Nelson Academy

Policy: Autism Specialist Resource Base

Author: Sophie Kelly – SRB Lead Teacher
Sarah Wilson – Principal

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Related Policies: Safeguarding, SEND and Inclusion, Behaviour, Attendance

Nelson Academy Autism Specialist Resource Base Policy

Introduction

The Autism Base at Nelson Academy is a specialist provision within a mainstream school for pupils whose needs are consistent with an autism profile. Pupils remain part of the wider school community and are supported to access both specialist provision and mainstream opportunities according to their individual needs.

The Autism Base caters for pupils across Key Stages 1 and 2 and currently offers up to 12 places.

Purpose of the Autism Base

The Autism Base supports pupils whose primary needs are associated with autism and social communication differences. A formal diagnosis of autism is not required; however, pupils must require specialist provision beyond that ordinarily available within a mainstream classroom.

Children attending the Autism Base experience differences associated with autism which may affect social communication, social understanding, emotional regulation, sensory processing, flexibility of thought and access to learning.

The Autism Base aims to provide a supportive, inclusive and autism-friendly environment where pupils can achieve academically, socially and emotionally whilst developing the skills needed to participate successfully in school life.

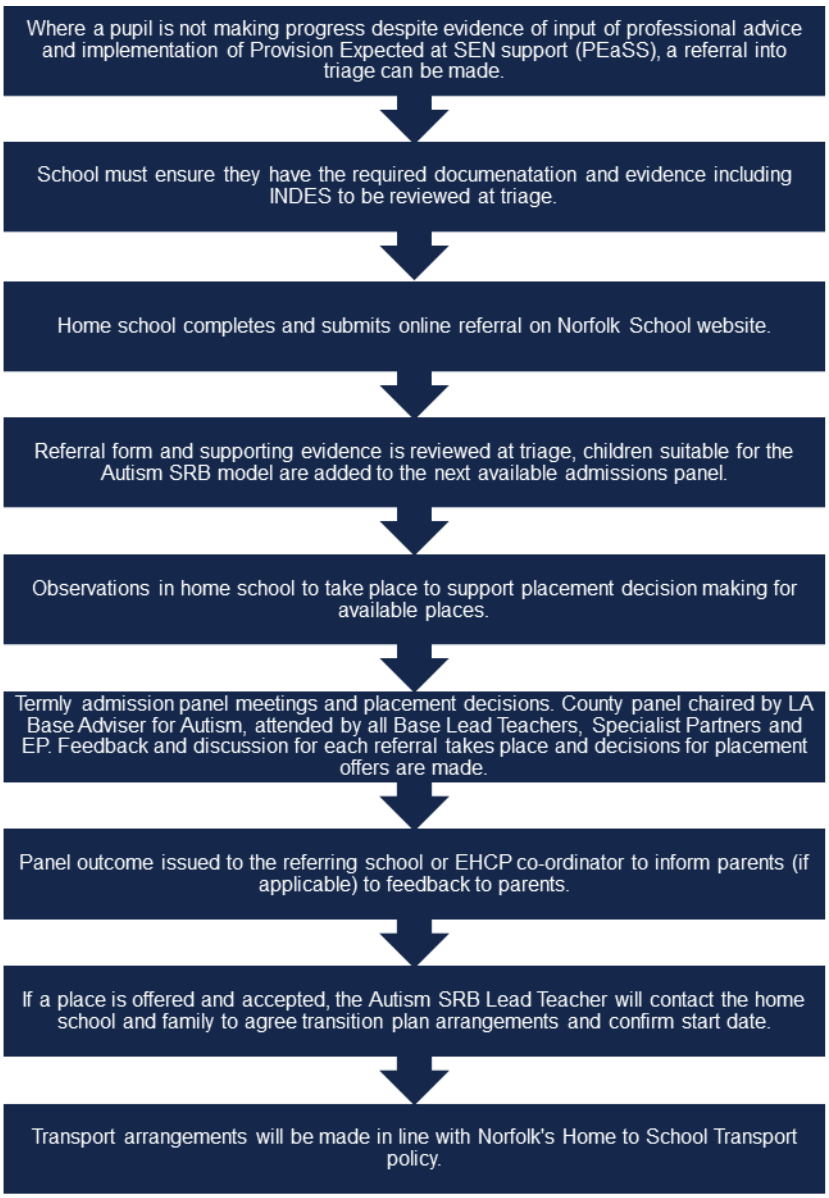
Admission and placement criteria

Pupils accessing the Autism Base will typically:

- Be of statutory primary school age.
- Present with needs consistent with an autism profile.
- Require specialist support beyond that ordinarily available in mainstream provision.
- Have differences in social communication, social understanding, flexibility of thinking and/or sensory processing which impact on learning.

- Have the potential to access a mainstream curriculum with appropriate support and reasonable adjustments.
- May have associated needs, including speech, language and communication needs, sensory needs or learning difficulties.
- Be suitable for a mainstream school environment with specialist support.

Pupils access the Autism Base through Norfolk County Council's Specialist Resource Base admissions process:



Placement decisions are made by Norfolk County Council following the Specialist Resource Base admissions process.

Transitions

- Transition into the Autism Base will be carefully planned in partnership with parents and carers, previous settings and relevant professionals.
- Additional visits, visual supports and personalised transition arrangements may be provided where appropriate.
- Support will also be provided during transitions between year groups and into secondary education.

Capacity and Staffing

The Autism Base currently offers 12 places and is led by a Lead Teacher, supported by a Higher Level Teaching Assistant and 2 Teaching Assistants. Staff working within the Autism Base receive ongoing professional development relating to autism, communication, emotional regulation, sensory differences and inclusive practice.

The Autism Base works closely with the SENDCo, Senior Leadership Team, mainstream staff, parents/carers and external professionals to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and provision.

Aims of the Autism Base

The Autism Base aims to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing and autism - friendly environment.
- Support pupils' academic, social and emotional development.
- Promote successful inclusion within mainstream school life.
- Develop communication, independence and emotional regulation skills.
- Enable pupils to achieve positive outcomes and prepare for future transitions.

Mainstream Inclusion

The Autism Base operates as an integral part of the wider school community and is not a separate educational setting. All pupils remain members of a mainstream class and

are supported to access learning, social opportunities and wider school activities at a level appropriate to their individual needs.

The balance between Autism Base and mainstream provision will vary for each pupil and will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains appropriate.

Provision within the Autism Base

Provision may include:

- Specialist teaching.
- Small-group and individual support.
- Social communication interventions.
- Emotional regulation support.
- Sensory-informed approaches.
- Structured teaching strategies.
- Support for independence and life skills.
- Preparation for change and transition.
- Advice and support for mainstream staff.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review

Pupil progress and wellbeing are monitored regularly through ongoing assessment and review. Individual targets are set termly and reviewed in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals.

The suitability of a pupil's placement within the Autism Base will be reviewed regularly to ensure that provision continues to meet their needs.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Nelson Academy recognises the importance of strong home-school partnerships. Parents and carers will be involved in discussions regarding support, provision, progress and next steps for their child. Regular communication between home and school will support a consistent approach to meeting pupils' needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Autism Base Staff

- Deliver specialist provision.
- Monitor pupil progress and wellbeing.
- Support access to mainstream learning.

Mainstream Staff

- Provide an inclusive learning environment.
- Implement agreed strategies and reasonable adjustments.
- Work collaboratively with Autism Base staff.

SENDCo and Senior Leadership Team

- Oversee the effectiveness of the Autism Base.
- Ensure appropriate provision is in place.
- Support staff training and development.
- Ensure statutory responsibilities are met.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains the responsibility of all staff. Pupils attending the Autism Base are subject to the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to ensure that it continues to reflect current guidance and the needs of pupils accessing the Autism Base.