



SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND
DISABILITY (SEND) POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2022

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> 1. Introduction

Every child at Merrywood is welcomed and treated and valued equally irrespective of their identified SEN or the way in which it is manifested.

Merrywood Education welcomes all children with SEND as an integral part of the school community. The school is committed to providing effective differentiation to offer curriculum and social access to all children. The school recognises the need to provide individualised educational and curriculum planning and provision to many of its children. Some children will need additional support extending to a one-to-one or two-to-one basis. Teaching and pastoral support may be located in areas outside of the main body of the school when relevant to certain individual needs and situations. The school will provide the best individualised support packages possible and these will be reinforced with specialist advice and the explicit involvement of external agencies when appropriate. Part of Merrywood's model is early identification of SEND and will work with other providers of services for those with SEMH, ASD, ADHD, Attachment disorder and other complex needs, to ensure that the earliest and most appropriate support is offered to a child.

Merrywood House is committed to working in partnership with the families of children with SEND. Parents, guardians and carers responsible for the children who attend the school will be respected and valued as partners and communicated and consulted with on a regular basis. They will be fully involved in their child's education, attendance issues and behaviour management. At Merrywood Education, children are supported to become reflective of their own behaviour and what may help them to feel more settled and secure.

Children have a right to be involved in decision making about their education and future and Merrywood expects all children to take responsibility for their time at the school. Merrywood Education believes that a multi-disciplinary approach to SEND throughout the school will be adopted and developed by the school at every opportunity.

> 2. The arrangements for coordinating the provision of education for children with SEND

All children at Merrywood have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Statement of Special Educational Need, so the school takes a whole-school approach to coordinating the response to SEND.

The Head of Safeguarding and the Head of SEND is responsible for the upkeep of children's files. This includes the setting up of new files containing essential information such as previous school records and original and amended EHCPs and Statements of Special Educational Need.

Extra support for those children in crisis or with extreme SEMH is organised by the Head of School, Assistant Heads and SENDCo, who have responsibility for timetabling within the school to ensure that their needs are met.

Staff are advised on strategies for meeting children's SEND by colleagues, the therapy team and the educational psychologist. The SENDCo also co-ordinates external advice and support when appropriate.

> 3. The admission arrangements for children with SEN who do not have an EHCP/Statement if they differ from the arrangements for other children

All children who attend Merrywood Education, currently have an EHCP/Statement of SEND and they are considered for admittance to the school if the EHCP/Statement matches the SEMH, ASD, ADHD or other complex needs provision the school offers.

- Consultations are sent to the school by the local authority for consideration.
- The admissions team will assess the needs of the individual and make contact with the local authority and family/parents or carers.
- A member of the Merrywood team will visit the children at their current establishment or at home, whichever is appropriate, followed by the child and parents/carers being invited to visit the school.
- A further visit to the school or trial days may occur before a school place is offered if this is deemed appropriate and a place is available.
- After a place has been offered and accepted a transition plan will be discussed with the parents or carer. This will either be with the Head of School, Assistant Head or SENDCo.
- The purpose of a transition period is to conduct a risk assessment, ensure there is provision of school uniform, opportunity to complete the home school agreement and outline the school rules.
- Some children may start at Merrywood Education on a transition timetable that gradually builds in duration if the child is successful and they are able to access more time in school.

> 4. The kinds of provision for SEND in which the school specialises and the specific school provisions

The school operates in a non-judgmental, therapeutic manner, which takes into account the varied special needs encompassed within the SEMH spectrum. Merrywood is set up to work with children who may have experienced multiple exclusions, trauma, dysfunction and mental health diagnosis. We recognise that overt behaviour may stem from sources such as Asperger's Syndrome, Autism, Attachment Difficulties and Communication Difficulties, alongside any environmental factors that may have occurred both past and present.

Merrywood's approaches within our school, staff team curriculum and the environment, are all aimed at providing a therapeutic, but secure environment, maximising the inclusion of all the children. Children may be educated in very small groups or individually with the support of a teacher and at least one teaching assistant. We have high expectations of all of our staff team and children to raise the expectations of behaviour and academic effort. The school actively promotes a nurturing ethos and behaviour is supported using restorative approaches and reflective education that promotes making positive choices.

All staff are trained in trauma informed practice and complete regular training throughout the academic year. This includes, training on brain development, trauma related development, sensory related behaviours and remedies, communication related behaviours, understanding emotions and reactions and more.

At Merrywood Education, we are fortunate to have a therapeutic social worker and a safeguarding lead who work closely with pupils, staff, parents, carers and families.

> 5. Facilities for children with SEN at the school including facilities which increase or assist access to the school by disabled children.

There are a high number of computers available in the class bases to facilitate the practical literacy difficulties many of the children encounter. The school is well signposted with rule reminders and directions to help children independently orientate themselves. Some of these signs may be symbolised or offered in pictorial form. Staff communicate with children by offering them dialogue in more than one modality such as over exaggerating facial expression and using evocative body language whilst speaking. Children with mobility difficulties are enabled to participate in all activities and sessions, on and offsite, so that no individual is excluded due to a disability.

> 6. How children with SEND are identified and their needs determined and reviewed.

Children who attend the school have EHCP plans previously issued by the Local Authority whilst in another school or on role at a 'Pupil Referral Unit', (PRU). This means that the young person's special needs have already been identified before reaching our school. Upon a child starting at Merrywood, if the school felt that additional needs have not been identified other than those named on the EHCP, an emergency annual review can be conducted. This is where Merrywood would present evidence to have this information included on the EHCP. This could then result in additional support being requested, or an alternative placement being recommended.

All children have an annual review meeting where the EHCP/Statement is reviewed. This happens once within a twelve month period (please see Merrywood's Annual Review Policy).

Individual Pupil Pathway's are known as IPPs. The are completed three times a year in Autumn Two, Spring Two and Summer Two. These targets are continuously reviewed and updated in consultation with the SEND Team, Teachers and parents/carers.

Individual risk assessments are carried out by the Behavioural Team and are continuously reviewed. Staff training in the management of children/young people with E.B.D is ongoing.

The school has a team approach: Teachers, Trusted Adults, Therapists, Residential Carers, Social Workers and other professionals are all involved in monitoring pupil progress using their IPPs.

Progress and concerns are monitored regularly with half termly progress meetings. Any actions are decided upon and are then shared with all multi agencies involved with particular children and when appropriate with the whole school community.

> 7. Arrangements for providing access by children with SEN to a balanced and broadly-based curriculum (including the NC)

Merrywood Education is committed to providing the best possible personalised curriculum to meet the very individual needs of the children. Core subject teaching is organised to take place in small groups with additional support from trusted adults. We use the school grounds to take learning outside with a hands-on approach; we then use this learning in a more classroom-based environment.

All children are taught at a level in which they can access and is appropriate for their individual learning. This is closely monitored by the Assistant Heads. At school, we consider Maths, English, Science and PSHE as the 'backbone' of the curriculum. Other subjects taught include Creative Arts, Geography and History, Computing, PE, SEMH, and Food Technology.

Short and medium-term planning supports the curriculum provision. This combines with detailed schemes of work. Sound academic progress and achievement is considered to be of great importance. The school seeks to re-establish the concept of learning as a positive and enjoyable experience. The Curriculum provided is broad based to ensure that each child takes part in the National Curriculum which is tailored to meet individual needs. We aim to introduce children to a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience.

Our Curriculum emphasises the need to acquire basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and Math's and English Schemes of work are carefully planned to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to the children's ability.

Included within our curriculum offer is our enrichment programme which aims to develop independence, social skills, wider world experiences and resilience.

> 8. How children with SEN engage in the activities of the school on an equal opportunities' basis.

All of the children at Merrywood Education, on a full-time basis, have been identified as having SEND. Irrespective of need, all employees and stakeholders in the school community regard all the children on site as fully participative members of the school community and society.

Equality of provision and identity are fundamental to the school ethos and the entire school exists on the basic premise that all people are entitled to the same level of respect irrespective of impairment, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or ethnicity.

Parents or children who may feel disempowered by physical or cognitive impairment or who may feel anxious about their social status are welcomed wholeheartedly by the school. If parents or carers are unwilling to visit the school, then representatives of the school are always willing to visit at home.

> 9. How Assessment, Recording and Reporting are organised

The school has a team approach: teacher, teaching assistants, therapists, and other professionals are all involved in monitoring pupil progress using ongoing teacher assessment and IPPs. Ongoing formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual children through each lesson by identifying what each child has learned, supporting them to correct and improve and identifying the next stage in their learning. Half termly teacher assessments are made in Reading, Writing and Maths in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning.

Within our school, we use IASEND in order to track small steps of progress made throughout the academic year. This allows us to identify gaps in learning and acknowledges achievements made by the child. We recognise that progress occurs at different rates and therefore track progress at six points throughout the year.

9.1 Target Setting

Based on formative, summative and regular teacher assessments, teachers set individual targets for IPPs. SMART targets are set for reading, writing and maths as well as communication and interaction, SEMH and physical and sensory. Targets are shared with the child and parents/carers during parent days which occur three times a year.

9.2 Recording

Records of progress kept for each child are updated continually using IPPs and supplementary information. Records will form the basis of written reports to parents at the end of each academic year. Records are retained throughout the child's time at the school and appropriate records passed on to other schools when pupils leave.

9.3 Reporting

Written reports are provided for parents at the end of each academic year. Parents are invited to attend their child's annual review as part of their EHCP once a year and this meeting can be extended and used to discuss their child's overall progress at the school. As classes are small, teachers are in regular contact with parents/carers during the year. The child's teacher will phone with updates once a week.

- > **10.** Any arrangements made relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of children with SEN concerning the provision made at the school.

The school has an established complaints procedure that aims to deal with all issues in an empathic, sensitive fashion due to the sensitive and emotional nature of the children who attend the school. Confidentiality is paramount and children, parents or others may approach the Head Teacher to raise concerns. Please see our complaints policy.

> 11. The role played by the parents and carers of children with SEN.

Merrywood Education depends on successful partnerships with parents and the existence of two-way support and communication between home and school. The school has an 'open- door' policy that means parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they feel they have an issue or a problem. Meetings or home visits will always be arranged for a parent/carer at their request. The views of parents and carers are always listened to and treated as an invaluable source of information as to how the school is providing for children with SEN. It is hoped that the policy and practice of the school reflect that it is often the parents who know their children best and have much to offer the school.

Merrywood have a dedicated Family Support Worker who will work closely with school and home to ensure a joined-up approach.

> 12. Links with child health services, social services and educational welfare services and any voluntary organisations.

Merrywood Education recognises the importance of the involvement of external agencies in the lives of the children and in contributing to the best practice of the staff. This input is coordinated by the Head Teacher who may suggest to parents and teaching staff that input is needed or can be approached by the same parties to organise external agency support for a child. Merrywood Education will work effectively with medical, clinical, therapeutic and peripatetic services that offer support to the children and those who work with them. The school is committed to working with and developing all partnerships with external agencies and service providers.

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