SEND Information Report
Date: September 2026

Willow Vale School

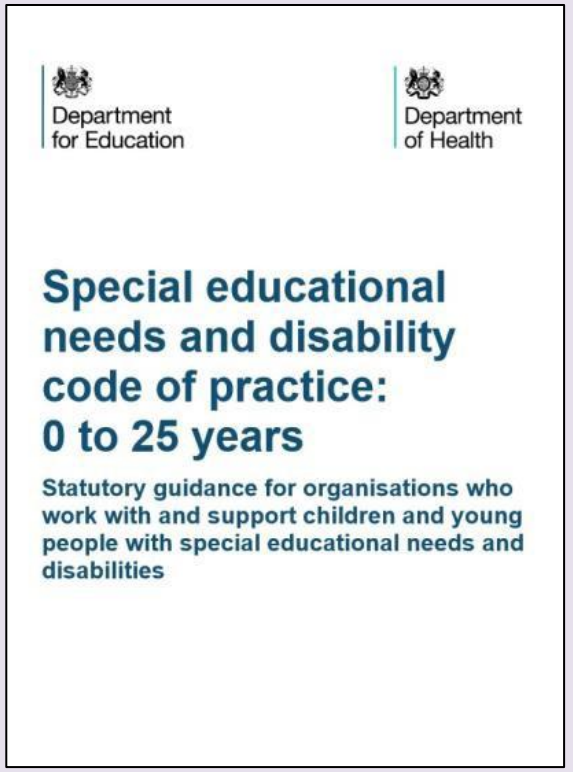
Be Safe - Be Kind - Belong

- *This report is designed to inform you of the types of support available for your child at **Willow Vale School***
- *It will help you understand who can help and how this help can be accessed.*
- *This report will be reviewed annually.*

Definition of Special Educational Needs

A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Namely provision that is different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support.

taken from SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years *(6.15 pg 94)*



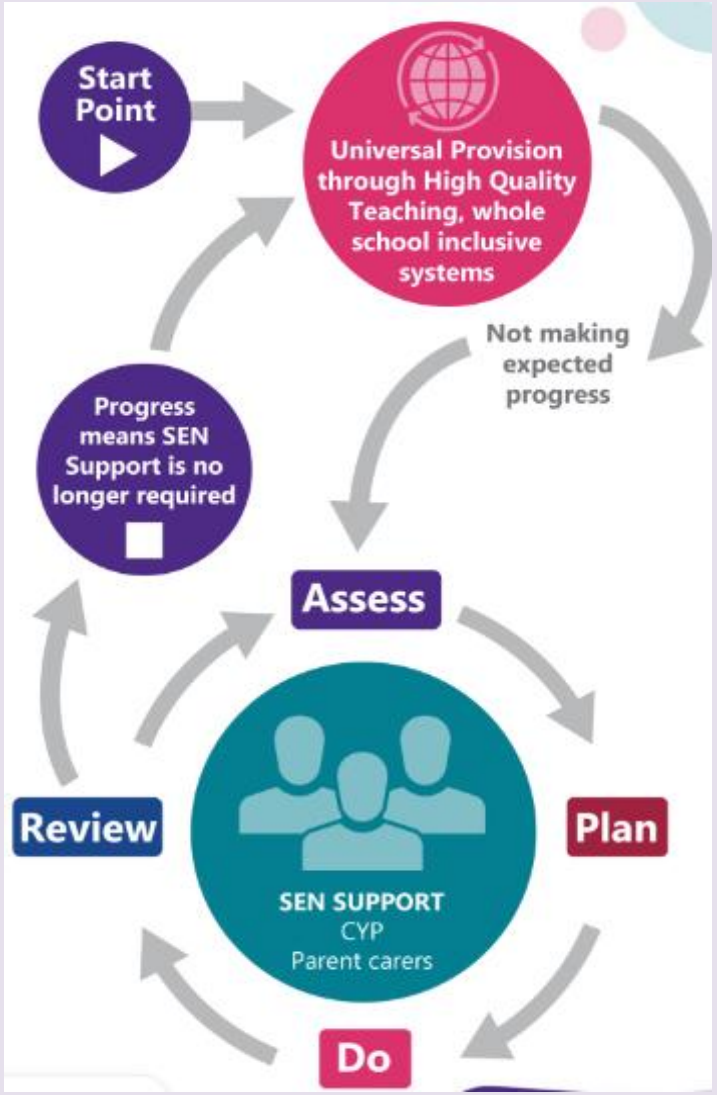
How does the school know if a child needs extra help?

- *A child may be identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) at any stage during their education.*
- *This may be a long-term difficulty or disability requiring specific intervention or something new that develops during their time at Willow Vale School.*
- *On entry to Willow Vale School, we will complete a series of baseline assessments to help us determine any underlying learning challenges. We will also sit with your child to hear their experiences of school previously, enquiring about things which may have been challenging for example.*
- *We will contact your child's previous educational setting for any information they hold which may support us to understand and plan for your child's needs.*
- *Information may also come from a variety of other sources, such as:*

- *Parental concerns*
- *Child concerns*
- *An officially recognised diagnosis requiring SEND provision*
- *An Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)*
- *Involvement from external agencies/professionals*

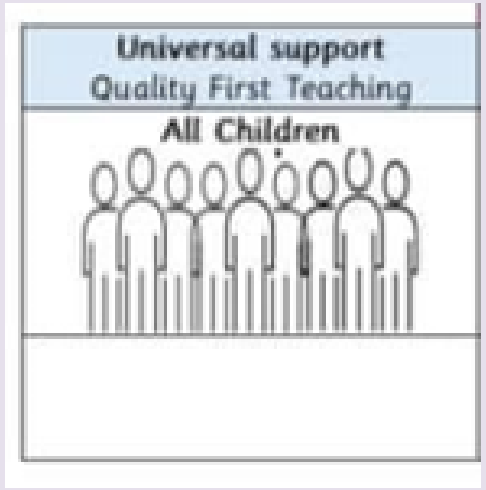
How will the school support my child?

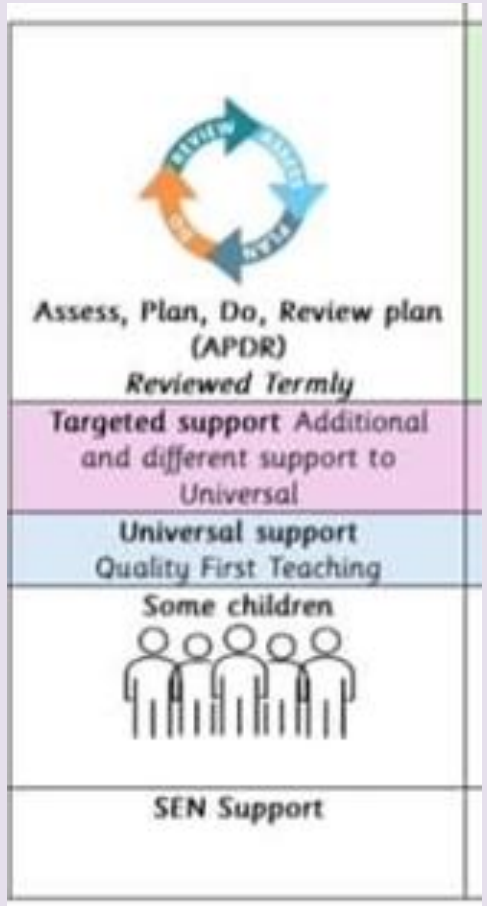
- *Willow Vale School meets the presenting needs of the children and works to understand and support any underlying causes of the needs. Each child is unique, and the support they need will be tailored to them.*
- *School staff will support individuals at a level appropriate to their needs through high-quality teaching and adaptation within the classroom, engaging activities pitched to children's interests and emotionally available adults to support*
- *We aim to ensure the fullest possible access to the curriculum for all students and a personalised Learning Plan will be produced to share appropriate strategies with school staff to ensure this is able to happen.*
- *The learning plan will also be used to establish a small number of personal outcomes/aims and agreed actions for everyone involved, including the child. These will then inform staff's planning and focus support for each student.*
- *If your child has an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan), we will support them to work towards their outcomes*



- **Please note:** if your child has a diagnosis, this doesn't automatically mean your child will be on the SEN register or that an EHCP should be applied for. For some children with a diagnosis, the universal provision provided to the whole class is sufficient to meet their needs.

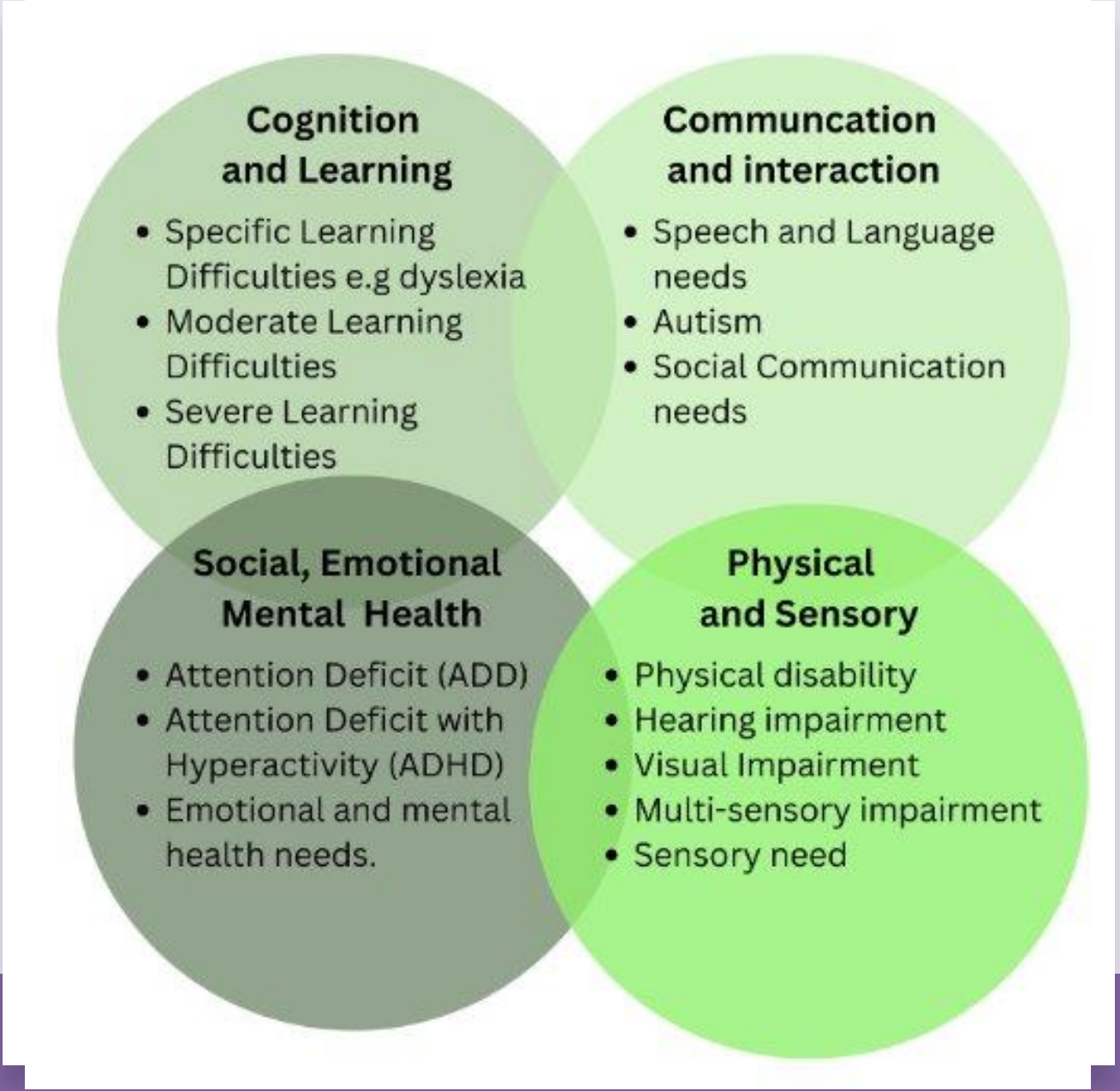
SEND
Graduated Response





What kinds of SEND are provided for at the school?

The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 identifies four broad areas of Special Educational Need. The image here shows the SEND category of need with the range of needs within each category.



What provision is there for children at Willow Vale School?

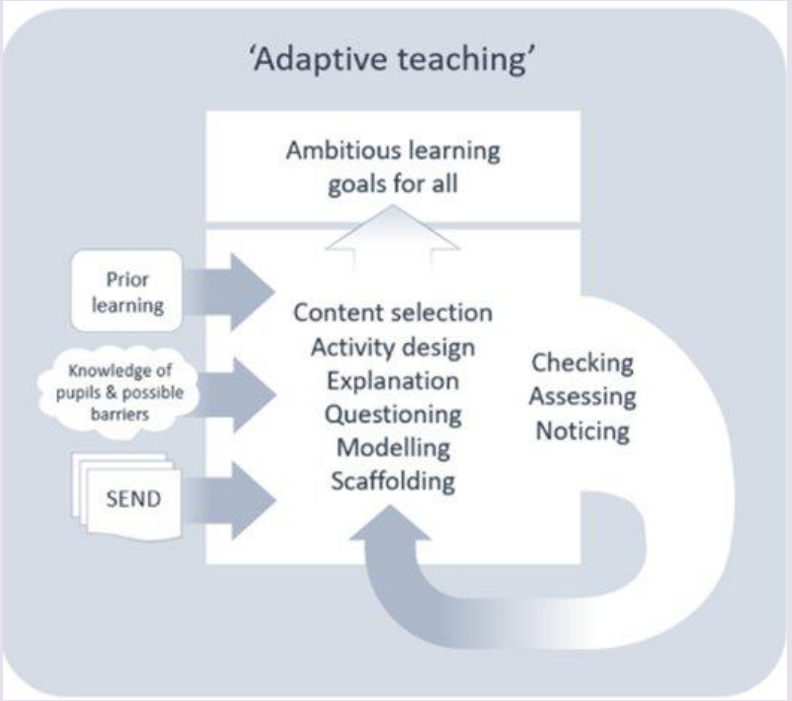
- *Students at Willow Vale School access learning in small groups (approximately 6 students).*
- *Curriculum programmes are designed to meet the children's academic needs as well as their emotional needs*
- *Timetables are designed to meet each individual child's needs*
- *Daily sessions with their tutor gives each child a key person in school*
- *Soft starts, with breakfast and social time prior to learning*
- *Outdoor and practical learning opportunities*
- *ELSAs (emotional literacy support assistants) across all school sites who work 1:1 or in small groups with the children*
- *Careers guidance and support to secure work experience*
- *Careers interviews (Year 11 only)*
- *Visiting speakers from different careers*

How will the school's approach be adapted to match my child's needs?

We make the following adaptations to ensure all pupils' needs are met;

- *Differentiating our curriculum to ensure all pupils are able to access it. For example, by grouping, 1:1 work, teaching style, lesson content.*
- *Adapting our resources.*
- *Adapting our teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of individual pupils.*
- *Using recommended aids such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font etc.*
- *Differentiating individual lessons. For example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching key vocabulary, repeating instructions and providing visual prompts etc.*
- *Ensuring staff are aware of pupil's individual needs and teach in a way that is appropriate for them.*
- *Work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and external agencies to cater for young peoples' special educational needs and disabilities.*
- *Identify special educational needs at the earliest opportunity to ensure early intervention and support.*

Most areas of the school are accessible to all and if required we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure all students have full access to the curriculum.



How will I know what progress my child is making?

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This is then shared with parents at parent's evenings, review meetings and in written reports.

How does Willow Vale School support mental health and wellbeing?

- *Willow Vale School have a large pastoral team, with pastoral leads in each centre. This team of people help to support mental health and wellbeing through being trusted adults, attending meetings to keep updated with a child's circumstances, making referrals to support services and being close links with the families for example.*
- *Staff use an emotion coaching approach with children*

- *A number of our staff are ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) who deliver 1:1 or small group interventions as required, and also use their skills in their day to day interactions with children.*
- *We have a tutor support system to ensure pupils have regular contact when needed during school time, supported by key adults.*

- *Our medical students have regular contact with CAMHs.*

- *We may refer to an Educational Psychologist to support with mental health needs.*

- *We have a PFSA, who can support parents.*

What support will there be for my child's wellbeing?

All Willow Vale centres offer a 'soft start' to the day, with breakfast provided and staff available to offer 'check ins' before lessons begin

Lessons are kept short at 40 minutes, with no more than 2 lessons before a planned break

Children are given their own named drink bottle which they can have with them in the day – refilled as required.

Lunch is provided daily
We have a tutor support system to ensure pupils have regular contact when needed during school time, supported by key adults.

Our medical students have regular contact with CAMHs.

We may refer to an Educational Psychologist to support with mental health needs.

We have a PFSA, who can support parents

What specialist services are available to support my child?

Willow Vale School works closely with the Educational Psychology Service and have termly meetings with their link Educational Psychologist (EP) to identify next steps of support for individual children. We may seek parental permission for an EP to work directly with your child to help us better understand their needs.

- *The Family Intervention Service (FIS) can support families to navigate challenges*
- *Mental Health in Schools Team (MHST) who are part of Young Somerset***
- *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)*
- *Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS) who are part of Turning Point*
- *** Children and Young People's Therapy Service (CYPTS) – includes services such as speech and language, occupational therapy*
- *Support services for hearing, visual or physical impairment*

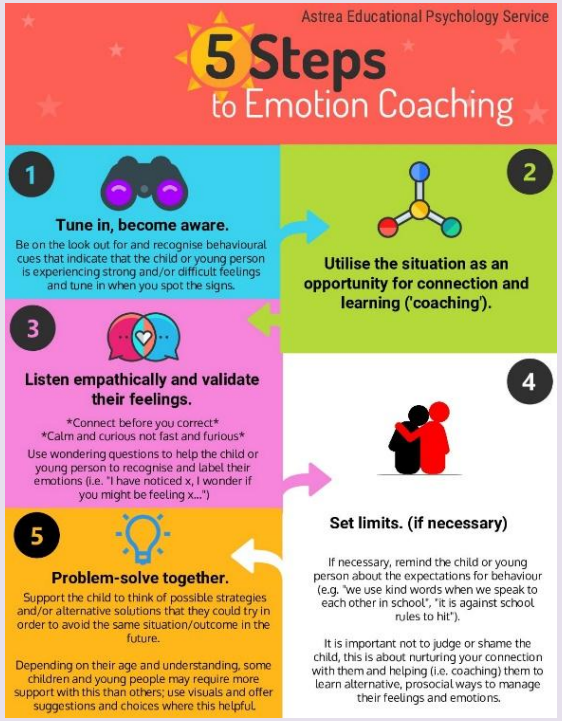
***these services accept referrals from parents/carers*

What training is made available to staff supporting students with SEND?

The school has a development plan which identifies training needs for all staff in order to support the teaching and learning of all students. Whole staff training is regularly provided and supports staff in sharing knowledge, strategies and experience, ensuring consistency of approach for all students, including students with SEND needs.

We have a team of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA's) who deliver small group and 1:1 interventions to develop students' emotional literacy skills.

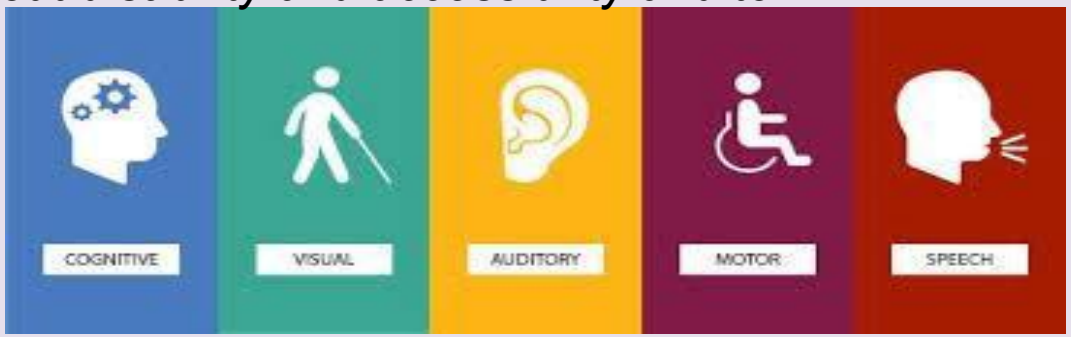
All student facing staff have Team Teach/Price training, which focuses on de-escalation techniques



How accessible is the school environment?

Willow Vale school operates out of 6 very different sites between Bridgwater and Taunton. Our Accessibility plan outlines the schools aims to ensure as a school all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind. Many children and young people who have SEND may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is '…a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities', Code of Practice (2015).

We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.



How will my child be included in activities outside of the classroom?

We enable all children to engage fully in all aspects of school life. We do not see SEN as a barrier to accessing the full curriculum and ensure that children with SEN are fully included in all activities in order to promote the highest levels of achievement.

We do this by;

- *Encouraging all students to take part in trips and off site activities to enhance their learning, supported by a key adult.*
- *Ensuring students with SEND support have appropriate planning and support to ensure they can access off site provision and reasonable adjustments will be made.*
- *Ensuring that all pupils have access to the school curriculum and all school activities, for example, by providing adult support and adaptations where necessary.*

How will my child and I be involved in decision making and planning for their education?

For parents/carers

- *Parents evenings*
- *Phone calls home*
- *Open door policy*
- *EHCP annual reviews*

For children:

- *Observations*
- *Tutor time discussions*
- *1:1 conversations*
- *Careers conversations*

How will the school support my child during transition into Willow Vale?

Willow Vale is a Day 6 provision, meaning that many of the children on roll have been permanently excluded from a school. Some children also come to us as 'hard to place' having been unsuccessful securing a space in a local school. Other children may come to us under partnership with their 'home school' for a range of reasons, which can include medical tuition.

For many of our children, something traumatic has happened to them in their previous school (permanent exclusion). The children are in a kind of 'limbo' waiting to hear whether the decision to exclude them is being rescinded so they can return to school or upheld and they are to remain at Willow Vale. They are given a slow start to their time in school to accommodate this.

Children start at Willow Vale initially on an out of hours timetable, where they come into centre for tours, baseline assessments, meeting teachers and so on. Timetables are then increased as appropriate to the child.

Once we know a child is remaining at Willow Vale, staff contact excluding schools to ensure all relevant information about their needs, and previous support is in place.

How will the school support my child during transition out of Willow Vale School?

When students leave Willow Vale, the transition support put in place will be bespoke to the individual and/or the setting they are joining. For every child who leaves Willow Vale School, there is always a handover of information from both the SENDCo and the pastoral and safeguarding teams where relevant. Some examples of transition processes are below:

- *the child may have a few supported visits to the school/college and then simply start their new school*
- *Willow Vale may offer an initial partnership to support transition, with the child attending both settings while they settle in.*
- *Some specialist settings take charge of the transition process, and visits/meetings are organised with parents/carers directly with limited involvement by Willow Vale.*

Who should I contact for more information or if I am concerned about my child?

If you have a safeguarding concern about your child, please contact their education centre and ask to speak to someone from the safeguarding team. Centre leads, pastoral leads plus other staff within the school team are all highly trained to manage safeguarding concerns.
Nic Anstice is the Willow Vale designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Each of the Willow Vale School centres have a named centre lead and pastoral lead, and these will be your first points of contact if you have any general concerns about your child.

	Holway	Northfields	DDC	Albert Street	New Prospects	Cossington	Online and Virtual
Centre Lead	Ali Keirle	Deryk Kerr	Bek Tainton	Kate Taylor	Sarah Pearce	Emilie Crossland	Sarah Pearce
Pastoral Lead	Laura Mansfield	Rich Dewdney	Kate Rosington	Katie Day	Rachael Chappell	Amanda Loach	X
office@willowvale.org.uk	01823 349 338	c/o 01823 349338	c/o 01823 349338	01278 434017	01278 421148	01278 444222	01278 421148

There are 2 SENDCos at Willow Vale, who can be contacted via their direct email address should you have any specific SEN concerns or queries. Contact Sarah Harding or Jo Littlechild on: senco@willowvale.org.uk

How will the school advise me if they have concerns about my child?

- *If we have concerns about any aspect of your child's school life, the most appropriate member of staff will contact you. This may be your child's teacher or tutor, a member of the pastoral team or a member of the leadership team.*
- *Staff may also use other opportunities such as parents evening to let you know about any concerns.*
- *For all our children, we use an 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' approach. We identify their individual needs (through assessments, observations and conversations for example), and set targets in the areas of English, Maths and SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health). These targets are then reviewed, often as part of termly parent meetings.*

What support does Willow Vale School have for me as a parent of a child with SEND?

We can be a listening ear
We can offer guidance or next steps advice
We can support you to complete any paperwork relating to your child
We can explain processes which you may encounter e.g. the EHCP process

We can signpost and/or refer you to other specialist support services…

Family Intervention Service (somerset.gov.uk)

Somerset's Parent Carer Forum

Wise Workshops

SENDIAS

Somerset's SEND Local Offer

Willow Vale School

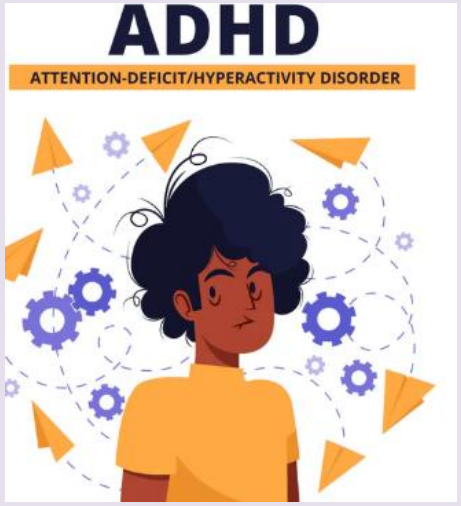
Be Safe - Be Kind - Belong

...we can signpost you to useful resources

the sleep charity

eric

The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity



What should I do if I am not satisfied with a decision or what is happening?

- *Your first point of contact is always the person responsible – this may be your child's class teacher or tutor, the SENDCo, our Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Head Teacher.*
- *You are encouraged to speak to them first and explain your concerns.*
- *If you are not satisfied that your concern has been addressed, then please ask for the contact information for their line manager.*
- *If you still feel the issues are unresolved, then please follow the school's complaints procedure*

- *If your concern is with the Local Authority, then please contact the Somerset Parent Carer Forum Somerset Parent Carer Forum CIC Ltd (not for profit) company no. 10227489 or the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Advice Service (SENDIAS) - Home (somersetsend.org.uk).*

Glossary of terms

ADHD(Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) A condition which can affect concentration, impulse control and activity levels.
ASC/ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition/Disorder) A neurodevelopmental condition that affects communication, social interaction and flexibility of thought.
Annual Review A yearly meeting to review the progress and needs of a pupil with an EHCP (see below), and to consider whether any changes are needed.
CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) NHS services supporting children and young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties
Differentiation/Adaption Adapting teaching methods, tasks or resources to suit the individual needs of learners
EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) A legal document for children with significant and complex needs which sets out the support a child requires across education, health and social care.
EHCNA (Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment) The formal assessment process carried out by the local authority to determine whether a child or young person requires an EHCP.
EAL (English as an Additional Language) A term used to identify pupils for whom English is not the first language.
EPPLAC (Education and Personal Progress Plan for Looked After Children)
Graduated Response (APDR) A four-part cycle (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) used by schools to provide increasingly targeted support for children with SEND
Inclusion Ensuring all children, regardless of ability or need, are welcomed, valued and supported to fully take part in school life.
Intervention A specific programme of additional support, usually time limited, designed to help a child progress in a particular area
Occupational Therapy (OT) An NHS service which supports children who have difficulties with everyday physical tasks, such as handwriting, balance or coordination.
Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) A document which describes strengths and needs of children on the SEND register, as well as detailing their short-term targets and strategies which support them.
SALT (Speech and Language Therapy) An NHS service who support children with speech, language and communication difficulties.
SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) One of the 4 categories of SEND which describes children experiencing difficulties their mental health, emotions and/or behaviour.
SEN/SEND – Special Educational Needs/Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENDCo/SENCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) The teacher responsible for coordinating SEND support within a school
SEND Code of Practice The statutory guidance that schools and local authorities much follow in identifying and supporting children with SEND
SEND Register An internal school record which records the learning differences or disabilities of the children who require support in school which is additional to or different from their peers.
SEN/SEND Support The level of support provided for pupils with SEND who do not have an EHCP but who require additional help and support to meet their needs.
Sensory Processing Difficulties A term used to describe a child who struggles to interpret or respond appropriately to sensory information from more than one sensory system e.g. vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste
TAC/TAF (Team Around the Child/Family) A multi-agency approach to support a child and family's needs involving both the family and outside agencies