

Wickselm House Learning Centre



Welcome to Wickselm House (opening 2021)

Our unique, not-for-profit, alternative learning centre is set in fifteen acres of idyllic Gloucestershire countryside and includes its own smallholding with a range of livestock and a student-run kitchen garden. We adopt a holistic and trauma-informed approach where children can connect with the great outdoors and agriculture, be heard and valued, learn and grow.

Our Motto

Be Curious, Be Kind, Be Joyful, Be Unique.

A Message from the CEO

It has been my pleasure and privilege to spend the past decade working with children and their families helping children learn from the land and connect with the great outdoors. I am now beginning an exciting new chapter, working with an exceptional and passionate staff team to supporting young people on their individual learning journeys here at Wickselm house.



At Wickselm House our students have a wide range of different needs, and every individual has a unique set of skills and interests, which we aim to nurture and support to their fullest potential. We offer a balanced curriculum fostering each child's intellectual, physical and emotional learning. We are proud to work in close partnership with parents, carers and external organisations to equip children with the tools needed to access further education and embrace the next stage of life's journey.

Hannah O'Brien
CEO

Vision

At Wickselm we believe it is our responsibility to offer all students the opportunity to explore, learn and flourish through our unique approach to learning and outdoor focused curriculum.

This allows every individual to find their passion and follow it to enrich education, which will in turn lead to lifelong interests.



Ethos

It is our privilege as carers and educators to guide our learners in an engaging and joyful educational environment, giving every individual a platform to show the world what they have to offer.

We also have an ethos of further responsibility to animals, the natural world and our environment. This is echoed in our operational practice and curriculum focus.



Teaching & Leadership

Our Teaching and Leadership ethos is underpinned by a strong focus on our joint responsibility to offer a quality and meaningful education to the children we care for at Wickselm House. We believe that by investing in the young people we are educating, that we are in turn investing in our global future. We aim to equip the next generation, regardless of their individual challenges, with the tools and skills to build a positive and exciting future for themselves.

Strong leadership is essential to support a well-resourced and highly motivated teaching and learning support team.

All our lead teachers have trauma training to a minimum of DDP1, SEN and ENCO experience and training, Safeguarding Lead training and Level 3 Paediatric First Aid training, along with years of classroom experience. All staff working with the children use a trauma-informed approach and have SEN training along with Level 3 Paediatric First Aid. We understand the importance of ongoing CPD, and all staff access regular in house and external training.

“Hannah and team, I can never thank you enough for the stability and strong support you gave me with my boys. It has allowed me to understand the boys struggles and work as a team to build them up. You truly have a part of our hearts”.

V. Mills Parent

Curriculum

We follow our own bespoke curriculum, which relates back to our natural world and utilises outdoor learning opportunities wherever possible, with core subjects being English, Maths, Science and Personal, Social Development, Art and Music. In addition to whole class lessons and activities, all children are offered one-to-one and small group daily lessons in English, Maths and Science with their key learning lead. These one-to-one sessions take place in comfy, cosy teaching rooms which are equipped with resources to support learning preferences beyond traditional desk-based teaching. Every one of these sessions is tailored to an individual child’s particular interests, to use a positive and exciting base to engage the child from the outset, and enable a strong foundation on which to build a love of learning.

All staff work closely with our SENCO learning lead, parents and carers to tailor and track each child’s learning journey, with recognition and respect for their academic, social, emotional and cultural needs. Assessment and tracking are key to effective support and learning. Staff meet each Friday to evaluate and plan for every child.

We regularly invite students to share their achievements with their peers and families during open days and whole school events.

Carefully planned transitional links are in place for students joining or leaving the setting, ensuring that pupils have a smooth changeover into their new learning environment.



Extra Curricula Activities and Enrichment

At Wickselm House we understand that supporting the whole child inside and outside of the classroom is essential in achieving a productive and positive outcome for our children. We spend time every day, in all seasons, come rain or shine, exploring the natural world, enjoying Forest School sessions, working in the kitchen garden, and caring for the animals on our smallholding. These experiences are both therapeutic and informative, offering potential for children to identify vocational pathways working in agriculture, horticulture and animal management. Being out and about offers lots of opportunity for physical education and for understanding and tolerance of the wider world. Building relationships with animal offers a unique opportunity and motivation to grow children's ability to nurture and empathise.



“You have to be kind and gentle otherwise the animals won’t know that you are their friend.”

G. aged 6.

The Learning Day

Our learning day runs from 9am to 2.30pm. Children aged 5-13 years old attend for two days each week during term time; this is for forty weeks of the year. Our Oak population attend on a Monday and Tuesday and our Yew population attend on a Wednesday and Thursday. Each Friday staff complete essential tracking, planning and training. Friday is also a day when parents and carers are invited on several dates throughout the year to attend training and discuss their child's needs and progress. Our three classes are divided by age, but there is flexibility within this set-up to allow for individual ability. Class One caters for ages 5-7 years, Class Two caters for ages 7-9 and Class Three caters for children aged 10 upwards.

Each learning day begins with a group catch-up with staff and friends and a chance to discuss the topics and themes of the week. At this point staff can decide how to begin the day's learning, working from a flexible lesson plan which can be spontaneously adapted to account for weather, student engagement opportunity, and group dynamic on the day. Each class is managed by a lead teacher who is supported by qualified support staff consultants and therapists each week.

Each class has its own dedicated classroom along with access to our science, art and food tech room, messy paint rainbow room, walled sensory garden, kitchen garden and outdoor learning spaces, including animal handling areas.

The lead teacher works in a one-to-one or small group with each student at different points through the day in our upstairs learning rooms to support maths, science and English at a pace and duration to suit each child's capability on the day.

We break for lunch at 12:15. Our on-site kitchen provides healthy balanced meals for children and staff, using many ingredients sourced from the students' kitchen garden. Staff eat with the children in their class groups and outdoors for alfresco dining in good weather.

At the end of each day classes relax and wind down ready to transition home and share their adventures with parents, carers and siblings.



Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

Wickselm House provides a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all its pupils, with child welfare and wellbeing at the heart of all planning and practice. All lead teaching staff have safeguarding lead training and all staff receive regular child protection mandatory training and are kept up to date with child protection procedures.

Each day we reflect on our motto and British Values. The children learn to respect each other, share, take turns and support one another. Children are encouraged to respect and celebrate each other's spiritual and cultural beliefs. Procedures are constantly updated to reflect new and developing technologies, enabling our children to learn to make safe choices in their use of digital resources, the internet and personal devices.

Stay Safe activities are regularly included within the curriculum and enrichment programme, e.g. personal safety, fire safety, e-safety, first aid and road safety.

Procedures for Safeguarding Children

All organisations working with children have a responsibility to implement robust safeguarding policies and procedures, and to make sure these are understood by and communicated effectively to all staff with designated safeguarding leads employed within the workplace. In addition, it is a requirement that all staff undergo appropriate checks prior to employment, including Enhanced DBS and barring, suitability to work with children, and safe recruitment adherence.

Wickselm House may work with other agencies following statutory Safeguarding Procedures. As part of this process, we routinely note any minor injuries or other concerns about a child. This is not meant to imply a particular judgement; it is done in a spirit of wishing to provide support to families. In the event of more serious concerns, the welfare of the child will always be the guiding principle in any action taken.

A designated member of staff has responsibility for co-ordination of admissions and continuity of care to looked after children.



Opportunities Beyond Wickselm and Our Partners

Wickselm House is a not-for-profit community interest organisation which means we have a responsibility to serve our community. It goes without saying that our invaluable intervention in the lives of the young people who learn with us supports each individual child, and in turn our local and global community, by changing the trajectory and social and economic input our learners will make in future.

We have partnered with local organisations with a likeminded ethos, to offer our families further support and enrichment activities, from Forest School and respite holiday care to parent and carer training.

If you are a member of a local or national organisation and you are interested in working with us or in visiting Wickselm House to discover more about what we do, please get in touch.

Our beautiful, listed building belongs to the Berkeley Castle Estate and is situated close the castle itself. We use this as an opportunity to inspire children and spark an interest in the history of our local surroundings.

Admissions

Wickselm House Learning Centre exists to support children who are currently not able to thrive attending fulltime in a mainstream school environment. We work closely with parents and carers, schools, childcare and healthcare professionals and our local authority to provide an alternative provision. Our aim is to support children and equip them with the resources to access mainstream education and vocational training later in their educational journey. We also support children who are flexi-schooling to provide much needed respite from a full-time school placement.

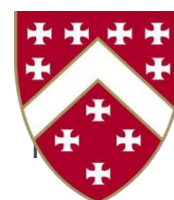
Pupils are admitted to Wickselm House following consultation with parents and carers and the Wickselm SENCO and learning lead or following a request from the Local Authority where a child has an Education and Health Care Plan in place. All children are offered a gradual transition and supported to begin their time at Wickselm House in the most positive way.

As a not-for-profit social enterprise, we rely on grant funding and philanthropic donations, or in some cases self-funding from parents. We nurture and guide the children we work with to be the best they can be and to support them to become happy, enriched learners who in turn make valued contributions to our shared society.



The Haven

Parenting and Wellbeing Centre



Berkeley Castle

Get in touch...

Thank you for taking the time to read this prospectus and learn a little about Wickselm House. Please do get in touch to find out more and to request a visit, information on fees or full copy of our policies and procedures.

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