

SEND and Inclusion Policy

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Purpose

To outline NAS Independent schools' approach in identifying and responding to SEND and to support effective inclusion in our schools and communities. This policy outlines the framework for the school to meet its duty, obligation and principal equality values to provide a high-quality education to all of its pupils, all of whom have SEND.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff who work in National Autistic Society Independent schools

Approach

The United Nations (UN) states that education is a fundamental human right. However, autistic pupils continue to experience high rates of school exclusion. The NAS believes all children, including those with autism, have the right to education. Our schools have high ambitions for all pupils to fulfil their potential and have a clear ethos of respecting each pupil, developing their strengths as well as equipping them with effective supports to help thrive in the face of challenges. Our schools put emphasis on opportunities for community-based learning in order to generalise and rehearse functional skills in real life settings and enabling pupils to participate in their local community. We focus on developing autism specific supports into a broad curriculum that covers but not exclusively, academic skills, social skills, regulation, wellbeing and independent living skills to support pupils to make a successful transition into adulthood with the necessary skills to live independently, to gain paid employment – when possible and appropriate, and to participate in their local community. We recognise that each pupil with autism has unique needs and unique approaches to learning and therefore provide education strategies tailored to meet the individual needs of each pupil.

All pupils have the right to an inclusive education. In delivering on that entitlement, we promote the rights endowed by the Equality Act 2010 for each of the protected characteristics and prejudice against none. All of our pupils will be respected, supported to achieve beyond what is expected and be empowered to make positive choices about their own lives. Expectations for all pupils will always be high and realistic. Our planned provision will support pupils to make a positive inclusive contribution to their community, and through equipping pupils with the 'tools' and skills they need for different stages in their life. We will seek to improve the current and future lives of the pupils, their families and members of the local community.

The schools have an Accessibility Plan (as defined by the Equality Act 2010, Para 3 of Schedule 10) that details specific arrangements to improve accessibility for pupils with disabilities. The school will ensure it has appropriate disabled access, toilets and changing facilities. And these will consider the pupils' need for dignity and privacy.

Furthermore, reasonable adjustments will be made according to the Equality Act 2010 in order to support pupils' individual sensory differences. We will ensure that there are clear and effective systems in place to meet the needs of all pupils in order that they make the necessary progress to fulfill their potential. In doing so we will:

- Provide all children with their legal entitlement to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that is differentiated according to their individual needs, within the NAS Quality of Life Framework;
- A transdisciplinary approach to support pupil progress and support areas of need.
- Provide an education that enables pupils to achieve their best and develop in confidence
- Ensure the teaching and learning environment is effective by implementing autism specific practices and which will have a positive impact and improve the educational outcomes for all pupils;
- Ensure that there are planned, robust and transparent systems in place, that are understood by everyone, to support an efficient and consistent approach to the identification and assessment of all pupils' special educational needs
- Ensure we work in partnership with parents and maintain close links with external support services and professionals where appropriate
- Ensure the school environment and expectations of staff are designed to promote independence and provide appropriate level of challenge and support
- Provide effective assessment procedures to ensure early identification of any areas of difficulty and inform interventions.
- Nurture self-esteem and celebrate the success of all pupils
- Prepare pupils to make successful transitions, throughout their school journeys including into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education, training or supported living.

Operational delivery

Schools have local procedures that outline specific arrangements and approaches. The following elements of operational delivery are common to all schools:

- All pupils attending NAS schools will have an Education, Health & Care Plan and a diagnosis of autism as the primary diagnosis.
- All pupils are funded by their Local Authority.
- High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in our school's response to students.
- On entry to the young person's strengths and areas for development will be assessed and identified and used to plan support and provision.
- Documentation to support pupil's will be created such as risk assessments and individual support plans.

- Families have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education and as such their views will be sought and they will be included in decision making.
- Our pupils will be offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education, including an appropriately individualised and differentiated curriculum.
- The school will manage its resources to ensure all pupils' needs are met.
- The school will have a transdisciplinary team which will work with all staff, parents and pupils to ensure all pupils needs are met.
- Provision and progress for our pupils will be monitored and reviewed regularly.
- The school will collaborate with outside agencies, education, health and social care services to provide support where appropriate.
- The responsibility for Education, Health & Care Plans will be reviewed regularly in line with SEND Code of Practice and children's needs and this lies with the local authority.
- Transition planning will lead to successful entry into the school and successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.
- Pupils will be encouraged to participate in group, class, whole school and community activities.
- Provide a range of accredited courses that are personalised as appropriate.
- Where schools are in receipt of Pupil Premium, their strategy, outlining their expenditure and needs being met, will be published on their website.
- Schools evaluate the success of their provision, considering:
 - the level of support pupils received and the amount of progress they make (including against EHCP outcomes)
 - the progress data of pupils
 - where appropriate, the success of pupil premium strategies
 - the impact of training and new approaches to meeting needs
 - the views of pupils and parents
 - the views of outside agencies
 - destination tracking
 - additional assessment data such as reading or spelling ages
 - achievement of external qualifications
 - observations of teaching and learning
 - monitoring of attendance data, both daily and/or sessional
 - monitoring of engagement in learning
 - monitoring of behaviour incidents and risk assessments
 - informal discussion with students
 - regular communication with parents or carers
 - parent or carer and student questionnaires
- Staff person specifications will include appropriate qualifications, and training will be provided for those involved in the implementation of the policy where appropriate. All staff have training in the following areas: Safeguarding, Ask Autism modules, and Studio 3 training, SPELL.
- Staff performance management processes will support the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that support effective provision for our pupils

- Training will cover the cognitive, social, emotional, communication, sensory, health and physical needs of pupils with SEND
- Arrangements for the fair admissions of pupils are outlined in the school's admissions policy and will be published on the school website
- The school will plan, deliver and monitor services against how well outcomes have been met in relation to Improved educational progress and outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- The school will adhere to the Data Protection Regulation 2018 and GDPR requirements, with regard to sharing and storage of information.
- Schools will use a range of autism specialist approaches. All approaches will be evidence based, ethical and individualised to each pupil.

Children with Specific Circumstances

Please note this section should be considered alongside the expectations and procedures of the school's Safeguarding Children and Young People (Child Protection) Policy – SO-0189 and the government's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

Communication Needs

- We note that many of the pupils in our school will have communication needs related to their Autism diagnosis.
- We will work to ensure that all pupils have a medium to be able to express their wishes and feelings, and that these wishes and feelings are taken into account by school staff and leadership.

Children with a Social Worker

- We note that all children with a disability can be considered a Child in Need under Section 17 of The Children Act (1989).
- Therefore, many of our pupils will have or previously have had a Social Worker for this or other reasons.
- Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse and/or neglect and/or complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.
- Where children need a social worker, this will inform the school's decisions about Safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absences or a child being missing from education) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support).
- We will work closely with all relevant professionals including Social Workers to safeguard and promote the educational interests of our pupils.

Children in (or previously in) the care of the Local Authority

Children at the school who are being accommodated, or who have been taken into care, by their Local Authority are legally defined as being 'looked after'.

- The school has a designated member of staff for coordinating the support for children in the care of the Local Authority.
- The Principal will assign a member of the leadership team (SLT) to act as SEN co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Designated teachers should work closely with this member of SLT to ensure that the implications of a child being both looked after and having SEND are fully understood by relevant school staff.
- Our school will promote the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) and ensure this is reviewed regularly.
- Our school is conscious that children in the care of the Local Authority are more likely to be missing from education and we will ensure that any concerns of this nature are dealt with as part of our Schools Safeguarding Children and Young People (Child Protection) Policy – SO-0189.
- A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.
- We note that when dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.
- We will promote the educational and welfare needs of Care Leavers as they transition to adulthood, working in collaboration with their Personal Advisors.

EAL

The school supports the pupils and families of the SEND pupils whose first language is not English, where identified in their Educational Health Care Plans:

- It is necessary to consider the pupil within the context of their home, culture and community.
- Where there is uncertainty about an individual pupil, the school will make full use of any local sources of advice relevant to the ethnic group concerned, drawing on community liaison arrangements wherever they exist.
- The school will look carefully at all aspects of a pupil's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of English that is used there or arise from SEND.
- The school will ensure appropriate strategies, support and intervention are put in place to support pupils with EAL.
- The school will seek where necessary the support of the local authority.

- We support families with meetings and documentation working alongside the Local Authority.

Pupils with Medical needs

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on schools to make appropriate arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions

Without effective support pupils with both medical conditions and SEND are at risk of being significantly disadvantaged.

Schools will ensure the impact of any medical condition is understood by all staff in addition to their SEND.

Where pupils with SEND also have a medical condition, their provision will be planned and delivered in coordination with the EHC plan.

Where deemed appropriate, school will request relevant medical investigations and assessments closely working with medical professionals and follow guidance to meet pupil physical and mental needs.

Therapeutic and clinical support will be embedded throughout, and clinicians will be closely working with education staff and external agencies as appropriate.

Mental Health

Many of our pupils or young people may also experience poor mental health challenges alongside with their autism. This may be an on-going aspect of their overall wellbeing or may be for a shorter period. This can potentially manifest itself in, school refusal, heightened anxiety, depression, overly restrictive and repetitive type of behavioural patterns, and sleep disorder. The list is not exhaustive.

Where appropriate the school will work with external agencies such as CAMHS to collaboratively work and formulate appropriate individualised plans to support the wellbeing of all pupils and young people accessing our schools (cf. Wellbeing and Mental Health Support in Schools SO-0353).

Schools will be committed in thriving to achieve a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to positive mental health in as it is recognised that this leads to improved pupil and student wellbeing, which, in turn, can improve learning.

Mental health champions/staff where available and appropriate will be able to provide some initial psychological first aid including recognising the common signs of distress across different age groups and being able to identify who might be at an increased risk.

School and college staff are not expected to, and should not, diagnose mental health conditions or perform mental health interventions (DfE, 2023).

Pupils from Ethnic Minority Backgrounds

NAS schools will consider all aspects of provision to ensure it is effective for this group. Our organisation is committed to taking action to prevent discrimination and to support equality. This includes, but is not limited to, procedures for assessment and interventions, training of staff, curriculum, wellbeing and parent support.

Some NAS schools are located in areas where there is a higher representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Schools will work with their local authorities with regards to understanding local need and ensuring strong provision.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School Governance Committee (SGC) is responsible for:

- Ratifying and regularly reviewing this policy to ensure it conforms to relevant law and guidance (in conjunction with the NAS Director of Education)
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- Ensure local procedures are in place to effectively implement this policy within the school.
- To keep themselves informed through regular meetings with staff and visits to the school.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and advise of NAS board of trustees of any necessary amendments.
- Appointing a governor who will review the effectiveness of implementation and report back to the SGC on a regular basis.
- To ensure that any issue that may be perceived as a potential reputational risk is referred to the NAS board of trustees.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring all relevant staff are aware of this policy, receive appropriate professional development and local procedures are followed.
- The Principal will assign member/s of the leadership team to ensure the code of practice is effectively implemented as well as effective liaison with external agencies and coordination of annual reviews and appropriate training to meet individual need. The member/s of staff may or may not be hold the role titled SENco (*Special Educational Needs co-ordinator*).

Clinical Leads are responsible for:

- Professional supervision for clinicians in substantive posts and oversight of agency therapists/clinicians.
- Providing clinical and professional leadership to the service across the NAS schools in line with professional standards
- Contributing to the development of a strategy for NAS SALT/Psych/OT services across schools.

- Being jointly responsible in collaboration with local senior leadership teams for the operational oversight of the delivery of Clinical Services within schools.
- Working with school Principals on embedding a transdisciplinary embedded approach across the whole school team to provide integrated therapeutic services for CYP.
- Providing professional advice and guidance to Principals on workforce planning and recruitment of clinical/therapeutic staff and assistant roles.
- Providing specialist advice, guidance, second opinions and case consultation regarding assessment for admissions and interventions/treatment where relevant.
- Contributing to the clinical governance strategy for the continuation and future development of therapeutic services across NAS Independent Schools.
- Collaboration with relevant stakeholders around policy and NAS wide strategy
- Represent Clinical services at SGC
- Work collaboratively with Director of Education representing clinical services across relevant NAS wide strategy groups.
- Contributing to promoting and sharing of positive practices across NAS schools.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Knowing pupils and their needs really well. This starts through forming effective relationships with pupils and their families.
- Planning and reviewing support for the pupils in their class
- Setting high expectations for every pupil, taking into account their individual needs
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.
- Ensuring every pupil is able to access the school's curriculum
- Being accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.
- Being aware of the needs, outcomes sought, and support provided to any pupils they are working with.
- Keeping the leadership team up to date with any changes in profile, academic developments and causes of concern.

The designated member of the Senior Leadership team is responsible for:

- Determining the strategic development of SEN policy and provision in the school with the School Governance Group (SGG);
- Day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEN policy and coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils, all of whom have an EHCP
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues, working closely with staff, parents and other agencies;
- Being aware of the provision in the Local Offer and be able to work with professionals providing a support role to families to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching;

- Liaising with the relevant Designated Teacher where a pupil is a looked after child;
- Advising on the deployment of the school's budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively;
- Liaising with NAS clinical leads, other early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies;
- Is a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services;
- Liaising with potential next providers of education to ensure a pupil and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned;
- Ensuring that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- Ensuring that the school keeps the records of all pupils up to date;
- Coordinating access to appropriate therapy services.

Evaluation of Policy

The policy will be evaluated considering whether it is effective in eliminating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities and inclusion. This policy will be reviewed annually. Evaluations will be passed to the NAS Education Directorate for review and integration into any revised policy.

Equality Impact Assessment

In the design of this policy, we have considered the complex inter-relating elements that impact on the effective support and identification of those with SEN. This policy seeks to promote the rights of people who have one or more of the protected characteristics (of which everyone does). This policy also seeks to focus on the impact of factors such as EAL and particularly the impact on staff, children and families. We alert users of this policy to the need to consider these specific factors alongside SEND. This policy aims to support equality and inclusion both within our schools and communities. Effective SEND provision will ensure any adverse impacts are identified and actions are taken to remove or mitigate.

Through the implementation of this policy, we seek to lessen some of the known inequalities that exist in society, including, but not limited to race, disability and gender, through carefully designed provision and support that affords opportunities for people with those protected characteristics to excel.

The Legal Framework

This policy has regard to the following legislation:

Article 24 of UN Convention on rights of people with disabilities

Children and Families Act 2014
Children Act 1989
Health and Social Care Act 2012
Equality Act 2010
Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986
Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
Education Act 1996
Education Act 2002
Mental Capacity Act 2005
Children Act 1989
Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2015
Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
Local Government Act 1974
Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986
Data Protection Act 2018
The UK General Data Protection Act 2018
The General Data Protection Regulation 2018
This policy has regard to the following statutory and non-statutory guidance:
Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2015) 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils'
DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
DfE (2015) 'School admissions code'
DfE (2015) 'Residential Special schools: national minimum standards'
The Children's homes (England) regulations 2015
DfE (2017) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
DfE (2018) 'Working together to safeguard children'
DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'9. Related Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- School's curriculum
- Supporting Behaviour in Schools Policy
- Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Definitions

A child or pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or a disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

EHC plan - Education Health Care plan

EDL – Educational Development Lead

CH – Children's Home

SGC – School Governance Group

HOSI – Head of School Improvement

EDL – Education Development Lead

EAL - English as Additional Language

EQD – Education Quality Development

References

Skiba et al (2008) Achieving Equity in Special Education: History, Status and Current Challenges. *Exceptional Children*, 74(3), 264-288

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>