Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties Policy (SEN)

Holme Court School Dorset

September 2026

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1. Introduction

Holme Court School Dorset is an independent specialist school providing education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

All pupils attending the School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), with placements commissioned and funded by their placing local authority.

The School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment in which every pupil is valued, understood and encouraged to achieve their potential.

We recognise that pupils have different strengths, abilities, experiences and needs. Our approach places the individual pupil at the centre of their education, ensuring that teaching, support and interventions are tailored to their needs and informed by their EHCP.

We work closely with pupils, parents, local authorities and relevant professionals to deliver high-quality specialist education and support pupils' academic, social, emotional and personal development.

This policy sets out how the School identifies and responds to individual needs, delivers EHCP provision, monitors progress and works collaboratively to secure positive outcomes for all pupils.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide high-quality, individualised education that enables every pupil to achieve their potential.
- Ensure that the special educational provision specified in each pupil's EHCP is understood, planned, delivered and reviewed.
- Promote an inclusive, supportive environment in which pupils feel safe, respected and valued.
- Ensure that teaching and learning are appropriately adapted to reflect individual needs and abilities.
- Support pupils' academic progress alongside their communication, independence, emotional wellbeing and social development.
- Work collaboratively with parents, carers, local authorities and external professionals.
- Ensure that pupils are actively involved in decisions about their education and support, wherever possible.
- Identify changes in pupils' needs promptly and respond appropriately.
- Promote independence, confidence and preparation for the next stage of education and adulthood.

- Ensure that staff have the appropriate knowledge, training and support to meet pupils' needs effectively.

3. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been developed with reference to the following legislation and statutory guidance, as applicable:

Legislation

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 1996
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, as amended
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

Statutory and government guidance

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- High Needs Funding Operational Guide (current edition)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions, where applicable
- Relevant Department for Education guidance on independent schools and special educational provision

This policy should be read alongside the School's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

- Equality and Accessibility Policies
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection and Records Management Policies

Other relevant policies and procedures will be applied where appropriate.

4. School Provision and Pupil Needs

Holme Court School Dorset provides specialist education for pupils aged 7-16 with identified special educational needs and disabilities.

The School's provision is designed to support pupils whose needs may include one or more of the following:

- Communication and interaction needs, including autism and speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Cognition and learning needs, including specific and moderate learning difficulties.
- Social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Sensory and/or physical needs.
- Associated developmental, emotional or learning difficulties.

The School recognises that many pupils have needs across more than one area and that these may change over time.

Provision is therefore based on each pupil's individual profile, EHCP and identified outcomes, rather than diagnosis alone.

The School's specific offer, including any specialist facilities, therapeutic services, staffing arrangements and age-related provision, is outlined in its Admissions Policy and School Provision Statement.

5. Admissions and Initial Assessment

All prospective pupils must have an EHCP, and admission is considered in accordance with the School's Admissions Policy.

Before confirming a placement, the School will review relevant information to establish whether it can meet the pupil's identified needs.

This may include:

- The pupil's current EHCP.
- Educational psychologist reports and other specialist assessments.
- Previous school reports and progress information.
- Relevant therapeutic, medical or professional reports.
- Information from parents and carers.
- Discussions with the placing local authority.
- Observations, visits or assessments where appropriate.
- The pupil's own views and preferences, where these can be obtained.

The School will consider the provision required, its ability to deliver that provision, and any reasonable adjustments necessary to support the pupil.

Following admission, an initial assessment period will establish the pupil's starting points across relevant areas of development.

This may include academic achievement, communication, social interaction, emotional wellbeing, independence, sensory needs and physical development.

Information gathered during this period will inform the pupil's individual learning plan and support arrangements.

6. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Every pupil attending the School has an EHCP, which forms the foundation of their individual educational provision.

The School will ensure that relevant staff understand each pupil's identified needs, intended outcomes and the provision required to support them.

Particular attention will be given to:

- **Section B:** The pupil's special educational needs.
- **Section E:** The outcomes the pupil is expected to achieve.
- **Section F:** The special educational provision required to meet those needs and support the identified outcomes.

Relevant health and social care information and provision, including Sections C, D, G and H, will also be considered where appropriate.

The School will translate the provision specified in the EHCP into practical arrangements within the pupil's education programme.

This may include specialist teaching, adapted learning resources, targeted interventions, therapeutic input, communication strategies, individual support or environmental adjustments.

The SENCO will oversee the implementation of EHCP provision, working with teachers, support staff, therapists and other relevant professionals.

The School recognises that the placing local authority holds the statutory responsibility for securing the special educational provision specified in Section F of the EHCP.

The School will work collaboratively with the local authority to deliver the agreed provision and will promptly raise any concerns about its implementation or suitability.

7. Individual Learning Plans

Each pupil will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), or equivalent individual learning plan, which supports the delivery of their EHCP.

The plan will identify:

- The pupil's strengths and areas of need.
- Relevant EHCP outcomes.
- Short-term, measurable learning and developmental targets.
- Teaching approaches and adaptations.
- Specialist interventions and support arrangements.
- Strategies for communication, emotional regulation and independence, where relevant.
- Responsibilities for delivering and monitoring provision.
- Arrangements and timescales for reviewing progress.

Individual plans will be developed collaboratively by teaching staff, the SENCO and relevant specialists, with contributions from the pupil and their parents or carers.

Targets will be reviewed at least termly and updated to reflect progress, emerging needs and professional recommendations.

IEPs are intended to support the delivery of EHCPs and do not replace or amend the statutory provisions contained within them.

8. Teaching and Access to the Curriculum

The School is committed to providing a broad, balanced and appropriately adapted curriculum that reflects pupils' ages, abilities, interests and individual needs.

High-quality specialist teaching is central to the School's approach.

Teaching staff are responsible for planning and delivering learning experiences that enable pupils to access the curriculum and make meaningful progress.

Depending on individual needs, approaches may include:

- Adapted teaching materials and resources.
- Structured and multisensory teaching.
- Visual supports and communication aids.
- Assistive technology.
- Individual or small-group interventions.
- Practical and experiential learning.
- Additional processing time and repetition.
- Adapted classroom environments.
- Sensory and movement breaks.
- Individual strategies to support concentration, organisation and emotional regulation.

The School will seek to ensure pupils can participate in the wider life of the school, including educational visits, enrichment activities and social opportunities, with appropriate support and reasonable adjustments.

Curriculum pathways and assessment arrangements will be tailored to pupils' needs while maintaining appropriate expectations and opportunities for progression.

Further information is contained within the School's Curriculum and Assessment Policies.

9. Specialist and Therapeutic Provision

The School recognises that some pupils require specialist or therapeutic support to access education and achieve their EHCP outcomes.

Where specified in an EHCP or otherwise agreed as part of a pupil's provision, this may include:

- Speech and language therapy.
- Occupational therapy.
- Physiotherapy.
- Educational psychology.
- Specialist learning interventions.
- Emotional wellbeing and therapeutic support.
- Communication, sensory or behavioural support.

Provision will depend on the individual pupil's assessed needs and the services available or commissioned for that pupil.

The School will seek to integrate relevant professional recommendations into everyday teaching and learning.

Where specialist practitioners are involved, they will work collaboratively with teaching and support staff to promote consistency and reinforce strategies across the school day.

The School will monitor the effectiveness of specialist interventions and review their impact on pupil progress.

Where additional or different specialist support is considered necessary, this will be discussed with parents, relevant professionals and the placing local authority in accordance with the arrangements outlined in Section 13.

10. Assessment, Monitoring and Progress

Pupil progress will be monitored regularly using a combination of formal and informal assessment.

Assessment will be appropriate to the pupil's individual needs and may include:

- Baseline and ongoing academic assessments.
- Progress against IEP targets.
- Progress towards EHCP outcomes.
- Teacher observations and work samples.
- Communication and interaction assessments.
- Social and emotional development.
- Independence and life skills.
- Specialist and therapeutic assessments.
- Pupil feedback and parental observations.

The School recognises that progress may be demonstrated in different ways and is not limited to academic attainment.

For some pupils, significant progress may include improved communication, confidence, emotional regulation, independence, engagement or social participation.

Teachers and the SENCO will review progress at least termly to identify achievements, barriers to learning and any changes required to teaching or support.

Where a pupil is not making expected progress, staff will consider the effectiveness of existing strategies and identify appropriate next steps.

The impact of interventions and provision will be evaluated to ensure that support remains appropriate and purposeful.

11. Pupil Voice and Parental Engagement

The School recognises that pupils and their parents or carers play an essential role in planning and reviewing educational provision.

We are committed to maintaining positive and constructive relationships with families and ensuring that their knowledge and understanding of their child informs our approach.

Parents will be involved through:

- Admissions and initial assessment discussions.
- Regular communication about progress and wellbeing.
- Individual learning plan reviews.
- Parent consultation meetings.
- EHCP annual reviews.
- Discussions concerning changes in needs or provision.

Pupils will be encouraged and supported to share their views about their learning, support, aspirations and experiences.

Appropriate communication methods will be used to ensure that pupils can contribute meaningfully, including those with communication difficulties.

The School will ensure that pupils' views are reflected in individual planning and review processes wherever possible.

12. EHCP Annual Reviews

The School will work with the placing local authority to support the statutory annual review of each pupil's EHCP.

Reviews will be undertaken at least annually, with more frequent arrangements where required by legislation or individual circumstances.

The purpose of the review is to consider:

- The pupil's progress towards EHCP outcomes.
- The effectiveness and suitability of current provision.
- The pupil's strengths, achievements and changing needs.
- The views of the pupil, parents and relevant professionals.
- Whether existing outcomes remain appropriate.
- Whether any changes to the EHCP or provision are necessary.
- Future educational pathways and transition arrangements.

The School will gather relevant information and professional contributions, arrange or support review meetings in accordance with statutory requirements and provide the necessary documentation to the local authority.

The local authority is responsible for decisions about maintaining, amending or ceasing the EHCP.

Where changes are recommended, the School will work with the local authority and parents to support the statutory process.

The School may request an earlier review where there are significant changes in the pupil's needs, progress, circumstances or required provision.

13. Reviewing Provision and Additional Support

All pupils attending the School have an EHCP, and their placement is funded by a local authority.

The School is committed to delivering the provision specified in each pupil's EHCP and ensuring that appropriate support is in place to meet their individual needs.

Pupils' progress and the effectiveness of their provision are monitored regularly through individual learning plans, assessments, staff observations and input from relevant professionals.

Where a pupil's needs change, or where it becomes apparent that additional or different provision may be required, the School will work collaboratively with parents, the local authority and relevant professionals to review the pupil's needs and identify appropriate next steps.

Any proposed changes to provision, including those with additional funding implications, will be discussed with the local authority through the EHCP annual review process or an earlier review where appropriate.

The School will provide supporting evidence, including assessments, professional recommendations and records of progress, to inform these discussions.

Where changes to an EHCP are required, these will be considered through the statutory review and amendment process.

Where an urgent need arises, the School will take appropriate steps to safeguard and support the pupil and will not defer necessary action solely until the next scheduled annual review.

The School will continue to work with the local authority and parents to ensure that educational needs are appropriately supported while any proposed changes are considered.

14. Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare

The School recognises that pupils with SEND may experience additional vulnerabilities and safeguarding challenges.

All staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff must remain alert to the possibility that:

- Communication difficulties may affect a pupil's ability to disclose concerns.
- Signs of abuse or neglect may be incorrectly attributed to a pupil's disability or SEND.
- Pupils with SEND may be particularly vulnerable to bullying, exploitation or abuse.
- Changes in behaviour or emotional presentation may indicate underlying distress or safeguarding concerns.
- Some pupils may require additional support to communicate concerns or seek help.

Staff will receive relevant safeguarding training and must report concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The School will ensure that appropriate individual risk assessments and support arrangements are in place where necessary.

All safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance and the School's safeguarding procedures.

15. Social, Emotional and Mental Health

The School recognises the importance of emotional wellbeing in enabling pupils to learn, develop positive relationships and achieve their potential.

Support for social, emotional and mental health will be embedded within the School's pastoral approach and wider curriculum.

Depending on individual needs, support may include:

- Predictable routines and supportive learning environments.
- Emotional regulation strategies.
- Social skills and relationship development.
- Positive behaviour support.
- Access to trusted adults and pastoral support.
- Targeted interventions and specialist advice.
- Individual plans to support emotional wellbeing.

Staff will seek to understand the underlying causes of distress or behaviour and respond in a supportive, proportionate and individualised manner.

Where concerns arise about a pupil's mental health, the School will work with parents and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support and referrals.

Any immediate safeguarding or welfare concerns will be addressed through the School's established procedures.

16. Equality, Inclusion and Accessibility

The School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that pupils with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the School will consider and implement reasonable adjustments to support disabled pupils' access to education, facilities and school activities.

Adjustments may relate to:

- Teaching approaches and learning materials.
- Communication methods.
- Classroom environments.
- Equipment and assistive technology.
- School routines and activities.
- Assessment arrangements.
- Access to wider educational opportunities.

The School will review barriers to access and consider appropriate measures to remove or reduce them.

Individual needs will be considered alongside the School's accessibility arrangements and relevant health and safety requirements.

The School recognises that speaking English as an additional language is not, in itself, a special educational need. Where a pupil has both SEND and English as an additional language, appropriate consideration will be given to both areas.

17. Working with External Professionals and Agencies

The School recognises that effective specialist education often requires a coordinated, multi-agency approach.

Where appropriate, the School will work with:

- Placing local authorities and SEND case officers.
- Educational psychologists.
- Speech and language therapists.
- Occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

- Health professionals and specialist services.
- Children's social care.
- Mental health services.
- Other education providers and transition services.

The SENCO or designated member of staff will coordinate communication and ensure relevant professional advice is considered in individual planning.

Information will be shared lawfully and appropriately, in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

Professional recommendations will be reviewed alongside the pupil's EHCP, individual needs and existing provision.

18. Transition and Preparation for Adulthood

The School recognises that transitions can be particularly challenging for pupils with SEND and will plan carefully to support successful movement between classes, educational stages and settings.

Transition arrangements will be individualised and may include:

- Visits and familiarisation activities.
- Sharing relevant information with receiving staff or settings.
- Communication with parents and professionals.
- Individual transition plans.
- Visual resources and preparation activities.
- Additional support for pupils experiencing anxiety or uncertainty.

For older pupils, preparation for adulthood will be incorporated into educational planning and EHCP reviews, as age-appropriate.

This may include developing:

- Independence and daily living skills.
- Communication and social confidence.
- Community participation.
- Careers awareness and employability skills.
- Further education and training pathways.
- Self-advocacy and decision-making skills.

The School will work with pupils, parents, local authorities and receiving providers to support positive and well-planned transitions.

19. Roles and Responsibilities

19.1 Proprietor / Governing Body

The Proprietor has overall responsibility for ensuring that the School meets its statutory and regulatory responsibilities.

The Proprietor will:

- Oversee the implementation and review of this policy.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision.
- Ensure appropriate leadership, staffing and resources are in place.
- Promote compliance with the Independent School Standards and relevant legislation.

19.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of education within the School.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that SEND provision is appropriately managed and monitored.
- Work with the SENCO to oversee EHCP implementation.
- Ensure that staff have appropriate training and support.
- Maintain effective communication with the proprietor, parents and local authorities.
- Monitor the quality of teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.

19.3 SENCO / SEND Lead

The SENCO is responsible for coordinating SEND provision across the School.

Responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the implementation of pupils' EHCPs.
- Coordinating individual learning plans and reviews.
- Monitoring progress and the effectiveness of interventions.
- Supporting and advising teaching and support staff.
- Liaising with parents, local authorities and external professionals.
- Coordinating EHCP annual review arrangements.

- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date SEND records.
- Identifying where additional or different provision may be required.
- Supporting school improvement and staff development.

19.4 Teaching Staff

Teachers are responsible for the progress and development of the pupils they teach.

They will:

- Understand and implement relevant EHCP provision and individual plans.
- Adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs.
- Monitor and assess progress.
- Work collaboratively with support staff and specialists.
- Contribute to reviews and professional discussions.
- Maintain appropriate records and communicate concerns promptly.

19.5 Support Staff and Specialist Practitioners

Support staff and specialist practitioners contribute to the delivery of individual provision under the direction of relevant school leaders and professionals.

They will:

- Implement agreed strategies and interventions.
- Support pupils' learning, development and independence.
- Contribute observations and information to assessments and reviews.
- Work collaboratively with teachers and other professionals.
- Follow relevant policies, procedures and safeguarding requirements.

20. Staff Training and Professional Development

The School is committed to ensuring that staff have the knowledge and skills required to support pupils effectively.

All staff will receive appropriate induction and ongoing professional development relevant to their roles and the needs of the pupil population.

Training may include:

- Understanding SEND and individual pupil needs.

- EHCPs and individual learning planning.
- Specialist teaching approaches.
- Autism and communication needs.
- Sensory processing and regulation.
- Social, emotional and mental health.
- Positive behaviour support.
- Safeguarding pupils with SEND.
- Relevant medical and therapeutic needs.
- Assistive technology and accessibility.

The School will review training needs regularly and maintain appropriate training records.

21. Monitoring and Evaluation of Provision

The School will evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its SEND provision as part of its ongoing self-evaluation and improvement processes.

This will include consideration of:

- Pupil progress towards EHCP outcomes.
- Progress against individual learning targets.
- The quality and effectiveness of teaching.
- The impact of specialist interventions.
- Pupil attendance, engagement and wellbeing.
- Feedback from pupils and parents.
- Professional and local authority feedback.
- Findings from internal monitoring, assessment and reviews.

The Headteacher and SENCO will use this information to identify strengths, areas for development and priorities for school improvement.

The Proprietor will receive appropriate oversight information to support accountability and continuous improvement.

22. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

The School will maintain accurate and up-to-date records relating to each pupil's special educational needs and provision.

Records may include:

- Current and previous EHCPs.
- Individual education plans.
- Assessment and progress information.
- Professional reports.
- EHCP review documentation.
- Records of interventions and specialist support.
- Relevant communications with parents and local authorities.

Information will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised individuals in accordance with the School's Data Protection and Records Management Policies.

Records will be retained and shared in accordance with applicable legal requirements and statutory guidance.

23. Complaints, Policy Monitoring and Review

Parents and carers who have concerns about their child's SEND provision are encouraged to raise these with the class teacher, SENCO or Headteacher in the first instance.

Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, parents may use the School's published Complaints Procedure.

Concerns relating to the content of an EHCP, local authority decisions or statutory SEND processes may need to be addressed directly with the responsible local authority through the relevant statutory procedures.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school provision make this necessary.

The Headteacher and SENCO will be responsible for reviewing the policy and recommending amendments to the Proprietor for approval.