



WILLOW TREE Academy



THE LEAF CENTRE



Policy on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion

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Statement of Intent

Inclusion is about creating a sense of belonging for all pupils, families and staff. For a child to feel included, they have to feel that they are an integral and important part of the school. Rockingham Junior and Infant School pride ourselves on ensuring that all pupils feel valued, successful and happy.

We recognise and celebrate diversity not just within our own school but across our academy trust and in the wider world.

The staff and governors of Rockingham Junior and Infant School and Willow Tree Academy aim to address all areas of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities through a whole school/ academy approach. Our ethos is one of collaboration between senior leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, agencies and most importantly, the child, to create a wholly inclusive school.

Rockingham Junior and Infant School values the individuality of all children. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking into account the pupils' varied life experiences and needs and maintaining a flexible approach to adapting practice in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Through our curriculum and wider school ethos, we aim to develop children's strengths, address needs and create an enabling and safe setting for all pupils to reach their individual potential, *ensuring we do not place a ceiling on the learning opportunities for the pupils we teach.*

Overall, we aim to support all children, including those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities to reach their potential in a caring and cooperative atmosphere by:

- identifying needs at an early stage and mapping provision of individuals carefully to track progress
- providing a broad and balanced curriculum through Quality First Teaching
- developing understanding of the purpose and relevance of learning
- raising self esteem through appropriate challenge and scaffolding
- providing a secure and safe environment to enable children to flourish
- developing provision for nurture to support Social and Emotional Wellbeing needs.

1. Legal framework

Introduction

1.1 This policy was reviewed and updated in October 2025 in line with the Code of Practice (2014)

1.2 Rockingham Junior and Infant School, as part of Willow Tree Academy, provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all children and we pride ourselves on inclusivity. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children and *we endeavour to make equitable changes within our provision which are needs led.* We make this a reality through the attention we pay to the different groups of children within our school at any time such as:

- Girls and boys
- Ethnic minority groups
- Children who learn English as an additional language (EAL)
- **Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**
- Children who are at risk of social or educational exclusion
- Pupils who have been identified as Vulnerable
- Those who are gifted and talented
- Those who are looked after by the Local Authority
- Others such as those who are sick, bereaved or whose parents are divorced or separated

When planning and delivering Quality First Teaching, teachers set suitable learning challenges and respond to children's diverse learning needs. Some children have barriers to learning that mean they have special educational needs and require particular action by the school, and may require scaffolds to support them in being and feeling successful.

We recognise that inclusion must encompass all aspects of equality. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we actively promote anti-racism, gender equality, LGBTQ+ inclusion and socioeconomic equity. We understand that some pupils may face multiple and overlapping barriers, and we commit to addressing these intersectional needs through equitable and respectful practice.

1.3 Teachers take account of these requirements and make adaptations to provision, where necessary, to support individuals or groups of children and thus enable them to participate effectively in curriculum and assessment activities. Such children may need additional or highly scaffolded support within Quality First Teaching and Learning experiences.

1.4 Children may have Special Educational Needs either throughout or at any time during their time in school. This policy ensures that curriculum planning and assessment of children with special educational needs takes account of the type and extent of the difficulty/difficulties experienced by the child.

1.5 The Disability Discrimination Act identifies the fact that some pupils with disabilities may have learning difficulties that call for special educational provision. However, not all children defined as disabled will require this provision. A child with asthma or diabetes, for example, may not have special educational needs, but may still have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act. We will assess each child as required, and make the appropriate provision, based on their identified needs.

1.6 This policy reflects the values and philosophy of Willow Tree Academy in relation to inclusion. It gives a framework from which all staff (teaching and non-teaching) and

Governors work. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the SEN Code of Practice alongside our:

- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- SEN Information report

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- To effectively outline how we will create an environment that meets the needs of each child in school;
- To demonstrate how we will deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for all, based on Quality First Teaching (QFT) experiences;
- To outline how children's additional needs (learning or SEMH) are identified and subsequently targeted;
- To ensure that the Special Educational Needs of children are identified, assessed and provided for;
- To make clear the expectations of all partners in the process;
- To explain how we intend to liaise with parents and outside agencies to ensure children's needs are identified and met as early as possible.;
- To demonstrate our work with outside agencies to ensure best practice when assessing needs and devising interventions;
- To demonstrate how we will ensure interventions for each child are reviewed regularly to assess their impact, the child's progress and the views of the child, the parents and teachers;
- To ensure that our children have a voice in their own learning.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Inclusion and Behaviour Lead for Willow Tree Academy - **Mrs Faye Ebbs**

Contact details: faye.ebbs@willowtreeacademy.org

School	Headteacher	SENCO	SEND Lead Governor
Rockingham Junior and Infant School	Mrs Louise Rennison	Mrs Chloe Marsden	Mr Tony Trueman

The SENCO manages the day-to-day operation of this policy within school, and they;

- Coordinate the provision for, and manage the responses to children's special needs;
- Support and advise colleagues, including upkeep staff training in the area of SEND and Inclusion;
- Oversee the records of all children with special educational needs;
- Act as the link with parents;
- Act as the link with external agencies and other support agencies;
- Monitor and evaluate the special educational needs provision, and report to the governing body
- Manage a range of resources, both human and material, to enable appropriate provision to be made for children with special educational needs;
- Provide staff training and support across the academy;
- Contribute to the professional development of all staff.

The governing body has due regard to the Code of Practice when carrying out its duties toward all pupils with Special Educational Needs.

The governing body endeavours to secure the necessary provision for any pupil identified as having special educational needs. The governors ensure that all teachers are aware of the importance of providing for these children. They consult the LA and other schools, when appropriate, and report annually on the success of the school's policy for children with special educational needs. The governing body ensures that parents are notified of any decision made by the school about provision for their child.

The governing body has identified a governor within each school to have specific oversight of the school's provision for pupils with special education needs. The SEN governor ensures that all governors are aware of the school's SEN provision including the deployment of funding, equipment and personnel.

Ensuring that this policy is adhered to and meets the requirements set out in the Code of Practice (2015), The Inclusion and Behaviour Leader (Mrs Faye Ebbs) ensures that all those who teach a pupil with an Education and Health Care plan are aware of the nature of the plan and have responsibility for the annual review of pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan.

3. Definitions

- **Educational Inclusion**

At Rockingham Junior and Infant School, we aim to offer excellence and choice to all our children, whatever their ability and/or needs. We have high expectations of all of our children. We aim to achieve this through the removal of barriers to learning and participation. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school

community, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background.

Teachers respond to children's needs by:

- Providing adaptive practices/scaffolded support for those who need help with communication, language, literacy and numeracy
- Planning to develop children's understanding through the use of all their senses and of varied experiences;
- Planning for children's effective participation in learning and in physical and practical activities;
- Helping children to manage their behaviour and social understanding and to take part in learning effectively and safely;
- Helping individuals to manage their emotions, particularly trauma or stress, and to take part in learning.
- Working in cooperation with the SENCo to ensure early identification and intervention of children with SEND is secured.
- Working in cooperation with the SENCo, support staff and parents to provide, implement and review Individual Development Plans (IDPs) or SEN Support Plans for SEND children in their class.
- Planning and implementing extension and enrichment activities for the most able children.
- Ensuring that all pupils have a voice and that they understand their contributions are valued.
- Actively celebrating and building on pupils' strengths and achievements.

Attendance is a big contributing factor to ensuring that children can make progress. If children do not attend school regularly, then gaps in learning will begin to appear and this can impact on their attainment. Our Pastoral Team contacts parents and families regularly to ensure that attendance is a priority and children and staff are involved in monitoring and tracking attendance in their classroom, celebrating achievements together.

4. Special educational needs and support at Willow Tree Academy

Children with Special Educational Needs have learning difficulties that call for special provision to be made. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child or young person's ability to learn. There are four main presenting areas of SEND:

- [Communication and Interaction](#)

Communication and interaction refers to the way children and young people communicate with those around them, how they respond to people and develop social skills and relationships with others.

Communication and interaction needs include: speech, language and communication difficulties.

- [Cognition and Learning](#)

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation or adaptation.

- [Social, Emotional and Mental Health](#)

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression.

Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or attachment disorder.'

- [Physical and Sensory](#)

Physical and sensory disabilities are conditions that affect a person's ability to carry out daily activities. Physical disabilities involve impairments to a person's body, such as their limbs or motor functions, while sensory disabilities involve impairments to a person's senses, such as their vision or hearing.

Children are considered to have a Special Educational Need or Disability if:

- They have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;
- They have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities that are provided for other children of the same age.

All children have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, which enables them to:

- Understand the relevance and purpose of learning activities;
- Experience levels of understanding and rates of progress that bring feelings of success and achievement.

Children have a right to be safeguarded at all times and this is a priority within our academy (please refer to our Safeguarding Policy).

We support children in a manner that acknowledges their entitlement to share the same learning experiences that their peers enjoy. We do not withdraw children from the classroom and encourage in-class interventions where possible. There are times, however, when to maximise learning or reduce anxiety, children may work in small

groups, or in a one-to-one situation outside the classroom. This is always consulted with the child.

At Rockingham Junior and Infant School, all children are assessed and monitored when they enter our school, so that we can build effective relationships and begin to understand their prior learning and development. We use this information to provide starting points for the development of an appropriate curriculum for all of our children.

As a school, we pride ourselves on our rigour in the identification, monitoring and evaluation of SEND. This is outlined below:

Provision Mapping:

As a school, we endeavour to map the provision of all pupils closely across each term and use this to identify areas of strength and need in order to facilitate further learning opportunities or additional interventions to ensure all learners are able to reach their own personal potential.

Early Identification Form:

Through professional dialogue within frequent Pupil Progress Meetings, as well as through constant communication with parents or carers, class teachers and support staff may recognise that individuals within the provision map require additional support alongside QFT. Therefore the Early Identification Form is used to carefully assess the current levels of children and monitor additional in-class support used for individuals where concerns have arisen. Upon identifying need and seeking and implementing advice from the SENCO, if a child still presents significant needs which require additional support in one or more areas, a letter will be sent to parents requesting permission to add their child to the SEND register.

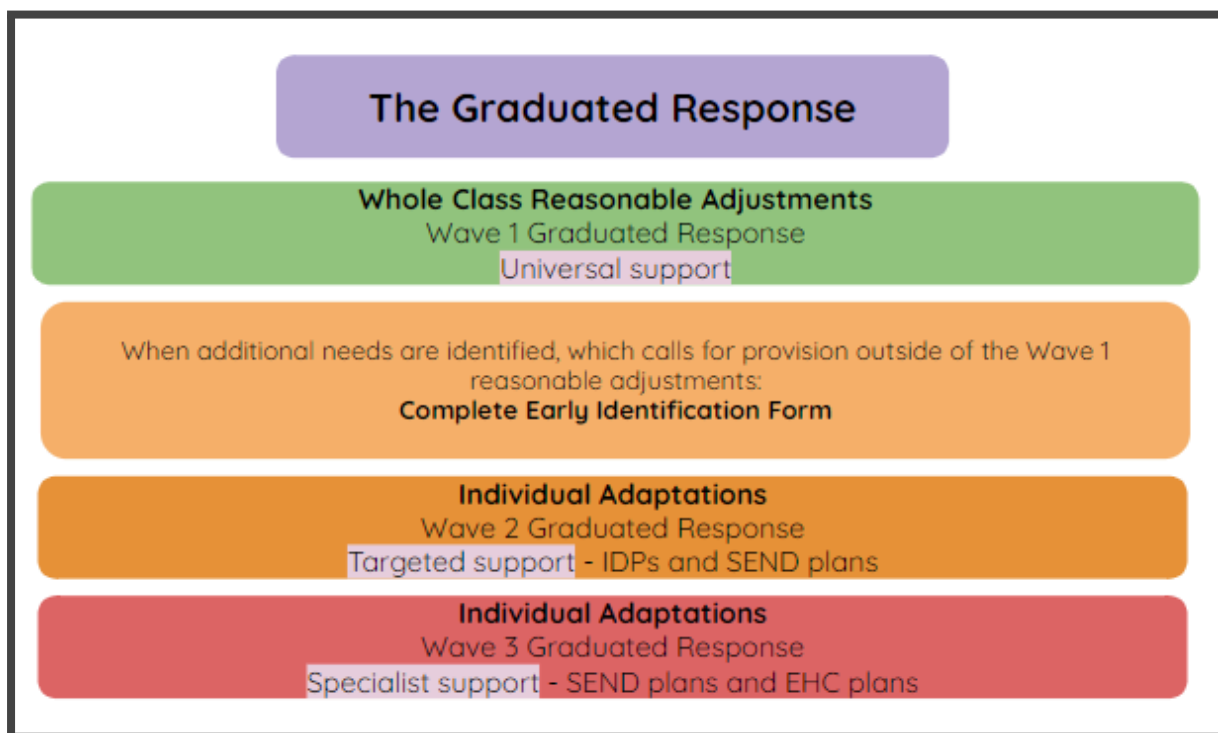
Graduated Response:

Where a child or young person is identified as having Special Educational Needs, educational establishments should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective provision in place. By taking this approach earlier, decisions and actions can be revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the child/young person's needs and of what support will help to secure good progress and good outcomes. This approach is known as the Graduated Response.

The SEND Graduated Response guidance is intended to be used as a tool for schools and settings and those partner agencies working with them and has been created in collaboration with SEND professionals, parents/carers and young people. At Willow Tree Academy, we have developed our own Graduated Response documents which identifies Behaviours/ Learning Behaviours observed, Assessment Tools completed, the strategies trialled and the outcomes and impact of these strategies. The information gathered through the Graduated Response moves through three phases of behaviours and interventions and is used academy wide to identify next steps in a child's support plan.

Most children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will have their needs met through mainstream education. The Code of Practice makes it clear that high quality teaching which is adapted for individual pupils is the first step in responding to possible SEND. It describes how the graduated approach and the ‘Assess, Plan, Do and Review’ cycle should be operated alongside approaches, strategies and arrangements that should be put in place to support children and young people. It provides detailed guidance on how educational settings can identify children and young people with different types and levels of need, along with information on appropriate steps and strategies to support them through the areas of:

- Universal Provision (Wave 1 support)
- Targeted Support (Wave 2 support)
- Individualised Support (Wave 3 support)



SEN support (Universal Provision):

If our assessments/ observations of individuals show that a child may have a learning difficulty, some significant gaps in their learning, or have barriers in their emotional regulation which impacts on their ability to learn, we will use a range of strategies that make full use of all available classroom and school resources. This is referred to as SEN Support and refers to any additional support that children receive alongside usual Quality First Teaching within the classroom.

SEN Support may occur when:

- There has been little or no progress made with existing interventions
- Additional support is required to develop literacy or numeracy skills
- Additional support is required for emotional, behavioural or social development

- Additional support is required for sensory or physical impairments
- Additional support is required for communication or interaction needs

Where needs are similar, it is appropriate to support these children within a group focusing on the common needs. However there is scope within the SEN Support for each child to have individual targets. Provision will be in a small group as well as some individualised support for their more personal needs. Provision will run concurrently with scaffolded curriculum support. The group may be taught by the class teacher and also supported by a member of our highly trained support staff. The responsibility for planning for these children remains with the class teacher, in consultation with the SENCO.

Targeted Support

Individual Development Plans (IDP):

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is written for those children on the SEN register who require specific targeted intervention. These targets are needs led and are generated to ensure that children's learning is personalised and allows them to celebrate their successes at a level which suits their needs. These plans allow three SMART targets to be identified based on a child's needs and outlines strategies which can be used to meet these needs and the team of people who will support the pupil in their achievements.

IDP books are used as a method of evidence collection and this allows us to track progress towards personal targets, enabling success to be shared and celebrated with parents in termly reviews. When targets are set, this book is used as an evidence portfolio to show progression towards these targets and the daily impact. Interventions for these children with SEND are frequent and evidenced appropriately - allowing parents, teachers and the children to see their own progress and understand their targets and how they can achieve these.

Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP):

For some learners, their main area of need is their Social, Emotional and Mental Health and their subsequent behaviour and/or behaviours for learning, which can often lead to secondary issues in cognition and learning. For some children, despite the Restorative Practice and Emotion Coaching approaches we use as part of our Behaviour Policy, their needs are greater and their experiences mean that further individualised support is required. An IBP focuses on the process of trigger identification and offering alternative reactions to situations. The SENCO and class teacher will work alongside the child and their parents/ carers each term to identify triggers, behaviours and positive steps towards improving their responses and subsequent engagement with peers, staff and the curriculum.

Assess/Plan/Do/Review Cycle

This is an ongoing cycle to enable the provision to be refined and revised as the understanding of the needs of the pupil grows. This cycle enables the identification of those interventions which are the most effective in supporting the pupil to achieve good progress and outcomes. During this cycle we will take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place.

ASSESS

A clear analysis of pupil's needs are made by the class teacher (working with the SENCO) – including information about progress, behaviour and other factors; parent and pupil views; development compared to peers and national data, and if relevant advice from external agencies.

PLAN

Parents/ carers are formally notified that SEND support is being provided

Joint agreement on adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place as well as expected improvement.

A clear date for review is identified.

All staff are made aware of the plan and their role in meeting the outcomes

The plan is recorded on the school's information system and shared with parents as necessary.

DO

The class teacher responsible for working with the child on a daily basis will make adaptations to practise; implement appropriate interventions and provide resources and the support mechanisms to meet the outcome of the assessment and planning stages.

The SENCO will continue to monitor and further assess a child's needs to identify strengths and areas for development.

REVIEW

In collaboration with parents/ carers and the child, the effectiveness of support and interventions will be reviewed in line with agreed date

The class teacher, with SENCO, will review the support in light of progress and development

Decisions will be made based upon any changes, in consultation with the parent/carers and pupil.

Parents have clear information about impact of support and interventions and the next steps.

For those children whom we consider to have more severe or complex needs or for whom a number of strategies have been trialled and had little success, we may feel it necessary to seek advice from other professional services. This support may include;

- Specialist Inclusion Team
- Educational Psychologist
- Visual Impairment Team
- Hearing Impairment Team
- CAMHS

- MIND etc.
- With Me in Mind
- Emotional Literacy (ELSA)

A variety of support can be offered by these services, such as advice to the school about targets and strategies, specialised assessment or some direct work with the child. The specialist services will always be invited to contribute to the planning, monitoring and reviewing of the child's progress. Provision will run concurrently with scaffolded curriculum support and wherever possible, be implemented within the child's normal classroom setting.

SEND Plans:

For those children where additional advice and support has been sought by different service providers and professionals, the movement from an IDP to an SEND plan may be made. Parental and child involvement is imperative in writing and reviewing an SEND plan, as with an IDP. An SEND plan offers a multi disciplinary approach to ensuring needs are met across all four areas of SEND and offers further rigorous monitoring of strengths as well as needs to ensure we are providing a curriculum which captures interest and sparks curiosity for all learners.

Education, Health and Care Plan:

The highest level of support offered for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities is the implementation of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, which is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support programmes. After gathering at least three terms of evidence through an SEND plan, a referral will be made, with parental consent, to the Educational and Health Care Team, for consideration to be made about a child's needs and if they meet the requirements for an EHC Plan. It is important to recognise that this is not always the right pathway for an individual and EHC plans are given at the discretion of the panel of professionals.

EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs. Reports and assessment procedures are carried out in the process of applying for an EHC plan and the involvement of many services contribute to creating a portfolio of information about a child to ensure that they are receiving the highest level of care.

The LEAF Centre

The LEAF centre is a provision, as part of Willow Tree Academy, that aims to radically improve the emotional well-being, learning opportunities and social development of children most vulnerable to social and educational exclusion. The centre offers a 10-12 week nurturing and therapeutic placement which will inspire integration and acceptance; supporting the understanding that behaviour is a form of communication; therefore

facilitating opportunities to understand and encourage strategies for children's emotional regulation through therapeutic support. *Further information about the LEAF centre can be sought from our Inclusion and Behaviour Leader - Mrs Faye Ebbs*

5. The LEAF at Rockingham Junior and Infant School -SEMH support through our Forest School Provision

For some children, there are barriers to learning which stem from Social, Emotional or Mental Health needs (SEMH). For these children, it is paramount that school employs a safe and stimulating environment for children. The LEAF at Rockingham Junior and Infant School is a resource base outdoors which sets out to provide targeted, individualised or group support to pupils within the school environment, specifically those with social and emotional wellbeing needs or difficulties. Our programme of intervention develops pupils skills in emotion management, preparation for KS3 and beyond into adulthood, as well as enabling a safe and stimulating environment which breaks down the barriers for pupils who may find the larger classroom environment challenging at times.

Through rigorous identification and 'Team around a class'/ 'Team around a child' meetings; timetables of support and specific delivery of interventions within the LEAF at Rockingham Junior and Infant School are mapped out.

Emotional Literacy is an intervention which is hugely successful at Herringthorpe Junior School and specifically targets the emotional needs and language of emotions for individuals. It provides a safe environment for pupils to share their feelings and we have seen an excellent success rate in pupil's articulation of their needs and emotions following this intervention.

6. Allocation of resources

The SENCO is responsible for the operational management of the specified and agreed resourcing for special needs provision within the school, including the provision for children with Education and Health Care Plans.

The head teacher/ SENCO informs the governing body of how the funding allocated to support special educational needs has been employed.

The Head Teacher and the SENCO meet regularly to agree on how to use delegated funds to support inclusion and SEN. They review provision, ensuring that all children receive their entitlement whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background.

7. Partnership with parents and Pupil Participation

Partnership with parents

The school works closely with parents in the support of those children with special educational needs. We encourage an active partnership through an ongoing dialogue

with parents. Parents have much to contribute to our support for children with special educational needs.

We have regular meetings to share the progress of special needs children with their parents. We inform the parents of any outside intervention, and we share the process of decision-making by providing clear information relating to the education of children with special educational needs.

Pupil participation

In our schools, we encourage children to take responsibility and be central to the decision making process. This is part of the culture of our school and relates to children of all ages. The work in our school recognised the importance of children developing social as well as educational skills. It is imperative that we allow children to thrive in areas where they are successful and enjoy all learning opportunities. We are passionate about creating a climate for learning which premises on social innovation and encourages children to be aware of what is available to them in the outside world.

Children are involved at an appropriate level in setting targets on their Individual Development Plans and/or Individual Behaviour Plans and attend review meetings. Children are encouraged to make judgements about their own performance against their targets and identify areas where they would like more support. We recognise success here as we do in any other aspect of school life.

Co-Production and Pupil Voice

Our approach is rooted in co-production, where children, parents, and professionals work together to design, implement and review provision. Pupils' views are gathered through structured interviews, learning journeys, questionnaires, and review meetings. These insights inform the setting of personalised targets and the development of interventions.

Parents and carers are invited to co-produce plans such as Individual Development Plans (IDPs) or SEND Plans, ensuring that the strategies reflect their child's strengths, interests and aspirations.

8. Complaints procedure

As part of the general publicity about complaints procedures, it is important for parents to know where they can go for information, advice and advocacy, if they require it. As SENCO and Inclusion and Behaviour Lead of Rockingham Junior and Infant School, Mrs Julie Tunks and Miss Chloe Darby meets and communicates with parents regularly about the needs of their child and the progress they are making. Parental involvement is a vital part of our ethos and our inclusivity. If parents or carers feel that concerns remain unresolved after discussion with the SENCO or Headteacher, they may contact the school's SEND Governor or the Local Authority's SEND team for further guidance. The school aims to acknowledge all concerns within five school days and resolve issues

wherever possible within twenty school days. Full details can be found in the Academy Complaints Policy available on our website.

9. Staff training

It is the role of the SENCO, alongside the pastoral team and Headteacher, to ensure that all policies and procedures are up to date and that staff training is in line with expectations. Early Career Teachers follow a specific programme for their continued professional development, including training from the SENCO. Local Authority guidelines are followed and support with training around specific areas of SEND and SEMH are obtained from outside agencies where necessary.

Professional Development

SEND and Inclusion CPD is delivered regularly and links to the school improvement plan. Staff access targeted training through local partnerships including the Educational Psychology services and partnership schools. Topics may include autism awareness, trauma-informed practice and adaptive teaching.

The SENCO monitors the impact of training through staff evaluations, classroom observations and pupil outcomes, ensuring that professional learning leads to improved inclusive practice.

10. Monitoring and Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is up to date with current legislation. The policy will be monitored and evaluated by:

- Academy Inclusion and Behaviour Lead
- SENCOs
- Pastoral Team
- Executive Headteacher

Impact Measurement and Accountability

To ensure this policy leads to measurable improvement, Willow Tree Academy will monitor and evaluate impact using the following indicators:

Area	Impact Indicator	Evidence Source	Responsibility
Pupil progress	Progress data for pupils with SEND and other vulnerable groups compared to national and school averages	Termly data reports	SENCO / Inclusion & Behaviour Lead
Attendance	Attendance trends and persistent absence data for pupils with SEND	Attendance monitoring reports	Pastoral Team / Attendance Lead

Exclusions and behaviour	Number and type of fixed-term or permanent exclusions; positive behaviour data	Behaviour logs / CPOMS analysis	Inclusion & Behaviour Lead
Pupil voice	Pupil feedback through structured interviews, review meetings and wellbeing surveys	Pupil surveys / IDP review notes	SENCO / Class teachers
Parental engagement	Parental satisfaction and participation rates in reviews or SEND events	Parent questionnaires	SENCO / Senior Leadership Team
Staff development	Evaluation of training effectiveness and staff confidence in supporting SEND	CPD evaluation forms	SENCO / Headteacher

Findings from these indicators will be summarised annually in the SEN Information Report and shared with the Governing Body.

The policy and/or procedures will, where necessary, be revised in light of these evaluations. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.