

## Wheel of Independence – Subject on a page

- **Intent:** your curriculum plan, including its design, structure and sequence
- **Implementation:** how you teach and assess your intended curriculum
- **Impact:** the outcomes for your pupils as a result of the education they've received

### Why do we teach it?

- At the Helen Allison School the overall aim in supporting children and young people with autism is to develop life skills and link these skills together to promote independence in all possible aspects of their lives. This builds self-esteem and confidence and ensures a sense of achievement which in turn increases happiness and wellbeing.
- The **WHEEL OF INDEPENDENCE** Framework is an online tool used to track progress and measure outcomes for independence and functional life skills. It recognises that preparing for adulthood begins from an early age for many children and young people living in their own families and with careful planning and thought, this approach can be replicated for children/young people at the school.
- Every person at the Helen Allison School is different, so the life skills that will be taught, and the pace that they are taught, will vary from person to person. For example, one young adult with autism may ultimately be able to live on his or her own with very little, if any, outside support, while another may require supports and services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Starting to develop life skills to the best of a child's ability at a young age will make a difference as they get older.
- There are endless life skills to learn which will be taught and practiced at home, school, and in the community. Most people with autism benefit from clear, hands-on instruction in life skills that will help them to increase independence.

### INTENT - What we are teaching

- The tasks associated with learning life skills are complex and involve many steps from beginning to end.
- Our students need help to learn the skills involved.
- Breaking tasks down into smaller, more manageable steps is an effective strategy when teaching the skills.
- We all use task analysis at different times, for example using a recipe to make a cake or following instructions to assemble a piece of furniture.
- We use the Wheel of Independence lessons to teach these skills and are usually led by the teacher. Life skills training should occur in natural environments where the skills being taught relate directly to the type of environment the person is going to live and use them. This means learning cooking skills in a kitchen or learning laundry skills in a laundromat.

### IMPLEMENTATION - How we teach it

- The Wheel of Independence is suitable for use with teenagers (aged 11+) who have the potential to live an independent or semi-independent life.
- It is taught from year 7 to year 15 with the intention of implement this framework in primary groups in the next academic year.
- Wheel of Independence is taught discretely for approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes per week across both key stage 3 and 3 hours once a week at the Hub.

- It is based on eight comprehensive life skill areas related to participation in activities of daily living at home, college/school and in the community.
- Each of the eight areas are graded in order for the students to commence and develop alongside the hierarchy of skills based upon their individual level of need. Each skill area has been split into five levels.
- These eight areas include self-care activities, preparing a meal, money management, shopping, room organization and transportation.
- **How it works:**

Level one comprises of the foundation skills required to progress in each area. Every level becomes progressively harder, and the tasks involved more advanced.

The online tool allows the school to:

- Have individual profiles for each student
- Follow a skill hierarchy to assist student to progress with their independence
- Track student progress in each area with current and past comments
- Produce a visual graph (see example image) and score to demonstrate progress across each year
- Produce target sheets to share with parents and other professionals
- Produce reports to demonstrate progress across cohorts

All documents created by the Subject Leader are saved into the One-drive for all the teachers to use. Class teachers use the schemes of work from Wheel of Independence to create lesson plans and resources adapted to suit individual pupils' needs. The class teacher saves these plans, for review, discussion and monitoring purposes, in the Short-Term Planning folder within the One-Drive.

#### **IMPACT - What is working**

- As result of teaching life skills to our students at the Helen Allison School, we have seen numerous positive impacts on their development and overall functioning.
- It has promoted Independence by empowering our students to take care of themselves, enhancing their independence and self-confidence. Skills such as personal hygiene, grooming, and managing daily routines equip them with the ability to handle personal needs and tasks.
- Also, our students are acquiring daily living skills enabling them to navigate daily tasks and routines independently. These skills include meal preparation, money management, time management, and household chores.
- By recognizing the importance of life skills and providing a comprehensive curriculum, our students can develop the necessary skills to lead more independent, fulfilling lives.

#### **Subject Leader Actions and Impact**

| Previous Improvement Actions and Impact | Current Improvement Actions | Future Improvement Actions |
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| <p>Implementation of Wheel of Independence at the school (KS3) and Hub.</p> <p>Areas of strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Variety of activities</li> <li>- Lots of photo evidence</li> <li>- All students access the lessons.</li> </ul> | <p>Students have been encouraged to have more independence during practical tasks e.g. find equipment in cupboards instead of giving it to them, differentiated visual supports for each student depending on needs, more choices about food, etc</p> <p>Teachers, TAs and tutors have reinforced aspects learnt during theoretical lessons in the more practical activities by asking questions that include reasoning, problem solving and independent thinking.</p> | <p>Time can be restrictive around how much students can do in the lessons e.g. students should be encouraged to prepare own meal, choosing own ingredients, tidy up, etc.</p> <p>Equipment needs to be modified to cover and adapt some students' needs e.g. different types of graters, knife, etc.</p> <p>Wheel of Independence should be taught in the type of environment the person is going to live and use them. This means learning cooking skills in a kitchen, or learning laundry skills in a laundromat.</p> |
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