Hope School, College and Provision A.S.C. Policy.

Policy reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governors.

Hope's Mission statement is:

Taking the individual needs of every child as our prime aim, we strive to achieve the highest possible standards in the wider educational context, where **achievement, equality** and **independence** are key aspirations for all.

At **Hope** we share a vision of excellence where the highest standards of teaching mean that the culture of learning is inherent in us all.

At **Hope** the staff, pupils and all those involved share in, and celebrate the achievement of all. We all have a crucial part in playing.

At **Hope** creativity and independence are expected and encouraged.

At **Hope** everyone has the opportunity to grow, develop and extend their understanding of their own individuality and uniqueness.

To achieve this, we firmly believe in:

- Ensuring our curriculum is diverse but also places great emphasis on the core curriculum areas and developing individual skills.
- encouraging personal, social, and emotional growth and a deeper awareness of cultural, moral, and spiritual values
- preparing all pupils for the opportunity, responsibilities, and experiences of life
- Supporting every pupil's ability to participate and drive their own learning so that they can explore questions and challenges.
- inclusion whenever possible
- establishing the school as a resource centre providing expertise, materials, and advice across the community
- Encouraging and supporting staff to be committed to professional development and to sharing communication.

We offer an environment dedicated to learning where pupils can expect:

- to be included
- resources of the highest quality
- access to a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum which is both interesting and challenging.
- to be taught by highly qualified, experienced, and motivated staff
- a system of assessment, monitoring and recording that is recognised and understood by all.
- to feel safe, secure, and **HAPPY**

This policy is a whole-school policy.

Introduction

Most pupils at Hope School and College have a EHCP that defines them as having a severe learning difficulty (SLD) and/or complex needs. Most of the reception children will have an EHCP by the end of their first school year.

In addition, many pupils/students also have additional areas of need one being a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)

People with ASC have difficulties in:

- non-verbal and verbal communication,
- social understanding and social behaviour,
- thinking and behaving flexibly (rigidity of thought) according to the situation
- sensory perception and responses.

Pupils with an ASC may experience unusual sensitivity to sound, touch, and visual stimuli.

Although all people with ASC share certain difficulties; their condition will affect them individually.

This policy document sets out the school's aims, principles, and strategies for the education of pupils with ASC at Hope School. It will form the basis for the development of ASC-specific practice in the school.

Rationale

To ensure that pupils on the autistic spectrum are able to access the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum offered to pupils throughout our school the additional difficulties characteristic of pupils on the ASC spectrum need to be taken into account and these will include: the learning environment, planning, teaching and learning objectives.

Aims

To enable the following key principles to underpin practice and the best possible education for pupils with an autistic spectrum condition we strive to ensure:

- Knowledge and understanding of autistic spectrum condition throughout the school.
- Knowledge, understanding and implementation of established interventions and approaches.
- Knowledge and understanding of general and specific behaviours and behaviour.

Approaches and Interventions

The teaching ethos at Hope School embodies the provision of a structured, positive, empathic, and low-level stimulus environment with good links between school, home, and outside agencies. However, to meet the needs of all pupils across the spectrum we use an eclectic mix of established and researched approaches and interventions, drawing on best practice and continuously monitoring and evaluating strategies.

Interventions and approaches include.

- Aspects of TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children), - AAC– PODD – Universal Project Core.
- Limited language approach.
- Attention Autism - Intensive Interaction.
- Sensory Processing

Equal Opportunities and inclusion for young people with ASC

The decision as to where a pupil is placed is in line with their age and their degree of group sessions and individual support is based upon individual need which is consistently and regularly tracked, monitored, and assessed at school level and within the Annual Review process.

Specific needs and requirements

At Hope school it is recognised that pupils with ASC have specific needs and requirements that must be addressed. These may include:

- Structured teaching.
- Continuity of practice and provision
- Visual prompts and cues.
- Communication systems which are developed in liaison with Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) and go with the pupil through school.
- Personalised timetable.
- Use of social stories.
- Opportunities for tailored, specific support.
- Opportunities to learn to work without prompting an adult.

Continuity of Practice

At Hope School staff recognise the importance of generalising the skills that pupils learn across school, home, and other settings. Staff regularly liaise with multi-disciplinary teams, parents, and carers to ensure continuity of approaches in and out of school. This is supported through regular meetings and the ongoing tracking and assessment procedures embedded in school.

In order to ensure continuity, the pupils with ASC at Hope School can access, where appropriate:

- An individual timetable
- Individual workstations / Quiet working spaces
- Social stories to support their understanding.
- Access to specialist approaches, by experienced members of staff
- Sensory Processing Room known as Busy Body Room
- Sensory diets to ensure sensory needs are met.
- Rebound Therapy

In order to ensure continuity pupils will have:

- Specific plans to support emotional and behaviour needs.
- Appropriate levels of staff support.
- Overview and Strategies.
- Safe / calming spaces (both internal and external)

Environment

ASC pupils may also have sensory difficulties which can result in unusual or uncomfortable perception of sound, sense, touch, sight, and smell. This means that many children are unable to focus upon teaching activities and can be distracted by noise and visual or other stimuli.
This can have a profound effect upon their ability to learn and can impact behaviour when sensory input causes extreme discomfort or pain. Pupils on the autistic spectrum may also have difficulties with flexibility and require clear visual support to understand routines and expectations.

The school strives to reduce environmental anxiety and distress by the following:

- Quiet Room / Area: Providing an environment which is calm, distraction free and has a low level of visual and auditory stimulus.
- Access to a high degree of visual and physical structure.
- Providing pupils with a means of requesting withdrawal to a chillout area (safe / quiet space) when their levels of anxiety become raised.
- Strategies to cope with highly stimulating environment / situations.

Sensory Issues / Sensory Needs

Sensory profiles may be used for pupils with ASC following a sensory assessment with specialist O.T. Sensory assessments will be monitored and reviewed at the Annual Review.

Assessment

All pupils are assessed inline with individual curriculum pathways using appropriate systems which include Bsquared /Functional / Entry level / Achievement Continuum outcomes and are reported at Annual Review. An analysis of pupil progress data can be accessed school intranet.

Curriculum

Underpinning all teaching and learning is an emphasis on the development of Communication and Personal Development including social interaction, social understanding, social communication, and physical development. Lessons are planned to facilitate development in these areas but specific teaching, for example in social skills, life skills and sensory desensitisation are also necessary.

Pupils are provided with many 'real life' opportunities, for example, reduce rigidity, develop appropriate social skills. Pupils all access a full differentiated curriculum delivered in a way that addresses the triad of impairment and sensory issues.

Behaviour

Behaviour is often a means of communication. Staff endeavour to understand the function / meaning behind the behaviour. Specific strategies are used to reduce anxiety and promote feelings of well-being and to modify unwanted behaviours and promote more appropriate behaviours. Hope School promotes the ongoing training and development of staff to enable a fully comprehensive and supportive understanding of all procedures, practices, and development of an overall progressive curriculum. We have a rolling programme of training that all staff access as well as training our own staff to be trainers themselves. Pupils have Individual Behaviour Plans that are regularly reviewed and updated with parents, healthcare and education professionals and form part of the documentation for Annual Review. All appropriate class-based staff are trained in positive handling.

Training

- All staff attend training on autism awareness. Staff will be kept up to date with current research relating to education and well - being of pupils with ASC.

- All appropriate staff members are trained in autism awareness and specific practices which include:

TEACCH, Sensory Integration, Social Stories, Intensive Interaction and Attention Autism/Universal Project Core.

Development, Monitoring and Review

We are currently in the process of Autism accreditation in the teaching of pupils with ASC. This provides a valuable opportunity to gain an objective judgement of the quality of provision as well as informed future whole school planning and development. An important part of this process is the whole school audit and action plan. Provision for pupils on the autism spectrum is continuously monitored and evaluated as part of the self-evaluation process.

The school has achieved the Autism Accreditation Award from the National Autistic Society (2021). We continually review our practice and audit to ensure we meet all the needs of our ASC pupils.