



## The MEADOWS Pathway at Sandgate School

An adapted non-subject specific sensory curriculum for our PMLD learners.

### Chapters

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### **1. The MEADOWS Pathway**

The MEADOWS pathway at Sandgate school is one of three adapted pathway approaches to learning specifically designed for our PMLD learners and those working at level P4 and below. The pathway in comparison to its LAKES and SEAS counterparts takes a less structured, non-subject specific approach to learning. Due to the complex learning, medical and physical needs of our learners in the MEADOWS pathway, a great focus is placed on our student's health and well-being needs, which come at the forefront of our daily routine, learning sessions and planning. Like the SEAS pathway, the MEADOWS pathway takes a sensory curriculum approach, attempting to create a holistic learning environment for our young people which not only focus on their educational skills, but have great emphasis on their personal progression in their daily lives. The MEADOWS acronym encompasses the key elements of the pathway and the broad areas of which we as a pathway strive to deliver and develop for our learners during their time at sandgate.

**M-Movement:** Movement is a large part of our everyday learning as most of our PMLD learners have some aspect of physical disability with an emphasis on supporting movement and body awareness we aim to maintain or improve the movements available to our learners from gross motor movements to eye tracking. Movement is a focus target for most of our learners, whether this is through their MOVE goals, physio/hydro program or their functional fine motor sessions (MATP/Cause and effect) which is weaved throughout the learning sessions that take place.

**E- Engagement:** engagement is a key part of the pathway as this is what we base our learning from. In later chapters this report will discuss how we assess our PMLD learners here at sandgate, this assessment stems from our learner's engagement. Engagement is the foundation of learning (in accordance with the DfE) and when our students are engaged, is when we see learning take place.

**A- Acceptance:** This is an important value across all the pathways here at sandgate, in the MEADOWS pathway acceptance comes in the form of everyone being unique and different and the idea that everyone has valuable skills and brings something to the table. Our learners are all widely different and complex, acceptance is a key value in the pathway as we accept all our learners for what they already bring to our school and strive to celebrate this.

**D- Differentiated curriculum:** this refers to our curriculum being differentiated to suit the needs of our learners. In the meadows pathway we take a personalized approach to teaching and learning. We strive for our learning sessions to be meaningful and relevant to the students involved in them, as well as this, due to the complex medical needs of our learners we ensure that the curriculum is differentiated to fit around their health and learning needs in a way that is beneficial for them.

**O- Observation:** observation is another key aspect of the pathway, we utilize this assessment strategy in every learning session that takes place in the pathway. We utilize observation to assess for engagement, whether this be through video, written, or informal day to day observations which create our evidence material for learning, assessment and planning.

**W- Wider community links:** the wider community and our links to the outside world is an important part of the pathway, due to the health and learning needs of our students, it is often a struggle for them and their families to gain access to the wider community; in the meadows pathway we understand the importance of our learners experiencing the wide world whether this be on fun adrenalin filled trips to bendrigg lodge or simple day to day

community experiences of shopping. These links help to provide the complete learning environment we strive for.

S – Sensory experiences: Lastly, sensory experiences underpin every learning session that takes place in our meadow's pathway. Our students access the world through their senses and due to their physical limitations, it is even more vital that as a pathway we provide valuable meaningful sensory experiences for our learners to be involved in a total holistic learning environment. Sensory experiences provide access to topics and areas that our students may never get to experience whether this be a trip to the seaside, a long-haul flight to Australia, a trip to outer space or a cross-country train ride.

## **2. Teaching and Learning**

In the MEADOWS pathway our teaching and learning looks very similar to that of the SEAS pathway, however we work on a non-formal curriculum basis, meaning that our teaching and learning sessions are less structured than those in different pathways in the school. Our teaching in the pathway focuses mainly on experiential, meaningful learning sessions with our students' medical and learning needs at the forefront of our practice. Our learning sessions aim to immerse the student within a theme (which will be discussed further in the curriculum section of this document) and develop cognitive, physical and communication skills that are most relevant to our students' daily lives and IEP targets. We focus largely on sensory exploration and utilizing all of our senses to allow our students to fully grapple with a theme/topic, we also utilize our Sandgate pedagogy of repetitive practice; we find it most helpful and beneficial for our teaching and learning to be repeated throughout a half term or termly, this allows our student to build upon and develop their engagement as they grow familiar with the various learning stimuli they explore. We follow the DfE guidance for PMLD / P4 or below students, that engagement and learning come part and parcel with one another, which is why engagement is the key focus for our teaching and learning sessions, alongside the IEP targets of our students. Teaching sessions will build on the prior session, as a pathway we look at what engaged our learners in that session, and what areas of engagement can be worked upon for the next session, this not only generates target progression and increase in engagement, but is a fully tailored way of teaching and learning specifically for our cohort, which in turn delivers good results in their IEP/EHCP targets.

## **3. Curriculum**

As mentioned above, as a pathway we focus on a sensory curriculum, meaning that our curriculum is based on sensory exploration in a non-formal non subject specific manner.

Though we do not follow a formal curriculum, we do have a 2 year rolling theme cycle which teachers plan their learning sessions towards, these theme cycles are loosely based off the early years theme cycle we have here at Sandgate but also encompass some of the PMLD specific theme cycles from the CEA sensory thematic units (<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/pmld-sensory-thematic-units>). Our curriculum triad of communication, cognition and physical development underpins everything we do within the pathway and is what we strive to offer in our students varied and bespoke timetables.

Our curriculum covers a wide range of sensory sessions including physical development and body awareness sessions such as TIME, TAC PAC and MATP, communication work sessions focusing on a wide range of AAC our learners utilize in their daily lives from eye gaze devices, PECs, intensive interaction and on-body signing. We also focus on cognition in many learning sessions such as food technology and self-occupation work (cause and effect switch work), as well as local community links work which supports our learners in accessing the wider world in their local vicinity. Lastly, we pride ourselves on delivering fun immersive sensory sessions including a weekly sensory story, sensology, themed work, sensory room sessions and creative development which help to bring our half term theme to life. Our curriculum is very much tailored for our learners' needs, with a focus on engagement and their IEP targets. Each student undertakes individual work in the morning which is a targeted session based on their individual IEP's, these sessions can range from self/body awareness sessions, communication-based sessions, turn taking and physical development sessions, we develop our bespoke curriculum to best meet the IEP targets of our students.

#### **4. Assessment**

Assessment for our MEADOWS students takes an intuitive approach. We assess our students using the engagement model, which is the advised format of assessment from the department for education. The engagement model is devised for students who may not meet the criteria for other assessments formats and thusly make no progress, the engagement model allows for student specific assessment, both against their engagement in learning sessions and their IEP targets, therefore more scope for progress to be made for all. Here at sandgate we aim to capture and develop the engagement of our students in their learning sessions. Engagement is imperative to learning and is also the basis of all fundamental learning skills. We assess in the 5 areas of engagement which are; anticipation, persistence, initiation, realization and exploration. These areas show and develop understanding for our MEADOWS learners and allow them to make progress in

their learning sessions in a manner that is relative to their learning and complex medical needs.

Alongside assessing engagement in learning, we focus closely on our students' IEP targets which are developed from their larger EHCP targets. These IEP targets are extremely personalized targets that help to support our students to live their lives to the fullest. We assess these targets through capturing evidence and recording them on our evidence for learning platform, which are then discussed and amended during their annual review. From these assessments in both the engagement model and IEP targets, teachers can then plan personalized learning sessions which help to increase different areas of our student's engagement and work towards their IEPs. Due to the individualization of the assessment and learning sessions, MEADOWS students make progress as their engagement grows through the various topics and themes we cover, the sessions they take part in can adapt and change throughout the half term depending on how the students respond to the stimuli.

## **5. Environment**

The environment for our MEADOWS learners varies throughout the school day. During our themed sessions, we like to be as immersive as possible and create a holistic learning environment for all students where they can explore and experience different topics in a sensory enhancing way. On the other hand, we take our learners' learning and medical needs into account for the environment too, though we may have more stimuli around our classroom than some other classes here at sandgate, we can also quickly make our space calm and relaxing. Our environment changes with how our students present to us on the day. Some days, we are all go, with heavy stimuli, color, music and action, but other days and times we require a softer calmer classroom environment with low light, relaxing music and calming visuals this helps support our students fatigue management and epilepsy plans. Our environment also needs to be intuitive to what we utilize it for, as well as what our student utilize it for, meaning we have areas for self-occupation to take place this could be something simple like a cozy corner with cushions, or different mobiles , choice baskets or cause and effect toys that are on offer throughout the day to be used in our down time. These self-occupying provisions are available throughout the day and can be quickly utilized whenever needed, which promotes students' autonomy and independence in managing their time.

## **6. Day to Day**

As mentioned throughout this document, we take each day as it comes for our MEADOWS students, this is due to the unpredictability of our learner's health needs throughout the

day. For this reason, it is important that within the pathway that the day-to-day remains fluid and flexible so that learners don't miss out on their learning sessions but also can have their medical health needs adhered to and met when this is required. A rough outline of our day for our MEADOWS learners includes 3 longer learning sessions, snack, lunch and choice time. Out of the 3 learning sessions within our day, 1 session is based on their IEP targets, so is an individualized learning session where our students work 1:1 with their support staff or teacher. Another session we do daily is a whole group sensory or movement/body awareness session, this could range from MATP (which is our adapted physical education program for children with complex learning needs), TAC PAC, sensory story, and other sensory activities. The last session we offer is often based on intensive interaction, Communication and relaxation. Alongside this rough daily format, we also intertwine our student's hydro and physio programs and other intentions and targets including MOVE work.

## **7. Progression of the pathway**

As cohorts develop and change, the MEADOWS pathway at sandgate school has also developed to meet the needs of our cohorts. In the new academic year, we are beginning to integrate our MEADOWS and SEAS pathway further, to ensure a more cohesive social curriculum is created for our MEADOWS learners. As the MEADOWS pathway has now been developed and rolled out to our students the adapted curriculum of the pathway can also be adapted and altered to meet the needs of our other SEAS learners. With this new crossover of pathways both the MEADOWS and SEAS pathways here at Sandgate can be further enriched to ensure that all the needs of the students are met fully and holistically throughout their education.