



# LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

## SEND Policy & Information Report

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Review

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 2024

Next Review Date: September 2025

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

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

## **LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE**

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

## **DEFINITION of terms SEND - Special Educational Needs & Disabilities**

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

'A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

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'.

Special Educational Provision Is educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools (SEND Regulations 2014).

## **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.

## **AIMS**

Our SEN policy and information report aims to:

- Set out how our school will support and make provision for students with special educational needs (SEN)
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for students with SEN

Our overall aim is to provide an educational environment which celebrates the uniqueness of every student. We are flexible and responsive to the complex needs of individuals and within a safe, secure and nurturing environment provide positive challenge and a focus on outcomes.

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Every member of staff has a responsibility to meet the special educational needs of students.

The Deputy Head Teacher, Kevin Dunk is responsible for student referrals and is the key point of contact with the Local Authority regarding placements.

### **The headteacher will:**

- Work with the senior leadership team and Proprietor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school.
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of students.
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents / carers, and other agencies to ensure all students receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching.
- Lead on innovation and research in special education so that Learning Opportunities is at the forefront of teaching and learning practice.
- Have strategic leadership of staff training and development.
- Lead on staff induction to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and understanding support them to be effective in their role and have a shared vision for school.

### **The Deputy Head Teacher will:**

- Work with the headteacher and Proprietor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school
- Manage all referrals and be the key point of contact with the LA regarding placement of students
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual students with EHC plans

### **The class teachers are responsible for:**

- The progress and development of every student in their class.
- Providing outstanding teaching and learning opportunities.
- Providing an emotional and physically responsive and enabling environment for all students.
- Leading support staff to support interventions and how these can be linked to classroom teaching.
- Working with the leadership team to review each student's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision.

## **EXTERNAL AGENCY SUPPORT**

Sometimes we need extra help to offer our students the support that they need. Whenever necessary we will work with external support services to meet the needs of our students and to support their families. These include:

- Speech and language therapists

- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists
- GPs or paediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Social services and other LA-provided support services
- Voluntary sector organisations

### **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. We currently support students with a range of needs including: 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.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT**

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.

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

**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. All annual review evaluations and effectiveness of provision will be reported to the Local Authority.

### **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.

### **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.

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

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

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the students in their class.

High-quality teaching is our first step in responding to student's needs. We will make sure that they have access to a broad and balanced curriculum in every year they are at our school.

We will differentiate (or adapt) how we teach to suit the way the student works best. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to adapting the curriculum, we work on a case-by case basis to make sure the adaptations we make are meaningful.

In addition to adapting 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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 leadership team
- time-out space for students to use when upset or dysregulated.
- individual Thrive / walk & talk sessions.
- external referral to the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (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.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXPERTISE & TRAINING OF STAFF & 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.

### **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 Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology (KM CAT) service.

### **THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING PARENTS / CARERS ABOUT, & INVOLVING THEM IN THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION**

Learning Opportunities recognises that parents/carers have a unique overview of their child's needs and as such have a vital role to play in decision making. There is a collaborative approach to creating a personalised SEND plan for all students according to their needs and the review involves all stakeholders.

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 / social workers are encouraged to:

- 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.
- Let staff know of any concerns regarding their child's academic progress or social, emotional or mental wellbeing.
- Feel empowered to contribute to their child's progress.
- Have high expectations of their child and encourage them to work hard at school and at home.

### **WHAT SUPPORT IS IN PLACE FOR LOOKED-AFTER & PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER STUDENTS?**

Simon Graydon (Headteacher) is also our Designated Teacher who works closely with the staff team to make sure that all teachers understand how a looked-after or previously looked-after student's circumstances and their SEN might interact, and what the implications are for teaching and learning.

Students who are looked-after or previously looked-after will be supported much in the same way as any other student at the school. However, looked-after students will also have a personal education plan (PEP). We will make sure that the PEP and any SEN support plans or EHC plans are consistent and complement one another.



## **THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING STUDENTS ABOUT, & INVOLVING THEM IN, THEIR CHILD'S 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.

## **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.

## **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)

## **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)

### **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.

### **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/educationandchildren/special-educational-needs>

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

### **REVIEW**

The Headteacher, will undertake systematic monitoring and conduct regular reviews of the SEND policy and procedures in order to ensure that systems are effective, fair and consistent. The Headteacher will keep Proprietor informed.