils who have struggled to access mainstream education, particularly those with EBSA, autism, and PDA. Our approach includes:

- High expectations for all pupils with personalised scaffolds.
- Adaptations such as visuals, repetition, small-group teaching, and flexible timetables.
- Full participation in all curriculum areas wherever possible.
- A strong emphasis on preparation for adulthood: independence, resilience, and social skills.
- Active monitoring of barriers to learning and removing them.

Implementation

Teaching

- Delivered by experienced teachers and support staff with subject expertise.
- Lessons are clear, interactive, and sequenced to build on prior learning.
- AFL strategies (questioning, discussion, exit tickets) check understanding and guide next steps.

Assessment

- Weekly observations recorded in IEPs and progress trackers.



- Termly assessments in English, maths, reading, and phonics benchmark pupils against national standards.
- Colour-coded trackers monitor attainment and progress over time.
- Pupil voice and self-assessment support metacognition and independence.

Impact

The impact of our curriculum is measured through:

- Pupils' academic progress evidenced in books, assessments, and reports.
- SEMH progress tracked through personalised records and observations.
- Pupils' ability to talk about their learning and identify next steps.
- Re-engagement with learning and improved attendance for pupils with prior school anxiety.
- Parent and pupil questionnaires showing confidence and satisfaction.
- Termly written reports to parents, highlighting progress socially, emotionally, and academically.
- Annual EHCP reviews

Our curriculum prepares pupils not only for the next stage of their education but for life — fostering resilience, curiosity, and a love of learning.

Fundamental British Values in the Curriculum

The Prevent strategy defines British values as:

1. Democracy
2. The rule of law
3. Individual liberty and mutual respect
4. Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

In the curriculum, we cover these areas in a holistic and cross-curricular way. This includes:

- Debating sessions and teaching persuasive writing (during English lessons)
- An exploration of democracy during PSHE lessons
- Self-directed activities (collective decision-making) in many lessons
- Children learning about the importance of having rules and how these relate to laws, during PSHE lessons
- Physical Education lessons where we promote 'fair play', following and developing rules and being magnanimous in defeat.
- Providing clear rules for internet usage which have been discussed and developed in collaboration with pupils
- Introducing stories with a moral message
- Discussing how to exercise personal freedoms and rights during PSHE
- Teaching pupils about online safety through lessons, to keep themselves safe online whilst they exercise their rights and personal freedoms



- Introducing and teaching topics encompassing different world religions, their festivals and celebrations
- Allowing children to gain a greater understanding of religious diversity and practices – actively promoting diversity through, for example, organising educational visits to different places of worship around Brighton
- Using PSHE lessons to raise and discuss issues of bullying and prejudice.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Leadership team alongside the School Improvement partner monitors curriculum coverage, quality, and impact through:

- Planning reviews, learning walks, and lesson observations.
- Regular assessment moderation with staff.
- Parent and pupil feedback.
- Reflective practice, ensuring continual improvement.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and shared with staff and parents.

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Assessment Policy
- SEN and Inclusion Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Policy



Appendix

Curriculum Rationale

At Hove Micro-School, our curriculum has been carefully designed to meet the needs of our unique cohort, while ensuring full coverage of the National Curriculum. We specialise in supporting children who have experienced Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), autism, and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), many of whom have faced trauma or negative experiences in previous schools.

Why Our Curriculum is Different

1. Child-Led Topics, Teacher-Led Objectives

We allow pupils to help select half-termly themes (e.g. "Space Exploration", "Ancient Worlds", "Inventions"). This approach gives children a sense of ownership and control, reducing anxiety and fostering engagement.

However, all learning objectives remain teacher-led, based on the National Curriculum, and sequenced to ensure progression. This ensures pupils meet national expectations while learning in a context that feels meaningful and motivating to them.

Why this works for our pupils:

- Builds trust and reduces demand-related anxiety.
- Increases motivation and curiosity.
- Allows teachers to weave statutory objectives into topics children care about.

2. Four-Day School Week (24 Hours)

The choice to run a four-day week is based on evidence from our cohort:

- Many pupils experience high levels of anxiety, and a shorter week increases attendance and engagement.
- It provides families with space for therapies, medical appointments, or recovery time, without impacting core learning.
- A consistent routine across four days helps pupils sustain progress and avoid burnout.

From September 2025, we will transition to a five-day week (30 hours), in line with growing stability and demand.

Consultation and Collaboration

Our curriculum model has been designed in close consultation with:

- Parents, whose insights into their children's needs are invaluable.
- The local authority, in recognition of the growing number of EHCP consultations and placements.



- Pupil voice, ensuring children feel heard and valued in the process.

This collaborative approach ensures our curriculum is inclusive, realistic, and tailored to our community.

Intent, Implementation, Impact

Intent: To re-engage children with education through a safe, nurturing, and ambitious curriculum that balances academic learning with social and emotional development.

Implementation: National Curriculum objectives are mapped and sequenced by qualified teachers, taught through engaging topics chosen with pupils, and adapted through project boxes, visuals, and small-group teaching.

Impact: Pupils make measurable progress academically and emotionally, evidenced through assessments, IEPs, SEMH trackers, pupil voice, and parental feedback. They develop resilience, curiosity, and confidence to succeed in future education and life.

Conclusion

Our curriculum is ambitious, inclusive, and tailored to the needs of children who cannot thrive in mainstream schools. It prioritises both academic progress and emotional wellbeing, giving pupils the best chance to rediscover a love of learning, achieve their potential, and prepare for adulthood.