



## Topaz Pathway– 3 I's



Topaz representing  
communication,  
emotional peace &  
positive interactions

### Intent

The intent of the Topaz Learning Pathway is to provide a highly specialist, personalised curriculum for children at the earliest stages of development, with complex needs. As a **“doing curriculum”**, it prioritises active engagement, exploration, and sensory experience as the foundation for learning.

The regulate, reach and then teach principles underpin all our pathways. Within Topaz classes also focus on **regulation before expectation, connection before communication, engagement before task, and play before formal learning**. These ensure that children feel safe, emotionally secure, and ready to engage.

Topaz recognises that learning begins through co-regulation, trust, and shared experiences, with a strong focus on developing early communication, social, emotional, and cognitive skills as preconditions for learning.

Aligned with the **iASEND Engagement statements ('A' curriculum)**, the pathway aims to build the foundations of engagement, curiosity, and interaction.

Learning is delivered through the 4 stages of the RISE Therapy approach, following a structured sequence of Regulate and Reconnect, Invitation, Shared Experience, and Ending. This approach is centred on meeting children where they are, with adults joining and extending their engagement, promoting meaningful interaction, active participation, and opportunities to share space and experiences in ways that are comfortable and regulating.

### Implementation

The Topaz pathway is delivered through a non-subject specific, experiential curriculum, where children learn through doing, not through formal instruction.

## Curriculum & Pedagogy

- A thematic, interest led approach that captures our learners' motivation and curiosity
- Strong emphasis on play based, multisensory learning
- Recognition and evidencing of incidental learning as meaningful progress
- Learning through practical experiences and continuous provision, rather than formal tasks

## Environment

Classrooms following whole school, enabling environment advice to meet the sensory needs of all children.

The Topaz classroom is carefully designed to:

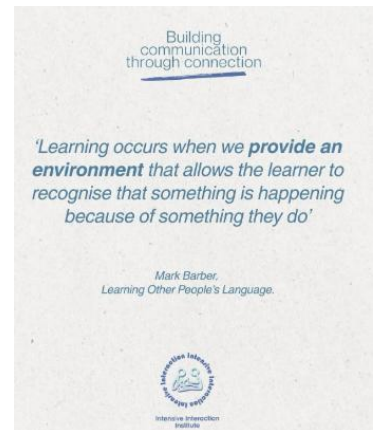
- Reduce anxiety and sensory overload
- Invite interaction (not demand it)
- Support autonomy, exploration, and regulation
- Ensure all methods of communication are visible and accessible in all areas

Spaces are intentionally zoned to support learning, including:

- **Regulation and safe spaces** (e.g. tents/soft safe spaces, beanbags, regulation resources) to support emotional security
  - **Intensive Interaction areas** to develop connection and early communication through shared attention
  - **Heuristic and exploration zones** with open-ended, sensory-rich resources
  - **Engagement stations** focusing on cause-and-effect and low-demand interaction or areas for children to engage in their own play schemas.
  - **Movement and sensory circuits** to support regulation and transitions
- CHECK

## Inclusive Communication Approach

- Communication is embedded everywhere, not confined to one area
- Use of AAC, objects of reference, Makaton, and visual supports is seen throughout
- Adults model communication without expectation
- All forms of communication are recognised and equally valued
- Intensive interaction is woven throughout our Topaz pathway



## Transitions & Structure

- Predictable routines supported by objects of reference, now/next boards, and sensory cues e.g. transition songs
- Movement-based and low-demand transitions are used to reduce dysregulation

## Adult Role

Adults are central to implementation and:

- Slow down, pause, and allow processing time
- Observe and follow the child's lead, building on interests
- Model interactions through Intensive Interaction approaches
- Prioritise connection, co-regulation, and trust
- Recognise and record in-the-moment learning and engagement

## Impact

As a result of the Topaz Learning Pathway:

- Children demonstrate increased engagement through active “doing”, exploration, and interaction

- Children develop co-regulation skills with trusted and familiar adults
- Children develop rapport and relationships with the adult supporting them, which leads to improved emotional security and reduced anxiety
- Early communication skills develop, including gesture, shared attention, vocalisation, and use of AAC
- Intensive Interaction supports early communication and connection by encouraging adults to follow the child's lead and build shared, responsive interactions.
- Children show progress across the iASEND Engagement statements, including improved exploration, persistence, and initiation
- There is clear development in social, emotional, and cognitive readiness for learning
- Children demonstrate increased autonomy, curiosity, and willingness to engage with their environment

Importantly, learning is visible through:

- Sustained engagement
- Repeated exploration
- Cause-and-effect understanding
- Moments of shared attention and connection

By prioritising environment, relationships, and engagement, the Topaz pathway positively impacts the children by:

- Improving their regulation within school
- Reducing anxiety and levels of dysregulation
- Increasing communication
- Developing deeper, more meaningful engagement

Topaz pathway aims to successfully builds the foundations for learning, enabling children to progress with confidence into the next stage of their educational journey.