Local Procedure/Protocol

School/Home Name:	**Oakwood Learning Centre**
Local Procedure/Protocol Title:	**SEN POLICY**
Linked to Group Policy Title & Code:	OPSP24
Date Reviewed:	August 2026
Next Update Due:	August 2027
Procedure/Protocol Lead (SCHOOL):	Alister Sidgwick
Procedure/Protocol Sponsor (GROUP):	ROB JAMES

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Witherslack Group is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, GOVERNANCE (ESG) STATEMENT

Witherslack Group is committed to responsible business practices in the areas of: Environmental Stewardship, Social Responsibility, Governance, Ethics & Compliance. An ESG impact assessment has been completed on this procedure/protocol to ensure it can be implemented successfully without adverse implications on our Group goals.

To ensure that this procedure/protocol is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, please email the named policy lead.

CONTENTS

1. STATEMENT AND VISION
2. IN RESPONSE TO:
3. SEND CATEGORIES:
4. THE WITHERSLACK GROUP WILL:
5. IN OUR SCHOOL WE WILL:
6. GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE
7. FURTHER READING
8. REFERENCES
9. ASSOCIATED FORMS
10. APPENDICES

1. STATEMENT AND VISION

1.1 Our aim is to ensure that our pupils reach their full potential in education and personal development by receiving the highest standards of teaching and care.

1.2 The Witherslack Group believes that all children and young people are entitled to an education and care that enables them to:

- Achieve their best
- Become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
- Make a successful transition into their adult lives

1.3 Education and care for Witherslack Group means providing settings that recognise and assess the needs of all their pupils in order to put support and intervention in place. All children and young people should have access to high quality education and care based on a need-led assessment.

2. IN RESPONSE TO:

2.1 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEN and disabilities
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs)
- Autism Act 2009 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/pdfs/ukpga_20090015_en.pdf
- National Institute for health and clinical excellence (NICE), information about NICE clinical guidelines 128, (2011) 'care for children and young people who may have autism' https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg170/chapter/Introduction

3. SEND CATEGORIES:

3.1 The Witherslack Group caters for children and young people with a wide range of SEN difficulties including, but not limited exclusively to:

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Autism
- Specific Leaning Difficulties including Dyslexia and Dyspraxia(SpLD)
- Attachment Disorder
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs(SLCN)
- Moderate Learning Disability (MLD)

Access to support over and above that provided generically in our settings may be required for some individuals or groups.

3.2 Social, Emotional and Mental Health

SEMH Is an overarching term for children who demonstrate difficulties with emotional regulation and/or social interaction and who may also be experiencing mental health problems.
Children and young people who have difficulties with their emotional and social development may require additional support to interact successfully and find it difficult to make and sustain healthy relationships. This may be because of adverse childhood experiences. These difficulties may be displayed through the child or young person becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as through challenging, disruptive or socially inappropriate behaviour.

3.3 Autism

Autism is a pervasive neuro-divergence that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. Individuals with an autism diagnosis will show a range of characteristics, and no two individuals are affected in exactly the same way. All autistic individuals share, to differing extents, impairments affecting their ability to:

- understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication (for example not fully understanding the meaning of gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice).
- understand social behaviour which affects their ability to interact with others
- think and behave flexibly — which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities, understanding abstract concepts and/or difficulty with change

In addition some autistic young people have acute sensory needs in relation to an enhanced or reduced perception of sounds, sights, smell, touch and taste, which affects their response to these sensory input and integration. They may also have coordination and planning difficulties and unusual sleep and untypical behavioural presentation such as repetitive movements or self-stimulatory behaviours, and preferences around clothing and food texture..

All the above difficulties mean that the young people are often highly anxious from trying to make sense of the world, and this may have an effect on their behaviour. Autistic young people, especially females, may mask their challenges and present neuro-typical behaviour in order to fit in, or divert attention away from them in order to avoid interaction. This in itself can cause exhaustion and low self-esteem, leading to heightened challenges when the young person is out of the school environment, meaning problems can be understated or not fully understood.

3.4 Specific Learning Difficulties

The term 'Specific Learning Difficulty' (SpLD) is a term that refers to a difference or difficulty with particular aspects of learning.

The most common SpLDs are dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia and dysgraphia. An individual may have one of these independently or in combination with others and there is a continuum from mild to severe.

All children and young people have different abilities to think, remember and learn. When an individual has difficulties or weaknesses in just one or two areas in contrast to average or good cognitive skills this is called a Specific Learning Difficulty for example, struggling to form letters and hear word sounds.

3.5 Attachment Disorder

Attachment disorder is a condition shown in children who may have been unable to form secure attachments to caregivers or where exposed to inconsistent and unpredictable care.

Typically young people will present with inconsistency of emotional responsiveness especially to caregivers and by emotions such as fear and sadness, and may not respond consistently to praise or reward.

Often this disorder will mean that the individual has difficulty forming healthy and stable relationships with peers or other adults.

3.6 Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Some children and young people find it difficult to listen, understand and communicate with others and may need support to develop the skills involved.
SLCN is the umbrella term most commonly used to describe these difficulties. Children and young people with SLCN may have difficulty with only one speech, language or communication skill, or with several. Children may have difficulties with listening and understanding or with talking or both. Each child also has a unique combination of strengths. This means that every child with SLCN is different.

3.7 Moderate Learning Disability (MLD)

Children and young people with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) will generally have attainments below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum, despite appropriate interventions. They have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts.
They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and under-developed social skills.

4. THE WITHERSLACK GROUP WILL:

4.1

- provide a caring, respectful and nurturing environment in which everybody feels safe and able to learn
- ensure the children and young person's views are listened to
- ensure equality of opportunity for each pupil
- foster dignity, self-respect and independence
- recognise and seek to maximise each child/young person's potential
- ensure well managed establishments with staff committed to achieving high standards for each child and young person
- ensure that all settings are appropriately set up to meet the needs of the children and young people within the setting
- offer a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum in a stimulating and exciting learning environment
- work in partnership with parents, carers, Authorities and other outside agencies to ensure children and young people are given the greatest opportunity to succeed
- monitor attainment and progress and ensure that parents/carers and funding bodies have appropriate, relevant information
- provide an assessment of the individual special educational needs within the setting of the within the first twelve weeks of a placement
- ensure appropriate provision is made to meet the needs identified in the individuals Education, Health and Care Plan and/or based on the assessment findings
- ensure a member of staff acts as SENCO within each school to co-ordinate statutory processes and provide advice and support for staff in school
- ensure all staff have an understanding of the range of SEN difficulties experienced by the pupils as part of their induction. Provide further in depth training for highly specialist settings or needs as appropriate.

5. IN OUR SCHOOL WE WILL:

5.1

- provide a baseline assessment
- record and report on pupils' Education Health and Care Plans using the WG EHCP system on the database
- record a minimum of 3 SMART targets on the WG EHCP system on the database for each pupil which will be reviewed every half term

- identify areas of need and implement appropriate provision, activities and curriculum to support those needs
- provide therapeutic provisions/interventions in line with identified needs on the Education, Health and Care Plan and/or initial assessment
- provide termly reports on progress
- provide Post Admission and Annual reviews identifying progress, attainment, objectives and future programmes using the report that is generated using the WG EHCP system on the database
- evaluate the provision to identify any specific arrangements / resources for cohort groups
- include children and young people in planning and decision making
- work closely with parents or carers and their families, consulting them about the young person
- plan an individualised, needs-led transition into the setting
- raise awareness with children and young people of equality, diversity and the impact of their specific needs
- modify the environment and provide appropriate resources, as far as possible, to take account of the individual difficulties with sensory stimuli or sensory integration experienced by some children and young people
- provide opportunities for children and young people to generalise skills learnt in one setting/lesson to other situations/settings
- recognise that Information and Communications Technology can be a particularly effective medium for children and young people and provide appropriate support
- continue to develop and implement a continuum of provision in accordance with BILD guidance/Autism Education Trust (AET)/ NAS standards/NICE guidance
- provide appropriate resources to meet pupils' SEN needs
- ensure all transitions both internal and external are managed effectively and specifically planned to meet the needs of the individual

6. GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

6.1 The following are examples of some of the types of strategies which WG schools may use to support pupils, along with personalised curricula and clinical support:

- low arousal spaces
- sensory rooms
- movement breaks
- communication programmes
- social skills programmes
- anxiety management programmes
- emotional regulation programmes
- resilience exercises
- life skills teaching
- community activities
- specific structured teaching methods e.g. TEACCH, attention autism.
- support for break and lunchtime activities
- visual timetables
- social stories/scripts/Comic strip conversations

7. FURTHER READING

7.1

- Mental Health Interventions and Services for Vulnerable Children and Young People 1st Edition by Panos Vostanis (ISBN-13: 978-1843104896)
- Autism Education Trust Progression Framework at: https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/shop/pf-shop/
- 'The reason I jump' – Naoki Higashida
- Autism: a very short introduction – Uta Frith (ISBN: 978-0-19-920756-5)
- Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks) Paperback – 15 Jan 2013 (ISBN-10: 9781849053419)
- Cool Connections with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Encouraging Self-esteem, Resilience and Well-being in Children and Young People Using CBT Approaches 1st Edition. Laurie Seiler (ISBN-13: 978-1843106180)
- 'Thinking in Pictures' – Temple Grandin
- NICE: Autism (quality standard 51) 2014
- ASC in the secondary school – Lynn Plimley / Maggie Bowen
- Can I tell you about ADHD?: A guide for friends, family and professionals ISBN-10: 9781849053594 approx.£9
- How to identify and support children with ASC difficulties – Jane Speake
- Educating students on the ASC spectrum: a practical guide – Martin Hanbury
- Positive behaviour strategies to support children and young people with ASC – Martin Hanbury
- Aspergers Syndrome – Tony Attwood

8. REFERENCES

- SEND Code of Practice (DfE)
- Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision :a Green Paper. Secretary of State for Education
- 'Excellence for all children' DfEE 1997
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Aiming High for Disabled Children 2007
- Lamb Inquiry review of SEN 2009
- Education Act 2011
- A good education for all (Ofsted) 2012
- Ofsted Non-association independent school inspection handbook
- BILD Learning Disabilities Core Skills Education and Training Framework
- Autism Education Trust Resources at : https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/
- The SEND Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit Practical information and guidance for schools and colleges. Careers and Enterprise Fund 2018

9. ASSOCIATED FORMS

None

10. APPENDICES

None