

Skills for Independence Overview

Aims and Objectives 2021/2022

Rational

Skills for Independence (SFI) is one of 3 routes on offer in Post 16. Students from years 12, 13 and 14 can access this route and are taught in mixed year groups. The SFI route is part of the main school body, and includes students working at Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, with possibility of progress to Level 1. Classes are mixed ability, with predominantly SLD learners and some MLD/ ASC learners.

SFI is currently led by Matthew Hanson, (based at Redwood main building) and also delivered by four additional teachers. Currently there are 47 students following this pathway based in 5 tutor group classes. Each class is supported by a consistent teaching assistant.

SFI incorporates Key Skills and Life Skills and works to prepare the students for adulthood, enabling students to make independent choices.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the SFI route is to prepare students for adulthood- both through accredited units to support their entrance to college and through practical activities to further develop their life skills. We aim to guide students towards being confident, informed, cooperative and pro-active. Focus is placed upon being able communicators and viewing themselves in terms of their individual abilities and how their contribution supports the wider group or community. We aim to support our learners to become as independent as they can, (dependent upon their individual needs and abilities), through engaging in practical activities to further develop their life skills. We aim for all our students to develop functional skills for living, so each of them is able to lead a fulfilling life and to continue to develop their independence. We recognise that for young adults with special needs every experience may provide a learning opportunity. Our approach to teaching functional skills and independent life skills is at the core of our curriculum. Students have the opportunity to work towards achieving Edexcel certification Entry Level 1 – 3 to Level 1 – 3 in English and Maths. To promote the personal and social development of learners Skills for Independence students will achieve a Vocational BTEC qualification designed to enhance student self-esteem, their aspirations and their contribution to the

community. This activity-based curriculum will promote the development, assessment, and accreditation of key skills and other personal and social skills, with an emphasis on co-operation, teamwork and rewarding achievement.

Relation to whole curriculum

The Skills for Employability and Independence course enables students to develop practical and functional skills within a real-life context, across a broad curriculum. It provides students with opportunities to develop and enhance their ability in basic skills including Maths, English and ICT through Nationally recognised accreditation.

Objectives

- To give students a wide range of experiences of adult life
- To develop vocational training skills
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the world of work through practical tasks
- To develop knowledge and understanding of personal and work place safety
- To gain qualifications
- To develop independence skills for adult life, including cooking basic meals, laundry and clothing care skills and household domestic skills
- To develop independent travel skills and confidence in the community where appropriate
- To develop money management, budgeting and personal shopping skills
- To develop knowledge and understanding of personal online safety
- To develop personal health and wellbeing, including sex and relationships, emotional counselling

BTEC

Students will work towards the BTEC Awards from Entry level 1 up to Level 1 in Vocational Education, through vocational training sessions. The purpose of the BTEC qualifications is to develop the transferable skills, attributes and behaviours needed for students to progress ultimately to employment. The qualifications are designed to be delivered in an applied way, bringing together appropriate content with practical and technical skills.

We intend for every student to have the opportunity to develop key transferable skills through core units listed below. This will help learners to appreciate how the transferable skills they develop in their core units can be contextualised in the sector they are studying.

Catering and Domestic	Gardening, DIY and Hazard Awareness	Office, Reception and Data Input	Sports and health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knife skills • Food preparation • Food storage • Making and serving meals • Food hygiene • Ironing and steam press • Bed making • Floor, window and worktop cleaning • COSH regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using manual hand tools • Using power tools. • Lifting and carrying. • Gardening techniques – cutting grass, clearing weeds and cutting shrubs and bushes. • Basic DIY techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering phone • Greeting visitors • Photocopying • shredding • Laminating • scanning • Filing alphabetical and numerical • Work processing • Data input to database and spreadsheet. • Emailing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • To develop understanding of game rules. • Develop skills for sport. • Develop Reflection on own performance • Evaluate own strengths and weaknesses • Understand components of fitness • Understanding the human body. • Developing fitness plans • Understanding principles of training with facilities and equipment. • Understanding principles of training without facilities and equipment.

Physical Development

All students will have access to two sessions each week to develop fitness and physicals skills. Activities will include Ball games, Circuit training, Yoga, Walking and Exercise sessions.

Duke of Edinburgh Awards

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award programmes are at three progressive levels which, if successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver, or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

With assistance from staff, participants select and set objectives in each of the following areas:

- **Volunteering:** undertaking service to individuals or the community.
- **Physical:** improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities.
- **Skills:** developing practical and social skills and personal interests.
- **Expedition:** planning, training for, and completion of an adventurous journey in the UK or abroad.

To achieve an award, the participant must work on each section for a minimum period of time, and must be monitored and assessed by someone with knowledge of the chosen activities. Each progressive level demands more time and commitment from participants: Bronze 3–6 months; Silver: 6–9 months; Gold: 12–18 months. Participants are required to show regular activity and commitment to the award for the duration of their DofE programme, which is usually at least one hour per week, students will take part in three sessions each week.

Preparation for Adulthood

LifeSkills are vital for any young person to equip themselves with the tools to deal with any day to day situation. It is an essential and pervasive cornerstone of the whole school curriculum taught across the week, though with particular pertinence on Friday's which is dedicated to preparing students for Adulthood. This provides opportunities for students to develop life skills through the experience of activities on and off site. SFI are aware that our students are potentially more vulnerable and more at risk than others when using ICT and communication devices. Although use the internet/devices is educational and can be creative, empowering and fun it can leave those who are vulnerable to e-safety risks. These are challenging and complex issues that SFI has strategies for in order to develop safer internet use.

At Redwood we focus upon every individual. We want to ensure that each student has the opportunity to learn, practice and embed the skills they need, in various situations, in readiness for adulthood. This is to prepare students for whichever pathway they require once they leave school- whether this be employment, independent living or supported living. Our aim is to ensure that they live as independent and fulfilling life possible. We use the PSED curriculum and personal skills developed throughout all areas across school life such as self esteem, problem solving, resilience and confidence, alongside the students Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP/My Plan) persons centred outcomes. Our goal is to promote independence in adult life for all learners at all levels through creative and meaningful ways. The Life skills strands and topics have been designed by Redwood staff to ensure all of our learners specific needs are catered for, as well as complementing their academic requirements. All of our students are individuals and we feel they should have a curriculum that can be tailored around their needs as well as fulfilling DfE requirements. School outings and educational visits are viewed by the Skills for Independence programme as powerful, positive teaching tools that help enhance the social, personal and emotional development of all learners. Students are encouraged to use buses, both supported and independently, to go shopping and become increasingly independent with money. Extra stimulation in new environments can be particularly beneficial to our pupils and can help teach life skills, build on social skills and improve independence and self- confidence. Under the right circumstances they can also provide valuable vocational experience.

Teaching and Learning Approaches:

- Discussion, Demonstration and Modelling
- Practical Activities
- Group, Pair, Individual and 1 to1 work
- Use of visual and audio aids
- Role play
- Research
- Interviews
- ICT work
- Worksheets
- Interactive games and puzzles.
- Creative exploration
- Visits

Assessment and Recording:

The different types of assessment used include summative and formative assessment with written and/or verbal feedback. Assessment is ongoing and can be seen through

- Work completed by students
- Mid-Term Work scrutiny
- Mid-Term moderation meetings
- Staff observation and notes
- Staff discussion
- Achievement of targets
- End of term reports

Monitoring and Evaluation:

M&E occurs through frequent informal evaluation and feedback. Formal evaluation and monitoring takes place regularly through internal moderation meetings, accreditation, targets (using SIMS) and end of term reports. Every year we review the curriculum, which will be shared with parents at the commencement of the course in September 2022.

Teaching and Learning approaches

The Skills for Independence course is taught in small groups. Skills are taught with a variety of theory and practical tasks.

Functional Skills are an integral part of the curriculum, real working experiences, are offered to the students to teach them practical skills for employment and for adult life. Outside agencies and companies are encouraged to inspire and motivate students. External providers discuss CEIAG opportunities.

Active learning and engagement plays an important part of the curriculum at SFI. Students participate in a variety of practical lessons, such as Gardening, Office Skills, Sports industry and Catering as well as the core subject's ICT, Maths, English and PSHE. The Tutor time and Life Skills lessons are planned in such a way as to meet students' individual EHCP outcomes and develop their skills in becoming more independent in a wide range of targeted key areas. Within any lesson, all students have differentiated tasks that promote active learning and engagement. For example, this could be through the use of skills such as

cooking, making simple meals, tea and coffee or being taught the skills to enable them to look after a house, through cleaning, washing etc.

Strategies are implemented across the curriculum to ensure that all students are accessing learning at an appropriate level that both consolidates and challenges. These range from shorter tasks in lessons where students complete one task prior to beginning another to setting outcomes that students can work on independently. Individual learning styles are an integral part of the teaching and learning across the curriculum. These styles are recognised through the use of activities that enable students to engage with their learning outcomes and to progress to an expected level, if not above. Wherever possible, students participate in practically based lessons to develop skills safely and in an appropriate manner that suits their own way of learning. These activities develop collaborative skills both with peers and staff, engagement with the content of the lessons and encourages participation, this guiding benefits the cohort of students at SFI and prepares them for independence and adulthood.

Inclusion

Inclusion is ensured through differentiation and suitable support within the classroom and a range of activities that appeal to the full range of learning styles (VAK). The curriculum and accreditation opportunities acknowledge the diverse range of students' needs and abilities from EL1 – EL3. Students can access bespoke programmes tailored to support their individual needs, which can lead them to the supported internship route, if employment is a realistic prospect.

Assessment and recording

Baselining is completed at the start of each module, with further assessments at the mid-term and end point. Student self-evaluation and in-depth teacher marking alongside these assessments allow for triangulation of individual progress. Achievements are recorded, in SIMs and bespoke tracking software for Maths, English and other subjects as progress is made. Earwig is used to demonstrate progress towards EHCP Outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is undertaken by Matthew Hanson to ensure relevant modules / units are being completed to a high standard and in a timely manner. Frequent informal evaluation and feedback takes place to inform planning and to ensure student progress. A

curriculum audits takes place yearly to ensure the offer is robust and appropriate; developments are made to the curriculum to meet the ever changing requirements of the students.

Formal evaluation and monitoring of accredited units takes place regularly through internal and external moderation meetings and support meetings (when available)..

Targets are monitored using SIMs and the accreditation tracker. Achievement of EHCP Outcomes are monitored and evaluated to ensure students are developing lifelong independent skills

Parents and Carers receive termly reports and have the opportunity to meet with staff in parent's evenings in the autumn and summer terms. EHCP's are reviewed annually in a multi-agency meeting to ensure impartial advice is available.

Staff attend weekly evaluation meetings and training sessions to ensure their skills are current. Twilight training sessions are carried out on a half termly basis, external courses are made available and peer observations and reviews take place to share good practice and cascade information.

Achievement and Communal Worship

At SFI, we have weekly achievement sessions. Students and staff have the opportunity to celebrate student achievements and progress. An achiever of the week is chosen and recognised for their outstanding behaviour, work or endeavour throughout the week. They are awarded a certificate and the 'Achiever of the Week' trophy and their photo is displayed in the sixth form social area. Staff award house points to students who have completed work above their expected level, behaved in an outstanding manner or made progress in any of the Redwood or British values. The student's council have the opportunity to feedback information discussed in student's council meetings. Students are given the opportunity to discuss events from the week. As a whole community, students and staff celebrate our unique diversity, by recognising multi-cultural festivals and religions holidays.