Oversands School
Statement of Purpose
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Witherslack Group

CONTENTS

- The Aims and Objectives of Oversands Residential Provision
- Location and Accommodation
- How to find us
- Caring for Children
- Ethos and Culture
- Achieving Positive Outcomes
- Social, Sporting and Cultural Activities
- Placement Plans
- Religious and Cultural Ethos
- Contact between Children, Families, Relatives and Friends
- Consultation with Young People
- Equal Opportunities, Anti – Discriminatory Practice and Children's Rights
- Referral and Admissions Process
- Compatibility and Matching
- Making a Complaint
- Safeguarding
- Missing From Care / Education
- Individuality and Positive Group Living
- Education
- Health
- Therapeutic Services at Oversands
- Therapeutic Model
- Measuring the Effectiveness of Therapeutic Support
- Staff Training, Development and Supervision
- Organisational Structure
- Governance
- Children's Behaviour
- Mechanical or Electronic Means of Surveillance
- Emergency Procedures
- Contact Details
- Staffing Matters – Residential Staff Team

The Aims and Objectives of Oversands School

The purpose of the residential house is to provide a therapeutically managed facility to meet the nurturing, management, social, emotional and moral needs of up to 12 young people aged 8-19 years of either sex who are unable to live in a family context. The therapeutic rationale and practice in the house is fundamentally based upon attachment principles combined with a variety of environmental and supportive therapies.

At Oversands we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, caring and stimulating environment for young people, where issues and concerns affecting both their past and their futures can be positively addressed and supported. At Oversands we hold the highest aspirations for all our young people. In partnership with each young person, their families and other professionals, we endeavour to enhance each young person's achievement possibilities, raise levels of self-confidence and create opportunities to learn, develop and achieve.

Oversands School is a co-educational, independent, specialist day and residential school in the South Lakes, Cumbria, providing education and care for children between the ages of 8 and 19. The school meets the needs of a diverse group of pupils exhibiting social, emotional and mental health difficulties, alongside pupils' with autistic spectrum conditions and a range of other associated needs such as ADHD. The school is approved by the DCSF (No. 909/6027) to cater for up to 80 pupils between the ages of 8 to 19 years. Witherslack group is the leading provider of specialist education for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs, communication difficulties (autism; Asperger's Syndrome; speech, language and communication needs) and complex learning needs. Alongside our schools and learning centres, we have an extensive Clinical Team who provide our young people with a personalised and comprehensive package of therapeutic support. The school operates on a day and residential basis for 38 weeks of the year and is inspected regularly by Ofsted. Seven of the Witherslack Group 52-week Children's homes are nearby and young people from the Children's homes access their educational through the Oversands School provision.

Oversands School's residential provision to be judged as Outstanding in all areas from our Ofsted inspection in November 2025

Location and Accommodation

Oversands School is located in the village of Witherslack 3 miles south of Grange-over-Sands. The school is situated two miles from the A590 which is served by a main bus route. The nearest amenities are located in Grange over Sands, a small town that has a railway station and a good variety of shops. Kendal is located 7 miles away and is a local transport hub. There is a large leisure centre and access to a variety of local activities such as youth club, dance classes, rugby and football teams and fishing venues. Opportunities are provided for young people to access local facilities in either a supported, semi-independent, or independent basis.

The school is situated in its own grounds and offers a high-quality group living experience within a welcoming and warm domestic setting.

Externally there are extensive grounds, an adventure play park, MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) pitch, football pitches and extensive woodland areas.



Visitors are welcome at most times during the day and evening, but preferably, not when young people should be at school or late at night. We provide children with appropriate privacy for visits involving family, friends, Social Workers and other professionals.



The design of the residential setting allows for privacy and promotes independence opportunities for young people and develop their life skills personal development.

All bedrooms are equipped with a television, firewalled internet access; the bedrooms are all furnished to a high standard, providing space and a facility for private study.





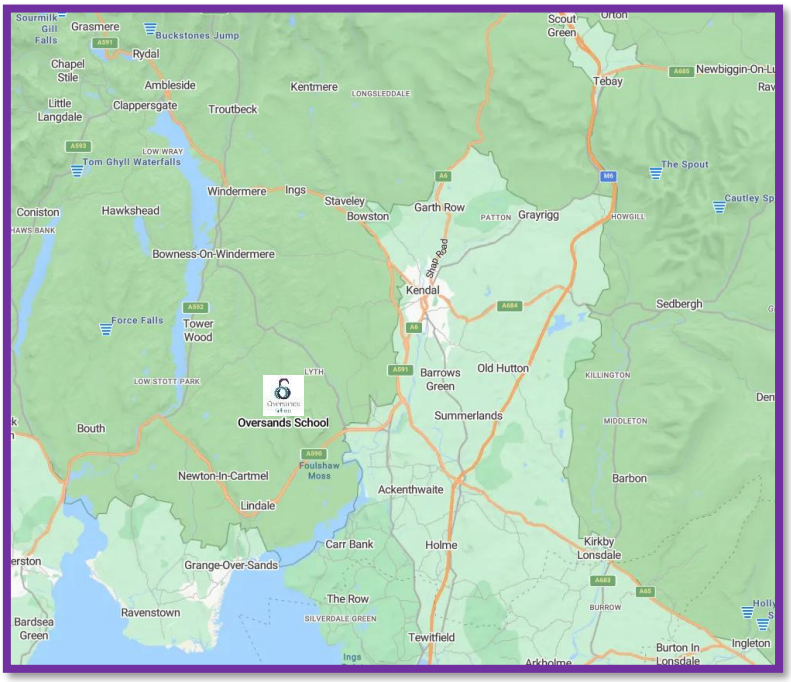
All children and young people living at Oversands have individual bedrooms that they can lock if they wish to ensure privacy and security. All young people have their own key but for safety reasons staff can gain access to bedrooms if necessary.

The wishes and feelings of the young people, as well as age and peer dynamics, are taken into account in deciding where each young persons room is located. All pupils are encouraged to personalise their own rooms and to develop respect for privacy for themselves and other members of the home. The young people are given a forum during weekly meetings to discuss any issues they may have, activities they wish to undertake and what they would like for their meals. Keyworker sessions take place with all young people, giving them opportunity to discuss how they are feeling, their views and wishes.

How to find us

From M6

- Leave the M6 at junction 36 and join the A591 towards Barrow and Kendal
- Then follow the A590 to Barrow for 5 miles.
- Turn right sign posted for Witherslack over the cattle grid.
- Follow the road for 2miles and you will arrive at OverSands School



By Train:

- Grange Over Sands station and Oxenholme station are the nearest and a taxi ride to school

Ethos and Culture

The ethos and culture of Oversands School is based on person centred principles which promote the development of meaningful relationships between staff and young people. Young people are at the centre of the work we do in trying to provide the most positive residential and educational experiences possible. These are based on the core values of mutual respect and good parenting, respectful to the values of privacy, dignity, independence, choice, rights and fulfilment.

All staff at Oversands School have an active awareness of each young person's racial, cultural, religious and dietary needs, and all young people will receive sensitivity in practice, especially when dealing with issues of a personal and sensitive nature. We aim to equip everyone with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed choices supporting them to develop these skills within a nurturing and appropriately structured environment.

Achieving Positive Outcomes

Better outcomes are achieved for our young people, where there is access to responsive support designed to increase resilience and reduce problems. Good care planning and case management / tracking is fundamental to improve outcomes, in that it facilitates an appropriate response of services and decision-making processes to the individual needs of each child or young person.

As a Care team we attend all meetings on our young people, we internally hold ITAC (Internal Team Around the Child) meetings to ensure as a staff team we identify areas of strength and development of the young people and provide a consistent approach.

For children and young people in our care, having some control over their lives is often extremely important. Working with young people in an inclusive, child friendly way to develop goals or define their own outcomes can help promote a sense of what the future might hold and how we reach it.

The homes approach to achieving positive outcomes for the young people we care for include:

- Involving children in discussions about their needs and their future
- Helping them to contribute to care plans and reviews, ensuring their wishes are always considered and where possible addressed.
- Giving clear information, making sure that young people know about – the reasons for staying residential, their rights while they are with us, future plans and how they can influence these.
- Encouraging young people to make choices, state preferences and define outcomes for themselves and respecting these choices and preferences.

The purpose of providing young people with personalised packages of support, information, advice, guidance and learning and development opportunities is to improve their life-chances.

Social, Sporting and Cultural Activities

All children in the residential provision are given the opportunity to actively engage in and influence the planning and delivery of a wide variety of leisure activities which include holidays and day trips and access appropriate opportunities which involve young people recognising and managing calculated risk.

Young people are encouraged and supported in their participation in a wide range of social, recreational, learning, and cultural activities. Staff management of these activities are based on their knowledge of a young person's developmental capacity and independent skills, with some young people will be able to access activities independently or semi-independently whereas others may require more staff support. Staff will assess each young person when they arrive with us and identify areas to improve skills and build a complete social development profile.

As well as supporting existing hobbies, we offer young people the opportunity to discover and develop new individual interests and hobbies which allows for the development of wider social networks. Many young people join local youth groups or community-based sports activities with some young people sometimes having part-time jobs. We understand that it is important that young people feel that they are part of the wider community and that they also have something positive to look forward to.



Each young person in Oversands residential provision will work on AQA units, during their time with us. These are designed around social skills. They are targeted to be age appropriate and based on adding to their life skills. We actively encourage all young people to help identify what they want to work on, in order to help them have

ownership.

Placement Plans

All young people have a comprehensive placement plan which includes: the day-to-day routines, contact arrangements, family details, education arrangements, health care, consents for medical treatment, risk assessments, PEP, identity, Social development profiles, social and leisure activities which is reviewed on a minimum half termly basis or as circumstances dictate.

A review of arrangements will be held within 12 weeks of placement in line with a school post admission review. It is the responsibility of the keyworker, under the guidance of the head of care, to monitor and ensure that the requirements of the care plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of each young person.

Religious and Cultural Ethos

The religious and spiritual needs of young people is central to their identity and welfare and Oversands is proactive in supporting them in these aspects. The home is sensitive and respectful of the religious and cultural needs of all the young people and their families and welcomes information prior to admission concerning any specific requirements. Young people will be supported in any religious observance of their choice as well as work aimed at increasing young people's awareness, understanding and acceptance of different faiths. Young people are actively encouraged to maintain cultural links, and this is supported by a culture in the home which recognises individuality and celebrates diversity. We will support a young person to attend a service or receive instruction in their chosen faith as well as supporting them in other aspects of religious observance such as diet and dress for example.

Contact between Children, Families, Relatives and Friends

Children and young people who reside at Oversands will be actively supported in maintaining contact with parents, family, and significant others. All Staff at Oversands actively promote family contact, as appropriate and agreed in the placement plan for each young person. Contact is supported in a variety of ways including visits, telephone contact and social media (where appropriate), email, school parents' evenings and reviews. The nature of this support will be detailed in each young person's Placement Plan.

Consultation with Young People

We believe that Oversands functions best and the young people living here are happiest when they are routinely consulted about events, actions and decisions which affect them. Consequently, the home has in place a number of formal and informal systems designed to involve young people in active decision making. All children accommodated at Oversands will be made aware of their rights and how they access independent advocacy services, Children's Rights Services and Ofsted.

All children and young people at Oversands are actively encouraged and supported to share and influence the day-to-day routines and practices within the home through a variety of means, including daily discussions, young person's meetings, menu and activity planning and regular planned key worker sessions. Other more practical examples are the purchasing and choices regarding resources, furnishings, and decor in the home. Young people are encouraged to be involved in discussion and decision making about developments within the home and actively contribute to the home development plan.

Consultation with young people involves adults working with children and young people to ensure that their views are heard and valued in the taking of decisions which affect them and that they are supported in making a positive contribution to their home.

Participation and involvement from young people, their families or carers, friends and support staff (i.e. social workers) is embedded into the heart of our services for care and education within the Witherslack Group. We feel young people's involvement (and other key individuals) are crucial to them taking ownership, developing self-esteem and establishing the wider skills they will need to succeed in life.

The young people in our care share responsibility for decision-making within the home environment. The young people are involved in the decision-making process around menus, activities and annual holidays, children looked after reviews, 1-1 key workers sessions, their pathway planning and are regularly consulted about staff and their approach in the manner of "the voice of the young person".

Equal Opportunities, Anti – Discriminatory Practice and Children's Rights

Oversands Residential Provision has an equal opportunities policy which aims to ensure that no job applicant, employee, young person or prospective young person is discriminated against whether directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, gender, attainment, special educational needs, ethnicity or cultural background. Oversands Residential Provision operates a 'zero tolerance' approach towards discrimination and extremism in all its forms.

We believe that all young people have the right to be listened to, to have their views respected and to be able to feel safe, free from abuse, fear or oppression. A key focus of life at Oversands Residential Provision is in helping young people to gain a greater understanding not just of themselves, but also of other young people, adults and the wider community. With rights come responsibilities and it is important that young people learn the value not only their own rights, but also the rights of others.

Our aims are:-

- To ensure young person's opinions and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future, and that feedback will be given after consultations;
- To balance properly young peoples' rights and responsibilities.
- To raise awareness of the relevant provisions contained within the European Convention on Human Rights as they apply to UK law (as contained within the Human Rights Act 1998);
- To establish our position that as an agency acting on behalf of Local Authorities (by way of our core function to provide care for their children) we are cognisant of our responsibilities and liabilities as a 'public authority' and will act in accordance with the Convention Rights.
- Young people will be encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run.
- Young peoples' privacy will be respected and information about them will be confidentially handled.
- Young people's complaints will be addressed without delay and young person will be kept informed of progress in their consideration.
- Guidance and training on consulting with and involving young people, their families and significant others will be provided for staff.
- The religious, racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of young people and their families will be taken in to account by staff who will be encouraged to ask for advice and assistance when necessary. Staff will ascertain and take into account the views and opinions of young people, their families and significant others. Feedback will be provided following consultations. The views and opinions of young people on all matters affecting them including day to day matters and major events will be ascertained and not taken for granted.
- Each young person, as far as is practicable, will be able to attend the services of, receive instruction in and observe any requirement of (including dress, diet or otherwise) of their religious persuasion.

Referral and Admissions Process

Initial enquiries and informal visits are welcome by appointment. Formal application for placement is made through the young person's Local Authority. Applications should be accompanied by their Education Health Care Plan along with school and social reports and any other professional reports.

Oversands Residential Provision caters for young people who have a diversity of needs and may be experiencing a range of difficulties including:

- Autistic Spectrum disorder.
- Communication difficulties.
- Attachment disorders.
- Developmental delay requiring a highly modified curriculum.
- Mental Health issues.
- Dyspraxia.
- Associated Behavioural difficulties.
- ADHD.

It is envisaged that the young people will be in the home for as long as they need to. This is dependent on funding and continual access to education within Oversands

The placement is needed in order to undertake the therapeutic work to help the young person develop a sense of personal security and identity, with consequent emotional and social development. There are high numbers of staff available to support and encourage young people to develop significant positive attachment relationships with staff and hopefully with each other in order to provide emotional building blocks for personal and social development.

iTAC (Internal Team Around the Child)

Pre-admission iTAC, iTAC at 10 weeks since entry to school, Post-Admission Review at 4 months (16-weeks).
Then move onto either termly or 6-monthly iTACS dependent on presenting needs and progress.
Focused iTACs are held at any point in the school year to respond to concerns and needs arising.
ARLL young people would be more frequent but at least half-termly.

Compatibility and Matching

At Oversands Residential Provision all possible care is taken to ensure that all the young people accommodated meet the criteria of admission, placement suitability and stability are paramount. In respect of all admissions, the assessment and approval process will always consider the needs of any new young person concerned, and the likely effects of his/her admission upon the existing group of young people accommodated.

If initial assessment of all the available documentation indicates that OverSands School and Residential Provision may be able to meet the needs of a young person, then an initial planning meeting is usually held. This affords the parent/carers, Social Worker, Psychologist and Local Authority representatives the opportunity to visit the school and home. If all parties agree on the appropriateness of the placement, then an agreement will be reached as how to involve the young person in the process.

The assessment and admissions process will, in every case, be tailored to meet individual need. Some admissions

will involve a number of visits building up to an overnight stay, whereas other transitions will occur much more quickly. The needs of the young person will always determine the speed and nature of the admissions process.

Whilst our preferred option is always a planned transition this may not always be possible and there may be circumstances where the young person may be admitted to the home within a short timescale. This would usually be in exceptional circumstance such as, the young person already been known the Witherslack Group or in circumstances where information received, from the initial referral requests would suggest, the home can meet the needs of the young person from the information that is shared and the home is confident that there is no emerging risks to other young people in placement.

If these circumstances do arise, and if the home has not been able to meet with the young person due to the stresses it may cause them. The home will always ensure that a pre-admission meeting is held with all relevant professionals involved with the young person, are held prior to admission in order to gather all relevant care and educational needs for the young person, which will form part of the pre-admission risk assessment of the young person.

The key purpose of a professional pre-admission meeting is to determine the current needs, behaviours and possible risks the young person been admitted to the home / school. It will also allow the Head Teacher and Head of Care to risk assess the young person's needs, against the needs of other young people in placement, and to record how the home will support the young person's current presenting needs.

In the pre-admission assessment the Head of Care will ensure staff have the relevant experience and training in place, to support the young person's current presenting needs.

An interim placement review meeting takes place approximately 12 weeks following a young person's admission to the school. This meeting will be the forum to confirm a permanent placement. The 12-week interim period of placement allows for settling and familiarisation by the young person and for more in-depth assessment of abilities, needs and provision arrangements by staff. It is essential that this period of time is provided so that all parties involved recognise the appropriate nature of our Residential provision in each individual case.

Making a Complaint

The Witherslack Group recognises that all children need to feel able to complain, know how to do so and be supported when they feel unhappy with any aspect of living in a children's home. At Oversands Residential Provision complaints are dealt with as soon as is practically possible by the most appropriate person.

All of our residential young people are made aware of clear information about how to raise a concern both formally and informally. They receive a young person's guide upon admission to the home and this has details of how to make a complaint. All young people have access to "I have a complaint" documentation. Most concerns or worries can usually be resolved by discussing issues with the individuals concerned. However, if the complaint cannot be resolved in this manner the home has a formal complaints procedure.

Our children and young people may choose to complain to anyone of the following people: key worker, other staff member, peer, parents/carers, social workers etc.

There are several other people or organisations independent of the home that may contacted; these include Ofsted (general helpline telephone 0300 123 1231), the Children's Commissioner / Help at Hand (0800 528 0731) or Independent Reviewing Officers, Social Workers or an independent advocate.

Safeguarding

At Oversands School the welfare of young people is paramount. We are committed to maintaining a safe, nurturing and caring environment where children and young people can safely build friendships; develop social skills, self-confidence and self–esteem.

Oversands School has a Child Protection policy and a robust training regime, which all staff receive. Oversands Residential Provision has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and 3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. All staff are clear on what action they are to take to protect a young person who is at risk, or potentially at risk. Initially concerns would be directed through the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, however should the need arise staff are aware of how to make a referral to the Local Children's Services if this is considered appropriate.

Allegations are reported to the Head Teacher and all allegations that meet the criteria are reported to the Local Area Designated Officer, Referring Authority Officers, Parents/Carers (where appropriate) and Ofsted without delay. The home follows Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership. Safeguarding procedures are detailed in our policy and procedures.

Bullying is recognised as an inherent risk in all group living experiences, and it is acknowledged there is always the potential for bullying and intimidation by other children and young people. At Oversands Residential Provision bullying is taken very seriously and a number of measures are in place to manage these incidents. Staff are trained in recognising the signs of bullying, and young people are continually encouraged to engage in open dialogue with staff in an environment where they feel able to share any concerns they may have.

There is also the formal complaints procedure for children and young people to access, and the home has an anti-bullying policy which is known and understood by all staff and young people. Regular opportunities are taken for young people and staff to discuss bullying in all its forms and the policy, and its effective implementation is monitored by senior staff in the home.

All children and young people at Oversands Residential Provision are actively encouraged to be involved in the interview process for all new staff and the home complies with current safer recruitment guidance. All newly appointed staff at Oversands Residential Provision are subject to interview and three satisfactory references and DBS at enhanced level are sought prior to any employment offer being made.

The safety of the buildings and wider environments is maintained with regular safety checks, risk assessments and support provided by the Witherslack Group Health & Safety and Environment Services.

Missing From Care / Education

Oversands School has guidance which details action to be taken whenever young people are missing from care. The timescale for action taken by staff in response to such incidents will be determined by a number of factors including:

- Guidance already agreed and incorporated within the young person's placement plan.
- the age, maturity and vulnerability of the young person.
- the time of day and weather conditions.
- previous behaviour patterns and the emotional state of the young person.
- the level of perceived risk indicated on the individual risk assessment.

The responses are detailed in each young person's individual risk assessment and placement plan.

Preventative Measures

An inter-agency approach to care planning, including an assessment of the likely risk of going missing, will be necessary from the point which young people are first looked after within the home. In particular, social workers and members of the residential care staff need to: -

- Be aware of the kinds of immediate and underlying reasons that may prompt young people to go missing.
- Have a thorough knowledge of young people's past histories of going missing, whether from home or substitute care.
- Keep accurate records.
- Plan ahead to manage situations in which young people may be vulnerable to going missing.

Planning and Prevention

Each young person will have a dedicated key worker. Initially the key worker will focus on developing trust with a young people and building a flexible, supportive and protective relationship. There are also opportunities for young people to access our therapeutic services. It is important for a young person that they feel listened to as 'adults' as young people often feel a sense of powerlessness and that they are not listened to.

High quality care, which meets the diverse needs of young people and provides greater structure and stability in the young people's daily lives, provide a context in which going missing becomes less likely. We will do this by linking the assessment of young people's needs and progress in all areas of their lives to the young person's care planning and review process. Detailed care plans also provide the opportunity to place the risk of going missing in the wider context of young people's lives.

The young people will have regular and planned access to a trusted adult outside the home - for example, a family member, the young person's social worker, an independent visitor or a children's advocate.

User friendly complaints procedures are in place which will address both informal as well as formal complaints. A pattern of minor complaints may indicate more deep-seated problems in the management and culture of the Residential Provision. By the promotion of open communication about 'minor' complaints are unlikely to be responsive to 'major' ones.

For those young people who have gone missing in the past, understanding past patterns of absence can help care staff predict the circumstances in which future incidents might potentially occur. Strategies that link knowledge of young people's past patterns with future planning will depend upon good standards of record keeping. Evidence of past incidents will form part of the young person's risk assessment and will be regularly reviewed.

The young person's placement plan and review process will pay proper attention to the potential risk that a young person may go missing so that additional agreed preventive measures can be in place.

For example, they may

- arrange to keep a close eye on a young person before and after a difficult meeting to help them feel secure and reassured.
- spend time with a young person after a difficult contact with a parent.
- respond immediately to incidents of conflict among young people.
- plan a consistent approach by all members of the staff team to manage a particular young person or to respond to a particular behaviour.
- Clear details in a young person's placement plan regarding their time in the community.

Such strategies involved organising individual quality time with young people and developing their interests in sports, cultural and social activities. From the point at which young people enter a placement, identification of their educational and leisure interests will form part of the initial assessment process. The promotion of outside interests can then be built into the young person's care planning and review process. Not only might this limit the risk of them going missing, but it would also broaden the range of social relationships available to them.

In most circumstances staff will conduct a local search for the missing young person(s). Staff will conduct a personal risk assessment before engaging in such activities to assess the level of risk they may put themselves in. When young people are missing from care the staff will inform the Head Teacher, Head of Care, police, parents (where appropriate), placing authority and the Regional Director.

On the young person's return, his/her general welfare and medical condition should be assessed and discussed immediately for example when the young person has last eaten, slept, any injuries sustained etc. and an offer made to arrange medical attention.

On return, staff will meet the young person's immediate physical and emotional needs. The welcome home is sensitive and followed up by listening to the reasons why the young person has gone missing from care (when the young person is ready) and attempting to act upon this information to resolve any issues.

Staff will record all facts associated with the absence in the missing from care logbook. Following any incidents of missing from care, the young person's Social Worker (if applicable) will be contacted and invited to visit the young person to discuss the period of missing from care with someone independent of the home. Staff are aware of their powers in relation to preventing a young person from leaving without permission and these are regularly reviewed in staff meetings, induction and development sessions.

Young people who are at significant risk when missing may have specific programmes designed to restrict or reduce such incidents. These measures will have been agreed in advance with the young person, parents (if appropriate) and the placing authority. All such programmes will be recorded in a written format and will be included with the young person's Placement Plan.

Individuality and Positive Group Living

There is always a possibility that in a home which accommodates multiple young people that individuality and person-centred practice suffers in the desire for efficiency and ease of management. Oversands Residential Provision House is committed to the provision of the highest quality care and recognises the importance of individuality, diversity and difference. To guard against institutionalisation the staff team and young people living in the home regularly review care practice to ensure that it accurately reflects the home's Statement of Purpose and the needs of the young people who live there.

Many of the young people referred to Oversands residential provision may have poorly developed social and life skills. These are often typified by negative peer relationships and an inability, or unwillingness to share, compromise or display tolerance towards others. Those who are under-skilled socially often find themselves in a cycle of negativity and rejection. Not only are they poorly skilled, but by virtue of their poor skills they can often find themselves socially isolated leading to a lack of social learning opportunities where peer modelling, reinforcement and recognition can take place.

Through the delivery of structured social skills programmes the use of positive reinforcement and rewards for pro-social behaviour means that these needs can be addressed.

Education

The Witherslack Group recognises that education, in all of its forms, is the cornerstone of personal growth and development. All our children and young people are actively encouraged to engage in the formal and informal educational opportunities provided. Young people living at Oversands School will attend the educational day which cater for pupils whose Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCP) indicate complex learning needs and challenging behaviour which may be compounded by additional problems leading to more complex educational needs.

As such pupils are also accepted with:

- Developmental delay requiring a highly modified curriculum
- ASD
- Communication difficulties
- Mental health issues
- Dyspraxia
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- ADHD
- Attention problems
- Attachment disorders
- Trauma

The care staff from Oversands School work very closely with the educational staff from the school to promote the educational opportunities and attainment of all our children and young people. Staff are fully conversant with the young person's EHCP and maintain daily communication with the education staff from the school. Young people are supported in accessing independent learning opportunities within the home that compliments their learning. Children are also encouraged to attend after school clubs/groups to further develop their skills, interests, social contacts and independence. Staff in the school promote a positive home learning environment, and this is supported by generous educational resources. All IT in the school is 'filtered' to ensure that the online experience of young people is both enjoyable and appropriately safeguarded.

Health

Each young person has a clear and comprehensive written Health Plan (within their Placement Plan) which details: medical history; any necessary preventive measures, allergies or known adverse reactions to medication; dental health needs; health monitoring required and the involvement of parents/carers in the young person's health care. The designated Safeguarding Lead has an oversight of all young people's health needs and has good links with local external agencies.

Staff at Oversands School are aware of the important role they have in promoting an awareness of health issues and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Each young person is provided with guidance, advice and support in accordance with their age, needs, culture and wishes in relation to health and social issues. A combined approach of individual and group work are used to promote discussion to support children's knowledge and understanding of their own physical and emotional health and well-being. Children with a particular health problem or a disability including physical or sensory impairment or learning disabilities are provided with the appropriate support to effectively meet their needs.

We will actively promote good healthcare by supporting young people to make the right choices as well as through the provision of information, education and guidance on health issues including sexual health. We will always attempt to seek the approval of those with parental responsibility (for those under 16) when dealing with issues which arise for each child's developing sexual awareness. This will involve the provision of age-appropriate education and guidance relating to sexual behaviour, health and well-being.

To promote appropriate levels of independence we encourage that, wherever possible, young people manage their own medication and general health needs. To deal with all routine treatments we access local doctors, dentists,

and opticians with which all our children and young people are registered. Staff at Oversands School will record all details of such visits on individual placement plans, including treatment and medication details.

In support of our healthy lifestyle objective smoking and vaping is not permitted at Oversands School, instead we support young people with smoking cessation programmes.

Therapeutic Services at Oversands School

The Witherslack Group recognises the importance of providing a safe, nurturing and supportive environment which allows young people to develop and maintain emotional health and wellbeing. We provide a consistent approach to the delivery of therapeutic services across the Witherslack Group and employ specialist clinicians. In 2008 the Royal College of Psychiatrists produced a briefing paper which describes the development of a set of Core Values and Core Standards for therapeutic communities. The purpose of developing these standards was to highlight the differences between therapeutic providers and others offering residential provision for children and young people. The therapeutic services we offer across the School in the Witherslack Group are inspired and driven by these recommendations.

At Oversands, the young people have access to a clinical team on site comprising Psychology, Psychotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy. The team provide on-site multidisciplinary therapeutic support 5 days per week.

We can refer to Clinical and Educational Psychologists in Witherslack Group and are in the process of employing an Educational Psychologist for two days a week. We will be recruiting for another Assistant Psychologist.

The wider Witherslack group Clinical Team comprises a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Psychologists, Assistant Psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Specialists and Counsellors. Every young person has an entitlement to direct, targeted and individualised therapeutic support, together with additional opportunities to work together in small groups. All our specialists are registered with the relevant professional bodies, *[Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the relevant professional colleges].*

Therapeutic provision is personalised to meet the needs of each individual examples of work include:

- Social Communication
- Sensory and Motor Needs
- Language and Speech Development
- Motivation
- Separation/attachment difficulties
- Self-harm
- Abuse
- Anxiety
- Bereavement

Therapeutic Model

A comprehensive assessment of each young person's needs is completed by one of our Psychologist, Occupational

Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist and Therapist (Counsellor) in consultation with all relevant professionals within twelve weeks of placement. The outcome of this assessment will make recommendations on a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Report regarding the nature of the most appropriate therapeutic support and may include:

- Solution-focussed therapy
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques
- Group work to improve social communication skills, including Lego Therapy
- Zones of Regulation
- Social Learning
- Counselling

All young people have access to targeted, specialist therapeutic support where needed. In addition, there is also the opportunity for them to access weekly specialist group therapy sessions (usually comprising two or three other young people) if appropriate.

Therapy is delivered by a skilled team of practitioners who liaise with staff in the home to give support and advice as to how best support the young people. The Therapeutic Practice Model is based on a staged approach to supporting young people achieve successful outcomes and a good level of social development via the establishment of safe, rewarding and trusting relationships, both in the residential setting and in school.

The delivery of therapeutic support and interventions is based on the '3 Waves' model:



Wave 1: All staff support young people to create an inclusive working environment. Clinicians provide training to school staff to help them understand and meets the needs of young people with social communication difficulties, mental health difficulties and attachment difficulties.
Wave 2: Group work with staff and children directed by a clinician.
Wave 3: Individual 1-1 work delivered by a clinician to address more complex needs.

Every member of the therapy team receives clinical supervision on a regular basis from a senior practitioner appropriately qualified and registered with HCPC and BACP. Regular team meetings also take place for therapists facilitating the sharing of good practice and the dissemination of new initiatives.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Therapeutic Support

Speech and Language Therapist

The Speech and Language Therapist supports the communication needs of the young people. Priorities for speech and language therapy intervention are.

- Developmental Language Impairment
- Speech Production Difficulties
- Social Communication Difficulties
- Consultation with staff to create a suitable communication and social development environment for young people.

Intervention can be 1:1, small group and consultation with staff and parents.

The work of the SaLT is as much about supporting staff and parents in providing the best environment for communication to flourish as it is about direct work with young people. Being an in-house provision means that there is also great flexibility to engage in the direct work at the times when the young people are best motivated to engage and using activities in flexible ways that interest them.

The work on communication is carried out by all staff particularly those in the therapy team our multidisciplinary approach means that young people have access to a number of therapeutic strategies that enable a holistic approach that prompts natural development to occur.

Occupational Therapist

The Occupational Therapist's role at Oversands is to evaluate the young person's ability to function in self-care, productive and leisure occupations. Assessment considers motivation, habits and routines, and abilities in motor skills, process skills including sensory processing, and communication/interaction skills. (This differs from the speech and language therapies assessments in that it is only looking at how their communication and interaction skills affect their participation in occupation). The contexts of each environment the young person is expected to carry out their occupations in is evaluated (home, school, community etc.) and the impact of the social and physical environment considered, as well as the young person's ability to feel competent and confident within that environment.

Assessment and intervention are intertwined, and the natural behaviours of the child/YP will be observed, with strategies introduced as part of the process. It is a child/YP-centred process, where it is important to understand how well the YP thinks they are able to complete their occupations, the importance they place on them, and their readiness to change. Information and views of parents/carers and school staff is required to build a full picture of the YP's occupational performance, and goals are set collaboratively with the YP.

Recommendations may include prescriptive work for school (for example to carry out a handwriting programme), a list of sensory strategies to increase or improve the YPs participation in certain occupations e.g. P.E. or dressing themselves, or group or individual OT intervention.

Following intervention, there will be a review and revision of goals.

Psychological Therapist

Within one-to-one therapy sessions, young people are offered the space to explore their emotions, past experiences and important relationships, within the framework of a relationally based integrative psychotherapy. We understand that, due to the young people's past experiences, it can be difficult for them to trust adults. We work in a child-centred way, with initial stages focussing on developing a trusting and safe therapeutic relationship. This can take several months and gives them the opportunity to learn about and experience safe relationships, before starting to focus on their thoughts, feelings and experiences. We work creatively with young people, basing sessions on their interests and using the outdoors and art-based activities to engage them. The psychological therapists in school are also involved in running outdoor therapy, life skills and nurture lunch groups.

Psychologist

The assistant psychologist carries out psychometric tests when young people first arrive and is then involved in implementing programmes to aid with educational development. This takes place under the supervision of a qualified psychologist

In addition to the therapeutic team in the school, young people can access support from clinical psychologists and a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist if required. This internal team allows us to give the young people the emotional and mental health support they need when they need it without the need for being placed on long waiting lists. This immediate support helps to maintain the stability the young people in our care need and in many instances allows then to avoid going into crisis.

The integration of therapeutic support within the school is also supported in the children's homes setting with each of our schools also having on-site mental health practitioners in addition to a multitude of therapeutic support staff. As a therapeutic team we communicate regularly and hold meetings to ensure we are delivering the best possible and individually tailored therapeutic support we can as we recognise each of our young people as individuals themselves.

Staff Training, Development and Supervision

All staff employed at Oversands School engage in the Witherslack Group's staff annual Performance Review which records details of their training and professional experiences, their qualifications and their agreed development targets to facilitate the provision of high-quality care for young people. The development requirements are identified through supervision and the on- going appraisal process. Training & development opportunities are provided for a minimum of six paid days per year for each member of staff.

This formalises an all-inclusive system of staff supervision, support, development and training. The Witherslack Group believes that staff support and development is a continuous process for all staff, whatever their role and responsibilities from appointment to leaving. It is a reciprocal process of mutual benefit to individuals, groups of staff and the establishment as a whole, and involves both formal and informal processes. These include using a variety of formats, including peer supervision, team meetings, handovers, and regular individual, direct 1-2-1 supervision with a senior member of staff which promotes reflective practice.

Training and development is not viewed as a process separate from the individual's day to day professional practice, indeed learning is most effective when individuals can identify a clear connection between theory and practice. As such the learning which occurs both informally and formally through day-to-day observation and feedback is as important as more traditionally based training.

Oversands residential care provision has a small staff team of both genders. The staff team have a vast amount of experience. The residential setting has an experienced and skilled staff team and regular reviews of the staffing profile of the home take place to ensure compatibility and skill set matching with the needs of the young people. We aim to provide a healthy balance of experience and gender to accurately reflect home contexts and promote gender identity in our young people.

The Head of Care has an NVQ Level 4 Registered Managers Award. All other staff either hold an NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or are working towards the BTEC Level 4 Diploma for Residential Childcare

Organisational Structure

Head Teacher
Ed Sherratt

Head of Care
S Edmondson (SLT & DDSL)

Team Leaders
C Eddy (Care SLT)
L Jones (Care SLT)

Deputy Team Leaders
C Tuson
P Cudby

Residential Support Workers
D O Hanlon
W Anderson
T Johnson
Z Cooper
G Walton

Waking Watch
M Stokes
K France

Governance

Oversands School is a member of The Witherslack Group and as such benefits from the support afforded by an organisation which has extensive experience and a national reputation for the care and education of children and young people. There are regular meetings for Head of Care and staff that provide a forum for peer support and the dissemination of good practice.

Standard 3 visits take place each half term and carry out routine examination and scrutiny of different aspects of the home, such as health and safety, leadership and management as well as standards of care. The Head of Care is responsible for devising an action plan from any recommendations made and ensures that these are completed in a timely manner. An External Care review also takes place annually to ensure that the home is meeting all of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools

Children's Behaviour

Staff accept that all children and young people may from time-to-time display behaviours which are outside of the norms of acceptability. To help our young people Oversands Residential Provision House has developed a positive management of behaviour policy, systems and processes in order to not only minimise risks for children, staff and members of the community, but also enable learning through resolution.

All staff have received training in Positive Behaviour Support which focuses on distraction, diffusion and de-escalation. A major aim of the home is to help young people develop appropriate internal working models of acceptable behaviour, and that positive behaviour patterns are associated with encouragement and reward.

Any disciplinary measures used are recorded contemporaneously and signed to verify their accuracy. Young people are also encouraged to record their views as this provides ongoing social learning opportunities and improved ownership. The Head of Care regularly monitors the use of disciplinary measures seeking out trends and patterns as well as analysis of their effectiveness and makes written recording to that effect.

Many children and young people will have past or current experiences which adversely affect their understanding of accepted behaviours, and this negatively impacts on their ability to regulate their behaviour effectively. Unfortunately, this sometimes leads to times when young people may engage in behaviour that places themselves or others at risk of harm. In such cases external controls may be necessary and staff may use physical intervention as one strategy to keep the young person and others safe.

All staff are given Positive Behaviour Support training and physical intervention training (PRICE – Protecting Rights in a Caring Environment) and are re-accredited on an annual basis. PRICE is an accredited approach that promotes the least intrusive positive handling strategy, with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal and non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilised. All staff receive PRICE training as part of their induction, and this is followed up with 12 hours of annual refresher training. The focus of this training is in the promotion of a positive environment, the early recognition of warning signals, de-escalation and diffusion. All staff who successfully complete this training are assessed as competent and certified as such.

Staff receive extensive training and guidance in respect of creating a positive environment where relationships are based upon mutual trust and respect. Management techniques are reward focussed and involve a range of strategies including the use of positive reinforcement, modelling, incentives and individualised guidance and support.

The Head of Care regularly monitors the use of physical intervention to effectively analyse any trends and patterns to provide learning opportunities for staff and young people to seek to avoid the use of physical intervention wherever possible. The use of each individual young person 'PBS Plan' also assists staff and young people when dealing with future incidents.

Emergency Procedures

We are fully compliant with all relevant fire safety legislation. Fire safety equipment is regularly serviced, inspected and if necessary repaired. Records are available on site. All children and staff are made aware of the fire evacuation procedure and assembly point should fire occur. All alarm tests and evacuation events are recorded and on file. We have a modern highly effective fire and smoke detection system which exceeds current requirements. The school's site manager checks the fire alarm system, conducts fire drills, reviews fire evacuation procedures and liaises with the Fire Brigade in respect of all fire safety measures. Emergency lighting is in place throughout the home and is checked in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Contact Details

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Witherslack Group

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Tel: 015395 66081

Residential staff team – Oversands School

Name	Experience relevant to role	Qualification
Sarah Edmondson Head of Care	Trained as a nursery nurse, working in a local nursey for 4 years, with pre-school children. 25 Years plus experience at Oversands school, working as an RSW/ house leader/ team leader and deputy head of care.	• NVQ 4 Health and social care, caring for children and young people. • NVQ 3 Caring for children and young people • NNEB/CACHE nursery nursing diploma. • ILM Level 3 Introduction in First line management. • Understanding Autism Level 2 • Safer Recruitment • Foundations to Therapeutic Practice • PBS Coach • Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Chris Eddy Team leader	Previous Recruitment Industry background, Mental Health Support Worker, Learning Disability Senior Project Worker, Registered Manager of Nursing Home, and Adult Challenging Behaviour Team Leader.	• QCF Level 3 – Health and Social Care • HABC Level 5 - Diploma in Leadership for Health & Social Care and Children and Young Peoples Services (QCF) • Various GCSE & A Level qualifications
Louise Jones Team Leader	School Governor, Accounting, Working with Young people from various residential settings at Witherslack Equestrian centre.	• First Aid • Certificate in Care • Equestrian Qualifications • NVQ LEVEL3/4 Caring for children and young people
Claire Tuson	6 Years working in residential childcare	• Level 3 NVQ

Deputy Team Leader	Senior Care Worker Deputy House Manager	• All Witherslack Group Training completed • First Aid • Open water swimming qualification

Paul Cudby Deputy Team Leader	18 Years' experience working with YP at Oversands school Previously worked in catering.	• NVQ 3 Caring for children and young people • GCSE Qualifications • Catering Qualifications
William Anderson RSW	Residential Support worker 10 years' experience.	• NVQ 3 Caring for children and young people • All Witherslack Group Training • 9 GCSE
Tess Johnson RSW	Customer Facing role in Michelin Starred Restaurant Housekeeping	• Level 3 Animal Care & Forensic Science • All Witherslack Group Training • Various GCSE Qualifications
Dawn O Hanlon RSW	Farm worker Shop assistant Ambulance driver/technician First Aid trainer	• City Guilds Level 3 – Delivering Learning – St Johns Ambulance
Zoe Cooper RSW	Nursery Nurse Children's Nurse School Nurse Teaching Assistant	• Nursey Nurse • Nursing • Mental Health First Aider • Level 2 Mental Health
Gemma Walton RSW	Head Person at racing stables	• Level 3 Diploma in Horse racing care
Karen France NSO	Cleaning services Care of the elderly	• NVQ 3 Caring for children and young people • All Witherslack Group Training completed
Mel Stokes NSO	Cleaning services Full Time Mum	• All Witherslack Group Training completed • NVQ 3 Caring for children and young people

Therapeutic Services Team

Ang Polley	Psychologist
Keira Ekpo-Daniels	Assistant Psychologist
Courtney Bestwick	Therapist
Eleanor Carter	Occupational Therapist
Zak Mulcahy	Therapist
Sarah Eastham	Mental Health Therapist
Sophie McCarthy	SaLT
Elizabeth Mills	SaLT
Emily Pemberson	Therapist
Nathan Ellison	Therapist
Vicky Rae	Occupational Therapist