'Respect & Achieve'

CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

We hope you found the information available on the school website helpful. Below are the answers to some questions we tend to get asked during initial visits. Should you have any further questions please don't hesitate to get in touch with school.

What is the admissions process?

All students who attend Castle Hill have an Education Health & Care Plan. Applications to the school are made via the Local Authority EHCP Team and they have the final say on the placements at Castle Hill. Parents should view prospective schools whilst their child is in year 5, then parents can name their school preference during the year 5 transfer annual review. Parent preferences are submitted to the local authority who will then liaise with professionals from school and other agencies to ensure the placement named is the most appropriate provision for the child's education. Placements are finalised by February when the child is in year 6.

The Local Authority EHCP Assessment Coordinators who support our admissions can be contacted via: specialeducation@stockport.gov.uk or 0161 474 2525.

How is the curriculum organised?

The Castle Hill staff team continually refine and adapt the curriculum to ensure we offer broad, balanced, challenging and engaging learning opportunities.

We aim to provide students with a curriculum that prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences which they will encounter after leaving us, whilst promoting spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

Our curriculum is based primarily on the National Curriculum and is broadly divided into a Key Stage 3 (Years 7 & 8), Key Stage 4 (Years 9-11) and Key Stage 5 (Years 12-13) model.

In Year 7 pupils are taught following a primary model, they are taught the majority of their lessons by their form teacher but will access specialist teachers/specialist rooms for certain lessons such as Food Technology. In year 8 and 9, all students are taught in mixed ability groups with teaching being differentiated to support and challenge all students. In Years 10 and 11 students follow both a core (English, maths, science etc) and options curriculum. The options curriculum allows students to progress further in areas in which they have a particular skill or interest. In keeping with our aim of preparing students for the world of work, all students follow a vocational course (construction, hair and beauty or hospitality) as part of their options curriculum.

Our Key Stage 5 curriculum focuses on developing and extending key functional skills in literacy, numeracy and computing alongside vocational courses and work-based learning. In this way our sixth form students are thoroughly prepared for the world of work. Our curriculum offers a very clear pathway for progression and all courses from Year 10 onwards lead to a formal qualification of some sort eg. GCSE, BTEC, Entry Level Certificate and Functional Skills. More information about our curriculum can be found using the following link: https://www.castlehill.stockport.sch.uk/Curriculum/

What does teaching look like at Castle Hill?

We believe that every pupil should have access to opportunities in which they can achieve as this will allow them to successfully transition into adulthood. Staff use a wide range of 'Quality First' teaching strategies to ensure that all pupils can make expected progress within their lessons. All staff are expected to:

- Have a sound understanding of individual pupil need.
- Prepare well-planned and creative lessons that promote progress.
- Use varied resources that allow pupils to learn in a 'hands-on' and meaningful way.
- Utilise differentiated and sometimes individualised activities.
- Produce specific visuals used to promote and support engagement.
- Create individualised resources where needed.
- Ensure the environment is safe and purposeful.
- Foster independence and promote an expectation of pupil interaction.
- Use individual explanation or offer individual support where needed.
- Emphasise the importance of mutual respect.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning.
- Use differentiated questioning and modelling.
- Adapt language used to support pupil understanding of expectations.
- Offer only constructive/effective feedback.
- Ensure effective direction is given to any additional adults in the room.
- Give well-structured, specific and authentic praise.

Classes in KS3 are taught in mixed ability groups with lessons being differentiated to ensure all pupils are challenged and can make real progress. Pupils are generally taught in classes of 12 by a teacher who is supported by at least one teaching assistant, sometimes it may be appropriate to offer a higher level of support. The level of support needed is decided by school in collaboration with parents and other agencies.

Once pupils reach KS4, they have access to a diverse range of vocational and academic opportunities. There is a strong emphasis on experiential learning throughout the curriculum as this helps pupils to develop functional based skills which will prepare them for adulthood. We also extend class based learning with a broad range of off-site trips and residential experiences.

Staff at Castle Hill will always work closely with pupils and parents to ensure the path they take through school will be the most beneficial to prepare them for their future and will encourage them to reach their full potential.

What interventions are available?

When necessary, intervention sessions are also offered to further support or enhance pupil progress. Interventions are generally split into academic interventions that focus mainly on maths and English development, and wider development interventions focusing specifically on social and emotional development. Parents will always be notified if a pupil accesses an intervention. We try not to take pupils out of core subjects for interventions, although this cannot always be avoided. However, interventions are for a set amount of time and should not interfere too much with the overall school year's curriculum. More information about the interventions available can be found using the following link: https://www.castlehill.stockport.sch.uk/Learning-support/

What additional specialist support is available at Castle Hill?

We have a whole range of additional on-site teams available to support pupils at Castle Hill. We work together to offer a cohesive approach to supporting pupils and families. Below are some of the key teams who offer support within school:

- Our Family and Multi-Agency Link officer (Pauline Johnston) can offer support to families and is available to help with any concern a parent may have.
- Our Hub Team offer specialist support across the school for pupils with ASC and other complex needs. They offer 1:1 intervention, sensory spaces, in-class support and additional learning environments.
- Our Pupil Support Team are available to support pupils who are unable to access their learning. Pupils' learning may be impacted for a wide range of reasons including friendship issues, anxieties or general concerns. This team can offer support or intervention to resolve any issue that a pupil encounters and the aim is to enable pupils to re-focus and access their lesson. This team also support with conflict management and strive to resolve issues using strategies based on the Restorative Approaches techniques.
- The Speech and Language Therapy and the Occupational Therapy teams are funded by the Together Trust. There is SALT on-site as well as a part time OT who are supported by a therapies assistant. Other members of the team offer support where needed.
- The NHS Physiotherapist is available on-site fortnightly and the NHS Occupational Therapist is available at request. The NHS school nurse is on-site twice a week but can be contacted at any time if needed. They all provide support for pupils and staff to ensure that individual children access the therapy they need.
- The Sensory Support Service are available on-site to support pupils with a range of hearing and visual impairments. They offer a range of 1:1 and individual support/intervention dependent on each pupil's individual needs.

What agencies support the school?

CAHMS run a half-termly consultation at school. This consultation is used by staff and parents to discuss individual pupils and strategies/options for support.

The Stockport Autism Team is currently reviewing the support it offers Castle Hill, they aim to offer a broader range of support in the near future.

The School Age plus Team, the Educational Psychology team, the Aiming High team, the SRE team and the Social Care team all support school where needed, they are all part of the Team Around the School and support can be accessed at any time.

Who decides what additional support is put in place for my child?

Castle Hill has 2 SENCO's, a Key Stage Three SENCO (Ciara Nellis) and a Key Stage Four SENCO (Abbie Nicholas). The SENCO's work closely with all staff to ensure that the appropriate support is available for each individual pupil. The SENCO's gather as much information as possible about each child's individual needs before they attend Castle Hill in year 7. As part of the year 6 transition process, the KS3 SENCO will liaise with the authority, parents, schools and professionals to ensure that all pupils have the additional support/ resources needed in place for September. Once attending Castle Hill, if a pupil requires additional 'in-class' support, the SENCO's together with teaching staff and parents will decide what support will be the most appropriate. School also boast a range of additional learning areas and specialist teams who operate on-site. These teams, such as the school Pupil Support Team, offer further support to pupils, parents and staff both in and out of class. If more specialist support is required then, as our specialist teams are an 'in-school' resource, school staff, in collaboration with parents, will decide which support is most appropriate for each individual pupil.

How are the year 7 class groupings decided?

Once the placements have been decided, the KS3 SENCO will collate the information from schools, parents and other professionals. The year 7 team will meet to discuss individual pupil need and groupings will then be decided. Pupils are taught in mixed ability classes within year 7 and we try to ensure that pupils will be with an appropriate peer group within classes.

Can Castle Hill support with personal care?

Staff at Castle Hill will be offered any relevant training linked to pupils' individual needs. Staff will support with personal care where appropriate, however, we will always encourage independence when possible but will ensure support is available for pupils who need it.

What additional clubs are available?

We have a wide range of extra-curricular activities available. Pupils can access breakfast club daily from 8am, you do not have to pay for your child to attend breakfast club but there are a range of drinks and snacks available between 50p-£1.00.

There are also a number of after-school clubs available, these change annually and information will be shared with you early in the new term. Clubs generally run until 3.45pm, however, you will be given full details in the autumn term. After school clubs are run by school staff and unfortunately local authority funded transport cannot take your child home after a club, parents/carers have to collect their child. More information can be found using the following link: https://www.castlehill.stockport.sch.uk/Extra-Curricular/

How do school dinners run?

School dinners are pre-paid using parent pay, this is to remove a level of stress for pupils with regards to using money. Pupils will be offered a choice between hot meals, panini's jacket potatoes, salads or sandwiches. Lunch times are monitored by Castle Hill staff and there are plenty of staff available to support pupils where needed. Pupils are welcome to bring a packed lunch if they wish, we are a 'Healthy School' and so encourage you to send healthy options for your child. More information can be found using the following link: https://www.castlehill.stockport.sch.uk/Information/Food/

How is transport managed?

Prior to starting school, the local authority work with students and their families to assess the most suitable transport arrangements. Your child may be entitled to Local Authority funded transport. If you require further information, the SEN transport team can be contacted on 0161-4742504. Once the place here has been agreed, if you think your child is eligible for LA funded transport you will have to contact the SEN transport team on the number above. The team will direct you to an online application and will support you through the process. LA funded transport is managed by the local authority, we as a school have no say on the company who provides the service, the routes, the pick-up points or the employment of taxi escorts.

When and if appropriate, the school and the local authority will help students and families to work towards full independence. We work alongside the 'Pure Innovations' charity to offer the travel training program to pupils who are ready to take the next steps towards independence. More information about the travel training program will be given during your child's annual review, however, we can refer any pupil to the travel training program any time you think your child is ready to travel independently to school. More information can be found using the following link: https://www.castlehill.stockport.sch.uk/Parents/Transport/