

Heart of the Forest Community Special School

SEND Policy 2023



Approved by:	HoF Governing Body	Date:	
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Website:	Yes	Type:	Statutory

Heart of the Forest Community Special School

SEND Policy

The SEND policy is a statutory policy. It is pivotal to the development of the school and it works symbiotically with other key policies. It should be read in conjunction with the school's accessibility scheme, Equality policies, the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the Anti- Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and the SEN information Report. The policy is written in conjunction with the Equality Act 2010, the Children's and Families Act 2014, the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 0-25 years (2015) and the supporting pupils at school with medical conditions guidance (2015).

Relevant documents are located on the school website (www.heartoftheforestschool.co.uk) or can be requested from the school. (admin@heartoftheforest.gloucs.sch.uk)

Context

The Heart of the Forest Community Special School caters for pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties and complex needs aged from 3-19 years. We can consider requests for placement for 2 year olds. All pupils will have a statement of educational need or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or will be in the process of obtaining one. Their needs are categorised within the four areas specified in the SEN Code of Practice (2015);

- Cognition and Learning
- Social, emotional and mental health issues
- Sensory and/or physical difficulties
- Communication and Interaction

Whilst recognising that the following are not categories of SEN they can impact on the progress and attainment of the pupils:

- Disability (the Code of Practice outlines the 'reasonable adjustment' duty for all settings and schools provided under current Disability Equality legislation and these alone do not constitute a category of SEN)
- Attendance and punctuality
- Health and welfare
- English as an additional language
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium
- Being a Child in Care
- Being a child of a Serviceman/woman

The school is organised to accommodate the needs of a wide range of pupils and all of the above are considered when putting in individual arrangements to overcome specific barriers to learning.

Aims

Our aims are:

- To ensure that all pupils are treated with respect regardless of sex, colour or creed
- To foster a positive and optimistic approach from all concerned to ensure that each and every pupil can reach their potential in preparation for the world
- To ensure that pupils' rights, needs, aspirations and personal preferences remain central to the ethos of the school
- To have high expectations for every pupil and to broaden their horizons by offering exciting and stimulating experiences within school and in the wider community
- To provide a welcoming and caring environment where educational and therapeutic needs are addressed effectively
- To foster exemplary socially acceptable behaviour and to develop in our pupils an understanding of the needs and rights of others
- To provide a broad, balanced, differentiated and relevant curriculum to include the National Curriculum
- To recognise and celebrate success
- To build strong collaborative partnerships with families and the local community
- To prepare pupils for a fulfilling, meaningful, contributing, and rewarding adulthood
- To actively encourage multi-agency involvement
- To encourage pupil awareness of a healthy life style
- To implement national initiatives to ensure that our provision is of the highest quality

Admission

Admission to the Heart of the Forest Community Special School is the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council. Admission is based on the needs of the individual child and may take place at any point in the year, depending on whether a school placement is available. All other pupils should have an EHCP to support the request for a Special School place.

Applications for admission to the FE department will be considered in line with all other applications for post 16 placements and it is not automatic that a pupil at the school continues into the FE department.

All referrals for the placement of children and young people with a statement or EHCP are discussed and decided by the Local Authority's multi-agency Special Needs Resource Group and the views of all relevant professionals working with the child are sought in support of this process.

It is important that prospective parents are able to evaluate all of the options that are available for children and young people who have a statement or EHCP before agreeing to the placement of their child within an educational setting. In keeping with this belief informal visits to the school are welcomed. The Local Authority Admissions advice can be found on the school website or on the GCC website.

Inclusion

The Heart of the Forest Community Special School is an inclusive environment. Each child's needs are assessed on an individual basis and, wherever possible adaptations are made to accommodate their needs. We have in place an Accessibility Plan. Our building is relatively new and was designed to be inclusive. We have hoists in all classrooms and inclusive changing facilities. The corridors are wide and the lighting is autistic friendly. The atmosphere is calm and welcoming.

Educational Provision

The school is organised to accommodate the needs of a wide range of pupils. We have four departments in school, which span Key stage 1 up to Key Stage 4/5 across Early Years, Primary, Seniors and Further Education. Within these departments pupils are grouped according to need and care is taken to create classes where the children will work well together and learn to their optimum. Each department has its own curriculum designed to cater for the age and ability of the pupils and there is also a Specialist Therapeutic Curriculum to ensure that educational and therapeutic needs are addressed. In order to enable pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum, experiential and sensory approaches are encouraged. Further detail on the curriculum can be found on the school website.

Each pupil has an individual Personalised Curriculum Plan (PCP) with associated targets with their EHCP outcomes incorporated into their PCP.

The school has a Post 16 Department for pupils who cannot access their local college at 16 years and provides further education in preparation for adult life. It is a County provision and students can be admitted from other Special Schools.

Review Arrangements

Reviews of pre-school pupils undergoing assessment are undertaken at six-monthly intervals. Parents and any professionals involved are invited to attend and/or contribute to reports. Pupils with statements or an EHCP are subject to an Annual Review carried out in accordance with the guidelines specified in the latest Code of Practice.

Transition Plans are drawn up following the Year 9 review.

At all reviews, current and future outcomes are discussed with parents and any professionals involved.

Our SEN Specialism and staff specialism

As a Special School we are able to focus all our efforts on developing our expertise in educating pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties and all professional development opportunities reflect this. There are three types of in-service training provision:

Externally run courses

These courses are offered by Colleges/universities or Professional Bodies. Staff register their interest in a particular course via their appraisal interview or directly to the Senior Leadership Team. Attendance is approved on the basis of the following criteria:

- The relevance of the course in meeting the needs of the school as identified in the school improvement plan
- The relevance of the course to the professional development of the member of staff as identified in the appraisal process
- The perceived benefit of the course to the school weighted against the cost of funding and supply cover
- Courses and workshops run by health care professionals to support medical needs.

It is expected that staff attending external courses will share knowledge and expertise on their return.

Whole School Training Days

All staff participate in five whole school training days per year. The topic of these training days will be prioritised by the Senior Leadership Team in order to meet the identified training needs of the school.

Regular school-based curriculum meetings

The school delivers a schedule of curriculum specific meetings on a weekly basis. In addition, teaching teams meet to discuss Pathway specific curriculum needs each week. Subject Leads also disseminate relevant updates via ad-hoc meeting as and when appropriate.

In-house training and peer support

All classes in the school have a highly skilled team supported by at least two teaching assistants. Class sizes are small and usually range from 7-12 pupils. We provide learning opportunities as a whole class, small group or individually. We work alongside a range of multiagency professionals and we have shared objectives and a consistency of approach. We work particularly with the therapy team, which includes Physiotherapy, Speech and Language therapy, Occupational therapy and Music therapy. We also support pupils with visual or hearing impairment and work closely with the County advisory teaching service. We work with the Educational Psychologist to conduct formal assessments or to seek advice on issues of learning and behaviour.

We are proficient in establishing strategies to support the learning of particular groups such as those with Autism or those in need of support to manage their behaviour. We operate a Total Communication approach throughout school to ensure that all pupils have the tools available to be able to communicate effectively. This includes signs and symbols as well as more high tech approaches using specialist communication devices or iPads. The school has invested in eye gaze technology.

We have staff trained to deliver rebound therapy. Staff undergo Team Teach training to ensure that we are skilled at teaching the pupils how to manage their behaviour. Specialist resources include a hydrotherapy pool, adapted food technology room, sensory room, sound beam, inclusive outdoor play equipment, resources for targeted interventions, gardening areas and inclusive sports pavilion, cycles and track.

Pupils with medical needs

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty of care on the governing body to make arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions. Pupils at the Heart of the Forest Community Special School are fully supported to enable them to have full access to the curriculum. The teaching staff and the senior leadership team consult with parents, carers, and health and social care professionals to ensure that the needs of pupils with medical conditions are fully supported. For further information, please refer to the school policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions.

We have access to the School Nursing Service and other health professionals who ensure that our staff are trained to support pupils with complex medical needs. This includes dealing with epilepsy and administering emergency medication, diabetes management, oxygen, suction and gastro feeds.

Partnership with Families

It is essential that staff and families work together to ensure a consistent approach to meeting the child's need and to be mutually supportive. We have two Family Liaison Workers who are able to offer much valued support to families. Our links with families are both formal and informal:

Formal links:

- Annual review meetings and reports
- Parents Evenings
- Multi agency meetings

Informal links:

- Home school diaries
- Big mac/iPad communications
- E-mails
- Informal meetings to discuss concerns
- Attendance at school events, social activities and fund raising events
- Newsletters
- The school website
- Parent workshops and open evenings

Links with other agencies

We have effective relationships with all professionals involved with the school and we advocate partnership working to ensure that pupils and families are given the help, guidance and support they need. We are currently involved with the following agencies:

- Children with Disabilities Team (Social Care)
- Community Lead Professionals Team
- CAMS

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Paediatrician
- School Nursing team
- School Dental Service
- Inclusion and Entitlement Team

Links with voluntary bodies or other services:

- Forest Pulse
- Toucan Play Therapy
- Active Gloucestershire

Links with other Schools, settings and Colleges

- Challenge and Support Network of meetings with other Special Schools in Gloucestershire
- Member of CHMA
- Outreach support to local mainstream schools
- Work experience opportunities for our students in local mainstream school and opportunities in our school for mainstream work experience placements
- Individual transition programmes with specific settings
- Inter-school activities and events with mainstream and special schools including sports events, music activities, Special School Choir and work experience and Enterprise activities.
- College placements for Teaching Assistants and Initial Teacher Training or PGCE students

Specific roles

The designated Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school is the Headteacher. Given that all pupils have special educational needs each teacher has responsibility for their class group. This includes formulating, implementing and evaluating individual education programmes, assessment, and individual behaviour plans. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that educational outcomes in EHCP's are written, implemented, and evaluated. The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers and Age Phase Leads are responsible for monitoring individual pupil files. Pupil progress is discussed as part of the formal process of tracking targets at least twice a year. Relevant information regarding pupils may be shared at team, department or teacher meetings. As a Special School all Governors share responsibility for SEN.

Criteria for evaluating the success of the SEN policy

We measure how well the school is meeting the identified individual needs of the pupils by the monitoring and evaluation of:

- On-going teacher assessment and the recording of progress on the pupil's individual education plan.

- Pupil tracking with targets set in Solar.
- Monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and its relevance to the needs of the pupils
- Annual review procedure
- Parent views
- Pupil voice
- Ofsted school inspections carried out under section 5 or 8 of the Education Act 2005
- School Improvement Partner visits and reports
- External moderation visits

Funding arrangements

As a maintained Special School all our funding goes to support pupils with SEND.

This funding covers the following areas of expenditure:

- Staffing
- Additional therapy support
- Staff training
- Maintenance and resources
- School Improvement focussing on learning and teaching
- Administrative support
- Capital expenditure

Resource allocation

- Classes and/or departments, where funding allows, are allocated a budget for specific resources to enhance learning
- There is a budget for targeted curriculum to ensure that there are appropriate specialist resources for subject teaching
- There is a budget for themed weeks and special events to provide exciting and stimulating activities that enhance or extend the day to day curriculum offer
- There is a budget to fund specific School Improvement targets
- The Continuing Professional Development budget ensures quality training opportunities linked to school improvement to maintain our highly skilled SEND work force.
- Pupil Premium spend for Children in Care is decided at individual Personal Education Plan meetings and is linked to improving learning and accelerating progress. Other pupils premium spend is linked to individual interventions and specific specialist programmes that require additional staffing.
- Sports Premium spend is linked to the PE action plan and is driven by ensuring sustainability.

Arrangements for considering complaints about SEN provision within the school

Any complaints about the provision and/or implementation of the curriculum can be addressed informally to the Headteacher so that an attempt to resolve the issue can be made. If this fails then the complaint can be addressed through the formal procedures outlined in the School Complaints

Policy. Advice may be sought from the Governors. Matters concerning the Local Authority will be referred to the Gloucestershire County Council Officers.

Consultation

This policy was subject to extensive consultation with staff, governors, families and any other interested parties (September 2015). The Local Authority was also consulted to ensure that its content was relevant to local SEN policy, practice and planning.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually. Any proposed major changes to it will prompt a major review and consultation process. This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership team.