Oakhill

faith stronger than the oak

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Accessibility Policy

Legislative Context

Most recent guidance, *'The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years',* became statutory in September 2014 and was last updated May 2015. This document outlines the duties, policies and procedures relating to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabled children and young people up to the age of 25. Under legislation stated in the '*Children and Families Act'* (2014) and the '*Equality Act'* (2010*)* the school has a statutory duty not to discriminate against a person or pupil and to make reasonable adjustments to ensure the reduction of barriers to achievement.

This code of practice requires that independent schools ***must*** have regard for this statutory guidance and whenever decisions are taken there ***must*** be consideration given to the Code.

The school acknowledges the white paper titled "Every Child Achieving and Thriving", published in February 2026, outlining significant reforms to the SEND system in England and will update and review school policies as these changes are implemented.

This policy is read alongside Keeping children safe in education 2026 (KCSIE), the School's Safeguarding Policy and the DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education effective from 1 September 2026.

Safeguarding education, including online safety, will be adapted to pupils' individual needs, communication, understanding and vulnerabilities. Staff must not assume that possible signs of abuse are explained by a pupil's SEND.

The School takes account of Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE, updated 2017) and Allergy safety in schools (DfE, July 2026) when planning appropriate support and reasonable adjustments. Medical arrangements are set out in the First Aid and Medical Needs Policy.

The school will ensure that it provides the help a pupil requires as identified in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The information in this policy will be reviewed and updated annually and any changes occurring during the year will be updated as required.

Aim

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that Oakhill's mission statement is accessible to all the pupils, staff and parents of the school regardless of their Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND).

'We seek to develop spiritual awareness; to nurture a sense of self-worth; challenge pupils to achieve their individual potential; inspire creative thinking and encourage independent learning; instil mutual respect and understanding and teach the value of service to others.'

- To ensure that children with SEND achieve well in school and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy and the provision offered at Oakhill are:

- to create an educational and pastoral environment that meets the needs of all the children who attend Oakhill;
- to ensure that the special educational needs of children are identified, assessed and provided for; and therefore, ensure that all the children at Oakhill make or exceed academic and social progress in relation to their individual capability and starting points;
- to make clear the expectations of all partners in the process; and to work with those partners towards the best outcomes for the individual;
- to identify the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for children's SEND;
- to enable all children to have full access to all elements of the school curriculum and enrichment activities at an appropriate level through differentiation and adaptation;
- to ensure that parents are able to play their part in supporting their child's education;
- to ensure that our children have a voice in this process.

Definition of Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) and Special Educational Provision

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty/difference or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty if they

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning, than the majority of others of the same age, or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational provision or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age in mainstream schools or other relevant early years providers.

Many children who have SEN may have a disability under the, *Equality Act (2010)* – that is '… a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' This definition provides a relatively low threshold where 'long term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'.

Examples of the above which would be included are: sensory conditions such as those affecting sight or hearing and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer and mental health conditions such as depression, eating disorders or an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). These children do not necessarily have SEN but where a disabled child requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

It is also fair to point out that certain symptoms of medical conditions such as those named above can have significant impact on access to learning for varied reasons and can be seen as a 'barrier to learning'. Therefore, reasonable adaptations and adjustments of provision, including aids and services, are considered at Oakhill as standard. This personalised, bespoke approach to learning and achievement is the hallmark of an Oakhill education.

When examining provision for SEND Oakhill considers four broad categories of need:

- Communication and interaction (e.g. Speech formation, dysfluent speech. Aphasia, Auditory Processing)
- Cognition and Learning (e.g. Moderate Learning Difficulties, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Short and long term memory difficulties, Speed of processing)
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties (e.g. depression, an Autistic Spectrum Condition, Tourette's Syndrome, anxiety, OCD)
- Sensory and/or physical needs (e.g. Hearing needs, Visual Needs, wheelchair users, sensory processing disorder)

The school regularly reviews accessibility, training and support to evaluate how equipped it is to accommodate reasonable adjustments to educational provision if required.

Responsibility for Co-ordinating Provision

The Governing Body, SEND Governor and Principal have overall responsibility for SEND provision in the school. They line manage the Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo) who leads and manages the department.

The SENDCo provides professional advice, training and guidance to colleagues on matters relating to supporting and working with children with SEND and works closely with parents and other agencies as a key point of contact to coordinate provision. The SENDCo is a member of the school's wider safeguarding team to ensure a link with this policy, the school's Safeguarding Policy and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs).

The SENDCo liaises with the Principal, governors and examinations officer to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the *Equality Act* (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements, both physical and educational.

Admissions

The admissions policy explains how Oakhill makes provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) through its admissions criteria and procedures.

In addition to the general admissions procedures applied to all prospective pupils, the Principal and SENDCo offer prospective parents an opportunity to discuss their child's needs via a range of media (face to face meetings, telephone calls, email). In the case of all new pupils; assessment and induction days are included in the admissions process and in specific cases, where required, transition plans and additional support and resources, for example social stories, are developed to ensure a smooth entry to school. There may, on occasion, be a need to run a waiting list for prospective pupils due to demand for provision and this will be discussed during the admissions process.

These plans may also include contact with the Local Education Authority in addition to Non-Prejudicial visits, where appropriate. They may also include contact with previous educational establishments and other relevant agencies involved with the pupil.

The school asks parents to provide information concerning any disability or SEN prior to accepting a place. Providing the school with this information (disclosure) enables it to consider any reasonable adjustments it may need to make to ensure a successful transition into school and appropriate support once on roll at the school. Information provided will be treated with appropriate levels of confidentiality and will be informed by the guidelines on GDPR legislation.

Arrangements will also be made, where necessary, for discussions between the class teacher or form teachers prior to entry, in order to establish clear procedures for the inclusion of a new member of the year group. In addition, arrangements for any medical protocols, staff training or medical supplies can be arranged prior to entry.

Identification and Assessment of SEND

Initial Assessment and Referral

New children to school will be assessed by their class teacher or subject teachers in conjunction with the SENDCo during their trial visits. Any children who have been identified prior to their trial visit as having special educational needs either through a parent's concern or through an educational psychologist or specialist teacher report; will also spend some time with the SENDCo, who may carry out internal assessment both formative and summative. The SENDCo may also observe the child in class and ask for relevant subject or class teacher observations and assessments. This will ensure a broad picture of need is assembled to enable support to be planned and a graduated approach to inclusion can be outlined. Screening opportunities may be explored, such as a basic Dyslexia screener, Visual Stress Screener, Reading/spelling age screener or Boxhall Profile to aim to ensure the needs of the young person are more holistically understood at an early stage.

Close liaison with parents, previous educational establishments or early year's providers will be coordinated. Children transferring from Nursery – Oakhill's Early Years provision - are already known to the SENDCo who will support and liaise with the designated Nursery SENDCo and staff. Specialist support and teaching by the SENDCo maybe provided for the children in the Early Years provision where it is deemed appropriate to enhance their learning and progression. This policy must therefore be considered in conjunction with Nursery assessment procedures, provision mapping and Local Offer.

I. Teachers and teaching assistants.

All teachers or teaching assistants who recognise a pupil is having difficulty in any area of the curriculum or school life which may have an impact on their progress will discuss this with the SENDCo, who will then examine and monitor the concerns in more depth. This may involve further individual assessment, discussion with other members of staff, discussion with the pupil, discussion with parents and observations in class which will enable school to gain a more holistic picture of need.

II. Parent or Carer

Any parent or carer who is concerned about their child's progress can contact school via the office, the class teacher or form teacher who will refer the concern to the SENDCo or Principal. Parents may also speak to or email directly the SENDCo, who

will liaise with the Principal and teaching staff. The email address for the SENDCo is sendcos@oakhillschool.co.uk.

III. Pupils

All pupils are given opportunity and encouraged to discuss with staff any difficulties they may be experiencing. In Seniors, the Oakleaf room is a point of contact and there is often a member of the learning support team working there. There are Learning Support staff in most senior lessons. Pupils are encouraged to attend the homework club each lunchtime run by the learning support team for help and support with homework. The Oakleaf room is a place to go at breaks and lunchtime for support and is staffed by a member of the Learning Support Team. Pastoral support, social interaction support and sensory relaxation support are offered as required.

IV. External Professionals

The SENDCO has initial contact, an introduction and final briefing with any external professional attending an observation, meeting or assessment of any pupil in school. Professionals use the SENDCo as their first point of contact and the SENDCo will liaise with the principal and staff in regard to any concerns or recommendations. *(see related policies - safeguarding procedures).*

V. Volunteers supporting in school

Volunteers maybe be in school for a variety of reasons and are a valued part of the school community. If they are assisting the Learning Support Department their activities are coordinated by the SENDCo who provides training and support for volunteers carrying out a specific role. All Volunteers are given opportunity to discuss any concerns they have with a member of staff or the SENDCo.

Assessment and Monitoring
A wide variety of assessment is used at Oakhill in the identification and monitoring of SEND. Both formative and summative methods of assessment are made use of to ensure a holistic picture of need and progress is obtained.

School Assessment Data: such as CAT scores, mock exam results, SAT's data, baseline assessments in all prep year groups, early years learning goals, subject reports, end of year exam results, New Group Reading Test, Spelling and Reading ages, PIRA and PUMA.

Individual Internal Assessment Data: WRAT 5, CTOPP, Dyslexia Portfolio, DASH, PIVATS, BPVS, LUCID Recall, Boxhall Profile, SDQ

External Assessment Data: Educational Psychologist (EP) reports, Dyslexia assessment reports**,** Psychiatric assessment reports, Neurological Assessment reports

Other forms of Assessment: Occupational Therapy assessments and programme evaluations , Physiotherapy and Motor skills programmes and evaluations , Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) assessments and programme evaluations, Sensory Integration assessments and programme evaluations, National Autism Standards - Sensory Audit for Schools and Classrooms. School Support Plan observations and recordings, photo evidence, video evidence, vocal recordings, examples of work

The SENDCo has responsibility for SEND assessment and tracking, which enables the department to monitor pupils' progress with the help of the teaching staff and teaching assistants. This ensures the needs of all pupils are being met, enabling every child to achieve their full potential. This includes ensuring as appropriate that pupils indicated with SEND requirements are also included on the gifted and talented record and access gifted and talented provision as appropriate to their individual abilities.

A Graduated Approach

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015), states:

A graduated approach must be taken in regard to identifying and supporting pupils and pupils with SEN (to replace school action and action plus)

At Oakhill we have three levels of identification and support:

- Observation and Monitoring,
- School Support and
- Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) Provision.

At School Support level, pupils will access supplementary services or support, 'additional to or different from', the other children within a mainstream classroom.

All parents of pupils who are being monitored by the Learning Support team, will be invited to attend a review meeting with the SENDCo. Pupils are also asked to contribute to their reviews, discuss their progress, achievements and concerns. Pupil SEND Information records for staff are updated every term on the iSAMS digital management system. These are confidential documents which are held securely and available to each member of the teaching staff to advise their planning and classroom management.

Additional learning support tuition packages are also available at Oakhill in the form of:
Additional study support sessions (Teacher and TA led, small groups, up to 4 pupils)
In-class and TA support
Bespoke support packages
Small group interventions sessions (Teacher and TA led, small groups, up to 6 pupils).

ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) sessions are available, where appropriate, through our two qualified assistants.

These packages are available to pupils in consultation with parents. Some will have a cost allocation and enhance our general provision. Small group intervention sessions may be for a fixed period only, as opposed to for a full academic year.

Pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) will usually be identified on application and their needs discussed with the SENDCo. The SENDCo will then identify the appropriate support requirements through a qualified EAL teacher and ensure a programme of English language assistance is developed if required.

Identifying and assessing SEND requirements for pupils who have EAL requirements will be supported by consultation with an EAL specialist teacher and Oakhill recognises that difficulties related solely to limitations in EAL are not SEND.

Accessibility

Curriculum

Appropriate action through staff development training, observation and discussion will ensure that lessons are organised and evaluated to ensure the best possible outcomes for full participation by pupils with a SEND.

Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) friendly practises have all been discussed with teaching and support staff and may be seen in use in all preparatory and senior classes as required.

Examples of which include (but are not limited to):
colour of paper/books
screen colour
size and type of font
paper enlargement/screen enlargement
use of IBooks
reduction in note taking
availability of coloured overlays, glasses and guideline rulers
use of a laptop and assistive technology
iPad for recording work through photographs, video and voice recording
in class scribes
in class readers/reading pens
number lines
concrete numeracy equipment
specialist pens and rulers
homework support

ASC /ADHD/HD friendly practises have all been discussed with teaching and support staff and may be seen in use in all preparatory and senior classes as required.

Examples of which include (but are not limited to):
sensory support equipment
personalised physical education programmes
personalised changing room arrangements
personalised locker arrangements
social stories
social and peer support groups
personalised lunch time arrangements
access to an agreed calm or sensory space, with appropriate support and supervision
personalised sensory processing and integration support plans
personalised motor programmes
personalised exit strategies
personal and visual timetables
home school liaison books / communication books
homework support
individual risk assessments (when necessary)
individual examination rooms

Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's requirements in advance with the Principal and SENDCo who will ensure relevant equipment and arrangements can be made available on entry to the school.

Calm spaces, de-escalation and restrictive interventions

Individual support plans should identify communication needs, triggers, reasonable adjustments and strategies to reduce distress. A calm or sensory space is for support, not punishment. If a pupil is prevented from leaving, staff must recognise that this may constitute seclusion and follow the School's Use of Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy. That policy governs prevention, lawful intervention, supervision, recording, parental notification and review, including where an intervention is anticipated in an individual plan. Staff must involve the SENDCo and a DSL as appropriate and review support following an incident.

School Environment

All possible steps will be taken to ensure any pupil who becomes disabled or requires temporary physical access arrangements during their time at Oakhill will have every opportunity to remain in school and have provision adapted, where possible, appropriate to their needs.

The main building at Oakhill where administration, some senior teaching rooms and the Principal's office are housed does have access limitations to the first floor. However, reasonable adjustments to teaching room allocation can be considered if essential to support temporary physical access requirements.

All the other buildings at Oakhill have accessibility adaptations such as a lift to access the first floor of the Preparatory building, dance studio and gym and a stair lift to access the science block. Disabled changing and toilet facilities are available and the sports hall and dining all are fully accessible.

Public Exam Access Arrangements

GCSE Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior awarding body approval.

The Equality Act (2010) requires an examination board to make reasonable adjustments *'to minimise the extent to which disabled persons are disadvantaged in attaining the qualification because of their disabilities'.* Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. Examples of access arrangements include extra time, a reader, a scribe, supervised rest breaks, read aloud, use of a laptop.

The SENDCo will gather a range of evidence: internal and external educational assessments, knowledge of substantial and long term difficulties/disabilities, teacher assessments, internal exams, class work; evidence of normal way of working or medical reports and diagnostic reports. This process commences from upper Key Stage Two.

Evidence from standardised scores may be obtained from assessments such as WRAT 5, LUCID RECALL, TOMAL and DASH. This will enable the SENDCo to make an application of recommendations to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) **who make the final decision** as to whether the candidate may use a particular access arrangement. This application cannot be processed before the last half term of Year 9. Diagnostic reports for conditions such as Dyslexia can help build the picture of the evidence of need but further testing is required as part of the application process to the JCQ.

Education and Health Care Plans - Statutory Assessment and Provision

Where it is deemed appropriate, Oakhill will work in partnership with Local Authorities and offer provision for pupils whose educational assessment requirements have been defined through statutory assessment procedures and where they have been given an Education and Health Care Plan (**EHCP**). In such cases Oakhill follow the statutory procedures required through the relevant legislation and use the necessary paperwork / portal systems provided by the Local Authority concerned for annual review.

Pastoral Care

Health and Safety

The school will ensure all pupils, including those with SEND and disabilities are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures. Where appropriate personal evacuation adjustments, such as 1 to 1 exit assistance, anxiety support and moving and handling plans will be developed as required. All other health and safety issues as indicated in the health and safety policy will be explained to pupils with SEND and any individual requiring further adjustments will have them defined in a personal risk assessment.

Children with Medical Conditions

Oakhill recognises that not all children with a medical condition will have a disability or SEND. However, pupils with long-term or complex medical conditions may require ongoing support, medicines or care whilst at school to help them manage their condition and ensure educational inclusion. Other pupils may require monitoring and interventions in emergency circumstances as outlined in the First Aid and Medical Needs Policy. It is also acknowledged that such medical conditions could involve extended school absence which can have an impact on a pupil's educational progression.

To support pupils' with medical conditions the SENDCo and School Nurse work to establish relationships with relevant health services and will receive, ask for and fully consider all advice from healthcare professionals. They will also listen to, discuss and value the views and knowledge of the parents and pupil.

The social and emotional impact that may be associated with medical conditions are handled with sensitivity through relevant channels in school, this may include the Learning Support department, the pastoral support system, form tutors and the safeguarding team.

Certain medical conditions may require additional arrangements, support or risk assessments to ensure adequate provision is available when a pupil undertakes off site sporting activities, extracurricular activities or school trips. These will involve staff, pupil and parents where necessary and our aim is that all the activities we provide are as inclusive as possible.

Professional Development

The SENDCo will provide regular advice, INSET and support to staff in regard to how to provide an inclusive educational experience for pupils with SEND.

The SENDCo also ensures that relevant information on courses and training in SEND for Learning Support Staff is disseminated to the Principal and staff and where appropriate relevant courses are applied for and attended. A record of the

department's staff training is kept to ensure a broad base of knowledge, which is cost effective for the department, is accessed and disseminated.

The school is also able to access training and information from external sources such as medical professionals; School Nurses, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Charities, University Professionals, County Council Inclusion Support Teams and local special school partners.

Complaints Procedure

The first point of contact if a parent wishes to discuss any concerns should be the class/form teacher or the SENDCo. All concerns will be explored and discussed with the Principal or Vice Principal and the outcome reported back to the parents within the agreed timeframe.

Formal complaints should be made in accordance with the school Complaints Policy.

Other Relevant School Policies

Safeguarding Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Admissions Policy
First Aid and Medical Needs Policy
EYFS SEND Local Offer Policy
PSHE Policy
Complaints Policy
English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy
Accessibility Policy (and plan)
Policies related to Access arrangements and examinations
Use of Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy

Outside Agency Links

We work in partnership with a wide variety of contacts to support our pupils; both NHS, charitable and independent. We seek to support and enable both pupils and parents to access the appropriate services to support their Individual and Special Educational Needs. Here is a list of some of the agencies we have regular contact with (this list is not comprehensive).

SEND traded Lancashire (including specialist teachers)

Lancashire Early Help team

Speech and Language Therapy Services (independent and NHS)

NAS – National Autistic Society

Occupational Therapy Services (Independent and NHS)

Audiology Services

Optical Assessment Services

Child and Adolescent Mental Health (Burnley, Blackburn and Preston)

Independent Educational Psychology Services (various contacts)

Manchester Children's Hospital

Community Paediatricians for ELHT

Social Services Teams

Further and Higher Education Providers

Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Schools Sports Partnership (Inclusive Sports Provision

References and Supporting Documents

DfE: Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015).

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

DfE: The Independent School Standards – Guidance for Independent Schools (April 2026).

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulating-independent-schools

DfE: Keeping children safe in education 2026 (current final guidance).

DfE: Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (updated 2017); Allergy safety in schools (July 2026), used as a good-practice reference for Oakhill.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/allergy-safety-in-schools

DfE: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from 1 April 2026).
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools

JCQ (2025-26) including successive yearly updates, Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

Regulations and Guidance - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications

Legislation.gov.uk 2010 *'Equality Act'*

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Policy lead: SENDCo

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