



<b>Title</b>	A22 Special Needs Policy
<b>Purpose</b>	To ensure Governors, School Leaders, teaching and support staff assess and meet the Special Educational Needs of all students
<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 05/2017
<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>	5/2020
<b>Relevant Governors' subcommittee for review</b>	Curriculum Committee
<b>Agreed at meeting of Local Governors on</b>	7/12/2017
<b>Filed as</b>	A22 Special Needs Policy Vs4 0517

## **Special Needs Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN) taken from Section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014**

1.1 A child or young person has an 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:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than others of the same age; or
- Have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream Post 16 institutions.

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

1.2 Although the new *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years*, 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.

### **2. Rationale**

2.1 Oak Lodge School became a Special Academy on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 and is managed by Barnet Special Education Trust. Oak Lodge provides suitable school places for secondary aged students aged 11-19 with mild or moderate to severe complex learning difficulties.

All students that attend the school will have or will be undergoing assessment for, an Educational Health and Care Plan in accordance with part 3 Children's Act 2014. All students require specialist teaching that addresses a broad range of cognition and learning difficulties.

2.2 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 document should be read as an 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.

2.3 Oak Lodge School offers educational provision to students aged 11-19 years with a broad range of SEN including moderate or complex learning disabilities. Students with an autism spectrum condition make up the largest group of learners in the school, currently at over 50% of the population.

2.4 Oak Bridge Post 19 provision offers a clear transition pathway for school leavers with a complex needs who may struggle to access mainstream college environment. Oak Bridge is managed by Oak Lodge School in partnership with Barnet and Southgate College. All practice principles and pedagogy that guide us in the education of all students at Oak Lodge School is further extended across the Oak Bridge Provision.

### **3. Assessment of needs**

3.1 A significant review of this Policy has included the changes arising from reform in SEND provision in that statements of Special Educational Needs have now been replaced with the new 0-25 Education Health and Care Plan which identifies and supports individuals with SEN through a co-ordinated assessment process ***Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.***

3.2 All students admitted to Oak Lodge have an Educational Health and Care Plan or will be currently undergoing assessment. Guidance on the new provisions in the Act places greater focus on 'outcomes' to which students are working and the support that aims to enable them to achieve these. This in turn should help them to succeed in their education and to make a successful transition to adulthood.

3.3 Annual Review of the EHC Plan take's place annually for each student. The student should be central to the review meeting as far as possible. Parents and other professionals are invited to attend and asked to submit their views prior to the meeting.

3.4 Oak Lodge has a designated Annual Review Co-ordinator whose responsibility it is to liaise with all professionals involved in the team around the child during the scheduling of reviews, organising attendance and requesting written advice in preparation for the meeting. The coordinator also chairs the meeting and provides information about transition options as appropriate following up on any actions required. A report reflecting discussion at the meeting is sent home but is also forwarded to Barnet SEN and other professionals involved in order to share outcomes set at the meeting.

3.5 Students at Oak Lodge have an uneven profile of academic attainment. This is particularly relevant across the ASC population. The spread of ability ranges from Pre National Curriculum-Level P5 to National Curriculum Level 3 in English and Maths with a corresponding degree of variability in other subjects of the National Curriculum.

3.6 We believe that for students to achieve realistic but challenging targets the curriculum should be relevant, functional and meaningful, build on relative strengths and should be matched to individual needs and stages of development.

3.7 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 Stage departments, building the core skills necessary for 'learning for life'.

Dependent on the needs identified on the students' EHC Plan, they will be placed in an appropriate class of broadly similar chronological age and where teaching approaches and interventions are matched to their level of development and communication needs.

The school is organised into the following departments:

- Middle School (Y7- Y9)
- Upper School (Y9-Y11)
- Post 16 (Y12--Y14)
- Post 19 (Oak Bridge)

3.8 Each department is led by a member of the Extended Leadership Team responsible for co-ordinating and planning the curriculum relevant to their department. They hold regular team meetings to review and monitor the relevance of the curriculum but also to ensure continuity and progression between key stages.

3.9 Students in Middle School 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, broadly aligned with the National Curriculum. Subject specialists in PE, Science, Music and cooking teach across the school and all follow a modified and suitably differentiated curriculum.

In the Upper School, 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.

## **4. Ethos**

4.1 At Oak Lodge we are guided by the National Autistic Society's SPELL Framework (**S**tructure **P**ositive **E**mpathy **L**ow Arousal **L**inks), which works, on the principle that each individual student is unique and therefore 'individual need' is at the heart of all that we do. The SPELL philosophy combines elements that embrace an eclectic range of evidenced-based interventions through activities that provide opportunities for all students to increase their independence, develop communication and reduce anxiety in a safe predictable environment. We are positive in our expectations and approaches, building on student's natural strengths and abilities. We try to see the world from the 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 learning activities that are calm, focussed and free from distraction. Through the SPELL framework we aim to provide a shared and consistent approach that links Oak Lodge with the family, wider community and multidisciplinary support services.

4.2 We are committed to the principles of inclusion appropriate to the needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC). While we have some discrete ASC classes where the practice is highly autism specific, all practice is autism inclusive. There are structured curriculum opportunities for ASC students to integrate with their non-autistic peers, so they may participate in inclusive education with increased social demands at a rate they feel comfortable with.

We recognise that, for some of our students, social integration may be a more difficult target to achieve 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.

4.3 Assistant Headteacher (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.

## **5 Meeting the needs of all students**

5.1. A significant number of children and young people attending Oak Lodge present with a complex medical conditions in addition to their learning difficulties. These may arise from a physical, genetic or neurological condition such as Epilepsy, or a chromosomal disorder such as Downs Syndrome. Many students present with a developmental coordination disorder (DCD), showing delayed motor skills. Some students in the school have more complex motor disorders such as Cerebral Palsy or genetic conditions which impact on their mobility.

5.2 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**.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 Students who use wheelchairs will require a physical management plan that outlines the additional interventions that need to be integrated into their school day. Physiotherapy programmes are planned where appropriate to ensure students spend 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, 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.

5.6 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.

5.7 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 a physiotherapy assistant and a Kinesiology Assistant 5 days a week. A specialist physiotherapist is employed by the school to deliver clinical, and classroom, proprioception programmes, acupuncture is also available by special arrangement. Regular trained in manual handling, hoisting and hydrotherapy.

5.8 NHS therapists allocated to the school should assess student need prior to formulation of a plan for intervention. 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.

## **6. Sensory Needs**

6.1 Some students will have difficulties with sensory processing and sensory modulation. This may particularly affect students on the autistic spectrum as research suggests sensory sensitivities affects approximately 90% of the autistic population, but also young people with other conditions. Occupational Therapists from Barnet Primary Care Trust (PCT) bring a sensory integration perspective to understanding sensory processing difficulties and the impact on learning, physical development, behaviour and emotional security.

6.2 Assessment is carried out to address students' individual differences and needs; through observation, questionnaires and liaison with 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.

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

6.4 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.

## **7 Speech and Language Therapy Provision**

7.1 Barnet NHS Primary Care Trust provide speech and language therapists to work on site 3 days a week, with a speech and language therapy assistant on site 5 days per week. The school has a designated specialist communication teacher who supports teachers with making the curriculum accessible for those students who require Alternative Augmentative Communication Systems AAC. Some students have both lo tech systems such as communication books and hi tech such as ipads with communication software installed Grid 2.

7.2 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. There are some students who will have a more targeted layer of input from the SALT teams. 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 systems. For example, we may 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.

## **8 Behavioural and Emotional Structure and Support**

8.1 The introduction of the SCERTS model into the school has provided essential curriculum interventions to enable students to emotionally regulate with the support of both environmental adaptations and staff support. Whilst we endeavour to move our students to a place where they are able to maintain control of their arousal state, without the need to physically intervene, there are inevitably times where this is necessary to maintain a good safe level of support.

8.2 All students who require positive handling strategies will have a behaviour management plan drawn up in discussion with key staff and parents. All staff at Oak Lodge will receive training in SCERTS methodology, de-escalation and positive handling 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.

For further information please refer to the **Behaviour Policy B4**.

8.3 Some students will need additional support where there are persistent and ongoing family difficulties, including attachment difficulties and early trauma or significant mental health needs. These students will have regular support provided by the Pastoral Support Team including School Counsellor, Pastoral Manager and the Assistant Heads for Autism & Additional Needs.

### **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 Care Teams – 0-25 Team



## **9 Admissions Process**

9.1 Barnet Special Education Trust will have regard to its Supplemental Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education in respect of all admissions to Oak Lodge School.

Most students join Oak Lodge at 'secondary transfer' (Year 7). However, the school and Trust will always consider suitable admission requests for older students, subject to there being places available. Successful applications for admission will identify Oak Lodge as the most appropriate provision for the needs of the student; where they will find a peer group that supports their wellbeing, and where they will have the best chance of making academic and personal progress.

For a young person to be admitted to Oak Lodge, the school must be named by a local authority (LA) in their Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). The overwhelming majority of young people admitted are resident in the London Borough of Barnet, but we will also work in partnership with other local authorities and parents/carers to assess the suitability of potential applicants for a place. For further information refer to **Admissions Policy A4**.

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

As a secondary school we have accessible subject specialist rooms Music, Art & Design, Science, DT & Food technology

We also have:

- A small swimming pool that is used by the students and also by the physiotherapist for hydrotherapy sessions.
- A small PE Hall and Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) for PE activities.
- An outdoor multi gym, vestibular equipment and trampoline
- 4 sensory/soft spaces
- A therapy suite on site for Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, First Aid Care and School Counselling Services.
- Wheelchair access to all classrooms.
- 5 mini buses, including 3 with wheelchair access and a wheelchair accessible car

## **11 Resource Allocation**

The number of classes within each department varies between 6 and 8. Class sizes vary between 6 and 12 students. Each class has a form tutor and between 1 and 4 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 Leaders have an allocated budget in order to ensure there are adequate learning resources available to meet the needs of the students.

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

All students attending Oak Lodge have an Education, Health and Care Plan 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 – **B3 Assessment**

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

The school provides students with access to appropriately differentiated curriculum meeting the requirements for Special Academies through the use of relevant material resources, teaching styles, modified approaches to learning and levels of staff support. Further information can be found on our website and in **A9 Curriculum Policy**.

## **13 Complaints**

The school operates the complaints procedure of Barnet Special Education Trust. This is available from the school website.

**14 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.

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

On request, Oak Lodge is able to provide a outreach support in the areas of Autistic Spectrum Conditions, Down Syndrome, cognitive developmental delay and physical disabilities. We primarily support schools within Barnet, schools in our Challenge Partner Hub and the Teaching School Alliance. We always 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. Two

members of school leadership also undertake accreditation reviews for the National Autistic Society.

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.

## **16 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.

## **17 Transition**

Northway is our main feeder school but we also admit students from primary schools across Barnet and other neighbouring authorities. 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 visits to primary phase settings.

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 supported by a consultant careers advisor for Special Educational Needs.

## **18 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 outreach support but also extend our business links in the community. We have held the National Autistic Society accreditation award for seven years and are the only local special provision to do so. We have developed links with universities for 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 (TAC's) ensure that all our students have the support they need to prepare for the next stage in their learning and development.

Other organisations that we have worked closely with include:

- Resources for Autism
- Mencap
- Parent Partnership
- 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.