


## SEND Policy

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## Purpose

Red Balloon is committed to offering an inclusive wellbeing and academic curriculum, to ensure the best possible progress for all our students, whatever their needs or strengths.

RBET-Aylesbury endorses the 2014 SEND Code of Practice vision of supporting the Education, Health and Social Care needs of young people through a holistic approach. Students referred to the Centre have all experienced challenging social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) circumstances, and the majority are supported by an Educational Health Care Plan. Within this context RBET-Aylesbury creates an inclusive and safe environment where individuality and difference are celebrated, recognising we all have needs and we all have strengths.

## Scope

The Head of Centre, supported by their Governors, must ensure that the Centre effectively meets the needs of all its students and that it complies with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice. The SENCo assumes the day-to-day responsibilities set out in this policy.

## Policy statement, provision and safeguards

Not all students with disabilities have special educational needs and not all students with SEND meet the definition of disability. We aim to meet the needs of each student according to their needs as identified by themselves, their parents<sup>1</sup>, former providers, commissioning agents and ourselves once students are placed at our Centre. Students have 'Special Educational Needs' if they have, 'a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them': 'students with a disability have special educational needs if they have any difficulty in accessing education and if they need any special educational provision to be made for them, that is anything that is additional to or different from what is normally available in schools in the area '. A student may be classed as SEND if they require special educational provision in order to access the curriculum or make progress. Such special educational provision addresses learning difficulties, caters for exceptional abilities and those with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). Four broad areas of need are described within the revised Code of Practice. Our intention is always to look beyond labels rather fit young people into categories, but we do recognise the four broad areas of need:

- communication and interaction,
- cognition and learning,
- social, emotional and mental health,
- sensory and/or physical needs.

Whilst not all of our students have been identified as 'SEND', each might be described as having 'additional educational needs' as their needs are unable to be met in a mainstream provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Wherever the term "parent" is used in the policy, it means any person with parental responsibility for the young person.

## Working effectively with SEND students

Neither our staff (in terms of their training) nor our buildings and resources make our Centre suitable for students with extensive sensory or physical needs, or those with significant communication or interaction needs. We do, however, have real strengths in supporting students who experience certain emotional and mental health difficulties and the bespoke nature of all our provision means we are able to meet certain needs in the area of cognition and learning.

We shall always consider referrals for students with EHC (education, health and care) plans, but will only admit a student if we, together with the student and their parents, believe it possible to meet the needs identified within the plan. It is also essential to state (see Admissions Policy) that a key component of our provision is that we provide a safe and supportive community for **every** student. The issue of individual rights as set against the rights of the broader community is a complex one. It is, however, the case that we will not allow any student to access or remain in a Red Balloon placement if they consistently refuse to respect the rights of other members of the community. We acknowledge that this may curtail our capacity to work with the full range of SEMH students, but we will always protect the community that forms the bedrock of our provision.

In working with SEND students we aim to:

- ensure that we are fully aware of their needs and that we devise individual plans to ensure those needs are met;
- ensure that students with special educational needs and disabilities are able to join in all the available activities to the best of their capability;
- support all students to develop positive wellbeing;
- support all students to make the best possible academic progress;
- ensure parents are informed of their child's special needs and that there is effective communication with parents to ensure that learners express their views and are fully involved in decisions which affect their education;
- promote effective partnership with and the involvement of outside agencies when appropriate;
- ensure SEND students are provided with appropriate support to enable them either to return to mainstream school or go on to further education, employment or training (adulthood).

In line with Red Balloon Philosophy and Practice and the recommendations of the revised Code of Practice we seek to:

- ensure students are central to decisions about their education

The SEND Code of Practice places the child or young person at the centre of decision-making around their education. In practice, this means that students need to be actively involved in setting targets and evaluating their progress towards them. It also means they need to actively identify what is important to them now and in the future.

## Effective use of the expertise of parents

Parents have the most intimate knowledge of their child, and so the code recommends that schools work in partnership with them, involving them in decisions and making use of their knowledge.

To ensure this happens, we need to remember that many educational terms are incomprehensible to those outside teaching and that some processes teachers take for granted may be a mystery to . If they are not given the tools and information they need, in an accessible way, they cannot contribute effectively.

## Use of a graduated approach

SEND support should arise from a four-part cycle, known as the graduated approach, through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised. This will lead to a growing understanding of students' needs and what supports them in making good progress. This approach perfectly matches the action planning cycle identified in our assessment policy (plan, do, evaluate, do again).

It is essential to allow sufficient time for the action (do) 'element' to become embedded before reviewing or evaluating it.

There has been a shift from viewing difficulties in self-management of behaviour from BESD (behaviour, emotional, and social difficulties) to SEMH (social, emotional and mental health difficulties)

The revised Code of Practice has changed the way young people who struggle to manage their behaviour and emotions are referred to. Whereas previously students were referred to as having "behavioural, emotional and social difficulties", in the new code this has become "social, emotional and mental health needs" (SEMH). The change in wording asks practitioners to look past a student's behaviour itself to the underlying causes and focus on what that behaviour is communicating.

Again, this accords with Red Balloon philosophy and practice. We aim to listen, to understand and to support young people to make appropriate decisions for themselves.

### **Identify individual need rather than categorise!**

"The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a student in a category".

This means that practitioners should consider all of a student's needs, not just those with which they have been labelled, alongside their strengths. Support should be targeted wherever it is most needed at any one time, remembering that students' needs may cut across more than one area and may change with time.

## Centre Practice

The Centre will identify a person responsible for ensuring that practice is effective and meets the requirements of the revised Code of Practice.

They will:

- ensure that daily practice complies with the requirements of this policy;
- liaise with and support staff to ensure student needs are well met;
- coordinate provision for children with special educational needs;
- maintain the Centre's SEND register and oversee the tracking information for all students with special educational needs;
- maintain and update resources for SEND;
- ensure that staff have access to appropriate resources;
- liaise with parents of students with special educational needs;
- attend/chair the EHC Plan reviews
- contribute to the training of all staff;
- liaise with external agencies including medical support services and social services;
- support the statutory assessment process for students who may need an EHCP;
- ensure EHCPs are up to date and fit for purpose;
- ensure that appropriate access arrangements are in place for public examinations;
- ensure that appropriate data sharing and protection guidelines are adhered to regarding SEND information;
- ensure that student confidentiality is respected at all times;
- ensure that students are supported in making their own decisions, and encouraged to express their own views and opinions
- ensure students' voices are heard and represented.

It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to negotiate provision with students in a manner that ensures any special needs are well met. All staff will endeavour to ensure that all students have full access to the available curriculum (academic, wellbeing and any additional activities).

It is in the very nature of Red Balloon provision that we treat young people as special and having individual needs. Thus, we negotiate their provision with them and their parents. Students are not slotted into pre-set timetables; a bespoke timetable is created for each young person at the time of admission. We would therefore not consider practice with SEND students to be demonstrably different from that with their peers, rather seeing all students as individuals and aiming to meet their needs regardless of how those needs have been identified prior to referral.

## Legislation and guidance that inform this document

- Children and Families Act (2014)
- SEND Code of Practice (2014 - revised 2015)
- Equality Act (2010)

## Other Red Balloon policies to be read in conjunction with this one

- Admissions
- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Disability and Discrimination
- Exclusions