Elm Tree Community Primary School

SEND Policy & Information Report 2026–2027

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Introduction

At Elm Tree Community Primary School, we work together to give all children a place to thrive. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and appropriately ambitious education in which each child is recognised as an individual and supported to succeed socially, emotionally and academically.

This combined document has two complementary purposes. Part One sets out the school's SEND Policy, including its principles, legal responsibilities, leadership arrangements and approach to provision. Part Two is the school's SEND Information Report. It explains to parents, carers, pupils and professionals how the policy is implemented in day-to-day practice.

The information report is published in fulfilment of the Governing Board's duty to prepare and publish information about the implementation of its policy for pupils with special educational needs. It also provides information about admission arrangements for disabled pupils, reasonable adjustments, accessibility and the steps taken to prevent disabled pupils from being treated less favourably.

A paper copy of this document can be provided free of charge on request. The school will also consider requests for information to be provided in an alternative or accessible format.

Part One: SEND Policy

1. Purpose and scope

This policy establishes the principles which guide Elm Tree Community Primary School's work with pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities. It explains how provision is led, delivered, monitored and reviewed and defines the responsibilities of governors, leaders and staff.

The policy applies to all pupils attending Elm Tree and to all staff, governors, volunteers, students, agency workers and professionals working on behalf of the school. It applies to teaching and activities on the school site and to educational visits, residential experiences, extended services, school-led transport arrangements, outreach, reintegration support and other activities for which the school is responsible.

Throughout this document, the term SEND refers to special educational needs and disabilities, while EHCP refers to an Education, Health and Care Plan.

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2. School context

Elm Tree Community Primary School is a maintained community special school in Skelmersdale for primary-aged pupils across Key Stages 1 and 2. The school opened in September 2008 to provide specialist education for children with EHCPs whose primary identified area of need is Social, Emotional and Mental Health.

The profile of pupils attending Elm Tree has changed considerably over time. The school now supports children with an increasingly broad and complex range of overlapping needs. In response, Elm Tree has developed a broad range of personalised, specialist and therapeutic provision.

All pupils attending Elm Tree have an EHCP. The school supports children from Lancashire and from neighbouring local authority areas. Admission is therefore determined through statutory EHCP consultation arrangements rather than through the ordinary mainstream admissions process.

3. Our vision and ethos

Elm Tree's vision is to work together to give all children a place to thrive. We want the school to be a safe and nurturing community in which children are recognised as individuals, experience success and create positive memories. The school's motto, Believe to Achieve, reflects its commitment to maintaining high expectations while ensuring that children receive the support they need to participate and progress.

Our work is underpinned by the Elm Tree Way and by the values of trust, acceptance, respect, resilience, inclusivity and friendship.

We want every pupil to feel physically and emotionally safe, to be known and valued as an individual and to develop positive, trusting relationships. We want children to understand themselves and their needs, communicate their views, make meaningful choices and become increasingly independent. We also want them to access engaging and appropriately challenging learning and to be prepared carefully for the next stage of their education and life.

4. Policy statement

Elm Tree recognises that special educational needs cannot be understood through diagnosis or category alone. A pupil's presentation is shaped by their strengths, developmental profile, communication, relationships, experiences, health, sensory processing, learning history and environment.

Although Social, Emotional and Mental Health is the school's principal designation, pupils may also have significant needs relating to communication and interaction, cognition and learning, sensory processing, physical development or health. These needs frequently overlap and may change over time.

The school therefore takes a holistic and needs-led approach. Provision is informed by the EHCP, ongoing assessment, pupil and family views, professional advice and evidence of impact. It is not dependent solely upon a diagnosis.

Our approach is relational, strengths-based and informed by an understanding of trauma, attachment, communication and regulation. We recognise that behaviour may communicate distress, anxiety, sensory overload, fear, uncertainty, unmet need or difficulty managing an environment or expectation. Our aim is not simply to stop behaviour. We aim to understand what it communicates, maintain safety, reduce barriers and teach children the skills they need to participate successfully.

5. Aims

Elm Tree aims to provide a safe, inclusive and appropriately ambitious education in which every pupil is known, understood and valued.

The school will fulfil the special educational provision specified within each pupil's EHCP and will provide teaching, support and reasonable adjustments which respond to assessed need. Pupils will have access to a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum which is adapted where necessary to reduce barriers without unnecessarily lowering expectations.

Academic, social, emotional, communication, sensory, physical and medical development will be considered together. Provision will be planned and reviewed using appropriate assessment, the views of pupils and families, professional advice and evidence of impact.

Elm Tree wants pupils to become increasingly confident, resilient and independent. Children will be supported to understand their own needs, develop positive relationships, communicate their views, participate in the wider life of the school and prepare successfully for future education and adulthood.

6. Legal framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

It also reflects relevant statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, school attendance, suspensions and permanent exclusions, supporting pupils with medical conditions, accessibility and the information maintained schools must publish.

The SEND Code of Practice remains the current statutory guidance for the organisations named within the Children and Families Act 2014. Proposed national SEND reforms published in 2026 are not, by themselves, a replacement for the existing legal framework. Elm Tree will review this policy if and when new legislation or statutory guidance comes into force.

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7. Definitions

A child has special educational needs where they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability where they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age, or where a disability prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities generally provided for children of the same age.

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, provision generally made for other children of the same age. As Elm Tree is a special school, its curriculum, staffing and environment are already designed around significant SEND. Within this specialist context, each pupil continues to require personalised provision which reflects their EHCP and current assessed needs.

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled where they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities. A pupil may have SEND without meeting the legal definition of disability, may be disabled without having special educational needs, or may meet both definitions.

The school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled pupil would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

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8. Principles of provision

The child is central to Elm Tree's decision-making. Pupils are supported to communicate their views, preferences, aspirations and concerns in ways which reflect their age, development and communication profile.

Parents and carers are essential partners. They hold knowledge about their child which is vital to understanding need, planning provision and evaluating progress. The school will communicate openly and respectfully and provide meaningful opportunities for families to contribute.

Every teacher is responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils they teach. This remains the case where a pupil also receives support from teaching assistants, intervention staff, therapists or external professionals.

High-quality and appropriately adapted teaching is the foundation of provision. Specialist interventions complement rather than replace meaningful access to classroom learning and the wider curriculum.

Provision will be needs-led and responsive. The school will consider what support is making a meaningful difference rather than simply whether an intervention has taken place.

Support should promote participation and increasing independence. Adults will provide the assistance pupils require while seeking to avoid unnecessary dependence wherever possible.

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9. Leadership and governance

The Governing Board has collective responsibility for ensuring that Elm Tree fulfils its statutory duties towards pupils with SEND and disabilities. It establishes the school's strategic approach, monitors the quality and impact of provision, considers the use of staffing and resources and holds leaders to account.

Mr Mark Montgomery is the school's named SEND Governor. He maintains an informed overview of the school's arrangements, meets relevant leaders, provides support and challenge and reports to the Governing Board. His appointment does not transfer collective responsibility away from the full board.

The Headteacher, Mr David Lamb, has overall responsibility for the leadership and management of SEND provision. This includes ensuring that EHCP provision is planned and delivered, staff and resources are appropriately deployed, employees receive suitable training and support, and SEND remains central to school improvement and self-evaluation.

The wider Senior Leadership Team (SLT) collaborates to coordinate the school's SEND arrangements and works closely with the Headteacher, teachers, families and external professionals. The SLT oversees provision, support colleagues to understand and implement EHCPs, contributes to annual reviews, monitors the impact of support and advise staff and governors about current and emerging needs.

10. Responsibilities of staff

Teachers are responsible for understanding the strengths, needs and relevant EHCP provision of the pupils they teach. They are expected to provide high-quality and appropriately adapted teaching, monitor progress and engagement, direct the work of supporting adults and contribute to assessment and review.

Teaching assistants and specialist support staff work under the direction of teachers and relevant leaders. Their role is to support pupils' access, communication, regulation, learning and independence. They contribute observations and records to the assessment process and deliver agreed interventions and strategies.

All staff are responsible for promoting dignity, inclusion and high expectations. They must follow agreed pupil plans and risk assessments, make appropriate adjustments within their role, report concerns about provision or wellbeing, maintain confidentiality and fulfil their safeguarding duties.

SEND is therefore a shared responsibility across the school. It is not the sole responsibility of the SLT and / or specialist staff.

11. Identification, assessment and review

Although every pupil at Elm Tree has an EHCP, assessment remains ongoing so that provision continues to reflect each pupil's current strengths, needs and circumstances. Assessment considers academic progress alongside communication, emotional wellbeing, regulation, sensory and physical needs, health, attendance, independence and participation. It is informed by the views of the pupil and family, day-to-day evidence and relevant professional advice.

The school applies the Graduated Approach through the cycle of Assess, Plan, Do and Review. This is supported by a clear Golden Thread connecting identified need, intended outcomes, planned provision and evidence of progress. Further information about how this operates in practice is provided in Section 29.

Where progress is less than expected, teaching, provision and environmental adjustments will be reviewed and amended as appropriate. Further professional advice may be sought, and an early or interim EHCP review may be requested where there has been a significant change in the pupil's needs, provision, placement, attendance, health or circumstances.

12. Teaching, curriculum and specialist provision

Elm Tree provides a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum which is adapted to reflect pupils' different starting points, learning profiles and developmental needs.

Adaptations may include changes to language, pace, task structure, recording methods, resources, grouping, sensory demands or the learning environment. Pupils may need additional processing time, visual support, repetition, practical learning, assistive technology, regulation opportunities or individual and small-group teaching.

The school's carefully planned cohorts enable the curriculum, teaching approach, environment and level of personalisation to be matched more closely to pupils' needs. Placement within a specific cohort does not define a child's potential. It is reviewed in response to progress, development and changing need.

Alongside high-quality teaching, pupils may receive targeted academic, communication, social, emotional, sensory or therapeutic support. Specialist provision may be delivered by trained school staff or by relevant external professionals.

Interventions will have a clear purpose, intended outcome and review point. Where provision is not having its intended impact, it will be adapted, replaced or discontinued.

13. Education, Health and Care Plans

Each pupil's EHCP is central to the planning and delivery of their provision. Staff working directly with a pupil must understand the relevant description of need, intended outcomes, special educational provision, communication requirements, reasonable adjustments and health or safety information.

The school will contribute to a formal annual review at least once every 12 months. The review will consider progress, the pupil's and family's views, the continuing accuracy of the plan, the suitability of provision and whether amendments should be requested.

An earlier review may be sought where needs have changed significantly, provision may no longer be sufficient, attendance has deteriorated, there are concerns about placement or the pupil is approaching an important transition.

The responsible local authority retains legal responsibility for deciding whether an EHCP should be maintained, amended or ceased and which school or type of placement should be named.

14. Working with pupils and families

Elm Tree is committed to meaningful participation rather than consultation as a formality.

Pupil views may be gathered through direct discussion, visual or symbol-based activities, one-page profiles, observation, curriculum choices, annual review contributions or work with a trusted adult. A child will not be expected to attend a formal meeting where this would cause unnecessary distress. Their views can be gathered and represented in another suitable way.

Parents and carers are encouraged to share information about their child's strengths, needs, health, successful strategies, concerns and aspirations. Families are involved through regular communication, school meetings, parent consultations, annual reviews, transition planning, Early Help and multi-agency meetings, surveys, workshops and the school's Family Support Network.

The school's published information describes the Family Support Network as offering support ranging from a listening conversation through to assessment of need and coordinated access to relevant services.

Where views differ, the school will listen carefully, share relevant evidence and seek to agree a constructive way forward.

15. Partnership with other professionals

Elm Tree works collaboratively with education, health and social care professionals where this is appropriate to a pupil's needs.

This may include educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, paediatricians, CAMHS professionals, school nurses, social workers, Early Help practitioners, specialist teachers, local authority SEND officers, attendance professionals and voluntary or community organisations.

Professional recommendations are considered alongside the EHCP, school assessment, pupil and family views, the child's presentation in school and the provision already in place.

External professional involvement complements but does not replace the school's responsibility for day-to-day teaching, provision and support. Some external services operate their own referral criteria and waiting times. The school cannot guarantee that a referral will be accepted or that a service will respond within a particular period, but it will continue to provide appropriate school-based support while families are waiting.

16. Equality, accessibility and participation

Elm Tree will not treat a pupil unfavourably because of disability. The school will make reasonable adjustments and continue to improve access to the curriculum, physical environment, information, communication and wider school life.

Pupils with SEND should be able to participate in educational visits, clubs, enrichment, residential experiences and leadership opportunities. A pupil will not be excluded from an opportunity simply because they have SEND. Individual arrangements may require adaptation where there are significant medical, accessibility or safety considerations.

The school's longer-term approach to improving accessibility is set out in its Accessibility Plan.

17. Medical needs and personal care

Some pupils have medical conditions which require additional support or reasonable adjustments. Elm Tree works with families and health professionals to establish suitable arrangements.

These may include an Individual Healthcare Plan, medication arrangements, emergency procedures, staff training, personal care, dietary or allergy management, specialist equipment and adaptations to attendance, teaching or activities.

Medical information will be managed confidentially but shared with staff who need it to keep the pupil safe and appropriately supported.

Further information is provided in the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

18. Safeguarding pupils with SEND

Pupils with SEND may experience additional safeguarding vulnerabilities. Communication barriers, dependence upon adults, personal care needs, social isolation, reduced understanding of risk or difficulty reporting concerns can make some pupils more vulnerable to harm.

Staff must remain professionally curious. A change in behaviour, engagement, attendance or presentation must not automatically be attributed to a pupil's SEND.

All safeguarding concerns will be recorded and managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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19. Attendance, behaviour and physical intervention

Elm Tree recognises that attendance and behaviour may be affected by anxiety, communication need, sensory overload, emotional dysregulation, health, trauma, transport difficulties or family circumstances.

The school will seek to understand and address underlying barriers while maintaining appropriate boundaries, safeguarding pupils and fulfilling its statutory duties.

Any reduced timetable will be exceptional, time-limited, properly agreed and regularly reviewed. It must be supported by a clear plan directed towards increased access to suitable full-time education.

Physical intervention will be used only where it is necessary, reasonable and proportionate to prevent harm or maintain safety. It will not be used as punishment or simply to secure compliance. Incidents will be recorded, monitored and reviewed in accordance with school procedures. The school will record and report significant incidents involving the use of force in accordance with current statutory guidance.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will be considered only in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy. The school will consider whether SEND, disability, unmet need or a failure to make reasonable adjustments contributed to the circumstances.

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20. Staff development

The school will provide training based on the current and anticipated needs of pupils, EHCP requirements, safeguarding duties, professional advice, school-development priorities and staff confidence.

Training may address communication, autism, ADHD, trauma, attachment, relational practice, emotional regulation, the Thrive approach, sensory processing, medical needs, de-escalation, physical intervention, curriculum adaptation, assessment and EHCP implementation.

Professional development is supported through induction, coaching, supervision, observation, professional discussion and access to specialist advice.

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21. Funding and resources

Elm Tree's staffing, accommodation, curriculum and specialist provision are structured around the needs of pupils with EHCPs.

Resources are allocated in response to statutory EHCP provision, assessed need, class and pupil profiles, communication and regulation needs, pupil safety, medical and personal care requirements, professional advice, transition arrangements, available funding and evidence of impact.

Staffing is deployed according to need. While some pupils require a high level of adult support, this does not necessarily mean that one individual adult will be permanently assigned to the child unless the EHCP expressly requires this or the school has determined that it is necessary.

The school will seek to allocate resources fairly, transparently and effectively across its pupil population.

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22. Concerns and complaints

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise questions promptly with the class teacher or class team. Where a matter cannot be resolved at this stage, it may be raised with the relevant senior leader or Headteacher.

If a concern cannot be resolved informally, parents may use the school's published Complaints Policy.

The complaints process can consider concerns about communication, implementation of provision, reasonable adjustments, treatment of a pupil and compliance with school policy. It cannot determine matters legally reserved for the local authority or First-tier Tribunal, including which school should be named in an EHCP.

Families may also obtain independent advice through their local SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.

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23. Monitoring and review

The school evaluates its SEND provision through progress towards EHCP outcomes, academic and wider progress, attendance, engagement, annual reviews, provision reviews, intervention evidence, pupil and family voice, learning walks, work scrutiny, incident analysis, professional feedback and governor monitoring.

Leaders will consider the impact of provision and make changes where support is not producing the intended benefit.

The Headteacher will report relevant information to the Governing Board. Mr Mark Montgomery, as SEND Governor, will maintain strategic oversight and provide appropriate support and challenge.

This combined SEND Policy and Information Report will be reviewed at least annually. It may be reviewed sooner in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance, staffing, governance, provision or the needs of the pupil population.

Part Two: SEND Information Report

24. What kind of special educational needs does Elm Tree support?

Although Social, Emotional and Mental Health is the school's principal designation, pupils frequently have overlapping needs across several areas.

Communication and interaction needs may include autism, speech and language difficulties, social communication differences, difficulty understanding or expressing language and difficulty communicating needs during periods of distress.

Cognition and learning needs may include moderate or specific learning difficulties, uneven learning profiles, working-memory and processing differences, executive-functioning needs and difficulties retaining or generalising learning.

Social, emotional and mental health needs may include anxiety, emotional dysregulation, low self-esteem, attachment-related needs, developmental trauma, ADHD, emotionally based school avoidance and difficulty managing change, uncertainty or perceived demands.

Pupils may also experience sensory processing differences, fine or gross motor difficulties, physical disabilities, hearing or visual impairment, epilepsy or other complex medical and personal care needs.

A child does not need to fit neatly into one category. Elm Tree considers the whole pupil, including their strengths, communication, development, relationships, health, sensory needs, experiences and aspirations.

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25. Does every pupil have an EHCP?

Yes. Every pupil admitted to Elm Tree has an EHCP.

The plan identifies the child's special educational needs, strengths and aspirations, intended outcomes and the education, health and care provision required to support them.

The EHCP is an important starting point, but it does not replace ongoing assessment. Provision is also informed by current pupil and family views, school-based assessment, risk assessment and advice from relevant professionals.

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26. How can my child be considered for a place?

Admissions are managed through the statutory EHCP consultation process. Parents do not apply directly to Elm Tree in the same way as they would apply for a mainstream school place.

Where a parent or carer requests Elm Tree, or a local authority considers Elm Tree potentially appropriate, the authority responsible for the child's EHCP may formally consult the school.

The school reviews the EHCP and accompanying information and considers the child's needs, outcomes and specified provision. It also considers whether the school can make suitable provision, whether reasonable adjustments are available, whether there is appropriate accommodation and expertise and whether placement would be compatible with the efficient education and safety of other pupils.

The school then submits a written response to the responsible local authority. The local authority makes the final decision about which placement is named in the EHCP.

Parents and carers may contact the school to discuss the provision and, where appropriate, arrange a visit. A visit is intended to help families understand Elm Tree's ethos, cohorts, classrooms, facilities and routines. It does not amount to an offer of a place and does not replace the statutory consultation process.

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27. How will Elm Tree understand my child's needs before admission?

Before a child starts, the school gathers and reviews information from the EHCP, annual review documentation, the current or previous setting, relevant professional reports and discussions with the child and family.

Information may include educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, CAMHS, paediatric, health, Early Help or social care advice. The school will also consider current support plans, risk assessments, attendance information and medical or safeguarding information where it is lawful and necessary to share this.

Where required, the school develops a personalised transition plan. This may include visits, photographs, social narratives, meetings with key adults or a phased start.

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28. How are needs assessed after a pupil starts?

Assessment is ongoing and holistic. Staff consider academic learning and the wider factors which affect a pupil's access to education.

Assessment may draw upon classroom work, teacher assessment, structured assessments, observations, communication and sensory information, social and emotional assessments, attendance, engagement, incident analysis, intervention records, progress towards EHCP outcomes, pupil voice and family feedback.

The purpose is not simply to identify what the child cannot yet do. Assessment is used to understand strengths, reduce barriers, plan provision and determine what helps the pupil succeed.

Progress is considered across academic attainment, engagement, communication, relationships, regulation, independence, attendance, wellbeing, participation and preparation for the next stage of education.

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29. How does Elm Tree use the Graduated Approach and the Golden Thread to review my child's progress?

Although every pupil at Elm Tree has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the school continues to use the Graduated Approach to ensure that provision remains responsive to each pupil's current strengths, needs and circumstances.

The Graduated Approach is a continuing cycle of Assess, Plan, Do and Review. Staff assess the pupil's strengths, needs and barriers using information from the EHCP, classroom assessment, observation, professional advice and the views of the pupil and family. They then agree the outcomes being pursued and plan the teaching approaches, reasonable adjustments, interventions and specialist provision required.

The agreed provision is implemented by the class team and, where appropriate, specialist staff or external professionals. The class teacher remains responsible and accountable for the pupil's learning and progress, including where elements of support are delivered by other adults.

Progress is reviewed across learning, communication, engagement, relationships, emotional and sensory regulation, independence, attendance, wellbeing and participation. Staff consider whether provision has been delivered as intended and whether it is making a meaningful difference. The pupil's and family's views form an important part of this review.

Elm Tree uses the term Golden Thread to describe the clear connection between:

identified need → intended outcome → planned provision → evidence of progress

The Golden Thread should be evident across the pupil's EHCP, classroom strategies, individual planning, interventions, professional recommendations and review documentation. This ensures that support is provided for a clear purpose and remains connected to the pupil's assessed needs and intended outcomes.

Where progress is less than expected, staff will consider whether teaching is appropriately matched, communication is accessible, the environment requires further adaptation or health, attendance, sensory needs or emotional wellbeing are affecting access. Provision may then be continued, adjusted, intensified, replaced or discontinued. The school may also seek further professional advice or request an early review of the EHCP where needs or circumstances have changed significantly.

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30. How often will the EHCP be reviewed?

An EHCP is formally reviewed at least annually.

The annual review considers progress since the previous review, the child's and family's views, progress towards outcomes, the continuing accuracy of the identified needs and the suitability of the education, health and care provision.

It also considers attendance, engagement, transition and whether amendments to the plan should be requested.

An early review may be requested where there has been a significant change in need, health, attendance, provision, placement or family circumstances.

The local authority is responsible for deciding whether the plan should be maintained, amended or ceased after the review.

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31. How is the curriculum adapted?

Adaptations are based on the individual pupil rather than a single approach used for all children.

A child may benefit from tasks being broken into manageable stages, reduced language, visual timetables, pre-teaching, repetition, additional processing time or practical and multisensory learning. Some pupils use assistive technology or alternatives to extended written recording.

Teaching may take place in whole-class, small-group or individual contexts. Pupils may receive personalised literacy, phonics, numeracy or communication work. They may also need movement breaks, sensory regulation, access to a lower-demand space or support during transitions and unstructured times.

Adaptation does not mean lowering expectations. It means reducing avoidable barriers so pupils can participate, progress and demonstrate their learning.

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32. How does Elm Tree organise pupils' learning?

Elm Tree organises pupils into carefully considered cohorts based on their current learning, communication, sensory, social and emotional needs. Cohort arrangements enable the school to match the curriculum, teaching approach, pace, structure, environment and level of support more closely to the pupils within each group.

When considering the most appropriate cohort, the school takes account of each pupil's developmental profile, academic starting points, communication needs, emotional regulation, sensory presentation, relationships, independence and the provision specified in their EHCP. Age is considered, but it is not the only factor used when organising classes.

Cohorts are flexible and do not define a pupil's ability, identity or future potential. Arrangements are reviewed as pupils develop and their needs change. Where appropriate, pupils may also learn alongside children from other cohorts for particular subjects, interventions, enrichment activities or wider school opportunities.

Some pupils require a more personalised approach, including a highly structured or lower-stress environment, individualised learning, specialist communication support and close attention to sensory and emotional regulation. This provision is planned according to assessed need and may be informed by occupational therapy, speech and language advice, relational practice and Thrive-informed approaches.

The purpose of the cohort model is to ensure that pupils learn within an environment that provides an appropriate balance of challenge, support, belonging and opportunity, while remaining connected to the wider Elm Tree school community.

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33. What interventions and specialist provision are available?

Support begins with the provision embedded across the school. This includes relational practice, clear routines, visual structure, adaptive teaching, emotional check-ins, communication support, regulation opportunities, trusted adults and restorative work.

Where pupils need additional support, the school may provide targeted academic teaching, precision teaching, Thrive-informed intervention, speech and language programmes, social communication work, emotional literacy support, sensory-regulation programmes, mentoring or structured transition and reintegration work.

Where specified or assessed as necessary, specialist support may involve speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, educational psychology, therapeutic or counselling support, specialist teachers, CAMHS or paediatric liaison, support for complex medical needs and multi-agency planning.

Not every pupil will receive every programme. Provision is determined by current need, the EHCP, professional advice and evidence of impact.

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34. How are social, emotional and mental health needs supported?

Supporting emotional wellbeing is central to Elm Tree's work.

Staff seek to build strong, consistent and trusting relationships. Pupils may be supported through co-regulation, emotion coaching, predictable routines, individual regulation plans, safe spaces, sensory strategies, Thrive-informed work and therapeutic intervention.

The school supports children to recognise emotions, understand triggers, communicate needs, recover from difficult experiences and develop alternative ways of responding.

Where appropriate, restorative work helps pupils reconnect and repair relationships after a difficult event. This takes place when the child is sufficiently regulated and able to participate meaningfully.

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35. What happens when a child becomes distressed or dysregulated?

Staff seek to identify early signs of distress and respond before a situation escalates.

Depending on the child's needs and individual plan, staff may reduce language, remove unnecessary demands, offer time and space, involve a familiar adult, adapt an activity or support the child to use a known regulation strategy.

Where necessary, staff may move other pupils or make environmental changes to maintain safety. Recovery is supported without unnecessary shame or confrontation.

Parents and carers will be informed about significant incidents in accordance with school procedures. Where a pattern develops, the school will review assessment, provision, risk management and professional involvement.

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36. Does the school use physical intervention?

Physical intervention is used only where it is necessary, reasonable and proportionate to prevent harm or maintain safety. It is not used as punishment or simply to secure compliance.

The school prioritises prevention, de-escalation and the use of individualised strategies intended to reduce the need for restrictive intervention. Staff who may be required to use physical intervention receive training appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

Significant incidents are recorded and reported to parents or carers in accordance with current statutory guidance and school procedures. Each incident is reviewed, with consideration given to the pupil's wellbeing, what occurred before and during the incident, whether medical attention or additional support was required, and whether changes are needed to the pupil's provision, communication support, environment or risk assessment.

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37. How are communication needs supported?

Communication support is personalised.

Staff may use visual timetables, now-and-next approaches, simplified language, additional processing time, modelling, repetition, social narratives, structured choices, communication aids or pre-teaching.

Some pupils receive specific speech, language or social communication programmes, informed where appropriate by advice from a speech and language therapist.

Staff recognise that a pupil may use spoken language confidently while still having significant difficulty processing information, interpreting social situations or communicating during anxiety and dysregulation.

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38. How are sensory and physical needs supported?

Sensory support may include an individual sensory profile, movement opportunities, access to regulation spaces, adapted resources and changes to noise, lighting or visual stimulation.

Some pupils require specialist seating, equipment, occupational therapy programmes or support with fine and gross motor development.

Personal care and physical support are planned with dignity and privacy. Staff receive relevant information and training, and arrangements are reviewed with families and professionals.

Educational visits and wider activities are planned with accessibility in mind.

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39. How are medical needs supported?

Where a pupil has a medical condition, the school works with the family and relevant health professionals.

An Individual Healthcare Plan may be produced where this is required. It will set out relevant medical information, medication, emergency procedures, responsibilities, adjustments and training needs.

The school also considers dietary requirements, allergies, specialist equipment, personal care and reasonable adjustments to attendance, teaching or activities.

Medical information is shared only with staff who need it to keep the pupil safe and properly supported.

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40. What expertise and training are available?

Elm Tree's staffing model includes teachers, teaching assistants, intervention staff, pastoral staff, family support staff, outreach professionals, extended-services staff and senior leaders with experience of complex SEND.

The school's staffing identifies roles including Academic Intervention Teacher, Outreach Coordinator, Family Support Worker, Pupil Support Manager and Senior Mental Health Lead alongside teaching and support staff.

Training priorities are informed by pupils' current needs, EHCP provision, safeguarding responsibilities, professional advice, incidents and lessons learned and the School Development Plan.

Training may include autism, ADHD, communication, speech and language development, relational and trauma-informed practice, emotional regulation, sensory processing, mental health, attendance, medical needs, first aid, de-escalation, physical intervention, curriculum adaptation and EHCP implementation.

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41. Which outside services may support pupils?

Depending on assessed need and service availability, the school may work with educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, paediatricians, CAMHS practitioners, school nurses, specialist teachers, social workers, Early Help practitioners, local authority SEND officers, sensory impairment services and voluntary or community organisations.

External involvement is coordinated carefully. Recommendations are considered alongside the EHCP, school assessment, current provision and the views of the pupil and family.

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42. How are pupils involved in decisions?

Pupil voice is gathered in ways suited to the child's age, development and communication needs.

A pupil may contribute through conversation, visual or symbol-based activities, a one-page profile, curriculum choices, wellbeing check-ins, school council, annual review work or discussion with a trusted adult.

Children are supported to communicate what they enjoy, what they find difficult, what helps them, what they would like to change and what is important for their future.

A child will not be required to attend a formal meeting where doing so would cause unnecessary distress. Their views may be gathered and represented in another appropriate way.

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43. How are parents and carers involved?

Elm Tree recognises that parents and carers hold unique knowledge about their child.

Families are involved through transition planning, regular communication, telephone calls, school meetings, parent consultations, annual reviews, EHCP discussions, Early Help meetings and multi-agency planning.

Parents are encouraged to share changes in health or family circumstances, successful strategies, concerns about progress or wellbeing, information from outside professionals and aspirations for their child.

The school aims to communicate in a respectful, clear and proportionate way and to address concerns before they become entrenched.

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44. What family support is offered?

The Family Support Network can provide listening, guidance, Early Help support and signposting to other services.

Depending on need and consent, this may include Team Around the Family work, attendance support, help to access community services, liaison with health or social care, support during periods of family difficulty and practical assistance with forms or referrals.

The school cannot replace statutory health, housing or social care services, but it can help families understand available routes and contribute relevant educational information.

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45. How are pupils included in school life?

The school seeks to ensure that every pupil can participate in the wider life of Elm Tree.

Opportunities may include educational visits, outdoor learning, sport, arts, music, clubs, school council, leadership responsibilities, community projects, enrichment activities, holiday provision and residential experiences.

Participation is planned through reasonable adjustments, appropriate staffing, transport planning, risk assessment and discussion with families.

Where an activity requires adaptation, the school will consider how the pupil can be included safely rather than beginning from an assumption that they cannot take part.

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46. How does the school prevent bullying?

The school does not tolerate bullying.

Pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to bullying, social misunderstanding or exploitation. Staff therefore teach respectful relationships, promote understanding of difference, supervise vulnerable times and provide accessible ways for children to report concerns.

Reported concerns will be listened to carefully and investigated. Families will be kept appropriately informed, support will be offered to the pupils involved and repeated patterns will be monitored.

Further information is available in the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

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47. How are transitions supported?

Transition arrangements are personalised.

Before admission, support may include information sharing, meetings with families, visits, photographs, social narratives, a phased start and opportunities to meet key adults.

When pupils move between classes, staff share information about learning, communication, regulation, sensory needs, health, risks and successful strategies. Pupils may have additional visits and continued access to familiar adults during the change.

Transition to secondary education begins early and is considered through Year 5 and Year 6 annual reviews. The school works with the pupil, family, receiving school and responsible local authority to transfer information and plan additional visits, travel preparation, familiar routines, safe spaces and key adults.

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48. How does Elm Tree prepare pupils for adulthood?

Although Elm Tree is a primary school, preparation for adulthood begins from the earliest years.

The curriculum and wider provision support communication, self-advocacy, independence, self-care, decision-making, emotional literacy, resilience, problem-solving, healthy relationships, online safety and community participation.

Pupils are encouraged to recognise their strengths, develop aspirations and gain an age-appropriate awareness of future learning and employment.

Preparation is matched to each child's developmental stage and reflected in EHCP outcomes, personal development and transition planning.

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49. How does the school support attendance?

Elm Tree recognises that attendance may be affected by complex SEND, medical needs, anxiety, transport difficulties or family circumstances.

The school monitors attendance and punctuality, communicates with families and seeks to identify underlying patterns and barriers. Support may include an individual attendance or reintegration plan, a named key adult, familiarisation visits, outreach, carefully graded expectations, Early Help or multi-agency planning.

Where anxiety or distress affects attendance, the school seeks to understand the barriers rather than viewing absence only as non-compliance.

Any reduced timetable will be exceptional, time-limited, regularly reviewed and directed towards increased access to suitable full-time education.

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50. Does Elm Tree arrange home-to-school transport?

For pupils who live within Lancashire and are eligible for home-to-school transport, Elm Tree provides and coordinates the transport arrangements on behalf of Lancashire County Council. These arrangements are overseen by the school's Transport Manager, who is responsible for coordinating routes, drivers, passenger assistants and the safe day-to-day operation of the service.

Transport arrangements take account of each pupil's individual needs, including communication, medical requirements, anxiety, supervision, behaviour, safeguarding and transition. Relevant information is shared with transport staff to support safe and consistent journeys between home and school. Families should inform the school promptly of any changes which may affect their child's transport arrangements.

Eligibility for funded home-to-school transport remains determined by Lancashire County Council in accordance with its statutory responsibilities and transport policy. Elm Tree coordinates the service for eligible Lancashire pupils but does not determine a child's legal entitlement to transport.

Where a pupil lives outside Lancashire, home-to-school transport is arranged and provided by the local authority responsible for that child. Elm Tree will work with the relevant authority and transport provider by sharing appropriate information and supporting safe transition and travel arrangements.

All transport arrangements are subject to appropriate risk assessment, safeguarding procedures, operational requirements and regular review. Transport information is shared only where it is relevant and necessary to support the pupil's safety, wellbeing and individual needs. Drivers and passenger assistants are expected to maintain appropriate confidentiality and follow the school's safeguarding and reporting procedures.

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51. How accessible is Elm Tree?

Elm Tree is committed to improving access to the curriculum, physical environment, information, educational visits, enrichment and wider school life.

Reasonable adjustments may include accessible communication, changes to routines or environments, specialist equipment, mobility or personal care support, staff training and additional planning for activities.

The school keeps accessibility under review as the needs of pupils and the use of its accommodation change.

Further detail is provided in the school's Accessibility Plan.

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52. Does Elm Tree support other schools?

Elm Tree provides outreach, inclusion and school-improvement support to schools beyond its own roll. As a specialist school, it shares expertise developed through its work with pupils who have complex and overlapping needs, while also learning from the practice and experience of partner schools.

Through Elm Tree's outreach service, specialist staff may provide consultation, pupil observation, assessment advice, suggested interventions, SEND clinics, reintegration planning and support relating to emotionally based school avoidance. The service also offers professional development, in-reach opportunities and practical advice about communication, curriculum access, learning environments and inclusive practice.

Elm Tree also contributes to Department for Education RISE activity as a supporting organisation and third-party provider, delivering agreed school-improvement work within the scope of individual commissions. Through this work, school leaders and specialist staff support schools to review and strengthen SEND provision, inclusive practice, curriculum design, leadership, quality assurance and partnership with parents and carers. This may involve SEND and inclusion reviews, advisory work, professional development and support to implement sustainable improvements.

Participation in RISE is mutually beneficial. It enables Elm Tree to share effective specialist practice while gaining insight into the approaches, challenges and developments found across a wider range of schools. Learning from this work is brought back to Elm Tree through leadership discussion, staff development, curriculum and provision reviews, improved quality-assurance processes and reflection on the school's own practice.

This helps Elm Tree to test its approaches against wider educational practice, strengthen the quality and consistency of its provision and ensure that the school continues to develop rather than operating in isolation. It also creates professional-development and leadership opportunities for Elm Tree staff, supporting the school to retain expertise and build capacity.

Elm Tree's wider school-improvement work complements its core purpose. Commitments are planned and monitored carefully so that they do not detract from the education, safety and support of pupils on roll. Responsibility for children attending Elm Tree remains the school's first priority.

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53. How are resources allocated?

The school's staffing, curriculum, accommodation and specialist provision are designed around significant SEND.

Resources are allocated according to EHCP provision, assessed need, pupil safety, class and pupil profiles, medical and personal care requirements, professional advice, intervention priorities, transition needs and available funding.

A child's support may be delivered by different appropriately trained adults rather than one permanently assigned member of staff, unless the EHCP expressly requires this or consistent named support has been agreed because of assessed need.

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54. How does Elm Tree evaluate its provision?

The school considers progress towards EHCP outcomes, academic learning, communication, independence, attendance, engagement, emotional regulation, wellbeing and participation.

Evidence is gathered through assessment, annual reviews, provision reviews, intervention records, pupil and family views, learning walks, work scrutiny, incident analysis, professional feedback and governor monitoring.

Leaders consider not only whether support was provided but whether it made a meaningful difference to the child.

Where provision is not having its intended impact, it is reviewed and changed.

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55. Who should I contact if I have a question?

Parents and carers should normally begin by contacting the class teacher or class team.

If further discussion is required, the concern may be raised with a senior teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Concerns which remain unresolved may be raised with the Headteacher.

Depending on the nature of the question, families may also contact the Family Support Worker and / or Attendance Officer through the school office.

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56. What if I am unhappy with the provision?

Most concerns can be addressed through timely discussion, review and clear communication.

Parents should first speak to the relevant member of staff. Where the concern remains unresolved, it can be escalated through the school's leadership structure.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, parents may use the school's published Complaints Policy.

Parents and carers may also seek independent advice from the relevant SEND Information, Advice and Support Service. Where a child's EHCP is maintained by another local authority, families should consult that authority's SEND advice service and Local Offer.

Related policies and information

This document should be read alongside Elm Tree's:

- Accessibility Plan;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Spotlight to Success (Behaviour Policy);
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- Restrictive Intervention or Positive Handling procedures;
- Complaints Policy