

# Special Educational Needs Information Report

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## What is SEND? (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

A learner has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities generally provided for others of the same age within mainstream schools.

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age within mainstream schools.

## The types of Special Educational needs that we provide for

Red Balloon is an independent specialist provision for young people aged 13-18 years. We have places for up to 20 learners with no more than 6 learners in each classroom.

We support learners with a range of special educational needs, including and not limited to:

- social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties, such as: Anxiety (social and generalised), depression, low self-esteem, low resilience, sleep difficulties and learners who have experienced trauma
- communication and interaction barriers, such as: autistic spectrum disorder and difficulties of communication and interaction associated with Anxiety and other SEMH difficulties
- cognition and learning difficulties, such as: Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, gaps in learning, working memory difficulties, processing difficulties and difficulties associated with High Anxiety
- some sensory and physical needs, such as: some physical impairments, sensory sensitivities.

## Expertise and staff training

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at Red Balloon Aylesbury is Claire Cockcroft. Claire is a qualified teacher BA Hons, with 26 years classroom experience, most recently working in an additional resource provision for young people with a diagnosis of autism. She is a qualified SENDCo holding the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (NASENCo) and a qualified access arrangements assessor, holding the PAPAA (postgraduate award for proficiency in access arrangements). Claire is also the designated safeguarding lead and works 4 days weekly managing the SEND provision.

## Learning mentors (subject teachers)

All our teachers have qualified teacher status. They receive ongoing in-house special educational needs training, and are supported by the SENDCo to meet the needs of learners who have SEND.

## Learning Support Assistants

We will in the future recruit learning support assistants who are trained to deliver SEN provision within the classrooms, support the learners social, emotional and mental health needs, and be trained to deliver interventions, such as the Zones of Regulation and TALKABOUT.

In our first academic year, learning support assistants will be trained in understanding and supporting learners with Autism, Dyslexia, Attachment difficulties and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA).

## External agencies and experts

Whenever necessary we will work with external support services to meet the needs of our learners and further support their families.

These include:

- Educational psychologists
- Specialist teaching service (STS)
- Special Educational Needs Assessment Team
- GPs or paediatricians
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Social services and other local authority (LA)-provided support services

## Assessing and reviewing learner progress towards outcomes

Red Balloon Educational Trust is currently writing an assessment framework that will be rolled out across all centres from September 2025. The framework has been designed with 5 bands (emerging, developing, securing, strengthening and mastering). Each area of knowledge or skill has been broken down into chunks to show how that particular objective develops. The idea is that the emerging band is capturing our very lowest learners progress with these objectives coming from KS1 and Ks2, and the mastering band being skills and knowledge taken from GCSE assessment objectives. We will not expect teachers to assess on all objectives every term, only the ones relevant to the current content they are teaching. This will allow us to accurately collect data and report on individual learner's profiles.

This information is then used to inform effective planning to close gaps and then returned to at future points to ensure retention of knowledge. Teachers are currently using learner RAG rating, in class formative assessment and mock exams to track progress.

## Our approach to teaching learners with SEND

All planning is highly differentiated for each learner. The support provided for each individual is outlined in their EHCP and summarised in a collaboratively produced working document (Passport for Progress (P4P)).

Lessons are differentiated according to the needs of each learner, and additional adult support is allocated where this can provide support for learning with the aim of all young people becoming as independent as possible.

Each learner has an individual Education Plan that is reviewed regularly with the learner and their learning mentor, which is overseen by the SENDCo.

The structure of the learning experience includes:

- individualised provision, tailored to meet need.
- graduated exposure and challenge at the right pace.
- a designated trusted adult for every learner and their family, called their Learning Mentor.
- highly qualified professionals who create a team around each child, the staff being supported by supervision and a strong Senior Leadership Team.

We review the SEND Information Report annually so that it reflects our ongoing work with learners who have SEND, and outlines how we identify, assess, support, and provide for our learners. We publish this report on our website to demonstrate the implementation of our policy for learners with SEND.

We aim to provide all our learners with the opportunity to thrive academically, to develop socially, and to successfully re-engage with the world around them.

## Adaptions to the curriculum and learning environment

At Red Balloon we offer a bespoke education programme that is designed to meet the needs of all learners and re-engage them with school life, as many of our learners have had significant periods of absence from learning prior to joining the centre.

Curriculum leaders design their subjects' curriculums in a way that is negotiated to meet the needs and interests of all learners and enables them to be on a pathway to achieve a variety of nationally recognised KS4 qualifications. For example, we offer GCSEs, Functional Skills, and will develop further qualifications in line with students' needs and interests in the future. Curriculum leaders will map their curriculums to ensure that there is good coverage of topics, progression of skills and to see where there are opportunities for cross curricular links to be made. Curriculum maps will be shared with learners to ensure they understand their learning pathway and enable them to identify success when they have mastered a topic.

Our curriculum offer includes Maths, English, Science (chemistry, physics, biology available separately), Art, PE, RSHE & Personal Development, Wellbeing, Music and Independent Projects.

Based on the needs of learners we will develop programmes e.g. in phonics or other areas as required, to support learners with lower reading ages. We have a primary-phase experienced teacher to support these learners, as required, to achieve the literacy knowledge and skills they need to access learning successfully across the curriculum.

Learners' profiles and needs are always considered within the setting. Seating arrangements, sensory stimulation, learner preference, lighting and small class sizes are some examples of adaptations we make to ensure our learners are able to feel comfortable and safe to learn within our centre.

When learners start at Red Balloon Aylesbury, they are given a laptop to work on. This is used in some lessons and allows us to provide individualized learning opportunities. It also enables our learners to become adept at ICT.

## Support for improving emotional and social development

The development of social and emotional skills is at the very core of all our work.

Red Balloon Aylesbury is well equipped to support learners with their SEMH (Social, emotional, mental health) and other SEN needs.

We approach learning in a holistic way. We know that learners cannot make progress academically if they have poor wellbeing. We aim to encourage learners to make the best possible academic progress as well as to ensure psychological, social, and emotional growth, improved communication skills and increased confidence and self-esteem through our wellbeing program and small-group work. We have a caring ethos where everyone is welcome and respected.

Learners are encouraged to use their voice and are always listened to. We encourage them to express themselves respectfully and appropriately. The provision we create for them is based on their individual profiles, ensuring that our approach is child-centred, and that learners' voices are at the heart of everything we do.

At Red Balloon Aylesbury we create a sense of community in which all learners are valued equally. At lunch and break times, our chef cooks a warm meal for learners and staff every day, and we all eat together in our community room, or outside if the weather allows. Learners play games with staff modelling positive behaviours and supporting socialisation.

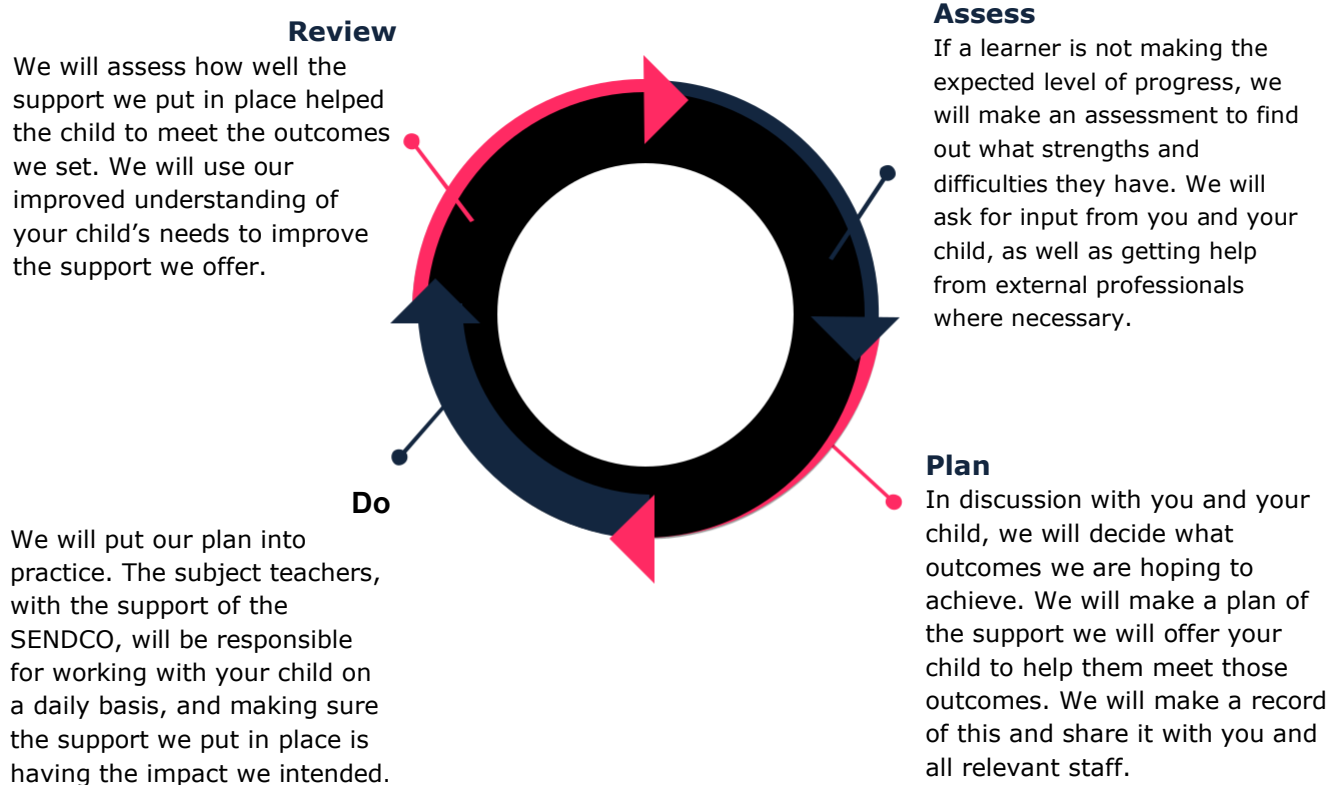
Learners can also have 1-1 therapy sessions with our Therapists (we have Occupational Therapy and Music therapy on site) and Mentoring sessions with a Key Person where they can build relationships of trust and address targets within their individual education plans.

We have high staff to learner ratios and ensure our groups are kept small, to allow staff to respond to the needs of learners and ensure the best outcomes.

At Red Balloon Aylesbury we practice unconditional positive regard (UPR). This means that we seek to empathise with, support, and accept each learner, regardless of what they say or do. We believe that UPR builds self-esteem and hope in our learners, and a feeling of self-worth in that they are accepted and valued.

### How will the school measure my child's progress?

Red Balloon follows the 'graduated approach' to meet our learners SEND needs. The graduated approach is a 4-part cycle of assess, plan, do, review.



As a part of the planning stage of the graduated approach, we will set outcomes that we want to see your child achieve. The outcomes are recorded on the learner's individual education plan. Mentors will work with learners to identify their targets, work on them and review them termly together.

Whenever we run an intervention with a learner, we will assess them before the intervention begins. This is known as a 'baseline assessment'. We do this so we can see how much impact the intervention has on the learner's progress.

This process is continual. If the review shows a learner has made progress, they will have new targets set in collaboration between learner and mentor. For some targets, learners may need a little longer to achieve them, therefore the cycle will continue, and the provisions will be revisited and refined.

## Supporting learners moving between phases and preparing for adulthood

All transitions are well planned and have included home visits and multiple centre visits. Red Balloon Aylesbury will facilitate enhanced transitions to include learners moving year groups and to a new key stage. This could include options events for GCSE courses. Learners will be supported in planning for their transition from Red Balloon to a Post-16 provision and learning appropriate life skills to enable them to be independent.

Transition experiences are provided for learners including sharing information, teaching core skills, visiting alternative provisions, visitors and guest speakers, open events, work experiences, teaching life skills such as independent travel and purchasing items from a shop or café, collaboration with local businesses and liaising with local college provision.

New learners joining us will have sensitive, appropriate transition arrangements made depending upon their specific needs and circumstances. We arrange meetings with the parents/guardians to discuss how we can best welcome their child into our community and the learners will have a number of taster visits and a bespoke timetable agreed in collaboration with parent/guardian and learner, to support a successful transition into the centre.

## Consulting and involving learner's and parents/guardians

We know that you are the expert when it comes to your child's needs and aspirations. So, we want to make sure you have a full understanding of how we are trying to meet your child's needs, so that you can provide insight into what you think would work best for your child.

At Red Balloon Aylesbury– parents / guardians are fully included in the process of working with their children/young adults.

This includes:

- Initial visits to the centre
- Introductory meetings
- Taster sessions
- Parent / guardian / teacher meetings throughout the year
- Termly progress reports
- An annual review meeting and report
- Parent/guardian support and meet-ups
- Coffee mornings
- Parent/guardian involvement in transition and post-16 options through informal and formal consultations and open events
- Regular questionnaires for families and learners to complete
- Regular newsletter and email updates.
- Social media updates
- IEP informal review meetings
- Enhanced SENDCo liaison – phone calls and emails as required

## How will my child be involved in decisions made about their education?

We believe learner voice is invaluable when making decisions about their education. Learners know themselves best, therefore we provide regular opportunities for learners to make decisions and share their views to ensure we offer the best support and educational journey to meet their individual needs.

We may seek your child's views by asking them to:

- Attend meetings to discuss their progress and outcomes ➤  
Prepare a presentation, written statement, video, drawing, etc,  
as per their preferences.
- Discuss their views with a member of staff who can act as a  
representative/advocate, as and when required
- Complete a survey

## How will the school evaluate whether the support in place is helping my child?

Red Balloon Aylesbury will evaluate the effectiveness of provision for your child by:

- Reviewing their progress towards their goals using the learner's individual education plans (IEP)
- Obtaining parent/guardian and learner voice within any informal reviews
- Reviewing the impact of interventions
- Using learner questionnaires
- Monitoring by the SENDCo
- Using assessments, as required and appropriate, to measure progress
- Holding an annual review
- Parent/guardian meetings  
Daily staff meetings which are learner focused to discuss issues of the day and actions  
➤ required.
- SEND learning walks and observations.
- Inspections by the local authority
- Inspections by Ofsted  
Monitoring visits by Local Governors and Red Balloon Aylesbury Trustees
- Baseline assessments which concern academic, social, emotional, mental
- health

## What support is available for my family?

If you have questions about SEN, or you or your family need support, please get in touch to let us know. We want to support you, your child and your family.

To see what support is available to you locally, have a look at Bucks local offer. Follow the link to find out about the local offer on the Buckinghamshire website <https://familyinfo.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/send/>

Our local special educational needs and disabilities information, advice and support (SENDIAS) services are a free, confidential, and impartial service that provides information and support to children and young people with SEN and their families. You can find out more about SENDIAS on their website which can be found following this link: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/bucks-sendias-service/>





National charities that offer information and support to families of children with SEND are:

- [IPSEA](#)
- [SEND family support](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Family Action](#)
- [Special Needs Jungle](#)