

NAS Quality of Life (QOL) Framework Curriculum Policy SO - 0003

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This policy replaces:
Curriculum Policy SO-0109

“Our goal is to help transform lives, change attitudes and create a society that works for autistic people.” The National Autistic Society

1. Purpose of this document

To outline the NAS Education Directorate's policy for NAS schools' curriculum and principles to delivery. This document is not intended to replace existing documentation relating to specific approaches, course content or programme delivery. Localised operating procedures must be written and delivered that fulfil the expectations of this policy.

2. Scope

Every child is entitled to an education and every child deserves to have access to the best possible developmental opportunities so that they learn more and do more, preparing themselves for life after school. Our autistic pupils learn in happy and safe learning environments that are able to support their individual needs as autistic learners.

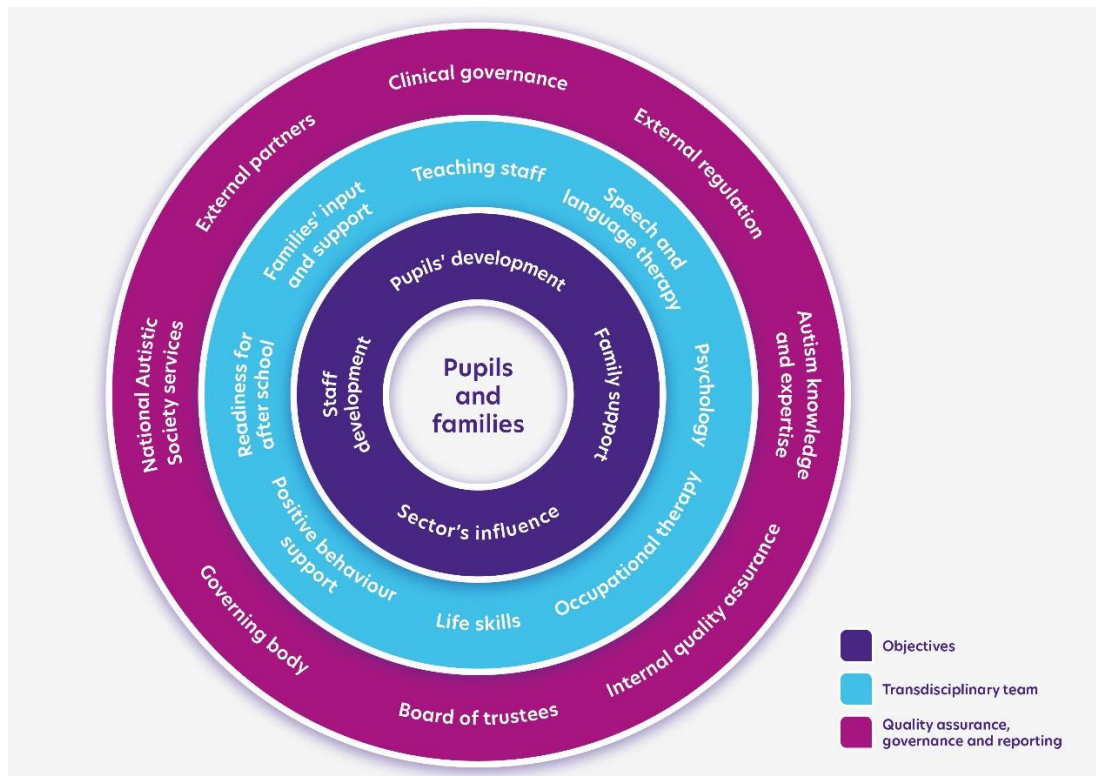
This document outlines the principles and top-level practice that underpins NAS Schools' curriculum model. NAS schools will admit pupils based on professional and consistently applied criteria, as defined by our admissions policy. Each of NAS' schools share a common vision but cater for different cohort profiles, which change over time and determined by each child or young person and their autism. Consequently, following the decision to admit a pupil each school will shape the pupil's curriculum provision around the pupil's EHCP outcomes and agreed developmental goals. Our staff, their parents/carers and the pupil will agree those goals.

3. Approach

Our curriculum is based on a quality of life focused framework to curriculum planning, incorporating the best NAS and sector approaches to best serving autistic pupils. This means integrating all of our schools' provision inputs into their financial, resource and staff planning so that what we aim to achieve for each pupil is a probable likelihood. Our curriculum anticipates and plans for the development of pupils, their families and our staff so that the knowledge and skills required to affect lasting improvements are secure.

Over time, we anticipate contributing increasingly to the education sector's development through our work with partners and colleagues from different schools, networks and organisations.

Our approach can be summarised in the following diagram:



4. Strategy

NAS Schools offer a specialist package of developmental support. The package incorporates academic, vocational, life skills, occupational health, psychological, speech and language, social and emotional skills, and pastoral inputs and specialist autism (SPELL Framework) support that when combined well develops pupils' knowledge and skills now and for the future.

The purpose and aim of this NAS Quality of Life Curriculum strategy is to build on our schools' strengths and then focus on developing areas of current weakness so that every child and young person that we serve benefits from a deliberately planned and cohesive curriculum regardless of their point of admission and preparing them for when they leave us.

Significant challenges are faced by our schools, including (but not limited to): financial pressures; recruitment and retention challenges; families experience challenges that impact on pupils in our schools; varying degrees of local service availability e.g. CAMHS; varying success in local stakeholder relationship building.

Effective school leadership at every level is crucial to every child's education, particularly when pupils join a school midway through their education and having received a late/recent ASD diagnosis. The range of challenges that result from that common scenario for our schools and families are many and varied.

We will pull together our schools' self-evaluation and improvement plans (SEIPs) under the banner of NAS QOL Curriculum so that our pupils and their families are consistently placed at the heart of all of our work. Each of our schools has the autonomy to make decisions about the what, when and how, all within our shared ambition and 'why'. This is a positive sum game approach where we will not view any aspect of a child's developmental provision more favourably than any other.

Our schools' staffing, resource and financial planning will be shaped to accommodate this strategy. In some cases, this will require little change. In other

cases, this strategy will fit into schools' current improvement planning and provide a framework for the changes.

This strategy seeks to enhance our pupils' provision and our families' experiences with our schools. Across our schools, we face challenges when our pupils' families find that expectations are perceived to be failed. This strategy will integrate families' views of their children's provision routinely and frequently.

Staff at every stage in their careers will play a crucial role in this strategy. Every member of staff has the potential to change a child's life by being the key advocate for a pupil. No matter their level of professional training or education, every member of teaching and learning staff will be the go to people for our pupils' provisions' impact.

5. Aims

The overall objective of this strategy is to ensure that every one of our schools provides the education promised by planning per child each input carefully and cohesively into a child and family centred provision. Each provision will build a curriculum package for pupils' that integrate statutory and effective non-statutory practice, including where applicable Early Years regulatory requirements, alignment to the national curriculum and guidance for 16 to 19 study programmes.

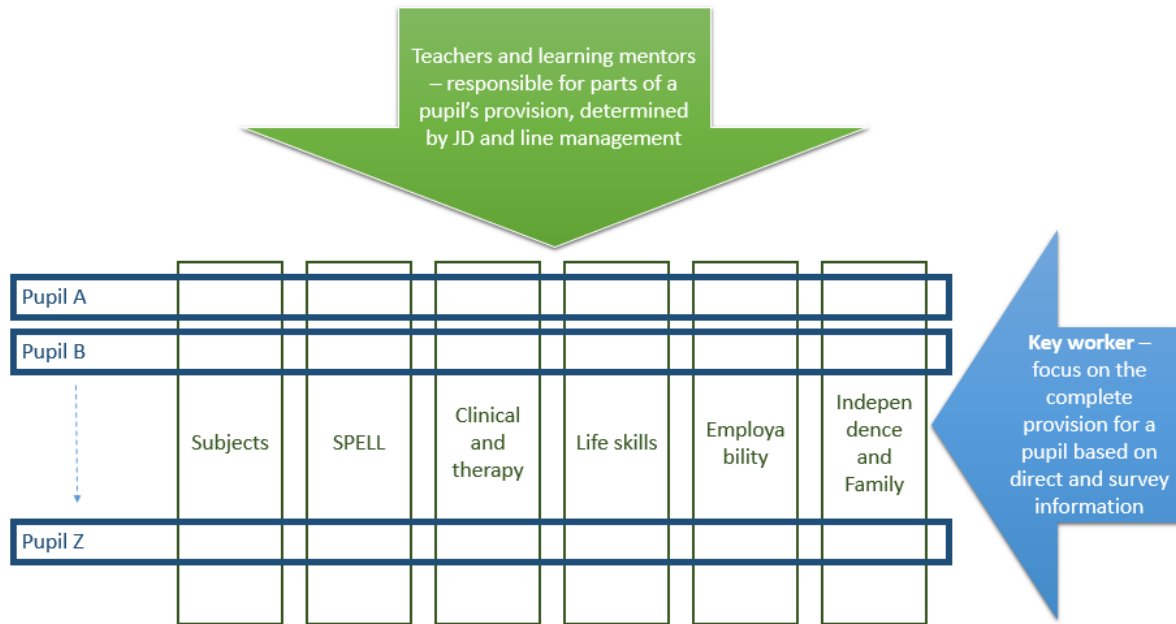
Through the planning and delivery of this child and family centred provision the NAS schools Quality of Life framework (and within this our Quality of Life curriculum strategy) aims to enable our pupils to:

- make progress against EHCP and academic targets that support preparation for adulthood.
- leave our schools and go on to sustained education, employment and supported / independent living.
- learn skills that support self-regulation, independence, social participation and wellbeing.

6. Operational delivery

During the 2019-20 academic year our schools were involved in a dual pilot implementing a quality of life curriculum. During this time, we worked with Kent University's TIZARD and Swalcliffe Park School. Both are developing approaches to quality of life measures and frameworks. Our schools worked with one or the other or both partners to pilot. During the academic year 2020-21 work focussed across our group of schools on developing a bespoke interpretation of the NAS QOL Curriculum. Their role of 'key workers' is central to our QOL model. A key worker is any member of suitably trained staff who has responsibility for being a pupils' advocate on the school's behalf. They should be the 'go to' person for each pupil and their family/carer, holding key information about the pupils' development and liaising with other staff to ensure that the pupils' quality of life is effectively supported and their education, health and care plans are fulfilled.

The following diagram is a simplified representation of the key worker role:



Our QOL model is inclusive of all school's assessment methodology (see individual school assessment policies).

7. Standardisation across NAS schools

The standardised requirements for every one of our schools are:

- I. The NAS QOL Curriculum must integrate academic, vocational, life skills, OT, Psychological, SALT, positive behaviour, SPELL and pastoral aspects
- II. The NAS QOL Curriculum must develop pupils' knowledge and skills now in a coherent and effective way, appropriate to pupils' needs and highly ambitious for their futures
- III. The NAS QOL Curriculum must prepare pupils well for life after school, within the context of their needs and based on our and their families ambitions for them
- IV. The NAS QOL Curriculum must be fulfilled by planning, delivering and monitoring its implementation through measures, observations and scrutiny
- V. The NAS QOL Curriculum requires that policies, procedures and standard operating procedures are aligned so that pupils' development is effectively underpinned by happy, safe and purposeful learning environments
- VI. The NAS QOL Curriculum requires that staff are effectively trained and given ring-fenced time to fulfil their roles within this strategy, reducing workload per member of staff while increasing productivity overall. We will incorporate existing effective strategies so as not to reinvent the wheel and avoid duplication.

8. Families' engagement

Core to our curriculum provision approach is the role of our pupils' families. Our experience tells us that it is only with our families' supported involvement in their children's development that our pupils do exceptionally well. This NASQOL Policy approach to curriculum provision and delivery incorporates families' views into the planning and evaluation of each pupil's development, improving the likelihood of

short- and long-term success and reducing the likelihood of families becoming or feeling peripheral.

In practice, the successful implementation of the NAS QOL Framework Policy will receive regular surveys to inform us of their perceptions of their child's development in addition to routine feedback from the school.

9. Local provision offer

Each school must develop and define a localised Curriculum Offer document. The curriculum will support and embed approaches that more than meet the expectations of the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2014). That document must detail how the school is achieving the standardised requirements listed above and the local operational delivery of their model i.e. what, why, who, how and when. All NAS Schools' curriculum provisions should closely meet each pupil's individual needs, as defined by their EHCP, our initial and ongoing assessments, their/their parents'/advocates aspirations and external experts' feedback.

Each school will have a curriculum offer that matches local contextual factors including their cohort's profile, individuals' needs and external partnerships/opportunities. Long-term QOL Curriculum plans must detail what/how each aspect of the curriculum contributes to the overall provision. Medium-term plans must detail how each aspect blends so that each pupils' provision is cohesive, coherent and purposeful. Short-term, operational plans (timetables, lesson plans, transdisciplinary input, SPELL profiles) must be designed so that they integrate seamlessly into each pupils' individual plans (refer to IEP Policy SO-0214) and the provision's medium- and long-term plans.

10. Staffing and resourcing

By getting the local provision offer right, staffing and resourcing can be planned to make best use of time and money that best supports pupils' development. Staff training should be aligned to long- and medium-term planning so that short-term delivery is of the highest quality.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

In the design of the QOL Framework, attention has been given to ensuring that all pupils, staff and key stakeholders in a child's development benefit. Through the implementation of this policy we seek to lessen some of the known inequalities that exist in society, particularly but not limited to race, disability and gender, through careful curriculum design that affords opportunities for people with those protected characteristics to excel. This policy outlines how its impact will be measured, including through analysis of information that enables an evaluation of impact on all beneficiaries. This policy has been designed and consulted on with a large stakeholder group internal to the NAS, including school-based staff and following a 6-month period of development.

12. Evaluation of Policy

The impact (positive changes to pupils, staff and families) of this policy will be measured through the NAS' Education Quality and Standards Framework, through evaluation of the 2019-20 pilot programme by the QOL Curriculum Project Group, by our external partners (including inspectorates and Regulators), and annually when reviewing this policy.

13. Linked Policies

- Special Educational Needs Policy SO-0134
- Individual Placement Plans and Individual Education Plans Schools Policy SO-0214
- Equal Opportunities in NAS Education Services Policy SO-0240

14. Definitions:

EQD – Education Quality Development; CH – Children's Home; LGB – Local Governing Body; HOSI – Head of School Improvement; EDL – Education Development Lead; DDE – Deputy Director, Education; DE – Director, Education and Children's Services; RI / NI – Responsible Individual / Nominated Individual