

Title	EDUCATIONAL AND WELFARE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH ECHP's
Cross References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🍌 Teaching and Learning Policy 🍌 Admissions Policy
Date	October 2024

Legislation and guidance

Whilst Apricot Online is not bound by SEND statutory duties under Section 31 (of the Children and Families Act 2014, this policy and our practice takes into account:

This policy and information report is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for students with SEN and disabilities
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health, and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the SEN information report #

Definitions

A student has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

Special educational provision is educational provision that **is additional to, or different from**, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

Special educational needs - definitions

Students present with the following needs:

1. Communication and interaction, for example, speech and language difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder, Asperger's Syndrome,
2. Cognition and learning, for example, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and moderate/severe/profound and multiple learning difficulties
3. Social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) difficulties, for example, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD),
4. Sensory, physical, and medical needs, for example, visual impairments, hearing impairments, processing difficulties, epilepsy

The benefits of the online platform in meeting the education and welfare needs of students with Education, Health and Social Care plans (EHCPs)

The needs of students with EHCPs who enrol at Apricot Online are varied and can be complex and long term. Some are unable to attend school in person due to medical and emotional needs. Flexibility is key to meeting the broad range of short-to-long term complex needs of such students. Online learning can help bridge the gap and help students remain engaged with their learning, without disruption to their routines, and to ensure continuity of education, fairness, and inclusion. Our lessons are taught online and we offer a broad curriculum for every age group, and the possibility of tailoring the offer to an individual student's needs. Online classroom delivery is geared to promote student engagement, to help student sustain concentration through access to our interactive content, gamified learning, and collaborative ways of working. In new ways, this helps students, some with pronounced difficulties, to re-engage with study and develop independent learning skills and confidence.

Lesson content is recorded and this, as well as content stacks of other related study material, is made available for students to access anytime, to help them catch up or reinforce their learning. In this way, students can learn at their own pace, with a personalised timetable and a range of tools at their disposal, enabling them to engage with lessons that are tailored to their specific needs and motivating them to take ownership of their own learning.

Educational provision for students with EHCPs Principles

We admit students who have had an EHCP from their relevant local authority. Where a student has an EHC plan, we seek to ensure that the education on offer to that student fulfils the requirements placed on Apricot Online by the relevant EHC plan. In so doing we:

- ensure that the delivery of curriculum and the appropriate plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of pupils with a statement / EHC plan
- ensure that the teaching offered enables pupils with EHC plans to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability to that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
- ensure that leaders of learning show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of students with EHC plans and ensure that these are considered in the planning of lessons.

Admissions

Upon registration, we ask clients / parents to share information about a student's specific interests, aptitudes and needs. When enrolling a student, parents / mentors are asked to include details of any special circumstances relating to the pupil's health, allergies, disabilities, special educational need which may be relevant to their participation in the education provided.

Client /Parents are asked to declare, through the admissions process, where students intending to enrol do so with an Education, Health and Social Care Plan (EHCP).

Information on a student's special educational needs, especially where they have an EHCP, will be made available to staff.

Early notification of any disability or impairment is of great value, as it will enable all staff to consider whether reasonable adjustments need to be made for a pupil during the admissions process and what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made to support the pupil's future education. In order that Apricot Online is fully compliant with the Equality Act, all staff are made aware of the duties towards children who are disabled and the 'reasonable adjustments' needed for particular children.

Ordinarily available and targeted provision for students with EHCPs

Primarily, we aim to support students with EHCPs through **daily, quality first teaching**. Our teachers have expertise at 'teaching through the screen' and understand how best to connect with students remotely and keep their lessons sufficiently compelling to maintain interest and engagement levels.

Live online lessons allow learners to fully interact with their teachers and peers and engage with lesson content through voice, interactive whiteboard displays shared with their screens, polling tools and quizzes and via written responses., practical work and differentiated work when some learners making be falling behind.

We aim to ensure that students requiring SEN Support or with an Education, Health and Social Care plan (EHCP) will have key teaching strategies

- curriculum adaptations
- interventions including support groups, 1:1
- specific resource requirements
- partnership working needed with parents and mentors
- external agency involvement
- assessments and reports

Welfare provision for students with EHCPs

SENCO monitors each student with an EHCP will check regularly, through 1:1 discussion with the student and contact with the family and clients, how well s/he is progressing academically and about their social, emotional well-being and mental health. The student's voice and that of their family are very important to this process. The teachers liaise closely with the SENCO, who is also our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in terms of any related pastoral or safeguarding issues.

We provide a safe and secure online environment. It allows students to regularly communicate with their teacher and we provide regular reports and feedback

The controlled online environment means students with additional needs, such as those exhibiting anxiety or with concentration difficulties, can have interactions managed accordingly. Many students with higher anxiety and mental health needs report that they flourish in the more controlled environment this offers. The level of access to interactions with peers and adults can be controlled to suit the learning situation. The system provides firm boundaries for students who require this approach. The teacher can restrict student access to general chat, private chat, microphone access and indeed the classroom itself. Students are aware of these controls and therefore respond to these firm boundaries.

The teacher can set questions via a Q&A pod that only the teacher sees the responses to and therefore students are not anxious in answering questions or giving opinions. Therefore, the issues that currently can affect autistic students- attendance, noisy corridors, disorganised rooms, being partnered with a pupil they do not know, or being forced into the limelight where they are not comfortable to be so, are negated by the online environment.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

They will:

- SENCO to determine the strategic development of this policy and provision
- have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual students who have EHC plans
- provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents / clients, and other agencies to ensure that students with EHCPs receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- be the point of contact for external agencies, within linked local authorities and their support services
- liaise with potential next providers of education / schools at which students may be 'dual-rolled' to ensure students and their parents / mentors are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- ensure we keep the records of all students with EHCPs up to date including progress reviews

Staff training and professional development

All of Apricot teachers have qualified teacher status and most have an additional online teaching qualification, as well as being SEN trained which is delivered in-house. This qualification comprises a range of units which address the theory and practice of online teaching. Teachers are assessed on their online lessons and they study the theory behind some of the practical aspects of the course, such as different types of online assessment, differences between synchronous and asynchronous learning and why different types of media may be relevant for different types of learners.

We endeavour to keep teachers abreast of the latest professional guidance and advice on supporting students with special educational needs and specifically, the EHCP process. To that end, we incorporate opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through regular group training, individual study and internal advice and support. A particular focus of this training will be upon how staff help identify and support students with social, emotional and mental health needs, especially during COVID-19, drawing upon the developments in monitoring student health and well-being that are also occurring.

Provision of information to Local Authorities and the Secretary of State concerning EHCP Annual Reviews

In England, the Local Authority (LA) for the area in which a student resides is responsible for making sure services across the three areas (Education, Health and Social Care) are brought together and that the EHC plan is co-ordinated between those services and the family. Joint assessments will help parents / mentors and young people to 'tell their story' Only once and will focus on the outcomes that children and young people can achieve as well as identifying the support needed to do this.

We are committed to supporting 'joined-up' education and care. Apricot contributes to the annual review process for the relevant students with EHCPs on roll where requested to do so by the LA. EHCP annual reviews are convened by local authorities in their local area and we will contribute to these reviews as required, either through the submission of progress / update reports, oral submissions at inter-agency review meetings or both. However, Apricot is not bound by the 2014 SEND Code of practice in terms and cannot take responsibility for hosting annual reviews and send reports to all parties involved.

Authorised by: Jodie Phillips, Operations Director

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