

Non-Subject Specific (NSS) Groups Skills for Life

Skills for Life lessons take place once per week, every Tuesday afternoon (for Summer Term 2023). Three mixed groups with students from Central, Circle and Victoria classes attend the lessons. The students have been chosen and allocated in each of the groups based on their needs/strengths in one of the following areas: *Social skills, Communication and practical abilities/engagement in tasks that promote independence.*

More specifically the groups are the following:

Skills for Life – Communication group (Circle Class room) =>

Phonics, See & Learn, Blank Level Questions, Colourful Semantics. The areas of focus also link to each of the NSS topics on the Language & Communication long-term plan. In this group we have the opportunity to deliver a range of interventions and strategies/approaches staff have been trained to deliver to our students, that support students' communication skills and language development. Equally, emphasis is being given to the development of their attention skills through Attention Autism Bucket elements during teaching.

Skills for Life – Social group (Central Class room): *Lego Therapy, Let's Talk, Games, work in small groups on a project, read stories (focus on empathy & awareness of others, friendships, kindness, inverted vs extraverted characters), social skills scenarios & scripts: modelling/role playing social skills & social norms, learning to regulate our feelings etc., conversation cards & games etc.*

Skills for Life – Vocational group (Victoria Class => Outside or communal areas indoors): *examples of (pre)vocational activities include: cleaning the staff room, helping tidying up the sensory garden, help printing or making copies, laminating. Working indoors: task boxes: sharpen pencils, sort glue sticks & scissors in pots (help other classes), replace batteries (toys from classes or ICT cupboard, practise setting up the table)*

Teaching staff stay in their room where they meet their students, apart from the Victoria class teacher who is leading the groups in relevant areas of interest/focus. Whereas one of the LSAs stay in class, the second moves to a different group in order to meet the students' transition needs, but also to provide a sense of consistency and familiarity.

Skills for Life groups provide our students a range of opportunities to develop their confidence, self-esteem, apply their learning, unlock their potential and discover their talents within smaller, more specific groups. Staff follow a constructivist approach by focusing on building connections between the students' previous and current learning. As mentioned, the students have been allocated in groups based on the areas they struggle more with or based on their strengths and identified potential. The aim is for our students to eventually develop a better sense of self and a deeper understanding of what they are capable of or need support with; this will allow them to respond to the wider world's needs in their adulthood.

Therefore, in these lessons students are provided with constant opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills and cognitive flexibility. Additionally, the practice of social, communication and listening skills within all of the groups is mandatory; these practices reflect real life situations, offer collaborative opportunities and prepare the students for confident community engagement in their adulthood. For example, emphasis on receptive and expressive language, while following a set of instructions, is implemented in all groups during their lessons and not just the Communication group. T All of the lessons provide opportunities for cross-curricular links to most of the subjects across the curriculum. This way the school ensures that NSS students are more aware of their community expectations later on in life, as they gain an appropriate set of skills which will allow them to become engaged and active members of the community within which they live.