



Title	A22 Special Needs Policy
Purpose	To ensure Governors, School Leaders, teaching and support staff assess and meet the Special Educational Needs of all students
Relevant to	Trustees, Local Governors, All Staff
Responsible Officers	Deputy Headteacher (Teaching and Learning)
Introduced	10/2006
Modification History	03/2011 11/2013 05/2017 06/2020
Related Policies	A2 Accessibility Plan A4 Admissions Policy BSET-Pol.21 Equality Policy A11 Exclusion of Pupils BSET-Pol.23 Teacher Appraisal Policy B3A – B3D assessment policies BSET Pol.25 Physical Intervention Policy
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Relevant Governors' subcommittee for review	Local Governing Body
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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. Vision Values and Ethos

2.1 Our vision for all students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is that they make excellent progress, feel safe physically and emotionally and are included and accepted in the community. In line with our mission statement "Learning for Life" we aim to prepare our students to leave school as confident young people who are as self-reliant as their strengths and abilities allow them to be. We believe passionately that all students should have the right to access learning at a level and in a setting appropriate to their needs that will enable them to enjoy and achieve. We believe firmly: *If a student cannot learn the way we teach, we should teach the way they learn.*

3. Rationale

3.1 Oak Lodge School became a Special Academy on 1st 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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 (ASC) make up the largest group of learners in the school, currently at over 50% of the population.

3.4 Oak Bridge Special Education Post 19 provision, offers a clear transition pathway for those school leavers with complex additional needs who may struggle to access mainstream college environment. Oak Bridge provides a 5-day week curriculum, personalised to each young person's strengths, interests and aspirations. It includes functional skills in English and Maths, vocational learning and the development of independent living skills.

4. Assessment of needs

4.1 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.***

4.2. Guidance on the new provisions in the 2014 Act, places greater focus on 'outcomes' students are working towards and the support that aims to enable them to achieve these. Every student in the school has a 'Monitoring Outcomes' assessment document to meet the statutory obligation to make clear links between special educational provision and the outcomes it is meant to support.

4.3 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. There is a greater focus on the wishes and feelings of the students, with greater emphasis on their participation in any decision making. Students aspirations and goals should be fed into any transition pathway to adulthood.

4.4 **The DfE have issued a notice to modify section 42 of the Children's and Families Act 2014. This modifies the duty on local authorities to secure SEN provision and on health commissioning bodies to arrange health provisions in accordance with EHC plans, so they can use reasonable endeavours. This**

amendment is relevant to Health and Care needs assessments and plans during COVID 19.

4.5 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 alongside key staff in the team around the child.

4.6 The Annual Review Co-ordinator 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.

4.7 Students at Oak Lodge generally have a broad range needs and an uneven profile of academic attainment. The spread of ability ranges from Pre-National Curriculum-Level P5 to National Curriculum Level 3 in core curriculum areas, with a corresponding degree of variability in other subjects of the National Curriculum.

4.8 Oak Lodge students are a wide and varied group of learners, with an increase over time of those with significant and severe learning disability. It is not uncommon for our students to have 1 or 2 overlapping conditions that lead to compounding factors like multi-sensory impairment and additional complex medical needs.

4.9 There are increasing numbers of autistic students placed at Oak Lodge whose cognitive ability aligns closely or just below that of their peers, where autism prevents them from achieving age expected outcomes within the current local provision offer. Oak Lodge will continue to work strategically with the Local Authority to offer more suitable provision for this cohort of young people.

5. Curriculum

5.1 We believe that for students to achieve realistic outcomes the curriculum should be relevant, functional and meaningful, building on strengths and matched to meaningful end points. All curriculum activities should be developmentally appropriate and linked to EHCP outcomes.

5.2 In order to deliver a supportive, flexible and challenging curriculum that meets the wide diversity of student's needs, the school are developing their curriculum offer suitable for more semi-formal learners, who are not able to access the National Curriculum. The Semi-Formal curriculum promotes the development of creative and expressive learning, offering holistic interconnected activities.

5.3 Students are grouped and placed in an appropriate class of broadly similar chronological age and where teaching approaches and interventions are matched to their level of development, communication and interaction

needs. They are also grouped in a class setting that is favourable given their ability to work as a group or where a more structured individual learning program is required.

The school is organised into the following departments:

- Middle School KS3 (Y7-Y9)
- Upper School 14-19 (Y10-Y14)

5.4 Assistant Headteachers have a curriculum responsibility for co-ordinating and planning the curriculum relevant to their department or area of specialism. Regular departmental meetings are aimed at reviewing and monitoring the relevance of the curriculum, to ensure continuity and progression between key stages.

5.5 Middle School is based on a Primary model where students spend the majority of time with the form tutor, to ensure suitable transition from their Primary setting and offer consistency of teaching approaches. The curriculum offer at Key Stage 3 ensures all students engage in functional activities through a topic-based approach.

5.6 Upper School offers a range of courses externally accredited for those students that have relative strengths and interests in aspects of vocational learning pathways. There is the option for those at the end of KS4 (Y11) to be entered for General Certificates of Education (GCSE's), Entry Level Certificates of Achievement or ASDAN Certification, according to their level of academic development.

6.6 Although students may leave at the end of Year 11, most 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.

7. Autism inclusion policy and practice

7.1 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.

7.2 We recognise that, for some of our autistic students, integrating into some learning contexts, where the social demands are increased, may be a more difficult target to achieve. The autism specific structures in discrete ASC classes provide our students with the security or predictability they need: removing scaffolding too quickly or inappropriately could lead to regression, loss of emotional well-being, self-confidence and independence.

7.3 Deputy Headteacher (Teaching and Learning) is responsible for all planning implementation of provision for students with Autism Spectrum Condition in line with National Autistic Society Standards for Day Schools.

7.4 Teaching strategies and staff skills are developed across the school to ensure consistency of practice that is underpinned by the Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Support (SCERTS) Framework. Staff work collaboratively to develop strategies that will ensure best outcomes to be achieved given the neurological differences in autism that impact on learning and personal and social development.

8 Meeting the additional needs of all students

8.1. 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.

8.2 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**.

8.3 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.

8.4 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.

8.5 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.

8.6 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.

8.7 Deputy Headteacher (Specialist Support) 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.

8.8. 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.

8.9 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.

9. Sensory Needs

9.1 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 80% of the autistic population. 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.

9.2 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.

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

9.4 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.

10 Speech and Language Therapy Provision

10.1 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 low tech systems such as communication books and hi tech such as ipads with communication software installed Grid 2.

10.2 Teachers and teaching assistants are supported to assist students' communication in the classroom, through the implementation of specific strategies and programmes. This forms the 'universal' offer for the majority of students. The programmes are developed jointly between speech and language therapists and teaching staff. There are some students who will have a more 'targeted' layer of input from the Speech and Language Therapy 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.

10.3 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.

10.4 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.

11 Emotional regulation and behavioural support

11.1 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 interpersonal support. Whilst we endeavour to move our students on where they are able to maintain better understanding and 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.

11.2 All students who require positive handling as a mutual regulatory strategy will have a behaviour support plan drawn up in discussion with key staff and agreed and signed by parents. All staff at Oak Lodge should receive training in SCERTS practice principles, de-escalation and positive handling in line with Barnet Policy. For those students who frequently become emotionally dysregulated and direct physically harmful behaviour as emotional expression, advice and support should be drawn on from the wider pastoral team.

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

11.3 Some students may need additional therapeutic support where there are persistent and ongoing family difficulties, including attachment and early trauma or significant mental health needs. These students and their families will have regular support offered by the Pastoral Support Team including Pastoral Manager and Senior Leaders. This comprises those with relevant specialism in multi-agency practices, specialist support and departmental leaders.

Multi-professional Support Services available to Oak Lodge School.

- Barnet CAMHS teams; Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Service for Children and Adolescents with Neuro-disabilities (SCAN)
- Tavistock Centre and Clinic – CAMHS service
- Social Care Teams – 0-19 Early Help Hub. 0-25 Team, CIC Children in Care Team

12 Admissions Process

12.1 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.

12.2 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.

12.3 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**.

13 Facilities for students at the school

As a secondary school we have accessible subject specialist rooms Music, Art & Design, 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 and 3 'Safe Spaces' to support emotional regulation
- A therapy suite on site for Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, First Aid Care and School Counselling Services.
- Wheelchair access to all classrooms.
- 4 mini buses, including 3 with wheelchair access and a wheelchair accessible car

14 Resource Allocation

14.1 The number of classes within each department varies between 6 and 9. Class sizes vary between 6 and 12 students. Each class has a form tutor and between 2 and 4 TA's depending on the class size and the particular needs of the students. Some students will have 1:1

14.2 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.

14.3 Heads of Department have an allocated budget in order to ensure there are adequate learning resources available to meet the needs of the students.

15 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. Data relating to educational progress is analysed every year and made available to governors.

Related Policies – **B3A – B3D 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.

16 Complaints

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

17 BSET-Pol.23 Teacher Appraisal outlines how we endeavour to meet the training needs of 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 College London Institute of Education (IOE) and Birmingham University for continued staff development.

18 Support Services and use of external facilities

On request, Oak Lodge is able to provide outreach support 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 Deputy Headteacher has been appointed a Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) specifically in SEN/ ASC. Both are currently engaged in support of schools outside of LA or established networks.

Deputy Headteacher (Teaching and Learning) also undertakes 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.

19 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 Parents Group is co-run by 2 senior members of staff weekly with the aim of offering psycho-education around SEN and specific support strategies.

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.

20 Transition

Northway is our main feeder school but we also admit students from primary schools across Barnet and other neighbouring authorities. The Deputy Headteachers act as SENCO's for the School and together with the Head of Middle School 3 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.

21 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.