

## PS32 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES POLICY

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### Introduction

Portfield School's policy for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) demonstrates how the school responds to and meets the special educational needs of our students. Portfield has responded positively to local and central government policy and legislation, including the Equality Act (DfE 2010) and the revised SEND Code of Practice (2015). Our SEND Policy underpins all other school policies.

### SEND Policy Objectives

The over-arching objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure the education of all students is exceptional.
- To promote trusting and open parent partnerships.
- To effectively identify and assess the needs of each student and ensure that the school provides appropriate provisions to meet those needs.
- To provide access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to include all aspects required to enable students to be successful and prepare for their adult lives.
- To develop and deliver individual programmes of study which reflect the complexities and variety of individual needs.
- To ensure appropriate, autism-specific approaches are implemented by all staff in all curriculum areas and aspects of school life.
- To monitor student progress and revise plans and programmes as necessary.
- To liaise effectively with all appropriate outside agencies and to work towards achieving better outcomes for students and their families.

### Our Learners

Portfield School, welcomes students from a wide geographical area. We provide for students between the ages of 4 and 19 who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and a diagnosis of autism. All our learners are working below Age Related Expectations (ARE). A high proportion of our learners have additional learning needs as well as other learning and medical diagnoses.

### Our Staff

Staff at Portfield are engaged in an active programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which

enhances their ability to provide personalised learning pathways to support students' unique and changing learning profiles. The school aims to promote a holistic, aspirational and positive learning environment in which all students thrive and feel valued. The multidisciplinary team comprises therapists and education staff, who strive to make learning a rewarding, personalised experience, enabling all students to realise their full potential.

### **Facilities**

Portfield School comprises two campuses, both located in Christchurch.

The main campus at Parley Lane provides caters for students aged 4-16 across Early Years, Infants Primary and Secondary phases.

The Sixth Form Campus, Reach, is located at Airfield Road and caters for students aged 16-19.

### **Leadership**

The school is led by a Headteacher and Head of Therapy, who are supported by a Deputy Headteacher and three Assistant Headteachers, one for each age phase.

In addition to class teachers, students are supported by a team of Teaching Assistants (TA's) and a team of therapists, including Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT), Occupational Therapists (OT), psychodynamic therapists and a behavior team.

The school has an administrative team who work under the direction of the School Business Manager (SBM).

### **Specialist Technology and Provision**

The school has a range of technological hardware and software to enable students to access an enhanced curriculum. Interactive Smartboards are installed in all classrooms, with a range of resources which enable students to access a wide choice of inclusive educational software. Communication is crucial to students' learning and an inclusive communication approach is implemented by all staff.

Manual sign language (Signalong) and visual aids are used throughout the school. Specific students use iPads as their primary method of communication, as assessed by the SaLT team.

Both campuses have well-equipped sensory regulation spaces as well as areas dedicated to physical activity.

### **Therapeutic Provision**

Portfield School is well-resourced with highly qualified therapeutic staff. The therapy team includes SaLT, OT, Physiotherapy, Dance and Movement Psychotherapy, Art Psychotherapy and counselling. Additionally we have an Assistant Psychologist who receives supervision from a Clinical Psychologist.

A School Nurse is onsite from 10am-2pm every day.

### **Enrichment**

The school provides a comprehensive enrichment programme, led by a team of creative professionals including an Artist in Residence, Actor in Residence, two Musicians in Residence, a Vocal Coach and a Personal Trainer.

Students in Early Years, Infants and Primary access a term of horse-riding each academic year, and students in the Secondary phase engage in a term of trampolining offsite.

### **Identifying and Reviewing Student Needs**

Accurately identifying individual needs is the starting point for all educational provision at Portfield School. This process begins at the point of consultation for a school place and is supported by parents/carers and external

agencies where appropriate.

Each student considered for a place at Portfield School has an EHCP and a diagnosis of autism. Places are offered following an in-depth assessment of need. This includes in-person visit to the school, an interview with parents / carers, therapeutic assessments and meetings with Local Authority (LA) representatives.

All EHCPs are formally reviewed annually. Students' holistic progress is examined, any changes to their needs identified, and the plan amended accordingly. All reviews are delivered using a Person-Centred approach, and students are empowered to take ownership of their future goals and planned provision. Particular concerns regarding factors unrelated to academic progress, such as medical conditions, health and safety issues, or behavioural matters, are identified, and consideration is given to any further provision that may be needed. Further funding may be sought from the LA to ensure appropriate or enhanced provision in the light of identified needs.

Where specific concerns are raised during the academic year, the school may convene a 'Team around the Child (TAC) meeting to ensure all relevant professionals and parent/carers are able to meet together to discuss the issues raised, integrate a variety of perspectives regarding the concern, and draw up a set of recommendations designed to address the concerns. This may include input from the school nurse, the therapy team and/or external professionals.

### **Providing access to a balanced and broad curriculum**

Portfield School seeks to provide access for all children to a balanced and broad curriculum, including, as appropriate, aspects of EYFS, National Curriculum, Functional Skills, Princes Trust, ASDAN or AQA Frameworks. Each student is able to access the curriculum through a sensitive understanding of their individual needs, therapeutic input and the use of positive autism-specific approaches.

The school has responded to the changes to the Primary and Secondary curriculum in 2014 by enabling respective phases to develop their own structures/schedules for delivery. Teachers use guidance for core and foundation subjects to ensure high-quality and consistent teaching is provided regardless of age or developmental phase.

The school uses the 'Portfield School Learning Journey' as a structure to set targets and accurately plan for and track progress at early development levels. Curriculum development is a dynamic process in which monitoring and evaluation play an integral part, and this is led by the School Leadership Team (SLT).

### **Governance**

The Governing Body of Portfield School is actively involved in the development of the school, and all governors are aware of their responsibilities to maintain a supportive and constructively critical stance in relation to the quality of education provided by the school. The Governing Body accepts its duty to evaluate the success of the education provided but entrusts aspects of this responsibility to the Headteacher and SLT.

Regular evaluation and oversight are maintained through:

- Governors receiving feedback from parents at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) events
- Governors scrutinising the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and completing targeted support visits to evaluate progress
- Governors completing visits and 'learning walks' around the school campuses, and providing written reports following the visit.

### **Concerns and Complaints**

The school aims to provide a high-quality education and service for all its students. Complaints and concerns regarding provision are treated seriously and are seen as a constructive part of school development. If concerned about any aspect of their child's education, parents should approach the class teacher, Assistant

Headteacher for the phase, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher in the first instance. If it is not possible to resolve the concern informally, the charity complaints procedure can be accessed on the school's website, and a hard copy is also available.

### **The involvement of Parents and Carers**

At Portfield School, working in partnership with our parents and carers is crucial to the education and wellbeing of all students. We strive to build and maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust that enables regular communication that is consistently focused on the needs of the student.

Parents and carers are involved in the education of their children throughout their school career. Regular opportunities to attend parent/carer meetings are given, in order to discuss progress, any concerns and celebrate success. Parents are welcome to make appointments with class teachers or members of SLT at any time of the year.

Parents and carers are also expected to be fully involved with the statutory Annual Review of each student's EHCP, in line with the revised SEND Code of Practice. Parent/carer feedback is a vital source of information, and school staff will actively seek out opportunities to ensure learning at home is supported alongside school timetables.

Parents and carers are well represented in more formal roles as parent governors and as part of an active and positive PTA.

### **Transition**

At Portfield School, we understand that points of transition between educational settings are a hugely important time in a student's life, and as such, we maintain close links with all local feeder schools and colleges to enable the most positive transition possible.

When a student leaves Portfield School, all of their records are shared with the next setting. If, for any reason, the school is not given the address of the receiving school or no request is forthcoming, then the LA will be informed.

The school has strong links with both Bournemouth and Poole College and Brockenhurst College. Students, who may transfer to either of them following the completion of their school career, have the opportunity to visit and become involved in a link course or transition course.

We strive for the best possible long-term outcomes for all students, and as such, all students are given the opportunity to undertake work experience where appropriate. This focus on employability and tangible work-based learning ensures that any transition out of school and into work is positive and well-planned. Careers' advice and guidance is provided for all students, and many different methods are used to ensure this is delivered in an appropriate way that learners can access.

For students who leave Portfield School, there are a range of options, including the school's Sixth form and 'Futures Unlimited', Autism Unlimited's 18-25 provision. Other local colleges, internships and apprenticeships are also considered where relevant. At all stages of transition, parents and carers are fully informed of the discussions that take place and are encouraged to engage with the process throughout.

### **Multi-agency Partnerships**

Portfield School seeks to maintain meaningful links with a range of outside agencies for the benefit of all students and their families. The charity, Autism Unlimited, enjoys a wide range of support from the local community and many businesses in Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire.

The school works closely with LA SEND teams, Health and Social Care professionals, local safeguarding teams (MASH), the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), sensory specialist teachers, the Educational Psychology

team, The Careers and Enterprise Company and Dorset Health Partnership.

**Review** – Every three years.