

Life Skills & Personal Development

At Thames Valley School, we have developed our Personal Development and Life Skills curriculum to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential, personally, socially, emotionally, physically and academically. We recognise the importance of preparing pupils for adulthood and enabling them to manage the transition from school to adult life effectively, developing knowledge and understanding of themselves, their identity and their place within the wider world.

At the heart of the Life Skills and Personal Development curriculum is the development of pupils' wider understanding, through the provision of practical learning opportunities that allow pupils to apply their knowledge in real life contexts and settings. These learning opportunities are delivered appropriate to the individual's age, stage of learning, planning and development.

Our curriculum draws on the expertise of our Transdisciplinary Team, integrating therapeutic programmes and goals in order to support the holistic development of our young people's skills.

We aim for our students to:

- Build confidence in their identity
- Recognise their interests and abilities
- Develop functional and transferable skills
- Access opportunities to practice and generalise skills
- Understand the benefits of mastering the skills required for living independently and how this impacts mental health and wellbeing
- Develop their resilience and learn to manage setbacks
- Develop self-awareness of their holistic needs
- Advocate on behalf of themselves and their best interests
- Be confident in use of a range of community resources and services
- Be able to make choices, given information about a range of encounters they may experience as they grow

Our Life Skills curriculum is based around preparing young people for adulthood, using targets within the Autism Education Trust Framework. This includes:

- Travelling Safely in the Local Community – recognising risk and managing journeys via different methods safely
- Money Management & Shopping – Developing the skills to manage personal finances and decision making
- Food Preparation & Hygiene
- Healthy Living & First Aid – Understanding how to support a healthy lifestyle and developing first aid skills
- Household Management – preparing for independent living and running a home
- Leisure- Recognising different aspects of leisure and identifying ways and means to navigate and enjoy leisure activities

Our Personal Development curriculum is focused on areas that support our pupils to have a positive quality of life now, and in the future. This includes:

- Emotional Regulation - developing social, emotional, and sensory regulation to give pupils the skills and opportunities to practice independent regulation
- Sensory Awareness & Self-Advocacy – understanding our senses, how we interact with the environment and advocating for individual needs

- Interoception – developing interoceptive awareness, noticing and connecting with bodily sensations and taking positive action
- Social Thinking - providing meaningful opportunities to understand and practice skills related to social communication and interaction
- Neurodiversity – developing community and self-awareness

Within each theme, pupils develop the knowledge and understanding of key concepts to enable them to flourish in the real world. We recognise that supporting young people to plan for the future can be challenging, however, it is vital that we provide them with the information and skills that enable them to feel equipped to make the most of future opportunities.

Assessment and recording of progress is captured through the achievement of AQA unit awards. This involves the collection of evidence of their achievements and skills they have gained. Each individual pupil's progress is also recorded using targets within their individual AET Framework.