

School Supplementary Guidelines



Title: English as an Additional Language (EAL)

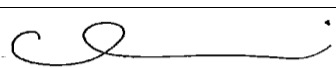
This guidance is to be read in conjunction with related National Autistic Society Policies

Declaration

Sybil Elgar School does not promote partisan political views.
School promotes British Values.

The school will have regard for The Human Rights Act, 1998, The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, as amended by The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001, including new duties 2002, and The SEND Code of Practice 2014, with special focus on Student Empowerment, Parents in Partnership and Consultation and Joint Working initiatives.

School has regard for the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Policy lead (s)	Deputy Principal,
Date of document	July 2022
Latest revision	July 2023
Signed Chloe Phillips Principal	



Sybil Elgar School Mission Statement

We are committed to ensuring that every autistic student has equal rights and opportunities to access their entitled education and to reach their full potential, whilst having their specific needs met.

We want to ensure that all our young people have purposeful and enjoyable experiences at Sybil Elgar, preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. This is achieved by ensuring that all students have access to an aspirational broad, balanced, motivating, relevant curriculum with clear outcomes and an emphasis on Quality of Life. Students at Sybil Elgar all have an Education and Health Care Plan outlining individual difficulties in language and communication, social awareness and imagination.

Every aspect of the students' care and education is tailor-made for them using approaches that The National Autistic Society has tried and tested over many years.

Sybil Elgar School Ethos and Philosophy

- We put the needs of our children and young people first. We are resolute in our commitment to ensuring their right to a quality education and to be treated with dignity and respect which we do with compassion, kindness and sincerity.
- We are non-judgemental and celebrate diversity. We unreservedly accept all our children and young people as part of our culture and community
- We promote that compassion, tolerance and positive intervention can effect change.
- We believe in a strong and transparent partnership with parents, carers and families, including other professionals around each family.
- Our empowering teaching approach puts our autistic students at the centre of all we do and always looks ambitiously towards next steps and preparation for meaningful adult living.
- Our curriculum is broad, balanced and creative with enhanced access to the community with positive opportunities for sensory, physical, social

communication and practical living skills. It is underpinned by established research and effective autism specific best practice.

- Individual priorities for learning are identified from EHCPs and our holistic and thorough assessments, which consider individual interests, strengths and needs, including the views of the student and their family.
- We intend that all our children and young people will be happy and safe. That they will be confident communicators and will learn independence skills and gain qualifications to be as autonomous and fulfilled as possible.
- We are committed to Equal Opportunities and all that implies.

Introduction

- This Policy is written within the context of the vision and values of the National Autistic Society
- The purpose of this policy is to provide a comprehensive document to share with staff, governors, other professionals, families and interested stakeholders. The policy incorporates our aims values and ethos as well as describing how English as an Additional Language (ELA) is taught and coordinated at Sybil Elgar School. It has been produced by the Deputy Principal in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and staff.
- The term 'school' at all times incorporates both the school and the Post 16 Provision.
- This policy is reviewed annually by the Deputy Principal who is responsible for leading policy development in the subject.
- The school's English and Speech and Language Therapy policies are overseen and monitored by the Deputy Principal and Manager Post 16 provision.

Background Information

Sybil Elgar School is an independent special school for students* 4 to 22 + years with a statement of special educational needs to include a diagnosis of autism. Communication is emphasised throughout the 24-hour curriculum for **all** students, whether that time be spent at school, home, or the wider community.

- The school is part of the National Autistic Society (NAS) whose ethos, policies and procedures all influence the learning environment at Sybil Elgar School. Alongside the NAS we share a common vision where 'we want a world where autism is understood and people with autism have the support they need to ensure that their rights are upheld and that they have the same opportunities as others in society.' In order to achieve that 'we champion



the rights and interests of all autistic people and aim to provide autistic individuals and their families with help, support and services that they can readily access, trust and rely upon and **which make a positive difference to their lives.**'

- The catchment area of the school is wide and varied with students attending from 13 LA's, 14 ethnic groups and varied socio-economic backgrounds, with many students currently qualifying for free school meals.

Intent

Students* at Sybil Elgar School will be encouraged to experience EAL through our Quality of Life Curriculum. The students will experience visits to local places, including places of worship of different faiths, to help understand about their place in the world and how it should be valued and celebrated. School ensures that the students acquire the life skills to lead fulfilling lives in the wider community. Values and positive attitudes are consistently and continually modelled by staff to encourage those in the students.

Supporting Students and Families who have English as an Additional Language at Sybil Elgar School

An increasing number of our students and their families who attend Sybil Elgar School (SES) have English as an Additional Language (EAL). The number of home languages is becoming increasingly diverse. Additionally, a number of our students, regardless of ability, have a special interest in other languages. These are both welcomed and valued at our school as it opens students, staff and families to new cultural and linguistic experiences and provides opportunities to explore our British Values.

- All students are entitled to equal access to the curriculum
- Forming and maintaining strong links with parents is fundamental to our students learning and development.
- Learning and using more than one language is an asset and opens up a learning opportunity for our students and staff
- Promoting development in a student's home language will have a positive impact on their development in other languages.



Potential difficulties when working with EAL and Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)

Distinguishing English language difficulties that are consistent with typical EAL development from those that represent disordered communication development associated with ASC.

Whether or not they have EAL, all students at Sybil Elgar School experience some form of communication impairment, consistent with their diagnosis of autism. Accurate assessment of a student's receptive and expressive language skills must consider EAL status and good practice guidelines.

Supporting students with complex communication needs and EAL to understand the language of the classroom and express their wants, needs, feelings and opinions.

Students who have EAL may have English language difficulties associated with their Autism that impact on their ability to understand instructions, information or conversation and to express themselves clearly to English speaking adults and peers. Many of the methods used to develop communication skills at Sybil Elgar School will support those students with EAL.

Families of students with additional needs may have come to Sybil Elgar School with outdated advice regarding stopping use of the home language and being monolingual. This is contrary to the increasing body of evidence. All staff at SES work to reassure families that current research and guidance say families should provide the best language model by speaking the language in which they are most fluent, should this be the families wish.

Establishing strong links with families in spite of a language barriers. A student on the autism spectrum is best supported when families and school work together. Sybil Elgar School is constantly striving to maintain, develop and strengthen our links with families. When working with families with EAL, existing language barriers must be addressed in order to optimise the student's progress.

Implementation

Irrespective of a person's cognitive or physical ability, gender, faith, race and creed, everyone must be treated with equal respect both within our school and the wider communities. We are fortunate to be based in London where we benefit from being part of a diverse community.

Cultural development and appreciation form a central part of our curriculum. We celebrate the cultural heritage of our students. We have an established and enriched SMSC diary of events running throughout the school year, celebrating a range of national and international cultural, ethical and religious events, linked to the PSHCE programmes of study. We undertake an MFL week, where we immerse ourselves in the languages, cultural influences and heritage of a variety of countries.

This is achieved through enhancing students' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society and by giving them opportunities to experience such diversity in our local community. Assemblies and discussions involving prejudices and prejudiced-based bullying have been supported by learning in RE and PSHE.

In addition, we employ teachers and support staff who bring a varied cultural experience to Sybil Elgar School. Where we have large numbers of families from specific cultural groups we hold information and celebration sessions for parents and staff to develop their understanding of autism, share cultural responses to autism and share food and music.

Events such as these help students develop an acceptance that other people having different cultural backgrounds and language should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour.

Supporting students on a daily basis at Sybil Elgar School

There are many 'good autism practice' strategies that underpin our values and approaches within school which are also good strategies for supporting EAL students:

- Use sign/visuals/objects: At SES a large emphasis is placed on using a range of appropriate visual supports to enhance a student's understanding and learning as part of a Total Communication Approach.
- Visual systems are in place throughout the school using both symbols and photos which do not rely on a student's understanding of a specific language. All staff are further trained in the importance of using and developing visuals through their induction training and further refresher workshops.
- We use a range of symbol packages which we use to create personalised receptive and expressive language communication systems. Some of these have the additional ability to include translations so that English and additional languages can be added to symbols. This ensures that a student who is a PECS user can hear both languages between school and home, yet have a symbol that represents a consistent item

- Modelling social conventions: Throughout all aspects of life at SES, social skills are focused on as part of a student's daily experience. Staff are aware of ways to capitalise on naturalistic events to make social learning ongoing and meaningful for all students. Teachers also proactively implement social learning opportunities in their lesson plans.
- Differentiate lessons to each student's language capability: Due to the wide range of cognitive and communicative needs of our students, teachers at SES are actively encouraged to differentiate a lesson for all students in their class. As autism practitioners, teachers are specifically skilled at using a range of multisensory learning to enable a student to access a lesson through other means than verbal language which is not only good autism practice but provides effective support for students who are learning English as an additional language.
- Teaching in context: Ensure that vocabulary is taught in context, therefore the meanings are clear, including non-literal language such as metaphors and idioms
- Promote self-esteem and confidence: Students with a good wellbeing and who have a positive view of themselves are more engaged in learning overall, but this also gives them the confidence to use English as an additional language
- Processing time: Extra processing time (alongside visual supports where required) allows the verbal language which the student hears to be processed before they can respond either verbally or in writing
- Appropriate Pronunciation: Young people and their parents' names will be pronounced correctly, with English variants and diminutives only used if stated by family How we support our EAL families and students
Personalised Support Each student and family will have their own preference for how they and their child are supported with EAL. We aim to work collaboratively with the family and student to achieve this, to promote their language development in their additional languages as well as their English.

Recruitment

AS stated the school employs a highly diverse and rich group of staff with a range of home languages All staff are interviewed prior to employment at which point it is ascertained whether their proficiency in English is suitable for the post.

Interpretation and translation services

When required we contact translation services available in the locality to support. This is used for paper-based documents e.g. reports, as well as interpreters required to be present at meetings, such as Annual Reviews, via



the phone or present in person. This cost will be covered by the school.
Other Relevant Policies: Promoting British Values Statement Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy

Mutual Respect

Respect is one of the core values of our school. This can be seen and felt in our pervading ethos in school. The staff and students know and understand that it is expected and imperative that respect is shown to everyone, whatever differences we may have and to everything, however big or small. The core value of respect at Sybil Elgar School underpins our work every day both in and out of the classroom. Students and adults alike, including visitors are challenged if they are disrespectful in any way. Values are highly visible around the school.

Impact

We are proud of our happy and safe school. Our students and staff have good attendance and want to be at school, where they feel valued and empowered. This is reflected and can be evidenced in absence monitoring, reduction of idiosyncratic behaviours and in consultation documents. We have a wealth of photographic evidence documenting the quality and joy of experience over time.

Assessment

The admissions procedure identifies where English may be an additional language for students. A communication assessment is carried out either formally or informally, depending on the student's needs and ability to participate in assessment in order to identify their receptive and expressive communication skills. This is followed by collaborative goal setting, and intervention considerations can include coaching parents, family members, teachers, and peers to implement language facilitation strategies.

This process must be personalised to each student and their family.

Data Gathering

Upon receiving the Sybil Elgar School prospective student's paperwork and admission paperwork, the home and additional language is usually disclosed.

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This enables the school to support families and the student by the best means possible.

Respecting and Embracing Diversity

Our school places huge value on a student developing as an individual according to their religious, cultural and personal beliefs and aims to work with students and their families to support this. Students can develop understanding or awareness of their own and other students' linguistic and social cultures through a range of events. We are privileged to be situated in a culturally diverse area of London. Many of our staff use more than one language and are able to support families.

Our SMSC Calendar includes an enormous range of events and Community Links including: Culturally diverse assemblies, performances Trips to culturally related places in the community (e.g.: local temples, synagogues, mosques etc.)

Working closely with parents of students to understand their perception of autism in their culture

Displaying work done by students in theme weeks so learning about different languages and social cultures is constantly showcased in the School

Ensuring resources used in classes and the school setting reflects a range of ethnicities and cultures

The aims of these events are to promote the valued differences and increase confidence and self-esteem of the students who may be more familiar with these countries, cultures and religions whilst introducing those who may be less familiar to these differences. This also supports 'Theory of Mind', where students can learn that different people live different experiences.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the British Values Policy

Other relevant Policies:

This document should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Curriculum policy
- PSHCE policy
- RSE Policy
- RE Policy
- Communication policy and guidelines
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy

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- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Staff conduct policy and NAS competencies Curriculum/British Values

Equal Opportunities

Teachers will ensure that provision reflects Cultural Diversity, Ethnicity, Religion, Gender, Ability, Disability and Age.

Health and Safety

All staff should ensure the health and safety of all students and staff at all times

*For the purposes of this policy and for fluency the term 'student' is used to describe all learners from the Early Years through to the 16-25 Provision