



***National Association of Independent Schools and  
Non-Maintained Special Schools***

## ***Standards for NASS members***

***Partnership, Innovation, Quality***

*All new and existing full and associate members are required to commit to these Values, Principles and Standards.*

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## Introduction

NASS is the national organisation for Non-Maintained Special Schools and Independent Schools and Services in England and Wales registered or approved to admit pupils with special educational needs.

The values and principles laid out in the Statement of Values of Principles have been drawn up in consultation with NASS members. New members are required to commit to these values and principles on joining NASS.

These Standards have been drawn up and agreed by NASS members in order to maintain and improve the quality and effectiveness of provision in our sector. It is an expectation that members have achieved these standards or are actively working towards them. They are strongly recommended by NASS Council.

They serve to:

- Define and give examples of how NASS principles should be applied in practice
- Set an expectation for potential NASS members on joining
- Reinforce members' processes of self-evaluation and quality assurance for education and care
- Allow us to be seen to be proactive in setting our own standards for the sector
- Give credibility and status to NASS membership

These Standards are generic to the whole sector and do not address practice specific to provision for different special educational needs or disabilities.

## **The national context in which members are required to operate**

### ***a) Legal and Statutory requirements***

Schools are subject to a wide range of legal and statutory requirement. NASS seeks to encourage its members to exceed requirements, and works on the assumption that all members will continue to meet all legal and statutory requirements.

In the interest of brevity, legal and statutory requirements or guidance are not reproduced here. However, an up-to-date list of primary and secondary legislation that applies to Non-Maintained Special Schools and Independent Schools that cater wholly or mainly for children with SEN can be found on the NASS website at: [www.nassschools.org.uk](http://www.nassschools.org.uk) .

In addition to DCSF regulation, schools in England and Wales which are charities are subject to Charity Law and the requirements of the Charity Commission, whilst those which are companies are subject to Company Law.

### ***b) Other Quality Assurance and Monitoring Processes***

NASS does not undertake quality assurance of members. Instead, each member is asked to self-assess their ability to meet the NASS standards and to re-sign to this on their annual renewal of membership. NASS supports Ofsted's processes for self-assessment and strongly recommends that members engage in additional, regularly reviewed Quality Assurance and monitoring procedures such as:

- Meeting Teacher Training Agency National Standards including for Headteachers, teachers, SENCOs and specialist teachers
- Investors in People
- Membership of the General Teaching Council's Teachers' Learning Academy
- Adherence to guidelines of relevant registered national professional bodies such as the Children's Workforce Development Council, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy, the Health Professionals' Council, the College of Occupational Therapists, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists and the Nursing and Midwifery Council
- Other discretionary national standards
- Performance management for all staff

## ***NASS Statement of Values and Principles***

### ***a) Mission statement***

NASS is the voice of Non-Maintained and Independent Special Schools. NASS exists to promote the role of high quality specialist provision within a modern inclusive education service and respects the right of children and young people, their families and carers to choose the right school for them.

We promote a sector that enables all children and young people to receive an education which is appropriate to their educational and social needs and which provides the maximum opportunity for all children and young people to participate fully in the educational, employment, consumer, recreational, community and domestic activities that typify an inclusive society.

As an organisation, NASS will:

- Provide a central point of contact for all full and associate members
- Promote the sector's unique contribution to Special Education with central and local government and SEN regional partnerships in order to influence strategic policy developments relating to pupils and students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) so that policy has due regard to the contribution of the specialist sector
- Fairly represent the views of our sector in a way that reflects the rich diversity of individual institutions and specialisms
- Provide the best possible service to members through information, advice and support, the development where appropriate of joint guidelines or codes of practice to serve as standards for members and the provision of high quality professional development for teachers, therapists, other professionals and support staff working with pupils and students with SEN.

### ***b) Values***

- NASS members are committed to excellence, to providing the highest professional standards and continuous improvement towards exceeding all statutory and regulatory requirements
- NASS members are committed to demonstrating the impact their provision has on children and young people through ongoing target-setting, monitoring and evaluation
- NASS believes that inclusion is a continuous process in which specialist provision plays an important role in partnership with other providers and with mainstream schools as part of an inclusive education system.
- NASS Schools will support all pupils to achieve the 5 outcomes set out in the Children Act 2004:
  1. Be Healthy
  2. Stay Safe
  3. Enjoy and Achieve
  4. Make a Positive Contribution
  5. Achieve Economic Well-being
- NASS schools place children and young people and their families and carers at the centre of their service provision.

- NASS schools will offer equality of opportunity to all pupils, students and staff regardless of gender, ethnicity and religion.
- NASS schools will promote the principle of partnership and multi-disciplinary work between pupils, families and carers, Local Authorities, regional bodies, other agencies and service providers in the best interests of each child or young person.

## **School-level Outcomes and Standards**

NASS is committed to use and development of the National Contract for Placement in Day and Residential Independent Schools and Non-maintained Special Schools ("The National Contract"). All member schools are strongly recommended to use The National Contract.

In 2008, key performance indicators were created for the National Contract to enable schools to record their progress against meeting the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes. NASS supports this and has adopted the National Contract key performance indicators as its own standards. We are also committed to a process of setting and monitoring child-level outcomes that allow schools to demonstrate the impact their service has had on individual children and young people.

Each standard is listed below with examples of evidence that schools can provide to demonstrate that they are meeting the standard.

### **Being Healthy 1 - Children are supported to understand and practise a healthy lifestyle**

#### **Service Requirements**

The School ensures health needs are met through medical care, promotion of self-care, promotion of well-being, PHSCE curriculum and therapies:

- 1) The School's personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) curriculum promotes good health and healthy life style. This should cover sexual health and relationships, healthy eating/exercise and, where appropriate, substance and alcohol misuse. There is involvement of local agencies including the local Health agencies and professionals, such as the drugs and alcohol team (DAT) teenage strategy manager in the delivery of the PSHCE curriculum as appropriate.
- 2) The curriculum offers all Children access to physical activity at least twice a week, appropriate to their needs. This can include formal P.E. lessons, leisure activities and physiotherapy and hydrotherapy.
- 3) Staff are competent and skilled to be alert and responsive to Children's emotional well-being, including early indications of mental health needs, and Staff are skilled and competent to support Children, and access additional help if required.
- 4) All Staff are competent and skilled to identify and respond to early signs of visual or hearing impairment and other health issues, and discuss these with the Child's carers.
- 5) There exists an operational no-smoking policy for Staff on duty whether on or off site with Children, and, as a general rule, a no-smoking policy for Children.

- 6) Drinking water is available in the school. Meals and snack menus reflect healthy living and Children have opportunities to engage in food preparation as part of the curriculum.
- 7) There are appropriate opportunities for participation in relaxation and recreational activities built into the school day and during evenings and weekends for residential schools.
- 8) Children and their parents/carers are supported to understand the importance of supporting their children's health needs as appropriate e.g. immunisations, attendance at relevant specialist clinics, regular dental care etc.
- 9) Where children have specific conditions which impact on their health needs, the school can evidence the steps it is taking to address these needs e.g. specialist training, equipment and support.

*Evidence Base*

*Healthy Schools Standard portfolio*

*School meal plans*

*Evidence of appropriate staff training*

*Pupil targets*

**Be Safe 1 - Children are safe and feel safe within the school environment**

**Service Requirements**

The School ensures:

- 1) It is fully compliant with all safeguarding regulatory requirements. This would include suitable policies and procedures for practice within school and staff recruitment and a central record of all CRB checks carried out.
- 2) Child protection procedures and staff training and practices explicitly address how children with communication difficulties, including those with no formal verbal communication, are to be safeguarded from abuse, and how indications of abuse can be identified and acted upon.
- 3) Each child's communication needs are widely understood and communicated to staff working with that child through the use of communication passports, communication plans, staff handover etc.
- 4) Risk assessments and risk management strategies are in place for each individual Child, along with IBP's where appropriate. These plans identify the most effective de-escalation strategies to calm down situations that may lead to the need for physical interventions, as well as identifying work to be undertaken to equip Children with positive ways of managing their anger and anxiety to prevent them from leading to high risk behaviours.

- 5) There exist written procedures for monitoring and evaluating significant incidents involving Children, and the effectiveness of the School's behaviour management policy.
- 6) Staff training and practices explicitly address how Children are to be safeguarded from unnecessary restraint, including Children who have complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities that impair their communication skills.
- 7) All staff are trained in positive behaviour management techniques. Those engaging in Restrictive Physical Interventions must have received training from a BILD accredited provider. Only Staff who have completed such training are involved in physical interventions. There is a clear debriefing process for children and staff where physical interventions have been used.
- 8) The school has a critical incidents plan and procedure and key Staff are trained to exercise this in the case of an emergency or critical incident.
- 9) There exists a strong culture in the School that bullying and discriminatory behaviour are not tolerated. This is supported by rigorous policies and procedures that counter bullying and discriminatory attitudes and behaviour from Staff, Children and visitors. There is a system for recording all incidents of bullying.
- 10) There are systems in place to protect Children from the risks of internet sites such as chat rooms; and mobile phones e.g. inappropriate/unwanted photography and filming. Staff take steps to ensure Children are well informed of the risks and how to protect themselves from potential risks.
- 11) There exist policies and procedures regarding safe Internet access and there is provision for the application of safeguards and filters to govern safe internet access.
- 12) There are systems in place to regularly canvas Children's views and feelings. Where children have communication difficulties, systems are in place to ensure that children can access a range of means of expressing their views.
- 13) There exist policies and procedures regarding safe transport for children.

*Evidence Base*

*Records of number of referrals to social services*

*Anti-bullying policy*

*Use of communication passports*

*Safe internet access policy*

*School Council*

**Enjoying and Achieving 1 - Children have good learning experiences matched to their assessed needs**

## **Enjoying and Achieving 2 - Children are supported to prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.**

### **Service Requirements**

The School ensures that:

- 1) Qualified teaching Staff who meet professional standards are employed.
- 2) There exist performance management review procedures for all teaching Staff, and provision is made for all Staff to be involved in training and continuous professional development and appraisal which includes targets for future performance.
- 3) Baseline assessments are made using data from previous school/statement and new assessments made on arrival (including social and emotional needs).
- 4) National curriculum levels/P' scale levels are:
  - o Included in the Annual Review report
  - o Included in the Child's transition plan as applicable.
  - o Included in report for LAC review (if the child has LAC status)
- 5) Each Child has an IEP/IPP/PEP and Transition Plan, as applicable, with targets and these are updated regularly through ongoing monitoring and assessment.
- 6) Arrangements are in place to ensure short and medium term lesson planning is monitored at least termly.
- 7) Lesson observation systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning at least termly.
- 8) The planning and delivery of the curriculum encompasses appropriate teaching styles, resources and techniques and responds to the age, aptitude, ability and learning style of the pupils.
- 9) There are high expectations of all Children. Plans are made having regard for individual abilities, aptitudes and interests, to support progression and attain demonstrable improvement in individual Children's achievement in line with the average for the comparable population of Children in England.

### *Evidence Base*

*School can demonstrate that initial assessment takes place and that there is regular assessment in relation to targets*

*School uses quality assurance processes to ensure that teaching and learning is appropriately tailored to pupils' needs*

*School keeps central record of all staff qualifications*

**Enjoying and Achieving 3 - Children are achieving their identified individual educational targets**

**Enjoying and Achieving 4 - Children and their carers are encouraged to have pride in their achievements**

### **Service Requirements**

The School ensures:

- 1) There are high expectations for each Child to achieve individual stretching and challenging targets, and that these achievements can be celebrated by the child and carers.
- 2) Where children do not make use of formal verbal communication, all staff have a clear sense of what constitutes progress and how this will be measured e.g. achievement of skills, reduction in behavioural difficulties etc.
- 3) Where English is not a Child's first language, there is help and support available for Children to learn English as their additional language. Additionally there is help available to retain/develop their first language either inside or outside of the School. Where a child is a non-verbal communicator, there is help and support available using AAC systems.
- 4) Children's achievements and attainments are celebrated both individually and across the school e.g. through the use of "celebration assemblies", prize-giving etc.
- 5) Intended outcomes for individual children and young people are clearly stated and progress towards them is systematically recorded. There are agreed systems for recording all educational achievements which might include display boards, mention books and specific awards.
- 6) Intervention strategies are modified to take account of the response of the child or young person.
- 7) Outcome data is systematically identified, collected and analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

### *Evidence Base*

*School demonstrates that pupil's achievements are valued through demonstrations of work, photographs etc.*

*Individual targets are easily identified in pupil's records and all staff can demonstrate how learning relates to these outcomes*

**Make a Positive Contribution 1 - Children are supported to be actively involved in their education planning and transition processes and decision making.**

**Make a Positive Contribution 2 - Children's views inform decision making in the School community**

## **Service Requirements**

The School ensures:

- 1) That Children and their parents/carers are involved as actively as possible in reviewing, decision making and developing the targets for their IEPs, PEPs, IBPs, Annual Reviews and Transition Plans and that work is done in advance of meetings, as appropriate, to enable the Child to participate.
- 2) There is established a school council or other mechanism for Children to be involved in decision making about school activities and school life.

### *Evidence Base*

*School has a clear home/school contact policy and can demonstrate how parents and carers are involved in school life*

*Young people's voices can be clearly identified at annual reviews either from their physical presence, written contribution or through representation through a known adult or advocate*

*School can demonstrate how it consults pupils on issues relating to school life*

## **Make a Positive Contribution 3 - Children are supported to have positive self identity, mutual respect and empathy for the needs of others in and out of the School**

### **Service Requirements**

The School ensures:

- 1) There exist planned opportunities to develop a range of secure and positive relationships with adults and other Children.
- 2) There exist mentoring and additional support for Children having difficulties forming/maintaining positive relationships with others.
- 3) Children have opportunities for initiating and participating in activities in their school, community and the wider international community.
- 4) Children have opportunities to learn and understand about a variety of cultures and religions. They are able to participate in a variety of religious/cultural celebrations as appropriate and in particular to their religious and cultural backgrounds
- 5) Children have opportunities to learn and understand about a variety of equality issues e.g. race, disability, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation.

### *Evidence Base*

*School can demonstrate good links with local community through a range of activities, events etc.*

*Staff receive appropriate training and can demonstrate an awareness and understanding of attachment and of how children form relationships.*

#### **Make a Positive Contribution 4 - Children are equipped to manage significant changes in their lives**

##### **Service Requirements**

The School ensures:

- 1) Staff are competent and skilled in supporting Children, parent(s) and carers through the joining and leaving school processes. Children are supported to learn about and understand the concepts of beginnings and endings and the emotions which accompany these.
- 2) Staff are competent and skilled to employ a range of strategies and mechanisms for supporting and educating Children to manage change and respond to challenges at different stages in their lives.
- 3) Children are made aware of their rights and responsibilities, and are supported at key transition points in their lives, in partnership with other Services as appropriate.

##### *Evidence Base*

*Rights and responsibilities are displayed widely at school and in residential accommodation*

*School can demonstrate events and processes to welcome new pupils to school e.g. welcome posters, buddies etc.*

#### **Achieve Economic Wellbeing 1 - Children are ready for adult life**

##### **Service Requirements**

The School ensures:

- 1) There exist opportunities for all Children to learn about a range of different learning and living options for adult life.
- 2) There exist opportunities for all Children, where appropriate, to receive independent professional advice from a career education specialist.
- 3) There exist opportunities for all Children to engage in learning independent living skills and/or work related experience and preparation for transition.

##### *Evidence Base*

*School runs work experience programmes and/or has links to local employers*

*Children are supported to work towards independence and steps towards this are clearly identifiable and measurable*  
*Regular input from local Connexions service or equivalent*

### **Principles of child-level outcomes setting: the outcomes process**

Individual outcomes for children and young people will cover a wide range of needs and circumstances. It is difficult to generalise the content of individual outcomes but it is possible to agree on an overall process through which outcomes will be set and monitored.

NASS schools are committed and aspire to a process of outcomes setting which:

- Fully involves children, young people and their families in setting of life goals and aspirations
- Separates out child-level from service level outcomes
- Starts before a child is placed in a NASS school
- Provides a clear and transparent process for how children, families, Local Authorities and schools work together on outcomes and assess the impact of placements and interventions
- Makes use of existing expertise to provide guidance on what are appropriate outcomes for children and young people with a wide range of severe, complex and/or low incidence special educational needs and disabilities
- Supports transition into adult services

The aim of this process is to build on and crystallise existing good practice in goal setting and monitoring rather than to add a further layer of bureaucracy or to work against existing structures such as the annual review of the statement or the Looked after Child review. The suggested process is as follows:

#### **1. Setting life goals**

At this stage the child/young person and their family work in partnership with the local authority and/or other current service providers to map out broad life goals. This might include questions such as:

- What do I want/want for my child?
- What might I be able to achieve?
- Where would I like to live?
- What do I want to do with my time?

This stage is independent of the school and takes place in advance of any decisions being made about placement.

#### **2. Placement**

Placement decisions should be made with particular regard to the wishes of the child/young person and their family. Such an approach is in keeping with adult person-centred planning but is not currently explicit in all placement decisions. Local Authorities should have access to high level, service-focused outcomes at this point to help them to make decisions about the best type of placement.

### **3. Translating life goals into achievable outcomes**

The provider where the child/young person is placed should work with the goals set in stage 1 to develop achievable outcomes, framed in ECM terms. These would take the young person's life goals as an end point and work back from there to set the outcomes that would need to happen at specific times to allow the child/young person to move towards their goals. This ensures that no one loses sight of the end goal but that these goals are broken down into step by step achievements.

NASS schools will contribute to a culture of sharing practice and experience on setting outcomes for children and young people to help develop an expert evidence base to support children with low incidence disabilities.

### **4. Monitoring and evaluation**

Schools and Local Authorities will make use of existing review opportunities to consider how these outcomes are being met. This process should be ongoing and linked back to stage 3 consistently so that outcomes can be reviewed and adapted as necessary.

### **5. Impact evaluation**

Schools and Local Authorities need to have a clear sense of the impact a placement or intervention has had on a child/young person. We believe that scenario planning could help with this by creating a picture of what the impact on a child could be if:

1. All the outcomes/goals set are fully met
2. The outcomes/goals are partially met
3. The outcomes/goals are not met

For example, a young person who has a goal to live and travel independently would still have certain support needs, if these goals were achieved. However, these would be different if the needs were partially met e.g. increased transport costs if she was not able to achieve independent travel. If none of the goals were met, the scenario might be of a young woman living in a group home with high support needs.

Although such an approach relies on some creativity, and could never prove causality, it allows schools and providers to make first steps towards costing the relative costs of intervention versus "do nothing". This approach has recently been introduced in the drugs and alcohol field, costing the impact of treating versus not treating addiction.

### **6. Local and Regional Priority setting**

Following the process listed above should assist Local Authorities in both setting and monitoring against their own local and regional priorities. This model could be followed with both in-authority and out of authority provision and allow for comparison of the merits of each. NASS schools are committed to making contribution towards service planning and future delivery in their host and placing authorities.