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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

2.0 Definition of Special Educational needs

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have learning difficulties if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
 - have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

SEN Code Of Practice (2015)

3.0 AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

Our aims are:

- To ensure that all students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to their individual needs
- To provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual needs, ability and interests of each student.
- To ensure that all students take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- To ensure that parents/carers of all students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- To ensure that all students are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision

Whilst many factors contribute to the range of difficulties experienced by our students, we believe that much can be done to overcome them or lessen their effect, by parents, teachers and students working together.

4.0 WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US

- I want to put it in a bottle and distribute it everywhere in the world. Yes, of course, they can have some interesting and eventful days at the school. But, what you find there, no, it is nothing like Bedlam, no, it is a peaceful, relaxed, slow, human atmosphere, with every person's inner state and difficulties with what is going on around them, being taken fully into account in the outlook and doings of the staff. What they do is so shatteringly simple, it is bewildering that most other services - everywhere - struggle to attain or practice this outlook, and these young people are at Higford as a result. Finally, an island of understanding for them.
- *Dave Hewitt, Co-founder of the Intensive Interaction approach.*
- The amazing staff have made him into the wonderful young man he is today! Peter sat through the whole school celebration. Not too long back, he could only be brought in for a very few moments. You can see how happy he is. His dad, Mike and I feel so blessed that Peter went to Higford school. Both the school and the care home staff have gone over and above what we'd ever expected of them.
- *Parent.*
- We have seen such a change in T the last year, and it has been fantastic. A real credit to the skilled staff and support at Higford.
- *Parent.*
- Here is somewhere, where he is valued and can build his self-esteem interacting with staff and pupils. The joined up work of the clinical and teaching staff is very impressive.
- *Parent*

5.0 WHAT SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS DOES OPTIONS HIGFORD CATER FOR?

Options Higford caters for students with autistic spectrum condition, challenging behaviour and additional complex difficulties.

There are currently 25 students on role between 8 and 19.

The students have difficulties in all four areas of need as defined by the SEN Code of Practice:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs
- All students have an Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of SEN.

6.0 WHAT DO WE PROVIDE AND HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

We use the principles of the National Autistic Society (NAS) SPELL approach in order to maximise access to the whole curriculum by prioritising:

- **Structure:** through using principles from TEACCH to organise the environment, use of personal schedules and systematic strategies to work
- **Positive:** approaches and expectations through sensitive but persistent intervention based upon thorough individual assessment, including Intensive Interaction and play-based approaches
- **Empathy:** based upon respect for personal experience to inform what motivates and what may frighten, preoccupy or distress each individual
- **Low arousal:** based upon individual sensory profiles and the use of PRICE for the positive management of potentially challenging behaviour
- **Links:** through a thematic approach to the curriculum and a multi-disciplinary team-work approach across the service and with families / significant others.

All students are taught within small groups with a high staffing ratio. All students follow an adaptive and flexible curriculum which utilises the skills and knowledge of school staff.

Students needs are met through a range of approaches including principles of Intensive Interaction, DIR Floortime, a total communication approach, TEACCH, and sensory diets.

Students also have access to a range of facilities, onsite and offsite, where relevant, including the sensory hub, care farm, Forest School and community facilities.

7.0 PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

At Options Higford we recognise the importance of working with other professionals.

Onsite we have a clinical team which consists of:

- Clinical psychologist
- Speech and language Therapists
- Occupational Therapist
- Assistant psychologist
- Two nurses.

The clinical team is a crucial part of Options Higford and make regular assessments of students, using these to create individualised profiles.

8.0 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Options Higford firmly believes that partnership with parents plays a key role in promoting a culture of co-operation between parents, schools, Local Authorities and others. This is important in enabling our students to achieve their potential.

Parents should be supported so as to be able and empowered to:

- recognise and fulfill their responsibilities as parents and play an active and valued role in their child's education
- have knowledge of their child's entitlement within the SEN framework
- make their views known about how their child is educated

-have access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision-making processes about special education provision

When students attend Options Higford on a residential basis or are “looked after” by the local authorities and living away from home, every effort is made to ensure that parents are encouraged to continue to play an active role in their children’s education.

9.0 STUDENT VIEWS

Options Higford involves students in their education and decision making as much as possible. Each student has a ‘My Views’ document which is completed by students, where possible, and other advocates including parents, class staff, the clinical team and key workers. This document sets out the student’s views about key aspects of their time at Higford including what they do and do not enjoy.

A student council has also been set up to provide students with a voice and there is one class representative per class.

The clinical team use talking mats to encourage students to share views on a range of matters.

10.0 HOW IS PROVISION EVALUATED

To ensure provision is appropriate we continually monitor and evaluate approaches through:

- IEP target data using MAPP.
- Progress against National Curriculum Steps, P-Scales and milestones.
- B2 Autism Progress
- Annual reviews
- School development plan
- Company governance.
- Reports by professionals.

11.0 PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD

The Post 16 curriculum focuses on developing life skills, social skills, community access and functional literacy and numeracy. Students working in Post 16 also work towards ASDAN qualifications.

The aim of this life skills based curriculum is to prepare students for adulthood.

Throughout their time in Post 16 regular transition planning meetings take place to organise future provisions and ensure the students’ needs and view will be met and heard.

12.0 WHAT TRAINING IS PROVIDED FOR STAFF

All staff undertake a three-week induction prior to beginning their role at Options Higford.

This induction includes:

- Support in understanding lesson preparation and planning
- Positive Behaviour Support via PRICE training
- Awareness of Autism and of Autism Specific strategies via SPELL training
 - Copies of key policies and procedures and knowledge of where all policies are located for reference
 - Safeguarding

Ongoing staff training is also completed in a range of areas including support to implement a range of approaches, awareness of new policies and procedures, health and safety, safeguarding as well as individualised professional development.

13.0 LA LOCAL OFFER

Although the students come from a range of local authorities, Options Higford is based in the Shropshire local authority.

For their local offer, which sets out how to access services, the pathway and processes your child, young person, or family might travel through you can visit their website at:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/local-offer/>

14.0 COMPLAINTS POLICY

Concerns will be dealt with under the terms of our Complaints Policy, which is published on our website.