

Home school partnership for children with SEND: Working together to achieve the best possible outcomes

At Blackhorse Primary School, and within the wider Leaf Trust, we believe that **every child, regardless of barriers, has the right to belong, grow, and succeed at school.**

“The leaders of early years settings, schools and colleges should establish and maintain a culture of high expectations that expects those working with children and young people with SEN or disabilities to include them in all the opportunities available to other children and young people so they can achieve well.”

SEND Code of Practice (2015), Para 1.31

Our strength-based approach focuses on each child’s unique abilities, aiming to build confidence, independence, and a strong sense of belonging. It begins with the principle that, to lead a successful independent life, a child needs to develop the emotional, social and academic skills to do so. This means supporting all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to develop resilience in ways that are appropriate to their individual needs, helping them to navigate challenges and achieve meaningful, long-term success.

This guide was written in conjunction with a working group of parents and is designed to support the home-school partnership, ensuring that together, we nurture strengths and build a successful future for every child.

Honesty, trust and mutual respect – the key to a successful partnership

At Blackhorse Primary School, we believe that the best outcomes for children are achieved when school staff and families work together in a spirit of trust, honesty and mutual respect. We seek to fully explain our school’s approach to SEND, and then to foster a close working relationship with you as parents so that you can understand what support your child may need, and how the school will provide this where necessary.

At times, there may be differences on opinion between school and parents as to what SEND support is necessary and how it is organised. Should this occur, it is

essential that both parents and staff engage in what we call 'responsible candour'. This means assuming goodwill, communicating with empathy, and, where necessary, challenging with honesty - assuming 'best intent' from the other party.

We recognise that many parents seeking additional support are doing so from a place of care, concern and, at times, frustration. This guide is intended to support and clarify what the school can reasonably provide to support pupils and families and clarifies where expectations may fall outside what is possible or appropriate within a mainstream primary school setting.

Understanding how SEND support is organised in school and who to contact

"A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age."

SEND Code of Practice (2015), para 6.15

Parents can find information about how children with a SEND are supported [via the school website](#). Our '[Graduated Response to SEND](#)' explains the support all children experiencing barriers to learning receive as part of our 'universal offer' as well as what happens if more support is needed over time. For most children, including those with some barriers to learning, their needs can be met at this universal offer, whilst a small number of children may need additional support and be added to the school's SEND register for closer monitoring, and a smaller number again may require an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP). Children who require an EHCP typically have additional needs which are (according to the DfE's SEND Code of Practice) '**severe, complex or long-term**'. A diagnosis of a specific need (e.g. Autism, ADHD or Dyslexia) may inform support, but it does not automatically mean a child will be added to the SEND register or receive an EHCP. Support is based on how needs present in the classroom over time and these may be managed through quality first teaching and targeted interventions.

Who is the best person to speak to about my child's progress or SEND?

Below is a table showing who should be the main point of contact depending on your child's needs:

Level/ Type of need	Main point of contact
General concerns about your child's development or progress	Class Teacher
General concerns about any learning barriers or possible SEND	Class Teacher
Specific questions about SEND support within the classroom	Class Teacher initially, and then the SENDCO (Claire Deacon).
A child on the SEND register who has a specific SEND plan (called a 'Individual Provision Map' or 'IPM')	On a day-to-day basis, this is still the class teacher, but you may also meet with the SENDCO, if necessary.
A child displaying anxiety at home or at school.	At home (Family link worker – Emma Touzalin) At school (1 st Class Teacher, 2 nd SENDCO).
A child with an EHCP	Class Teacher (general enquiries about their day-to-day support). SENDCO (specific enquires about specific interventions or support).

Communication via email

Blackhorse is one of the few schools where parents are given teachers' direct email addresses. This allows easy communication about most matters.

When emailing staff, please consider their workload. If you are sending a message which is just for information, i.e. not requiring a response, please put 'FOR INFORMATION' in the subject line. The teacher will then respond with a thumbs up emoji to show they've read your message. Please keep these messages brief.

If you need a response to an email, please put 'RESPONSE REQUIRED' in the subject bar so that the teacher, or other staff member, knows that a response is expected. Staff will endeavour to respond to all such emails within 5 working days.

Please don't copy several staff into an email as this leads to duplication of work. If you are unsure who to contact, or you think that the message may need to go to

several staff, please email the school office: office@blackhorsepri.org.uk and we will make sure that your enquiry is picked up by the appropriate people.



What can parents reasonably expect from the school regarding SEND provision?

SEND provision can be complex and there are many voices lending opinion as to what constitutes best practice. As part of the Leaf Trust, our provision is independently reviewed every two years, with further external reviews carried out by bodies such as OFSTED and the LA. The current externally validated view of the school’s practice is that it is strong and effective. However, there is sometimes a gap in what can be reasonably expected of a mainstream school, and what parents would like the school to do or provide. The school must ensure that it is following statutory DfE guidance in relation to SEND, attendance, safeguarding and the provision of education. We must also act in what we believe to be the child’s best interests.

So that parents have clarity on what the school believes we can reasonably and legally provide, we have tried to explicitly outline this below.

Assessing & Reviewing Need

Area	✔ Reasonable Expectation	✘ Unreasonable Expectation
Meeting with staff / raising concerns	School to organise timely meetings with class teacher (usually within five working days) and, where necessary, SENCO or other staff (usually within ten working days). Meetings will focus on collaborative planning and agree next steps.	Parents or school expecting meetings at short notice or daily contact; or in addition to a pre-scheduled meeting. Expecting specific staff or external specialists to attend meetings without clear process or agreement.
Responding to Emails	Where an action or response is requested (see above), staff will endeavour to respond to emails regarding SEND provision within five working days. Responses may take longer if the enquiry requires the school to liaise with other professionals or agencies.	Expecting an email response about SEND provision the same day or repeatedly sending multiple enquiries within a short period of time. Expecting staff to respond to messages outside of school hours, during holidays or on weekends.

Area	 Reasonable Expectation	 Unreasonable Expectation
Addition to the SEND register	<p>Where <i>'despite high-quality teaching and targeted interventions, a child is not making expected progress'</i> (SEND CoP) the school will add them to the SEND register, following a discussion with parents/ carers.</p>	<p>An expectation that a child to be added to the SEND register without evidence of persistent, long-term need, which cannot be met within the universal offer, or where an initial 'plan – do – review' cycle of intervention has not been attempted. A specific diagnosis does not automatically result in a child being added to the SEND register if their needs can be met within the school's Universal Offer.</p>
Creating & reviewing support 'Individual Provision Maps'	<p>Where a child is on the SEND register, school will create an Individual Provision Map (IPM) and schedule three 15-minute review meetings per year, reporting on progress and discussing with parents' possible adjustments.</p>	<p>For IPMs to be created for children not on the SEND register. For IPMs to be rewritten more frequently than three times per year or amended to address a short-term concern.</p>
Requesting EHCP assessment	<p>School will lead requests for an EHCP needs assessment where there has been little progress against IPM targets despite support (CoP 6.58); where the provision required goes beyond what the school can normally provide (CoP 6.95-6.99); where school-commissioned external agencies have provided evidence*; and following successive <i>'assess-plan-do-review'</i> cycles (CoP 6.44-6.56). If the parent would like the school to apply for an EHCP, but the school does not believe this is necessary at that time, then the school will explain how the child's needs are being met within the Universal Offer via SEND Support.</p>	<p>Expecting school to apply for an EHCP without sufficient evidence* or before support strategies have been attempted and reviewed, or where professionals agree that statutory/ LA thresholds, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, will not be met.</p>
Requesting support for parental EHCP application.	<p>Where a parental request for an EHCP has been made, the school will provide the LA with all requested information and documents.</p>	<p>The school to support a parental application for an EHCP needs assessment where there is insufficient evidence* <u>in school</u> to suggest this is necessary.</p>



Use of external reports	School to accommodate in school private professionally accredited assessments funded by parents, where practicable. School to consider the information provided by parent commissioned private reports, alongside reports commissioned by the school.	For private assessments to take place in school which disrupts learning or diverts staff from their primary duties. Expecting advice from privately commissioned external bodies to be implemented where a need in school does not present itself or where the school does not have available resources or funding to do so; or where the external agency is not professionally accredited or does not follow NICE guidelines.
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Provision & Support

Area	✔ Reasonable Expectation	✘ Unreasonable Expectation
Reasonable adjustments	Parents can expect classroom adaptations to be considered where needs in school suggest that these would be beneficial, such as sensory tools, movement breaks, visual supports, calm spaces. These will consider the pupil's presentation at home, where appropriate, with the school considering what is practicable and beneficial within a school setting. These adaptations will be clearly identified on a child's IPM, if they are on the SEND register.	Requests for full-time 1:1 TA support; major timetable changes; or significant resources without an EHCP or funding. Requests for specific adaptations to be implemented without evidence* of their need, or without the agreement of the school and other professionals.
Homework	Adjustments to presentation or type of home learning expected. On some occasions, support will be offered to complete homework in school, although this won't be needed for most children with SEND.	The school to routinely exempt children with SEND from all home learning.
Parental support in school	Parents and school to collaborate on school-based strategies such as calm starts, phased entries. Parents to join in occasional whole-school classroom visits, agreed in advance.	Parents to expect to stay in class or supervise their child on-site without agreement or for an extended period of time each day.

Staff deployment	Expecting that staff deployed to support specific SEND provision have sufficient training and expertise.	Parents choosing specific staff members or directing the school as to which staff should deliver an intervention or provide support.
School's 'best endeavours'	Expect school to implement advice, provide interventions, and differentiate within available resources.	Expecting guaranteed outcomes or specialist services the school isn't trained or resourced to deliver without external involvement.

Attendance

	 Reasonable Expectation	 Unreasonable Expectation
Attendance at school	School to provide support to reduce attendance barriers (e.g. EBSR toolkit, phased returns, calm starts, check-ins with pastoral staff, referrals to Nurture or Family Support). Absences will be authorised where medical evidence has been provided.	Expecting the school to authorise long-term absence or non-attendance without medical evidence or formal agreement. <i>Parents and schools have a legal duty to ensure regular school attendance under the Education Act 1996, irrespective of SEND.</i>
Lateness	School to support agreed morning transitions (e.g. 'soft start', adjusted drop-off routines) if anxiety or SEND needs are impacting punctuality. Support from the Family Link Worker, Emma Touzalin, to identify and remove barriers to arriving at school on time.	Children persistently arriving late without an agreed plan or reasonable explanation. The school allowing regular lateness without working with parents to rectify this. Expecting a member of the pastoral team to be available outside the agreed drop-off times.
Flexi-schooling	School to work with families to consider short-term phased returns where needed, as part of a planned reintegration following absence or SEMH needs.	Expecting school to educate children part-time at home and part-time in school long-term ("flexi-schooling") — <i>The Leaf Trust & S Glos LA does not support flexi-schooling arrangements.</i>
Reduced timetables	In rare cases, school and parents to agree to short-term reduced timetables, in line with DfE guidance, as part of a <u>time-limited, regularly reviewed</u> reintegration plan. School to consider a longer reduction in timetable because of chronic health conditions, under the advice of a health professional.	The school or parents expecting a reduced timetable to continue indefinitely. The school or parents to implement part-time education without agreement, review, or plan for return to full-time (contrary to DfE statutory guidance).

Authorised absence	Short-term absence will be authorised for exceptional medical or family reasons (see school attendance policy).	Expecting unauthorised holidays to be approved or frequent term-time absence to be permitted without formal agreement. Even for SEND pupils, regular attendance remains a key statutory expectation. Anxiety will not automatically result in absences being authorised unless agreed by a medical professional.
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*** What we consider as 'evidence':** Evidence used to inform SEND provision will usually take the form of observations made by professionals in the school setting, such as class teachers, SENDCO, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists or other suitably qualified individuals who have observed the child during learning at school. Parental observations from home are also considered alongside clinical and professional reports and observations.

Conclusion

At Blackhorse Primary School, we are committed to building strong, honest, and respectful partnerships with families to support every child with SEND to thrive. We believe that by working collaboratively, guided by clarity, empathy, and a shared understanding of what is reasonable and achievable within a mainstream setting, we can create the most effective and supportive environment for each learner. This guide aims to help families understand the framework within which we operate and to set realistic expectations grounded in national guidance and our school's values. Together, we can ensure that every child feels supported, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Policies & Guidance referenced:

Statutory Documents:

[SEND Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years \(2015\)](#)

[Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(2024\)](#)

[Education Act \(1996\)](#)

Local Documents:

[Blackhorse SEND Graduated Response 2025-26](#)

[Blackhorse Primary School Attendance Policy](#)

[Leaf Trust SEND Policy](#)

[South Gloucestershire Local Authority SEND Local Offer](#)

Glossary of terms:

Term	Definition
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; support for children with learning difficulties or disabilities.
SEN	Special Educational Needs requiring additional or different provision.
Disability	A physical or mental condition with a long-term impact on daily activities.
SEND Code of Practice (2015)	Statutory guidance on identifying and supporting children with SEND.
Universal Offer	High-quality teaching and support available to all pupils.
Graduated Response / Approach	Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle for SEND support.
SEND Register	School record of pupils receiving SEND support.
SEND Support	Support provided without an EHCP.
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan – a legal document for severe, complex or long-term needs.
EHCP Needs Assessment (EHCPNA)	A statutory assessment to decide if an EHCP is required.
SENCo / SENDCo	Teacher responsible for coordinating SEND provision.
Ordinarily Available Provision	Support schools are expected to provide without an EHCP.
Individual Provision Map (IPM)	Document outlining a child's SEND needs, targets and support.
Intervention	A targeted programme to support an identified need.
Quality First Teaching	Inclusive, high-quality classroom teaching for all pupils.
External Agencies	Specialist professionals supporting SEND provision.

Reasonable Adjustments	Changes made to reduce barriers to learning.
Best Endeavours	School's duty to do everything reasonably possible to support SEND.
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs.
ASD / ASC	Autism Spectrum Disorder / Condition.
Dyslexia	Specific learning difficulty affecting reading and writing.
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
Phased Return	Planned gradual return to school attendance.
Reduced Timetable	Temporary reduction in school hours under agreed conditions.
Flexi-schooling	Part-time education at home and school; not supported long-term.
Local Authority (LA)	Council responsible for SEND assessments and EHCPs.