

Curriculum Statement for Physical Education

Curriculum Intent for Physical Education at Vanguard School for Autistic Pupils

At Vanguard School, our Physical Education (PE) curriculum is built around the National Curriculum, with adaptations specifically designed to meet the needs of our autistic pupils. We understand that physical activity is not only essential for health but also plays a critical role in helping pupils build confidence, develop social skills, and support their emotional well-being. Our goal is to provide a safe, inclusive, and structured environment where students can engage in a range of physical activities that foster personal growth and resilience.

Tailored Approach to PE for Autistic Pupils

Recognizing that PE can be challenging for autistic pupils due to past difficulties or sensory sensitivities, our curriculum is carefully structured to allow each student to work at their own pace. Pupils are encouraged to explore and enjoy physical activity independently before gradually participating in group or team-based activities. This approach builds confidence, supports sensory needs, and nurtures each pupil's physical development. Our collaboration with Occupational Therapy expertise ensures that all physical development aspects are addressed in a way that aligns with each student's unique needs.

Key Aims and Outcomes

The PE curriculum at Vanguard School is designed to:

- Encourage lifelong physical activity by building competence, confidence, and enjoyment in a range of sports and activities.
- Foster teamwork, resilience, and leadership through physical challenges and group activities.
- Promote physical and mental well-being through structured, enjoyable PE sessions and an extensive enrichment program.
- Develop the vocational knowledge necessary for students interested in sports-related careers through the introduction of specific qualifications.

Pathway Offer in Physical Education

To further support our students' vocational and academic growth, Vanguard School offers tailored pathways for students beginning in Year 9:

- **Year 9:** Students are introduced to vocational learning with the opportunity to complete the Level 1 BTEC Introductory Award in Sport. This foundation program builds fundamental skills in sports, preparing students for further vocational qualifications.
- **Years 10 and 11:** Students progressing through Years 10 and 11 may take the Level 2 BTEC First Award in Sport. This vocational qualification serves as an alternative to GCSE, offering in-depth knowledge and experience in sports, fitness, and teamwork.

- **6th Form:** In our Sixth Form, students can continue developing vocational sports qualifications, enabling them to build career-ready skills while supporting their physical and mental well-being.

Curriculum Structure and Key Themes

Our PE curriculum is designed around essential themes that reinforce physical, social, and cognitive development:

1. **Physical Literacy:** We define physical literacy as the motivation, confidence, competence, and understanding needed to engage in physical activity for life. This holistic approach helps students develop not only physical skills but also confidence and self-awareness, allowing them to take charge of their health and well-being.
2. **Key Themes:** Across Key Stages 3 and 4, students engage in various sports and activities, including netball, basketball, badminton, handball, volleyball, football, dance, table tennis, fitness training, rounders, athletics, and frisbee. These activities are delivered through themes such as:
 - Outwitting Opponents
 - Defense and Attack Strategies
 - Healthy, Active Lifestyles
 - Character Building (e.g., resilience, leadership, sportsmanship, teamwork)
 - PE and Community Engagement
3. **Skill Development:** The PE curriculum supports the development of both individual and team skills. In Key Stage 3, students focus on fundamental skills such as decision-making, fitness, and healthy lifestyles. Key Stage 4 activities become more complex, emphasizing personal fitness, teamwork, and competitive engagement.

The Vanguard Approach to Developing Lifelong Physical Activity

We aim to inspire students to take ownership of their physical health, preparing them to be lifelong participants in physical activity. Our PE curriculum empowers students to explore and understand their bodies, develop self-confidence, and build a strong foundation for healthy, active lives. Through this tailored and inclusive approach, Vanguard School supports each pupil's physical and personal development, ensuring they leave us with skills, values, and resilience that will serve them throughout their lives.