

HILLSIDE SPECIALIST SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

Special Educational Needs Policy



Draft Reviewed – January 2017

Next Review – January 2018

SEND Code of Practice

It is the policy of this school to fulfil all that is required under the statutory instrument: The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014 which relates to The Education Act 1996 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and to be guided by the advice and guidelines published by the Lancashire Education Authority and any subsequent changes to the statute or advice.

The named SEN Co-ordinator is Paul Leaper, Acting Headteacher and the named SEN Governor is Steve Warren.

Provision

Hillside Specialist School and College is a non-denominational school and college that educates pupils with autism covering the whole of Lancashire. The school and College is Lancashire Services only county provision for autism and offers a specialist educational environment that facilitates learning of pupils. Hillside School and College promotes a multi-disciplinary approach to the pupils' education and care that includes speech and language therapy support working collaboratively with a highly qualified and dedicated school and college staff.

Our capacity is currently recognised as 90 pupils, we currently have 86 pupils on roll, 14 of which are based within our college provision and 72 based within our main school building.

Aims of the School

The School and college aims to:

- Remove/reduce a pupil / student's barriers to learning,
- Assist pupil/student to develop effective systems of communication and social interaction,
- Develop a pupil/student's ability to adapt to, and accommodate change,
- Encourage pupil/student to positively manage their own behaviour and difficulties,
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets each pupil/student's needs, including access to the National Curriculum,
- Provide an environment that fosters care and control of pupils to enhance learning opportunities,
- Provide inclusive and transfer opportunities as part of the continuum of education provision,
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and other professionals.

At Hillside Specialist School and College we have built an eclectic approach to pupils learning, taking into account current theories and methods of teaching. All of our pupils display significant difficulties within the 'Triad of Impairment' that is at the heart of the autism. A pupil/student's difficulties in language and communication, social relationships, and rigid patterns of behaviour/thought/interests form major barriers to learning. Our role is to help our pupils to come to terms with, and overcome, these difficulties.

Our Mission Statement: -

For all pupils to learn to their full potential in a fun and safe environment

Admission to the School

Visits with a view to requesting a place should be directed through your Area Assessment Services Office or named officer. Placement at the school and college is agreed between the Integrated Assessment Panel, SEN Officer, Educational Psychologist and the School/College.

It is important to note:

- 'without prejudice visits' - visit by the parents and pupil/student to the school and college, with no expectation of admission on either side at this stage.

Hillside Specialist School and College is a limited specialist resource for Lancashire and in order to justify the distances many pupils travel to attend the school and college it is necessary to consider if there is alternative provision to meet all the pupil/student's needs within their own communities prior to admission. This is in keeping with Government policy for all pupils to be included wherever possible within mainstream settings or local specialist provision. This is also a major focus of the LA's inclusion policy and vision for the future. Places at the school and college are limited to ninety and there are often a number of pupils referred to the school and college who are awaiting a place to become available.

The school and college does not operate a 'waiting list' system, however places are offered according to the following criteria:

- Availability/appropriateness of placement within the pupil's local community
- Examination of all the relevant documentation demonstrating the school and college can meet all the pupil / student's needs
- Integrated Assessment Panel decision
- Availability of place according to where the vacancy has arisen within the existing school and college group structure.
- The needs of the pupil/student will not detract from those of pupils already attending the school and college
- The young person should have a diagnosis of Autism.
- The young person should be in the process of or have in place an educational statement/education health and care plan with Autism named as the Primary Category of Need.

Facilities

- The school buildings for the primary and secondary provision is not fully accessible. There is a ramp to enter the main reception. There are disabled toilet facilities for mobile users. There are two disabled parking bays. The 16-19 provision is fully accessible.
- The main resource of the school is the staff and this is set to a high level to ensure full access to educational provision and care of the highest order. Each class has a teacher and at least two teaching assistants with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This team plans and works together to meet the individual learning, care and behavioural needs of all the pupils in the

class. High staff commitment to the School's philosophy and ethos is expected and staffing appointments are made with this as an essential criterion.

- The School building comprises of:
 - Well-resourced classrooms.
 - Access to age appropriate play and leisure areas
 - A range of furniture sizes are available to suit individual needs, adapted seating is also provided to meet sensory needs. There are three food technology rooms designed to meet the range of ages of pupils/students.
 - Outdoor play areas which have different fixed play equipment for different ages and sensory aids. There is a sunken trampoline, tactile trail, low ropes trail, two outdoor multi gym of different sizes and two orienteering trails to broaden skills across the PE curriculum. There are two sensory rooms and two interaction rooms to meet the needs of three to sixteen years and sixteen to nineteen years
 - Two minibuses and three seven seater vehicles to use for community activities, work experience, attending competitions, inclusion opportunities, swimming, residential trips and college courses.
 - Access to technology in the classrooms are designed to meet the needs of pupils from the age of three upwards. iPads have been purchased for all pupils, this will enable appropriate Apps to be applied for individual pupils as a tool for personalised learning.

The curriculum resourcing is funded through budget allocations given to subject leaders and priorities for funding are identified in the School's Improvement/Development Plan. The School occasionally receives donations from external sources to further enhance curriculum areas.

Identification of pupil needs - Assessment and Accreditation

There is a comprehensive system of assessment, recording and reporting in the school that informs the planning process so that pupils' progress can be effectively followed. As pupils enter school there is an initial assessment completed to assist in setting targets for the pupils' Individual Education Plan, including the Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS). In their fifth year, pupils complete a foundation profile, the results of which are conveyed to parents. All pupils are assessed using Bsquared, an online assessment tool that measures pupil progress on term-by-term basis and effectively measures the extent to which pupils have improved. The results of these assessments are used to compile whole-school targets for improvement.

Pupils have the opportunity to enter the SATs assessments, if appropriate. Often these assessments tell us very little of what our children can do, but they are useful for a small number of our pupils.

There is also the opportunity for our Key Stage 4 students to complete modules of work and receive accreditation for these through an examination body. Decisions regarding other examinations are based upon a child's individual needs or capabilities.

In Key Stages 1-3 staff collect examples of pupils work in their Record of Achievement, celebrating their successes in the school in each subject area of the National Curriculum. In the Early Years Foundation Stage class the pupils' achievements are celebrated in their Learning Journeys, focusing on the seven strands of the EYFS curriculum. In Key Stage 4 and 5 there are a broad selection of qualifications that can be chosen to suit the needs of the individual, developing a bespoke timetable focus. Most of the coursework relates to developing skills for the future, vocational understanding or experience of work.

There are assemblies, broadly focused on Fundamental British Values and events that happen throughout the academic year. Each week pupils receive certificates that acknowledge their academic and personal achievements. On leaving the school students receive their Progress Profile as part of a presentation package.

Teaching Methods

Hillside Specialist School uses a range of traditional and alternative teaching techniques in order to maximise the learning opportunities for the pupils who attend. All pupils have highly individualised learning programmes to assist them to overcome their particular barriers to learning, such as communication or sensory difficulties. The school promotes the use of other specialist teaching techniques and programmes such as Intensive Interaction, Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS), Makaton, and electronic resources to aid augmented communication. The programmes of the speech and language therapists are fully integrated into the child's teaching and learning opportunities. We also offer additional programmes and therapies, such as Sensory Integration and Dance therapy.

Many of the classrooms are carefully organised in order to address a central need of pupils with autism to understand and order the events of their day. Employing techniques such as TEACCH, the classroom can be arranged into discrete areas with a defined purpose assisting the pupil to develop appropriate responses/actions to those areas that aids comprehension and reduces anxiety. Most classrooms provide a low-arousal learning environment to enable pupils to modulate their sensory needs and focus on specific tasks. There may be group tables, individual workstations and areas designed to support pupils proprioceptive and vestibular needs.

Our overall aim is to provide a highly structured teaching environment in which the pupil feels safe and in which they have a degree of control and predictability: An environment that addresses the child's central need to learn to manage their autism so that they may develop and achieve.

Parent/Carer Partnership

Parents/Carers are encouraged to be closely involved with all aspects of the education of their child. Parents/Carers are welcome to visit the School at any time and the School offers regular open mornings where parents can come and share in lessons with their child.

During the first 8 weeks of first starting school Parent/carers are invited to an interim review to discuss how their child is settling in.

The School holds Annual Review Meetings for all children (two reviews per annum for nursery age pupils) this provides parents and professionals with the opportunity to discuss progress, targets and any issues relating to the young person. Pupils are encouraged to make a contribution to the Review through an "All About Me" booklet or attend part or all of the meeting. Parents/Carers and professionals are provided with written reports and provided with information on assessment and evaluation of pupil progress and achievements. All Annual Reviews are pupil centred and some pupils provide evidence and are present at the review.

There are three parent evenings a year for parents to come into class and meet with the class teacher, to look at work and discuss personalised learning targets.

End of year reports are produced for every pupil and end of Key Stage and Foundation Stage are reported to parents.

The half termly newsletter provides parents/carers with an overview of school life.

The School uses SCOPay to communicate with parents and carers via email and text. The School is also making it easier for parents to make payments for school meals, trips, holiday club and uniform via the SCOPay system. The parents are able to book parent evening meetings through SCOPay.

Parents/Carers are requested to complete ParentView via the School website or the Ofsted website. Parental questionnaires are collected every term at Parent Evenings. Specific questionnaires are distributed on an ad-hoc basis to inform schools strategic planning.

More recently the School has engaged in the Leading Parent Partnership Award Scheme and has been accredited with the Leading Parent Partnership status.

Staff Development and Training

A dedicated, hardworking staff team support our School in every area. All our staff are trained through in-service training (such as Team Teach, Sensory Integration, Child Protection training) and external training courses to further enhance the curriculum and the services we provide as a whole School.

Training needs are identified through the Appraisal system for both Teachers and Support Staff and the School Development Plan. Staff are readily encouraged to gain additional qualifications.

Governors

The School keeps the Governors regularly informed about all SEN matters through the School Effectiveness Committee (SEC) and also Full Governing Body Meetings.

The SEC Committee is responsible for ensuring that our curriculum fully meets the needs of the children in school and that all children, regardless of ability or background are given a chance to reach their full potential. Governors are also responsible for ensuring that the school follows the National and School Curriculum, that academic and behaviour standards are met and improved, that target setting,

mentoring, monitoring and evaluation takes place, that policies delegated to the Committee by the Governing Body are developed and reviewed.

The Governing body works as a team and acts with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the children in our school. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team run the school on a day to day basis, but the Governors provide support, assistance and challenge, acting as a “critical friend” to ensure that the school continues to maintain and improve high standards in everything it does.

Complaints

The School has a complaints procedure which is available via the School website or by contacting the School direct.

Please feel free to contact either the Headteacher or Chair of Governors should you feel that this is necessary.