



Elms School

Special Educational Needs  
and Disability (SEND) Policy  
and  
Information Report

April 2024

## **SECTION A - SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS**

This policy document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies that provide the framework to ensure the effective and efficient provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) at Elms School. It is written for the benefit of all members of the school community to ensure that the potential of every child is maximised, irrespective of ability, disability, race, gender and social origin, and to enable equality of access to the curriculum in an environment where every child is valued and respected.

This policy is written in line with the requirements of:-

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- SI 2014 1530 Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
  - Part 3 Duties on Schools - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
  - Schedule 1 Regulation 51- Information to be included in the SEND information report
  - Schedule 2 Regulation 53 - Information to be published by a local authority in its local offer
- Equality Act 2010
- Schools Admissions Code, DfE 1 September 2021
- SI 2012 1124 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- SI 2013 758 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Elms School policies and documents:

- Equality Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure

This policy will be reviewed annually.

## **Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

A child or young person has Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- (b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions - *SEND Code of Practice (2015, p16)*.

The four main areas of SEND are:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Physical and/or Sensory

## **Definition of Disability**

Many children and young people who have SEND may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. Disability is defined as

‘...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 and includes more children than many realise. ‘Long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’ - *SEND Code of Practice (2015, p16)*

## **The Local Offer**

The Children and Families Act, introduced in September 2014, requires Local Authorities to publish and keep under review all of the services available to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability. This is called The Local Offer.

The Kent Local Offer (SEND Information Hub) provides parents and carers with information about how to access services in their area and what they can expect from those services. It lets them know how academies, schools and colleges will support them and what they can expect across the local setting.

Academies, schools and colleges are expected to publish a SEND Information Report to help parents, carers, children and young people understand how their needs will be met and how they will be supported.

### **What kinds of special educational needs does Elms School provide for?**

Elms School is a designated specialist provision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disability in the area of Social, Emotional and Mental Health.

A high number of the students attending Elms School have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Conduct Disorder and/or Oppositional Defiant Disorder. In addition, many students have other types of need, including but not limited to:

- Speech, Language and Communication Needs.
- Specific Learning Difficulties, such as Dyslexia, Dyscalculia or Dyspraxia.
- Attachment Difficulties.
- Anxiety.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Trauma

All students at Elms School School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Admission to Elms School is the responsibility of the Local Authority through consultation with the headteacher. The Local Authority refers students whose EHCP identifies needs that meet the school's admission criteria.

Students join Elms School at different points of the school year, as long as their year group is not full and their needs would not stop the effective education of the other students in their year group.

### **How are special educational needs identified and assessed at Elms School?**

Before most students join Elms School, their special educational needs and/or disability have usually been identified and recorded in their EHCP and/or in SEND Support records at their previous placement.

However, it is also possible that a student has, or may develop, special educational needs and/or a disability that has not been identified before. When necessary, Elms School will use observations and/or further assessment to find out more about a student's individual learning needs so that the correct kind of support can be provided.

Elms School uses a range of ways to identify and assess SEND, including:

- assessment of reading, spelling and language skills.
- student observations during teaching and learning.
- observational checklists.
- strengths and difficulties questionnaires.
- informal discussion with students and parents or carers.
- monitoring of academic / vocational progress.
- monitoring of other progress data, including social and emotional development.

At Elms School, we are experienced in using different assessment tools to identify strengths and weaknesses in English and Mathematics and areas of social and emotional development.

In addition, Elms School has a Specialist Teaching and Learning Service which can support with the identification of specific difficulties.

Elms School can also refer students to access Speech and Language Therapy Services, Educational Psychology Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Occupational Therapy Services or other external agencies for further, specialist assessment.

The purpose of any assessment is to better understand a student's needs and the different approaches or support that may help the student to make better progress. This information will be shared with the student and their parents or carers. It will also be added to the student's Provision Plan, as part of their EHCP.

Elms School ensures that all teachers and support staff who work with the individual student are aware of the strategies and teaching approaches best suited to meeting the student's needs through Student Profiles.

**Information about the school's policies for making provision for students with special educational needs whether or not they have EHC Plans.**

**a) how does the school evaluate the effectiveness of its provision?**

Elms School uses a holistic approach to evaluate the effectiveness of its provision. We gather information about all aspects of progress and development from the student, the parents or carers, the teaching and support staff and any other professionals involved. This may include:

- assessment and tracking data from teaching staff.
- additional assessment data, such as reading or spelling ages.

- achievement of external qualifications.
- observations of teaching and learning.
- observations of additional learning support.
- monitoring of attendance data, both daily and/or sessional.
- monitoring of engagement in learning.
- monitoring of achievements and commendations.
- monitoring of social and emotional development.
- monitoring of behaviour incidents.
- informal discussion with students.
- mentoring sessions with students.
- informal discussion with parents or carers.
- parent or carer and student questionnaires.

Student Progress Reviews take place three times a year to monitor all aspects of students' development, so that we can check how well each student's needs are being met.

Every student will have an annual review of their needs and provision to check that it is right for them and that they are making progress towards the agreed outcomes.

**b) what are the school's arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of students with special educational needs?**

Elms School reviews all progress data at least three times a year, including attendance and personal development, although this may be more frequent if there are particular concerns about a student's well-being or engagement in learning.

Academic progress is tracked termly against the 21 Steps to inform teacher assessment of the working level for each student. Formal assessments, such as end of unit tests, are used to determine student attainment at key points throughout the year. Externally accredited and vocational courses are assessed against the criteria published by the awarding body.

Social and emotional development is monitored using the Thrive Profile or Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Provision plans and targets are discussed with the student and their parents or carers at least three times a year, in line with the Code of Practice, although this may be more frequent if it is felt that changes need to be made to a student's provision.

If these assessments or records do not show adequate progress is being made, the student's provision will be adjusted through discussion with them and their parents or carers.

The SEND Code of Practice (2015, 6.17) describes inadequate progress as:

- that which is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.
- that which fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress.
- that which fails to close the attainment gap between rates of progress.
- that which widens the attainment gap.

In most cases, this will mean a change to the strategies or approaches to teaching and learning used with the student. In some cases, it may mean a change to any additional support that the student receives or to the course(s) that the student is studying.

### **c) what is the school's approach to teaching students with special educational needs?**

Students at Elms School are taught in small groups, depending on their pathway, by staff experienced and trained in working with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and associated, complex SEND. The curriculum is delivered by subject specialists who make sure that teaching and learning uses lots of different approaches to meet individual students' needs. The work set is differentiated to challenge students whilst allowing them to achieve at a rate that is right for them.

We firmly believe that

‘High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.’

*SEND Code of Practice (2015, 6.37)*

The quality of Education at Elms School is judged to be good (Ofsted 2023).

We regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching and, where necessary, take measures to improve teachers' understanding of how to identify and support vulnerable students.

We are committed to the continuing professional development of all staff and there are regular opportunities to access a wide range of specialist training in order to develop expertise in meeting the increasingly complex needs of our students.

Elms School ensures that all teachers and support staff who work with the individual students are aware of the strategies and teaching approaches best suited to meeting the student's needs through Student Profiles.

**d) how does the school adapt the curriculum and learning environment for students with special educational needs?**

Elms School regularly reviews and adapts the curriculum and learning environment to meet the needs of our students.

Elms School adopts the three main principles of the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement and strives to meet the needs of individual students by:

- setting suitable learning challenges.
- responding to students' diverse needs.
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment.

When planning the content of the curriculum, teaching and learning staff ensure that:

- students are at the centre of the learning.
- students are clear about the learning objective and success criteria.
- activities are matched to age and ability and are taken at an appropriate pace.
- activities are varied and planned to develop a range of skills.
- students have the opportunity to work in a variety of groupings, according to the nature of the task.
- assessment is continuous but manageable and is used to plan the next step in each student's learning.

Teaching approaches recommended by other professionals, such as those included in students' Education, Health and Care Plans, are used to inform individual learning support strategies.

We have worked with our partner agencies, Speech and Language Therapy Services and Occupational Therapy Services, to ensure our environment and classroom strategies are communication friendly and take account of sensory needs.

Accredited courses, including GCSEs and vocational qualifications, are carefully considered based on their content and how they are assessed so that they can be matched to the learning needs, personal interests and aspirations of each student.

Sometimes, a student may need access to a personalised learning programme, tailored to meet their individual needs and different to that of their peers. This may involve access to learning or personal development opportunities, including but not limited to vocational studies, Music, Challenger Troop, Duke of Edinburgh, Sports

Awards, therapeutic learning or 1:1 / off site tuition. It may also mean a change to their educational pathway or access to an alternative provision.

**e) what additional support for learning is available to students with special educational needs?**

Elms School strives to deliver high quality teaching to meet the needs of *all* students. However, sometimes students will not make expected progress, despite high quality teaching targeted at their specific area(s) of difficulty, and may need additional support. This may include support from Teaching Assistants, within the classroom, in small groups or 1:1, focused on:

- reading and spelling skills, including phonics.
- reading for meaning.
- handwriting or keyboarding skills.
- maths skills.
- speech and language skills.
- social communication skills.

Occasionally, a student may need more expert support from an outside agency such as Speech and Language Therapy Services, Occupational Therapy Services or CAMHS. In this situation, parents or carers will be contacted so that a referral can be completed and forwarded to the appropriate agency. After a series of observations and / or assessments, a programme of support may be facilitated by specialists and / or provided to Elms School and advice and guidance provided to parents or carers.

In Key Stage 4, students may need extra support during exams - these are called Access Arrangements. Evidence of these needs will usually already be detailed in the student's EHCP and / or Provision Plans as the student's normal way of working. However, in some instances, there may be a need for specialist assessment.

Sometimes, a student will have such complex needs that they will find it extremely difficult to cope, even with the small setting and high level of adult support available in specialist provision. Elms School may need to request additional funding for 1:1 learning support or consider a change to their educational pathway.

**f) how does the school enable students with special educational needs to engage in activities of the school (including physical activities) together with children who do not have special educational needs?**

Elms School views enrichment activities, student-led learning and educational visits as an important part of the curriculum. Such activities are regularly used to improve social skills or to develop subject knowledge.

All Elms School students have SEND and, as such, we actively seek to ensure that everybody is able to engage in extra-curricular activities. In some cases, an individual risk assessment may mean that Elms School allocates additional adult support,

alternative travel arrangements or other, specific resources in order to maximise the engagement in and impact of the activity for all students involved.

On rare occasions, an individual risk assessment may mean that a student cannot access an activity on Health and Safety Grounds. In this situation, targets will be identified with the student and parents or carers so that they are able to work towards accessing similar activities in the future.

Some students make exceptional progress at Elms School. In such cases, the possibility of reintegration into mainstream provision is explored through the annual review of their EHCP. Where appropriate, inclusion programmes are carefully planned and regularly reviewed to facilitate reintegration at a pace that is right for the individual student.

**g) what support is available for improving the emotional and social development of students with special educational needs?**

Elms School believes that an important part of education is to enable *all* students to develop emotional resilience and social skills. Emotional literacy and opportunities to develop strategies for managing emotions are built into the curriculum, through direct teaching and indirectly in every interaction students have throughout the day.

Student well-being is the responsibility of all staff at Elms School. However, each student has an identified Class Teacher/Tutor who they have a regular contact with and daily opportunities to talk about how things are going.

Elms School monitors the social and emotional development of students using the Thrive Profile. Emotion coaching strategies, Zones of Regulation and The Incredible 5 Point Scale are used to help students develop their skills in recognising and regulating their emotions.

The social and emotional development of Elms Students students is also supported through:

- an allocated group to promote a sense belonging.
- whole centre and organisation events to promote a sense of community.
- regular opportunities to celebrate individual and group achievements.
- informal discussions with staff.
- mentoring sessions with Class Teacher/ Tutor.
- supported and monitored opportunities for social interaction.
- time out facilities and opportunities for reflection.
- a clear system of reward and consequence with opportunities for reparation.
- an in-depth, student centred programme of PSHE.
- focused work on developing independence, including careers advice and life skills.

Sometimes, a student may need additional support to improve their social and emotional development. This may include:

- speech and language skills sessions.
- social communication skills sessions.
- Lego Therapy sessions.
- meet and greet on arrival.
- alternative curriculum opportunities, including Independent Living Skills.
- additional mentoring.
- counselling.
- therapeutic intervention.

Occasionally, a student may need additional support from an outside agency such as Speech and Language Therapy Services, School Health Services, CAMHS, Early Help or Social Services. In this situation, parents or carers will be contacted so that a referral can be completed and forwarded to the appropriate agency. After a series of observations and/or assessments, a programme of support is usually agreed for the student.

Elms School has regular contact with other professionals involved with students, including medical professionals, Early Help Workers, Social Workers and Youth Offending Team Officers. When appropriate, Elms School will contribute to and/or attend multi-agency meetings regarding the welfare of students.

Sometimes, a student will have such complex needs that they will find it extremely difficult to cope, even with the small setting and high level of adult support available in specialist provision, and Elms School may need to request additional funding for 1:1 social and emotional support or consider a change to their educational pathway.

### **The name and contact details of the Assistant Headteachers for Inclusion**

Debbie Worman, Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion (Primary)  
Emily Mount, Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion (Secondary)

Contact can be made with SEND staff through the Elms School Main Office on 01304 201946.

## **Information about the expertise and training of staff in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and how specialist expertise will be secured**

Elms School's Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, Dover STLS, provide support and expertise to mainstream schools in all areas of SEND.

All Elms School staff have had the following awareness training:

- Child Protection, including Online Safety and Prevent.
- Trauma & the Effect on Brain Development.
- Trauma & Attachment.
- Improving Behaviour & Culture Through Relational Practice.
- Support for Learners with ASD.
- Support for Speech, Language and Communication Needs.
- Thrive
- De-escalation Strategies.

Identified staff have had the following awareness training:

- Anxiety Based School Avoidance.
- Suicide Prevention.
- Child Sexual Abuse & Grooming.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- Bereavement.
- Lived Experiences of Social Care.
- Trauma Informed Schools.
- Social Use of Language.
- Lego Therapy.
- Selective Mutism.
- Supporting Memory.
- Specific Learning Difficulties.
- DUST (Drug Use Screening Tool)
- Brooke Traffic Light Tool

In addition, some staff have accessed the following enhanced and specialist training:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Mental Health First Aider.
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA).
- Drawing & Talking.
- Nurture Groups.
- Masters in Enabling Learning.
- Advanced Certificate in Including Students with ASD.

Where a training need is identified beyond this, we will find a provider who is able to deliver it.

## **Information about how equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs will be secured**

Where external advisors recommend the use of equipment or facilities which the school does not have, we will purchase it or seek it by loan.

## **The arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education**

Elms School is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers and believes that their involvement is fundamental to students achieving their potential. As such, we strive to develop an open and mutually supportive relationship with parents and carers.

Elms School weekly contacts parents and carers, either by telephone, email or letter, to celebrate achievements or if there are issues or concerns. Parents and carers are similarly encouraged to contact Elms School and are welcome to arrange to visit and meet with staff at any time throughout the year, to share information or discuss how things are going.

Elms School invites parents, carers and students to attend an Annual Review once a year. This provides an opportunity to look at work and discuss progress, together with teaching and/or pastoral staff. Parents and carers are invited to contribute to and attend an annual review of the student's EHCP which, wherever possible, will include any other agencies involved with the student. Further evaluation of progress and support throughout the year will be informed by the views of the student and their parents or carers at least three times a year.

If there are concerns about a student's progress or engagement in learning at any point in the year, Elms School will contact their parents or carers and may invite them in for a meeting. This will sometimes result in a change to the strategies used to support the student or the agreed use of internal or external assessments to help further understand the student's needs.

Elms School values the opportunity to be involved with multi-agency working and actively supports the link between parents or carers and other agencies that may be involved with students. When appropriate, Elms School will contribute to and / or attend meetings with agencies such as CAMHS or Social Services and encourage parents or carers to attend too.

Parents and carers of students at Elms School are invited to attend an open day where they look at their child's work and have an informal conversation with the class teacher/tutor.

## **The arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education**

Elms School values each student as an individual with the right to be involved in discussing and making decisions about their education. However, Elms School also recognises that there can be times when it is in a student's best interests for adults to discuss and make decisions for them, such as when they are at risk of harm or when difficult decisions about their education have to be made.

Elms School provides students with opportunities to learn how to express their views and opinions with confidence throughout the curriculum including, but not limited to, the PSHE programme of study.

Students have frequent opportunities to discuss any issues with Class Teachers/Tutors, Pupil Support, Thrive Practitioners, Trauma Informed Practitioners or Teaching Assistants.

Elms School invites students, along with their parents or carers, to attend an open day. This provides an opportunity to look at work and discuss progress, together with teaching and pastoral staff.

Students are asked to contribute their views to the Annual Review of their EHCP and can attend the review meeting, with support if needed, so that they can be involved in discussing and deciding on any changes in their SEND or to their outcomes or provision. Further evaluation of progress and support throughout the year will be informed by the views of the student and their parents or carers at least three times a year.

Each class or tutor group has a Student Council of elected representative to Elms Leaf. They meet regularly to raise issues with the Leadership Team.

**How the governing body involves other bodies, including health and social services bodies, local authority support services and voluntary organisations, in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and in supporting the families of such students.**

Elms School is a member of the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KSENT), which aims to provide a supportive network of special schools in Kent.

Elms School's Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, Dover STLS, provide support and expertise to mainstream schools in all areas of SEND.

Elms School has also engaged with the following bodies:

- Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT).
- NHS Speech and Language Therapy Services, for direct therapy or advice.
- NHS Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy Services, for direct therapy or advice.
- NHS School Health Services.
- Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

- Social Services and Early Help, including the Youth Offending Team.
- Adult Social Care.
- Disabled Children's Services for support to families for students with high needs.
- The Education People, for employment support.
- Kooth, for wellbeing support.
- With You / The Forward Trust, to support students involved in substance misuse.
- Rising Sun, to support students who have experienced Domestic Abuse or are at risk of being in coercive or abusive relationships.
- Project Salus
- Be You Project, to support students who identify as LGBTQ+.
- The St Giles Trust, to support disengaged students at risk of criminal exploitation.
- Catch 22, to support disengaged students at risk of criminal exploitation.
- Charlton Athletic, to support disengaged students at risk of criminal exploitation.
- Kent Young Carers, to support students who are involved in the care of a sibling, parent or other family member.
- Holding On Letting Go, to support students who have experienced bereavement.
- Mind & Body, to support students who self-harm.
- The Fire Prevention Service, to support students who have an unhealthy interest or fascination with fire.
- KCC Steering Groups.

**The school's arrangements for supporting students with special educational needs in transferring between phases of education or in preparing for adulthood and independent living.**

Elms School recognises that transitions can be difficult for any student and especially those with SEND. In order to make sure that a move to Elms School goes as smoothly as possible, we ask for data, files and records from the student's previous placement so that we have all the background information available. Key members of Elms School staff will arrange to meet with staff at the current placement and / or observe the student before the move takes place. They will also liaise with any external agencies involved with the student.

All of the information that is gathered by Elms School before a transition takes place, including the student's EHCP and any professional reports available, are thoroughly reviewed and used to complete a Positive Behaviour Plan and inform the transition. This provides all staff with a detailed overview of student's needs, support network, triggers, strategies to support appropriate behaviour and what works best in terms of teaching and learning.

Elms School also contributes information to the next placement when a student moves on. Data, files and records are shared so that the new staff are fully aware of

the student's needs, progress and achievements and the kind of support that they might require.

Due to the complex needs and extreme vulnerability of many Elms School students, moving on to post-16 placement or employment can be particularly difficult. Gareth Nicholls (Assistant Headteacher for Learning (Secondary)) leads with Gill Clark (Attendance Officer) on careers and transition planning so that, throughout a student's time at Elms, they will receive guidance and support towards securing an appropriate placement in college, 6<sup>th</sup> Form, work-based learning or employment. This will be fully discussed and recorded at the Annual EHCP Review in Year 11.

### **The arrangements made by the governing body relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of students with special educational needs concerning the provision made at the school**

Elms School uses the same arrangements for complaints about the provision made for special educational needs and disability as for any other complaint.

In the first instance, parents or carers are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their child's Class Teacher/Tutor or the Assistant Headteachers for Inclusion.

If the concerns cannot be resolved through informal discussion, parents or carers should contact the headteacher for further discussion and, if necessary, information about the Elms School Complaints Policy.

A copy of the Complaints Procedure can be found on the School's website or requested from the Main Office on 01304 201964.

In some cases, usually for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by Elms School.

### **The contact details of support services for the parents of students with special educational needs and disabilities and children and young people with SEND**

Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provides a free and confidential information, advice and support service for

- parents of a disabled child.
- parents of a child with special educational needs
- children and young people, up to age 25, who have a special educational need or disability.

Staff trained in the legal framework for SEND can provide information and support on educational matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities, including health and social care.

IASK aims to help parents, children and young people:

- understand the system so they can take part fully in discussions.
- have the confidence to share their views and wishes about education.
- make informed choices and decisions.

IASK can be contacted on:

- **HELPLINE** 03000 413000 (Open Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm)
- **Office** 03000 412412
- **E-mail** [iask@kent.gov.uk](mailto:iask@kent.gov.uk)
- **Website** [www.kent.gov.uk/iask](http://www.kent.gov.uk/iask)
- **Facebook** [Information Advice and Support Kent IASK](#)

### **Information on where the local authority's local offer is published**

Kent's Local Offer (SEND Information Hub) is published on the KCC website at [www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs)

Parents without internet access or with any questions about the Kent Local Offer are welcome to contact the Elms School Main Office on 01304 201964 for further support or advice.