

SEND POLICY AND INFORMATION REPORT

Last reviewed on: 09/07/25

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1. Introduction:

Ancora House School is a Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) local authority provision which is comprised of two sites: Ancora House School hospital site and Ancora School community site at Castle Park.

The Ancora House School hospital site is a short stay hospital education provision. It provides education and support for young people who are admitted to Ancora House, a Tier 4 adolescent mental health inpatient unit. The unit is a Cheshire and Wirral Partnership {CWP} NHS Foundation Trust facility which caters for young people between 13 years up to their 18th birthday from the following local authorities: Cheshire West & Chester; Cheshire East; Liverpool; Halton; Knowsley; Sefton; St Helens; Warrington and Wirral. There are 26 places over two wards. Access to the school is directly as a result of admission to hospital. Length of stay varies widely; 8 weeks can be taken as an average but some stays may be only a week, others over a year. The team of teachers, teaching assistants, transition staff and administration staff work closely with home schools and colleges so that young people remain engaged with their learning despite their admission to hospital.

Ancora House School hospital site also has an eight place day provision for young people under the Cheshire Eating Disorder Service. Young people attend the provision for an eight week intensive offer of education and therapeutic sessions. Admissions are for young people between 13 years of age and 17 years and 10 months. As with the general admissions, our staff team work closely with home schools and colleges regarding school / college work and advice re functioning and best practice going forward.

The Ancora House School community site provides education for up to 34 learners from Cheshire West and Chester at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. School places are for young people who are unable to access their home school / college because of a range of needs. Places are available under the following categories:

- Medical Needs – learners who cannot attend their main school because of physical and/or social emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties.

- Statutory school age learners with an EHCP with the primary need being SEMH.
- Post 16 learners with an EHCP with the primary need being SEMH.
- Children Looked After

Admission to the school is via local authority referral. Ancora House School community site caters for children and young people in the Cheshire West and Chester locality; this element of the school operates from Castle Park, Frodsham and has close working partnerships with our locality schools.

Young people who attend Ancora House School hospital and community sites have health and / or social & emotional and / or mental health needs; all young people have special educational needs at this point in their educational journey.

Ancora House School **hospital and community sites** cater for young people who often have multiple conditions and present with a wide range of complex needs including:

- Social isolation (often following long term non-attendance at school)
- Social and emotional needs (including significant problems with peer relationships)
- ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder)
- OCD (Obsessive compulsive disorder)
- ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder)
- Self-harming
- Eating disorders
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Psychotic episodes
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia

Young people are registered at Ancora House School and their home school / college in a dual-roll arrangement. If they are 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) or in the case of the community site, they are on roll due to having an EHCP, they will be single rolled. Where a young person is dual rolled, their main education provider, will remain their home school or college and retain responsibility for the Graduated Response and the monitoring and review of Education Health and Care Plans. Ancora House School is fully committed to close collaborative partnerships and will fully support SEND processes.

2. Aims:

This SEND policy and information report aims to:

- Set out how our school will support and make provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for young people with SEND

3. Legislation and guidance:

This policy and information report is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for young people with SEN and disabilities
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEND coordinators (SENDCos) and the SEN information report

4. Definitions:

A young person 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 of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

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

5. Roles and responsibilities:

5.1 The SENDCo

The SENDCos at Ancora House School are as follows:

- Ancora House School hospital site: Sheila Kennedy Tel: (01244) 397428 / 397598
- Ancora House School at Castle Park: Kerry Kirkman Tel: 01244 506 670 / 01928 242 574

They will:

- Work with the head teacher and the designated SEND management committee member to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual young people, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that young people with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- Work with Ancora House School Transition colleagues to liaise with potential next providers of education / training to ensure young people and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- Work with the head teacher and Ancora House School Management Committee to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Ensure the school keeps the records of all young people with SEND up to date

5.2 The Designated School Management Committee Member responsible for SEND:

(Formerly known as the SEND Governor)

The Designated School Management Committee Member for SEND is **Samantha Olubodun**.
Contact via: admin@ancora.cheshire.sch.uk

The member will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at school management committee meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEN and disability provision within the school and update the school management committee on this
- Work with the head teacher and SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school

5.3 The Head Teacher:

The will:

- Work with the SENDCos and SEND management committee member to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEN and/or a disability

5.4 Class teachers:

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that they deliver quality first teaching supported by curriculum and pastoral differentiation and modifications to meet each young person's needs
- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy

6. SEN information report:

6.1 The areas of SEND provided for:

Our school sites currently provide specialist and additional /or different provision for a range of needs, including:

- Communication and interaction
For example, autistic spectrum disorder, speech and language difficulties
- Cognition and learning
For example, specific learning difficulties, including dyslexic needs, Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)
- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties
For example, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), bipolar
- Sensory and/or physical
For example, visual impairments, epilepsy, hyper sensitivity
- Moderate learning difficulties

Many young people have difficulties that fit clearly into one of these areas; some have needs that span two or more areas.

6.2 Information Gathering and Identification of SEND:

With regard to helping to identify SEND on admission, information will be gathered from:

- The young person
- Current / last home schools / colleges
- Parents
- Primary Schools where it is felt necessary
- Tier 3 and 4 CAMHS
- Social care where relevant

Each young person's current skills and levels of attainment will be assessed on entry to establish a baseline; the nature of these assessments will be determined by what the young person can tolerate on admission (given their social, emotional and mental health presentations).

Specific assessment tools may be used, including:

- The Wide Range Achievement Test, Fifth Edition (WRAT5) which measures and monitors fundamental reading, spelling, and maths skills.
- Lucid Exact
- Dyslexia Portfolio (GL Assessments)
- Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)

Young people are also encouraged to have their voices heard with regard to SEND, through Pupil Passports and the 'Bella Questionnaire' both of which support young people to consider their strengths and areas for development including what they find challenging and how they feel they could be best supported to move forward.

In the inpatient setting, the school provides information which feeds into clinical assessments for conditions such as ASD and ADHD.

The clinical team may make use of the following (the outcomes of which inform teaching and learning):

- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) assessment - a measure of general intellectual functioning.
- ADOS (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule) - a standardized diagnostic test for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- MOHOST (Model of Human Occupation Screening Tool) - an assessment which provides an overview of a young person's occupational functioning
- Speech and Language assessments

6.3 Assessing and reviewing pupils' progress towards outcomes:

Class teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all young peoples and identify those whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better the young person's previous rate of progress

- Fails to close the attainment gap between the young person and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

This will include progress in areas other than academic attainment, for example, social skills.

The subject teacher will work with the SENCO to carry out a clear analysis of the young person's needs. This will draw on:

- The teacher's assessment and experience of the young person
- The young person's previous progress, attainment and behaviours
- Other teachers' assessments, where relevant
- The individual's development in comparison to their peers and national data
- RICs / RICHs assessments after each session which examine a young person's Relationship with peers; Impact of mental health difficulties on ability to concentrate; Communication with adults and at Ancora School at Castle Park, Hopes for the future.
- The views and experience of parents
- The young person's own views
- Advice from external support services, if relevant

All teachers and support staff will be made aware of young people's needs, the outcomes sought, the support needed and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. Barriers to learning, initiatives and the effectiveness of the support provided in terms of its impact on the young person's progress is reviewed in weekly meetings.

6.4 Consulting and involving young people and parents:

Regular discussions with the young people and their parents /carers regarding special educational provision will take place. Where appropriate this will include weekly phone calls home. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the young person's areas of strength and difficulty
- Parents' / carers' concerns are taken into account
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the young person
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

Where relevant, young people and / or their parents will be supported to make an Education Health Care needs assessment request.

6.5 Supporting young people returning to their home educational settings, moving to new settings and preparing for adulthood:

When moving on, the Ancora House School Transition and SEND teams support young people and their families / carers to identify the most appropriate educational settings to meet the young person's needs and retain / gain a place there. Every effort will be made to ensure that young people and their families / carers are fully engaged in this process. It will be agreed with parents / carers and young people which information will be shared as part of this process. Transition staff will subsequently support young people to transition to the setting.

Where appropriate, young people will also receive advice and support regarding preparing for adult life.

6.6 Teaching approaches and adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment for young people with SEND:

High quality teaching is our first step in responding to young people who have SEND. Teaching and learning styles, lesson content, resources and lesson pace / length will, whenever possible, be adapted to meet the specific needs of the individual.

The curriculum covers core subjects and PSHE plus an adapted nurturing offer of access to Art for all, Outdoor Education, STEM, ELSA (emotional literacy sessions) and bespoke engagement activities to meet individual needs

Ancora House School offers:

- A physically small environment which demands little movement from one area to another.
- A generally quiet and calm atmosphere.
- A school area that has a maximum of 42 young people at any given time at the community site and 13 young people at the hospital site.
- One-to-one or small group teaching.
- A 'Sensory friendly' approach (e.g.: lighting can be set to meet individual needs; young people have access to time out / a 'chill out space'; sensory distractions such as fidget toys / wobble cushions etc. are provided as and when needed).
- A small staff team made up of experienced teachers and teaching assistants who are familiar with managing significant communication and interaction, cognition and learning, sensory, and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Individual teaching and learning strategies which enable young people with SEND to access sessions and learn. These could include for example:
 - Young people being supported to enter rooms
 - Allowing for extra processing time
 - Using recommended aids such as laptops; coloured overlays; scaffolded tasks; writing frames etc.
 - Delivering bespoke lessons connected to a young person's special interest
 - Academic sessions being cut short and a low stimulus activity offered if a young person is becoming overwhelmed
- Trauma informed practices to help support adverse childhood experiences.

6.7 Additional support for learning from external professionals

Ancora House School works with the following agencies to provide support for young people with SEND and their families:

- Tier 3
- Tier 4 CAMHS (including family therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and consultant psychiatrists)
- Social workers
- Educational psychologists
- Ward advocates

6.8 Expertise and training of staff:

- The SENCOs: Sheila Kennedy and Kerry Kirkman are experienced teachers and SENCOs. At the hospital site, Sheila Kennedy holds the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (NASENCO) qualification and as Deputy Head is part of the Senior Leadership Team. At the community site, Kerry Kirkman is supported by Carli Willis Deputy Headteacher who holds the NASENCO Qualification and also has the PGCert in SPLD. All teachers have considerable experience of working with young people with SEND
- Across the two sites there are:
 - Nine part and full time teaching assistants (equating to 6.7) who are trained to deliver SEN provision; this includes four teaching assistants who are trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA trained)
 - Four Transitions workers who support young people in their next educational steps
- Across Staff have significant experience of working with neurodivergent learners; many have taken part in training related to Autism; ADHD; Tourette's Syndrome; Dyslexia and executive functioning difficulties.
- All staff have completed Safeguarding and Prevent training.
- Ancora House School hospital site holds an autism accreditation from the National Autistic Society which was gained through a joint project with CWP hospital trust.
- Most staff have completed the NESSY Dyslexia Training Programme.
- Over the last three years all senior leaders, SENCOs and Transition staff have received training regarding trauma informed practices which has been disseminated to staff.

6.9 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision:

The effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEND is evaluated by:

- Reviewing each young person's individual progress in weekly meetings.
- Reviewing the impact of strategies / initiatives and interventions relating to Relationships with peers, the Impact of mental health on concentration and Communication with adults through RICs data analysis.
- Supporting home schools / colleges with annual review processes for young people with EHC plans.

6.10 Working with other agencies:

Ancora House School works closely with young people and their families in order to identify the wider support that will be necessary to address individual complex needs. This ensures that young people with SEND are supported effectively. This involves close communication and consultation with appropriate outside agencies.

At Ancora House the hospital education team work closely with the clinical team in supporting SEMH needs and wider engagement; this includes, collaboration with consultant psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and the nursing staff on the wards. Information is shared between the teams (from clinical to education and vice versa) to maximise understanding of each young person in order that support is specific and tailored to meet individual needs.

The SENCOs work closely with home school SENCOs, as and when appropriate, in order to ensure SEND needs are fully understood by both parties.

Education Transition workers work closely with students and families during times of transition back to the home school or new placements and ensure SEMH and practical needs are considered carefully to ensure successful transition.

Ancora House School in the community work closely with the CWaC Education Access team, planning and coordinating outreach work in the community and the CWaC virtual school for Children who are looked after.

Both sites also collaborate with:

- Social workers
- Family support workers
- Educational psychologists
- Tier 3 CAMHS
- The Early Intervention Team
- Dynamic Support Function Teams
- Intensive Support Function Teams
- Virtual Schools
- Section 19 Medical Needs Teams

6.11 Contact details for raising concerns:

Parents/carers who have a concern specific to a young person's SEND needs are encouraged to meet with the site SENCOs at a mutually agreed time to discuss; please contact Carli Willis at Ancora School, Castle Park and Sheila Kennedy at Ancora House. If they feel that an issue has not been adequately resolved they may wish to contact Sian Thomas, Head teacher, or further to this put their concern in writing to the Chair of the School Management Committee.

Please direct these emails to: admin@ancora.cheshire.sch.uk

Or write to:

The Head Teacher / Chair of Management Committee
Countess of Chester Health Park
Liverpool Road
Chester
CH2 1BQ

It should be noted that the school recognises the right of parents / carers of young people with disabilities to make disability discrimination claims to the first-tier SEND tribunal if they believe that the school has discriminated against their child.

6.12 Contact details of support services for parents of young people with SEND:

External agencies can provide excellent, information, advice and support for young people, parents and carers in relation to SEND.

Each local authority should have a SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS). See below for contact details:

Cheshire West and Chester

Tel: 0300 123 7001

Email: iasservice@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Website:

[What is the Local Offer and what does our Local Offer include? | Live Well Cheshire West \(cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk\)](#)

Wirral

Tel: 0151 522 7990 - option 2

Email: contact@wired.me.uk

Website:

[Wired - Wirral SEND Partnership](#)

Cheshire East

Tel: 0300 123 5166

Email: ceias@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Web:

<http://ceias.cheshireeast.gov.uk/home.aspx>

Halton

Tel: 0151 511 7733

Email: SENDpartnership@halton.gov.uk

Website:

[Halton SEND Partnership | Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice and Support \(sendiasshalton.co.uk\)](#)

Liverpool & Knowsley

Tel: 0800 012 9066

Email: liverpoolandknowsleysend@wired.me.uk

Web:

<http://liverpoolandknowsleysend.com/>

Sefton

Tel: 0151 934 3334

Email: seftonsendiass@sefton.gov.uk

Web:

<https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/advice.page?id=x8sKvkxyZyo&localofferchannel=9>

St Helens

Tel: 01744 673428

Email: sheilahenshall@sthelens.gov.uk

Website:

[SEND \(sthelens.gov.uk\)](#)

Warrington

Tel: 01925 442978

Email: imacdonald@warrington.gov.uk

Website:

<http://www.warringtonsendiass.co.uk>

Wigan

Tel: 01942 233323

Email: sendiass@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk

Website:

www.embracewiganandleigh.org.uk

Bolton

Tel: 01204 848722

Email:

iasoutofhours@outlook.com

Website:

www.iasbolton.com

Nationally, the Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (known as IPSEA) is a registered charity offering free and independent legally based information, advice and support to help get the right education for children and young people with SEND.

Go to: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/Pages/Category/who-we-are>

6.13: The local authority local offer:

Cheshire West and Chester SEND local offer is published here:

<https://livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/Categories/3948><https://livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/>

7. Monitoring arrangements:

This policy and information report will be reviewed by SENCos Carli Willis and Sheila Kennedy and by the head teacher Sian Thomas each year. It will be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year. It will be approved by the management committee annually,

8. Links with other Ancora House School policies and documents:

This policy links to our policies on:

- Accessibility plan
- Equality Policy & Objectives
- Positive Behaviour & Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy

Building resilience for future success