

Birmingham Independent College

Curriculum Policy

“Unlocking Potential Through Inclusive Education”

Approved: October 2025

Review Date: October 2026

Review and Approval

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or college priorities.

Policy Statement and Purpose

Birmingham Independent College (BIC) is committed to delivering an inclusive, aspirational, and high-quality education that enables every learner to achieve their full potential. Our curriculum is designed to meet the diverse needs of learners with autism, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, and a wide range of learning disabilities.

The curriculum provides academic rigour, vocational opportunity, and experiential learning that supports **independence, functionality, and widening community awareness** – the three pillars that underpin our provision and ethos.

We believe education should inspire curiosity, build confidence, and prepare young people for a meaningful adult life.

This policy outlines how BIC's curriculum is planned, implemented, and evaluated in line with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF), Independent School Standards (Part 1), SEND Code of Practice (2015), and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025).

Our Core Values and Guiding Principles

The BIC curriculum is shaped by our values, which define how we teach, support, and interact:

- **Respect and Dignity** – We treat every learner, colleague, and visitor with respect, kindness, and professionalism.
- **Inclusion and Accessibility** – We ensure every student can access a rich, challenging, and supportive curriculum.
- **Safeguarding and Well-being** – Learner safety and emotional health underpin everything we do.
- **Growth and Potential** – We nurture the potential in every learner, focusing on their abilities, not limitations.
- **Excellence and Integrity** – We set and uphold the highest professional and ethical standards.
- **Responsibility and Accountability** – We act with fairness and transparency.
- **Partnership and Collaboration** – We work closely with families, carers, professionals, and the wider community.
- **Positive Culture and Relationships** – We foster trust, mutual respect, and compassionate relationships throughout the college.

These values are not abstract ideals; they guide every curriculum decision and classroom interaction.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy aligns with:

- The Education Act 2002 (Section 78)
- The Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (Part 1: Quality of Education)
- The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF 2024 and EIF 2025)
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

Curriculum Intent

The intent of the BIC curriculum is to:

- Provide a broad, balanced, and differentiated curriculum that meets the needs of all learners, regardless of starting point.
- Develop communication, literacy, numeracy, and **functional life skills** as foundations for future success.
- Promote personal growth, **independence**, and employability through academic and practical learning.
- Nurture confidence, resilience, and self-advocacy.
- Foster a deep sense of **social responsibility, cultural appreciation, and community awareness**.
- Align our provision with each learner's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes.

BIC's curriculum recognises that success is multifaceted: academic attainment, social competence, and emotional well-being are equally valued.

The Three Pillars of the BIC Curriculum

Our curriculum is built upon three interconnected pillars that underpin all teaching, learning, and assessment:

1. **Independence** – We develop self-reliant, confident learners who can make informed choices, communicate effectively, and take responsibility for their learning and future. All pathways include structured opportunities for learners to practise personal care, travel training, and decision-making.
2. **Functionality** – Learning is purposeful, relevant, and transferable. We teach functional literacy, numeracy, digital, and communication skills in meaningful contexts, preparing students to apply these in everyday life and employment.
3. **Widening Community Awareness** – Learning extends beyond the classroom through community projects, volunteering, cultural engagement, and enterprise. These experiences help students develop social understanding, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

These pillars ensure that all students experience a curriculum that prepares them for adulthood, community life, and lifelong learning.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Our curriculum integrates four essential cross-cutting themes that enrich learning and personal development across all pathways:

- **Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE):** Develops the knowledge, skills, and attributes learners need to manage their lives, make responsible choices, and stay healthy and safe.
- **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE):** Promotes understanding of personal boundaries, friendships, respect, and healthy relationships.
- **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC):** Builds spiritual awareness, moral understanding, social empathy, and cultural appreciation, preparing learners for life in modern Britain.
- **Preparation for Adulthood (PfA):** Ensures all learning contributes to meaningful outcomes in employment, independent living, community inclusion, and health.

These themes run through every aspect of teaching, reinforcing the three pillars of **Independence**, **Functionality**, and **Widening Community Awareness**.

Curriculum Implementation

Implementation is guided by a personalised, structured, and flexible approach, underpinned by evidence-based teaching and learning strategies.

Teaching and Learning Framework

- All students follow an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) aligned with their EHCP outcomes.
- Teaching in small classes enables targeted differentiation.
- Communication-friendly classrooms support learners with autism and speech, language, and communication needs.
- Collaborative planning ensures continuity and progression.
- Staff receive continuous professional development in SEND pedagogy, safeguarding, and behaviour support.

Curriculum Design Principles

- Sequential progression within and across key stages.
- Integration of academic, vocational, and experiential learning.
- Cross-cutting themes – PSHE, RSE, SMSC, PfA, British Values, and Careers Education.
- Enrichment through community projects, arts, enterprise, horticulture, and sport.

Across all pathways, teaching and learning actively embed the three pillars. Lessons are planned to build **independence**, apply learning **functionally** in real-life contexts, and connect students with their **wider community** through practical engagement and authentic experiences.

Curriculum Pathways

BIC delivers three integrated pathways to ensure every learner accesses a curriculum suited to their abilities and aspirations.

A. High Achievers Curriculum (Academic Pathway)

For students working toward GCSEs and Level 2 qualifications.

This pathway promotes academic excellence through independence and self-directed learning, ensuring students apply functional and transferable skills within academic and community contexts.

Key Features:

- GCSEs and Level 2 qualifications (English, Maths, Science, ICT).
- Humanities, Creative Arts, and Modern Studies.
- Research-based and project learning.
- Mentoring for leadership and organisation.
- Preparation for post-16 college, A-levels, or university.

B. Functional/Vocational Curriculum (Applied Learning Pathway)

Blends academic learning with practical experience to build independence and employability. Balances classroom learning with community-based experiences to develop functionality in real-world settings.

Key Features:

- Functional Skills qualifications (Entry Level to Level 2).
- Vocational options such as Business, Hospitality, and Digital Media.
- Work placements, enterprise projects, and internships.
- Modules focused on self-confidence and social communication.
- Careers guidance integrated throughout.

C. Experiential Curriculum (Complex Needs Pathway)

For learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities and communication needs. Fosters independence and social participation through sensory, functional, and community-based experiences.

Key Features:

- Individualised communication programmes (AAC, Intensive Interaction).
- Sensory exploration, creative therapies, and life skills training.
- Functional independence (cooking, travel, self-care).
- Multi-disciplinary collaboration with families and professionals.
- Micro-progress tracking through Evidence for Learning (EFL).

Personalisation, Enrichment and EHCP Alignment

Each learner's journey is personalised, linking directly to EHCP outcomes through measurable targets. Termly reviews ensure ILPs reflect progress and adapt to changing needs. Enrichment at BIC reinforces our three pillars. Every community project, creative workshop, or volunteering placement strengthens independence, functional skill development, and community inclusion.

Activities include:

- Outdoor learning and enterprise.
- Sports, health, and well-being programmes.
- Community volunteering and social action.
- Leadership roles such as Student Council and peer mentoring.

Inclusion, Safeguarding, and Equality

BIC's inclusive curriculum ensures equal access for all learners. Safeguarding, well-being, and diversity are integral throughout.

- Learning environments are adapted for accessibility and sensory needs.
- Curriculum content celebrates diversity, equity, and cultural heritage.
- Anti-bullying and anti-discrimination themes are explicitly taught.
- Safeguarding and consent are embedded within PSHE and pastoral sessions.

Assessment, Monitoring, and Review

Assessment captures academic progress, social development, and personal growth.

Framework:

- Baseline assessments establish starting points.
- Formative and summative assessments inform planning.
- EHCP reviews integrate qualitative and quantitative data.
- EFL portfolios record learner progress.
- Student is central to evaluating impact and guiding next steps.

Progress is reviewed termly by teachers, SENCO, and senior leaders to ensure consistency and accountability.

Curriculum Evaluation and Quality Assurance

Evaluation and improvement are continuous. Proprietors, leaders, and external partners ensure the curriculum remains relevant, compliant, and effective.

Curriculum evaluation measures progress against three key indicators:

Independence, Functionality, and Community Participation – reflecting the impact of the three curriculum pillars.

Quality Assurance Processes:

- Lesson observations and learning walks.
- Curriculum reviews and moderation.
- Analysis of progress and destination outcomes.
- Consultation with students, parents, and external professionals.

Compliance and Regulatory Alignment

This policy complies with:

- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF 2024): [EIF 2024](#)
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF 2025: from 10/11/2025): [EIF 2025](#)
- Independent School Standards (ISS): [ISS](#)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015): [SEND Code](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025): [KCSIE 2025](#)
- Equality Act 2010: [Equality](#)
- General Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR): [GDPR](#)

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with these frameworks as part of professional practice.

Proprietorship, Leadership and Accountability

The Head of College holds overall responsibility for curriculum quality, supported by senior leaders and Proprietors.

The Proprietors ensure that the curriculum meets statutory requirements and reflects BIC's mission and the three pillars of **Independence, Functionality, and Widening Community Awareness**. Leadership at all levels promotes a culture of reflective practice and accountability, consistent with our value of *Excellence and Integrity*.