Special Educational Needs Policy

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1. Woodfield School

1.1 Woodfield School is an all-age Coventry Local Authority maintained special school, on two sites, catering for pupils aged 5 to 16 years of age (and support them in education until the age of 18), who are either being assessed for, or have a Statement of Special Educational Needs for Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD).

1.2 Many of our pupils needs are further compounded by being diagnosed as having either, dyslexia, dyspraxia, being on the Autistic Spectrum (ASD), or having Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) and attachment difficulties. Some pupils have been diagnosed with more than one of these educationally inhibiting conditions.

1.3 Our pupils are taught in comparatively small classes, with a generous adult-to-pupil ratio. With few, if any exceptions, we adhere to the expectations of the national curriculum, seeking opportunities wherever possible to return pupils to the mainstream of education.

1.4 We enjoy a relatively high success rate of reintegration’s to mainstream school from our primary provision, with the remainder benefitting from a smooth transition to our secondary provision at the beginning of Year 7.

1.5 As we are a designated special school, all of our staff are expected to be knowledgeable about the nature of our client group. This is achieved by continued professional development responding to training needs as they arise. Therefore, all of our teachers are teachers of special needs and the role of support staff is to assist in the educational and social development of each and every child.

1.6 Our policy reflects the need to admit pupils to Woodfield School throughout the academic year (refer to Section 5 – Admissions Arrangements). To quickly assess the needs of each individual, we operate a robust ‘base-line’ screening process, designed to assess the educational strengths and weaknesses of each child upon admission.

2. Introduction – The Principles of this Policy and Defined Perception of Our Client Group

2.1 The fundamental principles underpinning this policy are:

- Children with SEN (Special Educational Needs) require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum; irrespective of disability.

- In providing the widest possible access to the curriculum, Woodfield School recognises the definition of BESD (Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties) as given in Circular 9/94. Although the circular has been superseded by more recent documentation, this definition meets with the greatest measure of agreement and the BESD sub-group of the National Advisory Group on SEN recommend its continued use. According to Circular 9/94:

  "The emotions and behaviours which are associated with these pupils vary on a range from being, greater than sporadic naughtiness or moodiness, to the fringes of mental illness. They can encompass social maladaptation and abnormal
emotional stress. These emotions and behaviours are persistent (if not necessarily permanent) and constitute learning difficulties’.

- It is recognised in the circular that the difficulties can stem from both within and without child factors and often from a combination of both. (EBD Difficulties in Mainstream – DfEE 1999).

2.2 Further, the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, November 2001, states that children and young people who demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties may require help or counselling for one or more of the following:

- flexible teaching arrangements;
- help with development of social competence and emotional maturity;
- help in adjusting to school expectations and routines;
- help in acquiring the skills of positive interaction with peers and adults;
- specialised behavioural and cognitive approaches;
- re-channelling or re-focusing to diminish repetitive and self-injurious behaviours;
- provision of class and school systems which control or censure negative or difficult behaviours and encourage positive behaviours;
- provision of a safe and supportive environment.

The above interventions may be provided following the undertaking and completion of a statutory assessment.

2.2.1 The Code of Practice suggests that it is helpful to see pupils’ needs and requirements as falling within a number of broad areas, including Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties. They are:

- **Cognition and Learning**
  - Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)
  - Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
  - Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
  - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PLMD)

- **Communication and Interaction**
  - Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
  - Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- **Sensory and / or Physical**
  - Hearing Impairment (HI)
  - Visual Impairment (VI)
  - Physical Disability (PD)
  - Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)

3. **The Aims and Objectives of Woodfield School’s SEN Policy**

3.1 The school’s aims and objectives form an important part in the approach taken to pupils experiencing special educational needs. In summary these are:

- believing that every child matters, regardless of gender, ethnicity, social background, cultural heritage, or disability has the right to an education; and
that education should be directed towards fulfilling their development academically, socially, physically, spiritually, culturally and emotionally;

- believing that education should prepare the child for a responsible life within his community and society;

- believing that children learn and develop best in a safe environment, with sufficient structure to promote security, whilst allowing pupils space to grow, make mistakes and learn from experience;

- believing that each member of the school’s community, child or adult, has a significant role to play in the success of the school’s endeavour on behalf of its pupils; and each one has the capacity to develop further with the appropriate level of support;

- believing that every child can be successful, that behaviour can change for the better and that no one is beyond help;

- believing that the involvement of parents / carers in the education of the child is vital to the success of the child. To this end we will actively seek opportunities to develop a successful working partnership with each child’s parents or carers.

4. **The Role of the School’s Governing Body**

4.1 Governors will endeavour to secure the best possible provision for all pupils who are admitted to Woodfield School.

4.2 Governors have delegated responsibility to the headteacher to ensure that:

- all pupils have full access to their curriculum;
- all pupils have an Annual Review and an I.L.P. (Individual Learning Plan) to enable targets to be achieved and progress be made and measured;
- that regular reviews are held to monitor progress;
- that the school follows the procedures identified in the current Code of Practice;
- that the school reports annually to parents /carers on the school’s policy for pupils with special educational needs.

4.3 Governors have delegated responsibility to the headteacher and school’s Leadership Team to ensure that staff access appropriate levels of in service training to ensure as far as possible that they are able to meet the educational and developmental needs of our pupils. For example, in service training may be provided on an individual or group basis, including school-based, local authority and external courses on generic and specialist need, such as dyslexia, autism, Team-Teach training and subject content and styles of delivery.

5. **Admission Arrangements and Inclusion**

5.1 Pupils admitted to Woodfield School will usually have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), or be admitted for a period of assessment, prior to being statemented or returning to a mainstream school setting.
5.1.1 Prior to a pupil being admitted to Woodfield School it is expected that the school will receive current, or the most recent education and social data available on the child from the referring school or agency, in order that staff of Woodfield School may familiarise themselves with any information pertaining to achievement and needs before the child joins our school.

5.2 Woodfield School has an Admissions Policy which is reviewed regularly and gives details of the school’s procedures for admissions.

5.3 The Disability Code of Practice states that it is now illegal for schools to discriminate against current and prospective pupils because of their disability. This disability could be physical, learning or behavioural. Therefore, for all aspects of school life; admissions, educational opportunity and associated services, and exclusions, the school’s governing body cannot treat disabled pupils less favourably and need to take reasonable steps to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage.

5.3.1 However, the age and nature of both sites of Woodfield School currently presents insurmountable issues regarding access for non-ambulant pupils and adults. Efforts have be taken and continue to be made, to redress this matter. However, the nature of the buildings currently in use, mostly built during either the 1960’s or 1970’s, leave little scope for appropriate modification or practical redevelopment.

5.4 Our vision of an inclusive educational approach, underpinned by our mission statement – ‘Together, We Will Achieve’ – is designed to embrace the strengths and potential to progress of everyone within our school community. We expect pupils to want to learn and make progress, by encouraging the diversity of the individual to flourish positively within our community. The skills, experience, range of strategies available and tenacity of the school’s staff is, in general, more than enough to meet the wide-range of needs our pupils may have.

6. Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties

6.1 Woodfield School caters for BESD pupils with a wide-range of abilities and individual needs. Pupils with specific learning needs will be identified on admission or through previous assessment or intervention programmes; including those pupils who have been identified as being gifted and talented. Opportunities will be given for individual support and specialist help.

6.2 The school’s SENCO will ensure that individual programmes are provided for pupils with learning difficulties and that staffing is provided to ensure that programmes are delivered appropriately, usually through individual and group interventions.

6.2 Where appropriate, the school will enlist the support of external agencies to support its efforts to provide specialist help for specific pupils. Those we work collaboratively with include:

- LABSS (Learning and Behaviour Support Service)
- Speech and Language Service
- Educational Psychological Service
- School Health
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- VIBES, YISP, RELATE, Time-4-You
- Social Care
- Youth Offending Service
• The Connexions Service
• LACES (Looked After Children’s’ Education Service)
• Education Welfare Service
• Mainstream schools (Refer to Section 7: Pupils with Special Requirements (Including Gifted and Talented)),
• Sporting contacts with other schools and organisations (i.e. football, athletics, swimming, Coventry City Football Club).
• Work Related Learning (WRL)
• Journeys

6.2.2 The school will also seek to enlist the support of other schools and external agencies where possible / appropriate to enable pupils to engage in additional study with a view to developing special skills or talents, or to enrich pupil curricular opportunities.

6.2.3 Various appendices at the end of this policy provide a basic explanation of several difficulties that some of our pupils may experience.

6.3 The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) – The ILP is a planning, teaching and reviewing tool designed to suit the individualised needs of each child; in addition to the mainstream of curriculum activities provided by the school. It is a working document for all staff, parents and carers to refer to and must therefore be relevant, accessible, and understood by all concerned. ILPs should contain a maximum of three short-term SMART targets, focussing on the key areas of literacy, numeracy, behaviour and / or communication skills. The ILP should also outline the strategies to be used to achieve success, the criteria used to measure that success, a review date and recorded outcomes. The ILP should also:

• be seen as a working document,
• be understood by staff, parents / carers and the pupil,
• seek to raise pupil attainment or help to change behaviour / attitudes,
• promote and assist in effective planning designed to meet individual pupil needs,
• help pupils to monitor and measure their progress and achievements.

ILP’s will be reviewed bi-annually, unless circumstances necessitate an update of needs.

6.4 The Statement of Special Educational Needs – All pupils who attend Woodfield School are admitted to the school either having been ‘statemented’ as having behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties (BESD), or placed with us on an Assessment Placement to assess whether or not they require a longer term placement at a school such as Woodfield in order to meet their specialist individual needs. It is possible that a child admitted to us on an Assessment Place, will be statemented as having behavioural, emotional and / or social difficulties.

6.4.1 Having a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), does not mean that a child is prevented from returning to, or attending mainstream education. As Section 11 of this document; Reintegration of Pupils into Mainstream Provision states, we are committed to returning pupils to the mainstream of education when and where it is in the child’s best interests to do so.

6.4.2 Ceasing to maintain a Statement of Special Educational Needs – Statements are maintained only when necessary. The decision to cease to maintain a statement is only made after careful consideration by the local authority, on recommendation by the child’s school and in close consultation with the child’s parents / carers. A statement is no longer maintained if:
• the objectives of the statement have been fulfilled,
• the child’s needs can be fully met by a placement at a mainstream school, without specialist input / support,
• the child’s needs no longer impede access to the National Curriculum,
• the child can cope with the daily expectations of his curriculum without additional support or a higher level of adult support,
• the child does not experience any significant self-help or self-control difficulties.

A Statement of Special Educational Needs also ceases to be maintained if the child leaves full-time education at the end of Year 11, or moves into further education. If the Local Authority ceases to maintain a statement, they will inform the child’s parents / carers in writing and of their right to appeal against the decision via the SEN Tribunal. However, from September 2014 this will change.

7. **Pupils with Special Requirements** (including Gifted and Talented)

7.1 The school will endeavour to provide all pupils with the opportunity to develop specialism’s and talents, where this appropriate and possible.

7.2 The school will enlist the support of other schools, outside agencies and specialists where possible, to enable pupils to engage in supported study, or self-supported study.

8. **Providing a Structure for Pupils’ Behaviour**

8.1 The school will provide a structure *(refer to the school’s Behaviour and Physical Intervention Policy)* for pupils in which they have opportunities to make informed choices about their behaviour. The school recognises its responsibility to respond to the emotional, behaviourial an social difficulties of pupils, as well as any additional difficulties that may present as barriers to development and learning.

9. **Identification of Needs, Assessment and Monitoring of Pupils**

9.1 Woodfield School has a policy and procedures for assessing, reporting, recording and whole school monitoring of pupil progress and needs.

9.2 Within the context of this policy, the school will take positive steps towards identifying, assessing and monitoring individual pupil’s special educational needs. These include:

- Initial Baseline Assessment upon admission
- Observation (initial and ongoing, as required for assessment, monitoring of educational, social and/or developmental concerns )
- Educational Targets (including ongoing subject-based target-setting)
- Weekly Targets (educational and social)
- New Behaviour Policy, Daily behavioural records (site and pupil specific behavioural systems, log books and agreed contact procedures)
• ILP Targets
• Positive Handling Plans
• Reading Tests (reading age and reading comprehension)
• Regular National Curriculum and curriculum achievement tests
• Social Checklist assessment
• Annual Reviews
• Agency reviews; e.g. PEPS and LAC Reviews
• Bi annual Parents Evenings

9.3 Whilst many of the systems in place are generated and monitored from within the school, external agencies also contribute to and underpin elements of Woodfield School’s identification of needs, assessment and monitoring of pupils, both on an individual and group basis. These organisations include:

• Educational Psychological Service
• LABBS
• CAHMS
• Social Care
• LACES (Looked After Children Education Service)
• Local Authority Education Officers, including L.A. SEN Officers
• OFSTED

9.3.1 In addition, the above services from other local authorities whose education service may ‘buy-in’ places at Woodfield School (i.e. Warwickshire L.A.) also contribute to the identification of needs, assessment and monitoring of their pupils.

9.4 The Annual Review

• It is a legal requirement for all pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs to have a review of their progress undertaken on their behalf each year following the inception of their statement; and every twelve months, thereafter.

• Woodfield School will contact all relevant parties involved with each statemented child – parent(s) / carer(s), social care, educational psychologist, representatives from the local authority, etc., inviting them to attend a meeting at which the progress, any new or additional needs of the child, etc., will be discussed and reviewed, based on a report prepared by the school, outlining the achievements, issues and intended targets for the next twelve months of the child’s educational future. Following the conclusion of the Annual Review, a report will be prepared and distributed to all concerned.

• Those pupils at Woodfield School on an Assessment Placement, will be subject to report that details whether or not that child should be subject of a Statement of Special Educational Needs, requiring a more permanent placement at the school. The statementing process includes consultation with parent / carers, as well as the school and other stakeholders, during and before both provisional statements and final statements are completed.

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10. **Securing and Maintaining the Desired Partnership with Parents and Carers**

10.1 Woodfield School will actively seek to involve parents and carers at all times in the education and development of their child(ren). For the benefit of each child we aim to forge a positive partnership with parents and carers. By doing so, we will:

i. Hold a statutory Annual Review on each child, adhering to the procedures and protocols of the system.

ii. Hold interim / update Reviews as appropriate, in order to help maintain the continuity of a child’s progress should it be deemed necessary; including progress and/or Assessment Reviews, as appropriate.

iii. Adhere to the PEP / LAC Review process, as required; recognising the need to closely support the development of the potential additional needs of the Looked After Child within our school and wider community.

iv. Provide information on a regular basis to parents and carers through the school’s bi-terminly Newsletter and other written or verbal communication, as appropriate; including Local Authority sponsored communications / information.

v. Provide parental / carer access to an annual Woodfield School Prospectus; either in hardcopy or via the internet.

vi. Inform parents / carers of their child’s annual targets through reports, parents’ evenings or the Annual Review process.

vii. Hold two annual Parents and Carers evenings. These will be held during the second half of Autumn Term and second half of the Summer Term respectively, each academic year.

11. **Reintegration of Pupils into Mainstream Provision**

11.1 By being actively committed to the process of reintegration, Woodfield School recognises its responsibility to provide opportunities for pupils for pupils to return to mainstream provision, where appropriate and where it is in the best interests of the individual pupil.

11.2 The school will work closely with mainstream partners, the local authority’s Inclusion Officer, Outreach and parents and carers for reintegration programmes to be effective.

11.3 Where pupils are being reintegrated, the child’s receiver school’s SENCO and relevant staff will be party to all relevant details and documentation pertaining to the pupils education and welfare.

11.4 Coherent meetings from year 6 to 7.
12. **Arrangements for Complaints about the School’s SEN Policy**

12.1 Complaints and concerns about Woodfield School’s SEN Policy should be initially discussed with the Headteacher. Should it be felt that the complaint has not be dealt with effectively or the school has failed to respond appropriately, the parent / carer has the right to make a complaint to the Woodfield School’s Chair of Governors and Coventry Local Authority. In all cases we would seek to resolve any issues, particularly in the best interests of the child.
Appendix One

Attention Hyper Deficit Disorder (ADD)  
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

What is it?

ADD / ADHD is a syndrome characterised by:

- inattention
- impulsive behaviour
- hyperactivity (though this may not always be present).

People with ADD / ADHD are unable to filter out stimuli effectively and are therefore distracted by everything around them. It is thought to affect between 3% to 5% of the population, with males being significantly more likely to be affected than females. There is no cure for the condition though medication (e.g., Ritalin) can help to alleviate the symptoms. Characteristic behaviours may persist into adulthood, though with appropriate support many learn coping strategies.

ADD / ADHD is not related to general intelligence but, because it affects concentration, it impedes learning. A pupil with ADD / ADHD may not perform as well as his peers because he may not have learned in the past.

ADD / ADHD causes great frustration in the pupil and to those around them. As a small child, they may not have learned appropriate social responses because they were unable to differentiate which of their behaviours brought praise or sanction. Because their behaviour is so demanding, they are used to receiving negative feedback about themselves and this can develop into low self-esteem and possibly depression.

What you might expect

Many behaviours characteristics of a pupil with ADD /ADHD are to be found in most children at one time or another in their lives. However, in the pupil diagnosed with ADD / ADHD, these behaviours are more extreme, persistent and resistant to change. A pupil with ADD / ADHD may:

- fidget, squirm or appear restless most of the time,
- experience difficulty remaining seated,
- be easily distracted (i.e., fiddle with objects).
- have difficulty following instructions,
- talk excessively,
- not think about the consequences of their behaviour,
- appear not to listen,
- often list things,
- take time to settle down,
• work slowly,
• have difficulty in playing or working quietly,
• change activity often,
• never seem to finish anything,

• stumble over, or crash into, or break things,
• forget all the time.

They will experience high levels of frustration and this may spill over into temper tantrums or outbursts of aggression.

They may seem to be socially unaware by interrupting, walking to the front of queues, shouting out, not taking turns appropriately, or 'hogging' a resource.

Because they experience a lot of negative feedback, they may see themselves as a failure and as a result, crave attention. They may seek to gain this attention by clowning around and adopting the behaviours of other de-motivated pupils.

What helps?

• Providing a tight structure with clear and firm guidelines.
• Sitting the pupil with most of the class behind them.
• Keeping them away from distractions (e.g., windows, equipment).
• Maintaining eye contact when giving instructions.
• Keeping directions clear and concise.
• Avoiding giving lots of instructions at once.
• Making sure they understand before starting.
• Repeating instructions, if necessary in a positive manner.
• Monitoring them frequently.
• Rewarding often (the effects of both praise and sanctions are likely to be short-lived).
• Identifying where there has been success and help them to articulate good things about themselves (e.g. "you settled well today. How did that make you feel").
• When they do something wrong, pointing it out calmly, without entering in to a debate about it.
• Identify the behaviour as inappropriate rather than refer to the pupil as the problem.
• Enforcing classroom rules consistently.
• Administering consequences immediately.
• Breaking activities into smaller tasks.
• Allowing for changes in activity during the lesson.
• Modifying the task for completion in a given time, if necessary.
• Ensuring tasks test knowledge and understanding, rather than concentration.

. . . . and remember!

Working with challenging behaviour is wearing and frustrating, so try to remember you are one of a team of people who is working with the pupil. You are not expected to have all the answers.
Appendix Two

Aspergers Syndrome
Autism
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

What is it?

Autism is a developmental disability affecting the way a person communicates and interacts with others. People with autism often have accompanying learning disabilities which inhibit language development. Autism has no cultural, racial or social boundaries, although four times more males than females are affected. Autism occurs in varying degrees of severity; thus, it is referred to as a spectrum disorder.

Aspergers Syndrome is a form of autism which falls at one end of the disorder spectrum. Sufferers may often be boys and are likely to be of average or above average intelligence. However, they may experience difficulties with language, with their speech sounding stilted or over-formal. It is possible they may not fully understand what is expected of them.

There are three main areas of disability associated with Aspergers Syndrome:

- communication
- social interaction
- routine / imagination / rigidity of thought

There is also the possibility of additional sensory problems.

Communication - A literal understanding may cause difficulties when giving and receiving instructions. The ASD pupil may not always be aware that it is they who are being spoken to. The pupil may not follow whole-class instructions, or he may attach himself to a different group because he is not aware of either surroundings or expectations. Make instructions both simple and clear. Always use the pupil's name before you speak to him. This will confirm you have his attention. Remember, the ASD pupil may take instructions literally – by admonishing a pupil with the statement "pull your socks up", will more than likely result in the pupil doing just that; reaching down and pulling his socks up! Beware! Say what you mean; mean what you say.

There may be little or no eye contact. This does not mean that the ASD pupil is being rude or not listening to you. Time and the development of self-confidence may improve this. Again, state the pupil's name to confirm that you have his attention. Straight forward confrontation may result in the pupil walking away from you, or exhibiting bizarre behaviours, such as walking around in circles.

The ASD pupil does not necessarily appreciate hierarchy and this means they may speak in the same tone of voice to both peers and staff. The pupil may have a limited tone of voice and gesture causing them to appear rude or abrupt; yet, they may only be asking for clarification on a matter. They may also experience difficulty when trying to understand the
viewpoint of others. The ASD pupil may incorrectly presume you already know what is on their mind. This could in cause real frustration for the pupil with ASD.

Social Interaction – The ASD pupil may experience difficulty with the basic rules of social interaction, understanding when a conversation begins or ends is something he has to learn. This is a skill that is not acquired naturally. The ASD pupil may chat or ‘butts-in’ at inappropriate times. It is equally likely that the pupil will walk away from you in the middle of a conversation. The ASD pupil needs to know that you are speaking to him and he will also need to know when you have finished speaking. Do not presume the pupil understands what you are expecting of him.

The ASD pupil may call out for your attention without raising his hand. He may even leave his work area to engage with you, or others midway through a period of group instruction. Clear and precise instructions are necessary; and the pupil may require reminding on a regular basis.

The ASD pupil may shun physical contact or may contact inappropriately. The pupil may have difficulties in understanding what matter greatly or is important to others. Thus, the ASD pupil tends to understand his own perspective, only.

Routine, Imagination and Rigidity of Thought - The need for repletion and firm structure are essential for the pupil with ASD. Routine is supported by the school timetable, but sudden or unplanned changes can cause problems. Changes of room, supply staff and visitors to the school can generate major anxiety in the child. Even changes in seating arrangements within the pupil’s classroom can cause problems. It is best to let the ASD pupil sit in the same place in order to minimise potential issues. If possible, try to foresee any forthcoming changes to routine, anticipate the consequences, and inform the ASD pupil of what is going to happen; when and why.

The ASD pupil will have specific interests that fill their time (e.g., train timetables, road maps, computers and fantasy games). Talking with the ASD pupil about his interests, irrespective of how mundane they may appear to be to you, is one way of engaging positively with that child.

The ASD pupil may forget all the time; arriving late for class, entering the wrong room, reading the wrong lesson or day on the timetable. The pupil may completely forget the structure of his school day. Additionally, toileting may present as a problem. Breaks and lunchtimes can be largely irrelevant as concepts to the ASD pupil, who may not need to go to the toilet during those periods of time. Not realising that he needs the toilet, he may wait right up to the last moment before going. Conversely, he may be fixated on his routine and respond to the school bell or an instruction, leaving the room without permission, fearing he will be late to his next lesson, lunch, or miss his taxi home.

Sensory Problems - The ASD pupil may experience hypersensitivity to sound, heat, touch, colour and smell. This can create additional problem for the child in the shape of class-based audio-visual machinery, labels on items, colours of walls, perfumes or aftershave on staff, and odours from waste bins. If, for some reason, the ASD pupil is already anxious, additional sensory problems may present as one too many, resulting in an outburst of negative behaviour.

. . . . and remember!

Working with challenging behaviour is wearing and frustrating for the professional adult. For the pupil with ASD, it is equally so. You are not expected to have all the answers when supporting the pupil, but patience and understanding are essential tools. Remember the pupil with ASD sees things from a completely different perspective.
Dyslexia
Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)

What is it?

Dyslexia, now frequently referred to as a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD), is the term used for an information processing difficulty which impeded learning to read, write and spell. Dyslexic people may also experience difficulties with sequencing, short-term memory, handwriting (dysgraphia), time-keeping, sense of direction, and aspects of numeracy (dyscalculia).

This specific learning difficulty is a life-long condition which is helped by focused teaching using a multisensory approach and the development of coping strategies. It is not related to the person’s general level of intelligence and will not hinder his / her ability to learn in other areas.

Because their history of learning to read and write has been disappointing, some pupils suffer from low self-worth and begin to underachieve. Typically, pupils with a SpLD avoid activities requiring reading and writing because those activities present as hard work and frustrating.

The discrepancy between a pupils oral and written work may present as significant.

What you might expect.

Reading: It is likely that a pupil with SpLD will:

- not enjoy reading;
- have a less extensive reading history;
- read slowly and with difficulty;
- often lose the thread of what is being read;
- be slow at scanning and skimming texts;
- have lost his /her place in the text and experience difficulty in finding it again;
- tire easily if reading for any length of time.

Spelling: SpLD pupils may:

- spell erratically;
- spell the same word differently on the same page;
- reverse or omit letters;
- get words wrong today, they appear to have mastered the day before;
- make mistakes with alphabetical ordering;
- make errors with high frequency common words; such as days of the week and names;
- dictionaries / spell checkers present as unhelpful.
Writing: Characteristically, the written work of a pupil with SpLD will be short, poorly presented and poorly punctuated. It is likely to use only simple vocabulary and have jumbled or confused sequencing.

Writing is frustrating because the pupil with a SpLD will know what they want to say, but will also know they will not be able to find the right words. Those they do find, will be spelt incorrectly. The work will also look messy and poorly presented when completed.

General: SpLD pupils are likely to:

- forget information, such as telephone numbers, addresses, birth dates, teachers’ names;
- forget sequences, such as months seasons, the alphabet;
- lack organisation;
- be unable to follow a sequence of instructions;
- confuse left and right;
- have poor fine motor control and therefore experience difficulty using scissors and other equipment;
- reverse digits, such as reversing 23 as 32, or 6 may be written as 9;
- lack confidence.

What helps

It is particularly helpful to acknowledge that a pupil with SpLD has real difficulties and to reassure them that you do not view their errors as carelessness or the result of laziness.

Any of the following may help:

- marking for content, where possible;
- allowing the pupil to find other ways of displaying their understanding;
- allowing the use of ICT, especially speech recognition software or tape recorders where appropriate;
- keep note taking / copying from the board to a minimum;
- providing copies of notes;
- if appropriate, allowing pupils to have photocopies of others’ notes;
- keeping instructions short, repeating them positively and / or in a different manner;
- putting key words on the board, wall and in pupils’ books;
- ensuring homework is written clearly;
- allowing more time for the completion of tasks / assignments;
- teaching subject-specific words;
- avoiding having the pupil read aloud in class, unless they volunteer;
- using visual clues in place of words;
- write very clearly on the board;
- avoid the use of negative comments when marking or reporting on the pupil’s progress. Pupils with SpLD tend to know they have a problem, as do their parents or carers. So, be positive and constructive, wherever possible

As a general rule of thumb, where possible, separate the writing / creative process from the secretarial one. Allow pupils to use idiosyncratic spelling while they explore their thoughts and develop their ideas.
Appendix Four

Dyspraxia
Delayed Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)

What is it?
The word Dyspraxia means difficulty with learned patterns of movement. Whilst Dyslexia is thought of as a difficulty specifically with reading and writing, Dyspraxia is more to do with the movement and 'doing'.

Like Dyslexia, the term Dyspraxia has a wide range of association and can mean different things within different contexts.

What you can expect.
A pupil described as 'dyspraxic' is likely to have difficulty in the following areas:

- **Gross motor skills.** They are unable to catch. They bump into things, they are described as 'clumsy' or 'butterfingers'.
- **Fine motor skills.** They have very poor handwriting and presentation skills, unable to produce a straight line with a pencil and ruler; their books are 'messy'; they look untidy. They are unable to change their clothing quickly and unable to tie their shoe laces.
- **Speech difficulties.** They are unable to recall words. They take time to respond.
- **Memory impairments.** They cannot remember instructions or recall facts.
- **Reading / spelling.** They are unable to track across a page easily and have poor spatial discrimination.
- **Fidgeting.** They are unable to keep still; they fiddle and lose their place when reading or writing.

Pupils who have dyspraxia have probably failed to develop skills at the same rate as their peers and have probably been on the receiving end of other people’s exasperated comment throughout their lives. This often leads to a lack of confidence and low self-esteem.

What helps?
People seldom, if ever, want to show themselves as incompetent – pupils rarely get their work wrong on purpose. They are not just being lazy or careless, even when they get it wrong. Usually, if they could get it right, they would!

Any of the following may help:

- if possible, avoid the pressure of time;
- use praise whenever possible;
- seek to bolster confidence;
- accept shorter pieces of writing, placing an emphasis on quality rather than quantity;
• encourage the use of ICT;
• use alternative methods of recording and organising work;
• provide grids / chart for filling in;
• mark work for content, not presentation;
• set realistic targets – move towards accuracy;
• enlarge worksheets which can be written on;
• repeat information; **often**;
• use visual / aural cues to reinforce learning;
• check for understanding;
• be constructively critical;
• avoid sarcasm and implied criticism such as “You’re always last!” “How many times have I got to tell you?” “If I’ve told you once, I’ve said it . . . .”; and so forth.
Appendix Five

Hearing Impairment (HI) 
Deaf Pupils

Pupils with a hearing difficulty are only disabled if the situation in which they find themselves do not meet their needs.

What might you expect?

Pupils with a hearing impairment may:

- have a limited vocabulary;
- have surprising gaps in their general knowledge;
- find it difficult to cope with figures of speech and idiomatic expressions;
- have difficulty with abstract concepts; e.g., time and place;
- miss the endings of words in speech and writing;
- have difficulty with spelling – sounds may not be accurately distinguished;
- not be aware of points of grammar; e.g., tenses;
- miss aspects of interaction in the classroom;
- have little self-confidence and become more self-conscious during adolescence;
- misunderstand social situations;
- find it very difficult to say they have not heard;
- become socially withdrawn.

They are likely to find the following more difficult:

- listening to a tape recording, CD or radio, as there are no visual cues to use;
- working in room with a lot of background noise;
- listening to classroom discussion during which speech comes from different parts the room;
- listening to a speaker whose face is obscured by hands across the mouth, turning away, talking whilst writing on the board, standing with his / her back to strong light;
- working outside, in a gym or a swimming pool;
- listening to a speaker who is standing some distance away;
- taking dictation or notes from a teacher or a video, as it is difficult to watch the speaker and write at the same time;
- copying while being spoken to;
- working in silence – they may need to ‘check out’ what is needed with a friend.

PLEASE NOTE: None of the above should be taken as an indication of a lack of ability.
When planning work, it may be useful to think of a pupil with hearing impairment as someone who uses English as a second language.

What Helps?

- Taking account of the information above.
- Standing still as much as possible.
- Being prepared to paraphrase the main points of a discussion.
- Repeating what pupils say in response to questions.
- Encouraging collective working which will allow pupils to check information with peers.
- Making sure pupils are seated properly in class. Monaural pupils should sit with the good ear towards the teacher.
- Making sure the pupil is attentive before giving instructions.
- Not asking “Do you understand?” as it invites the answer “Yes”. Rather, ask the question “Can you tell me what you have to do?” as a way of checking understanding.
- Trying to communicate directly with the pupil.
- Negotiating over the most effective way of supporting the pupil.
- Liaising closely with the pupil’s supporter(s) and the pupil directly.
- Recognising that the pupil may not want his / her disability referred to publically.
- As far as possible, treating the pupil like any other.

Health and Safety.

Pupils with impaired hearing or who are deaf should take part in all school activities, unless there is evidence to the contrary that presents issues relating to health and safety that may compromise the welfare of that pupil or others, if that pupil were to engage in a particular activity. Please note that unless an activity can be adequately modified to include a pupil with impaired hearing or deafness, a full risk assessment will need to be completed in order to substantiate grounds for exclusion from an activity.
Appendix Six

Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome
Irlene Syndrome

What is it?

Sotopic Syndrome is a condition affecting the way figures against a background are perceived. Where the figures are small and the contrast with the background is great, those suffering from this syndrome experience visual distortion.

Under certain conditions, we all experience this. (Think about watching a television or computer screen when the sun is reflecting onto it, or looking at complex repetitive patterns in contrasting colours that ‘buss’ on the page). Those who are particularly sensitive experience distortions while reading conventional print in black on white. For them, the letters and words may all merge into one fuzzy line, or they may appear to move around the page. There may be an overall distortion of bends and waves running through the text, or the dazzle from the contrast is uncomfortable.

What this does.

People suffering from this syndrome often have problems with reading. The visual distortions make it difficult for them to identify the relevant differences in words and letters which is crucial for decoding text. For children learning to read, this creates problems, frustrations and a sense of failure. Some find the strain of reading unpleasant and tiring; so avoid it.

What can be done?

Opticians who specialise in visual problems can identify sufferers. It has been found that some people benefit from using tinted lenses to reduce the glare from the page of conventional print. People known to have dyslexic tendencies are often tested to see if coloured lenses and overlays will help.

What helps?

Everyone benefits from having text clearly presented. Those with this sensitivity syndrome may benefit from:

- Using a larger font. The problem associated with this is that larger print is often associated with blindness or ‘baby books’. We encourage older pupils to write in a smaller script and read smaller fonts, so deliberately choosing to write larger or use large fonts may be perceived by others as immature. Pupils can be encouraged to use larger fonts whilst word processing or preparing work, but use a smaller one with which to present the completed work.
• Changing backgrounds and font colours on screens. Again, this must be clearly distinguished from those pupils who are known to be just fooling around.
• Having text printed on a coloured background, especially powerpoint or OHP presentations.
• Accepting that some pupils will benefit from using overlays and / or tinted glasses.
• Not making unnecessary remarks that draw attention to their predicament.

Appendix Seven

Semantic – Pragmatic Language Difficulties

What is it?
Semantic – Pragmatic is a term used by Speech and Language Therapists to describe difficulties that people have using language appropriately, due to their difficulties in understanding a situation.

Pupils experiencing this difficulty may have problems with:
  • the implicit rules of conversation; e.g., taking turns;
  • interpreting facial expressions, body language, tone of voice;
  • timing responses – knowing when or how to interrupt a conversation;
  • knowing how much information to give;
  • checking that the listener has understood;
  • staying on one topic;
  • understanding anything other than literal meaning.

What you might expect.
The pupil may:
  • experience difficulty joining in at the right time;
  • ask too many questions, but not really show any interest in the answers;
  • say something that appears to have nothing to do with the current conversation;
  • shift from one subject to another;
  • not understand tone of voice or body language;
  • be unable to infer meaning from what is said;
  • interpret very literally;
  • experience difficulty in concentrating;
  • experience in understanding instructions;
  • appear bizarre or immature;
  • say too much, not giving the listener time to speak;
  • read without understanding;
  • be clumsy or uncoordinated.

What helps.
The pupil may be helped by:
  • keeping instructions short and simple;
  • avoiding metaphors in explanations;
  • limiting synonyms;
• being aware of your use of subject-specific language, especially at its more basic level; e.g.; a ‘table’ in a kitchen is different to a ‘table’ in a science or maths book;
• being prepared to repeat information – more than once;
• explaining key words;
• writing reminders on the board or in a book and using visual cues alongside words;
• checking for understanding;
• keeping activities short and focused;
• inviting questions;
• allowing for mistakes;
• being patient;
• not sounding irritated, even when you perhaps are.
Appendix Eight

Visual Impairment

Pupils with impairment vision are only disadvantaged if the situations in which they find themselves do not meet their needs.

What might you expect?

Pupils with impaired vision may:

- adopt an unusual posture to maximise the use of their residual vision
- hold items very close to their face;
- walk hesitantly, especially in unfamiliar surroundings;
- not greet or respond to others at a distance;
- be unable to distinguish between a figure and its background;
- find writing with a coloured pen more difficult to read;
- be very sensitive to light reflected from the board;
- need the lights on, even on a sunny day;
- experience difficulty locating the right place on a page, in a book;
- take longer to read;
- write slowly;
- be confused if there is a lot of movement around them;
- not see moving objects or obstacles;
- experience fine motor skill difficulties; e.g. using scissors, or colouring pictures;
- be socially hesitant, especially in new situations;
- be withdrawn;
- be distracted in class as they try to follow the interaction around them;
- become irritable / unhappy if they feel they cannot cope;
- tire much more easily.

PLEASE NOTE: None of the above should be taken as an indication of a lack of ability. Some of the above may make the pupil a figure of fun. Please be vigilant.

What helps?

Pupils with impaired vision may be helped by:

- ensuring the lighting level is appropriate; even if it means having the light on, on a sunny day;
- ensuring that the pupil is seated appropriately; usually at the front of the room;
- using black ink and printing as much as possible;
- using more spacing when writing;
• removing irrelevant clutter from the page – patterns and pictures added for visual interest may cause confusion;
• using appropriate-sized fonts;
• keeping pathways / doors free of obstructions;
• enlarging or simplifying tests;
• using clear and good-quality photocopies;
• writing in pupil’s books in a way that they can read;
• making visual aids available outside of lesson times; such as relevant DVD’s;
• stopping DVD’s at important images;
• liaising with support workers and pupils themselves over the most effective way to meet their needs.

Health and Safety.

Pupils with impaired vision should take part in all school activities, unless there is evidence to the contrary that presents issues relating to health and safety that may compromise the welfare of that pupil or others if that pupil were to engage in a particular activity. Please note that unless an activity can be adequately modified to include a pupil with impaired vision, a full risk assessment will need to be completed in order to substantiate grounds for exclusion from an activity.
Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)

What is it?

People with pathological demand avoidance syndrome (PDA) will avoid demands made by others, due to their high anxiety levels when they feel that they are not in control.

PDA is increasingly recognised as part of the autism spectrum

The central difficulty for people with PDA is their avoidance of the everyday demands made by other people, due to their high anxiety levels when they feel that they are not in control. Hence the name of the syndrome: pathological demand avoidance.

People with PDA tend to have much better social communication and interaction skills than other people on the spectrum, and are consequently able to use this ability to their advantage. They still have real difficulties in these areas though, usually because they need to control the interaction. They often have highly developed social mimicry and role play, sometimes becoming different characters or personas.

The main features of PDA are:

- obsessively resisting ordinary demands
- appearing sociable on the surface but lacking depth in their understanding (often recognised by parents early on)
- excessive mood swings, often switching suddenly
- comfortable (sometimes to an extreme extent) in role play and pretending
- language delay, seemingly as a result of passivity, but often with a good degree of ‘catch-up’
- obsessive behaviour, often focused on people rather than things.

People with PDA can be controlling and dominating, especially when they feel anxious and are not in charge. They can however be enigmatic and charming when they feel secure and in control. Many parents describe their PDA child as a ‘Jekyll and Hyde’. It is important to recognise that these children have a hidden disability and often appear ‘normal’ to others. Many parents of children with PDA feel that they have been wrongly accused of poor parenting through lack of understanding about the condition. These parents will need a lot of support themselves, as their children can often present severe behavioural challenges.

People with PDA are likely to need a lot of support into their adult life. Limited evidence so far suggests that the earlier the diagnosis and the better support that they have, the more able and independent they are likely to become.
Further help and support can be accessed as follows:

**Local Authority’s Local Offer**
To find out the Local Authority’s local offer please use the following link: www.coventry.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer.

**NAS Autism Helpline**
Offers confidential information and advice on PDA and related issues.
Tel: 0808 800 4104 (open 10am-4pm, Monday-Friday)
Email: autismhelpline@nas.org.uk

**The PDA Contact Group**
A group for parents of children with PDA which is part of Contact A Family. The website features information about PDA and its history, as well as support advice for home and school. Also includes an online support forum.
Website: www.pdacontact.org.uk
Tel: 0114 2589 670 (Margaret Duncan, National Coordinator for the group - calls are preferred after 8pm, or leave an answerphone message)

**The Elizabeth Newson Centre**
Advice, support, training and a range of publications are available through the Elizabeth Newson Centre, part of NORSACAs Sutherland House Children’s Services in Nottingham.
Website: www.norsaca.org.uk or www.sutherlandhouse.org.uk
Research has shown that if in the first few years of our lives our emotional needs are not adequately met or responded to, then it can have an effect which can last a lifetime. This effect is described as having an insecure attachment. In addition it has been found that attachment 'styles' can often be passed on from one generation to the next.

**What is an Attachment?**

- A way of relating to another person
- Children are biologically predisposed to form attachment relationships to help them experience security and comfort
- Children develop a range of behaviours to keep their carer close (i.e. attachment behaviours), for example when a baby is feeling unsafe because its carer leaves the room the baby will cry and in response the carer returns
- All infants, provided they experience at least basic care, will selectively attach to a small number of adults caring for them
- The primary attachment relationship leads to the development of a ‘blueprint’ (Internal Working Model) of this relationship, which influences later relationships e.g. childhood attachment experiences will impact on future relationships, even into adulthood

In some cases, when a child’s development is interrupted in their early years, it can lead to them having profound problems in forming and maintaining relationships throughout their lives.

**Secure Attachment Outcomes**

Research indicates that attachment aids children to develop:

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Socially
- Morally

Which enables them to:

- Cope with change and stress
- Cope with separation and loss
- Become independent
- Develop future relationships
Types of Attachment

Secure Attachment

• A healthy reciprocal relationship between child and carer
• Social interaction is characterised by fun and playfulness and the child’s need for comfort
• When the child becomes anxious or distressed comfort is given quickly and effectively
• The child feels able to explore the world at his/her own pace knowing that the carer is a secure base to return to

Avoidant Attachment

• When carers actively discourage signs of either affection or distress
• Carers believe that emotions are to be suppressed and feelings should be unexpressed. This means that it is difficult for the child to access a feeling of being loved and nurtured and they have to develop alternative coping mechanisms to survive emotionally. This very often leads to the child believing that feelings should not be expressed and them appearing self reliant or quiet and shy
• There may be difficulties with peer relationships, the child may relate better to adults or have superficial friendships
• Children in these situations can become withdrawn emotionally and learn to internalise painful and difficult feelings

Ambivalent Attachment

• Children experience ambivalent attachment when they are never quite sure whether their carers will meet their need for reassurance or comfort
• The carer may sometimes respond to distress and anxiety or may ignore it. There is a lack of predictability in the behaviour of the carer; this can make the child feel ‘all over the place’
• The child may have difficulty focusing or concentrating on schoolwork, may be loud, aggressive, talkative, and may have difficulty accepting rules/boundaries as well as learning from consequences
• They may also have difficulties understanding cause and effect

Disorganised Attachment

• Occurs when children send out attachment signals but these are not received or responded to appropriately by the carer
• Children with disorganised attachment often fail to thrive and may have developmental delay
• Young children will inevitably show signs of emotional and behavioural difficulties from an early age by demonstrating
aggressive, disruptive or withdrawn behaviours both at home and in the early years environment

- Sometimes the carer appears unaware of the child's needs
- This attachment style can occur when the carer has many unresolved emotional issues from their own past or has no emotional resources to draw upon due to mental health problems. It may also occur when a traumatic life event is experienced by a child in the first few years of their life
- Alternatively, and much more seriously, disorganised attachment can occur when the parent is a threat to the child through abusive behaviour
- The child may present as angry and aggressive, hyper-vigilant about what adults are doing, unable to concentrate, controlling in all relationships
- Can be socially isolated or attracted to deviant peer group, may demonstrate compulsive behaviours e.g. self-harm, drugs

**What to do Next?**
If you suspect a child may have attachment difficulties they will require a specialist assessment to determine which interventions will be the most supportive. These children can be mistaken for children with autism or ADHD depending on their difficulties.
Appendix Eleven

Definition of SEN

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or

(b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority

(c) are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Special educational provision means:

(a) for children of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area

(b) for children under two, educational provision of any kind.