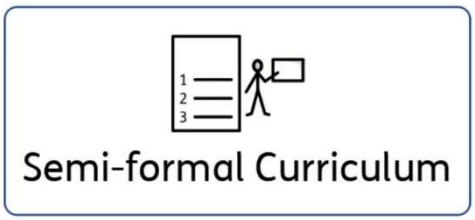
Hollywater School

Inspire. Believe. Achieve.

Hollywater Semi-Formal Curriculum

Pink Class (KS2)
Yellow Class (KS2)
Platinum Class (KS2)
Green Class (KS2)
Red Class (KS3)
Blue Class (KS4)



September 2026

Rationale

The intent of Hollywater's curriculum is to prepare pupils for adulthood. Succeeding in life for our pupils means living as an independent life; not just having a voice but having the skills to make their own choices and have control over their lives.

Our curriculum equips pupils with the essential life skills, knowledge and cultural capital that they will need to become the most independent and happy versions of themselves that they can be.

We aim to :

Inspire, motivate and challenge our children to be curious learners.

Develop aspirational, independent and resilient learners who **believe** they can.

Enable our children to **achieve** their full potential, that is individual to them.

Intent

Children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) learn very differently from neuro-typical children (Imray 2018) and therefore require a different pedagogical approach. At Hollywater all pupils have different needs and these can vary widely across the school. To support all pupils needs effectively Hollywater adopts a different curriculum pathway for cohorts of pupils. Pupils are placed on a pathway dependant on their cognitive, communicative, social/emotional and sensory needs. At Hollywater School we have 5 curriculum pathways and they are :

Pre-Formal Curriculum	Informal Curriculum	Semi-Formal Curriculum	Formal Curriculum	National Curriculum
PMLD	Complex SLD, SLD/Autism	SLD, SLD/Autism	SLD/MLD Autism	
Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities	Working consistently and over time at the most complex end of the SLD spectrum	Working consistently and over time at or below the earliest reaches of the NC	Working consistently and over time significantly below age related expectations	Working within typical or near typical age related expectations

Each class follows a curriculum pathway that best suits the learning needs of the pupils in the class. Pupils may remain in a pathway during their time at Hollywater or they may move between pathways dependant on their needs and development.

Hollywater School has pupils that operate within all curriculum pathways. We use the EQUALS curriculum model as a basis for our curriculum but we also use EYFS, the National Curriculum, Accreditations and Preparation for Adulthood.

How we approach teaching is influenced by our pupils' complex needs and will be determined by the individual's level of learning difficulty; their preferences and motivations and their ability to and willingness to follow instructions or engage in adult led learning.

The Equals curriculum for Semi-Formal learners has been specifically designed for students with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and moderate learning difficulties (MLD). Pupils working within the semi-formal curriculum are doing to learn. The curriculum is designed to be fun, engaging, practical and meaningful and matched to pupils learning and developmental needs. Regardless of the physical, emotional and learning challenges faced by the pupils due to their special educational needs and disabilities, teaching through our semi-formal curriculum captures the interest and imagination of our pupils.

Implementation

The semi-formal approach enables pupils to develop independence and functional life skills. Pupils who are in the semi-formal pathway can engage in adult led learning and have the attention skills to attend to an activity. The semi-formal approach uses real life experiences to develop life skills. Staff will model and repeat activities gradually withdrawing support until a pupil can do the skill independently. Once the skill has been mastered the teaching shifts to being able to generalise the skill – i.e. apply it in lots of different contexts. Pupils are taught to problem solve by adults "sabotaging" the activity once the initial skill is embedded. This might look like running out of bread to make toast for breakfast – pupils would be supported to solve this problem. In shopping this might look like not having enough money to get everything on the list.

Through our semi-formal approach, pupils learn skills and strategies to self-regulate, access the community and interact, play and socialise with other people without high levels of anxiety. Pupils learn to make their own choices and develop preferences which can be fostered into lifelong hobbies and enriching activities.

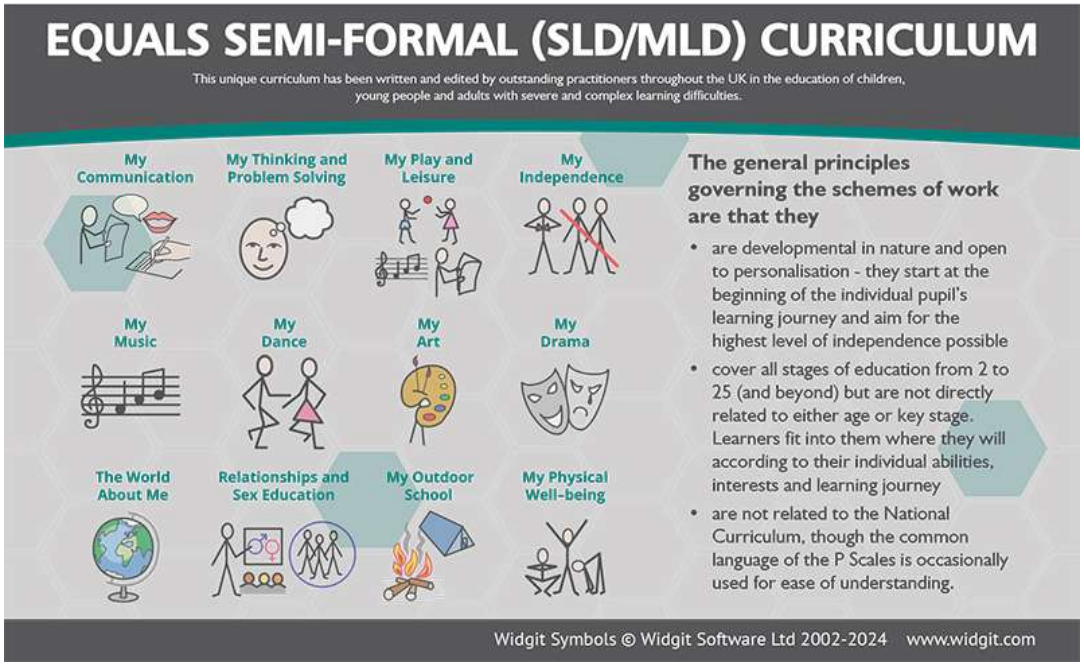
The semi-formal curriculum has a range of key aspects, as outlined in the diagram below. The Semi-formal curriculum supports and guides learning through the following areas for pupils in KS1, 2 and 3;

Our core curriculum:

My Communication, My Independence, My Thinking and Problem solving, My Outdoor School and My Physical Wellbeing

Additional Areas covered are:

My Citizenship – RSE, My Art/Dance/Drama/Music, The World About Me and Attention Autism



For pupils in Blue class (KS4) they are following a semi-formal curriculum approach through the ASDAN Exploring Aspirations accreditation.

The semi-formal curriculum is for students who are a little more independent. Within classes following this curriculum pathway you will find the following provision:

- More established communication system but with complexities around processing and memory retention.
- Students will require some support but are working towards independence. The student to adult ratio is high.
- Students follow individualised timetables/schedules with an emphasis on EHCP outcomes, including speech and language and occupational therapy targets
- Students work from a more ‘traditional’ classroom, with easy access to an outdoor space. Transitions are kept short and part of a highly structured day.
- Teaching approaches are tailored to suit their needs.

Some pupils will also access Rebound Therapy and Pet Therapy. These sessions have a clear focus based on the individual’s starting point.

Pupils in KS4 will also have the opportunity to build on their independence and life skills through the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Impact

The semi-formal curriculum pathway focuses on developing the practical application of skills and knowledge. It centres around the development of student voice and choice, fostering positive social and communication skills. These learners are developing their independence, communication, cognitive and social skills.

We measure the impact of the curriculum in a number of ways.

Progress is recorded within Earwig – generalisation, fluency, independence and maintenance of skills and knowledge measured. Baseline data is gathered in the first half term and progress is recorded through evidence collated as well as data harvest points throughout the year. Termly assessment meetings are held between DHT and class teacher to discuss pupils making little, good or excellent progress. Pupil progress meetings are held with parents throughout the year.

Personalised targets outlined in EHCP targets across the areas of Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Sensory and Physical Development and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Development. Pupils have EHCP targets set each year which focus particularly on what they need to learn. EHCPs targets are written taking into account progress already made and consideration of what they now need to learn, and what they may be able to achieve. Ensuring that they have challenging but realistic targets which allows them to make progress. Achievement of these targets are also recorded via Earwig.

Plenty of photographs are taken of what the pupils are learning and achieving in school and these are shared with parents through Earwig. Records of Achievements are compiled for each pupil with pupils work as well as photographs.

Rebound therapy progression is tracked against the Huddersfield Functional Index for Rebound Therapy.

Pet Therapy and Duke of Edinburgh Award is tracked against Personal Development levels of progress.