

# Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

West Heath School



<b>Approved by:</b>	The Board of Trustees	<b>Date:</b> March 2024
<b>Creation date/ Version Date:</b>	March 2024, Edition 7	
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	March 2024	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	March 2026	
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<b>Policy Audience:</b>	Staff/ Volunteers/ Trustees/ Contractors/ Parents/ Students	

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Copies of this policy are available on the School Website - <http://www.westheathschool.com/policies-and-procedures> or as a hard copy on request from the School Office.

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# 1. The Rationale, Purpose and Aims

## Rationale and Purpose

All our students have special educational needs. They have come to us because their needs cannot best be met within mainstream provision. This is partly because of the complex and subtle nature of their needs, and also because their difficulties are exacerbated by large and populous educational environments. This policy describes the key features of our school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision.

## Aims

This policy aims to provide an educational experience for each student that fosters their personal, emotional, moral, spiritual, psychological and academic growth, delivered in a way that matches their individual and special educational needs and is in line with our 4Rs – respect, responsibility, relationships and resilience.

In addition;

- To ensure the SEN and Disability Act and relevant Codes of Practice and guidance are implemented effectively across the school
- To provide full access to the curriculum through differentiated planning by class teachers and support staff as appropriate
- To continually monitor the progress of all students, to identify needs as they arise and to provide support as early as possible
- To provide specific input, matched to individual needs, in addition to differentiated classroom and residential provision, for those students who are not making good progress
- To involve parents and carers in plans to meet their child's additional needs
- To provide support and training for staff in order to plan for individual students
- To use external professionals and agencies to support our work where appropriate

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010

## 3. Definitions

- EHCP – Education Health and Care Plan
- IEP – Individual Education Plan

## 4. The Objectives to meet the above Aims

We set out to:

- Offer acceptance and support to enable personal, emotional, moral and spiritual growth
- Have high social and academic expectations both for and from our students
- Promote self-worth and enthusiasm by encouraging independent learning
- Give every student a sense of achievement
- Meet all the statutory requirements and guidelines regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), paying particular attention to the current Code of Practice for identifying and meeting the needs of children with SEND, Human Rights legislation and any other relevant legislative obligation enacted to meet the needs of children with SEND
- Provide all students with a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum in line with the National Curriculum and their individual needs as far as schools' current facilities and stage of development will allow (see Teaching and Learning policy and individual subject policies)

- Provide individual and group support for each student according to their needs specified in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP Outcomes), and agreed targets set out in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) and to assist students in obtaining further support external to our school when appropriate and possible
- Respond to changing needs as they emerge and develop, providing an ongoing flexibility of response
- Identify, monitor and support students who will need extra resources and/or teaching help as early as possible
- Assist students in coping and overcoming emotional, social and behavioural problems which are interfering with effective learning and to do this by fostering and promoting self-efficacy, self-esteem, and autonomy, and subsequently celebrating and rewarding achievement
- Equip all students with the skills, emotional strength, self-confidence and support required for the transition from our school to the next phase of their lives, be it reintegration to a mainstream school, college or work

## **5. Strategies & Practices relating to the implementation of this Policy**

Depending on spaces available, there is an initial paper-based consultation carried out by the SENCo, Head of School, Head of Care and Safeguarding, Head of HEART and Therapy as well as other relevant therapists. If this is successful, students are then invited for a taster session and interview.

Taster days enable both us and them to have a chance to assess whether this is an appropriate environment in order to meet their needs. Students and their parents and carers are interviewed by the Principal and a panel of other staff as part of the admission process. Students who are seeking a boarding place will also be interviewed by a senior member of our care staff.

If we feel we are the right place, and once funding has been agreed, students and parents and carers receive an 'Admissions Pack' which includes information for them and forms for completion.

### **5.1 Assessment, Target Setting and Review**

During the period of induction, support will be allocated in line with needs addressed by the EHCP as well as through assessments carried out as part of the induction process:-

- When a student is offered a place at the school, information is gathered on their special educational needs through interviews, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), documentation from previous schools, and dialogue with external professionals. Prior to the student starting at West Heath School assessments can be carried out by our internal therapeutic team; this can include a language and communication assessment, a psychological assessment, as well as an academic attainment assessment and an occupational therapy assessment (if appropriate). Along with other less formal assessments these provide a baseline of information which helps to determine the appropriate provision for each student. This information is collated, and the report is distributed to relevant staff so that the appropriate interventions can be put in place. It also lists the outcomes taken from the student's EHCP and the suggested strategies that should be used in the classroom. Depending on the individual student, most will spend the first few weeks based in our specialist Induction Department to familiarise them with routines and expectations before they transfer to the main school. Students initially start for two or three days a week and build up their time in school slowly. This is especially important for students who have been out of education for some time before joining us. Once students have settled and are attending fulltime, lessons in the core subjects will be provided on a daily basis. In addition, other sessions will focus on beginning to develop students' awareness and engagement in other fundamental aspects of well-being such as healthy eating and exercise. A key intention of the induction process is to provide an emotionally supportive environment that allows for the establishment of some of the fundamental principles that create the opportunity for people to flourish. These principles include a growing sense of self-awareness, self-efficacy, gratitude

and compassion, held together by an attitude that sees success as dependent upon co-operation and a determined and creative application of personal strengths and attributes

- Beginning in the Induction Department has the dual benefit of enabling the induction team to assess the student's academic ability, while the student gains confidence and has the opportunity to perhaps fill-in any gaps in knowledge, in a nurturing environment. Thereafter, at a pace that's right for the student they are gradually integrated into main school lessons. As they feel more comfortable the degree of close support is steadily reduced to the point where, if appropriate, the student is ready to be independent
- Students joining our HEART provision follow the same admission process, however, they start immediately within HEART as opposed to going through our Induction Department. This is also a gradual transition process, students usually start one, two or three days a week, depending on their needs, increasing in agreement with parents and carers as and when it is deemed appropriate
- Students joining our Juniors provision follow the same admission process, however, they start immediately within Juniors as opposed to going through our Induction Department. This is also a gradual transition process, students usually start one, two or three days a week, depending on their needs, increasing in agreement with parents and carers as and when it is deemed appropriate
- It may be, however, that students joining the school at the start of Year 7 when the vast majority, if not all, of the students are new to the school, do not start in the Induction Department. Instead, the Year 7 students will be immediately based with their Tutor Team giving them the opportunity to more quickly form the bonds and relationships that will be central to their progress. In this instance students will nevertheless be able to access the full range of therapeutic provision depending on their needs
- Once in school, on-going assessment and monitoring arrangements are carried out by tutors who regularly track the rates of each student's progress, both academic and emotional. All teaching staff are trained in delivering lessons which are adapted to the needs of their learners, making use of concrete apparatus, teacher modelling and differentiated learning outcomes to support all students. Lessons also benefit from having learning support assistants present who can identify difficulties and help to give instant support
- However, when less than expected progress is identified, the tutor and Head of School will liaise with the Head of Curriculum and the Head of HEART and Therapy in order to decide whether additional and/or different provision is required. If a student is identified with a specific need that cannot be met within the normal provision of the school a focused intervention will be planned. The school has access to a full team of professionals within our award-winning therapeutic centre based on site including a Clinical Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapists, a Cognitive Behaviour Therapist, Counsellors, a Play Therapist, Occupational Therapists, and a School Nurse. This is in addition to Literacy and Numeracy Specialists based within the main school

Throughout their time at West Heath School students will have an IEP which will be reviewed and updated on a termly basis. The IEP will identify specific time bound targets that relate closely to the EHCP Outcomes. They will also identify strategies to support the achievement of targeted objectives and outcomes.

## **5.2 Staff Contacts, Tutor Teams and Key Workers**

Students who board will be allocated a Key Worker. Key Workers have a responsibility for maintaining an overview of each student's experience of life in our school. They also represent a named contact for parents, carers, sponsoring authorities and other legitimate parties for individual students (all such contact will be recorded for the students file).

Within school, members of the Tutor Team (either the Tutor themselves or the group LSAs), provide student support on an individual as well as group basis in addition to monitoring student progress and liaising with parents, carers and fellow professionals. They are responsible for the completion and monitoring of IEPs and for representing the needs and best interests of the students in their group.

### **5.3 Teaching**

Staff differentiate their teaching styles according to the assessed learning needs and strengths of each student. Such differentiation is evident not only in the methods used to deliver lessons, but also frequently in the content, with individual's programmes tailored to meet their specific needs. Please refer to the Teaching and Learning policy.

### **5.4 Students with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP's)**

Our school convenes Annual Reviews of EHCPs on behalf of the sponsoring Local Authority. We have developed a generic form for recording Annual Reviews based upon the Code of Practice, and those different Local Authorities using our school approve this. Preparation for Adulthood and transition to the next phase of education is a key part of Annual Reviews from Year 9 onwards.

### **5.5 Meeting Emotional and Behavioural Needs**

All students receive the full support and encouragement of our school in dealing with their emotional and behavioural needs. All of our policies and practices are designed to raise self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence through achievement. Students are encouraged to share anxieties and are listened to empathetically at appropriate times. Effort and achievement in any area are praised and rewarded. We prefer to see challenging behaviour as a barrier to learning and an outward expression of an inner need, which we try to look behind to engage with the root cause of the problem.

Throughout their time at school, students are given access to a wide range of positive experiences. Outings, visits, and trips are planned throughout the year, both as part of the curriculum of individual subjects and more generally, in order to widen students' experience of the outside world and to cultivate their ability to cope with the demands of different environments.

Outside speakers frequently come to our school to speak on a variety of topics, again to widen students' experience of the outside world. Social activities and clubs are provided during breaks in the school day to allow students to interact effectively with their peers on an informal basis.

Underpinning our approach is our firm belief that our students may have rejected school but not education. Most want to achieve within the same framework as their mainstream peers, and we support all students to ensure that this is possible.

At West Heath School we take the student's views very seriously, and encourage them to participate in their learning by:-

- being involved in target setting and identifying teaching and learning strategies that work for them
- incorporating their views in every aspect of their education
- encouraging self-advocacy and independence

All students have daily contact with their tutor and very often their Head or Deputy Head of School. If they are boarders, they will also have daily contact with their boarding house staff and their boarding Key Worker. Staff in school liaise very closely with boarding staff to ensure that all information is shared. There is also an active Student Council (in Main School, HEART and in Residential), made up of representatives from each class, who meet on a half-termly basis to discuss matters pertaining to student life.

Furthermore, our therapeutic team enables us to apply an individual approach to each student's learning, with a flexible and varied curriculum structure to enable progress and ensure there is a seamless integration between development strategies identified during therapeutic sessions and their application in the classroom. All students, following a referral, have access to our Counsellors, CBT Therapist, Play Therapist, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Complementary Therapist either for 1:1 sessions, group sessions or in-class support. In addition, our Clinical Psychologist is available to carry out psychological and cognitive assessments either to assess for undiagnosed difficulties or to evaluate a student's current emotional well-being.

Typically, our HEART students will remain under the HEART umbrella throughout their time with us. These students will have a designated specialist Key Worker, enhanced access to therapeutic interventions, and greater involvement from the Head of HEART and Therapy.

## **5.6 Moving On**

Typically, students move on from our school via integration into a college or sixth form, University or through integration into work.

All students participate in a comprehensive Careers Education programme which includes work experience in Years 10 or 11. Students also attend two weekly PSCE lessons throughout their time at West Heath which develops their understanding of searching for jobs, budgeting, self-care, completing applications and practising interview techniques. All Year 9 and 11 students, along with any KS5 leavers, have at least one individual interview with the external careers adviser from CXK. They receive impartial assistance with careers planning and completing application forms for college and/or work. Where possible, students are supported in attending Careers Fairs where they are able to explore some of the opportunities available to them beyond their time with us.

Students are not forgotten once they have left our school. Former students and their parents and carers are encouraged to keep in contact and to request advice if needed. Many of our former students do keep in touch and come back to visit our school, even years after they have left us.

## **5.7 Staffing and Resources**

The Principal has primary responsibility for setting, implementing and monitoring all SEND policy in accordance with statutory obligations and the aims of our school.

Students have access to a range of services designed to address their particular needs. These include Language and Communication, CBT, Counselling, Occupational Therapy, Play Therapy and psychological / cognitive assessments. In addition, students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, can access 1:1 support through our literacy and numeracy departments as well as in-class support from trained staff.

The Form Tutor / Key Worker for each individual student is responsible for consulting with students, parents, carers and other staff in monitoring individual student development and ensuring progress is celebrated. Heads and Deputy Heads of School, the Head of Curriculum and the Deputy Principal maintain an overview of this process.

The teacher responsible for careers advice within our school has the responsibility for liaising with our local suppliers of careers advice, co-ordinating careers education and work experience placements.

Learning Support Assistants have responsibility for assisting students with SEND as requested or directed in line with the support identified at induction / assessment and subsequent reviews.

All teaching staff have responsibility for differentiation in curriculum planning and delivery, and for ensuring students are emotionally supported and encouraged, praised and rewarded at every appropriate opportunity.

The SENCo, Head of Curriculum and Head of HEART and Therapy, overseen by the Principal, are responsible for ensuring relevant provisions are in place to meet our student's specified needs and maintaining an overview of all provisions across the school, as well as monitoring the social and emotional progress of students throughout the course of the year.

The school places great value in the professional development of its staff, and staff training is provided on a regular basis. All staff receive comprehensive induction to work at West Heath School and SEN training is part of this staff development.

All staff are given regular opportunities for CPD to develop their skills in working with SEN students. Training needs will be identified on an annual basis and will be discussed at each member of staff's annual appraisal meeting. Trustees will be informed of school-based training and are invited to attend.



There are no specifically allocated financial resources. The entire budget of our school is spent on meeting students' specialist educational needs.

## **5.8 Complaints**

There is a separate Complaints, Concerns, Suggestions and Compliments Policy. This is available on the School web site.

## **5.9 Partnership with Parents**

The school listens to parents and carers. Sometimes, the first signs of difficulty are picked up through conversation at home, so parents and carers are always welcome to contact the school to talk about concerns.

Throughout the school year, tutors and boarding staff (if applicable) will liaise with parents and carers on a weekly basis to provide up-to-date information on academic progress and emotional wellbeing. In addition to this on-going monitoring, each new student has a New Student Progress Review after a period of approximately 12 weeks, and a formal Annual Review (normally at a later date) to assess their progress. Information will be compiled by our Review Co-ordinator and will include reports from the Head of School, the tutor, all academic staff responsible for teaching the student, relevant therapeutic reports, and a boarding report (if applicable). Students, parents and carers also contribute to Annual and Emergency Reviews and Interim Meetings. Where parents and carers are unable to attend, every effort is made to seek out their views and if necessary, meetings are held externally to school, currently the majority of these meetings are held online or remotely. All information will be shared with the student's parents and carers, and local authority representatives, in addition to social services and any external professionals if appropriate.

School staff will be proactive in their liaison with all those responsible for creating an environment in which young people can flourish. This will include regular contact with, for example, parents and carers, LAs, social workers and CAMHS. We will frequently offer to host and co-ordinate meetings, and will, where possible and appropriate, offer therapeutic support to parents and carers alongside the young person. Parents and carers are also given support and guidance in identifying external sources of additional support where this may benefit the young person. Parents and carers also have the opportunity to discuss any concerns with the teaching staff at Parent's Evenings which are held annually.

Parents and carers may also be invited to attend training events and sit on various committees.

## **6. Persons with Particular Responsibilities**

### **Oversight of Provision:**

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Head of Curriculum
- Head of Heart and Therapy
- SENCo
- Head of School (Upper, Middle, or Lower)
- Group Tutors

### **Co-ordinator of day to day provision:**

Learning Support Managers (LSMs) within each school area, as directed by various Heads of School.



## **7. Other Participants & Stakeholders**

The school makes every effort to work with health services. CAMHS, social services and educational welfare, as well as with partner colleges and other educational providers. We see our work as a partnership and fully support the team around the child. The school makes every effort not to cross professional boundaries.

Where deemed necessary the School will make referrals for additional support.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Head of Curriculum

All pupils' attainment and achievements are reported to the Student Services Committee following review and evaluation.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with all our School's other policy documents, particularly:

- Teaching and Learning
- The School Prospectus
- The Accessibility Plan
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Child and Adult Protection Policy

## **11. Consultees**

The Principal, Senior Management Team, Student Services Committee and the Trustees of the School. A representative group of parents were invited to make comments and suggestions.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Annual Reviews of Educational, Health, Care Plans (EHCPs)**

#### **Introduction**

Annual Reviews provide an opportunity for all those concerned with the education of our students to formally meet together and consider the progress made by each student and to plan for the future. Parents, carers, educational psychologists, social workers, clinical psychologists, representatives of the sponsoring authority and the student themselves can be involved in Annual Reviews. All members of the meeting contribute to the Annual Review report which will be submitted to the placing local authority in line with the requirements of the SEND code of practice.

#### **Aims of Annual Reviews are:**

- to assess each student's progress towards meeting the outcomes specified in the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and to collate and record information which the school and other professionals (including the parents or carers) can use in planning to support the student
- to assess each student's progress towards meeting the outcomes or interim targets agreed following the making of the EHCP or the previous Annual Review
- to review the special provision made for each student
- to consider the continuing appropriateness of the EHCP in the light of each student's performance during the previous year, whether any additional needs have become apparent and/or whether to make any amendments
- if the EHCP is to be maintained, to set new outcomes / interim targets for the coming year so that progress towards those targets can be considered at the next Annual Review
- to consider and start to plan for meeting the career aspirations of students when they reach Year 9. Annual Reviews from Year 9 onwards focus on Preparation for Adulthood and supporting students transitioning onto the next phase of education or training

#### **Strategies and Approaches**

Annual Reviews are important in supporting individual students to achieve their potential through demonstrating both to them and others the progress they have made during the preceding twelve months. Equally important is the role of the meeting in identifying strategies, outcomes, and short-term targets to take the students further. The process of the Annual Review meeting involves those concerned sharing information by word or report so that informed decisions and agreements can be made.

All Annual Reviews within our school conform to the guidelines and expectations of the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Contributions to Annual Reviews (and other meetings concerning our students) should: -

- be written or spoken in a way that is consistent with the ethos of the school so that it may be read or heard by the student him/herself
- be positive in tone, ensuring that potentially negative observations or phrases are expressed as clear action points. The majority of our students have such a low sense of self confidence that a negative comment in such a formal meeting may have a devastating impact
- make reference to the outcomes in the student's most recent EHCP

- refer to achievement levels and targets for the previous year (especially by subject teachers, tutors and Key Workers) in suggesting or setting targets for the coming year. You may wish to comment on any change
- suggest targets and outcomes for the coming year
- suggest that consideration be given to change in provision if there is evidence that there is a strong case for it.

A summary of the Annual Review meeting is sent to the Chair of the Review (usually the Head of School), Tutor, parents and carers and Local Authority in order for them to respond to any recommendations or requests arising from the meeting.

### **External Links**

Representatives of the students' Local Authority, medical services, CAMHs, social services, CSK Service and other relevant agencies are invited to attend.

### **Staffing & Resources**

Teachers and other staff may need cover to enable