Mo Mowlam Academy – Secondary Formal Curriculum Offer

Most students follow the formal curriculum offer which includes all subjects outlined here

Art

Art gives students a non-verbal way to express complex feelings, especially when words are hard to find. It can be therapeutic, helping to reduce anxiety, process trauma, and promote calmness. Creating art encourages mindfulness and focus, which helps emotional regulation. Producing artwork—even simple pieces—gives a sense of achievement and pride. Art encourages risk-taking in a safe space, which helps students build resilience. Positive feedback in art can boost self-worth for learners who struggle academically. Students are encouraged to appreciate other people's artwork, which is a fundamental skill which young people with SEMH sometimes find difficult.

Students who opt for Art in KS4 will study an Arts Award qualification or an Art / Photography GCSE or Open Award depending on ability levels.

Physical Education (PE)

PE is not just about fitness or sport; it's a vital tool for supporting emotional regulation, social development, confidence building, and lifelong wellbeing. Physical activity helps to release stress and tension, especially for students with high levels of anxiety, anger, or trauma. Exercise stimulates endorphins and serotonin, improving mood and mental clarity. For many SEMH learners, PE offers a healthy, structured outlet for emotions and energy. PE gives students the chance to achieve personal goals, experience success outside the classroom and receive positive recognition for effort, not just ability. This helps build resilience and a sense of self-worth—especially for students who struggle academically.

In KS4, students work towards an Open Award which incorporates the elements of fitness and healthy living.

PSHE

Delivering PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) in a secondary SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) setting is absolutely essential. It's not just a subject—it's a life skills toolkit, equipping students with the emotional, social, and practical knowledge they need to navigate life safely and confidently.

PSHE directly teaches coping strategies, self-awareness, and emotional literacy—all critical for students with SEMH needs. Many students in SEMH settings have difficulties with peer interaction, conflict resolution, and boundaries. PSHE teaches how to build and maintain healthy relationships, including friendships, family dynamics, romantic and sexual relationships. It promotes respect, empathy, and consent—building safer, more respectful communities in and out of school.

PSHE gives students the knowledge and confidence to stay safe in the community and online, and ensures that all students have suitable Sex and Relationship Education.

The Pol-Ed Educational programme is used to educate children further on contextual safeguarding issues.

English

English as a subject offers unique benefits that directly support the needs of students with SEMH difficulties. English provides learners with the tools to articulate thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Literature, creative writing, and discussion activities encourage self-expression in safe, structured ways, which can help learners process emotions and develop a stronger sense of identity.

SEMH learners often face challenges with confidence and self-worth. Success in English—whether through reading aloud, completing written work, or sharing ideas—helps build resilience and pride in achievement.

We offer a range of qualifications from Entry Level to GCSE. Local colleges tell us that a student achieving a level 1 functional skills allows them to progress to a level 2 functional skills course, so those students who are unlikely to achieve a grade 4 GCSE are offered the functional skills qualification.

Bespoke Curriculum Pathways

For those students who have medical or mental health needs which prevent them from accessing the formal curriculum, and for whom Alternative Provision is not appropriate, a bespoke curriculum is offered, delivering a combination of the most relevant subjects, often on a 1-1 basis away from the conventional classroom environment.

Science

Science helps students make sense of the world—how things work, why events happen, and how humans impact the environment.

It connects them to real-life issues like health, climate change, nutrition, and technology.

This gives students a sense of relevance and curiosity, especially important in re-engaging learners with low motivation or disconnection from school.

We teach science to spark curiosity and reconnect students with learning, build confidence, resilience, and reasoning and equip students with life skills and practical understanding.

We offer qualifications from Entry Level to Level 2 in either Open Awards or GCSE. The open award is accessible to less able learners, or those who struggle with the demands of formal examinations, and therefore benefit from portfolio based assessment.

Outdoor Education

We recognise that many of our learners have experienced barriers to traditional classroom learning, and outdoor education offers an inclusive, hands-on alternative that encourages engagement, confidence, and emotional regulation. Our intent is to create a safe, supportive environment where students can develop personally, socially, and academically through positive outdoor experiences. Our OE curriculum supports teamwork, communication, and leadership through group challenges and problem-solving tasks. It helps to foster self-reliance, responsibility, and trust through guided risk-taking and encourages empathy, patience, and respect for others and the environment. It can help students face challenges in a supportive setting where failure is seen as part of growth and provide opportunities to achieve success beyond the classroom, raising self-esteem and motivation. In KS4, students can opt to continue with Outdoor Education and work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Mo Mowlam Academy

Maths

Numeracy is essential for daily life: managing money, telling time, cooking, using public transport, measuring, etc. Many SEMH students will move into practical or vocational pathways—maths is key in trades, retail, mechanics, and care work.

Maths is a core subject, and required for college courses, apprenticeships, and employment. Without it, students may face barriers to progression later in life. We offer a range of qualifications from Entry Level to GCSE. Local colleges tell us that a student achieving a level 1 functional skills allows them to progress to a level 2 functional skills course, so those students who are unlikely to achieve a grade 4 GCSE are offered the functional skills qualification.

Food

Our Food curriculum is designed to equip students with the practical skills, knowledge, and confidence to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and independent living.

Food lessons are structured to provide a safe, supportive, and sensory-rich environment where students can achieve success, build independence, and learn skills that will benefit them both now and in adulthood.

In KS4, students will work towards and Open Award which incorporates elements of nutrition and healthy living.

Alternative Provision

For some students, it is appropriate to offer AP as part of their curriculum. This can be alongside the Formal Curriculum or as part of a bespoke package of education. The AP offered will be the most suitable package for that particular student, and takes into consideration future aspirations and peer relationships. All AP is appropriately risk assessed with checks carried out on unregistered providers.

Oracy

Oracy is the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language. At Mo Mowlam Academy we believe spoken language to be fundamental to the achievement of our pupils. We understand that communication and language are the roots underpinning success in reading and writing and that good communication skills can enhance every type of learning. Oracy underpins our work across the curriculum as pupils develop the skills to reason, discuss, debate and present their learning in a variety of contexts with increasing skill and confidence. Our pupils are encouraged to explore ideas through discussion, toformat their own reasoned arguments, to challenge each other's opinions, to develop critical thinking skills as well as talk in full sentences with a clear and confident voice. It is our intention to provide an environment that is rich in talk and ensure that, by thetime they leave Mo Mowlam, all our pupils are able to communicate effectively and confidently in a range of different situations, for a variety of different audiences.When teaching oracy at Mo Mowlam, teachers address the four key strands of the oracy skills framework:

- Physical aspects – how we use our voice and body to communicate.
- Linguistic aspects – how we structure what we say and choose appropriate vocabulary.
- Cognitive aspects – staying focused whilst speaking and when listening to others, asking appropriate questions and explaining opinions using reasons.
- Social & emotional aspects – working with others, listening and responding and increasing confidence.

ICT

Digital literacy is a basic life skill in today's world. ICT teaches students how to use computers, smartphones, the internet, and common applications that are vital for managing money, applying for jobs or benefits, accessing services like banking or healthcare and communicating with others. ICT helps develop problem-solving, logical thinking, sequencing and memory, and attention to detail . These skills support both academic learning and the emotional regulatio crucial for SEMH learners.

ICT lessons can be low-pressure and highly structured, offering a calm, safe space for students who may find other subjects overwhelming. Working on a screen can feel more private and less exposing than group or verbal activities. Most jobs now require basic IT skills—from emailing and spreadsheets to digital registers and stock systems.

ICT gives students new ways to communicate, especially those who may struggle verbally. In KS4, students will work towards and Open Award qualification covering ICT skills

Global Studies

This lesson is delivered to KS3 students and covers humanities themes, however is referred to as Global Studies following a student voice activity. Lessons explore people, places, cultures, beliefs, and societies—past and present, and help SEMH students develop a broader perspective and connect with the world beyond their immediate experiences. Global Studies tackle emotional and moral questions—injustice, conflict, identity, resilience, and ethics, and help students explore their own values and emotions. The aim is for young people to develop empathy and understanding for others, and reflect on choices, actions, and consequences. Through topics like religion, human rights, diversity, and global issues, students learn to respect different views and cultures, understand social justice and inequality and become more responsible, informed citizens. This supports their development as respectful members of society, even if they've struggled with behaviour or relationships. Through Global Studies, students will be supported to think critically and question information so that they can make informed decisions and understand current events and their rights and responsibilities. These are essential life skills, especially for students preparing for independent living or further education.