Park Lodge School

Curriculum Policy

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Policy author:	Christopher Johnson
Committee sponsor:	Jawad Sheikh
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Introduction

School context

Park Lodge School is a highly specialist provision for young people admitted to Park Lodge Clinic, a Tier 4 CAMHS Eating Disorder Service. We are not a mainstream setting: our students present with complex needs that require education to be fully integrated into their clinical care and recovery. While most students have a primary diagnosis of an eating disorder or eating-related difficulty, many also experience co-occurring mental health conditions such as depression, OCD, or anxiety.

A significant feature of our student profile is disengagement from education prior to admission. Many have experienced long periods out of school, disrupted learning journeys, or strained relationships with education. Re-engagement is therefore central to our work. From admission, we build a detailed picture of each young person's educational history, health needs, and personal circumstances, enabling us to design personalised programmes that focus not only on academic progress but also on restoring confidence, rebuilding routines, and preparing students for their next steps.

Students are admitted and discharged throughout the year, with the average stay being 16–20 weeks, though some remain significantly longer depending on clinical needs. All placements are commissioned by home Local Authorities, who retain statutory responsibility for education. Close collaboration with families, home schools, and community teams ensures continuity of learning and a supported transition post-discharge.

The school operates within Park Lodge Hospital and is embedded in the work of the hospital's Multi-Disciplinary Team, including Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and Nursing and Care staff. Education is not delivered in isolation but as a core part of recovery. Daily collaboration with clinical colleagues aligns learning with therapeutic progress so that barriers are understood holistically and education actively contributes to reintegration.

Our ethos is built on personalisation, flexibility, and partnership. We work at the intersection of health, education, and family life, ensuring every young person has the opportunity to re-engage with learning, develop resilience, and transition successfully back into their home, school, and wider community.

Ethos and Vision

At Park Lodge School, our ethos reflects the unique circumstances in which we work. We educate young people who are inpatients at Park Lodge Clinic, a Tier 4 CAMHS Eating Disorder Service. Education here is not an add-on: it is an essential strand of treatment and recovery. Everything we do is shaped by our commitment to each student's health, wellbeing, and future.

Our core values are expressed through the acronym HEALTH, which captures the spirit of our school:

- Hopeful Environment – We create a climate of optimism and possibility, helping young people to see beyond their immediate challenges and believe in their capacity to grow.
- Empathy and Understanding – We foster a community that listens, understands, and values every individual, ensuring students feel safe, seen, and supported.
- Achievement – We celebrate progress in all its forms. Academic success is important, but so too is confidence, resilience, and re-engagement with learning.
- Lifelong Learning – We model curiosity and growth, encouraging students and staff to continue developing their skills, knowledge, and aspirations.
- Therapeutic Support – Working hand-in-hand with the hospital's clinical team, we integrate therapeutic strategies into daily learning, ensuring education is part of the recovery journey.
- Holistic Wellness – We see the whole child: their health, their learning, their family, and their future. Our goal is to equip students for a successful return to education, home, and community life.

These values underpin our ethos and define our purpose. Park Lodge is a place where education and recovery go hand in hand, where barriers are met with creativity and compassion, and where every young person is given the chance to rediscover their voice, their talents, and their future.

Our vision is that every young person leaves Park Lodge having re-engaged with education, equipped with renewed confidence, resilience, and the skills to thrive in life beyond the hospital.

Statement of Intent

The curriculum at Park Lodge Hospital School is designed to provide a flexible, personalised, and holistic educational experience that supports the academic, emotional, and social development of every student. Recognising that our students are admitted with significant medical and mental health needs, including eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and other psychological or learning difficulties, our curriculum prioritises engagement, well-being, and recovery alongside academic progress.

Our intent is to:

- Support holistic development: foster resilience, confidence, and life skills alongside academic learning.
- Facilitate educational continuity: provide a curriculum that mirrors home school learning where possible, ensuring smooth transitions during admission and discharge.
- Promote engagement and motivation: adapt teaching to each student's medical, emotional, and cognitive needs to maintain participation and progress.
- Prepare students for the future: equip students with the knowledge, skills, and personal development to reintegrate into education or pursue further learning or vocational pathways.
- Integrate therapeutic support: align educational delivery with medical and therapeutic care to support recovery and well-being.

Through a personalised, responsive, and flexible approach, Park Lodge School ensures that education plays an active and meaningful role in each student's recovery journey, supporting both immediate learning needs and long-term aspirations.

Curriculum is key to education. Our students roll on and roll off throughout the year, they are all at different stages in their education and have different experiences of and disruption to their education. This makes curriculum planning a complex process.

This policy sets out the School's approach to providing a high-quality, personalised curriculum for students receiving education during an inpatient stay. It describes how the curriculum is designed, implemented and evaluated within a clinical environment where students experience significant disruption to their health, wellbeing and continuity of education.

It applies to all teaching staff, support staff and visiting professionals delivering or supporting education.

The Importance of Education in the Context of Hospital Care / Recovery

- Education as part of recovery (holistic approach)
- Flexibility to accommodate medical treatments
- Supporting mental well-being, social interaction, and personal development
- Collaboration with MDT (medical, therapeutic, family)
- How the curriculum complements recovery while ensuring academic progress

Curriculum Intent

Our vision

The School exists to safeguard students' educational rights during a period of acute mental health need. Our curriculum ensures that every student:

- maintains connection with their home school and core learning pathway
- continues to make meaningful academic progress where possible
- develops confidence, safety and readiness to re-engage with education
- leaves with improved self-efficacy, resilience and positive learning habits
- has a successful and supported transition back into their community setting

Principles

Our curriculum is grounded in:

- Individual need – every timetable, expectation and sequence of learning is personalised.
- Trauma-informed practice – we prioritise safety, trust, predictability and relationships.
- Hospital context – medical safety, MDT guidance and clinical risk influence curriculum access.
- Continuity – we align with each student's home school subject content where appropriate.
- Ambition – students are supported to work towards challenging, developmentally appropriate goals.
- Inclusion – we remove barriers to learning arising from health, anxiety, neurodiversity or disruption.
- Collaboration – education, care and clinical teams work together to secure the best outcomes.

What the curriculum aims to achieve

The curriculum is designed to:

- Rebuild confidence, readiness and stamina for learning.
- Enable students to keep pace with home-school curriculum expectations.

- Provide structured routines and predictable learning experiences.
- Offer therapeutic benefit through engagement, success and relationship-building.
- Support reintegration or onward placement through improved engagement and attendance.
- Provide broad social, moral, cultural and spiritual development through PSHE and enrichment.

Curriculum Structure

Overview

The School provides access to the full range of academic and foundation subjects set out in students' home-school curriculum plans. This includes core academic learning, PSHE and wellbeing education, enrichment activities, project-based learning, one-to-one tuition, ward-based learning where appropriate, and supported independent study.

The Personalised Curriculum

The Personalised Curriculum is the overarching framework through which each student's learning, pathway placement, and engagement strategies are planned and monitored. It ensures that academic, therapeutic, and social-emotional needs are considered holistically, and that progression is tailored to each student's stage of recovery and educational readiness.

Safety and Practical Considerations

While the School aims to deliver the full home-school curriculum wherever possible, some subjects or activities may be temporarily adapted, reduced, avoided, or delivered differently due to safety, clinical needs, or practical constraints. Examples include:

- Practical or laboratory work where supervision or equipment is not feasible.
- Group activities where risk assessments restrict participation.
- Tasks requiring sustained attention or physical presence when the student is unwell.

Where appropriate, we work with the home school to maintain continuity, for example through online participation, partial engagement, or modified practical tasks. All decisions are made in collaboration with the MDT, prioritising the student's safety, well-being, and engagement.

Education Pathways

Students are placed on a pathway according to their presenting needs:

- Stabilisation Pathway – safety, predictability, rapport, tiny steps of engagement.
- Engagement Pathway – emerging routine, structured sessions, reduced avoidance, growing self-efficacy.
- Learning Pathway – full participation, curriculum alignment, stretch and achievement.

Movement between pathways is flexible and responsive to daily MDT updates.

Formal curriculum vs personalised curriculum

The School maintains a formal curriculum plan as required by the Independent School Standards.

However, the actual curriculum is highly adaptive:

- Students study the content their home school directs, wherever feasible.
- Where this is not possible, teachers select the most appropriate content to maintain progress.
- Provision may be in the classroom or delivered on the ward depending on risk, presentation and MDT advice.

Provision for Non-Commissioned Students

For students who are admitted to the hospital but for whom Park Lodge School is not formally commissioned to deliver education, the School provides coordination and support as part of their medical and therapeutic recovery. This includes:

- Liaison with the student's home school or educational provider.
- Supporting access to educational resources and maintaining continuity of learning where appropriate.
- Integrating educational goals into the student's recovery plan in collaboration with the MDT.

This ensures that all students benefit from educational engagement appropriate to their circumstances, while recognising the limits of the School's statutory responsibility.

Curriculum Implementation

Adaptive teaching

All teaching is personalised. Staff adjust:

- task complexity
- amount of work
- mode of learning (paired, 1:1, independent, supported)
- environment (classroom or ward)
- sensory and cognitive load
- pacing, chunking and scaffolding
- communication approach and expectations

Engagement-first practice

Many students arrive unable to learn in a typical classroom setting. We therefore:

- build routine and predictability through structured timetables
- use the Key Teacher programme to reduce anxiety and create relational safety
- start extremely small (e.g., five-minute sessions, check-ins, low-demand tasks)
- gradually increase expectations as safety and capacity improve
- celebrate all forms of progress, not only academic outcomes

Home-school liaison

We contact each student's home school as part of the admission process to obtain:

- current curriculum coverage
- schemes of work or topics
- coursework requirements
- exam tier decisions
- prior attainment
- SEND reports, EHCPs or existing adjustments

Where information is unavailable or limited, we apply professional judgement to select suitable work.

We continue to collaborate and communicate with the home school as part of the education provision.

Working with the MDT

Curriculum access is shaped by:

- daily handovers
- risk assessments
- medical or psychological advice
- clinical recommendations about group/ward access
- safety information for staff

Education staff attend MDT meetings, ward reviews and planning meetings where appropriate.

Assessment and progress

Progress is monitored holistically, recognising achievements in engagement, emotional resilience, social skills, and academic development, with adjustments made promptly to the personalised curriculum. Progress is captured through:

- MHFE descriptors (A–E) – social-emotional functioning
- RoLE and CRoL – readiness and engagement
- Teacher assessment
- Work scrutiny
- IEP targets
- Attendance and participation data
- Student voice (captured as part of the Education Care Plan)

Monitoring focuses on movement and trajectory, not comparison with age-related norms.

Curriculum Content

Each subject has a planned programme of learning. These are stored in the curriculum folder on the shared drive. There are some considerations:

English

Includes reading, writing, speaking and listening. Work is aligned with home-school expectations wherever possible.

Mathematics

Provides continuity with home-school work, alongside targeted teaching to rebuild confidence and core skills.

Science

Covers Biology, Chemistry and Physics content relevant to each student's stage, with practical alternatives where laboratory work is not feasible.

PSHE / Wellbeing

Delivered weekly. Includes health, relationships, online safety, emotional literacy, resilience and personal development.

Enrichment (Theme Thursday)

Weekly thematic, cultural or creative sessions designed to:

- broaden horizons
- support SMSC development
- reduce anxiety and build group confidence
- provide enjoyment, routine and connection

Alternative Curriculum Offer

Aimed at students on the Stabilisation or early Engagement Pathway, we provide:

- therapeutic project work
- sensory or low-demand activities
- creative or practical options
- highly personalised, non-sequential tasks
- relationship-building, trust and safety work

The alternative curriculum may be used to attempt re-engagement with any student as appropriate.

On-the-Ward Programmes (Therapeutic and Re-Engagement Units)

To support students who are temporarily unable to access the full classroom curriculum, Park Lodge School provides a series of On-the-Ward Programmes. These units, covering subjects such as art, music, English, and mathematics, are designed to re-engage students with learning, build resilience, and support recovery.

Principles:

- Prioritise re-engagement, confidence, and routine over formal attainment.
- Identify gaps in learning through communication with home schools and parents, tailoring each student's programme to their needs.
- Offer learning in the student's environment – bedside or ward spaces – where classroom attendance is not possible.
- Serve as a gateway to full curriculum participation, providing structured but accessible opportunities for students to acquire and develop skills.

Delivery:

- Students engage with modules that combine foundational concepts with therapeutic and creative approaches.
- Students can choose areas of focus, ensuring engagement is personalised and motivation-led.
- Sessions are integrated with the broader curriculum and can reinforce learning across subjects.

- Timetabled throughout the week, these programmes support transitions from Stabilisation or Engagement Pathways into full participation in the Learning Pathway.

Aims:

- Encourage enjoyment and engagement with education.
- Develop creative thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills.
- Support emotional and social development as part of the recovery journey.
- Provide opportunities for success and achievement to build confidence for reintegration into mainstream classroom activities.

Access to Learning

Classroom learning

Students attend the main classroom where clinically appropriate. Expectations are adjusted daily.

Ward-based teaching

Provided when:

- clinical risk restricts access
- the MDT advises ward-only activity
- the student is unable to access the classroom safely
- trust or confidence is still developing

Ward learning is equivalent in quality but may be shorter, simpler or more flexible.

Part-time or graduated timetables

Many students require phased introduction to learning with incremental increases over time. These decisions are made in collaboration with the MDT.

Attendance expectations

Absence may be due to clinical need. Education staff record attendance but contextualise all patterns within MDT understanding.

Curriculum Leadership and Quality Assurance

- Regular review of teaching plans, student progress and IEP targets
- Review of engagement indicators and safeguarding considerations
- Termly curriculum review and mapping
- Annual curriculum review to ensure compliance with the Independent School Standards
- Staff receive regular CPD on trauma-informed practice, curriculum planning in hospital settings and SEND.

Equality, Inclusion and Access

The School is committed to ensuring all students can access an ambitious curriculum regardless of disability, mental health presentation, background, SEND, medical needs or protected characteristics. Adjustments are provided in line with our Inclusion Policy and the Equality Act 2010.

Transition and Reintegration

The curriculum supports reintegration by:

- aligning with home-school content
- preparing students for return to mainstream or alternative provision
- providing transition summaries, targets and progress reports
- participating in home-school meetings where appropriate

Monitoring and Evaluation

The SLT monitors the effectiveness of the curriculum through:

- analysis of student outcomes
- engagement trajectory data
- student voice
- MDT feedback
- quality assurance activities
- parental feedback
- annual policy review