

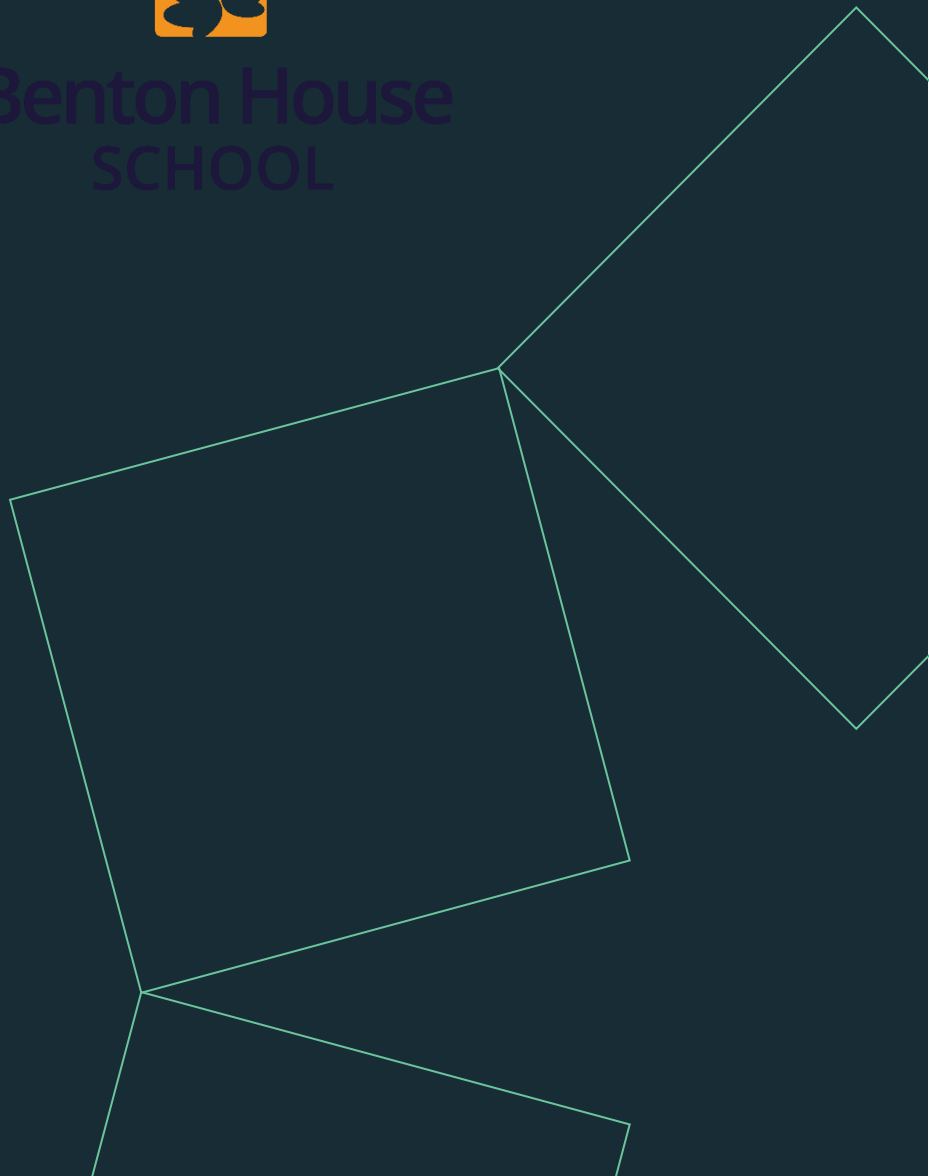


**OFG**  
Education

# SEND POLICY



**Benton House**  
SCHOOL





## **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEED AND DISABILITY (SEND) POLICY**

### **1. Our vision**

At Benton House School, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and aspirational environment where every pupil is supported to achieve their full potential. We place safeguarding, wellbeing and inclusion at the heart of all we do, ensuring pupils feel secure, respected and valued.

Our curriculum and provision are designed to be broad, balanced and stimulating, enabling pupils to make progress academically while also developing socially, emotionally and personally. We foster resilience, independence and a love of learning, preparing pupils for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

Our ethos is underpinned by the values of **Curiosity, Ambition, Respect and Empathy**. Through positive relationships, high expectations and nurturing principles, we ensure that every pupil can succeed, contribute and thrive in a caring and inclusive community. All Benton House School policies are grounded in this vision.

### **Introduction and scope**

Benton House School is an independent specialist school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, including autistic pupils. The school is registered by the Department for Education to admit up to 60 pupils aged 5-14.

Every pupil at Benton House School has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, and every pupil is therefore on the school's SEND register. Many pupils also have additional needs across more than one of the four broad areas of need described in section 7.

The school is not included on the list of independent special schools approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, the proprietor and the governing body. It sets out how the school identifies, assesses, provides for and reviews the special educational needs of its pupils, and how it works with families and other agencies to do so.

### **Legislation and guidance**

This policy has been written with reference to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3



- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, January 2015)
- Equality Act 2010, including the reasonable adjustments duty and the accessibility planning duty in Schedule 10
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Keeping children safe in education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026)
- Working together to safeguard children 2023
- Children Act 1989
- Care Act 2014
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, 2015)
- Use of reasonable force in schools (DfE, 2013)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 remains the statutory framework. The government's February 2026 schools' white paper, Every Child Achieving and Thriving, proposes significant reform to the SEND system; these proposals are not yet law. Section 25 sets out how the school will respond as reforms progress.

## **Aims and objectives**

Benton House School aims to be an inclusive school that values equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, attainment or background. We pay particular attention to:

- girls and boys;
- pupils from minority ethnic and faith groups;
- pupils learning English as an additional language;
- pupils who are looked after or previously looked after;
- pupils with additional medical needs or disabilities;
- more able pupils; and
- pupils at risk of disengagement, suspension or exclusion.

We keep our practice under review by asking: do all our pupils achieve as much as they can; are there differences in outcomes between groups; what are we doing for pupils we know are not achieving their best; and are our actions effective?

The aims of this policy are to:

- create an environment that meets the special educational needs of each pupil;
- identify, assess and provide for each pupil's needs from the point of admission;
- secure the outcomes and provision set out in each pupil's EHC plan;



- ensure all pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum, adapted to their needs;
- set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of the proprietor, leaders and staff;
- ensure pupils with SEND take as full a part as possible in all school activities;
- keep parents and carers fully informed and involved in decisions about their child;
- ensure pupils are involved in decisions about their own support; and
- prepare pupils for their next stage of education and for adulthood.

## **Definitions**

### **1.1 Special educational needs**

Under section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014, a child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

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

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children of the same age by mainstream schools.

### **1.2 Disability**

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have 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. 'Long-term' means a year or more; 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial. This includes sensory impairments and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and epilepsy. Not every disabled pupil has SEN, but there is significant overlap, and the school's duties under the Equality Act apply to every disabled pupil.

## **Educational inclusion and adaptive teaching**

We recognise that pupils have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations, require different strategies for learning, and acquire, assimilate and

communicate information at different rates. Teachers use **adaptive teaching** to respond to these differences, planning so that every pupil can access the curriculum and make progress. For some pupils, content from earlier key stages, or elements of the early years curriculum, is more appropriate.

Teachers respond to pupils' needs by:

- providing support for communication, language and literacy, including pre-teaching of key vocabulary;
- using visual cues, multi-sensory approaches and regular recap and retrieval of prior learning;
- planning for full participation in learning, including physical and practical activities, with reasonable adjustments where needed;
- helping pupils to regulate their emotions and behaviour so they can learn safely and effectively, using trauma-informed and relational approaches;
- working with the clinical team to deliver whole-school and targeted interventions, such as social skills and nurture groups; and
- setting ambitious, achievable targets drawn from each pupil's EHC plan.

Staff ensure that pupils feel secure and know their contributions are valued; appreciate and respect difference; take responsibility for their own actions; are taught in groupings that allow them to experience success; learn from materials that reflect a range of backgrounds without stereotyping; and are encouraged to participate fully regardless of disability or medical need.

## The four broad areas of need

The SEND Code of Practice describes four broad areas of need. These are not rigid categories: most pupils at Benton House have needs across more than one area, and provision is planned around the individual rather than a label.

| Area of need                        | Examples in our cohort                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Communication and interaction       | Speech, language and communication needs; autism; social communication difficulties                                                        |
| Cognition and learning              | Gaps in learning following disrupted education; specific learning difficulties; processing difficulties                                    |
| Social, emotional and mental health | Anxiety, including demand-avoidant profiles; trauma and attachment needs; emotionally based school avoidance; difficulties with regulation |
| Sensory and/or physical             | Sensory processing differences; coordination and mobility needs; hypermobility; physical and medical conditions                            |



## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **1.3 The proprietor and governing body**

- ensure the school meets the Independent School Standards and its duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- hold the headteacher to account for the quality of SEND provision and the outcomes pupils achieve;
- ensure an accessibility plan is in place, implemented and reviewed;
- ensure there is a suitably qualified and experienced SENDCo with sufficient time to carry out the role; and
- approve and review this policy.

### **1.4 The headteacher**

- has day-to-day responsibility for all aspects of the school, including SEND provision;
- works closely with the SENDCo and clinical team to ensure EHC plan provision is delivered;
- keeps the proprietor and governing body informed about SEND provision and outcomes;
- responds to consultations from local authorities under section 39 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (see section 9); and
- ensures the schoolwork's in partnership with parents and carers.

### **1.5 The SENDCo**

The SENDCo is **Mrs Worthington**, who can be contacted via the school office on 01913919153 or at [Kathryn.worthington@bentnhouseschool.co.uk](mailto:Kathryn.worthington@bentnhouseschool.co.uk)

The SENDCo:

- oversees the day-to-day operation of this policy and co-ordinates provision for pupils;
- leads the graduated approach and the planning and review of individual provision;
- advises and supports teachers and support staff, and contributes to staff training;
- maintains SEND records and provision maps;
- co-ordinates EHC plan annual reviews and liaises with local authorities; and
- liaises with parents and carers, health, social care and other agencies.

### **1.6 The clinical team**

The school's clinical team is led by the Lead Clinician, Mr Venus, and includes a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist and a therapies



assistant. The team assesses pupils' needs, contributes to planning and review, delivers therapeutic and targeted interventions, and advises staff on strategies such as sensory plans.

### **1.7 Teachers and support staff**

Every teacher is responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. Teachers and support staff:

- know and follow the school's procedures for identifying, assessing and providing for pupils with SEND;
- plan and deliver adaptive teaching that addresses each pupil's targets;
- work with the SENDCo and clinical team to review progress and adjust provision;
- keep the SENDCo informed about pupils' progress and any emerging needs; and
- build constructive relationships with parents and carers.

### **1.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The DSL (Brian Tweddle) ensures that the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND are understood and acted on in the school's safeguarding arrangements (see section 19).

## **Admissions and consultations**

The school's admissions arrangements do not discriminate against pupils with SEND or disabilities and have due regard to the Equality Act 2010. Places are normally offered to pupils who have an EHC plan naming, or proposing to name, Benton House School.

When a local authority consults the school the headteacher and SENDCo consider the draft or amended EHC plan in full and respond in writing within the timescale requested, normally less than two days. Where the school concludes it cannot meet a pupil's needs, it states the specific grounds, with reference to the provision in the plan, the school's environment and the efficient education of other pupils. Full details are set out in the school's Admissions Policy

## **Identifying and assessing needs**

Because every pupil arrives with an EHC plan, identification at Benton House focuses on building an accurate, current picture of each pupil's needs on entry, and on identifying needs that emerge or change over time. On admission, the SENDCo and clinical team draw on:



- the EHC plan and the professional advice that informed it;
- records and assessments from previous schools or settings;
- information from parents, carers and, where relevant, social workers and the virtual school;
- the pupil's own views about their strengths and difficulties;
- baseline assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and communication; and
- observation and assessment by teachers and the clinical team.

Where a pupil's needs appear to have changed significantly, the SENDCo will discuss this with parents and carers and may ask the local authority to bring forward the annual review.

## The graduated approach

The school follows the graduated approach set out in the SEND Code of Practice: a continuous four-part cycle through which provision is refined as the school learns more about each pupil and what works for them.

| Stage  | What happens at Benton House                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assess | Teachers, the SENDCo and the clinical team analyse the pupil's needs using assessment data, observation, EHC plan outcomes and the views of the pupil and their family.                               |
| Plan   | Staff agree, with the pupil and family, the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, the expected impact, and a date for review. These are recorded in the pupil's individual plan. |
| Do     | The class teacher remains responsible for the pupil's day-to-day learning, working with teaching assistants and the clinical team to deliver the agreed provision.                                    |
| Review | The effectiveness of the support and its impact on progress are reviewed on the agreed date, and the cycle begins again with any changes needed.                                                      |

## Individual planning and provision mapping

Each pupil has an individual plan, developed with the pupil and their parents or carers, which translates the outcomes in their EHC plan into shorter-term targets. Individual plans include:

- SMART targets linked to the outcomes in the EHC plan;



- strategies for the pupil and for staff;
- the provision to be made, including any therapeutic input;
- a date for review; and
- success criteria.

Individual plans are reviewed formally each term, and informally through pupil progress meetings, multi-disciplinary team meetings and daily communication between staff. Where a pupil is looked after, reviews are aligned with their Personal Education Plan. Each pupil also has a one-page profile or pupil passport, written with them, setting out their strengths, needs and how they prefer to be supported.

A provision map records how each pupil's EHC plan provision is delivered across the school day. It is used both to plan staffing and as a monitoring tool to check that specified provision is being delivered.

## **Monitoring progress**

Pupils' progress is monitored through half-termly assessment, pupil progress meetings, the review of individual plans and progress towards EHC plan outcomes. Given the gaps in learning many pupils have on entry, progress is judged against each pupil's starting point. We consider progress to be adequate where it:

- closes, or prevents the widening of, the gap between the pupil and their peers;
- matches or improves on the pupil's previous rate of progress;
- secures fuller access to the curriculum;
- shows improvement in independence, social and personal skills; and
- shows improvement in regulation, behaviour and engagement with learning.

Where progress is less than expected, the graduated approach is used to adjust provision, and the SENDCo may seek additional specialist advice.

## **Requests for an EHC needs assessment**

Every pupil currently at Benton House has an EHC plan. This section applies if a pupil is ever admitted without one, or is awaiting one.

A request for an EHC needs assessment can be made to the local authority by a pupil's parent, by a young person aged 16 to 25, or by the school. Others, such as health or social care professionals, may bring a child to the local authority's attention. The local authority must carry out an assessment where the child has or may have special educational needs, and it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with an EHC plan.

Following an assessment, the local authority issues an EHC plan where it is necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with a plan. When the school makes or supports a request, it will provide:

- the action taken through the graduated approach, and its outcomes;
- records of reviews and the pupil's progress;
- relevant health and medical information;
- assessments of attainment, including literacy and numeracy;
- advice from the clinical team, educational psychologist and other specialists;
- the views of parents, carers and the pupil; and
- information from social care and any other professionals involved.

## Annual reviews of EHC plans

Every EHC plan must be reviewed at least once every 12 months. Where the local authority requires the school to arrange the review, the SENDCo will organise it in line with the SEND Regulations 2014:

| Requirement                                                    | Timescale                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Review completed                                               | Within 12 months of the plan being issued or last reviewed |
| Invitations sent to all participants                           | At least two weeks before the meeting                      |
| Advice and information circulated                              | At least two weeks before the meeting                      |
| Review report sent to the local authority and all participants | Within two weeks of the meeting                            |
| Local authority decision to maintain, amend or cease the plan  | Within four weeks of the meeting                           |
| Plan amended before a transfer between school phases           | By 15 February in the year of transfer                     |
| Plan amended before a transfer to post-16 education            | By 31 March in the year of transfer                        |

Participants invited include the pupil's parents or carers, the pupil (supported to contribute in a way that suits them), the class teacher, a local authority representative, health and social care professionals involved, and anyone else the local authority or school considers appropriate. For looked-after pupils, the virtual school is invited.



The review considers progress towards the outcomes in the plan, whether those outcomes remain appropriate, whether the provision is being delivered and is effective, and whether the plan should be maintained, amended or ceased. The review report sets out any recommended amendments. The local authority, not the school, decides whether to maintain, amend or cease the plan.

## **Preparing for adulthood and transition**

The annual review in Year 9, reviews include a focus on preparing for adulthood: higher education or employment, independent living, participating in society, and being healthy. The school's careers programme, which is linked to the academic curriculum and delivered across all ages, supports this work.

Transitions are planned carefully. For pupils joining the school, this includes phased starts, visits and early relationship-building with key adults. For pupils moving between classes or leaving the school, it includes early liaison with the receiving setting, sharing of information with consent, and familiarisation visits.

## **Looked-after and previously looked-after pupils**

The school works closely with virtual school heads and social workers to ensure that the Personal Education Plan and the EHC plan for each looked-after pupil are aligned, and that reviews are co-ordinated where possible to avoid duplication for the pupil and their carers.

## **Medical needs and accessibility**

Pupils with medical conditions are supported in line with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, including through individual healthcare plans where appropriate. Where a pupil also has SEN, their healthcare plan is co-ordinated with their EHC plan.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the school must make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, and must not treat disabled pupils less favourably. The school maintains an accessibility plan setting out how it will increase disabled pupils' access to the curriculum, improve the physical environment, and improve the availability of information. The accessibility plan is reviewed annually and is available on request and on the school website.

## **Safeguarding pupils with SEND**



Children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges, both online and offline. In line with Keeping children safe in education 2026, staff recognise that barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in pupils with SEND, including:

- assuming that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood or injury, relate to the pupil's disability without further exploration;
- pupils being more prone to peer group isolation, bullying and prejudice-based harm;
- the potential for pupils to be disproportionately affected by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

Staff act on any concern without delay in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The DSL and SENDCo work together so that each pupil's communication needs are understood and they have a trusted way to raise concerns.

## **Behaviour, regulation and reasonable force**

Behaviour at Benton House is understood as communication. Staff use relational, trauma-informed approaches to understand the function of a pupil's behaviour and to support regulation. Individual child support plans, informed by the clinical team, set out each pupil's triggers, early warning signs and the strategies that help them.

Restrictive physical intervention is used only as a last resort, by trained staff, where it is reasonable, proportionate and necessary, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and the DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force. Every incident is recorded, parents and carers are informed, and the incident is debriefed with the pupil and staff. Data is analysed half-termly to reduce the use of restrictive practice over time.

## **Partnership with parents and carers**

Parents and carers know their children best, and their views are central to every decision we make. We involve parents and carers in assessing their child's needs, setting and reviewing targets, and planning transitions, and we keep them informed about their child's progress and wellbeing through regular contact, reviews and consultation meetings.

Parents and carers can contact their child's class teacher, the SENDCo or the Lead Clinician at any time. The school also holds regular coffee mornings and parental engagement sessions.



Every local authority provides a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), which offers free, impartial and confidential advice to parents, carers and young people. The school will provide contact details for the SENDIASS of each pupil's home local authority on request.

## **Pupil voice**

Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 requires regard to be had to the views, wishes and feelings of the child and their parents, and to the importance of their participating as fully as possible in decisions. At Benton House, pupils are supported to share their views in a way that suits them, including through visual supports, written responses, trusted adults and alternative communication methods. Pupils contribute to their one-page profiles, individual plans and annual reviews, and the school council gives pupils a collective voice in school decisions.

## **Working with other agencies and staff development**

Alongside its own clinical team, the school works with a range of external services where needed, including educational psychology, specialist teaching services, CAMHS, paediatric and therapy services, physiotherapy, hearing and visual impairment services, social care, virtual schools and local authority SEND teams.

All staff receive training on this policy as part of their induction. The SENDCo and clinical team identify SEND training needs through quality assurance and appraisal, and deliver or commission training, including on adaptive teaching, trauma-informed practice, communication and sensory needs. Staff are encouraged to pursue further professional development in SEND.

## **Records, complaints and evaluation**

### **1.9 Records and data protection**

The SENDCo maintains a SEND record for each pupil, including information from parents and carers, progress and behaviour data, the pupil's own views, and information from health, social care and other agencies. Records are held securely and processed in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Data Protection Policy. Information is shared with other agencies only where there is a lawful basis to do so.



### **1.10 Complaints and disagreement resolution**

Concerns about SEND provision should first be raised with the class teacher or SENDCo, and then with the headteacher. Where a concern is not resolved informally, parents and carers may use the school's Complaints Procedure, which is available on the school website.

Disagreements about the content of an EHC plan, or a local authority decision about an assessment or plan, are matters for the local authority. Parents can access independent disagreement resolution and mediation, and have the right to appeal certain decisions to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). Before appealing, parents must normally contact a mediation adviser, except where the appeal concerns only the school or type of placement named in the plan. SENDIASS can advise on each of these routes.

### **1.11 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision**

The school evaluates its SEND provision through quality assurance of teaching and provision, analysis of progress and attainment data, progress towards EHC plan outcomes, attendance and behaviour data, and the views of pupils, parents, carers, staff and external professionals. Findings are reported to the proprietor and governing body termly and inform the School Development Plan.

## **Future policy review**

The school is monitoring the SEND reforms proposed in the February 2026 schools' white paper, including proposed Individual Support Plans, national inclusion standards and a revised SEND Code of Practice. These proposals require legislation and are not yet in force. This policy will be reviewed and updated when a revised Code of Practice is published or when the law changes.

This policy is reviewed annually by the SENDCo and headteacher and approved by the proprietor and governing body. It may be reviewed sooner in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance or the needs of the school.

## **26. Linked policies**

Accessibility Plan, Admissions Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Attendance Policy, Behaviour Policy, Careers Policy, Complaints Policy, Curriculum Policy, Data Protection Policy, Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy, Safeguarding Policy



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