**Green Lane School**

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**Social Understanding and Interaction Policy (Autism)**

Headteacher: Mrs Joanne Mullineux

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**Introduction**

This document is a policy statement for approaches to Social Understanding and Interaction for children with ASD at Green Lane School. It identifies our aims, objectives and strategies used.

**Intent**

At Green Lane we recognise that children with autistic spectrum disorders have difficulty with understanding social norms and routines. This fundamental component of the Triad of Impairment implies that children with ASD have difficulty recognising or understanding other people’s emotions and feelings. They may find it hard expressing their own emotions and feelings, which can make it more difficult for them to fit in socially. They may:

* not understand the unwritten social rules which most of us pick up without thinking: they may stand too close to another person for example, or start an inappropriate subject of conversation
* appear to be insensitive because they have not recognised how someone else is feeling
* prefer to spend time alone rather than seeking out the company of other people
* not seek comfort from other people
* appear to behave inappropriately, as it is not always easy for them to express feelings, emotions or needs. (NAS 2008).

Difficulties with social interaction and understanding can mean that children with autism find it hard to form friendships: some may want to interact with their peers and make friends, but may be unsure how to go about this.

Within the school community a myriad of complex social interactions, sets of rules and routines exist. Therefore, these difficulties in social understanding can profoundly hinder the learning process for children with autism. As a result, these difficulties may be shown in:

* Challenging or inappropriate behaviour.
* Difficulties in developing friendships.
* Apprehension or anxiety of social situations.
* Limited range of play skills.
* Reluctance to explore new experiences with their peers.
* Inability to learn in some group situations.

At Green Lane we have an eclectic/pragmatic child-centred approach to learning and this is reflected in our strategies addressing social interaction and understanding for children with autism. We do recognise that at times some children may withdraw from certain social situations and choose to do so, but at Green Lane, we aim to create and maintain a learning environment that is conducive to addressing this aspect of the Triad of Impairment through putting the child first and individualising his or her learning.

**Implementation**

At Green Lane developing our pupil’s social understanding forms the foundations of our curriculum; therefore social understanding is woven through each and every activity the children are engaged in.

Green Lane’s ethos is one of a caring, nurturing and socially engaging environment. Consequently, the very nature of Green Lane as a school community facilitates relationships between children, their peers and staff to be established and maintained.

**Strategies**

With the importance of developing each pupil’s social understanding this area of the Triad of Impairment underpins every child’s learning programme.

Assessment of a child’s needs is undertaken in several ways:

* Class team observations
* Parental questionnaires/meetings
* Foundation Baseline Assessment
* Foundation Stage Profile
* B-squared
* SCERTS
* Pupil Pathway to Success

Each child in the ASD specific classrooms have an IEP which includes targets taken from the SCERTS programme, including targets for social understanding and interaction. When necessary, Behaviour Support Plans are written in order to support social understanding. The plans are then shared with parents and pupils.

**Activities**

All learning sessions are underpinned with turn taking routines and developing peer/adult interaction. Activities carried out to address the development of social interactions and aid social understanding include:

* Adult to child one to one work e.g. joint attention routines, sensory times.
* Social Stories.
* Class based group activities e.g. good morning group, beginning and end of lessons, snack time.
* Whole school activities e.g. lunch time, assembly.
* Social Language and Communication groups.

At Green Lane we individualise learning and planning is prepared with a child-centred approach.

**Equal Opportunities**

In all areas of learning staff aim to promote equal opportunities in accordance with the Green Lane Equal Opportunities Policy. This recognises that each pupil should have access to the curriculum regardless of gender, sexuality, race, ethnic background, cultural heritage, social circumstance, disability or learning difficulty.

**Resources**

Resources will be provided on a needs led basis (e.g. materials for curriculum projects, such as symbols, physical prompts etc.) and linked to the appropriate subject.

**Impact**

Pupils’ individual educational plans will be reviewed three times yearly and shared with class team members. IEPs will also be shared with parents and pupils at parents’ evenings, and at SCERTS clinics. Behaviour Plans will be shared with pupils and parents and reviewed by class teams on a regular basis. Specific social understanding issues will be discussed at the weekly key stage meetings, at SCERTS curriculum group meetings and with the ASD coordinator as and when needed. Parents are encouraged to share any concerns with staff regarding social understanding, and additional support at home will be provided by the Family Liaison Team or the ASD coordinator. A pupil’s SCERTS data or PHSE data will reflect the impact these strategies have had on a pupil’s progress.

Reviewed by: J. Barnes (Head of Autism)

Person responsible: J. Barnes (Head of Autism)

Date: September 2023

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