SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY

The Courtyard offers a tailored educational and social provision with a holistic approach. We aim to equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and thrive with increased independence in their next stage of life.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) - POLICY STATEMENT

Approval Committee:	**Full Governing Body**
Author:	**Head Teacher**
Last reviewed:	**Oct 2026**
Next review date:	**Oct 2027**
Required to publish on website?	**Yes**
Statutory?	**Yes**

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy accepts the definition of SEND as set out in s20 of the Children and Families act 2014. It reflects the approach to and arrangements for SEN outlined in the Children and Families Act 2014.

2. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT THE COURTYARD

2.1 The Courtyard is a special school for students aged 13-19. Students at The Courtyard all possess an EHCP for autism spectrum condition and/or speech, language and communication needs. Many students at The Courtyard also have additional difficulties (e.g. physical, sensory, communication and emotional/behavioural).

2.2 Admissions to the school are managed by the school in consultation with local authorities. Students are accepted throughout the academic year. We implement transition programmes for all students prior to placement. Placements at The Courtyard are kept under constant review and specifically through the Annual Review process which monitors the progress towards outcomes within a student's EHCP. The school accepts students from Islington and surrounding boroughs if the placement is felt to be appropriate and places are available (See The Courtyard Admissions Policy).

2.3 The Courtyard has been designed and built to have provision and accessibility for people with disabilities so that they may be integrated fully into The Courtyard life.

3. AIMS

3.1 To know each individual student as thoroughly as we can, including any circumstances which might affect their well-being, behaviour and performance at any moment in time. This includes taking a long-term view of each student, visualising the best possibilities for each, and knowing when they are ready to take the next (challenging) step.

3.2 To ensure we always see, first and foremost, the child and not the difference and to ensure that education (and not care) remains paramount. This will include identifying what motivates each child, to be aware of any barriers to learning, and use that knowledge to encourage them to 'have a go' for themselves.

3.3 To ensure that students feel safe, secure and comfortable to enable them to focus on learning, ensuring staff have clarity and act on policies and procedures.

3.4 To maintain high but realistic expectations for each student, enabling the development of independence.

3.5 To ensure that each student has a personalised curriculum which is tailored towards the specific needs of each individual student.

3.6 To offer opportunities and experiences for students to learn in a multitude of different ways and through a rich, varied and individualised curriculum.

3.7 To ensure that all students are engaged in learning activities appropriate to their abilities.

3.8 To encourage students to monitor their progress and to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.

3.9 To give students an equal voice in, and ownership of, their education so that they are able to express opinions, choices and preferences, promoting their independence, confidence and self-efficacy.

3.10 To use individuals' interests, skills and experiences to enhance the education of students and staff.

3.11 To provide enriching, motivational and project-based work experience opportunities.

3.12 To learn and share information, to the benefit of our students through mutually supportive relationships with parents, specialists and outside agencies.

3.13 To ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place to protect students from harm and neglect (please see the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for more information).

4. GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT

The Governors, along with the Headteacher, are responsible for ensuring the aims of the school are achieved. This is realised by:

4.1 Governor involvement in development planning and the monitoring/evaluation of the plan via the Curriculum and Standards Committee.

4.2 Termly Governors' meetings at which school development is always a priority focus.

4.3 The detailed work of Governors, e.g., links with teachers, student shadowing, participation in school events, Governor training, classroom observations.

5. SCHOOL STAFF

5.1 The individual needs of the students at The Courtyard require the staff to have an understanding of child and adolescent development and experience and expertise in the following areas:

5.1.1 autistic spectrum condition;

5.1.2 speech, Language and Communication needs;

5.1.3 behaviour that causes concern;

5.1.4 working with parents and support professionals;

5.1.5 medical needs;

5.1.6 language development;

5.1.7 sensory sensitivity;

5.1.8 any additional needs that any individual student may be experiencing, e.g., physical disability, ADHD.

5.2 Professional development opportunities are available to all staff to meet the needs of the students. Staff are encouraged to support each other and to share expertise.

5.3 The school works with a range of external professionals to best support the students to access their education and achieve their potential. Such external professionals include Speech and Language Therapists, CAMHS Clinicians, Educational Psychologists, Art Therapists and Occupational Therapists.

5.4 The Headteacher of the Courtyard acts as the SENDCO for the school. The Headteacher is accountable for and responsible for the delegation of:

5.4.1 the day-to-day operation of the SEND Policy;

5.4.2 co-ordinating provision for students;

5.4.3 liaising with parents/carers of students;

5.4.4 liaising with external agencies as required;

5.4.5 staff training;

5.4.6 keeping staff informed of new legislation, policies and procedures;

5.4.7 ensuring staff are informed of students' needs;

5.4.8 liaising with other schools regarding the transfer of students and to ensure that the relevant records are made available;

5.4.9 ensuring that students' EHCP outcomes are common knowledge and students are supported to make progress towards them;

5.4.10 delegating the chairing of Annual Review meetings to appropriate members of the Leadership Team;

5.4.11 ensuring that relevant paperwork is submitted to Local Authorities and shared with selected parties;

5.4.12 ensuring that Islington Council are regularly informed of the provision on offer here at the Courtyard through the submission of the School's Information Report;

5.4.13 ensuring that parents are aware of the support and provision available in Islington via the Local Offer link on Islington Council's website.

5.5 Teachers are responsible for:

5.5.1 ensuring that lessons are structured to meet the needs highlighted in each student's Individual Education Plan;

5.5.2 referring concerns and/or additional needs to the Deputy Head;

5.5.3 monitoring progress against the targets stipulated in each student's Appendix A;

5.5.4 Liaising with parents/carers and students.

6. PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS/CARERS

6.1 The Courtyard recognises the crucial role of involvement offered by parents/carers in supporting their children and will therefore value the opportunity to discuss practical strategies to enhance their child's development, with them.

6.2 Parents/Carers are invited to attend Annual EHCP Review Meetings. They will also be able to meet the teaching and support team at Parents/Carers' Learning Review meetings.

6.3 The Children and Families Act 2014 stipulates that parents/carers/young people can have more of an active role in the provision put in place to support the young person with an EHCP. The Courtyard will support parents/carers with this process, liaising with support agencies and local authorities where necessary.

6.4 Parents/Carers are also invited to attend the Courtyard's fortnightly parent workshops which provide information about the school's policies and procedures as well as further information about the school's curriculum and pastoral interventions and support available for parents in the local community.

7. RESOURCES

7.1 Staffing levels are significantly higher than in mainstream schools, allowing for small class sizes, direct 1:1 support if necessary, individual timetabling and pastoral support.

7.2 All students have a detailed Student Passport, created in collaboration with students and parents, that allows the students to retain ownership of their personal information that is shared with others,

7.3 Specialist resources including communication aids and information technology.

7.4 Classroom organisation and management.

7.5 Behaviour modification programmes – Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)

7.6 Effective multi-agency work with experienced professionals

7.7 Alternative teaching strategies.

8 GROUPING

8.1 Groups are organised by ability not age.

8.2 Student groupings are varied to encourage the development of social communication.

8.3 Students are grouped in small class sizes – no more than 10.

8.4 Students occasionally work 1:1 with a teacher to focus on a particular area of their Appendix A (Individual Education Plan).

9. EXTERNAL SUPPORT

9.1 Professional support is available to students, staff, parents/carers and Governors from a broad range of agencies. These include:

9.1.1 LA consultants;

9.1.2 Educational Psychologists;

9.1.3 Consultant Paediatricians;

9.1.4 Physiotherapists;

9.1.5 Occupational Therapists;

9.1.6 Art Therapists

9.1.7 Speech and Language Therapists;

9.1.8 Linked Social workers;

9.1.9 Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist

9.1.10 School Nurse.

10. TRANSITION TO FURTHER EDUCATION

At 14+ the Annual Review for students is designated a 'Transition Review'. This begins the process whereby students' likely educational needs after 16 years are assessed. Further education is explored and arrangements for assessment and link provision considered. A transition plan is drawn up by the case worker in the LA SEND department.

11. PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AT THE COURTYARD

11.1 The Courtyard aims to provide a broad, balanced, relevant and progressive curriculum for each student, the aim of which is to include all of the students in the process wherever possible.

Agreed and implemented systems of planning, assessment, recording, evaluating and reporting are a prerequisite to delivering this curriculum in a professional, efficient, effective and consistent manner throughout the student's school years.

11.2 In planning and assessment, particular consideration is given to relevance and progression in order to meet the learning difficulties of the students in our school.

11.3 **Planning**

11.3.1 Teachers are responsible for producing termly plans linked to the chosen adopted curricula in their area. The planning must form a coherent, relevant and comprehensive learning package. Teachers at the Courtyard use the method of backwards planning which involves the desired learning outcomes being at the forefront of the lesson construction. All lesson components are focused on how best to support each student to achieve the learning outcome.

11.3.2 The reference points are:

11.3.2.1 targets documented in student Appendix A's (See 11.3.3.1 below)

;

11.3.2.2 individual academic targets;

11.3.2.3 assessment information;

11.3.2.4 The Courtyard schemes of work and other adopted curricula

11.3.3 The components of planning are:

11.3.3.1 **Appendix A's (Individual Education Plans):** details the four key skill targets for each student and the strategies and provision in place to support the students in achieving the targets.

11.3.3.2 **Long-term plans:** Coverage plans in all curriculum areas. These ensure breadth and balance and promote ability appropriate learning;

11.3.3.3 **Medium-term plans**: Schemes of Work (SoW) written for each curriculum area and teaching level. The SoW for each curriculum area are evaluated for effectiveness at the end of each full term;

11.4 **Assessment: Key Principles**

11.4.1 At The Courtyard, students have an entitlement to an assessment process which:

11.4.1.1 accurately identifies and tracks their progress;

11.4.1.2 highlights strengths and difficulties together with strategies to manage them;

11.4.1.3 raises the expectation of success and celebrates a broad range of achievements;

11.4.1.4 provides reliable and credible information to support progression in learning;

11.4.1.5 is motivating and actively involves them in review and target setting.

11.4.2 At The Courtyard, teaching staff have an entitlement to assessment and recording procedures which:

11.4.2.1 are based on clear and shared criteria;

11.4.2.2 are manageable, sustainable, consistent and useful;

11.4.2.3 meet statutory requirements;

11.4.2.4 support quality teaching and learning;

11.4.2.5 yield reliable and valid assessments.

11.4.3 From the Courtyard, parents/carers have an entitlement to an assessment and reporting practice which:

11.4.3.1 highlights their child's success and progress;

11.4.3.2 identifies weaknesses and how they will be addressed;

11.4.3.3 provides them with opportunities to review and discuss their child's achievements;

11.4.3.4 involves them in helping to meet learning targets;

11.4.3.5 ensures information about their child is detailed, specific and easy to understand.

11.4.4 Assessment is the professional starting point within a planning – delivery – recording – evaluation cycle. Assessment includes formal assessment undertaken by others for EHCP purposes, formal regular assessment undertaken by class teachers and other professionals, informal assessment during the course of learning activities and statutory assessment.

11.4.5 At the Courtyard this assessment process begins before the student starts at the school with a transition period. Further assessments are made when the student joins The Courtyard and this information is then used to formulate the first Appendix A (Individual Education Plan) by the end of the student's first half term.

11.4.6 Teacher assessments of individual student's curriculum needs take place termly with the support and advice of therapists and other specialists where appropriate, and will refer to:

11.4.6.1 The student's EHCP and any reports by the Educational Psychologist and/or other professionals.

11.4.6.2 The targets set at the Annual Review.

11.4.6.3 Regular evaluation and review of each students' Appendix A detailing Key Skill targets within:

11.4.6.3.1 social communication;

11.4.6.3.2 academic progress;

11.4.6.3.3 independence;

11.4.6.3.4 inclusion.

11.4.6.4 Termly evaluation of planning documents in all curriculum areas.

11.4.7 Details of the current formal assessment are recorded in the Annual Review Report. These include GCSE Grades and/or Functional Skills equivalents as well as achievement towards other qualifications including LAMDA and NFCE. Formal assessment will also be against any published curricula that have been adopted by the Courtyard.

11.4.8 Annual Reviews are timetabled to take place at the end of each academic year or earlier if required by the Local Authority. Annual Reviews are implemented in accordance with the advice contained in the Statutory SEND Code of Practice relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Parents/Carers receive an Annual Review Form and Report completed by the Deputy: SEN/Safeguarding and other professionals. Parents/carers and students are encouraged to comment on the report and review. Review meetings take place at The Courtyard and are chaired by a member of the leadership team. Parents/carers and other professionals are invited to attend. Agreed recommendations are minuted and sent to all present at the review.

11.4.9 Informal assessment by the teachers takes place during the course of learning activities. Teachers and teaching assistants record and store this by keeping daily notes of observations and the outcomes of learning activities in the student's books/on the planning sheets. These notes are used to inform future planning and target setting at the Annual Review. Annotated photographic evidence is used as part of the assessment method.

11.4.10 Statutory assessment arrangements for those students who access KS4 & KS5 examinations are carried out in accordance with the current guidance provided by the relevant examination boards.

12. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TREATMENT OF COMPLAINTS

The procedure for managing complaints is to contact the Headteacher of The Courtyard, Deborah Shepherd, Deborah.shepherd@thecourtyardislington.org / 02038596350. Upon contacting the appropriate person, the expected timeframe for response is 5 working days. The response will be in the form of a telephone call or written letter, sent first-class, whichever is deemed to be most appropriate. For more information, please refer to the Complaints Policy, located in the Website Published Documents.

13. LEGISLATION

13.1 The Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3

13.2 Maintained schools – The Education (Special Educational Needs) (Information) Regulations 1999: SI 1999/2506.

13.3 Academies and free schools – Section 1(8) of the Academies Act 2010.

13.4 Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

13.5 Also see The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice January 2015 (SEND Code of Practice).