



EDUCATION MY LIFE MATTERS
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND)
&
INCLUSION POLICY

Approved by:	Independent Executive Board	Date:
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- 1 Special Educational Needs Policy: Autumn 2026
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1. Introduction

Education My Life Matters (EMLM) is committed to providing an inclusive, ambitious and person-centred educational experience for all learners. We believe that every child and young person has the right to participate, achieve and thrive regardless of their special educational needs, disability, social, emotional or mental health needs, background or circumstances.

As an Independent School providing Alternative Provision, EMLM recognises that inclusion is the responsibility of all staff. High-quality teaching, positive relationships, effective support and a culture of belonging are fundamental to improving outcomes for all learners.

EMLM recognises that strong, trusting relationships are central to effective inclusion, particularly for learners who have experienced disruption, trauma, anxiety or barriers to school engagement. Staff work relationally and consistently to create a sense of safety, belonging and readiness to learn.

This policy outlines how EMLM identifies, supports and monitors learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), whilst promoting an inclusive environment where barriers to learning are identified and removed wherever possible.

This policy is informed by:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 Years (updated 2024)
- Equality Act 2010
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan
- Emerging National Inclusion Standards
- The Government's "Every Child Achieving and Thriving" reform agenda

2. Vision and Principles

At EMLM we believe:

- Every learner can achieve and make progress
- Inclusion is everyone's responsibility
- High expectations should be maintained for all learners
- Learners and families should be at the centre of decision-making
- Safe, consistent and trusting relationships are essential to engagement, learning and wellbeing
- Early identification and intervention improve outcomes
- Adaptive teaching benefits all learners
- SEND provision should promote independence, resilience and self-advocacy
- Preparation for adulthood begins early and should be embedded throughout a learner's educational journey.

3. Aims

EMLM aims to:

- Promote inclusion, participation and achievement for all learners
- Identify SEND as early as possible
- Ensure learners receive timely, evidence-informed support
- Remove barriers to learning through adaptive teaching and reasonable adjustments
- Support positive attendance, wellbeing and engagement
- Develop learner confidence, independence and resilience
- Work in partnership with families, referring schools, local authorities and external agencies.
- Prepare learners for successful transitions and adulthood.
- Ensure staff receive high-quality SEND and inclusion training.
- Monitor and evaluate SEND provision to secure continuous improvement.

4. What Inclusion Looks Like at EMLM

Inclusion is demonstrated through:

- High-quality adaptive teaching
- Personalised learning pathways
- Consideration of sensory, physical and environmental access needs
- Accessible curriculum materials and communication formats
- Flexible timetables where appropriate
- Small-group and individual support
- Removal of barriers to participation in all aspects of school life
- Trauma-informed and relational approaches
- Communication-friendly learning environments
- Consistent key adult support and trusted relationships
- A relational behaviour approach that promotes safety, trust, belonging and repair
- Staff working collaboratively and consistently to understand behaviour as communication
- Access to specialist interventions
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled learners
- Learner voice influencing decision-making
- Strong partnership working with families and professionals
- Opportunities for all learners to participate fully in provision activities.

4A. Accessibility

EMLM is committed to ensuring that disabled learners are not disadvantaged and can access education as fully as possible.

This includes:

- Making reasonable adjustments for disabled learners

- Improving access to the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment where possible and appropriate
- Providing accessible information in a range of formats
- Considering communication, sensory, emotional and physical access needs in planning provision
- Working in line with the school's Accessibility Plan and duties under the Equality Act 2010

Accessibility is considered proactively as part of admission, assessment, planning, teaching, intervention, transition and review process.

5. Definition of SEND

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A learner has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- Have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities generally provided for others of the same age.

Special educational provision is educational provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age.

6. Areas of Need

EMLM recognises the four broad areas of SEND identified within the SEND Code of Practice:

Communication and Interaction including:

- Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Cognition and Learning including:

- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) including:

- Anxiety
- Trauma-related difficulties
- Attachment needs
- Emotional regulation difficulties

Sensory and Physical Needs including:

- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Physical disabilities

- Medical conditions affecting learning

7. Identification of SEND

EMLM adopts a graduated approach to identifying SEND. Information may be gathered from:

- Referral documentation
- Previous schools or provisions
- EHCPs
- Educational Psychology reports
- Health professionals
- Parents and carers
- Learner voice
- Baseline assessments
- Classroom observations
- Attendance and behaviour information

We recognise that attendance concerns, mental health needs, adverse childhood experiences and social disadvantage may impact learning and require careful assessment.

We do not assume that low attainment, poor attendance, behaviour concerns or English as an Additional Language automatically indicate SEND.

8. Quality First Teaching and Adaptive Practice

All staff are responsible for the progress of all learners.

Teaching staff will:

- Set high expectations
- Build consistent, respectful and trusting relationships with learner
- Use relational approaches to support engagement, regulation and readiness to learn
- Adapt teaching to meet individual needs
- Break learning into manageable steps
- Use clear modelling and explanation
- Provide visual supports and scaffolding
- Check understanding regularly
- Support communication and vocabulary development
- Use assessment information to inform planning
- Promote independence
- Implement agreed strategies and reasonable adjustments
- Ensure learning materials, instructions and communication are accessible to learners' needs

Adaptive teaching is the first response to emerging needs.

9. SEND Support

Where additional support is required, EMLM follows the graduated approach:



Assess

Needs are identified through assessment, observation and consultation.

Plan

An Individual Support Plan (ISP) is developed outlining:

- Learner strengths
- Areas of need
- Targets
- Adjustments
- Interventions
- Review arrangements

Do

Support is implemented by teachers, mentors and specialist staff.

Review

- Progress is reviewed regularly with learners, families and professionals
- The effectiveness of support informs future planning.

10. Specialist Provision and Interventions

Support may include:

- Mentoring
- Emotional wellbeing support
- Social skills programmes
- Literacy and numeracy interventions
- Speech and language programmes
- Sensory support strategies
- Regulation and self-management programmes
- Access arrangements
- Assistive technology
- Bespoke timetables
- Provision is personalised and outcomes-focused.

11. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Learners with EHCPs receive provision in line with their statutory plan. EMLM works closely with:

- Local Authorities

- Referring schools
- Parents and carers
- Health professionals
- Social care services

Annual Reviews are completed in accordance with statutory requirements.

12. Attendance, Wellbeing and Mental Health

EMLM recognises the close relationship between SEND, attendance, wellbeing and educational outcomes. We will:

- Identify barriers to attendance early
- Promote positive engagement
- Use trusted relationships and relational practice to reduce barriers to attendance and engagement
- Provide pastoral support
- Support learners experiencing anxiety and emotionally based school avoidance
- Work collaboratively with families
- Access specialist mental health services when appropriate
- Attendance interventions will be supportive, graduated and individualised.

13. Working with Families

EMLM values parents and carers as partners. We will:

- Listen to family views
- Share information regularly
- Involve families in reviews and planning
- Support families to access additional services where appropriate
- Communicate clearly and consistently

14. Learner Voice

Learners will be supported to:

- Express their views
- Participate in reviews
- Contribute to target setting
- Develop self-awareness and self-advocacy skills
- Influence decisions affecting their education

15. Preparation for Adulthood

Preparation for adulthood is embedded throughout provision. This includes support for:

- Careers education
- Employment pathways
- Further education
- Independent living skills
- Community participation

- Travel training
- Health and wellbeing
- From Year 9 onwards, planning will reflect long-term aspirations and outcomes.

16. Transition Arrangements

EMLM works closely with learners, families and partner organisations to support successful transitions. This includes:

- Entry assessments
- Information sharing
- Planning for accessibility needs during entry, reintegration and onward transition
- Reintegration planning
- Transition to further education, training or employment

17. Medical Needs

Learners with medical needs will be supported through Individual Healthcare Plans where appropriate.

Staff will receive training relevant to the needs of learners and medication will be administered in accordance with school procedures and statutory guidance.

18. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of SEND and inclusion provision will be monitored through:

- Learner progress data
- Attendance information
- Behaviour information
- Learner voice
- Parent and carer feedback
- Staff feedback
- Learning walks
- Lesson observations
- Provision reviews
- Annual policy review

The Leadership Team will report regularly to the Governing Board regarding SEND outcomes and inclusion priorities.

19. Roles and Responsibilities

Head of School

- Responsible for strategic leadership of SEND and inclusion and ensuring statutory duties are fulfilled.

SENDCo

- Responsible for coordinating SEND provision, maintaining records, liaising with professionals and supporting staff development.

Teaching staff

Responsible for the progress and inclusion of all learners through high-quality adaptive teaching.

Learning Mentors and Support Staff

- Responsible for implementing agreed strategies, supporting wellbeing and promoting independence.

Governors

Responsible for monitoring SEND provision, inclusion outcomes and statutory compliance.

All Staff are responsible for promoting inclusive, accessible and relational practice.

20. Complaints

Concerns regarding SEND provision should initially be raised with the teaching staff, Learning Mentor or SENDCo.

Where concerns remain unresolved, the school's Complaints Policy should be followed.

Parents and carers may also seek independent advice through the Local Authority's SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

21. Local Offer

Information regarding SEND services available within Lewisham can be found through the Lewisham Local Offer:

www.lewishamlocaloffer.org.uk