



Crafting a positive future

Trauma-informed, attachment-focused and relationship-based care, therapy and education.

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Welcome

As you might expect of a school named after an inspirational artist, designer, craftsman and writer, creativity is at the heart of everything we do at William Morris School.

For us, creativity means transcending traditional ways of thinking. It goes beyond just imagining what might be possible: it's about making those possibilities a reality. Creativity involves not only coming up with new ideas, but also the dedication and determination to put those ideas into practice.

The practical implementation of evidence-based innovative approaches can be seen in all aspects of school life. Our developmentally-sensitive curriculum pathways have been carefully designed to enable young people to overcome their barriers to learning and discover the joy of developing new skills. Our trauma-informed approach draws upon practice and research by some of the world's leading practitioners and academics. And the provision of targeted therapeutic interventions provides our pupils with an all-important sense of safety and stability.

Whilst the needs of those who come to William Morris School are often complex, our core values – kindness, empathy, creativity, curiosity and positivity – are very simple. We're fortunate to have an exceptionally dedicated staff team who not only embody these values but who also have the skills and experience needed to really understand the particular challenges faced by children with relational, attachment and other complex needs.

Although we take our work extremely seriously, we are also keenly aware of the importance of having fun. We want every student to look back on their time here with fondness and with happy memories of life at William Morris School.

I hope that this prospectus gives a helpful insight into school life. Of course, nothing beats visiting in person, so please do come and see us and we will be delighted to show you around.



Jake Lukas RSW, MBASW

Chief Executive,
Novalis Trust

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About William Morris School

William Morris School is an independent day and boarding special school for children and young people with complex learning needs and associated social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties.

The school – together with its sister school Cotswold Chine School – is one of the few educational establishments in the country to adopt a truly 'trauma informed' and 'trauma responsive' approach to care, therapy, and education.

Set in a tranquil rural location on the edge of the Cotswolds with easy access to main transport routes, we are a co-educational school for pupils between the ages of 7 and 19. As well as providing places for day pupils, the school can also offer boarding accommodation for up to 42 weeks of the year.

All our young people are supported to achieve external accreditation for their learning through a range of examinations including GCSEs, BTECs, A Levels, Functional Skills and Entry Level Certificates. We also believe that creative pursuits bring various psychological benefits and play an important role in helping young people to build cognitive, physical and social skills. With that in mind, the educational curriculum incorporates a wide variety of activities including art, crafts, textiles, woodwork, photography, music, sport and horticulture.

“...I do not want art for a few; any more than education for a few; or freedom for a few...”

William Morris



“Your application of trauma-informed and trauma-responsive principles and interventions leads the way and has caught the attention of US providers and colleagues.”

Dr Janice Lebel – Director of Systems Transformation at MA Department of Mental Health

Our highly skilled team of specialist teachers, carers, and therapists have a wealth of experience in dealing with a variety of developmental, relational, educational, care and therapeutic needs including:

- mild to severe learning difficulties
- relationship and attachment disorders
- complex and developmental trauma and other difficulties associated with childhood trauma such as hypervigilance and chronic hyperarousal
- global developmental delay
- mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, emotional/mental distress, social phobia, and obsessive-disorder
- neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism spectrum disorder; sensory processing difficulties, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome, speech and language difficulties, dyslexia, dyspraxia, oppositional defiant disorder, and foetal alcohol syndrome.

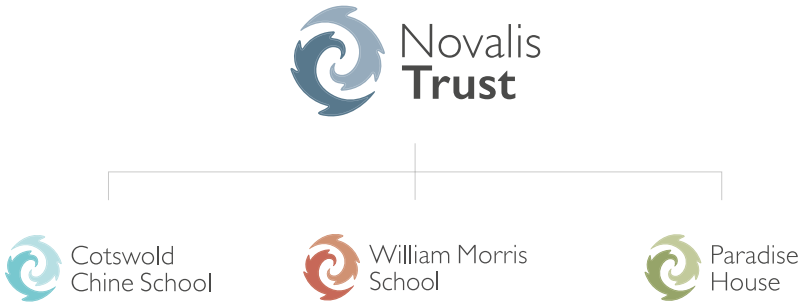




About Novalis Trust

Founded in 1954, Novalis Trust is dedicated to the provision of trauma-informed, attachment-focused, and relationship-based care and education for children and adults.

The charity owns and operates William Morris School, Cotswold Chine School (also for pupils with complex learning needs aged 7 to 19) and Paradise House (a home for adults with learning disabilities). Whilst each organisation retains its own identity, they all share the same ethos, values, and organisational approach.



The three organisations also share management, administration, maintenance, training, and other resources in order to ensure that consistently high standards are maintained across the charity.

“Novalis Trust has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to providing the highest quality service that I have ever observed in 40 years of practice.”

Kevin Ann Huckshorn PH.D, MSN, RN, CACD



Our values

Our values not only represent the qualities we look for in our staff members, but they also provide a set of principles and beliefs that guide what we do as an organisation.



Kindness

We always strive to treat others with dignity and respect. We are caring, helpful and considerate.

“Do things for people not because of who they are or what they do in return, but because of who you are.”

Harold S. Kushner



Empathy

We understand that life can sometimes be tough and we support others when they need our help. We are accepting, open-minded and non-judgmental.

“No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

Theodore Roosevelt



Creativity

We think outside the box to find imaginative solutions. We are always looking for new ways to make things better.

“You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.”

Maya Angelou



Curiosity

We have a thirst for knowledge and are open to new ideas. We are inquisitive, questioning and eager to learn.

“Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers.”

Voltaire



Positivity

We look on the bright side and don't let problems get us down. We are enthusiastic, hopeful and optimistic.

“Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.”

Carl Bard

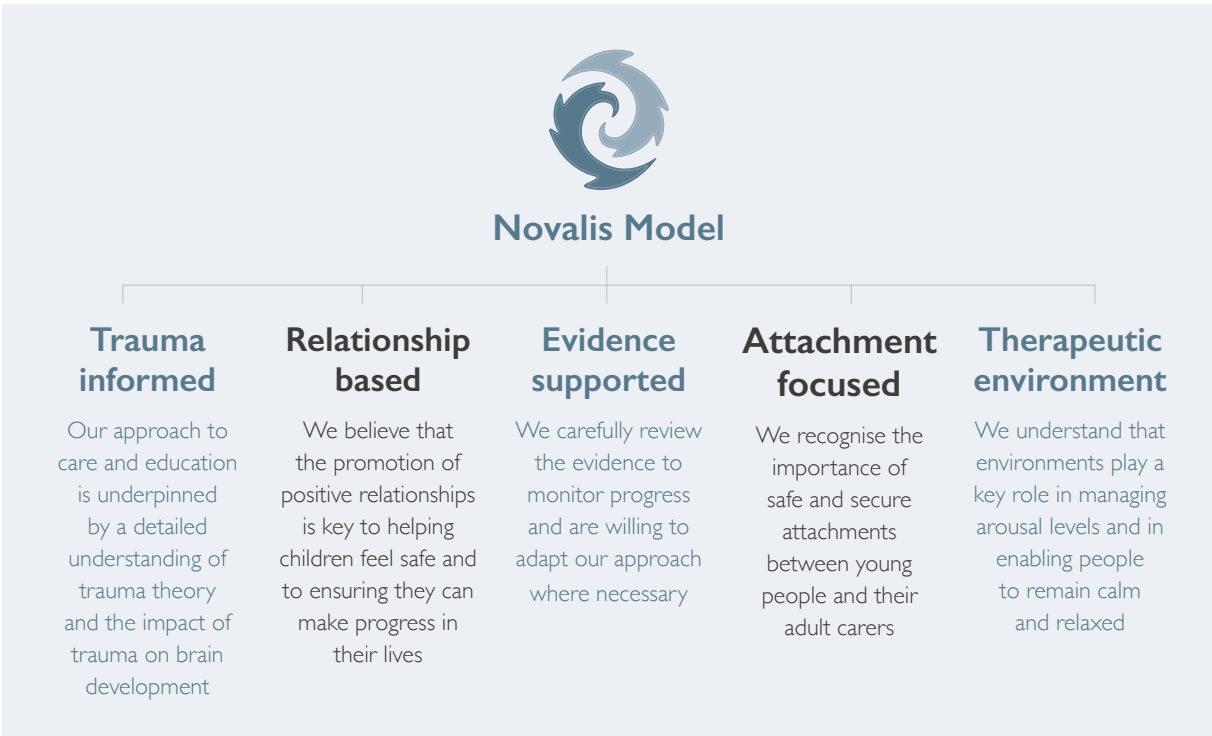
Our approach – the Novalis Model

The school’s approach – known as the Novalis Model – is based on many years of experience and draws on practice and research by some of the world’s leading practitioners and academics in trauma theory, attachment-focused therapies and sensory integration.

Trauma-informed care

Because many of the young people who come to the school are affected by developmental and/or complex trauma, the Novalis Model involves a trauma-informed and evidence supported approach which promotes positive relationships and secure attachments within a therapeutic, low arousal environment.

The model was developed after we received training in trauma-informed care from Dr Sandra Bloom (an internationally recognised expert in trauma-related disorders and co-creator of the Sanctuary Model and Creating PRESENCE™) and is underpinned by a considerable body of scientific and academic research.



“It’s been a privilege working with Novalis Trust and joining you on your journey to becoming a truly trauma-informed organisation. Your approach sets the standard for others involved in the care of children and adults.”

Dr Sandra L. Bloom, MD

Establishing a sense of safety

Central to the Novalis Model is the belief that establishing a sense of safety is a vital first step in enabling young people to regulate their emotions and to make progress in their emotional and social well-being. With that in mind, we do everything possible to ensure that all children feel physically, psychologically, socially, and morally safe.

Physical	Psychological	Social	Moral
Physical safety is prioritised by carefully designing the physical environment to provide comfortable, homely surroundings and a calming atmosphere	Each young person is helped to feel psychologically safe by receiving therapeutic input from our team of clinical therapists	Social safety is enhanced by encouraging positive relationships with key adult attachment figures and through positive role modelling by all members of staff	Moral safety is cultivated through the promotion of a positive outlook and sensitive values including a commitment to non-violence, open communication and social responsibility

Each child's feeling of safety and stability is further enhanced through the establishment of planned daily activities and routines which convey a sense of structure, predictability, and rhythm that may have previously been lacking in their life.

A culture of continuous improvement

We promote a culture of continuous improvement, and we are constantly looking at how we can develop and refine our approach using the latest research and best practice from across the world.

An example of this has been the adoption of the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (devised by Dr Bruce Perry, one of the world's leading child trauma experts) in order to develop both our therapy plans and our curriculum. We have also introduced family meetings to support families to discuss and work through difficult issues and our Family Liaison Manager helps children stay in touch with their families and friends.

Staff are supported to reflect on their practice so that they can adapt their approach where necessary. Our staff training and development programme – including the Ofqual accredited **Level 4 qualification in Trauma-informed Care** along with the **Level 4 Certificate in Family Work** – is widely recognised to be industry leading. In addition to running our own staff development programmes, we are regularly asked to provide training on our model of trauma-informed care to other organisations, both in the UK and overseas.





Personalised education and learning experiences

Many children will arrive at William Morris School having had negative previous experiences of school, often with extended periods out of full-time education. At Novalis Trust, we're proud of our record of helping young people to re-engage with their education and inspiring them to discover the joy of learning and developing new skills.

A developmentally sensitive approach

Unlike many mainstream schools, we don't adopt a "one size fits all" approach. Instead, we provide a developmentally sensitive educational programme which is personalised to reflect each pupil's interests, strengths, and individual barriers to learning.

A high teacher/pupil ratio of two qualified teachers per class of 6–8 pupils means that we're able to offer each child individual attention and support. Most of our pupils will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) setting out the additional support that they require to meet their needs. Our teaching staff are skilled in helping every child to make the best possible educational progress, whatever their starting point.

“The curriculum is broad and interesting. Pupils enjoy their learning and feel challenged.”

Ofsted – 2023

Overcoming barriers to learning

Our integrated therapeutic curriculum has been carefully designed to help overcome the significant impact of early childhood trauma on young people's learning processes. It is informed by the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) developed by Dr Bruce Perry (one of the world's leading child trauma experts). NMT is not a specific therapeutic technique but an approach to structuring the application of interventions in a way that best meets the needs of each child.

The NMT approach starts with a core assessment involving a review of each child's relational history and an assessment of their current functions to develop a 'map' of developmentally appropriate interventions. This assessment, together with a review of a young person's EHCP outcomes and relational history, is then used to assign each child to one of four curriculum pathways. Each pathway allows for individualised access to the National Curriculum with the ultimate aim of ensuring that every child develops the skills necessary for them to achieve the greatest level of independence and fulfilment in their adult lives.

Curriculum pathways



Seedling

To be able to understand and respond to sensory needs, make sense of the world around and access multi-sensory learning experiences.



Sapling

To develop awareness of emotions, learn how to self-regulate, connect meaningfully with others, and engage with learning experiences.



Sycamore

To develop positive relational health, be safe and work towards appropriate accreditations, in line with a young person's abilities and interest.



Blossom

To develop transferable skills in preparation for life and independence.

The individualised curriculum pathways encourage students to explore all subjects within the National Curriculum in a practical and creative way. The content and progress within each subject area are mapped out in individual subject Schemes of Work and curriculum maps. All pupils are supported to achieve external accreditation for their learning via a range of examinations including GCSEs, BTECs, Functional Skills and Entry Level Certificates.

Literacy and numeracy skills are taught throughout the school day and all teachers cultivate and encourage students' development in these key areas. Creative and physical skills are developed through a range of activities including art, textiles, woodwork, photography, horticulture and music. In addition, various sporting opportunities are available in the school's indoor and outdoor gyms and within the school's grounds.

The National Curriculum

<p>Seedling and Sapling Pathways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Literacy and Numeracy (daily) ● Science, Art and Design, Computing, Design and Technology, MFL, Humanities, Music/Drama and Physical Education ● The school takes a cross-curricular approach following a topic master scheme ● PSHE is studied daily ● Swimming and Cycling Proficiency
<p>Sycamore Pathway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils continue to study English, Maths, Science and PSHE ● Pupils are supported through an informal options process where they can select subjects of interest
<p>Blossom Pathway (post-16 provision)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We recognise that students at this stage need access to a curriculum that will prepare them for adult life after leaving school. As a result, each student follows a highly personalised curriculum, with a timetable based on their individual needs and choice of subjects.
<p>Personal, Social Health & Economics (PSHE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We place a great emphasis on developing each pupil's understanding of day-to-day life skills including how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and managing money as well as the ability to keep themselves safe. ● Sex and relationship education forms part of the PSHE curriculum and is timetabled for all students. Sex and relationship education is delivered according to each individual student's abilities and emotional development, and class groups may be divided into smaller groups where appropriate.

The Vocational Curriculum

Preparing students for work and adult life is an important aspect of the school's curriculum. Students following the Sycamore and Blossom pathways can choose options from a range of work-related and vocational opportunities which suit their individual needs, abilities, and interests. These are generally in the areas of:


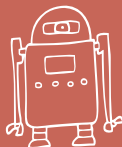




- Land and environment (including gardening and horse care)
- Hospitality and catering
- Construction and Maintenance
- Business administration (including office skills)
- Personal and work skills development

Wherever possible, we seek to gain accreditation for their vocational learning.

The Enrichment Curriculum

The Enrichment Curriculum is designed to complement the National and Vocational Curriculum. It is aimed at encouraging pupils to access and engage in learning in all areas of the curriculum, to develop new skills including independence skills, and to access work in the community.

We strongly believe that creative activities bring various psychological, educational and social benefits. With that in mind, the Enrichment Curriculum has a strong emphasis on arts, crafts, textiles and horticultural activities.

	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest School • Westonbirt Arboretum • Woodchester Mansion • Box Woods • Beaches
	Curriculum enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheltenham Literature Festival • Cheltenham Science Festival • Science Boffins • Sublime Science • Zoolab • School of Larks • Festival Players • Animal Interactive Wonderdome
	Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience • Life skills • Travel skills • My Cook Book • Transition support • Preparation for work • SkillZONE • SchoolBeat
	Working with animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy animals • Small animal care • Pony care • Living Eggs
	Arts/digital media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpentry • Digital making • Weaving
	High achievers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibitions • Galleries • Theatre visits • Small group interventions • Workshops • Cheltenham Literature Festival

The school day

The day starts at 8.45 when pupils and staff meet in their classrooms for a community meeting (there is a breakfast club for those who require it). Pupils on the Seedling and Sapling pathways will then engage in a therapeutic activity to prepare them for learning while pupils on the Sycamore and Blossom pathways will explore a current affairs topic led by their form teacher.

There is a short break between lessons from 10.30 to 11.00 and a lunch period from 12.45 to 13.30. The school day finishes at 15.30 except on Friday when we finish at 12.45.

Formal lessons are taught during the first part of the school day when pupils are most alert and receptive. From break-time onwards, we focus on more practical subjects such as Design and Technology, MFL, Humanities and Computing. These practical lessons continue after the lunch break, with the addition of physical education activities and 'enrichment curriculum' activities such as art and crafts, horticulture, cycling proficiency, outdoor education, and work experience. Swimming lessons take place during the morning at a local swimming pool.

Home Studies (homework)

We expect all pupils to complete one home study task each week and we encourage reading at home to build literacy skills. The amount of reading will vary between pupils, but we generally expect pupils to read for five minutes at least three times a week.

Pupils on the Seedling and Sapling pathways have a weekly home study reading task and their progress is recorded in a personal reading log. Pupils on the Sycamore and Blossom pathways are assigned a weekly home study task to support progress towards achieving their personal education outcomes (EHCP objectives).

Each pupil has an individualised termly homework chart and can choose which task to complete each week. We recognise that homework at this stage may take many different forms and could include reading, written work, research tasks or practice of other skills as appropriate.

Regular drop-in sessions for the members of the Boarding Support team are arranged to ensure collaboration between the education and care teams to support each pupil's outcomes. Pupils have a personal homework record to record progress and to provide an opportunity for parents and carers to give feedback.

Pupils who complete all their home study tasks each half term receive a certificate and a retail voucher to recognise and reward their achievements. Certificates and vouchers are presented as part of a special class assembly.

Work experience

We encourage and support our older pupils to gain practical work experience to equip them with the skills they need in later life.

Pupils are able to gain practical experience through a range of facilities provided by Novalis Trust which include the Upper Court Café at William Morris School, and the Lunchbox Café at our sister school Cotswold Chine, all of which provide pupils with the opportunity to serve members of the public working alongside members of our staff. Not only does this allow them to acquire valuable practical skills associated with working in a hospitality and retail environment but it also helps them to develop self-confidence and independence skills.

We also make use of the range of skills within Novalis Trust to provide our pupils with other types of work experience. This might include working within the IT, administration, or training departments or with members of our maintenance team.

Other opportunities including working at the local riding stables to acquire horse care skills. Our post-16 students also participate in life skill activities such as taking public transport, shopping for daily items, budget and planning and preparing meals, all of which are core elements of our Blossom pathway which focuses on achieving independence goals.



Therapeutic support

One of the most important ways in which we help our young people to gain a strong sense of psychological safety is through the provision of high-quality therapy by members of our clinical therapy team.



Types of therapy available

We offer a number of different forms of therapy – each child has different needs when it comes to therapeutic support, so we offer targeted interventions aimed at ensuring that all our young people can access therapy in a form that is most beneficial to them.

Speech and language therapy	This aims to support children with their communication, language and interaction skills. Our speech and language therapists offer support in many areas including social skills, emotional literacy, vocabulary enrichment and self-awareness.
Occupational therapy (OT)	OT provides practical support to children to enable them to overcome barriers to learning and to help them with daily life tasks. It can include support with self-care, functional skills, independence and life skills, sensory needs and motor skills.
Trauma-specific therapy	This includes: cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) which addresses problems in a very practical way; trauma-art narrative therapy (TANT) which is a structured creative cognitive exposure technique used to resolve traumatic events; and Reconstruction of Traumatic Memories RTM which is a trauma-focused therapy addressing issues underlying PTSD.
Creative therapy	Creative therapy offers children the chance to explore and communicate through the use of dance, drama and music. It aims to have a positive effect on emotional wellbeing and self-esteem and to improve their ability to communicate and concentrate. This can include drama and play therapy.
Talking therapy	Talking therapy gives children the opportunity to think and talk through a problem or issue. It provides them with the chance to express their feelings and to explore options for overcoming the difficulty in question.
Child, Adolescent & Family Psychotherapy	This helps young people find new ways to think about personal issues and difficulties by exploring how their feelings and thoughts are connected to their relationships and behaviour.
Attachment-based therapy (dyadic developmental psychotherapy)	Attachment-based therapy focuses on enabling young people to establish secure attachments with their adult carers by developing or rebuilding trust. It is often used in conjunction with other forms of therapy.
Clinical and Educational Psychology	Clinical Psychology involves supporting young people to overcome issues such as anxiety, anger and/or depression. An Educational Psychologist uses specialist knowledge and expertise to improve a young person's educational experience and outcomes.
Systemic family work	Systemic family work is offered as a way of supporting our young people's families to discuss and work through difficulties in their relationships with each other. Sessions provide family members with an opportunity to talk to each other with the aim of helping them to understand each other better, change negative behaviours and resolve conflicts.

Therapy sessions take place either one-to-one or in a group setting alongside other children with similar abilities and needs. Weekly individual therapy sessions generally last for 45 minutes and are scheduled to fit in with the school timetable to ensure that key subjects and activities are not missed.

The effectiveness of each young pupil's therapy programme is regularly monitored at our regular clinical and therapy meetings where goals and progress are reviewed. Our qualified therapists are supported by our team of Educational Clinical Therapy Assistants who accompany young people to therapy sessions and then support them to achieve their therapy goals outside of each session.

Alongside the therapy sessions, regular social activities and 'fun days' are held at Ebley House where our Clinical Therapy Centre is based to give young people an opportunity to interact with our therapists on an informal basis and to engage in games and other fun activities.

We also retain an external Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist who conducts clinics on a regular basis to provide clinical psychiatric support to those who need it and to ensure that any prescribed medication is reviewed regularly.

Our therapy dogs

Our team of four-legged friends – Stanley, Rosa and Chester – have been a fantastic addition to the therapy department. They play an important role in helping pupils to overcome their barriers to accessing therapy. They regularly accompany pupils to therapy sessions to provide additional comfort and support.

“Staff take the time to learn about pupils' needs and interests. This puts pupils at ease”.

Ofsted – 2023





A homely and nurturing environment

Boarding accommodation

Our boarding accommodation caters for up to 14 young people and is divided between two comfortable and well-appointed houses – Hiram House and Merton House – both of which are located on the main school site and are designed to promote the creation of a safe and nurturing family atmosphere.

Each house has a fully equipped kitchen, dining room, laundry, and utility room. There are five lounge and games rooms split across the two houses which are used for indoor recreation, watching television, playing computer games and general relaxation.

Every boarder has their own bedroom which is decorated according to their individual preferences and interests. Each bedroom has study facilities along with storage including a lockable space. In keeping with the school's therapeutic approach and because some children have sensory difficulties and needs, the sensory information in each house (i.e., loud noise, strong lighting, bold colours) is kept to a minimum. This ensures the creation of a 'low arousal' environment which reduces stress and promotes a calming and relaxing atmosphere.



Staff support

Our Head of Boarding is responsible for the day-to-day running of both Hiram House and Merton House. He is supported by a team of care, therapy, youth support and domestic staff who work together to ensure that all aspects of each child's individual care and therapy needs are met.

In addition to supporting each child with their daily care needs, a Welfare Support Worker acts as a key safety attachment figure for two boarders in their allocated house. They are also trained to support pupils through Life Story Work as well as acting as a point of contact with their class teachers to support their academic and social progress at school.

Respecting children's views and wishes

Every effort is made to ensure that every child's views and wishes are heard and respected where possible and appropriate. Each house holds their own group meetings on a fortnightly basis. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss suggestions and ideas about the home environment, choice of activities and meals.

Although it's thankfully quite rare for children to feel the need to complain, each child is made aware of their right to make a complaint. If a complaint is made, it is looked into promptly and, if we have got something wrong, we make sure that it's put right as quickly as possible.

‘Every effort is made to ensure that every child's views and wishes are heard and respected where possible and appropriate.’



Having fun and staying healthy

Being young is about discovering new things, enjoying the outdoors, pursuing hobbies and interests, developing a sense of adventure, and gaining self-confidence. It's about making friends and having fun. At William Morris School we aim to do all of this and lots more besides.

Our Youth Support team

Our team of Youth Support Workers run after school clubs and activities as part of our waking day curriculum, as well as helping children to access clubs and other leisure activities in the local community. The members of the team are specifically chosen for their energy and enthusiasm along with their skills in encouraging young people to participate in new activities.

Physical activities

William Morris School is set in several acres of beautiful gardens, which makes it the perfect spot for enjoying nature or going on walks with one of the Trust's therapy dogs. Its Cotswolds location also means it's ideally suited for a wide variety of healthy outdoor pursuits: everything from bike riding, fishing, and horse riding to snowboarding at the local dry ski slope. When the weather's not so good, there are also plenty of indoor leisure activities available including swimming, ice-skating and skateboarding.

Creative activities

Our excellent onsite workshops and other facilities – including our creative skills studio with its state-of-the-art printing press and horticultural facilities featuring a green house and polytunnel – provide plenty of opportunities for young people to pursue creative activities and hobbies. Different areas of the school's grounds are dedicated to leisure activities, vegetable growing and decorative planting. Pupils also have access to our modern IT suite for learning and research.

After school clubs

The youth support team also run a variety of after school clubs catering for a range of interests including running club, football, basketball, volleyball, disco-cise, sewing club, play club and drama club.



Outdoor activities

- bike riding
- sports
- dog walking
- tennis
- horse riding
- fishing
- rock climbing
- kayaking
- tubing
- sailing
- paddleboarding
- snowboarding
- mindfulness walks



Indoor activities

- swim fitness
- diving
- ice-skating
- yoga
- spinning
- skateboarding
- visiting the local leisure centre and working out at the gym



Local clubs and community activities

When assessed as safe and appropriate, pupils are encouraged to participate in clubs and activities in the local community including Explorer Scouts, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, Cadets, table tennis, football, gymnastics, music band, Cheerdance and chess and dance clubs. Not only does this help to develop confidence, independence, and social skills but it also provides an opportunity to meet and make friends with other young people in the local community.

“The true secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life.”

William Morris

Promoting a healthy lifestyle

We emphasise the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle, and we encourage and support all children to take plenty of exercise and to develop good eating habits.

We aim to ensure that all our pupils enjoy a healthy, balanced diet: all meals at school and in the houses are prepared by our team of cooks using fresh local ingredients where possible. Healthy snacks are available in the houses and children are also supported to learn how to prepare themselves tasty and nutritious meals.

Mindful of the fact that everything is so much easier after a good night's sleep, we also support children to develop healthy sleeping habits including regular age-appropriate bedtimes and good sleep hygiene techniques.

Staying safe and happy

We know that children make the best progress when they feel happy and secure. Staying safe is vitally important and our commitment to safeguarding is fundamental to everything that we do, particularly because of the vulnerable nature of many of the children in our care.

Safeguarding and child protection

Safeguarding and child protection encompasses a wide variety of issues including health and safety, site security, safety on school trips, online safety, mental health, and anti-bullying along with all forms of maltreatment, exploitation, abuse or neglect. Our robust safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures have been developed in conjunction with independent child protection experts and reflect the importance we place on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all those at the school.

Staying safe online

Whilst the internet is a wonderful educational resource and great for staying in touch with family and friends, it's important to stay safe online. With that in mind, all pupils are timetabled to attend the school's IT and internet safety course run jointly by members of the school's IT team, teaching team and safeguarding officers.

To prevent access to inappropriate or harmful material online, appropriate controls are in place on the Wi-Fi throughout the school. Further, where risk assessed as necessary for safeguarding purposes, the school may operate appropriate monitoring of internet use and email communications through the use of keyword-based filtering software. We ensure that any such monitoring is no more intrusive than necessary and is only carried out with the written consent of the relevant placing authority.

Wellbeing

We take the wellbeing of all the children at the school extremely seriously and we seek to promote a positive culture that upholds our values of kindness and empathy. We celebrate diversity and we emphasise the importance of showing respect for others.

We want all children to flourish so we adopt a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. Our Anti-Bullying Policy reinforces the importance of a supportive culture and countering bullying is a regular workshop topic run by senior staff.



Joining the School

Moving to a new school can be daunting so we work hard to make the process as smooth and welcoming as possible.

Admissions questionnaire

It's important to make sure that William Morris School is the right place for your child, so we always try to find out as much about them and their needs as possible. The process starts with the completion of our Admissions Questionnaire. This information is reviewed by our Admissions Panel which includes senior members of our education, care, clinical therapy, and management teams. Each meeting is chaired by Novalis Trust's Chief Executive who is a Registered Social Worker with more than 25 years' experience of working with children with complex needs.

Informal visit

If the Admissions Panel decide that William Morris School may be suitable, you and your child will be invited for an informal visit and tour so that you can see for yourself what the school is like and meet our staff and other pupils. We may also come to visit you at home or your child's current school to find out more about them.

Placement visit

Assuming that everyone is happy to proceed, your child will be invited to come to the school for an initial placement visit which normally lasts for five to seven days. This provides a further opportunity to check that the school can meet their needs and that everyone is comfortable that it is the right place for them.

Offer of placement

Provided that the visit is successful and a place is available within an appropriate house and class, a formal written offer will be made. All placements are subject to the terms of the National Association of Special Schools contract.

We know that it can take a while to adjust to a new environment, so we take particular care to make sure that every new pupil gets all the support they need over the first few weeks to help them settle in and get to know everyone.



Preparing for the future

Everyone has to leave William Morris School one day, whether it's to go to college or to enter the world of work. In many ways, everything that we do at William Morris School is designed to prepare children for adult life and we do everything possible to make sure that each child is ready when the time comes to move on.

All children who join the school are assessed shortly after their arrival using the assessment tool developed by our therapy team. This is used to make a baseline assessment of independence skills and to establish appropriate goals for a variety of daily and domestic activities (e.g. cooking, laundry, shopping, and personal care) along with emotional regulation, community and social skills.

Throughout their time at the school, a holistic approach is taken towards helping each young person to achieve their individual independence goals. The Clinical Therapy Assistants assigned to each house play an important role in supporting each young person to make progress towards their goals as part of their daily routines. Progress is regularly reviewed by our qualified therapists and goals are updated accordingly.

In addition to the work done in school and the homes on a daily basis, our Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists deliver targeted group work focused on preparing for the future. These groups are designed to enable young people to build their confidence and to develop a range of independence skills – everything from budgeting and using public transport through to the use of body language and eye contact, social skills and interview skills.



“Leaders place pupils’ career aspirations at the heart of their planning for each individual.”

Ofsted – 2023

Our Leadership Team

Senior Management



Jake Lukas
Chief Executive



Caroline Tebay
Deputy Chief Executive,
Head of Clinical
& Therapy Services



Maureen Smith
William Morris School Trustee

Education



Gareth Parker
Headteacher



Carol Hill
Deputy Headteacher



Tom Shanks
Deputy Headteacher

Boarding



Jason Towells
Head of Boarding Provision



Beth Price-Bish
Deputy Head of Therapy
(Family & Systemic Practice)

Admissions



Rachael Walton
Head of Admissions,
Transitions & Family Support

Pupil support



Martha Lukas
Placement Planning
Social Worker



John Smith
Trainee Pupil Counsellor

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Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Clinical & Therapy Services

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William Morris
School