



SEND Policy

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This policy explains how Skylark Plus identifies and supports individual needs, reviews provision and involves students in decisions about their education. It applies to staff supporting young people aged 16–25 within our specialist post-16 provision.

1 Aims and objectives

Our aim is to help every student achieve their potential, guided by our five values: Bounce Back, Be Kind, Show Respect, Take Responsibility and Be Safe.

- Provide appropriate support and reasonable adjustments so students can access learning and participate in provision life.
- Help students work towards their aspirations, EHCP outcomes and greater independence.
- Involve students and, where appropriate, parents and carers in planning and reviewing support.
- Work with local authorities and other professionals to coordinate provision and address unmet needs.
- Make staff responsibilities clear and use evidence of progress to improve teaching and support.

2 Vision and values

We provide a broad, balanced and purposeful curriculum adapted to individual needs, strengths and interests. We maintain high aspirations

while recognising different starting points, communication needs and rates of progress. Progress may include qualifications, practical skills, engagement, confidence, relationships and independence.

3 Legislation and guidance

This policy is informed by the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Regulations 2014, the SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years and the Equality Act 2010. We apply the duties relevant to our legal status as a post-16 provider and our commissioning and funding arrangements. We also follow applicable data protection and mental capacity requirements.

4 Inclusion and equal opportunities

We aim to remove barriers to learning and participation. Staff plan reasonable adjustments to teaching, communication, assessment, equipment and the environment, and review whether these adjustments work. Disability-related needs must be considered when applying attendance and behaviour procedures.

Practical activities and off-site learning are planned using individual needs and proportionate risk assessments. Staff consider adaptations and suitable alternatives where a barrier to participation is identified.

5 Definitions and areas of need

A young person has special educational needs where a learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision. This includes significantly greater difficulty in learning than others of the same age, or a disability that prevents or hinders access to facilities generally available to others of the same age in mainstream education. For young people over compulsory school age, special educational provision is educational or training provision additional to, or different from, that generally available in mainstream post-16 institutions.

Under the Equality Act 2010, disability generally means a physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on normal

day-to-day activities. A student may be disabled without having SEN, or have SEN without meeting this definition of disability.

The four broad areas of need

- Communication and interaction, including understanding language, expressing needs and social communication.
- Cognition and learning, including acquiring, retaining and applying knowledge and skills.
- Social, emotional and mental health needs, including difficulties affecting emotional wellbeing and engagement.
- Sensory and physical needs, including barriers linked to sensory processing, hearing, vision or physical access.

Needs can overlap and change over time. Support is based on the individual rather than a diagnosis or category alone.

6 Roles and responsibilities

Principal and senior leadership team

The Principal, Adrian Stenner, holds overall responsibility for SEND provision and is the named point of oversight. The senior leadership team coordinates implementation with teaching and support staff. Specific tasks may be delegated, but the Principal retains accountability.

The Principal and leadership team will ensure staff understand each student's needs, oversee EHCP provision and progress, allocate resources, organise reviews, liaise with local authorities and identify training requirements. They will obtain specialist advice where needs exceed staff expertise and act promptly on gaps in support.

Teachers and instructors

- Plan and deliver high-quality teaching adapted to individual needs and agreed outcomes.

- Read relevant EHCP information, support plans and risk assessments before working with a student.
- Work with support staff and specialists to implement agreed strategies and reasonable adjustments.
- Record engagement, progress and concerns, and contribute to reviews of support.
- Raise unmet needs or barriers with the Principal or senior leadership team and maintain appropriate communication with students and families.

Teaching assistants and support staff

Support staff implement agreed plans, encourage independence and share observations with the teacher or instructor. They report concerns promptly and work within their training and competence.

Students

Students are supported to explain what matters to them, identify strengths and difficulties, set goals and give feedback on support. We adapt communication and meetings to enable participation, including using visual information, extra processing time or a trusted supporter where helpful.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers hold valuable knowledge of the young person. We invite their views and encourage them to share changes that may affect learning or wellbeing. We offer termly opportunities to review support and provide an annual report on progress, involving families in accordance with the young person's wishes and applicable legal requirements.

Young people's rights to make SEND decisions apply after compulsory school age, subject to the relevant mental capacity provisions. We support students to make their own decisions and involve parents, carers or advocates appropriately. We do not assume that SEND means a person

lacks capacity. Information is shared lawfully, including where necessary for safeguarding.

7 Information about SEND provision

Skylark Plus will make this policy and clear information about available support accessible to students, parents, carers and placing authorities. The Principal or senior leadership team can explain how support is arranged, reviewed and coordinated. Information will be updated when arrangements change.

8 Identifying and assessing needs

Before admission and during induction, we review the EHCP, previous reports and relevant professional advice with the student and appropriate family members or professionals. We assess current skills, interests, communication, independence, wellbeing and support needs to establish useful starting points.

Admissions decisions follow our admissions arrangements, relevant statutory duties and local authority consultation processes. We assess whether the required provision can be delivered, including reasonable adjustments and any additional resources or specialist input.

Recognising changes and responding to concerns

Teachers and instructors monitor progress against the student's starting points and agreed outcomes. Slow progress, absence or behaviour alone does not establish a new special educational need. Staff consider factors such as communication barriers, anxiety, sensory demands, bullying, bereavement, health and previous educational experiences. English as an additional language is not itself SEN.

Students, parents or carers may raise concerns with the instructor or senior leadership team. The Principal will ensure concerns are considered, relevant observations and assessments are gathered, and next steps are agreed and recorded. Specialist assessment or advice will be sought where

appropriate; staff will not make diagnoses outside their competence.

9 Our graduated approach to support

We use an assess, plan, do and review cycle to adapt support. This complements the EHCP and does not replace provision specified within it.

Assess

The teacher or instructor, supported by senior leadership, reviews the student's strengths, needs, existing provision and barriers. The student's views, family knowledge where appropriate, and professional advice inform the assessment.

Plan

Staff agree specific outcomes, teaching approaches, adjustments and any targeted support with the student and appropriate others. The plan records what will happen, who is responsible and when progress will be reviewed. Relevant staff receive the information they need to implement it.

Do

Teachers and instructors remain responsible for teaching and progress, working closely with support staff. The leadership team helps resolve barriers and arranges further advice where needed. Staff record what support was delivered and the student's response.

Review

Staff review progress, student feedback and the effectiveness of support at the agreed date. They consider whether adjustments or specialist input need to change and record the next steps. Significant concerns are acted on promptly rather than waiting for the next scheduled review.

10 Types of support

- Adapted teaching and everyday adjustments, such as visual instructions, demonstrations, smaller steps, additional processing

time and predictable routines.

- Targeted individual or small-group support linked to specific learning, communication, independence or wellbeing outcomes.
- Specialist advice or intervention where required, arranged with the relevant professionals and placing authority.

These approaches may be used together. Students do not have to pass through numbered stages before receiving necessary support. Resources are planned through the provision's agreed funding and commissioning arrangements; any gap in EHCP provision is escalated promptly.

11 Evaluating the effectiveness of provision

The senior leadership team evaluates provision through teaching and support records, student progress, termly plan reviews, EHCP reviews, student and family feedback, and staff observations. We consider academic, vocational and wider developmental outcomes, including participation and increasing independence.

Leadership reviews whether planned provision is delivered, where barriers remain and whether resources and interventions are effective. Findings inform staff development and improvements to the curriculum and support.

12 Individual education and support plans

Individual plans translate EHCP outcomes and assessed needs into clear, achievable steps. They identify the support required, responsibilities, success measures and review dates. Plans are developed by teaching staff with leadership oversight and contributions from the student and appropriate others.

Plans are reviewed at least termly and sooner if needs change. Information is recorded securely and shared with relevant staff. Students and, where appropriate, parents and carers receive accessible information about agreed support and progress. A plan does not reduce or replace the

provision specified in an EHCP.

13 Education Health and Care Plans

The local authority maintains the EHCP and is responsible for its statutory review at least every 12 months. Skylark Plus cooperates with the review process and holds the review meeting where requested by the local authority. Staff provide evidence of progress, the effectiveness of provision, the student's views and any recommended changes.

Reviews focus on the young person's aspirations and preparation for adulthood, including further education or training, employment, independent living, community participation and health. Relevant professionals and family members are involved appropriately, with support for the student to participate meaningfully.

Where Skylark Plus hosts the review, leadership will coordinate invitations, reports and the review record within the applicable statutory timescales. Recommended changes are submitted to the local authority; the review meeting does not itself amend or cease the EHCP.

If needs change significantly, progress stalls despite appropriate support, or we are concerned that provision cannot meet the student's needs, the Principal will contact the local authority promptly and request an early review where necessary. We will identify interim support and risk management with those involved. Changes to placement must follow the applicable statutory and commissioning processes.

Transitions and preparation for adulthood

Transition planning begins early and reflects the student's goals, strengths and support needs. We work with the student, receiving providers, careers support and relevant agencies to identify suitable next steps and share necessary information lawfully. Achieving an outcome does not automatically mean the EHCP or support should end; decisions rest with the local authority under the statutory process.

14 Staff expertise and training

The Principal and leadership team identify training needs through induction, supervision, reviews and observation of practice. Staff development addresses the needs of the current cohort, inclusive teaching, communication, reasonable adjustments and safeguarding. Specialist tasks are undertaken by appropriately trained or qualified staff.

15 Working with external agencies

We work with relevant services where needed, which may include educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, sensory support, health and mental health services, social care, careers services and local authority SEND teams. Access depends on assessed need and agreed arrangements; listing a service does not mean it is provided on site.

Referrals and information sharing follow appropriate consent and safeguarding procedures. Advice is translated into practical strategies and reviewed with staff. Where specified provision is unavailable or delayed, leadership raises this with the responsible agency and local authority and records agreed action.

16 Concerns and complaints

Students, parents and carers can raise a concern with the relevant instructor or senior leadership team. Formal complaints about SEND provision should be addressed to the Principal under the Skylark Plus complaints procedure. A complaint about the Principal, or an unresolved complaint, follows the escalation route in that procedure.

We will help students access the complaints process in a format they understand. Families and young people can also seek independent advice from their local SEND Information, Advice and Support Service, including about local authority decisions, mediation and rights of appeal.

Complaints about Skylark Plus, appeals about local authority EHCP

decisions and disability discrimination claims follow different routes. The appropriate route depends on the issue and the provision's legal status. Using our complaints process does not remove statutory rights or extend external appeal or claim deadlines.

17 Monitoring and review

The senior leadership team will review this policy annually and sooner where legislation, staffing or provision arrangements change. The review will consider student outcomes, access to provision, student and family feedback, complaints, staff understanding and the effectiveness of adjustments. The Principal is responsible for approval and communicating changes to staff.

Related policies and guidance

Read alongside the current admissions, accessibility and equality arrangements, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, complaints and data protection policies.

SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, particularly chapters 7, 8, 9 and 11:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>