



# INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

A SCHOOL WITHOUT LIMITS

Transforming Approaches to Education



UTOPIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 2023

# WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL

As a school we believe positive relationships are at the heart of everything we do, and that relationship starts from your first enquiry. We hope you find the information here valuable, however it can sometimes be difficult to encapsulate the work we do in such a format, so please do not hesitate to get in touch if there are questions that you having read the information provided here.

Utopia is an independent special school for boys and girls aged 13-16 who need a small, structured and nurturing environment to flourish. We have created a calm and collaborative environment in which students feel happy and safe. This is our number 1 priority, after all, effective learning can only take place when students are settled enough to access it. With class sizes of 1:4 and a passionate and committed staff team, it is our privilege to be able to support students in achieving their academic and social potential.

For me as a head, and for our entire staff team it is imperative that students and their parents feel comfortable with their choice of school and we will do everything in our power to provide you and your child with a positive experience of education. Ultimately, our primary goal is for your child to be happy coming to school.



Chris Black  
Head of Centre



**A PLACE THAT REDEFINES THE NORMS OF EDUCATION**

# UTOPIA ETHOS

Our 'AAA' ethos underpins everything we do we believe education should be:

- Accessible - removes barriers to learning by identifying them from the outset and addressing the needs of individuals.
- Approachable - places the relationship between staff and students at the centre of everything we do.
- Aspirational - sets high expectations and offers a curriculum that provides a platform that enables students to develop, and reach their full academic and social potential.



**AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ALLOWS LEARNERS TO BE HAPPY, SAFE AND GROW**



# UTOPIA VALUES

At the heart of what we do are our core values of developing:

- Relationships - developing the skills needed to make meaningful connections with others.
- Resilience - learning to overcome difficulties and challenges that life throw at us.
- Respect - know what it means to flourish within a diverse modern Britain.

# A BESPOKE AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO LEARNING

## UTOPIA VISION

An education journey that allows children to be happy, safe and create memories, surrounded by people who value their individuality, encourage them to achieve and help harness growth.

At Utopia, neurodiversity is celebrated, after all no 2 people are ever the same, therefore why should their curriculum be? We adopt a strength based approach for our social and academic development, reinforced by powerful, pastoral programmes to improve educational outcomes.

The bedrock of our approach centres around specialist staff knowing our students, parents & carers and working together to build packages of support to address their needs.

# CURRICULUM BUILT AROUND YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS



## AT UTOPIA WE ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING WITH A PERSON CENTRED APPROACH

Our curriculum provides tailored intervention in Maths and English, and addresses skill gaps on a small group basis by boosting confidence to accelerate learning. Our vocational qualifications provide practical opportunities for students to become critical thinkers and to develop key skills to boost employability, communication and teamwork skills. In addition our outstanding mental health and wellbeing support is delivered via our PSHE curriculum with regular personal development opportunities, group-work and 1-1 counselling all on offer. We believe so much can be learned through practical and physical activities that take place outside of the classroom, and we facilitate this kind of learning by providing challenging activities that encourage students to try new things and break out of their comfort zones.

The Utopia approach prides itself on being innovative, providing unique learning experiences that stretch and support students to reach their full potential.

The curriculum at Utopia comprises of core GCSE Maths and English, BTEC Science alongside options of 7 vocational qualifications at level 1 and 2 (BTEC Sport, Business, Media, Art, Home Cooking Skills, Teamwork and Personal Skills and Caring for Children Under 5).

The curriculum is adapted to a students needs as identified in their EHCP. Following initial baseline assessments work is differentiated and Utopia staff are mindful of individual learning styles to maximise students' potential across all curriculum areas.

The Utopia model places a specific focus on personal and social development to effectively prepare students for adulthood. This is implemented through our PSHE, Independent Living Skills and Duke of Edinburgh lessons which prioritise students gaining experiences outside the classroom that enable them to practice social skills and new behaviours. Utopia has an ever-evolving approach to this aspect of the curriculum, in order to adapt to individual student need.

We recognise that reading isn't always a priority for some students, however proficient reading opens up access to a wider curriculum and more opportunities for everyone.

Therefore we take a whole centre approach to improving students confidence in reading by focusing on the development of reading across all subjects.



# ESTABLISHING A PLATFORM FOR PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH BY BUILDING ON STRENGTHS, QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES

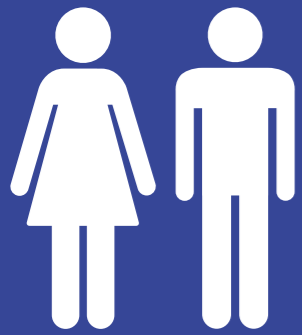
## HOLISTIC APPROACH

At Utopia we take an holistic approach to learning. Our students achieve accelerated engagement and progression, through bespoke timetables that increase their future life opportunities.

The Utopia ethos places particular emphasis on:

- Regular parental engagement
- Effective links with external agencies
- A diverse curriculum offer
- 1:4 class sizes
- Targeted support and intervention
- Community partnerships and involvement
- Age appropriate and relevant practical 'life-based' activities
- Supported transition to FE, work placements or traineeships
- Supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of its young people
- Building students resilience across the curriculum by scaffolding learning in all areas

# LEARNER PROFILE



Boys and Girls  
aged 13-16



Young people with  
high anxiety,  
neurodiversity or  
emotionally based  
school avoidance



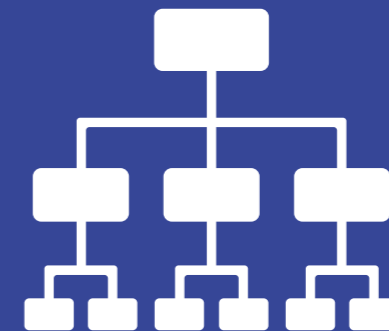
Young people who  
may be on the  
SEND pathway



**AT UTOPIA WE GENUINELY CARE ABOUT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND VALUE THEM AS INDIVIDUALS**



Young people with  
an EHCP



Young people  
unable to access  
mainstream  
education



Young people who  
require a small and  
nurturing setting to  
progress



# REFERRALS & ADMISSIONS

At Utopia we focus on the needs of students with additional needs. These students may be 'lost to learning', experiencing emotional based school avoidance or be out of school with a placement hard to establish. Students who attend Utopia are required to have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) we receive referrals via the Local Authority SEN Commissioning team. All referrals to Utopia are managed by our Operations Manager in conjunction with the Head Teacher.

Utopia will work collaboratively to meet the individual needs of learners with additional needs, as such we will utilise our extensive network of professional and community partners to provide personalised interventions for young people. Interventions to support learners may include but are not limited to:



Community Interventions



Occupational Health



Speech & Language



Dyslexia Interventions



Bespoke Support



Educational Psychologists



Counselling

Our admission's criteria and procedures are designed to ensure that we do not discriminate on grounds of ability, gender, ethnicity, race or religion. A copy of our policy is located in the policies section of our website



**“IF A CHILD CAN’T  
LEARN THE WAY  
WE TEACH,  
MAYBE WE  
SHOULD TEACH  
THE WAY THEY  
LEARN”**

**IGNACIO ESTRADA**