



# LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

## SEND Policy & Information Report

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This policy has been developed with a range of staff at the school with wide ranging experience and will be reviewed annually.

Review Date: September 2022

Next Review Date: September 2023

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Safeguarding / CP Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching, Learning & Policy

## **1. LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE**

This policy and information report is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015) and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for students with SEN and disabilities
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN coordinators (SENCOs) and the SEN information report
- Equality Act 2010

## **2. DEFINITION of SEN**

**The Code of Practice 2015 defines SEND as:**

'A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or 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 they: (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them 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'.

## **3. DEFINITION of DISABILITY**

Many children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 - that is '...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial is defined as 'more than minor or trivial' SEN Code of Practice (2015, p16)

## **4. THE KINDS OF SEND FOR WHICH PROVISION IS MADE AT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

At Learning Opportunities all our students have an Education, Health and Care Plan. Their needs fall under one or more of the following categories; Social Emotional and Mental Health, Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning and Sensory and Physical.

Their EHCP may also contain specific needs, for instance dyslexia, dyspraxia, speech and language needs, autism, Asperger's syndrome, learning difficulties and behaviour difficulties. Some of our students have also been identified as being at risk of failing to achieve their social, developmental or academic potential due to extreme anxiety or fragile mental health. Learning Opportunities provides a safe secure, holistic and nurturing environment with a higher level of pastoral, emotional support and social skills support.

Where there are other kinds of special educational need, which do not occur as frequently and with which the school is less familiar, we can access training and advice to ensure these needs can be met.

## **5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS WITH SEND**

Learning Opportunities provides small class sizes and levels of staffing to meet students' needs as identified in their EHCP.

Students are set short term targets from the outcomes indicated in the EHCP. Where applicable, covering the four areas: cognition and learning, communication and social interaction, physical, sensory, independence and social, emotional and mental health needs.

We monitor the progress of all students throughout the year to review their academic progress. This includes progress towards EHCP outcomes which is monitored through Annual EHCP reviews and sharing provision plans 3 times each year.

Where progress is not sufficient, we put in place extra support to enable the student to catch up. Examples of extra support include interventions such as Thrive sessions, talkabout sessions, semantic links sessions and additional numeracy and literacy lessons.

We will ensure that all teachers and support staff who work with the student are aware of the support to be provided and the teaching approaches to be used.

## **6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOLS POLICIES FOR MAKING PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH EHC PLANS**

### **6a. How the school evaluates the effectiveness of its provision for such students**

Each review of the EHCP will be informed by the views of the student, parents / carer, and where appropriate social worker, class/subject teachers, and the assessment information from teachers which will show whether adequate progress is being made.

The SEN Code of Practice (2015, 6.17) describes inadequate progress thus:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between rate of progress
- Widens the attainment gap

Education, Health and Care Plans will be reviewed annually, which will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the special provision. The collation of all annual review evaluations of effectiveness will be reported to the Local Authority.

### **6b. The school's arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of students with special educational needs**

Every student in the school has their progress tracked throughout the year, including assessments of reading age, spelling age etc. Using these it will be possible to see if students are increasing their level of skills in key areas.

If these assessments do not show adequate progress is being made the Provision Plan will be reviewed and adjusted.

Teachers will work with members of the leadership team to carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs. This will draw on:

- The teacher's assessment and experience of the student
- Their previous progress and attainment or behaviour
- Other teachers' assessments, where relevant
- The views and experience of parents / carers
- The student's own views
- Advice from external support services, where relevant

The assessment will be reviewed regularly.

All teachers and support staff who work with the student will be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided, and any teaching strategies, approaches and interventions that are required. We will regularly review the effectiveness of the support and interventions, and their impact on the student's progress.

### **6c. The school's approach to teaching students with special educational needs**

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. We will regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all students, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable students and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered SEN Code of Practice (2015, 6.37)

At Learning Opportunities the quality of education was judged to be requires improvement in our last Ofsted inspection. We are working towards good by following our Learning Improvement Plan which is available from the school.

### **6d. How the school adapts the curriculum and learning environment for students with special educational needs**

At Learning Opportunities, we adapt the curriculum and the learning environment for students with special educational needs. We also incorporate the advice provided as a result of assessments, both internal and external, and the strategies described in Education, Health and Care Plans.

Adaptions include:

- Differentiating our curriculum to ensure all students are able to access it, for example, by grouping, 1:1 work, teaching style, content of the lesson, etc.
- Adapting our resources and staffing
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc.
- Differentiating our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.

As part of our requirement to keep the appropriateness of our curriculum and learning environment under review the Proprietor ensures improvements as part of the school's accessibility planning are made.

## **6e. Additional support for learning that is available to students with special educational needs**

As part of our budget we receive additional Pupil Premium funding for some of our Children in Care. Details of the amount and what it is spent on are included on the school website and available from the school.

Additional support includes, but is not limited to:

- Teaching assistants supporting students on a 1:1 basis
- Speech and Language Therapy, where relevant including an in-depth assessment and individual language programmes; delivered directly by SaLT or by school staff overseen by SaLT.
- Use of communication support – assisted technology if appropriate.
- Social Skills programme based on “Talkabout”.
- Thrive approach incorporating the use of self-regulation strategies, relaxation activities, and zones of regulation.
- Educational Psychologist 6 days per year direct input to the school. This includes observation of identified students with recommendations for strategies that could be used to enhance teaching and learning, and consultation or advice for parents / carers of identified students if appropriate.

## **6f. How the school enables students with special educational needs to engage in school activities**

All clubs, trips and activities offered to students at Learning Opportunities are available to all students. Where it is necessary, the school will use the resources available to it to provide additional adult support to enable the safe participation of the student in the activity

## **6g. Support that is available for improving the emotional and social development of students with special educational needs**

At Learning Opportunities, we understand that an important feature of the school is to enable all students to develop emotional resilience and social skills, both through direct teaching for instance PSHE and tutor time, and indirectly with every conversation adults have with students throughout the day.

For some students with the most need for help in this area we can also provide the following;

- access to counsellor, mentor time, or support from a member of senior leadership team
- time-out space for students to use when upset or agitated
- individual Thrive / walk & talk sessions.
- external referral to CAHMS/CYPMHS.

Students in the early stages of emotional and social development because of their special educational needs will be supported to enable them to develop and mature appropriately. This will usually require additional and different resources, beyond that required by students who do not need this support.

**7. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXPERTISE & TRAINING OF STAFF IN RELATION TO STUDENTS WITH SEND & HOW SPECIALIST EXPERTISE WILL BE SECURED**

Where additional training needs are identified for staff we will find a provider who is able to deliver it. Training providers we can approach are Educational Psychologists, Speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physio therapists and local specialist teachers.

**8. INFORMATION ABOUT HOW EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH SEND WILL BE SECURED**

Where external advisors recommend the use of equipment or facilities which the school does not have, we will purchase it or secure it by loan. For highly specialist communication equipment the school will seek the advice of the KCC Communication and Assistive Technology team.

**9. THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING PARENTS / CARERS OF STUDENTS WITH SEND ABOUT, & INVOLVING THEM IN THEIR EDUCATION**

We are committed to promoting parental engagement through regular communication which will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty
- We take into account parent / carer concerns
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes for the student
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are.

All parents / carers of students at Learning Opportunities are invited to discuss the progress of their children on at least three occasions a year and receive a written report three times per year. In addition, we are happy to arrange meetings outside these times.

Parents / carers and social workers where appropriate, will be invited to attend and contribute to Education, Health and Care Plan reviews. Wherever possible will also include other agencies involved with the student. Information will be shared and made accessible for parents / carers.

**10. THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING STUDENTS ABOUT, & INVOLVING THEM IN, THEIR EDUCATION**

When a student has been identified to have special educational needs because special educational provision is being made for him or her, the student will be consulted about and involved in the arrangements made for them as part of person-centred planning. Parents are likely to play a more significant role in the childhood years with the young person taking more responsibility and acting with greater independence in later years.

**11. THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY THE PROPRIETOR RELATING TO COMPLAINTS FROM PARENTS / CARERS OF STUDENTS CONCERNING THE PROVISION PROVIDED AT THE SCHOOL**

Please consult our Complaints Policy which is available on our website or from the school for more information.

Learning Opportunities is committed to establishing a clear, simple and accessible complaints procedure, which aims to resolve issues as quickly as possible. The procedure is not intended to replace the normal discussions, which take place on a day-to-day basis regarding problems and concerns as they arise. It is only where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of such discussions that further steps may need to be taken.

There are some circumstances, for students who have an EHCP, where there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by the school.

## **12. HOW THE SCHOOL INVOLVES OTHER BODIES, INCLUDING HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES, LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT SERVICES & VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS, IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH SEND & IN SUPPORTING THE FAMILIES OF SUCH STUDENTS**

The Proprietor and Head Teacher have engaged with the following bodies:

- An agreement with an Educational Psychologist for 6 days support per year
- Access to local authority's Speech and Language Therapy Services / Occupational Therapy Services / Physiotherapy Services for students with requirement for direct therapy or advice
- Children's Social Care Services, promoting effective working partnerships
- School Health (Kent)

## **13. THE CONTACT DETAILS OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE PARENTS / CARERS OF STUDENTS WITH SEND (up to age 25 - Code of Practice 2015, 6.39)**

Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provides a free and confidential, information, advice and support service, for parents of a disabled child or child with special educational needs and to children and young people up to age 25 who have a special educational need or disability.

Trained staff can provide impartial legally based information and support on educational matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities, including health and social care. The aim is to empower parents, children and young people to fully participate in discussions and make informed choices and decisions. Also to feel confident to express their views and wishes about education and future aspirations.

They can be contacted on:

HELPLINE: 03000 41 3000 Office: 03000 412412 E-mail: [iask@kent.gov.uk](mailto:iask@kent.gov.uk) [www.kent.gov.uk/iask](http://www.kent.gov.uk/iask)

## **14. THE SCHOOL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPORTING SEND STUDENTS IN TRANSFERRING BETWEEN PHASES OF EDUCATION, OR IN PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD & INDEPENDENT LIVING**

At Learning Opportunities we work closely with the educational settings used by the students before they transfer to us in order to seek the information that will make the transfer as seamless as possible. This involves visits to host primary schools and transition days in the school.

We also contribute information to a students' onward destination by providing information to the next setting including colleges and specialist providers.

## **15. INFORMATION ON WHERE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S LOCAL OFFER IS PUBLISHED**

A Local Offer gives children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, and their families, information about what support services the local authority think will be available in their local area.

The Kent authority's local offer can be accessed via <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-andchildren/special-educational-needs>

Parents / carers without internet access should contact the school for support to gain the information they require.