

TORFIELD AND SAXON MOUNT ACADEMY TRUST



SEN POLICY

February 2022

Introduction

Torfield and Saxon Mount schools are special academies, covering the age range from early years through to Year 11. The schools offer provision for pupils with autism, communication and speech and language difficulties and other moderate and severe complex needs, including global learning difficulties.

We currently have approximately 250 pupils on roll in the federation. Pupils travel from Hastings and the surrounding areas of East Sussex; we have admitted pupils from as far as Eastbourne and Seaford to the West of the County, and Rye in the East. All pupils attending Torfield and Saxon Mount Schools have an EHC Plan. Therefore, our provision is aimed at meeting the needs of SEN pupils. Many of our pupils have speech and language difficulties and require additional support with communication. Typically, the majority of Torfield Y6 pupils transfer to Saxon Mount at phase transfer. A number each year (around 25%) will transition to settings for more significant SEND or to settings closer to where they live. Occasionally pupils transition to a mainstream setting. Some pupils with more significant learning difficulties transition to SLD settings during KS1 or 2, prior to phase transfer. 40-50% of Saxon Mount school's Year 7 intake typically transfers from Torfield School, with the remainder coming from mainstream primary schools or other special schools. The majority of these pupils come from primary schools within a few miles of Saxon Mount. The majority of pupils at each school in the academy trust have associated learning difficulties and are working at well below age-related levels compared to peers in mainstream of the same age, with many pupils operating at the Pre Key Stage Levels or below the expected level at Y7 transfer. During Primary at Torfield, the majority of pupils are working with Pre Key Stage Levels for most of their time at the school.

The aims of the schools

The schools' aims are described in their vision statements, which are available on the school websites.

Implicit within the aims and delivery are the key ideas that:

- All pupils are entitled to a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum
- Developing a close and supportive partnership with parents is essential
- The safeguarding and well-being of pupils is of paramount importance
- Pupils must experience success in their learning in order to develop skills, knowledge and self-esteem.
- Developing every pupil as an individual by promoting independence, confidence, self-esteem and a positive self-image, resilience, aspirations and life-long learning is a priority.

The highest quality of teaching and learning should be consistently promoted.

The objectives of this SEN policy are:

- 1) To ensure that all pupils at the schools receive appropriate teaching and support which takes account of their Special Educational Needs.

- 2) To ensure parents and carers are involved fully in decisions regarding their child's education and provision.
- 3) To ensure that resources available to the schools (including financial, staffing, technical and advisory) are deployed appropriately and effectively to meet children's needs.
- 4) To liaise effectively with all individuals and organisations who have an interest in, or are able to make a positive contribution towards, a child's education.
- 5) To ensure provision of appropriate staff development and training so that staff develop and update their skills in meeting the needs of children with Special Educational Needs.
- 6) To ensure that statutory obligations of the schools are met.

Special needs provision

Admissions

Pupils who come to Torfield and Saxon Mount Schools will normally have:

1. an Education Health Care Plan
2. a range of Special Educational Needs (SEN), identified in their plan, particularly 'autism and associated Communication and Language Difficulties' (ACLD). They may also have identified speech, language and communication needs.
3. Moderate or Severe Learning Difficulties
4. Live in East Sussex especially Hastings and surrounding areas.
5. Below age-related learning levels; working at lower than expected academic levels, although they may have strengths in one or more areas of learning.

Placement decisions are made by the Local Authority, following consultation with the school. New pupils are offered a range of visits as part of the transition process, supported by staff from their existing school and staff at Torfield or Saxon Mount School.

Our SEN provision is reviewed regularly. We are special academies and all of our provision can be described as SEN provision. We distinguish between our 'standard' schools' provision and our 'additional' support provision which involves higher levels of in-class and extra support interventions. We also have an 'enhanced' level of support, which involves provision for particularly vulnerable groups and individual pupils with a higher level of need. If particular levels of support or resources or strategies are identified within the EHCP, e.g. therapy or additional staff support, the Local Authority will need to provide additional funding to pay the cost of these. At both schools there are Additional Support Facility classes and at Saxon Mount there is an Additional Support Team based within the Blue Room, who provide support for behaviour and learning interventions. The Assistant Headteachers at both schools report to the Headteachers, the Executive Headteacher and governors, through the Academy

Advisory Board. The provision described in the SEN policy will contribute to ensuring the needs of all pupils within the trust are met

Organisation

Torfield School

Torfield School is an average sized split site special school for pupils, aged 4 to 11. The Croft Road site accommodates pupils broadly in NC Years 2 - 6, whilst the Early Years Centre, Parker Road, nearly 1 mile away, provides a nurturing learning environment for our youngest pupils from their Reception year to year 1. Occasionally, children may remain at the Early Years Centre for a further period, according to their individual needs.

The school is organised in a carefully structured way that promotes independence, confidence and preparation for transition into the next phase of education and learning. Many of our children learn in very small steps. Teachers regularly assess learning and monitor how much support each child needs.

Class sizes are small and have a high staff ratio. We support children joining our Reception classes, and those who join later in the primary phase, by providing a well-structured transition programme. As children move through the school we provide appropriate levels of support and challenge to extend learning and develop independence. Pupils with the highest level of need at the EYC and at Croft Road are able to access additional support, particularly in relation to speech language and communication difficulties.

Additional support to pupils is provided by a range of staff who work alongside our teaching team. We work with a team of NHS Speech and Language Therapists and Assistants, who are funded by the Local Authority to deliver specific intervention described within a pupil's EHCP. The therapists are responsible for devising and delivering speech and language programmes. Pupils who require other interventions such as Occupational Therapy (as specified in their EHCP or by Sensory Needs Service) may also receive this at school, again provided by staff who are employed by the Local Authority partnership with the NHS.

Saxon Mount School

Saxon Mount School offers provision for pupils aged 11-16 (years 7 – 11). The school is organised into two class groups per year. In year 7, to support with the transition, pupils have the majority of their lessons with their class teacher and their linked TA. As pupils move into year 8, they are taught by subject specialist teachers and are arranged in groups according to ability for Maths, Science and English. This is to prepare them for Key Stage 4 and future accreditations and programs that will support their eventual transition: GCSE, BTEC, Functional Skills, Entry Level or other accredited courses. In Key Stage 4, some option groups are vertically grouped (mixed Y10 and 11 classes). This enables the school to offer as wide a range of accreditations as possible to a much

smaller than typical mainstream KS4 cohort. This has been a successful model, with the range of accreditations available to our pupils being wider than that of many mainstream schools.

Saxon Mount also has four specialist Additional Support (AS) classes as part of our provision. These offer smaller, highly structured classes and higher levels of staff support to the pupils with the highest level of learning and communication needs. These pupils are integrated in to lessons across the school wherever possible, for example, when joining a group following a particular accreditation. This model also enables other pupils in the school who have complex needs to access the available support within some AS classes. We also have provision through our Additional Support team for targeted intervention for additional language and communication support, Literacy support, Maths support, behavioural support, self-esteem, friendship groups, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in-class and withdrawal support for identified groups or individual pupils.

Curriculum

The trust schools offer a broad and balanced curriculum which is based on the National Curriculum, but which is adapted as appropriate to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of all pupils.

Early Years Foundation Stage pupils are taught through discovery based learning:

The areas of learning are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

KS1, 2 and 3 cover programmes of study in:

English

Maths

Science

Computing

Geography

History

RE

DT

Art

Music

PE

PSHE

KS4 pupils follow the core curriculum of accredited subjects with BTEC and GCSE, Functional Skills and ELC qualifications according to pupils' learning levels. Some qualifications offered do not carry performance points (they don't contribute to national performance scores) but nevertheless are relevant to some pupils in terms of preparing them for next stages of education, training or employment.

Provision

Torfield

Learning at Torfield is delivered in carefully planned and differentiated activities and pupils follow:

Our modified Early Years Curriculum

Our modified National Curriculum including PSHE and RSHE

Our adapted Early Development Curriculum (for pupils with higher needs).

We have excellent facilities to support learning, including a range of indoor and outdoor learning environments on two securely fenced sites.

We have good sized classrooms that include plenty of smaller rooms for small group and individual interventions, as well as dedicated specialist areas such as our learning centre and swimming pool. All classrooms are well resourced, with a range of ICT resources, including interactive smartboards in every classroom.

At the Early Years Centre, we have three classrooms, small learning rooms plus indoor and outdoor areas to support learning through play. The Early Years Additional Support facility has a large classroom and two smaller teaching rooms. Covered outdoor learning zones ensure all-year outdoor learning through play can take place. Recently refurbished playgrounds have climbing and sliding equipment and an inset trampoline

At the Croft Road site, there are six classrooms plus an Additional Support facility comprising of a classroom and several smaller teaching spaces. There is also a meeting room at the Croft Road site used for training, visiting school staff, parent meetings and family support training.

Outdoor areas are also well resourced at Croft Road, including a multi-use games area, a nature garden, a "paddock" and a number of small playgrounds that are used for challenging learning and play activities. Newly refurbished playgrounds have climbing equipment and outdoor gym equipment.

Additional laptops and tablets are used throughout the school to support access to ICT. The use of ICT across the curriculum utilises programmes such as Espresso, Education City, Clicker 7 and Purple Mash, which support the independent development of Mathematics and English.

Saxon Mount

Saxon Mount School has a number of specialist teaching facilities, including dedicated rooms for the teaching of food technology, art, design technology, music, Computing and Science. It also has 12 teaching classrooms where lessons are delivered. Four of these are purposely designed AS classes for pupils with higher needs and an additional support classroom (blue room) for additional communication sessions, support with learning, personal development and behaviour and support for pupils who require it at break and lunchtimes.. All classrooms have access to computers for the pupils to use and all classes have interactive whiteboards. Teachers can book additional laptops and iPads to be used for learning activities within their own classroom. All classrooms are linked by phone and computers are networked to allow for access to electronic information. A training room (PDC) is used to support staff CPD as well as provide training and meeting space for visiting staff.

Outside, the school has one hard court all weather flood lit MUGA and one floodlit AstroTurf MUGA, for basketball, football and a range of PE activities. There is also a floodlit adventure play area, a covered and floodlit external gym and a covered outdoor classroom. In addition, the school has a covered outdoor table tennis area and a large playing field with available space for a full-size football pitch, running track or several striking and fielding games areas to be marked out. It also has an allotment where herbs, vegetables and fruit trees are tended by the pupils. The Blue room has a small outdoor space for individual or group activities.

The school is accessible to those with mobility difficulties and access to both floors in the main building is supported by the provision of an internal lift.

Transport

Because of the size of the catchment area and the fact that all pupils have EHCPs, the majority are transported to school by LA funded taxi. Other pupils are brought to school by parents or carers and occasionally, older pupils are able to walk to school independently. In Key stage 4 pupils who live near enough and are able to be safe and can independently travel, are encouraged to use public transport. Saxon Mount works with an 'Independent Travel Trainer' when this service is available, to develop pupil's independence and safety awareness around travelling. Transport for each pupil is reviewed annually as part of the annual review process. Both Torfield and Saxon Mount provide additional transport for pupils who live within the 3-mile radius catchment and who have had difficulties with school attendance in the past. This is as a result of the LA not providing transport to these pupils.

IEPs

At Torfield School, IEPs show the standard educational provision and progress expectations for all children, plus the personalised additional provision some children will receive with targets and progress in these programmes. Additional programmes include sensory plans, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, motor skills, Sensory Circuits and Speech and Language Therapy programmes. Targeted pupils at risk of

underachieving in their core curriculum areas are also given additional curriculum focus programmes.

Torfield IEPs are informed by the child's EHCP. Class teachers write a new IEP every school year, in liaison with the previous class teacher and with advice from Speech and Language Therapists where appropriate. They run from Sept to July. They are reviewed and updated in a Multi-Agency Pupil Progress meeting, at Annual reviews, at Behaviour Working Group meetings and at Parents Evenings. Looked After Children also have their IEPs reviewed at LAC and PEP meetings. Teachers are responsible for these plans and ensure programmes are implemented. As children progress through the school the number of additional programmes they need may reduce. In these cases, this may be indicative that the child no longer requires special school provision and may be considered for a transition to mainstream provision through the Annual Review process.

Children who exhibit behaviour which requires management beyond the usual school behaviour management system have an Individual Behaviour Plan which is written and implemented by the teacher. These are reviewed frequently when first written and then as a minimum 3 times a year. When progress is evident, the plan may be withdrawn. Monitoring is via class team meetings, pupil progress meetings, Behaviour Working Group meetings and Leadership Team monitoring.

At Saxon Mount School all pupils have an Individual Educational Plan which sets out the type of provision the pupil is accessing and their learning progress in relation to that provision. IEPs are evaluated 3 times per year as part of the Multi Agency Pupil Progress Meetings, and adjustments to provision are made based upon identified needs. Progress is also rigorously and systematically monitored throughout the year, using teacher assessments and formal testing, with outcomes shared with all staff. Learning Leaders identify pupils who are at risk of underachievement in their curriculum area and are responsible for providing additional support and interventions.

Risk Assessments are in place for those identified pupils who require additional support and provision, as identified through data analysis. All pupils have a Pupil Profile that identifies specific types of intervention most successful and appropriate for each pupil, and also information regarding a pupil's presentation in times of need and effective strategies to support. These plans are monitored and reviewed through the Multi- Agency Pupil Progress Meetings.

Annual Reviews

The Local authority is responsible for the maintenance and updating of EHCPs. Pupils have a statutory annual review of their EHC plan to which they, their parents/carers, Local Authority caseworkers and any relevant other persons such as social workers are invited. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their views. Parents/carers are also given the opportunity to present and have their views about their child's progress at the school recorded at the Annual Review. The annual review process considers if the EHCP is sufficient in describing the child's needs and the support required to meet these needs.

Other SEN Support

Both schools are committed to developing and maintaining good ASD provision and part of this process would include regularly auditing and reviewing the environment, teaching and learning and behaviour management of all pupils with ASD.

ADHD - some of our pupils are assessed as having ADHD. The school supports the management of this by providing facilities for arranging medication where required and liaising with the medical services as appropriate.

Family Work –Teachers and class teaching assistants have phone contact, email and in some cases may complete a home-school communication book or electronic communication through resources such as Class Dojo. The schools are also able to give support and advice to parents, including signposting Local Authority services, advisory services, out of school services, activities and learning support. As part of the Additional Support Provision, we have safeguarding staff responsible for working very closely with families and other agencies in supporting vulnerable pupils or pupils at risk. Torfield School offers a comprehensive Family Support Programme including training in Autism and associated areas such as Challenging Behaviour and Communication.

Staff Training and Continuous Professional Development

The Senior Leadership Team has responsibility for planning Continuing Professional Development. Staff training is decided by a process of matching information collated from Performance Management meetings, with school led needs as described in the School Development Plan. There is a programme of INSET provision and in addition to this, individual staff members may attend training /CPD sessions as appropriate.

Teaching Assistants are required to undertake relevant training provided by each school. They meet with their line manager during the year to discuss development and training needs. They also participate in the cycle of CPD offered to all staff including C.P., Team Teach and First Aid training. A programme of development and training is offered through regular meetings and INSET.

Links with other agencies

- The Educational Psychologist Service provides statutory services where necessary.
- CAMHS support some pupils and link with key members of staff to share information about the child.
- ESBAS has links with the schools and is available for work with pupils and parents, particularly to support with attendance.
- The schools maintain links with pupils' Social Workers and / or Key Worker, where they have one and with the LAC team including respite care staff.
- A member of the school staff will represent the school at most of the LACs and PEPs for the pupils.
- Saxon Mount maintains links with post 16 providers, careers services and other organisations involved in identifying appropriate pathways for pupils as they leave school.
- Sensory Services links with the schools to support pupils with visual or hearing impairments.
- CITES provide SaLT, PT and OT support as required.
- FISS has provided support for some pupils with significantly higher levels of need and their families and liaises with key staff in the school.
- The schools have access to a Police Liaison Officer who can work closely with the school in supporting targeted pupils and offering advice to school staff.

Parental Links

Parents / carers are welcome to contact and / or visit either school and to discuss any worries or problems.

The schools hold at least 2 parent / carer consultation evenings a year for pupils which are in addition to the Annual Review meeting. Each school also provide additional opportunities to meet teaching and support staff prior to transition. Each school also have staff who can provide information and advice to parents.

Mainstream School Links

Saxon Mount School links closely with feeder primary schools during transition. The school is also a lead school in the East Sussex Careers Hub and offers support to all secondary schools across Sussex with Careers Advice and Guidance for pupils with SEND.

Torfield links with feeder nurseries during transition and feeder primaries where there is a transfer. On occasions, pupils who may be being considered for transition to a mainstream school have opportunities to attend taster sessions. This is dependent on the needs and interests of the pupils involved.

Where possible and appropriate Torfield pupils will participate in events or activities with mainstream pupils e.g. The Big Sing. KS 4 Pupils have also taken part in projects with local schools including business, enterprise groups, work related learning and sporting events and music performances. The schools have also been involved in areas such as providing INSET for mainstream schools for example in training Teaching Assistants or taking part in cross-phase liaison meetings in the local schools cluster group. Torfield has also run ASD training sessions and Saxon Mount have recently delivered ASD Safeguarding training to all of the DSLs in the local authority through the East Sussex safeguarding conference. Occasionally both schools offer training and advice to transport providers.

Saxon Mount School has links with the local FE Colleges and their SEN staff, both through taster courses and by arranging pupil visits prior to transition.

Torfield has links with mainstream schools for moderation and assessment, SENCo networking meetings, plus bespoke training or support.

Transition

Both schools have a thorough process to support transition into the schools, from other feeder schools and nurseries or mid-year. Torfield staff visit pupils in their home or nursery before they start in their Reception Year. Wherever possible all potential pupils are visited in their current school or nursery prior to their placement commencing, Consideration of the pupil's SEN, especially for pupils with ASD is carefully planned for, with the use of photographs and initial visits, before joining the school. Some of our pupils who are identified as especially vulnerable, may well benefit from initial part time integration, before attending full days. Our Additional Support team is also available to provide additional support at this critical phase in a child's schooling, which can include providing pictures, symbols and further visits around the school as well as individual support. At Saxon Mount pupils can have time in the blue room to enhance orientation and reduce anxiety.

Pupil Views

Pupil views are actively sought through questionnaires and at Annual Reviews, plus at LAC/PEP meetings for pupils in care. The School Council also provide opportunities for pupil voice to be meaningfully taken account of.

Data Protection and GDPR

Education Health Care plans are kept securely so that unauthorised persons do not have access to it. EHC plans will not be disclosed without the consent of the child’s parents or the young person, except for specified purposes or in the interests of the child/young person.

(9.211)

See our Data Protection policies for more information.

Evaluation Process

Every year the Senior Leadership Team reviews its policy on SEN. It evaluates the educational needs provision for the pupils and endeavours to identify areas which can be strengthened and improved or developed.

Chair of AAB Date.....

Executive Headteacher..... Date.....

Appendix 1 Social Communication Skills Policy

Appendix 2 Flexibility of Thought Policy

Appendix 1

Social Communication Skills Policy

The Social Communication Skills program is used primarily at Saxon Mount School, due to the nature of the SEN of Torfield pupils, who now access primary based SEN models of language acquisition and development.

Social communication skills are how we use the language skills that we have to communicate with other people.

There are 3 areas:

- 1) Functions (requesting, commenting, protesting, relating news etc.)
- 2) Skills of Conversation/Interaction (looking, listening, turn-taking etc.)
- 3) Awareness of self and others (appearance, interests, feelings etc.)

Each child has access to methods that enhance their social communication skills whether 1:1 with an adult, in a small group or in a large group setting. These methods may include:

- **Proximal Communication** – a parent-child interaction approach (*Potter & Whittaker 01*).
- **Structured Play** sessions (*Sherratt & Peter 02*).
- **Communication through Singing** groups (*Wendy Prevezer*).
- **Social Use of Language Programme** (*S.U.L.P. Wendy Rinaldi*).
- **Social Stories & Comic Strip Conversations** (*Carol Grey*)
- **'Teaching Children with Autism to Mind Read'** (*Howlin, Baron-Cohen & Hadwin '98*)

Speech and Language Therapy helps children improve 3 areas of communication:

- 1) Receptive Language (understanding of language)
- 2) Expressive Language (speaking)
- 3) Social Use of Language - which is divided into:

Some students in the school have age appropriate Receptive Language and Expressive Language skills. On the assessments they score well within normal limits for their age. Some exceptions may be limited vocabulary development (receptive and expressive), difficulties with semantics (word definitions, synonyms and antonyms, both receptive and expressive), and with higher-level understanding (cause/effect relationships, inferences and deductions, understanding of non-literal language such as idioms and metaphors). These students usually demonstrate difficulties with aspects of Social Use of Language. Many pupils with Autism will have difficulty with Social Use of Language.

Examples of skills in this area are given below:

- 3a) Communicative Functions** e.g. using language to give news clearly, to tell a story, to take messages, to instruct effectively, to describe people and to talk about feelings.

3b) Conversational Skills e.g. listening to someone else, taking turns to talk, looking at the person talking, pausing to allow others to follow what you are saying, interrupting appropriately and keeping on the same topic in a discussion.

3c) Awareness of Self and Others e.g. knowing your interests, feelings, strengths, weaknesses and needs (the basis of self-esteem), AND demonstrating an interest in others' interests, feelings, strengths, weaknesses and needs (the basis of friendship strategies/empathy).

At Saxon Mount twice-weekly Social Communication Skills sessions are delivered in the class to work on the areas described above, in addition the Additional Support team and the Additional Support Facility will deliver bespoke sessions for identified groups and individuals. At Torfield School in KS1 and KS2 these sessions are delivered through Talking Together sessions.

The following are some examples of activities used in the group. The targets relate to the Social Communication Skills areas listed:

a) Communicative Functions

b) Conversational Skills

c) Awareness of Self and Others

ACTIVITY	SKILL TARGETED
News	Narrative skills.
Manners	Awareness of self and impact on others.
Multiple Meanings	Higher-level understanding of language; Awareness of others' intentions.
Idioms	Higher-level understanding of language; Awareness of others' intentions.
Group Sort	Teamwork - seeing yourself as part of a group.
Blindfold Games	Giving instructions and listening to instructions; Turn-taking; Awareness of others' needs - can't see what you see etc.
Charades	Conveying a message non-verbally; Looking and turn-taking; Awareness of listeners' needs.

Compliments

Social functions of giving compliments
Awareness of others' feelings;

Wink Murder

Looking and following eye gaze
and acting on it.

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Head of School, who reports to Governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request.

Review date: May 2020
Next review: May 2023

Appendix 2

TORFIELD/SAXON MOUNT FEDERATION

Flexibility of Thought Policy

Introduction

At Saxon Mount and Torfield School we develop pupils' flexibility of thought to support them through transitions and /or changes to routines. We also work with pupils to improve their thinking skills to underpin the development of communication and interaction and social skills.

The aim of this Policy is to ensure a consistency of approach across the schools and to support pupils' learning and understanding.

Objectives

- to develop the flexibility of each pupil's thinking skills
- to improve pupils' self-esteem and independence
- to reduce dependency on prompts from adults and increase independence
- to provide opportunities throughout the day for pupils to make choices and decisions
- to develop each pupil's awareness of his/her ability to think
- to develop each pupil's awareness of his/her ability to solve problems
- to allow pupils to take the lead in some activities
- to develop pupils' concept of self/other awareness

Statement of Equal Opportunities

At both schools thinking skills are taught as an integral part of the curriculum in which we aim to ensure equal opportunities and access for all children and to recognise the needs of children with communication difficulties including autism, pupils with visual or hearing impairment and to provide appropriate resources for both genders

Delivery

A range of strategies are used to support the teaching of flexible thinking skills.

These are outlined in Appendix 1 – Staff guidance.

The teaching of flexible thinking skills also forms part of the teaching for all areas of the curriculum especially Citizenship and PSHE.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Flexibility of Thought forms an integral part of some pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPS). IEP targets are reviewed and set three times per year. Individual behaviour plans

will refer to strategies to reduce rigid thinking as appropriate and are reviewed at least termly. Reviews of Education and HealthCare Plans (EHCPs) will report on Flexibility of Thought where it is an identified need.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored and evaluated by the whole staff and reviewed by the Federation Governing Body.

Reviewed and Federated May 2020
Next review May 2023

Appendix 2a

Staff Guidance

The following strategies support the development of pupils' flexibility of thought.

Making Decisions and use of Choice Boards

Targeted pupils are given opportunities to make choices throughout the day and across the curriculum e.g. choosing activities as rewards, snacks and food at lunchtime, playground activities. For some children making a choice is essential. Some choice boards indicate what is inside a box or cupboard. Some are personalised for specific pupils. Pupils are taught how to use a choice board to help them with decision making. From here pupils are offered opportunities to make spontaneous requests using known motivators.

Pupils with an ASD diagnosis may have a very limited range of preferences. Where necessary, staff use symbols and objects of reference to help pupils make decisions, recognise and achieve goals and earn rewards and be monitored to participate in learning.

Visual Timetables

All classes have a visual timetable. Individual pupils may have personalised timetables. This helps pupils to understand the passing of time and what they have to do throughout the day. Pupils can depend on these timetables and to support them.

It can be upsetting if what is on the timetable does not happen for any reason, e.g. a teacher is sick, a visitor does arrive, swimming is cancelled etc. In order to prepare pupils for the unexpected, we teach strategies to cope with change and respond positively to something unexpected happening.

Social Use of Language Programme

At Torfield and Saxon Mount Sulp is used to support pupils' understanding of change and social expectations. In addition, citizenship time gives pupils opportunities to evaluate and plan for changes.

Pupils at Torfield and Saxon Mount School have the unknown session called “?” time. This is an opportunity to practise managing something unexpected. In AS4 this is referred to as ‘independent learning time’ (ILT) where the emphasis is on the pupils responding to the situation and organising themselves and the resources they need.

Taking a break

At Torfield School, staff would direct a pupil to a calming activity in order to reduce anxiety.

Pupils are encouraged to develop self-help strategies for coping with anxieties. Teaching pupils to request 'Time Out' when they are feeling stressed can prevent the manifestation of aggressive behaviours. In this way the pupil is in control of when s/he takes "Time Out" and this supports their ability to manage their own behaviour.

Self/Other Awareness

Pupils are taught to develop these skills in regular social use of language programme activities and in PSHE and Citizenship lessons. These teach pupils to understand that they may have similar likes and dislikes to other pupils in their groups. They are taught to understand how to recognise emotions in themselves and others.

Generalisation and transfer of skills

To address the difficulties that pupils with ASD have in generalisation, they are taught to transfer skills within a variety of contexts and situations. Trips out of school are encouraged so that the pupils experience a range of contexts in which to learn within the wider learning environment.

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Head of School, who reports to Governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request.

Reviewed and Federated May 2020
Next review May 2023