



# Path Hill Outdoors Curriculum Policy

Status:	Updated Policy Date:	Scheduled Review:
Voluntary National Standard	September 2025	September 2027

Path Hill offers opportunities for positive experiences and personal growth in an outdoor environment. Our values underpin everything we do. Our values:

- Being Outdoors
- Promoting Personal Growth
- Living in a Community
- Living Sustainably
- Being Inclusive

Path Hill Outdoors is an alternative provision for students with SEMH needs. It strives to foster a culture that encourages engagement, emotional and social development, self-discipline and respect for others and the environment. Many students face significant challenges in their lives or have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Many students are neurodivergent and have disrupted and inconsistent experiences of school and learning. Sometimes, students haven't engaged in a formal education setting for a long period of time.

We describe ourselves as a bridge to the right educational path. Once a student is able to build a trusting relationship with their instructor, develop self esteem by learning new skills and make social connections with peers in a safe, supportive environment, our students are then able to reengage with education. This could be reintegrating back to their previous setting, transitioning to a new setting or move onto the world of work.

Each student's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) targets are central to their learning journey and the support they are provided with, ensuring that their programme aligns with their individual needs and developmental goals. All of which are agreed with professionals, parents/carers and the child.

## **Curriculum Intent:**

The intent of our curriculum is to provide personalised, therapeutic support that addresses the unique needs of each student. We aim to ensure that our students are equipped with the skills, knowledge and emotional resilience needed for successful reintegration into mainstream or special educational settings, wherever appropriate.

We have a skills-based curriculum. We differentiate between 'soft' skills and 'hard' skills learned at Path Hill.

## Soft skills

Soft skills are skills, knowledge and abilities used to perform interpersonal activities and metacognitive tasks. For example, flexible thinking, self-regulation, social interactions with peers, self-expression etc. **Soft skills are our curriculum drivers.** When students develop targeted soft skills, they are able to progress and engage in the next step of their education.



See Appendix A- Examples of soft skill outcomes.

### Hard skills

Hard skills are technical expertise or specific knowledge acquired through education and training. At Path Hill, that looks like fire lighting, using a hatchet to process wood, fishing, using a wood turning lathe, making a tie dye t-shirt etc. Hard skills are easier to quantify with evidence in certification and awards. Students can acquire AQA unit awards, National Navigation Award System (NNAS) awards, RYA Level 1 and 2 sailing awards and other awards from external bodies. These awards complement the students' portfolios as they move onto their next provision or place of work. Some students have been unable to acquire any other awards, such as GCSEs, so the awards attained at PHO are significant.

See Appendix B- Activity opportunities.

If soft skills are the 'what' the students are learning, the hard skills are the vehicle to get them there. For example, students might learn to follow instructions (soft skill) through the learning of knots and lashings (hard skill), or learn flexible thinking (soft skill) through designing and making a wooden bird box (hard skill).

### **Implementation**

We provide a bespoke 1 to 1 programme for each student, designed to be led by the student's interests and areas of development specified by the referrer and the student's EHCP. We have a plethora of resources that support the teaching of soft and hard skills, in line with our values. It is difficult to pinpoint a cohort wide curriculum and/or pathway, as each programme is dictated by each student's needs and wishes.

### **Identifying target soft skills**

Referrers identify at least four soft skills that they would like Path Hill to support the student with. These skills are ranked according to what areas the student should focus on first. The most common required soft skills are listed in our paperwork, but referrers can agree on a specific skill that may not be listed, as appropriate and agreed with PHO.

### **Programme planning**

We develop individual programmes with the needs of the student in mind. We recognise starting a new provision can be incredibly challenging for our students and some students need an individualised transition plan as they start Path Hill Outdoors.

1 to 1 instructors read all referral paperwork and talk to the 1 to 1 managers about their new student. Instructors develop plans focusing first on the soft skill foci and then the hard skill foci (including any AQA awards or other awards that will be worked towards), taking into account student interest. See Student Induction policy .

Whilst working with students, instructors employ use a range of therapeutic techniques, including the PACE model, to support their SEMH needs. See Appendix C our Prosocial Behaviour Policy.

As well as supporting students with self-regulation and engagement in learning, Key Stage 4 students are supported to obtain vocational qualifications aligned with their future aspirations. They may take part in site jobs or work placements at PHO or with local businesses or charities. If

appropriate, careers guidance will help students identify and pursue their post-16 options, ensuring a seamless transition to adulthood.

### **Monitoring**

- 1 to 1 Managers are responsible for monitoring individual student's programmes.
- Daily briefings and de-briefs allow members of staff to share observations and plans and voice their concerns. The experienced staff team and SLT are able to support/make suggestions for future student plans.
- Student focus sessions are an extension to the debriefing session in which the team collectively brain-storm challenges/successes and next steps for a specific student.
- We provide a bespoke package and work flexibly, and action can be taken quickly if a student isn't making progress. This could involve changing activity focus, changing pace, considering student dynamics and planning accordingly, changing instructors.

### **Impact**

- Well-being: Improvements in emotional health and self-regulation, measured through feedback from instructors, Rickter Scale wellbeing survey and student self-reports. Measured termly and reported to parents/carers and referrers.
- Soft skills targets: Progress of identified focus areas, measured through feedback from instructors, Rickter Scale wellbeing survey and student self-reports. Measured termly and reported to parents/carers and referrers.
- AQA Awards and other certificates acquired: Progression in AQA awards acquired, including practical work experience in fields such as construction and cooking.
- Reintegration Success: Successful transitions back into mainstream or special schools, colleges or places of work.
- Parent and Carer Feedback: Regular feedback from parents and carers about their child's emotional and academic progress, engagement and well-being.

### **Reviewed by**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julia Warwick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julia Warwick- Director    September 2025**

APPENDIX A- Examples of soft skills outcomes

XXX will be able to...

<p><b>Flexible thinking/ response to change</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use self-regulation strategies when responding to new plans</li> <li>• Use visual timetables to change the order of activities</li> <li>• Suggest changes to the order of the day</li> <li>• Can talk about how they feel when specific changes happen e.g.</li> <li>• Plan strategies to support them if there is unexpected</li> <li>• Remain regulated when there is a change of routine/ instructor/ location/ activity/ lunch plans</li> </ul>
<p><b>Independence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get lunch/ get equipment/ start a conversation with a peer themselves</li> <li>• Complete an activity (light a fire/ bake a cake etc) independently</li> <li>• Order a coffee in a shop/train ticket etc by themselves (AQAs)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Following instructions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow verbal instructions to make a bird box/chop wood etc</li> <li>• Follow a written recipe/ board game instructions etc</li> <li>• Can follow instructions for 10 minutes</li> <li>• Listen to instructions with other people near by</li> <li>• Listen to instructions from a different member of staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Diet</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cookery/ healthy eating/ budgeting AQAs</li> <li>• Write a food diary and suggest improvements</li> <li>• Try new food/cuisine</li> <li>• Cook their own lunch</li> <li>• Cook and serve for others</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical stamina</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gym AQAs</li> <li>• Can stay awake for the 5-hour session</li> <li>• Increase their walking time/distance by xxx</li> <li>• Discuss strategies to improve fitness at home</li> <li>• Make up an exercise plan</li> <li>• Use strategies to remain alert in the afternoon</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social interactions with adults</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take turns when playing a game/ completing an activity</li> <li>• Match facial expressions to possible emotions</li> <li>• Use facial expression</li> <li>• Use people's names to get their attention</li> <li>• Help others</li> <li>• Celebrate winning a game without being 'boastful'</li> <li>• Accept losing games</li> <li>• Share resources/ food/ space etc</li> <li>• Ask for help</li> <li>• Use appropriate tone and volume of voice</li> <li>• Demonstrate active listening for 5 minutes</li> <li>• Stay on topic for 10 minutes</li> <li>• Talk about the topic of others' choosing in a conversation</li> <li>• Ask questions in conversation</li> <li>• Wait patiently to talk</li> </ul>

<p><b>Social interactions with peers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> <li>• Role play how to have a reciprocal conversation with a peer</li> <li>• Practice questions they can ask a peer</li> <li>• Distinguish between family/ close friends/ acquaintances and strangers</li> <li>• Join in others' conversations</li> <li>• Work with another student to solve a problem/ play a game/ fix a bike</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transitions between activities/places</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish an activity with time reminders</li> <li>• Use visual prompts to understand that the activity is finishing and another is starting</li> <li>• Use a social story to use a taxi</li> <li>• Use a safe place to feel calm before getting the taxi home</li> </ul>
<p><b>Use of appropriate language (not swearing)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify when swear is and isn't appropriate</li> <li>• Agree spaces/ environment where swearing is acceptable</li> <li>• Discuss when swearing/ rude language is worse</li> <li>• Discuss strategies to use instead of swearing</li> <li>• Not swear whilst in the outdoor kitchen</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-esteem</b></p> <p><i>*This is more likely to increase when they are successful in all other areas!</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise what they are good at</li> <li>• Develop 'mantras' about themselves and to use daily</li> <li>• Recognise positive people in their life and why the student is a good friend to them</li> <li>• Set themselves a challenge to complete</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-expression and reflection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a feelings chart to express how they feel</li> <li>• Draw a map of what it feels like when they are worried, frustrated etc</li> <li>• Point to a feelings chart to express how they feel</li> <li>• Write a rap/ paint/make a sculpture etc to show a feeling</li> <li>• Ask their instructor when they are hungry/thirsty/need the toilet</li> <li>• Score their day/work/ ability to listen etc out of 10</li> <li>• Talk about ways they can improve next time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-regulation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a safe space they can use when feeling dysregulated</li> <li>• Agree a communication strategy for when feeling dysregulated eg. Time out sign, code word, use of a coloured card</li> <li>• Identify times they feel dysregulated</li> <li>• Understand the neuroscience behind feeling 'triggered'</li> <li>• Name things/ sensations that can make them feel calm</li> <li>• Make a bag/ box of things that make them feel calm</li> <li>• Practice strategies to remain calm in school/ at home</li> <li>• Use a feelings thermometer/ 5-point scale to track how they feel and strategies they can use to help themselves</li> </ul>

Other soft skills; Problem solving, Leadership, Teamwork, Time management, Organisation, Commitment Empathy, Sleep hygiene, Taking responsibility, Mentorship, Critical thinking, Creativity, Conflict resolution

## APPENDIX B- Activity Opportunities

### Activity Opportunities for 1 to 1 Students at Path Hill Outdoors

#### Outdoor Pursuits

Archery  
Camping  
Canoeing  
Climbing (Indoor)  
Fishing  
Mountain Biking  
Rafting  
Axe & Knife Throwing  
Sailing

#### Ecology/Wildlife

Water Pollution  
Ecological Surveys  
Pond Studies  
Woodland Ecology  
Tracking  
Live Small Mammal Trapping  
Bee Keeping

#### Bushcraft

Knife, Axe, Bow Saw Skills  
Survival Skills  
Campcraft  
Bow Making  
Preparing game  
Outdoor Cooking  
Den Building  
Primitive Technologies

#### Construction

Intro to Plastering  
Intro to Tiling  
Intro to Plumbing  
Intro to Brick Laying  
Intro to Carpentry  
Intro to Painting and Decorating  
General Maintenance

#### Horticulture

Seasonal Planting  
Harvesting  
Garden Maintenance  
Hard and Soft Landscaping

#### Woodwork

Making Rustic Furniture  
Bird/Bug Boxes  
Tool Reconditioning  
Joining Wood  
Carving  
Wood Turning

#### Cooking/Catering

Campfire Cooking  
Catering for groups  
Baking  
Food Hygiene  
Butchery  
Healthy Eating  
Using a Pizza Oven

#### Creative Arts

Photography  
Film Making  
Art in Nature  
Sewing/ Knitting/ Textiles  
Intro to Making Music  
Painting  
Printing  
Upcycling  
Model Making

#### Life Skills

Public Transport  
Budgeting  
Ordering food/ Shopping  
Socialising  
Event Planning  
Entrepreneurial skills

#### Employability

Creating a CV or Portfolio  
Enrolling in College  
Work Experience  
Interview Practice

#### Heritage Crafts

Blacksmithing  
Leather Work  
Green Woodworking  
Willow Weaving  
Coppicing  
Charcoal Making

#### Expeditions

Overnight Camps  
Navigation  
First Aid

#### Mechanics

Bike Mechanics  
Basic Car Mechanics

#### Gym & Fitness

Gym Programmes  
Weight Lifting  
Circuit Training

#### Example Qualifications

AQA Unit Awards  
NNAS Navigation Award  
Duke of Edinburgh Award  
RYA Level 1 & 2 Sailing  
John Muir Conservation Award  
Food Hygiene  
First Aid

*All courses are subject to the availability of the instructors*

APPENDIX C- A Student's Journey

