



Title	<b>Policy A22 Special Needs Policy</b>
Purpose	<b>To ensure Governors, the Senior Leadership Team, teaching and support staff assess and meet the Special Educational Needs of all students at Oak Lodge School.</b>
Relevant to	<b>Governors, All Staff</b>
Responsible Officers	<b>Assistant Headteacher (Autism)</b>
Introduced	<b>10/2006</b>
Modification History	<b>03/2011 11/2013</b>
Related Policies	<b>A2 Accessibility Plan A4 Admissions Policy A9 Curriculum Policy A10 Equality and Diversity A11 Exclusion of Pupils A17 Performance Management Policy B3 Assessment, Recording and Reporting B10 Physical Intervention Policy</b>
Date due for review	<b>11/2016</b>
Relevant Governors' subcommittee for review	<b>Curriculum Committee</b>
Agreed at full meeting of Governors on	<b>12/11/2013</b>
Signed by Chair of Governors	
Filed as	<b>A22 Special Needs Policy Vs3 1113</b>

## **Rationale**

Since all students at Oak Lodge have 'Special Educational Needs' and since the requirements for the contents of a Special Needs Policy relate to everything Oak Lodge will do as a school, this policy should be seen as an over-reaching umbrella policy that gives fuller expression to our mission as a school. As such, it establishes the principles and sets the parameters for all our development work and monitoring activities, and provides a central 'spine' from which all other policies radiate.

At Oak Lodge we are guided by the National Autistic Society's SPELL (**S**tructure **P**ositive **E**mpathy **L**ow Arousal **L**inks) framework, which works on the principle that each individual is unique and therefore individual need is at the heart of all that we do.

Using the SPELL philosophy we aim to provide safe, predictable environments and activities that provide opportunities for all students to increase their independence, develop communication and reduce anxiety. We are positive in our expectations and approaches, building on student's natural strengths and abilities. We try to see the world from our student's perspective to understand what may cause distress, so as to provide the best possible care and support. We aim to provide an environment and activities that are calm, focussed and free from distraction. Through the framework we aim to provide a shared and consistent approach that links Oak Lodge with the family, wider community and multidisciplinary support services.

We are committed to the principles of inclusion appropriate to the needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Conditions. There are some discrete classes of students with ASC that function as an integral part of the school. We aim towards inclusion at one or more of the three recommended levels – locational, social and educational – and monitor feasibility and the benefit for all students concerned. While we have some discrete ASC classes there are opportunities for all students to integrate through the Foundation Learning curriculum in Key Stage 4 and 5 where students select preferred subjects with a vocational theme. The SPELL philosophy can be seen in the framework of these sessions to support all and especially our ASC students.

We recognise that, for our students, social integration may be a more difficult target to achieve than educational, as autism specific structures in discrete ASC classes provide our students with the security or predictability they need: removing scaffolding too quickly or inappropriately leads to regression and a loss of emotional well being and self confidence and independence. The Assistant Head Autism has the responsibility to ensure all planning and implementation of provision for students with ASC is appropriate and that teaching strategies and staff skills are developed across the school to ensure consistency of practice.

## **Special Needs**

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001) states that children have a special educational need (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty, which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

It goes on to say that children have a learning difficulty if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- have a disability, which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority
- are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Although the Code emphasises that for the majority of students with special educational needs, their needs can, and should, be met in mainstream schools or settings, it also acknowledges that some students may for part or for all of their education require a placement in a special school.

### **Meeting the needs of students with SEN at Oak Lodge**

Oak Lodge is part of the educational provision provided by the London Borough of Barnet and caters for secondary aged students who require specialist teaching support to address a broad range of cognition and learning difficulties. Our students' special educational needs range from moderate to severe with associated complex learning difficulties including physical impairments. Approximately half of the students have ASC (Autistic Spectrum Conditions) or associated Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) including Asperger's Syndrome. Approximately 10% of students present with Down Syndrome.

Students additional needs in respect of physical, sensory, behavioural and communication difficulties impact on their cognition and learning potential. Students at Oak Lodge have an uneven profile of academic attainment. This is particularly the case with the ASC student population. Student ability ranges from P-Levels P4/P5 to National Curriculum Level 5 in English and Maths with a corresponding degree of variability in other subjects of the National Curriculum.

In order to deliver a supportive, flexible and challenging curriculum that meets the wide diversity of student's needs, the school is organized into

three key stages, building the core skills necessary for 'learning for life'. We believe that for students to benefit from their time at school the curriculum should be relevant, build on relative strengths and motivations and matched to student's individual needs and stages of development.

Dependent on the needs identified on the statement, a student will be placed in an appropriate class of similar chronological age and where teaching approaches and interventions are matched to the student's level of development and communication. The school is organised into the following departments:

- Key stage 3 (Y7/8)
- Key Stage 4 (Y9-Y11)
- Post 16 (16-19)
- Oak Bridge; A franchise of Barnet & Southgate College (Post-19)

Each Key Stage department is led by a member of the middle leadership team who co-ordinate and plan the curriculum relevant to their key stage. Key Stage leaders hold regular meetings to review and monitor the relevance of the curriculum but also to ensure continuity and progression between key stages.

Students in Key Stage 3 spend the majority of time with the form tutor to ensure suitable transition from their primary setting but also to provide better consistency of teaching approaches. They offer a complementary curriculum that promotes creative and e-learning, through the National Curriculum.

At Key Stage 4, subject specialists teach many students and all follow a modified and suitably differentiated National Curriculum. All courses are externally accredited and all students receive either General Certificates of Education (GCSE's) Entry Level Certificates of Achievement or ASDAN Certification at the end of KS4.

Although students may leave at the end of Year 11, many choose to stay on and join our Post 16 Department where the major emphasis is on the development of Life and Work Related Skills through a continuum of the 14-19 curriculum or an ASDAN Qualification.

### **Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities**

A significant number of children and young people attending Oak Lodge present with complex learning difficulties arising from physical and/or sensory impairment. These may include Cerebral Palsy or other conditions resulting in neurological impairments, as well as conditions and syndromes resulting in specific impairments or global developmental delay, such as Down's Syndrome or Prader-Willi Syndrome. Some students may present

with features of developmental coordination delay and others with complex medical conditions or multiple combinations of need.

The school aims to maximise each student's potential for academic progress through understanding the many different factors that impact upon learning. Physical, sensory, cognitive, behavioural, emotional and communication needs will be reflected in individual learning styles and in personalised therapeutic interventions and teaching strategies.

Physical disability may significantly impact on the student's capacity to access the curriculum. Staff must ensure that all students can participate in lessons and learn to their full potential, thus meeting the criteria of the Equality Act. (From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act. The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled students and prevent disability discrimination.) See **A2 Accessibility Plan**.

## **Multi-Professional Support**

### **Communication**

Barnet NHS Primary Care Trust provide speech and language therapists to work on site 1 day a week, with a speech and language therapy assistant on site 5 days per week. The school also has a specialist teacher who coordinates of Communication across the school.

Teachers and teaching assistants are supported to assist students' communication in the classroom, through the implementation of specific strategies and programmes. The programmes are developed jointly between speech and language therapists and teaching staff for individual students. Where appropriate, students may receive a block of 1:1 or small group speech and language therapy sessions to build upon a specific skill.

The school supports young people who use a range of communicative methods. For example, signing, symbols, or a computer-based Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) device to facilitate their communication.

Opportunities for skill sharing between speech and language therapists and teaching staff will be supported through jointly run class sessions and staff training. External training may be sought for staff members when it is necessary to meet the needs of individual students.

### **Physical Needs**

Teachers and teaching assistants will be supported to include students with additional needs in their classroom, through the implementation of physical management plans, strategies and programmes to develop specific functional skills. These aim to help the student maximise their potential both physically

and cognitively. Programmes should be jointly developed between therapists, classroom staff, students and parents, particularly in the area of self-care.

Students with a physical disability may need adapted equipment, such as appropriate ICT, adjustable furniture, sloping boards or visual aids. Teaching staff will need to work jointly with multi-professional agencies (for example, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, IT specialists, speech & language therapists) to ensure the accessibility of the curriculum for all students.

Students who use wheelchairs will require a physical management plan that outlines the additional interventions that need to be integrated into their school day. Students physiotherapy programmes include spending time out of their chairs for either hydrotherapy or physiotherapy and also to stand in a standing frame for a lesson. While at Oak Lodge students experience their pubertal growth spurt and it is especially important for wheelchair users to have the opportunity to keep as supple and mobile as possible to minimise the risk of deformity. Students with conditions affecting muscle tone and joint position should be monitored for splinting needs to protect hands and arms from deformity and to promote function.

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for additional needs leads the school's Physical Care Team and should liaise with the NHS Primary Care Trust Head of Paediatric Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy to ensure that the physiotherapy and occupational therapy needs of young people at Oak Lodge are being met.

The Physical Care team should work closely with the NHS physiotherapists who currently come into school for 1 day a week, and the Occupational Therapist who comes in one day a week. The school also employs an Accessibility Coordinator for 1 day a week and a Kinesiology Assistant 5 days a week. They should also have regular training in manual handling and hydrotherapy.

Following a NHS therapists' assessment of students needs, a plan for intervention will be made. This may include blocks of individual or group therapy sessions delivered by the NHS team, advice to the school physical care staff and classroom staff and/or provision of programmes and strategies to be integrated into the students' daily schedule. All programmes will require liaison between NHS and school staff to monitor the success of strategies and goal achievement.

### **Sensory Needs**

Some students will have difficulties with sensory processing and sensory modulation. This may particularly affect students on the autistic spectrum, but also young people with other diverse conditions. Occupational Therapists from Barnet Primary Care Trust (PCT) bring a sensory integration perspective

to understanding sensory processing difficulties and the impact of these on learning, physical development, behaviour and emotional security.

Assessment is carried out to address students' individual differences and needs; through observation, questionnaires and liaison with daily staff and parents. Advice is provided on sensory strategies and environmental factors to help students to access the curriculum and for developing functional skills. In some instances blocks of individual or group therapy may be provided; ultimately the aim is to integrate strategies within the student's daily regime.

Additionally, some students may have specific hearing or visual impairments that will require monitoring and regular support from an advisory teacher for sensory impairments.

Oak Lodge has integrated a Sensory program into the school day for all students based on their individual needs as established in consultation with parents, therapists and class teams. Students participate in targeted sensory activities that aim to regulate their sensory needs so that they are able to develop their social, emotional and cognitive skills.

### **Behavioural and emotional structure and support**

All students who require positive handling strategies will have a behaviour management plan drawn up in discussion with parents. All staff at Oak Lodge will receive training in positive handling and de-escalation in line with Barnet Policy. For those students who exhibit exceptional challenging behaviour consistently, specialist advice is available from Key Stage Co-ordinators, Assistant Heads and Pastoral Manager.

Some students will need additional support where there is a history of family difficulties including attachment difficulties and early trauma or significant mental health needs. Students will have regular support provided by the Pastoral Support Team including School Counsellor, Pastoral Manager and Assistant Heads for Autism, Additional Needs and Teaching and Learning.

### **Multi-professional Support Services available to Oak Lodge School.**

- Barnet CAMHS teams; Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Service for Children and Adolescents with Neurodisability (SCAN)
- Tavistock Centre and Clinic – CAMHS service
- Social Services – Disabled Children's Team / Child and Families
- Great Ormond Street Hospital; Centre for Interventional Paediatric Psychopharmacology, Wolfsen Centre Neurology and Neurodisability Service.

## **Admissions Process**

A referral is made to the school, usually by Barnet LA. After considering the paperwork the school will, if it is able to meet the students needs, invite the parents to visit the school. The decision to offer a place will be made based on several factors such as the match between the needs of the student and the students in the school, availability of places, the commitment and support of parents to the approaches used and the needs recognised through appropriate funding and appropriate resources. The LA makes final placement decisions. For further information refer to **Admissions Policy A4**.

## **Facilities for students at the school**

As a secondary school we have subject specialist rooms for some areas of the curriculum.

- We have a small swimming pool that is used by the students and also by the physiotherapist for hydrotherapy sessions.
- Although we do not have a gym we use our school hall and Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) for PE activities.
- We have 4 school mini buses.
- We have a therapy suite on site for Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Music Therapy, First Aid Care and the School Counsellor.
- We have wheelchair access to all our classrooms.

## **Resource Allocation**

The number of classes within each department is 5 or 6. Class sizes generally vary between 5 and 12 students. Each class has a form tutor and between 1 and 3 TA's depending on the class size and the particular needs of the students. Some students will have 1:1 TA allocation due to additional needs including medical and physical disabilities that significantly affects their ability access to the curriculum without a high level of support. Key Stage Co-ordinator's have an allocated budget in order to ensure that there are adequate learning resources available to meet the needs of the students.

## **Information about the school's policies for the assessment and provision of all students with special needs.**

All students attending Oak Lodge have a statement of special educational need and this is reviewed annually. The schools Assessment and Recording policy details procedures and practices used by staff to identify and review needs. Data relating to educational progress is analysed every year and made available to governors. Related Policy – **Assessment Recording and Reporting B3**

## **Access to a broad balanced curriculum**

The school provides students with access to appropriately differentiated curriculum meeting the requirement of the National Curriculum through the use of relevant material resources, teaching styles, modified approaches to learning and levels of staff support. Our Curriculum Policy contains more details of the curriculum models for each Key Stage – **Curriculum Policy A9**

## **Complaints**

The school has adopted the Barnet Complaints Policy, which informs parents and staff of the procedures to be followed should they wish to make a complaint. **Grievance Policy A8a / Complaints Policy Parents – A8b**

## **Information about the school's staffing policies and partnership with bodies beyond the school**

**Performance Management Policy – A17** outlines how we endeavour to meet the training needs of all staff. Money is allocated from our delegated budget to support training opportunities and professional development. At Oak Lodge we are committed to supporting professional development in the field of Special Education to Postgraduate level so as to provide the highest quality support and teaching to meet our students needs. Oak Lodge has established links with Middlesex University, University of London Institute of Education (IOE) and Birmingham University for continued staff development.

## **Support Services and use of external facilities**

Oak Lodge provides an Outreach Service in the areas of Autistic Spectrum Conditions, Down Syndrome, cognitive developmental delay and physical disabilities. We primarily support schools within the Barnet East Learning Network, schools in our Challenge Partner Hub and the Teaching School Alliance. We also respond to specific request from other schools.

We are an extensive provider of local outreach support, designated a National Support School in 2011. The Headteacher is a designated National Leader in Education (NLE) and one Assistant Headteacher has been appointed a Specialist Leader in Education (SLE). Both are currently engaged in support of schools outside of LA or established networks.

We hold an advisory surgery for staff and parents once a month with a Social Worker from the Disabled Children's team as coordinated by our Pastoral Manager.

Oak Lodge works with a multi-disciplinary team to meet the needs of students in relation to mental health support and to target those students at risk of and/or experiencing mental health difficulties or a loss of emotional well being.

## **Parents**

Parents generally visit the school before students are admitted and attend Annual review meetings and Parental Consultation Evenings in addition to any social/information event the school may provide.

A home-school diary provides the opportunity for parents to make informal contact with the school on a daily basis and the school can be flexible to telephone/meet with parents on matters arising. A weekly newsletter is sent home to give parents/carers current information. The school website also provides information about the school. Some parents prefer to receive correspondence via email this facility is available upon discussion with form tutors.

We work in collaboration with Parent Partnership to develop programmes of support that can be implemented in the home – this is especially successful for students with ASC. The Triple P Partnership delivery of training for parents with children with an ASC has been offered.

## **Transition**

Northway is our feeder school but we do have students admitted to the school who have attended a variety of primary schools across Barnet. The Assistant Heads for Autism and Additional Needs together with the Key Stage 3 Co-ordinator discuss the transition planning and implementation of provision for students transferring to Oak Lodge once a place has been offered.

Transitions are carefully managed in close liaison with relevant school staff through attendance at year 6 Annual Reviews and/or visits to Northway School or other Primary School placements.

Oak Lodge begins the transition planning for life, as set out in the SEN Code of Practice, for students from the year 9 Annual review – aged 14 years. This is facilitated by the work of the Prospects Careers Advisor for Special Educational Needs.

## **Links**

An aspect of the SPELL framework focuses on links. At Oak Lodge we have developed links beyond local services and have linked with many national services. Our Specialist Status for Cognition and Learning has helped the school extend existing links in the community through our outreach service but also extend our business links in the community. We have registered with the National Autistic Society for accreditation. We have developed links with universities for up to date research and staff development. We have an established link with Barnet Social Services and CAMHS teams and regularly work in unison with multidisciplinary teams around the child to meet Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes.

Other organisations that we have worked closely with include:

- IPOP
- Resources for Autism
- Mencap

- Parent Partnership
- Prospects
- Barnet College
- Short Breaks

Curriculum links range from Specialist Arts and PE projects to links with local employers and residential facilities. It is our expectation that Oak Lodge will continue to build links locally, nationally and internationally through development of high quality education and services for young people with Special Educational Needs.