

SOUTHLANDS SCHOOL

Special Educational Needs Policy

Jan 2021

Rationale

Southlands is a school for students with moderate learning difficulties from Year 7 through to Year 11. The school caters for a wide range of special educational needs and associated conditions, and prides itself on creating a unique and specialised education for each and every pupil.

Admissions to Southlands School are through the local authority and are fully explained in the admissions policy. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), unless taken on an agreed assessment place at the request of the Statutory Assessment and Review service.

The aim of this policy is to clarify SEN provision and access across the school, and to highlight the many ways as a school we meet the many needs of our students.

Purpose

The philosophy at Southlands School is to provide every child with a unique educational experience that meets individual needs and requirements outlined in the EHCP. They have every opportunity to access a varied curriculum including specialist therapies and care to ensure they are motivated and challenged.

We provide a well-balanced and structured curriculum which follows the National Curriculum, but also incorporates many features that help our students achieve success and develop life skills that will enhance their chances and opportunities in later life.

As part of our community at Southlands School we work closely with several professional agencies. These provide an in-depth knowledge and understanding that can develop and assist in the overall assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation and development of our students' unique needs. These professionals work alongside students, teachers and teaching assistants to develop techniques and skills that will support each individual child.

The key component of our SEN provision is to allow students to develop in situations that promote and encourage independence and confidence at every opportunity with the skills and support of understanding and knowledgeable staff.

Procedure

In Key Stage 3 we follow the National Curriculum and deliver a full and comprehensive education to all students, the details of which are in our curriculum policy. At Key Stage 4, students have access to the Moving On Project alongside core elements of the national curriculum, which offers them a variety of opportunities to experience different skills to support them in moving to the next stage of their life, and to be more prepared for employment.

At admission panel any pupils placed at the school will have an EHCP with specific needs. The specialist provisions detailed in EHCPs are often carried out by specialist Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychology and other specialised professionals. These professionals work with staff to ensure a continuity of delivery, consistency and accuracy. The school understands the importance of a strong partnership with parents and a strong emphasis is placed on communicating with parents to keep them informed.

All students are supported to have an annual review of their EHCP to help ensure that their SEN needs remain accurately identified and provided for. Parents and relevant professionals are encouraged to be actively involved in these reviews.

The school utilises a huge variety of teaching methods and strategies on a day-to-day basis which meet the needs of the individual pupils within a lesson, allowing all students to access learning in a variety of ways which motivate, stimulate and allow continual development.

Assessment by teachers and multi-agency staff of progress in National Curriculum subjects will be supported by acquiring and attaining skills and competencies in all subject areas and follows the AWOL (assessment without levels) government recommendations. In Key Stage 4 the students will also complete a range of external courses as appropriate, which may include GCSE, Entry Level and ASDAN in a range of curriculum areas.

Resources

The school has a delegated budget, which is monitored on a termly basis by the governing body finance and staffing committee. The school purchases the local authority financial services service level agreement at level 3 which entitles us to a termly monitoring visit from our designated local authority finance officer.

All members of staff have opportunities to suggest areas of expenditure and teachers, as subject leaders, are allocated budgets for their subjects which may include SEN specific learning aids.

We acknowledge that the most valuable resource is staffing, and there is a real commitment to use every available resource to retain and recruit skilled teachers and teaching assistants. There is also continued professional development of staff in order to meet the needs of the children effectively.

Communication

It is recognised that not all of our pupils will always be able to communicate their exact needs, intentions or desires at all times. All staff are aware of this, and appropriate safeguarding and communication training is undertaken with staff to ensure that a child's SEN requirement never endangers them, or restricts their development or learning in any way.

The school currently has three trained Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) – Sam Hall, Stella Ellis and John Lines. Any specific health and medical needs are documented to all staff to ensure knowledge and training needs are up-to-date and accurate; this is overseen by Sam Hall. The designated SENCo is Sonia Wilkinson.

Communication with parents is also a key part of our provision and this can be done through telephone calls, text message and e-mail. Parents are invited to contact the school at any time if they have any issues or concerns they would like to discuss, as well as being invited to attend annual reviews and parents' evenings.

Addendum Added for Melrose Centre

- The Melrose Centre is an autism specific provision. It is located at Longbenton High School and allows for access to a mainstream environment for students and a high level of personalisation for students. This also provides opportunities for inclusion into mainstream classes for students who would benefit. Inclusion is very much based on individual strengths, providing students with supported mainstream school experience at Key Stage 3 leading to GCSE or equivalent level qualifications where appropriate and beneficial.

Allocation to either the Beach Road site or Melrose Centre site will be based on the specific needs of a child.

- The Melrose centre is managed by a Centre Leader and trained SENCo, Brett Maclennan. There are two Deputy DSLs at The Melrose Centre, Brett Maclennan and Helen Irving.