



THAMESFIELD
COLLEGE

CHANGING LIVES | CREATING FUTURES

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Integrity. Respect. Perseverance.

For implementation from September 2026

Our SEND commitment

At Thamesfield, SEND is everybody's responsibility. We look beyond behaviour, use professional curiosity and work out what helps each pupil learn, belong and become ambitious for what comes next.

School policy | Annual review

Prepared for Management Committee approval

Document control

Field	Document information
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School	Thamesfield College Pupil Referral Unit
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Headteacher	Nick Elliott
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Use and review

This policy explains how Thamesfield identifies and supports pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. It should be read alongside the SEND Information Report, which gives parents, carers and pupils a shorter account of the school's current arrangements. Holly Stevens and the senior leadership team will review both documents each September. The Management Committee will approve this policy initially and when it is substantially revised, and will receive the annual SEND Information Report for oversight.

Status. The policy is written for Thamesfield's operation from September 2026. The approval date will be completed after the relevant Management Committee meeting.

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1. Purpose and principles

Thamesfield's purpose is to help children become ambitious for the next stage of their life or education. Many pupils arrive after mainstream education has not worked for them. Some already have identified SEND; others show clear indicators that have not yet been fully understood. Our starting point is therefore to ask what is making learning, attendance, relationships or regulation difficult, and what will help.

This is what Thamesfield means by being SEND detectives. It is professional curiosity, not informal diagnosis: staff look beyond the presenting behaviour, gather evidence, try well-chosen strategies and notice the difference they make.

- Pupils with SEND are entitled to the same ambition, curriculum breadth and preparation for adulthood as their peers.
- The pupil's voice and the knowledge held by parents, carers and home schools are central to planning.
- Support should be based on evidence and reviewed, rather than continued simply because it has always been used.
- Behaviour, absence, low attainment or a diagnosis can signal a need for further enquiry, but none proves SEN on its own.
- Safeguarding, SEND, attendance, mental health and behaviour are connected and must be considered together without losing the distinct responsibilities attached to each.

2. Thamesfield's context and the scope of this policy

Thamesfield College is a maintained Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). National guidance uses alternative provision as an umbrella term that includes PRUs, but Thamesfield has a distinct role and is not intended to act as a long-term substitute for specialist SEND provision.

This policy applies to Thamesfield's outreach, intervention and permanently excluded pupils. Responsibility changes according to the type of placement, so the policy is clear about what Thamesfield leads and what remains with the home school or Surrey County Council.

The Student Support Plan (SSP). Every pupil has one SSP. It brings together strengths, needs, ambitions, strategies and review information. The SSP does not automatically mean that a pupil has SEN and it does not replace an EHCP, healthcare plan, risk assessment or safeguarding plan.

The four broad areas of need

The SEND Code of Practice describes four broad areas. Thamesfield considers all four, while recognising that needs commonly overlap:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs

Thamesfield's profile is weighted towards social, emotional and mental health needs, often alongside autism, ADHD, speech, language and communication needs or learning needs. The categories help staff plan; they are not labels that limit expectations.

3. Legal framework and linked documents

Thamesfield has regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children and Families Act 2014, including the duty to use best endeavours to secure special educational provision
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments
- DfE Alternative Provision statutory guidance
- DfE statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion
- DfE statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions

This policy should also be read with Thamesfield's:

- SEND Information Report and Accessibility Plan
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Complaints Procedure
- Careers information and programme

4. Roles and responsibilities

Management Committee

The Management Committee provides strategic oversight of SEND. SEND is included within the Headteacher's Report and Holly Stevens provides a dedicated SEND update to the committee once each year. The committee assures itself that statutory duties are met, resources are used well and the school continues to improve its offer.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the school and for ensuring that this policy is implemented. The Headteacher makes sure SEND is considered within staffing, curriculum, safeguarding, school improvement and commissioning discussions. Broader decisions about a pupil's ambition, reintegration and whether an EHC needs assessment may be necessary are discussed at senior leadership level.

Strategic SEND Lead and SENDCo

Holly Stevens is Thamesfield's Strategic SEND Lead and named SENDCo. She:

- leads the school's SEND strategy and day-to-day coordination of SEND provision
- oversees identification, the SEN register and the quality of Student Support Plans
- advises staff and supports professional development
- coordinates EHC needs assessment requests, EHCP reviews and liaison with Surrey SEND
- works with pupils, families, home schools, colleges and external professionals
- reports to senior leaders and provides the annual SEND update to the Management Committee
- is also the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

Additional SEND and inclusion capacity

Philippa McHattie has completed the NPQ for SENCOs (NPQSEND) and works closely with Holly on assessment, planning, review and staff support. This gives the school additional qualified SEND capacity; her longer-term role designation will be clarified as the provision develops.

Amanda Sutton-Hall is the Inclusion Manager and a board member of the National Autistic Society. She contributes inclusion, safeguarding and autism expertise to pupil planning and staff development.

Tutors and all staff

The tutor is normally the main point of contact for the pupil and family. Where a pupil needs it, another member of staff may be identified as a close link. Every member of staff is responsible for knowing and using the SSP, adapting teaching, recording useful evidence and bringing concerns or successes to briefing, debrief and review.

5. Identifying SEND at Thamesfield

Most pupils at Thamesfield show more than one indicator of SEND, particularly features associated with ADHD, autism, communication, learning or social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff must not assume that the difficulty is simply poor behaviour: pupils are usually at Thamesfield because they could not cope successfully in mainstream education, and there is often an underlying reason, whether diagnosed or not.

Identification draws on:

- existing SEN Support records, EHCPs, professional reports and previous plans
- the pupil interview, parent or carer discussion, EXC2 information and the school or local-authority referral
- academic assessment, including reading information, classroom observation and work scrutiny
- attendance, engagement, communication, sensory, emotional and regulation patterns
- the pupil's response to teaching, reasonable adjustments and targeted support
- daily information shared through staff briefing and debrief

A previous SEN Support or EHCP status is retained and supported. Where need is newly suspected, Thamesfield investigates through assessment, observation and response to provision. Holly makes the school's final decision about SEN registration, informed by staff, Philippa, the pupil, parents or carers and the home school.

SEN Support (K). In practice, most pupils who come onto Thamesfield's roll are recorded as SEN Support because evidence shows that they require provision additional to or different from that generally available. Attendance at a PRU does not, on its own, justify a K code.

6. Entry information and the Student Support Plan

Entry information usually comes through three connected routes:

- 1) the pupil interview
- 2) the EXC2 document
- 3) the referral from Surrey or the home school, depending on whether the place follows permanent exclusion or is an intervention

The SSP is created during the interview process with the pupil, parents or carers and relevant school. It records what the pupil wants to achieve, what adults have noticed, the approaches most likely to help and how progress will be recognised. It is a working classroom document rather than paperwork kept separately from teaching.

If the pupil remains long enough, the SSP is formally reviewed three times during the year. It is reviewed sooner when needs, circumstances or the placement plan change. Parents, carers and the home school are expected to attend review days.

7. The graduated approach

Thamesfield uses an assess-plan-do-review cycle proportionate to the pupil and length of placement.

Assess

Staff bring together prior information, pupil and family views, assessment, observation and response to support. Assessment is continuous; it includes the daily discussion of progress, concerns and successful strategies in briefing and debrief.

Plan

The SSP sets clear ambitions, practical classroom strategies, targeted provision and indicators of progress. Planning identifies who will do what and how the pupil and family will be involved.

Do

Teachers remain responsible for the pupil's learning. Staff use agreed strategies consistently, provide high-quality adaptive teaching and record evidence that will help the next review.

Review

Formal reviews draw together academic progress, attendance, engagement, regulation, behaviour, relationships, pupil and parent views and the success of individual strategies. Support is strengthened, changed or withdrawn according to what the evidence shows.

8. SEND responsibilities across the three tiers

Provision	What it means	SEND responsibility
Tier 1: Outreach	Advice and support delivered with the pupil remaining at their home school.	The home school retains responsibility. Thamesfield helps staff understand needs, adapt provision and review what is working.
Tier 2: Intervention	A short-term intervention placement, normally 6 to 12 weeks, with a clear return plan.	Thamesfield gathers evidence and works closely with the home school. The home school normally leads any formal EHC needs assessment request, with Thamesfield helping to complete the paperwork.
Tier 3: Permanent exclusion	The pupil is on Thamesfield's roll following permanent exclusion.	Thamesfield leads the SEN register, assess-plan-do-review cycle, EHC needs assessment work, annual reviews and liaison with Surrey and external professionals.

These responsibilities do not prevent Thamesfield taking the initiative when a pupil needs help. They ensure that the correct school or authority remains accountable and that evidence follows the pupil.

9. Teaching, adaptations and the wider offer

Thamesfield's usual offer is designed around small groups, high adult availability, clear routines and strong relationships. Adaptations are individual rather than based only on a diagnostic label.

- Teachers use the SSP to adapt explanation, task size, language, resources, pace, recording and feedback.
- Learning is modelled and broken into manageable stages, including an I-We-You approach where useful.
- Consistent routines and predictable boundaries reduce uncertainty while relational, restorative and PACE-informed approaches support regulation and repair.
- Reading information, including NGRT and reading-quadrant analysis, is used to identify barriers. That Reading Thing is available where pupils need structured reading intervention.
- Pastoral support, Thrive-informed practice and access to trusted adults help pupils engage with learning and manage emotions.
- Staff use briefing, debrief and shared review information so that helpful approaches are understood across the team.

Pupils with SEND are expected and supported to take part in the full life of the school, including trips, enrichment, careers activity and work experience. Reasonable adjustments and individual risk assessments are used where required.

10. Working with pupils, families and home schools

Pupils are involved from the first interview and are asked directly about what helps, what gets in the way and what they want next. Their views are revisited through daily relationships, tutorials, SSP reviews, review days and transition planning.

Parents and carers contribute to the SSP, receive review information and are expected to attend review days. The tutor is usually their first contact; a pupil may be given another close staff link where this is helpful. Initial enquiries can be made through info@thamesfieldcollege.org.

For intervention and outreach pupils, Thamesfield works with the home school throughout. The SSP is shared. Assessment information, strategies, evidence and recommendations should also be transferred so that successful support continues after the pupil leaves. Thamesfield recognises that this wider transfer needs to become more consistently thorough and will monitor it as part of SEND improvement work.

11. External specialists, assessment and diagnosis

According to need and the pupil's circumstances, Thamesfield may work with:

- educational psychology
- speech and language therapy
- occupational therapy
- Mindworks Surrey and other children and young people's mental-health services
- Surrey SEND services and the Learners' Single Point of Access
- school nursing and other health professionals
- social care and family support
- the Virtual School
- Youth Justice and other relevant agencies

Specialist involvement is discussed with the pupil and family unless there is a safeguarding or other lawful reason not to do so. Advice is used to refine teaching and provision, not simply filed as a report.

NHS routes and Right to Choose

Where families ask about assessment for conditions such as ADHD or autism, Thamesfield may signpost them to appropriate NHS routes, including the NHS Right to Choose where it applies and where providers are accepting referrals. Parents should discuss eligibility and available providers with their GP. Thamesfield does not make a diagnosis, guarantee a referral or acceptance, or endorse a particular provider, but it can contribute educational evidence with appropriate consent.

12. EHC needs assessments and EHCPs

Requests for an EHC needs assessment

Thamesfield will not wait for a diagnosis before putting appropriate educational support in place. Where evidence indicates that the pupil may need provision beyond SEN Support, an EHC needs assessment will be considered with the pupil, family and relevant school or professionals. The broader ambition for the pupil, including whether an assessment may be needed to secure successful reintegration, is discussed at senior leadership level.

- For Tier 1 pupils, the home school leads and Thamesfield contributes advice and evidence.
- For Tier 2 pupils, Thamesfield gathers and collates evidence, assessments and response-to-provision information and works closely with the home school to complete the paperwork. This work has supported successful assessments while enabling some pupils to remain at their home school.

- For pupils on Thamesfield's roll following permanent exclusion, Thamesfield leads the school contribution to the request and works directly with Surrey.

Pupils who already have an EHCP

Thamesfield is a maintained PRU and is not intended to provide a long-term substitute for the mainstream or specialist placement required by an EHCP. Surrey remains responsible for maintaining the plan, must be involved in the placement and next-step planning, and remains responsible for securing the special educational provision in the EHCP. Thamesfield will make the provision it is commissioned and reasonably able to deliver during the placement and will identify promptly where further arrangements are needed.

Normally 12 weeks. Where a pupil already has an EHCP when they enter Thamesfield, the placement will normally be time-limited to 12 weeks in accordance with Thamesfield's commissioning arrangements with Surrey County Council.

Where a pupil has been permanently excluded, Thamesfield may provide interim education while Surrey reviews the EHCP and identifies an appropriate mainstream, specialist or post-16 destination. Thamesfield should not become the long-term placement simply because another suitable placement is not yet available.

A placement may exceptionally continue beyond 12 weeks where Thamesfield College and Surrey County Council agree that this is appropriate and in the pupil's best interests. The pupil, parents or carers and relevant professionals will be involved in reviewing the placement and planning the next step. This may include agreement for a Year 11 pupil to remain at Thamesfield to complete GCSE courses without another disruptive move.

Where an EHCP is issued while a pupil is attending Thamesfield, the school works with Surrey, the pupil and family to identify and plan an appropriate longer-term placement.

Suitability of referrals

Where Thamesfield has concerns about whether a pupil's needs, risks or access requirements can be met safely and appropriately, these will be raised clearly with Surrey. The school will ask for the proposed placement to be reconsidered or for additional support to be agreed. Surrey will normally make the final commissioning decision. Surrey SEND will usually discuss a proposed placement with Thamesfield beforehand; the extent of prior consultation can vary between referral routes.

13. Reviewing placements and reintegration

Returning to school is not held over until a formal review. Staff talk about progress and readiness every day through briefing and debrief, and bring that evidence together at review days. Every placement has a deadline or decision point.

An intervention pupil is expected to return to the home school, normally after 6 to 12 weeks. Thamesfield and the home school use the review process to plan timing, adjustments and support.

If a permanently excluded pupil is ready for another mainstream school, or that is judged to be their best chance of success, Thamesfield puts them forward for the next Fair Access window. The timing of those windows is fixed externally. A pupil may therefore be ready before a window opens, miss a window, or have a school allocated before they are quite ready to attend. Thamesfield may continue to hold and support the pupil until transition is workable. If earlier behaviours re-emerge, the school may ask for the Fair Access referral to be withdrawn and reconsidered.

Most returns are phased. Occasionally an immediate full-time return is the better option because of the individual pupil, the receiving school or the time of year. Outreach supports reintegrated pupils whether they have come through intervention or permanent exclusion.

14. Preparing for adulthood

Preparing for adulthood is part of the offer for every pupil, not an add-on for pupils with SEND. Thamesfield provides a comprehensive careers programme that includes careers learning across subjects and RSHE, employer encounters,

vocational visits, work-experience preparation and placements, college and sixth-form research, applications, personal statements, CVs, mock interviews and transition planning. The programme is reviewed against the Gatsby Benchmarks.

For pupils with an EHCP or additional transition needs, Holly and Philippa work with the local SEND team and liaise directly with colleges. They share information with consent, discuss support, help resolve barriers and advocate for a suitable opportunity where necessary.

15. Equality, accessibility, medical needs and safeguarding

Thamesfield does not treat pupils less favourably because of disability and will make reasonable adjustments. Neither current site is fully wheelchair accessible. Both have accessible toilets; the ground floor at Hersham and most of the Staines site can be accessed by wheelchair. Daily wheelchair use is not ideal at either site. An individual access assessment is therefore required before placement, followed by discussion with the family and Surrey about reasonable adjustments, support or alternative arrangements.

Medical conditions, disability, safeguarding and SEND can overlap but require their own plans and responsibilities. Staff follow the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Safeguarding and Child Protection policies alongside the SSP. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with data-protection and safeguarding duties.

Pupils with SEND can be more vulnerable to bullying, exploitation, abuse and having their communication misunderstood. Staff take concerns seriously, make communication accessible and ensure that pupils have a trusted route to ask for help.

16. Funding, effectiveness and governance

Using resources

Thamesfield will usually put appropriate support in place from within its existing staffing and resources. Where assessment shows that a pupil requires provision beyond what the school can reasonably provide, Thamesfield will gather the evidence and submit a request to Surrey for additional funding, specialist input or other provision.

Evaluating effectiveness

The school evaluates SEND provision through:

- progress towards SSP and EHCP outcomes
- academic progress, reading development and work produced
- attendance, engagement, regulation and readiness to learn
- the pupil's and family's experience of support
- the impact of individual strategies and specialist advice
- successful reintegration and sustained post-16 destinations
- review of the SEN profile, professional development and the quality of documentation

Holly reports SEND through the school's leadership and governance cycle. SEND is included in the Headteacher's Report to the Management Committee and is the subject of a dedicated annual update. The policy and Information Report are reviewed each September and sooner if the law, guidance or local commissioning arrangements change.

17. Concerns and complaints

Thamesfield aims to resolve concerns early and through direct conversation. Parents and carers should normally speak first with the tutor or staff member involved. If the concern remains, it should be raised with Holly Stevens as SENDCo, then with the Headteacher. Formal complaints are handled through the school's published Complaints Procedure. Initial contact can be made through info@thamesfieldcollege.org.

Parents, carers and young people may also seek free, confidential and impartial advice from SEND Advice Surrey. Using that service does not affect the school's complaints route or any statutory rights.

18. Key references

- [SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- [Alternative Provision statutory guidance](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions](#)
- [NHS Choice Framework](#)
- [Surrey Local Offer](#)
- [SEND Advice Surrey](#)