



Highfield School

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

September 2026

Written by: Leigh Fisher

Policy owner	Head of Learning Support / SENDCo
Applies to	Highfield School, including Early Years provision
Approved by	Senior Leadership Team
Review cycle	Annual, or sooner if guidance or provision changes
Next review	September 2027

1. Purpose and ethos

Highfield School is an inclusive, non-selective independent school for pupils aged 2–13. We believe that every pupil should feel known, valued and able to participate fully in school life. This policy explains how we identify and remove barriers to learning, participation and wellbeing, and how we provide support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our approach is ambitious, strengths-based and child-centred. High-quality adaptive teaching is the starting point for every pupil. Where a pupil requires provision that is additional to or different from that ordinarily available, support is planned through a graduated approach and reviewed in partnership with the pupil, parents and relevant professionals.

2. Aims

- identify emerging needs and barriers as early as possible;
- secure consistent, inclusive and adaptive classroom practice across the school;
- ensure class and subject teachers retain responsibility for the progress of every pupil they teach;
- provide proportionate targeted and specialist support, with clear intended outcomes;
- promote pupils' independence, self-advocacy, wellbeing and preparation for their next setting;
- work openly and constructively with parents, carers and external professionals;
- use staffing, therapies and resources effectively, reviewing impact rather than assuming that more adult support is always the best response; and
- meet our duties under relevant education and equality legislation.

3. Legal and guidance framework

This policy should be read alongside the school's Admissions Policy, Accessibility Plan and Disability Equality Scheme, Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Complaints Procedure.

The policy has regard, where applicable, to:

- the Children and Families Act 2014, including arrangements for Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and plans;
- the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014;
- the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015), particularly in relation to funded Early Years provision and EHC plans;
- the Equality Act 2010, including the duty not to discriminate and to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils; and
- the Independent School Standards and the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, as applicable.

Highfield School is an independent school and is not currently approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014. The school nevertheless uses the principles of the SEND Code of Practice to inform good practice across the school.



4. Definitions

A child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other pupils of the same age.

A disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A pupil may be disabled, have SEN, or both. A diagnosis does not automatically determine either the support required or whether a pupil is placed on the SEND register.

The four broad areas of need are communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; and sensory and/or physical needs. These areas help with planning but do not describe the whole child, and needs often overlap.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Senior leadership

The Head and Senior Leadership Team are accountable for the school's inclusive culture and the quality of SEND provision. They ensure that SEND is considered in strategic planning, staffing, professional development, curriculum design, admissions and accessibility.

Head of Learning Support / SENDCo

- leads the strategic development and day-to-day coordination of SEND provision;
- maintains oversight of the SEND register, provision mapping and review cycles;
- advises and supports staff, coordinates specialist assessment and provision, and liaises with families and external agencies;
- coordinates requests for EHC needs assessments and annual reviews where the school is responsible for arranging them;
- works with leaders on staff deployment, training, transitions and accessibility; and
- monitors the quality and impact of provision and reports to senior leaders.

Teachers

The class or subject teacher is responsible and accountable for the progress and development of every pupil in their class, including where a pupil receives support from an LSA, specialist teacher or therapist. Teachers identify concerns, adapt teaching, contribute to Assess–Plan–Do–Review, implement agreed strategies and communicate with parents and the Learning Support Department.

Learning support staff and therapists

Specialist teachers, intervention teachers, LSAs and therapists work within agreed plans and under appropriate professional direction. Their support should enable access, participation and increasing independence. LSAs supplement, rather than replace, the teacher's relationship with and responsibility for the pupil.

6. Identification and the graduated approach

Identification draws on information from the pupil, parents, teachers, previous settings, observation, attainment and progress data, screening or diagnostic assessment, and external professional advice. Slow



progress or challenging behaviour does not by itself mean that a pupil has SEND. The school considers other factors, including attendance, health, wellbeing, English as an additional language and changes in circumstances.

Where concerns remain after appropriate classroom adaptation, the school follows a graduated cycle:

Assess – build a rounded understanding of strengths, needs, barriers and starting points.

Plan – agree outcomes, adjustments, provision, responsibilities and a review point with the pupil and parents.

Do – the teacher remains responsible for implementing the plan, with support from relevant staff and specialists.

Review – consider evidence of progress and the pupil's and parents' views; continue, adapt, step up or step down support accordingly.

Pupils may be placed on the SEND register when the evidence indicates that special educational provision is required. Support is not delayed while a formal diagnosis is awaited. Equally, a diagnosis alone does not necessarily require SEND-register placement if needs are met through ordinarily available provision and reasonable adjustments.

7. Three levels of provision

The school describes provision in three levels. These are flexible rather than fixed stages: a pupil may receive support at more than one level, and provision may increase or reduce as needs and impact are reviewed.

Universal provision (Wave 1)

- consistent adaptive teaching, guided by the school's universal 'Top Ten' expectations and phase-specific checklists;
- clear routines, explicit instruction, manageable steps, checks for understanding and appropriate scaffolding;
- visual supports, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, alternative ways to record, assistive technology and accessible resources where helpful;
- support for attention, executive function, communication, sensory regulation and emotional readiness to learn; and
- inclusive classroom, pastoral, co-curricular, sport and boarding practice, with reasonable adjustments where required.

Targeted provision (Wave 2)

- time-limited individual or small-group teaching designed to address a clearly identified barrier or skill;
- structured literacy, numeracy, language, working-memory, study-skills, social communication or emotional-literacy programmes;
- pre-teaching, consolidation, touch typing or other targeted access support; and
- class-led planning and review, with advice or delivery from the Learning Support Department where appropriate.

Specialist provision (Wave 3)

- specialist teaching delivered individually or in a small group by appropriately qualified staff;
- a substantially adapted or personalised curriculum where ordinary differentiation is insufficient;
- commissioned Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, physiotherapy, play therapy, counselling or other specialist intervention;



- individual adult support where assessment shows that this is necessary for safety, access or delivery of specified provision; and
- support specified in an EHC plan and liaison with the relevant local authority.

For some pupils, specialist English and/or mathematics teaching may replace selected mainstream lessons for an agreed period. The pupil's LSA may attend these lessons when this supports consistency and transfer of strategies. Such arrangements are individually planned and reviewed; they do not indicate that the school can meet every level of need at every age or phase.

8. Floreat House

Floreat House, the school's SEND and wellbeing hub, brings together learning support, intervention, pastoral and therapeutic services. Depending on individual need and availability, pupils may access specialist teaching rooms; intervention and ELSA spaces; Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, physiotherapy and play-therapy rooms; a sensory and regulation room; a sensory garden; and rooms for Team Around the Child and annual review meetings.

Floreat House is a whole-school resource, not a separate placement. Its purpose is to make support easier to coordinate while helping pupils remain connected to their class, curriculum, friendships and wider school life.

The school commissions qualified therapy providers and prioritises statutory provision specified in section F of an EHC plan. Therapists assess, advise, deliver or oversee programmes within their professional remit. Education staff may embed recommended strategies between sessions when trained and when this is safe and appropriate.

9. Support plans, review and pupil voice

Where useful, a pupil may have an Individual Support Plan, a pupil profile, a regulation plan, a risk assessment, or a therapy programme. Documents should be practical, outcome-focused and accessible to the staff who need them. They record strengths and interests as well as needs, agreed strategies, pupil and parent views, responsibilities and review arrangements.

Pupils are involved in decisions in ways appropriate to their age and communication needs. We help pupils understand their learning profile, recognise helpful strategies and develop the confidence to express what supports them. Plans and interventions are reviewed using evidence of progress, participation, wellbeing and independence, not attendance at an intervention alone.

10. Partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers hold essential knowledge about their child. The school aims to communicate early, listen carefully and make decisions transparently. This may include informal updates, parent meetings, review meetings, shared plans and guidance for home. Consent is sought before referral to an external professional, unless safeguarding or another legal duty requires a different course of action.

Where specialist assessment, therapy, specialist teaching or additional adult support incurs a charge, the school will explain the proposed provision and charging arrangements in advance. Responsibility for costs depends on the circumstances, including whether provision is privately arranged, parent-funded or commissioned by a local authority through an EHC plan.

11. Education, Health and Care plans

Parents and the school may ask the local authority to carry out an EHC needs assessment under section 36 of the Children and Families Act 2014. The school will normally consult parents before making a request and



will provide evidence of the pupil's needs, the provision made, and the response to support. Parents have the right of appeal against certain local authority decisions.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the school works with the local authority, parents and professionals to deliver the provision for which it is responsible and to monitor progress towards outcomes. The school will arrange or contribute to annual reviews as required, gather views and advice, and submit recommendations to the local authority. The local authority makes the final decision about whether and how the plan is amended.

For a prospective pupil with an EHC plan, the school considers carefully whether it can deliver the specified provision and meet the pupil's needs within its setting. As a non-section 41 independent school, Highfield School can be named in an EHC plan only with the school's consent.

12. Access, reasonable adjustments and independence

The school anticipates and makes reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Adjustments are individual and may relate to teaching, communication, environment, sensory access, equipment, routines, assessment, behaviour support, attendance, trips, sport, co-curricular activities or boarding. The school's Accessibility Plan sets out its wider approach to improving access.

Additional adult support is deployed in response to assessed need and agreed outcomes. It is not an automatic response to a diagnosis. Where 1:1 support is provided, the plan should clarify its purpose, hours, funding, lines of responsibility and how dependence will be avoided. Staff use a graduated approach to prompting and support so that pupils have appropriate opportunities to think, communicate, take risks and work independently.

Exam access arrangements are based on current evidence, the pupil's normal way of working and the regulations of the relevant awarding body. A diagnosis does not automatically confer an arrangement, and arrangements used at Highfield may be reassessed by a receiving senior school.

13. Admissions and transitions

The school welcomes applications from pupils with SEND and considers each application individually in line with the Admissions Policy and Equality Act 2010. Parents must provide full and accurate information about known or suspected needs, professional involvement and existing plans so that the school can consider reasonable adjustments and whether it can meet the pupil's needs. Admission is not guaranteed where, after careful assessment and consultation, the school reasonably concludes that it cannot safely or appropriately meet the need, even with reasonable adjustments.

Transition planning may include information sharing, visits, photographs or visual information, staff liaison, pupil profiles and joint meetings. Enhanced planning is used where needed for entry, movement between phases and transfer to senior or specialist settings. For pupils with an EHC plan, transition is considered through the annual review process and in partnership with the local authority.

14. Staff development and quality assurance

All teaching and support staff receive ongoing SEND development. This includes the school's Learning Beyond the Label programme, adaptive teaching training, phase guidance, briefings, coaching, and access to specialist advice. Learning walks and review of pupil outcomes are used developmentally to strengthen consistent universal practice. Role-specific training is provided, where staff deliver a specialist programme, a therapy recommendation, or an individual risk-management plan.



15. External agencies and information sharing

The school works, as appropriate, with educational psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, physiotherapists, paediatric and mental health services, local authority teams, specialist teachers, social care, and independent therapeutic professionals. External advice informs, but does not replace, the school's own assessment of what can reasonably be delivered in its setting.

SEND information is handled confidentially and shared on a need-to-know basis in accordance with data-protection and safeguarding requirements. Relevant information is shared with staff and receiving settings to support safe and effective provision. Records may include concerns, assessment evidence, plans, reviews, professional reports, EHC documentation and communication with families.

16. Monitoring and evaluation

The Head of Learning Support / SENDCo and senior leaders monitor:

- pupil progress, participation, attendance, wellbeing and increasing independence;
- the quality and consistency of adaptive teaching and agreed adjustments;
- the implementation and impact of targeted, specialist and EHC-plan provision;
- pupil and parent views, transitions, referrals and review timeliness;
- staff training needs, deployment and use of resources; and
- patterns in behaviour, exclusions, safeguarding, complaints and accessibility where these relate to SEND.

Provision is changed where evidence shows that it is ineffective, no longer required or insufficient. The school will be honest with families when a pupil's needs cannot reasonably be met within the school, and will work constructively with them and relevant professionals on next steps.

17. Concerns and complaints

Parents should raise concerns promptly with the class or subject teacher and then the Head of Learning Support / SENDCo. Most concerns can be resolved through discussion and review of the pupil's provision. Formal complaints are handled under the school's Complaints Procedure. Rights relating to local-authority decisions about EHC needs assessments and plans are separate from the school's complaints process.

18. Contact and policy review

SEND enquiries should be addressed to:

Leigh Fisher
Head of Learning Support / SENDCo
lfisher@highfieldschool.com
01428 728064

This policy is reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, guidance or the school's provision changes materially. The review draws on monitoring evidence and feedback from pupils, families, staff, leaders and relevant professionals.

