



Highfields Inclusion Partnership

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Highfields

School Offer for children with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (SEND)

Highfields is a Pupil Referral Unit within Stockport Metropolitan Borough local authority. It provides for secondary age young people with social, emotional and mental health needs. The majority of these young people are dual-registered with a mainstream school. Highfields is accessible for young people with physical disabilities, including almost complete access for people using wheelchairs (see [Accessibility Plan](#) for further information). It is not a designated specialist provision for young people with an *Education Health Care Plan* or *Statement of Special Educational Needs* but does make provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities in accordance with Stockport Local Authority's ethos that educational provisions are as inclusive as possible, and that young people with special educational needs and disabilities should be supported to ensure that they make the best possible progress.

Highfields works in partnership with Stockport local authority's SEND service:

📄 **Stockport Local Offer** - <https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/localoffer.page>

📄 **Stockport SEND Guidance** -

<https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/service.page?id=XtkRE8oVyjE>

Our 'School Offer' is broken down into ten questions:

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### **1) What are special educational needs?**

Highfields follows a widely recognised, cumulative three-tier approach to differentiating levels of need, consisting of:

- I. Quality First Teaching – primarily classroom-based approaches designed for the benefit of all students, all of the time.
- II. SEN Support (formerly divided into and known as 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus') - additional school-based and external agency approaches for small groups of students, provided on a short to medium term to address specific barriers to achievement.

- III. EHC Plan - additional school-based and external agency approaches for individual students, provided on a longer term basis to address persistent barriers to achievement. Students with a *Statement of Special Educational Needs* are also designated at this stage, with a Local Authority schedule and process in place to transfer each of them to a *Education Health Care Plan (EHC Plan)* before Apr 2018.

Having been referred to the Secondary Panel for Inclusion (SPI) and, in turn, allocated a placement at Highfields, on admission each young person is automatically deemed to have an additional needs requiring support above and beyond the first wave of provision, 'Quality First Teaching'.

As such, all young persons are designated on the *Register of Need* as being at the second tier of provision, known as 'SEN Support'. This listing sits alongside a basic outline of the nature of their needs. The nature of such needs will typically come under the umbrella term 'social, emotional and mental health needs' but may also include a specific learning need.

For a young person to be designated at the third stage as 'EHC Plan', they must be subject to an *Education Health Care Plan (EHC Plan)* - previously known, and continued in some circumstances, as a *Statement of Special Educational Needs*. A young person at this stage will typically:

- have a learning difficulty and/or social, emotional and mental health need and/or a disability identified by recognised specialists  
and
- present with a persistent level of need that prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age (*SEN Code of Practice: 0 - 25 Years, 2014*)

A young person entered into the statutory assessment process for an *Educational Health Care Plan* remains at 'SEN Support' until a decision to issue an EHC Plan is made and the relevant documentation is officially published.

An additional category of need to be identified may also be 'English as an Additional Language' which exists separately from the above.

## **2) How are special educational needs identified at Highfields?**

As part of the referral protocol for this Pupil Referral Unit, all young persons admitted to Highfields must have had recent contact with an Educational Psychologist and/or a specialist from Healthy Young Minds (HYMs) They may also have recently been part of the TAC process. From there, they participate in an admission meeting with the headteacher of Highfields or a member of The Highfields Senior Leadership Team. At this point, a decision may be made to refer for statutory assessment for an EHC Plan, if one has not been issued already.

Within their first few weeks at Highfields, the young person then undertakes – again, as a matter of course – a series of baseline assessments to provide a snapshot of their academic ability and social-emotional competence. In addition to this, our staff make careful observations of the young person, noting any concerns regarding their access to the curriculum and school life. These are then discussed at the young person's first PLP meeting, after their first six weeks of attendance, with

targets for future progress agreed upon. At this point, a decision may be made to refer for statutory assessment for an EHC Plan, if one has not been issued already.

From there, at any time of a young person's placement at Highfields, parents/carers, staff or others may raise concerns about a young person that call for consideration of whether statutory assessment would be a positive, productive way forward. Highfields works closely with outside agencies and can call on a wide range of services, including the Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), Sensory Support Service, Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) Service, ASD Team (Autistic Spectrum Disorder Team), Behaviour Support Service, Occupational Therapy Service (OT) and others. Some of these services offer direct support or advice and can help to further identify and clarify and young person's needs.

Highfields places prime importance on equipping each young person with the necessary skills and conditions to enable a reintegration into mainstream education, be that in the short, medium or long-term. Via the collaborative assessment and review processes outlined above, a decision may be taken to refer for statutory assessment with a 'future focus' – with a view to ensuring a young person who is settled within the small, supportive environment of Highfields has the appropriate support arrangements, secured through a EHC Plan, ahead of any transition to a larger, mainstream environment (including post-16 provision).

### **3) What is the process for applying for an Education Health Care Plan (EHC Plan)?**

At any point in a young person's educational career, a request can be made that the Local Authority carries out a statutory assessment of their needs. This is a legal process with clear protocol and a set timeframe to follow.

A decision to apply for an Education Health Care Plan (EHC Plan) is most commonly made, and is best made, as a collective decision involving the agreement of parents/carers, Highfields, outside agencies and ideally with the young person also agreeing. Parents/carers can take this decision themselves but we always encourage communication on such decisions.

Prior to such a decision, a young person will typically have been designated 'SEN Support' and in turn, have been in receipt of a variety of additional help over a period of time. The decision will be made with a view to attaining specialist guidance and funding to enable a more permanent and usually a higher level of further support.

The process of applying for a EHC Plan will follow three stages:

#### **Stage 1 (4 to 6 Weeks Total)**

Following a decision to apply for an EHC Plan, a range of information is gathered about the young person, including some information about their family background. A specialist assessment from an Educational Psychologist will also be sought if one has not been completed already. An initial meeting will then be held with a view to involved parties agreeing on the general purpose of the application. A written request is then sent to the Local Authority, usually by Highfields or any partner school with which the young person is registered. This initial process tends to take around 4 to 6 weeks.

#### **Stage 2 (16 Weeks Total)**

After the request has been received by the Local Authority, a panel of professionals will decide within 6 weeks whether they think the young person's needs are at a level that needs a statutory assessment. If this is the case, they will ask parties to contribute to the statutory assessment which involves writing a report outlining the young person's needs. This process should take a further 10 weeks. If they do not think the young person needs statutory assessment, they will ask Highfields / school to continue with the support at 'SEN Support'.

### Stage 3 (20 Weeks Total)

After the reports have all been sent in, the Local Authority (LA) will decide whether to issue an Education, Health and Care Plan to meet the needs described. If an EHC Plan is issued, this will formally provide guidance on future support and any funding arrangements the young person will receive from the Local Authority. A meeting will then be arranged within 15 working days, including an PLP review, to agree how the EHC Plan will be implemented. If a decision is made not to issue an EHC Plan, the Local Authority will advise a continuation of 'SEN Support' and contribute to a meeting in school to feedback their views. This should take a total of 20 weeks from the stated deadline for the reports.

This process follows national guidance:

 <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help>

## **4) How does Highfields make the curriculum more accessible to students at 'SEN Support' and 'EHC Plan'?**

As stated above, the first tier of provision is 'Quality First Teaching'. All students at Highfields are taught in their core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and ICT by experienced teachers with qualified teacher status (QTS). In addition to this, the teachers receive regular training around social, emotional and mental health needs (including Team Teach) – and related areas of special educational needs such as Autism, dyslexic-type difficulties and ADHD. A variety of differentiation takes place within lessons on a day to day basis, including differentiation by resources, by task type and by outcome. Decisions around differentiation are informed by observation and baseline / formative testing carried out on a student's arrival, and continued periodically during their placement at Highfields.

Highfields also has a team of experienced teaching assistants who received the same training input described above. Highfields places emphasis on teaching assistants developing subject expertise alongside special educational needs expertise, providing for training where necessary to further this.

All teaching staff fulfil a pastoral role as form tutors, supported by teaching assistants. In this role they act as the first point of contact for everyday issues.

## **5) What *additional* support is offered to students as 'SEN Support' and 'EHC Plan'?**

As stated previously, Highfields is not a designated specialist provision for young persons with an Education Health Care Plan but does make provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities in accordance with local authority guidance.

Furthermore, repeating that stated previously, the Highfields policy is to approach all students as 'SEN Support' (or 'EHC Plan' if they are already in receipt of this provision). This is based on their recent history – having been referred to Secondary Panel for Inclusion (SPI) and, in turn, allocated a placement at Highfields.

Every young person attending Highfields receives an *Personalised Learning Plan (PLP)*, reviewed at least twice per academic year, outlining personalised areas for development and individualised strategies to assist with removing barriers to learning. The young person has two formal opportunities to contribute to this, through a feedback form and through attendance of a review meeting. Likewise, parents are asked to complete a feedback form and are expected to attend the review meeting. With those students who are dual registered, a representative of the school will attend – usually someone who has worked with the young person. Other agencies working closely with the young person may also be invited to contribute.

Highfields has a number of additional strategies used to support students. Examples of these strategies include:

- 1-to-1 check in and check out sessions with a member of staff, to help students express any anxieties or other difficult thoughts / emotions on arrival at Highfields and on leaving.
- 1-to-1 and small group restorative justice sessions, following an incident.
- 1-to-1 and small group numeracy and literacy interventions.
- Additional sessions, usually ahead of exams, where a student has gaps in their core subjects.
- Vocational and alternative education placements to enrich timetables.
- Structured small group activities at break times, for those students with social anxiety.
- Access to teaching groups for specific subjects not delivered within Highfields, usually provided through a mainstream school.
- Transport to and from placements and mainstream schools (subject to availability).
- Visits to placements and mainstream schools supported by a teaching assistant.
- Access, through a referral protocol, to professional-trained counsellors and mental health practitioners.
- Assessment and application for access arrangements relating to examinations and other controlled assessment activities.

Highfields places emphasis on each young person developing independence within a larger mainstream setting. This is as important for KS4 students preparing to transition to post-16 provision as it is for KS3 students on reintegration programmes.

Finally, as most students are dual registered and undertaking a short term placement, Highfields seeks to work wherever possible in partnership with a student's designated mainstream school in the planning, funding and delivery of additional support.

## **6) How does Highfields monitor and review progress towards outcomes and support arrangements for young people?**

All young people attending Highfields are tracked, in terms of their general progress, using the following methods:

- Subject progress data, provided by teachers, is collected and reviewed every half-term.

- The Senior Leadership Team collates a summary and monitors attendance and behaviour data in 3 – 4 week blocks in order to respond quickly to any trends in a young person's engagement.
- Curriculum Review Mornings are held every term where our young people each have 1-to-1 meetings with their teachers to discuss their current progress and future targets in individual subjects.
- A written 'Progress Report', collecting the views of teachers and progress data, is published for each student every term.

As stated previously, all young people attending Highfields receive an Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) which monitors and plans for outcomes and support arrangements. These take place on a twice yearly basis, involving a Review Meeting attended by parents/carers, the young person's mainstream school (if they have one) and the young person themselves.

Students with a Statement or EHC Plan have a termly Review Meeting, one of which is designated an Annual Review. The Annual Review will consider the extent to which the student has achieved the outcomes in the EHC Plan, and whether further action is necessary. Further action may include setting new targets, discontinuing the EHC Plan (if sufficient progress has been made or if all outcomes have been achieved) or considering whether further support is necessary. Recommendations will be made by the school in the Review report, and the Local Authority will consider the recommendations when deciding what action to take. As with the PLP Review meeting, the Annual Review meeting is attended by parents/carers, the young person's mainstream school (if they have one) and the young person themselves. Any involved agencies will also be invited.

Young people registered as being a 'Looked After Child' also receive a Personal Education Plan.

Some young people will also be placed within the Team Around the Child (TAC) / Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process.

Where possible, and productive, Highfields will attempt to group review meetings together in recognition of our parents/carers other commitments with work, family etc.

## **7) What should parents / carers do if they have concerns about unidentified and/or unmet special educational needs?**

Parents / carers with any specific concerns about their child that are or may be related to SEN should contact Highfields and speak to **Mr M. Grant**, our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Assistant Deputy Headteacher.

The SENCO's role is to provide input on any issues that are or may be related to SEN. This includes:

- Attending meetings such as PLP Review Meetings, Annual Reviews, Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings where issues are or maybe related to SEN.
- Undertaking specialist assessment ahead of referral.
- Liaising with educational psychologists and other agencies.
- Liaising with families and the local authority with regards to the application for and maintenance of EHC Plans.
- Communicating with post-16 provision on SEN issues.
- Communicating with partner schools on SEN issues relating to reintegration.

- Providing training to Centre staff on SEN issues – including briefing on any new development to arise with a young person.

The SENCO is available to speak on the telephone or meet with parents/carers to discuss any of these processes.

## **8) How will the school support students at key transition points?**

The key transition points for any young person in secondary education are:


- Year 6 to Year 7
- Year 9 to Year 10
- Year 10 and 11 towards Post 16 Provision

For students at with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHC Plan) or Statement of Special Educational Needs, the Annual Review will also include a 'Transition Review' at these stages looking at Post-16 options and independent living.

Due to the nature of our provision, as a Pupil Referral Unit, young people attending Highfields will also be subject to additional transition points. These include:

- Leaving their existing placement to begin a placement at Highfields
- Reintegration, partial or fully, into a mainstream secondary school setting
- Starting a vocational or alternative education placement
- For a small number of students, movement from a placement within our Cedars provision to join the wider community of Highfields.
- For a small number of students, movement from a higher-tier mental health placement – often attached to or within a hospital – into the Cedars provision.

Highfields, working with young people and their parents/carers, always seeks to pre-empt anxiety and any other difficulties around any of these transitions. Highfields works on a case-by-case basis using strategies such as:

- Tours of Highfields outside of school hours when it is less busy, on the proviso a placement has been agreed.
- An 'online tour' of Highfields, published on our website:  
 <http://www.Highfieldscentre.org.uk/virtual-tour-gallery/>
- A personalised plan for attendance at Highfields, gradually increasing in time.
- A personalised plan for reintegration into mainstream settings, including supported visits.

All of our young people have access to high-quality careers advice, to ensure they are working towards aspirational, realistic and sustainable study and employment goals. This is carried out by our Young Person's Advisor, **Sarah Schofield**, who can be contacted in the first instance through the usual Highfields telephone numbers.

If a young person has an EHC Plan, they will meet with the Young Person's Advisor from Year 9 onwards. The Young Person's Advisor will work with the student and parents/carers to create a plan for their Post-16/Post-18 education.



## **9) What opportunities do parents/carers have for expressing their views?**

As mentioned above, there are a number of opportunities for parents/carers to express their views formally. Primarily, this opportunity is provided through our PLP Review Meetings, the first held within six weeks of a young person being admitted to Highfields. And from there, on a twice yearly basis – increased to a termly basis for students at [EHC Plan stage](#), one of which is designated an Annual Review.

For those young people within the the Team Around the Child (TAC) / Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process, there is also a further opportunity at these meetings.

Highfields operates, as much as possible, an ‘open door’ for parents/carers. We encourage parents/carers to maintain regular contact and to try help us pre-empt concerns and problems from becoming worse. A member of the senior leadership team is usually available from 7.30am until 5pm within the school week. Where a member of staff isn’t available, they will endeavour to call back within 24 hours.

Parents/carers can also arrange, on prior request, a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team to express their views. Highfields aims, as much as possible, to hold a meeting within five working days of the request being made.

Highfields has a complaints procedure. This begins with telephone or written contact with the headteacher. Following this, written contact can be made with our Chair of Governors, Martin Davies – in the first instance, via The Highfields main address.


Where there is a concern regarding a decision by the Local Authority, parents/carers have a formal right of appeal, and the decision letter will give instructions about how to appeal.

## **10) Where can parents / carers gain further advice and support?**

Aside from the options mentioned above, there are other points of contact we recommend.

Below are two links to information on Stockport local authority services involved in SEN support:

 <http://www.stockportcypdisp.org.uk/ourservices/sen/>

 <http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/education/educationtrainingandemployment/servicessupportingpupilsinschools/supportpupilsadditionalneeds/>

We also recommend the following independent advice groups:

- ‘Parents in Partnership’:  
 <http://www.pipstockport.org>
- Information Advice and Support Services – ‘IASS Stockport’:  
 <https://www.kids.org.uk/stockport-sendiaass>

