Functional Skills

Rationale

Functional skills are a key to success. They open doors to learning, to life and contribute to preparing students for life after education including independent living and work. They are practical skills in English, mathematics and ICT that enable learners to deal with practical problems and challenges. They allow individuals to work confidently, effectively and independently at a level which is appropriate for their individual needs and therefore prepare our students for everyday life.

Functional Communication provides opportunities for students in:

Interacting with Others --- Applying Literacy in Everyday Life --- Giving and Receiving Information

Functional Numeracy provides opportunities for students in:

Personal Finance --- Time Management --- Measurement --- Applying Number in Everyday Life

Functional PSD provides opportunities for students in:

Domestic Life Skills --- Community Life Skills

Functional ICT provides opportunities for students in:

Using Technology to Gather and Share Information --- Applying ICT in Everyday Life

Accreditation

Functional skills are an essential part of Post 16 curriculum and are accredited through Edexcel Entry Level Functional skills, AQA and ASDAN Towards Independence Units. This gives young people and adults recognition of their achievements through accessible and flexible qualifications, whilst developing practical skills in English, ICT and Maths including communication, team working, presentation and problem solving.

Assessment

Assessment will be carried out using the pre-entry level and entry level points system. Some students will complete Edexcel Entry Level Functional skills tests. In many instances students will show further 'linear' progress but they will continuously build on skills already achieved. The main emphasis for students in this phase of their educational development will be to use and adapt their existing skills in a broader variety of meaningful real life contexts.

<u>Key concepts and Processes</u>

Functional Communication

Interacting With Others – The students are provided with opportunities to develop skills and interact in a meaningful and purposeful way. This is key to becoming an active member of the community both within school and beyond. The opportunity to develop these skills within everyday contexts and for a range of purposes will form the core learning opportunity within this aspect of the curriculum. This will involve all students, representing the full range of communicative abilities within the school, and involving a variety of communicative devices and methodologies. Through this we aim to enable all students to contribute actively to situations and to utilise their communication skills to enhance their independence.

Application of Literacy in Everyday Life -Students will be provided with opportunities to use their existing literacy skills in order to access and navigate everyday situations. This will address the use of literacy skills from the most basic level as well as providing high level opportunities for those students for whom it is appropriate in order to support independence.

Giving and Receiving Information - Students will work on the effective use of a range of tools, in order to develop their ability to share information with a variety of different audiences for a variety of different reasons. This will be developed both within school with familiar people and in familiar contexts, as well as beyond school in the community in order to ensure that skills demonstrated in school can be used in functional ways elsewhere.

Gathering and Sharing Information -The skills involved in gathering information can range from learning how to use a phone through to knowing how to use a search engine (e.g. Google) to locate a website. In wanting to strengthen the link of accessing information to functional life skills, we would increasingly make use of the technologies found in everyday settings such as the home, for example radio and TV, handheld technologies (including mobile phones) and multifunctional games consoles, amongst others. For some of our students technology may actually be a key tool in enabling them to initiate contact with people around them, ranging from gaining a person's attention, through to exploring cause and effect and making choices. We will encourage our students to share the information they gather face to face with people around them, but in the context of functional ICT we shall also support them in learning how to use technology to share their work with people at a distance, or using it to leave a record which can be accessed by people at a later date. Students would be encouraged to use a wide range of technologies to communicate in whatever techniques were most appropriate to them. Just as it is important for students to question the sources of information that they use, they will also be taught to understand the possible risks in communicating with an unseen audience, especially to be careful to avoid sharing personal information. Students will learn that they can make physical products (such as DVDs) as well as purely digital versions which can be shared either with individual people or made available to large groups of people.

Functional Numeracy

Personal Finance - Students will learn about managing their finances. They will increase their awareness of the value of money, what factors determine whether items are good value and also learn about the benefits of research including shopping around and internet shopping. Personal finance also requires applying accountancy skills to everyday situations and students will develop their ability to establish approximately if they have enough money for required items, how much change should they roughly receive and other more general budgeting skills.

Time Management - This is a crucial aspect of all of our lives. Students will build on their knowledge of time and develop their understanding of responsibility in relation to time. For example knowing that if they have an appointment they need to ensure they allow enough time to get to their appointment. A general appreciation of time and its increment lengths will be key to this. The ability to read analogue and digital times and solve

problems relating to lengths of time is also important. For example "What time will it be in half an hour?" or "How long will it take you to get to your interview?" An important aspect of time management is understanding the consequence or implications of being / not being punctual and how the implications vary depending on the situation.

Measurement - This will provide opportunities to build on knowledge of size and its impact. Students will begin to develop more accurate skills in estimating and measuring. Other important measurement skills link to complex accurate measuring for example in home improvements or cooking, and more straight-forward measurements such as how much food to buy depending on how many people will be eating it.

Application of Number in Everyday Life – This encompasses how we all apply our awareness of number and its value to everyday life experiences. Central to success in this area is the ability to effectively and consistently transfer skills and knowledge from all Numeracy strands and apply them relevantly to everyday situations. In planning it is important to identify all possible opportunities for students to apply key skills to enable their greatest level of independence. This may be delivered through a combination of skills such as working out how long it will take to travel somewhere by completing subtraction problems using a timetable, or working out how many ingredients you need when cooking for a larger group, by using multiplication skills.

Functional ICT

Application of ICT in Everyday Life - The types of technology is vast and we aim to include games technologies, general home entertainment and the increasing range of reference tools which are now technology based. Learning about using remote controls and making screen based choices will continue to be important. Personal productivity tools could include multifunctional phones and cameras, simple calculators, paper shredder, and memory devices. Access to encyclopaedia types of information via websites is one form of technology based reference tool, the expansion in simple handheld tools gives increasing accessibility. In all of these areas we would hope to teach students to learn how to use technology in ways that can enhance their lives, giving them access to wider methods of communicating with people and to enjoying themselves along with being better equipped to make choices. The roots of this subject are firmly embedded throughout almost all of the other subject areas and further still in the ethos of the school. It is essential that the students are provided with age appropriate and socially relevant situations which require them to learn and display the necessary attributes needed for everyday living, both in and out of the home. The students will not only learn the practical skills for living, but will also develop the understanding of why and when to best use them and how to do so safely.

Functional PSD (also refer to independent living skills rational)

Community Life Skills - Students will become active members of the local community. This will focus on learning how to move safely and efficiently around the town either on foot or using public transport, perhaps even ordering a taxi. It will also involve learning the social etiquette that is required for example in the library, cafe, Post Office, leisure centre and bank.

Domestic Life Skills - Within the home situation, students will learn how to manage themselves and their belongings in a safe and appropriate manner. This will include all aspects of home life and will again combine the skills required to complete the task alongside the understanding of why and when such tasks should be completed. Domestic Life Skills will involve all students across the entire ability range and, as with all other areas of the curriculum, will be effectively differentiated to meet the individual needs of each student. Hygiene and safety will play a key part in all areas of work within the subject. Students will learn the basic principles behind keeping themselves and their belongings clean and safe whilst working within a range of contexts.

Students will learn to take greater control over their domestic life and develop greater independence over elements or all of their home life. This may take the form of planning and preparing a simple meal, stripping and making a bed and washing or ironing items of clothing.

All aspects of functional skills are also developed through work experience and the programme of study that students undertake at Middlesbrough College.

CURRICULUM LINKS

PSHE
Economic Wellbeing and Financial Capability

By taking on roles and responsibilities which develop their skills and understanding of money.

Personal Wellbeing

Priory Woods raises students' aspirations and develops their ability to reflect on their own and other's strengths and achievements.

ENGLISH
Speaking and Listening

Students have the opportunity to speak and listen in different contexts including group discussions.

Reading

Students read a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.

Writing

Students write in a variety of different styles.

MATHEMATICS
Applications and Implications of Mathematics

Students will have opportunities to develop and apply their mathematical skills to the real life.

ICT
Capability

Students use a wide range of ICT resources to support learning. They are encouraged to be independent in their selection, development and use of information sources and ICT tools to support them.