



Colchester Academy

RESILIENCE · EXCELLENCE · RESPECT



PROUD TO
BE A PART OF



Penrose
Learning Trust





About the Trust

Colchester Academy is part of Penrose Learning Trust.

At Penrose Learning Trust we are committed to achieving excellence through collaboration and a commitment to doing the very best for every child in our care.

The Trust was established in 2017, bringing together a collection of like-minded and aspirational schools. Since then, we have continued to grow locally, sharing a culture of best practice. We support one another when times are tough and allow staff to use their skills and talents across the Trust to not only raise standards, but to help everyone flourish and succeed.

We are passionate about developing our teachers and leaders, alongside our students.

Our collaborative approach means we discuss which elements of policy and practice should be standardised, aligned, or kept at a local level to ensure we can focus on what matters the most: our students.

Our Trust is continually growing and evolving, and our improvement plan supports schools with additional resources to help them achieve their school improvement priorities. Teaching and learning, school improvement and staff CPD are at the core of ensuring our students and staff get the best opportunities and development to enable them to flourish and thrive.

The Trust's mission
Excellence through collaboration

The vision
To inspire and enable all our young people, regardless of background or need, to be the best they can be.



Sarah Skinner
CEO, Penrose Learning Trust

Our values

We believe that developing the following attributes across our school communities is essential in achieving our vision:

Showing respect and tolerance
Valuing relationships
Being inclusive
Celebrating achievement
Demonstrating positivity



Welcome from the Principal

Mrs Jenny Betts

As Principal of Colchester Academy, I am honoured and privileged to welcome you to this fantastic school. We believe that each student is unique and we endeavour to provide an education which supports, challenges and engages our young people.

Together, we have an unrelenting focus on every individual and create a culture where we develop students' character in line with our core values of Resilience, Excellence and Respect, giving our young people the skills they need for their future.

We can promise you unwavering dedication from a talented group of staff who believe passionately in giving the very best opportunities to all the young people within our community. This spans both inside the classroom and beyond, to enrich their education with many and varied opportunities. Our culture of high aspirations, achievement and success for all, allows our students to grow and develop, inspiring them to be resilient young people ready to enrich society once they leave the Academy.

We work closely with students to enable them to fulfil their potential, providing rigorous academic challenge and supportive personal development. Our high expectations of students is reflected in our behaviour system and smart uniform code, and all students maintain high standards of appearance and behaviour at all times, allowing older students to lead by example.

Providing a friendly and supportive environment, we nurture our students' personal strengths and support them throughout their time at the Academy. Our dedicated staff want, not only to teach, but to lead and inspire, believing that better schools bring stronger outcomes and greater life opportunities.

We are proud of our achievements and continue to build on them. Once again, welcome to Colchester Academy.

Please come and visit us, to see for yourself what Colchester Academy can offer you.



Mission and values

Our Mission

Colchester Academy is a values driven school, with our core purpose, 'to be the change for those who need it most', underpinning everything we do. Through our mission of **'striving for excellence; ensuring equity'** we aim to ensure that every child fulfills their potential, and develops the valuable skills that will enable them to succeed beyond the Academy and in life.

We are committed to giving our students the best possible learning experiences and opportunities whilst studying at Colchester Academy. We provide rigorous academic challenge, in addition to educational and personal development activities, to gain a rich and rounded learning experience, so that all students get every opportunity to achieve their potential.



Our Values

RESILIENCE

We start this development the moment students join us. It means working hard and sticking at things when they are difficult, facing up to things and addressing problems head on – be it in the classroom, on the sports field or outside of the Academy – resilience gives our students the power to succeed.

EXCELLENCE

This is the aspiration to get things right, not to settle for completion, but to produce the absolute best. Cultivating a positive attitude to learning across the Academy community, we create an exceptional learning experience, which is waiting for students to grasp the opportunities available.

RESPECT

This is the value that starts at home and on which we build. Respect for ourselves, other students and all adults, regardless of background, ethnicity, age, gender, ability, values, lifestyles, opinions or interests; by being open, honest, friendly, and accepting of others, by sharing ideas and opinions openly and thoughtfully and by listening actively to the ideas and opinions of others. In short, we are kind.

"We know that real success is achieved through partnership and mutual support, so we will also work with you to ensure that you feel well equipped to support your child in their learning."



Our Curriculum

EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING

Learning and the curriculum is at the heart of our Academy's purpose and it reflects our core values of Respect, Resilience and Excellence. We recognise that improving educational outcome is the biggest way we can positively impact on all our students' futures, from those with SEN, disadvantaged, to those who attain the highest grades, our approach of excellence and stretch and challenge is tailored to meet the needs of all.

As well as our curriculum equipping our students with qualifications to progress in education and a child's intellectual development, it includes social and emotional development, citizenship and responsibility. Students are offered a broad and a balanced curriculum at KS3 where they explore a wide variety of national curriculum subjects. We make sure that students have the base skills and knowledge they need to support them in expanding their aspirations.



At KS4, students choose a number of GCSE options and we guide them in choosing the most relevant and appropriate subjects that allow them to progress with their education and employment aspirations, whilst maintaining a focus on academic rigour. Students and parents receive regular and meaningful feedback on progress both at KS3 and KS4.

We strive to deliver a curriculum that is coherently designed, sequenced and implemented, that is predominantly, but not exclusively, knowledge based and is built on a foundation of strong pedagogy. Our curriculum develops a child's love of lifelong learning, of fascination and wonder, and enables them to be excellent in all they do.

We are rightly proud of our students' achievements and celebrate them often, in class, assemblies and through our regular newsletters and parental communication. The pinnacle of excellence is inclusion within Arete, a publication showing excellent work from across the Academy, used both to celebrate achievement and as models for excellence for other students in class. Arete in its basic sense means 'excellence of any kind'. In its earliest appearance in Greek, this notion of excellence was ultimately bound up with the notion of fulfilment of purpose or function: the act of living up to one's potential. This is what we expect from our students every day. This is what they deliver.



Year 7

Our purpose is to develop our youngest students into resilient, respectful, and ambitious learners. By providing a broad curriculum, we reinforce the skills and experiences that our students bring from primary school. We offer them a wide range of opportunities to enrich their outcomes, both inside and outside the classroom. Our nurturing, yet mature environment prepares students for lifelong learning and development.

In addition to an excellent teaching team we also have a very supportive pastoral team. The team is committed to providing the care and support your child needs to thrive and be successful at school. Every year group has a Student Support Manager attached to it, which is a non-teaching role. This ensures that individuals get the support they need whether it be academic, personal issues, or extra-curricular.



To ensure students are independent and reflective we have carefully designed our curriculum to ensure it builds on prior skills and knowledge. Students will receive a progress report every term which reflects their academic progress and they receive targets which ensures they continue to develop and grow.

“It’s a really nice place to learn, and staff listen to our feedback and act on it. For example, we now have a Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme running.”

– Year 10 student



Our curriculum is ambitious and designed to give all learners, including the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

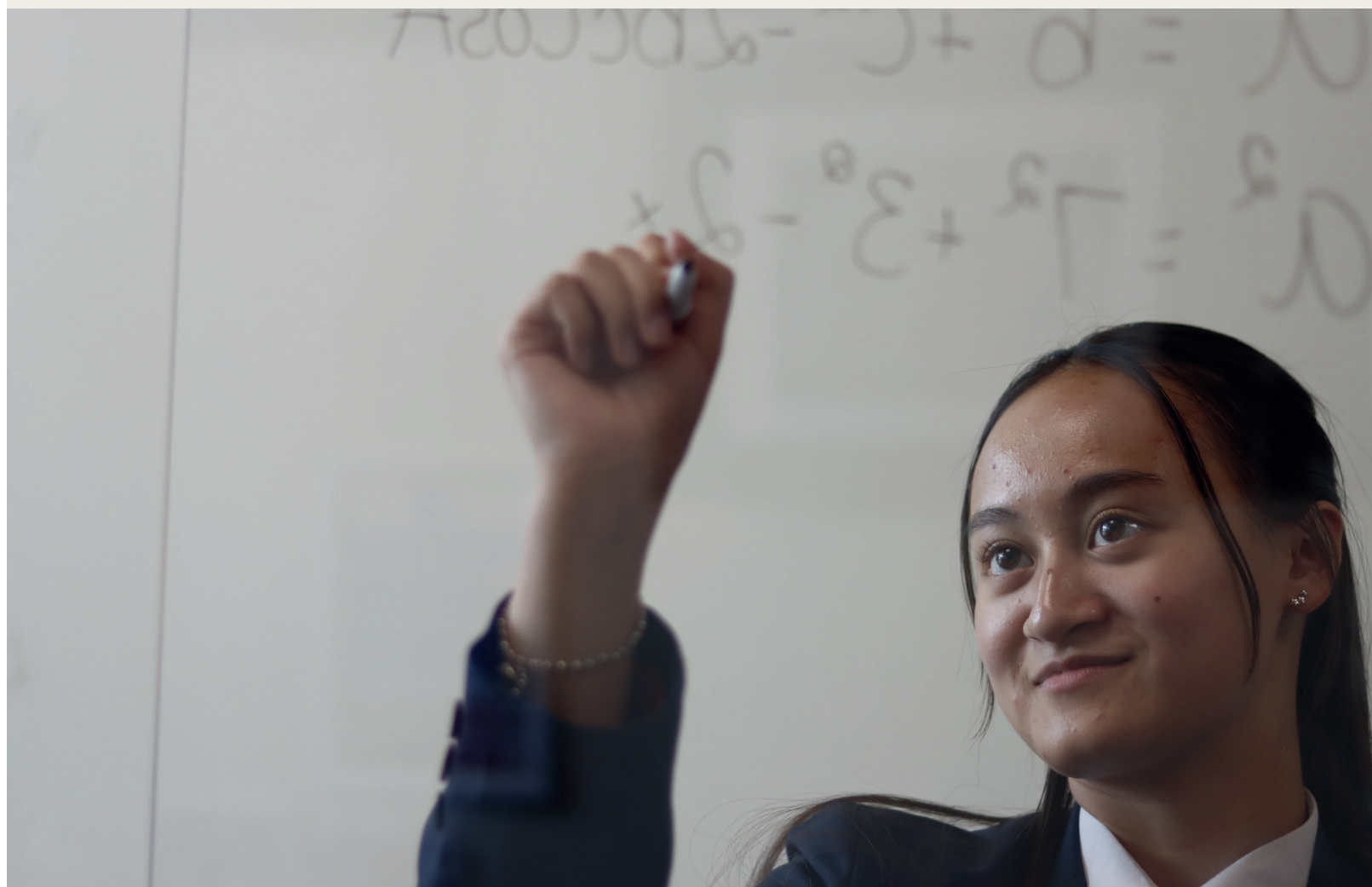
It is coherently planned and sequenced towards subject mastery and skills for future learning and employment. Our curriculum ensures we have the same academic, technical, or vocational ambitions for almost all learners. Where this is not practical – for example, for some learners with high levels of SEND – it remains ambitious while supportive and inclusive in meeting their needs.

Our learners study the full curriculum. We teach the full range of National Curriculum subjects for three years; students are supported to select a broad range of options which are completed in our two-year Key stage 4.

We believe passionately in the power of reading and have therefore placed this front and centre of the curriculum.

“The lessons here are great and the teachers make them fun. I particularly like my Science lessons as we do lots of experiments.”

– Year 8 student



Our pedagogy is based on Rosenshine's principles of instruction. Three of our five teaching routines are based on these principles to support:

- **High quality questioning**
- **Modelling**
- **Feedback**

The remaining two routines support teachers in planning for students with different needs and abilities and to support literacy and especially reading.

We ensure our teachers have excellent knowledge of the subjects and courses they teach. Teachers model and present subject matter clearly, promoting discussion, challenge and extending learning about the subject matter they are teaching. They check learners' understanding systematically using different types of questioning. Questioning also allows teachers to identify misconceptions quickly and accurately, and provide clear, direct feedback. In doing so, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary.



Our teachers are trained to scaffold new knowledge and skills to ensure our intent of a full and ambitious curriculum is accessible for all. They use techniques to help learners remember more knowledge in their long-term memories and to integrate and link new knowledge into larger concepts. We offer and practice retrieval opportunities at the start and throughout the lesson.



"The pace of change at Colchester Academy is fast, but the Senior Leadership Team communicate this change really well."

– Teacher



We have key formative assessment points throughout the year and end of year summative assessments. We use formative assessment points to offer high quality written feedback with personalised follow up tasks that improve the learning of each student. Our formative assessments are coherent with the latest lesson content and previously acquired knowledge is also assessed. We assess reading ages three times a year to ensure students are chronologically on track with their reading and to plan reading interventions where needed.

We have a common set of learning routines that reduce cognitive load on students and ensure that routines around the start of the lesson, questioning, modelling, feedback, and the end of the lesson make the most efficient use of learning time and create an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning.

Teachers select and use resources and materials from centralised shared areas to reduce unnecessary workload and to allow them to plan for their individual classes and students. They follow a common scheme of learning in each subject area, this supports the academy's intent of a coherently planned curriculum,

sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning, qualifications, and employment.

We have an established literacy strategy that aims to develop learners' confidence and enjoyment in reading through our Colchester Academy Canon and a curriculum that has a focus on disciplinary literacy. We have programs within the academy that support students with low levels of literacy delivered by trained staff.

Our curriculum ensures learners develop detailed knowledge and skills across all subject areas and, as a result, achieve well. It prepares our students for the next stage of their education, employment, or training. Our students gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests, aspirations, and the intention of their course of study.

Our curriculum design and intent means students read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension. We aim for our students to have a reading age that is broadly in line with their chronological age.

"I recently joined the Academy and the support I've received throughout my induction was excellent. The career prospects here are always promoted."

– Teacher





Student Leadership and Extracurricular Opportunities

Colchester Academy opens the door to a myriad of extracurricular and enrichment opportunities that truly inspire our students. Our vibrant 'super-curriculum' offers a selection of activities that can lead to AQA certificates, allowing students to engage as reading 'buddies,' take the lead on school-wide events, craft thought-provoking essays on topics of their choice, or contribute to our school magazine.

Within the Performing Arts faculty, we provide an array of activities that encourage students to explore new avenues and hone their talents, whether in acting or playing a musical instrument. Students can also delve into behind-the-scenes roles and gain valuable technical skills, and those seeking musical instruction are welcomed with open arms.

The highlight of our year is the annual school production—an extraordinary collaboration that unites students from across the academy in a spectacular showcase of dance, drama, and music. This event truly highlights the individual and collective talents that thrive within our school community.

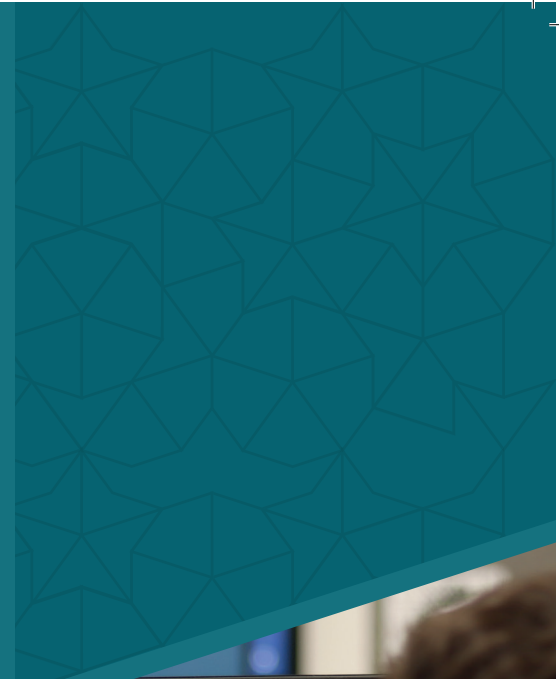
Our sports teams are as diverse as they are successful, offering students the chance to compete or enjoy physical activities. Our fitness suite is equipped with state-of-the-art machines and Olympic-style weights, ensuring that all students can pursue their fitness goals.



We enrich our curriculum with inspiring speakers, both in-person and virtually, who ignite passion and motivation in our students. Through the Jack Petchey scheme, we foster oracy and confidence while providing opportunities for students to engage with the wider community. Our roster of motivational speakers includes business leaders, educators from various academic levels, study skills experts, and professionals from a range of careers.

Students are also regularly invited to participate in trips and visits that enhance their studies and provide enriching experiences. These opportunities range from fieldwork and theatre excursions to community service and team-building activities. Additionally, we offer international trips to destinations such as Germany and Spain, contingent on student interest.

At Colchester Academy, we are committed to nurturing potential and creating an environment where students can thrive and embark on inspiring journeys.



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