



LOCATION: SCHOOL HANDBOOK, SECTION I, DOCUMENT 19

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES POLICY**

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**Date reviewed:** September 2025

**Reviewed By:** Vicky Aspin

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**Date of next review:** Autumn 2026

### **SECTION I**

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT ABBEY COURT SCHOOL**

Abbey Court School is a day special school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties aged 3-19 years. Abbey Court Foundation Special School is maintained by Medway Local Authority for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) as their primary presenting need. Additional educational needs may include visual/hearing impairment, sensory impairment, autism and/or physical disability. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan).

Admissions to, and consultation with, the school are managed via the Medway Local Authority SEN Team at Medway Council, who follow the Statutory process for consultations and placement in direct liaison with the Headteacher.

Once a placement has been agreed, we implement individual transition programmes. Placement at Abbey Court is kept under constant review, specifically through the Annual Review process, which monitors the pupils' SEN and provision needed to support them through the Education and Health and Care Plan. Any requests for changes are discussed with parents and formally submitted to the Local Authority via the statutory Annual Review process.

The school admits pupils from the Medway Authority, as places are given to Medway pupils as a priority. Pupils from other areas, e.g. Kent, are considered if placement is felt to be appropriate and places are available. Medway LA reserves the right to prioritise placements in discussion with Kent LA as part of local reciprocal arrangements. (See Admissions Policy, Staff Handbook, Section I, Policy No. 13).

### **AIMS**

The Governors and Staff at Abbey Court have developed shared aims and values:

- To know each individual child/pupil as thoroughly as we can, including any circumstances which might affect their well-being, behaviour and performance at any moment in time. This includes taking a long-term view of each child, visualising the best possibilities for each, and knowing when they are ready to take the next (challenging) step.

- To maintain high, but realistic expectations for each pupil, enabling the development of independence.
- To ensure we always see, first and foremost, the child, not the disability, and to ensure that education (and not care) remains paramount. This will include identifying what motivates each child and using that knowledge to encourage them to “have a go” for themselves.
- To ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and comfortable, to enable them to focus on learning, ensuring staff have clarity and act on policies and procedures.
- To give great emphasis to the celebration and communication of pupil achievements, thus enabling a positive impact on parents, the local community and the pupils themselves.
- To have and realise a bespoke vision for each and every pupil and each and every member of staff.
- Do everything we can to ensure that people in the local community see our school and pupils in a positive and informed light, in order to close the gap between the community’s perceptions of the school and its pupils, and what they are really like.
- To enable our pupils to develop into good citizens and to participate actively in their local communities, finding ways to encourage those in the wider community to notice what they have in common with the pupils as much as what makes them different.
- To offer opportunities and experiences for pupils to learn in a multitude of different ways and through a rich, varied and individualised curriculum.
- To give pupils an equal voice in, and ownership of, their education, so that they are able to express opinions, choices and preferences, promoting their independence, confidence and self-efficacy.
- To use individuals' interests, skills and experiences to enhance the education of pupils and staff.
- To ensure that leadership is in the hands of as many staff as possible; to have high expectations of all staff and enable career progression.
- To learn and share information, to the benefit of our pupils, through mutually supportive relationships with parents, specialists and outside agencies.
- Through self-evaluation methodologies, seek to know our school better, to inform focused school improvement, and so that others can know us better.
- To function and be recognised as an exemplary school in its field.

### **The Governing Body**

The Governors, along with the Headteacher, are responsible for ensuring the aims of the school are achieved. This is realised by

- Governor involvement in School Development Planning and the monitoring/evaluation of the plan.
- termly Governors Meetings, in which School Development is always a priority.

- the detailed work of Governors: e.g. links with subject leaders, pupil shadowing, participation in school events, Governor training, classroom observation, attendance at staff training and the delivery of the Governors' monitoring plan.

### **School Staff**

The individual needs of the pupils at Abbey Court require that staff have specialist knowledge and training, as well as an understanding of child and adolescent development, and experience and expertise in the following areas:

- Severe and Profound Learning Difficulties
- Social Communication Disorder
- Physical Disability
- Multi-sensory Impairment
- Complex Behaviour
- Complex Communication Difficulties
- Working with parents and support professionals
- Medical needs
- Language Development
- Emotional Literacy
- Complex feeding/hydration regimes
- Delivering personal care
- Working in collaboration with parents and any support professionals of the child

Professional development opportunities are available to all staff to meet the needs of the pupils. Staff are encouraged to support each other and to share expertise. [See Staff Development Policy (Staff Handbook, Section 2, Policy No. 11) for all staff groups.]

The school currently employs a Speech and Language Therapist, an assistant, and an Occupational Therapy Assistant. This is in addition to therapy provided by the NHS teams.

### **External Support**

Professional support is available to pupils, staff, parents/carers and Governors from a broad range of agencies. These include:

- Advisory Teacher for Hearing Impaired
- Advisory Teacher for Visually Impaired
- LA Consultants
- Physiotherapists (additional Health Authority provision)
- School Nurse (MCH, but based at the school)
- Speech Therapist (additional Health Authority provision)
- Occupational Therapist (additional Health Authority provision)
- Educational Psychologist (Local Authority)
- Kent Association for the Blind
- General LA Advisers
- Children and Young People's Disability Social Care Team
- Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies (AASSA)
- NELFT

## **BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES**

Abbey Court is located on two sites:

### **Primary and Secondary Site:** (Cliffe Road, Strood)

This caters for pupils aged 3 – 16 years. All areas of the school are accessible to all pupils, with wheelchair access throughout (see Accessibility Policy – School Handbook, Section I, Policy No. 35).

This site is purpose-built, with the primary site being opened in April 2017, and the secondary site opened in June 2023. It is an 8-acre site with extensive facilities, including hoists, to support the needs of pupils with SLD, PMLD and physical disabilities.

- Interactive Soft Play Room
- Sensory Stimulation Rooms
- Art/Technology Room
- Disabled toilets and personal care suites
- Food Technology Rooms
- Therapy Rooms
- Libraries
- Medical / Consulting Room
- Kitchen with meals prepared on-site/large dining areas
- Large hall
- Room for an interactive race master horse
- Minibuses + 1 people carrier with tail lifts
- Adventure playground and play area
- Sensory courtyards
- Drama/Dance studio
- Life Skills suite
- Art rooms
- ICT Suite
- Meeting rooms
- A school farm, with a viewing classroom
- Hydrotherapy pool

### **Further Education Site:** (Rede Court Road, Strood)

This caters for pupils aged 16-19 years. The building was purpose-built approximately 35 years ago.

All areas of the school are accessible to all pupils, with wheelchair access throughout (see accessibility policy – School Handbook, Section I, Policy No. 35).

Facilities include:

- Hydrotherapy pool (refurbished January 2007)
- Hall
- Kitchen with meals prepared on-site
- Music Therapy Room
- Enterprise Room
- Food Technology
- Life Skills Room
- Sensory Room

- Disabled toilets and personal care suites
- Library
- Therapy Room
- Sports field
- Medical / Consulting Room
- Minibuses and garage
- AVA Resource room
- ICT Suite

Additionally, both sites cater for the needs of pupils with visual impairment and those with low/moderate challenging behaviours.

## **SECTION 2**

### **PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING POLICY**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

##### Formative Assessment

At Abbey Court, formative assessment is used to monitor pupil progress in order to provide ongoing feedback that teachers can use to improve the effectiveness of their teaching and support pupils to improve further. Formative assessments:

- Help pupils identify their strengths and weaknesses and focus on what needs improving
- Help teachers identify where pupils are struggling and enable them to address those difficulties.

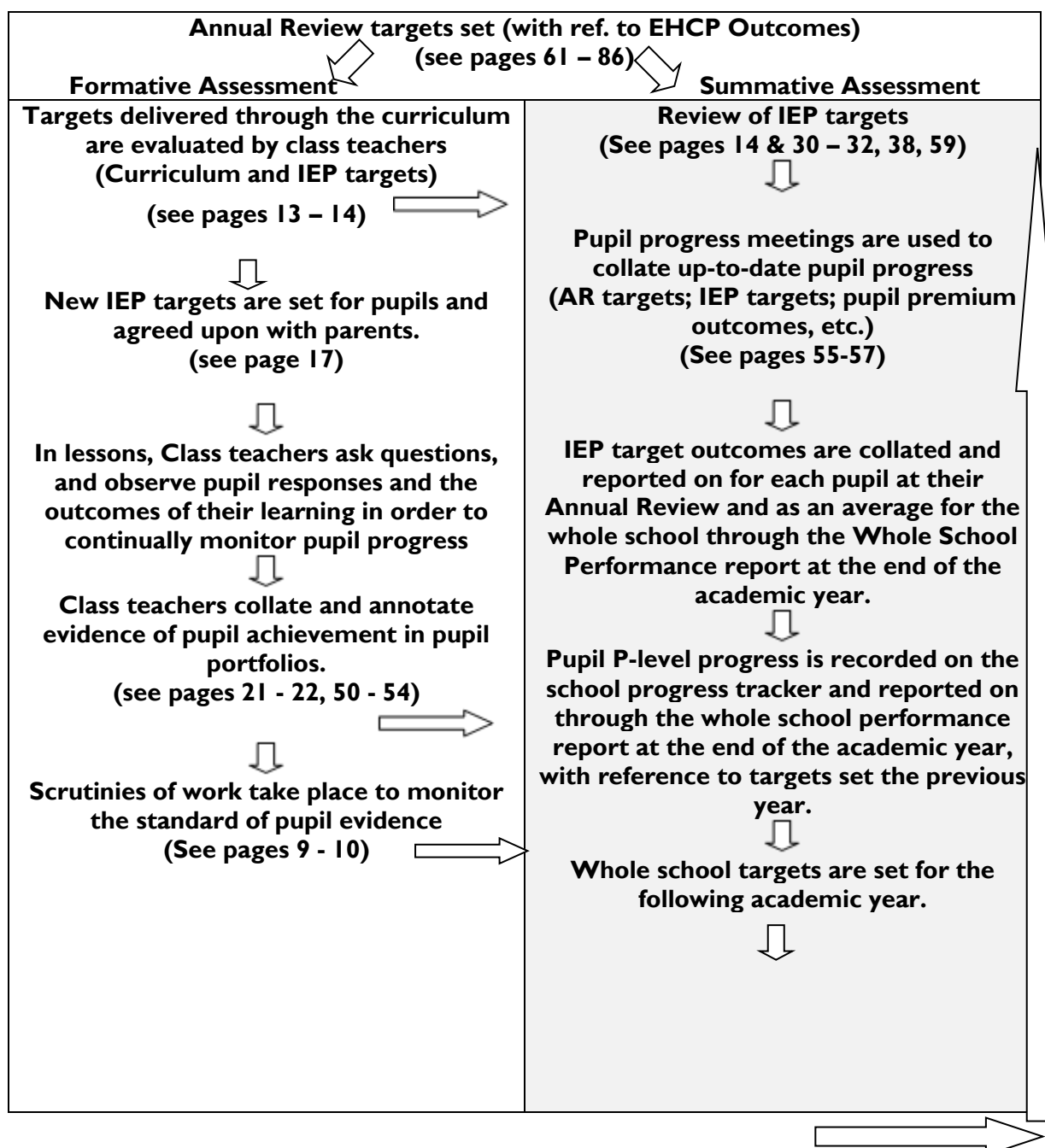
##### Summative Assessment

At Abbey Court, summative assessments are the methods used to review student learning at the end of a period of time (end of term or academic year, for example). These evaluations are compared to standards and benchmarks, for example, the P levels.

This policy includes a comprehensive system of assessment that ensures that the formative and summative approaches are effective and used consistently across the school. This policy is used as a key document in the face-to-face induction of new teaching staff by SMT in the school to make sure that approaches remain consistent.

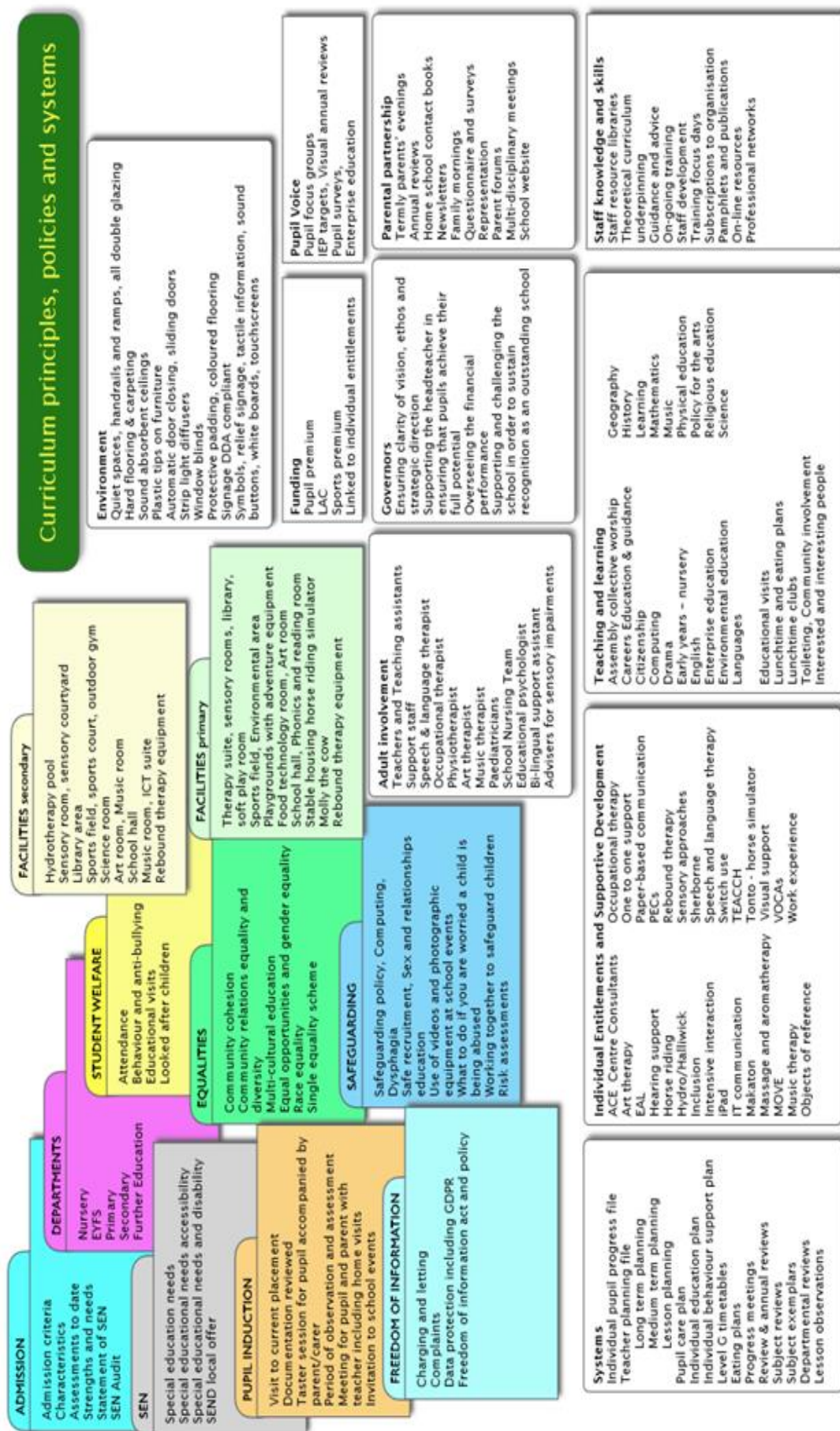
Progress and targets are discussed with Parents at Parents' evening; the Annual Review and information are sent home.

## What this looks like at Abbey Court School



Abbey Court School aims to provide a broad, balanced, relevant and progressive curriculum for each pupil in preparation for adulthood. The aim of this is to include all of the pupils in the process wherever possible. Agreed and implemented systems of Planning, Assessment, Recording, and Reporting are a pre-requisite to delivering this curriculum in a professional, efficient, effective and consistent manner throughout the pupils' school years.

In planning and assessment, particular consideration is given to relevance and progression in order to meet the severe learning difficulties and disabilities of the pupils at our school.



## DEFINITION:

This policy endeavours to ensure that its systems for Planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting (PARR) support the school in offering an Outstanding learning context where:

- The school's curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the school. It is evident from what teachers do that they have a firm and common understanding of the school's curriculum intent and what it means for their practice. Across all parts of the school, a series of lessons contribute well to delivering the curriculum intent.
- The work given to pupils, over time and across the school, consistently matches the aims of the curriculum. It is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning, work experience, careers advice and employment.
- Pupils' work across the curriculum is consistently of a high quality.
- Pupils consistently achieve exceptionally well, highly, particularly the most disadvantaged.

## Intent

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. This is either the national curriculum or a curriculum of comparable breadth and ambition. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]
- The school's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]
- The curriculum is successfully adapted, designed or developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of pupils with SEND, developing their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]
- Pupils study the full curriculum; it is not narrowed or diminished. In primary schools, a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) is taught in key stage 2 throughout each and all of Years 3 to 6. In secondary school, the school teaches a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) throughout Years 7 to 9.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise.
- Teachers present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. They check pupils' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback. In so doing, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary without unnecessarily elaborate or individualised approaches.
- Over the course of study, teaching is designed to help pupils remember long-term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas.



- Teachers and leaders use assessment well, for example, to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently, or to check understanding and inform teaching. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens on staff or pupils.
- Teachers create an environment that focuses on pupils. The textbooks and other teaching materials/resources that teachers select – in a way that does not create an unnecessary workload for staff – reflect the school's ambitious intentions for the course of study. These materials/resources clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
- The work given to pupils is demanding and matches the aims of the curriculum in being coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge
- Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offered.
- A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. At all stages, reading attainment is assessed and gaps are addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils. Reading books connect closely to the phonics knowledge pupils are taught when they are learning to read.
- The sharp focus on ensuring that younger children gain phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read, and the skills to communicate, gives them the foundations for future learning.
- Teachers ensure that their own speaking, listening, writing and reading of English support pupils in developing their language and vocabulary well.
- Pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. This is reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained.
- Pupils are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have the knowledge and skills they need and, where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests and aspirations and the intention of their course of study.
- Pupils' work across the curriculum is of good quality.
- Pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. They are able to apply mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures appropriately for their age and cognitive ability.

(OFSTED Handbook May 2019)

## **AIMS**

### **KEY PRINCIPLES:**

In our school, pupils have an entitlement to an assessment process which:

- accurately identifies and tracks their progress;
- highlights strengths and difficulties together with strategies to manage them;
- raises the expectation of success and celebrates a broad range of achievements;

- provides reliable and credible information to support progression in learning;
- is motivating and actively involves them in review and target setting.

In our school, Pupils and staff have an entitlement to assessment and recording procedures which:

- are based on clear and shared criteria;
- are manageable, sustainable, consistent and useful;
- meet statutory requirements;
- support quality teaching and learning;
- yield reliable and valid assessments.

Accountability - Parents have an entitlement to assessment and reporting practices which:

- highlights their child's success and progress;
- identifies weaknesses and how they will be addressed;
- provides them with opportunities to review and discuss their child's achievements;
- involves them in helping to meet learning targets;
- ensures information about their child is detailed, specific and easy to understand.

### **Entry Assessment**

Our assessment process begins before the pupil starts at school, with baselining and moderation meetings taking place. A formal entry assessment is compiled following agreed baselining with teachers, parents and other specialists through an individual pupil progress meeting and with specific reference to the pupil's EHCP. This information is used to formulate the first Individual Education Plan targets and an initial baseline across all subjects of the National Curriculum, recorded on the School's Progress Tracker.

The progress data enables a projection to be made for pupil progress that expects outstanding progress at the end of each Key Stage – this sets the standard for pupil progress for all pupils, including any pupils from specific cohorts of need, gender, ethnicity or background.

Abbey Court has developed a school standard for expected progress based on P levels. For PMLD pupils, the achievement of 40% of a P level is judged good and above 40% is judged as outstanding. This standard is raised to 60% of a P-level for SLD pupils and 80% of a P-level for higher achievers. These standards are moderated against progress measures nationally and in comparison to other special schools nationally, and for example locally with St. Nicholas School in Canterbury, and enable the school to demonstrate outstanding progress for pupils.

The school pupil progress tracker identifies the small steps of progress that each pupil makes across all subjects of the National Curriculum, plus RE and PSHE and C. The system enables the school to set rigorous and challenging targets measured against the school standard, which expects a better rate of progress than other special schools do: an outstanding standard of achievement.

The progress is monitored by multi-professionals through termly individual pupil progress meetings alongside progress with pupil IEP targets, which are levelled to match the data in the progress tracker. The progress and achievements of pupils identified both in the progress tracker and through their IEPs are used to demonstrate the outcomes of the targets within each pupil's EHC Plan.

The Abbey Court curriculum has a significant impact on the accreditation pupils work towards and achieve; for details on these, please see the School Development Plan and Whole School Performance report.

## **Moderation & External Validation**

Moderation cycles are built into the assessment schedule to ensure the consistency and accuracy of judgements made. This includes the moderation of IEP target achievement across departments and with other schools (including local mainstream provision) and the moderation of pupil progress across the school. The achievements link directly to the proposed outcomes of the pupil's EHCP. In addition, external moderation takes place for all external accreditations mentioned above.

An Assessment timetable has been designed that schedules:

- Teacher assessment / Planning.
- Pupil progress meetings.
- Timing of Annual Review & IEP Reports.
- Parents' consultation evenings.
- Examination board moderation/assessment meetings.
- Progress Files - Evaluation and moderation.
- Moderation of IEPs and Pupil portfolios relating to P-level attainment

## **Target Setting**

Target setting takes place within a cycle of planning, delivering, recording and evaluation. This begins with the IEP targets agreed for each pupil by a multi-professional panel in the pupil progress meeting. Targets are agreed with parents/carers at a parent meeting (and this may include adjustments to targets or the addition of further targets). Targets are worked on during the term, both in school and at home. These are monitored, should they need to be modified if they may be unrealistic or too easily achieved. This involves the support, where pertinent, of other co-providers (The therapy team or Educational Psychologist for example).

Towards the end of the term, pupil progress is assessed and their outcomes recorded, ready for review at the next pupil progress meeting, where next steps will again be considered and agreed.

## **Reviewing Pupil Progress**

Monitoring and review of individual pupils' learning needs takes place formally through the progress meetings in terms 1, 3 and 5 and annually in the pupil's Annual Review of their EHCP with the support and advice of therapists and other specialists where appropriate. Pupils contribute (there is a pupil-generated target) and are also targets, particularly linked to 'home-working', to involve and engage parents/carers (in addition to agreement by parents/carers of all targets set). The progress meeting agenda also focuses on reviewing progress in and setting targets for:

- The child's EHCP and any reports by, for example, the Educational Psychologist and/or other professionals.
- Communication and Literacy
- Numeracy
- PSHE and C
- Problem-solving / Working with others
- Social and Emotional Behaviour
- Behaviour / Learning and performance
- Computing
- Physical Development/Mobility (Inc. Leisure and Recreation Studies)

- This review of each pupil's IEP includes setting targets relating to preparation for adulthood, such as employability, healthy living, independence, relationships/friendships and behaviour
- Pupil progress in all curriculum areas.
- Language records (e.g. Derbyshire Language Assessment Record, Actions/targets from Speech and Language Therapist)
- Ongoing assessment of physical, visual, or hearing impairment, with supporting reports from Teacher Advisers and Therapists.
- Further assessment of any specific difficulty, e.g. behaviour, feeding, toileting.
- Daily/weekly subject recording and regular summaries of learning activities undertaken.
- The data also includes behaviour and attendance information as pertinent to the pupil.

## **Parent & Pupil Involvement**

All pupils have the right to be active participants in their own education and to feel that their opinions will be heard in the wider school community.

At Abbey Court School, we actively seek ways to listen to the views of our pupils and give them opportunities to be involved in decision-making so that they can engage as partners in the life of the school. We firmly believe that this will form the basis for them to make a positive contribution to the school environment and our ethos.

We encourage pupils to become active participants in a democratic society by holding a range of activities which develop skills that underpin their right to have an opinion, make a choice, and communicate these effectively. Please refer to the Pupil Voice policy for more information.

Annual Reviews are timetabled to take place on the anniversary of the pupil's EHCP. Parents and Pupils will comment on the report and review the progress report. Parents are also encouraged to comment specifically on pupil progress, whether they agree with the judgements that the school is making about their child's progress and what standard of progress they consider their child to be making. Pupils contribute to the PowerPoint presentation, which is shared in the meeting. Ongoing communication takes place between parents and class teachers through the daily home-school contact book, and this also provides opportunities to refine the learning for pupils through agreed target setting and monitoring progress. Please refer to the Annual Review policy for more information.

Informal assessment by the class teacher takes place during the course of learning activities. Class teachers and classroom assistants record and store this by keeping daily notes of observations and the outcomes of learning activities on recording sheets that will be linked to the pupil progress scores and supply evidence of the attainment made by pupils. These notes are summarised regularly and used to inform future planning and target setting at the progress meetings and Annual Review. Annotated photographic, audio or video records also provide alternative or additional assessment methods and records.

The Progress Tracker scores for each pupil, and the scoring system devised to score progress with IEPs, enabling teachers to see the rate of progress a pupil is making and identify any dips or peaks. This allows for adjustments to be made if a pupil is not achieving at the school standard by identifying the potential cause of the dips (e.g. attendance or behaviour) and what can be done to turn this around. Equally, where a pupil shows a peak, this can be explored for consistency and what can be done to enhance further progress.

This same data is used as part of the triangulation of activities for assessing teaching performance and identifying any potential practice that needs further development.

## **SECTION 3**

### **CURRICULUM PROVISION FOR PUPILS AT ABBEY COURT**

#### **RESOURCE ALLOCATION:**

All curricula operating within the school are adapted to meet the needs of our pupils' Special Educational Needs. They all meet National Curriculum Criteria but are adapted to deliver subject content at a rate and level appropriate to individual need.

All staff with a subject responsibility are annually required to outline and cost areas of development for which they are responsible. These are then considered by the Leadership Group, who allocate resources in accordance with the School Development Plan and against available Funding.

#### **ACCESS TO A BALANCED AND BROADLY BASED CURRICULUM**

Abbey Court School is organised into Departments:

The Nursery/Early Years and Foundation Stage	3 – 5 years	} - Primary
Key Stage 1	5 - 7 years	} - Primary
Key Stage 2	7 - 11 years	} - Primary
Key Stage 3	11 – 14 years	} – Secondary
Key Stage 4	14 – 16 years	} - Secondary
Further Education (Key Stage 5)	16 - 19 years	} – F.E.

Pupils are grouped according to age. Each Department is led by a Senior Teacher who leads the Department.

The National Curriculum applies to all schools, and Abbey Court works to the National Curriculum programmes and standardised Assessment Tasks. Therefore, in planning the curriculum, care has been taken to ensure that pupils are able to access the National Curriculum together with Personal, Social and Health and Citizenship Education (PSHE and C) and Religious Education. The National Curriculum is supplemented where appropriate with additional curricula; for example, the Derbyshire Language Programme and the Social Use of Language Programme supplement the Speaking and Listening content of the English National Curriculum and allow programmes of study to be accessed more readily.

The School Development Plan prioritises the continuing review of the Abbey Court Curriculum. Curriculum development is ongoing, and subjects are reviewed on a 3-year cycle. When the content of the curriculum is being planned, attention is given to the following:

- The individual pupil remains at the centre of the learning
- Pupil timetables are planned individually to ensure breadth and balance and coverage of all National Curriculum subjects.
- Content is matched to pupil age and ability.
- Activities are varied and are undertaken at an appropriate pace.
- Activities are planned to develop a range of skills.
- Progression is the key element of planning.
- Pupils work individually or in a variety of groups, according to the nature of the task.
- Pupils are supported to understand what they are doing and why.
- Regular evaluation of activities and pupil progress is part of the curriculum management process.

The enjoyment of learning through a challenging curriculum is the central aim of all subject delivery. Pupils are able to experience a wide range of learning styles which are designed to enable them to access the curriculum at a suitable level and as they move between different Phases and in preparation for adulthood and life beyond school, including employment, volunteering, independent living and their participation in society. These opportunities include the acquisition of skills and knowledge, didactic teaching approaches, directed group work, working in friendship groups, access to a wide variety of resources, flexible and meaningful experiential learning, regular and meaningful feedback from teachers, individual learning programmes, encouragement of independent learning and the opportunity to celebrate and share success.

Equally, there is a range of teaching styles adopted by staff, and they will include didactic teaching, individual learning tasks, working with small groups, team teaching, individual support for specific difficulties and resource-led/facilitated teaching. (Teaching & Learning).

Our EAL (English as an Additional Language) and ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) provide support to Teachers, class teams and individual pupils as identified.

## **EVALUATING SUCCESS**

An integral part of the school's evaluation process includes monitoring by the Leadership Team of all curriculum delivery and planning, and assessment files. In addition to this, the SMT and subject leaders make regular visits to classrooms whilst teaching is in progress. The outcomes of these practices are then discussed at Leadership meetings and evaluated. Attention is then drawn to examples of good practice and areas where improvement can be made. This information is shared with the teaching staff. Agreed Action Plans for improvement are written and monitored termly.

Advisers and Consultants are used regularly to assess the success of the education offered by the school. They provide a valuable external perspective.

Termly priorities (taken from the School Development Plan) are agreed by the Head and Senior Management Team and reviewed at the end of each term. Successful completion of targets indicates the success of the work undertaken. Targets are agreed for individual Leadership Team members, the Senior Management Team, the work of the Departments, the work of individual subject leaders and all teaching staff. The completion of developments as highlighted in the School Development Plan, in accordance with the stated performance indicators, is an element of quality control. The school undertakes a range of quality assurance tasks. (See Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, Curriculum Handbook, Policy No. 23).

## **SECTION 4**

### **STAFFING, STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES/BODIES**

Staffing at Abbey Court is organised as detailed in the diagram in Appendix 2. Teaching staff work within the Key Stage Departments. Support staff are used to enable all pupils to access the curriculum. Their roles are clearly defined and evaluated annually. Support staff are allocated to Departments according to pupil needs. This is also reviewed annually as pupil groupings are reviewed for the start of the Academic Year. The school undertakes a SEN Audit (see SEN Audit Policy) annually, to ensure that the school receives funding appropriate to the needs of the pupils.

All staff have the relevant qualifications for their role, including Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) where appropriate. For example, our Farm staff have qualifications and experience related to working with animals, and they work alongside a qualified SEND Teacher. The school invests in staff

accessing further education opportunities where there is benefit to pupils. For example, accessing degree-level study, master's level study and national professional qualifications in teaching and learning. Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) undertake formal training for their role with a minimum of English & Maths GCSEs or equivalent at grade 4 or above. Our Speech and Language therapists and Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) have regular access to professional supervision to inform and support their practice. The school-based therapy team liaise with and works with NHS therapy provision to ensure a collaborative approach that meets the pupils' needs.

All new staff undertake an initial induction on entry and then have 3 periods of probation review across 6 months. They undertake an extensive induction and moderation programme lasting a year. Training covers Safeguarding, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Makaton, Dysphagia policy and protocols, Personal care including feeding and toileting; Health & Safety, EAL, Manual Handling, Behaviour Support, ICT and GDPR. The Induction programme includes completion of online training, reading policies (and signing these where appropriate), undertaking questionnaires and completion of 16 Modules covering all aspects of school practice and learning. Following this, all staff engage in regular performance management where there is an expectation for them to continue to enhance their knowledge and skills to directly impact on their ability to meet pupils' learning needs.

All members of staff at Abbey Court School are entitled to personal and professional development in order to enable them to:

1. "Carry out the Job" which they are contracted to do and as formalised in their Job Descriptions.
2. To equip themselves for future professional and career responsibilities whether with the school or elsewhere.

The aims of the staff development policy are:

1. To improve the quality of educational provision for the pupils by fostering the professional and personal development of the staff.
2. To establish a process of planning and review which gives due consideration to the needs of the school and the needs and interests of the staff.
3. To involve every staff member in the school in the staff development process.
4. To create a climate of communication, consultation and shared decision-making within which staff will be able to participate in, and influence, the development of the school.
5. To direct financial resources towards identified staff development priorities.
6. To promote the value and self-worth of each individual to enhance the morale of the staff team, thus influencing, positively, the ethos of the school. All staff undergo regular appraisals, and all staff new to the school participate in induction programmes. (See Abbey Court Staff Development Policy, Staff Handbook, Section 2, Policy No. 11, for further details).
7. Teaching staff hold a range of qualifications.

## **SECTION 5**

### **MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WORKING**

A variety of structures and systems are in place to provide opportunities for joint/team planning and review. The following list details the formal meetings, but all opportunities are utilised for regular ongoing support and co-operation.

### **Schedule of Meetings**

- Teaching Staff Meetings are held weekly for 1½ hours. These are business and curriculum development meetings. These are chaired by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteachers/Assistant Headteacher.
- Department Meetings are weekly for 1 hour and are chaired by the Key Stage Leader or his/her representative. The purpose of these meetings is to plan and evaluate the work of the Department and to implement policies and practices as agreed at whole staff meetings.
- Class Team Meetings are held weekly for all classroom staff. These meetings discuss all classroom issues as appropriate. They are chaired by the class teacher.
- Leadership Group Meetings are held weekly. They are chaired by the Headteacher.
- Briefing meetings for all staff are held 3 times/week for 15 minutes. Briefings are scheduled in advance and focus on school policies, teaching and learning and communication.
- Meetings with therapists working in the school, and their line managers, are held termly (e.g. Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, etc).
- Meetings between the SMT and the school nurse are held at least half-termly.
- Termly meetings are held with the Attendance and Advisory Service at Medway LA and the Assistant Headteacher.

### **DEPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS AND RESOURCES FROM OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL**

The school makes use of the support and advice that is available from Medway Children's Services. The school has its own "pool" of external consultants, appropriately experienced and qualified in SEN.

#### **Additional Speech and Language Therapy**

These staff are employed by the school. This is separate from the SALT provided by the NHS, for whom Medway LA hold responsibility for commissioning.

Coverage permits a mix of class-based support, small groups and individual support from both therapist and assistant. (Communication skills are supported throughout the school day by all staff.) The school SALT supports both staff development and the implementation of the Derbyshire Language Scheme/Makaton/PECs in the school. They also liaise with the NHS SALT team.

#### **Therapy Assistant**

A Therapy Assistant is employed to provide support for those pupils who have more complex physical needs. Visiting therapists who provide OT and physiotherapy are provided by the NHS, for whom Medway LA is held responsible for commissioning work with pupils and advising staff on programmes accordingly.

For those pupils with a high level of need, routine physiotherapy is also provided by class teams. The MOVE approach is implemented throughout the school.



### **Educational Psychologist**

Staff have open access to the Educational Psychologist when required. The school buys additional educational psychology hours.

### **Visiting Teachers for the Sensory Impaired (Visual, Hearing)**

All pupils with sensory impairments are seen regularly and monitored by these specialist teachers.

### **School Nursing Team**

Staff have open access to the school nursing team, who are based on-site and available whenever the school is in session.

### **Attendance Advisory Practitioner**

School can contact the Advisory Service at any time for advice/referrals. Where circumstances dictate and the school is of the view that it lacks the necessary expertise to adequately inform a decision, advice will be sought from the relevant agency.

## **SECTION 6**

### **LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS**

All pupils have opportunities to be included in a range of events, experiences and visits. Strong links have been formed with local schools and the local community. There are close links with neighbouring SLD schools, such as Milestone School. Links with local Primary Schools are continually being developed (e.g. Brompton Westbrook School, Cliffe Woods School and Temple Mill School.) Students from local secondary schools and sixth form colleges attend our school and Farm to undertake work experience placements and key stage 3 / 4 pupils from Abbey Court undertake project work with Secondary schools for particular projects e.g. Art projects, Technology projects, etc. (See Integration Policy).

### **LINKS WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

These are extensive and include:

- Broomhill Park
- Local shops and the Medway Shopping Centre for independence programmes.
- Hoo Gillingham and Strood Leisure Centres for swimming.
- Work experience with local companies, shops, playgrounds, charities, etc.
- Local churches - support from local ministers and school chaplains for assemblies and celebrations, and use of local churches for Services.
- Community Policing Section.
- Local public transport.
- Theatre visits.
- Educational visits to places of relevance to schemes of work, e.g., museums, galleries, etc.
- Mother and Toddler Groups
- Several volunteers work regularly in the school. This is encouraged (refer to Students / Volunteers Policy).
- The school is part of the local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

### **Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of Links**

The process is dependent on the nature of the link and includes the following processes:

- School approach to curriculum monitoring.
- Individual Education Plans.
- Multi-professional Meetings.
- Independent Consultancy.

## **SECTION 7**

### **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

The school is committed to the principle and practice of parents as partners and seeks to develop open and confident working relationships through:

- Extending a welcome to parents to visit the school regularly.
- Regular contact via home-school communication books.
- Parents/carers evenings and meetings.
- Parent Workshops.
- Annual Reviews, Transition Planning and School Leavers' Meetings.
- School social events
- Whole school activities.
- Meetings at parents' / carers' request.
- Telephone calls/e-mails
- Regular newsletters.
- Parent Focus Groups (coffee mornings)
- Home visits.
- Family lunch
- An Annual Parents Survey, which informs school development planning.  
(See Partnership with Parents Policy / Home School Agreement Policy).

## **SECTION 8**

### **EVALUATION**

All staff have been involved in the development, implementation, monitoring and ongoing evaluation of this policy.

Individual members of teaching staff have responsibility for co-ordinating specific curriculum areas across the school and for the monitoring of these, along with the Leadership Group and Governors.

The policies below are all seen as an integral part of the SEN Policy of Abbey Court School:

- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- P.A.R.R. Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Parents Policy / Home School Agreement Policy

The monitoring of each policy is the responsibility of a named member of staff. All policies are updated to an agreed rolling programme as documented within the School Development Plan (SDP). The SDP priorities are identified by the Governors, SMT and staff. (See School Development Plan documentation for details of the planning process).

The Governors regularly review the SEN Policy. Parents are given a regular opportunity to comment upon it. Any complaints against the SEN Policy, the curriculum or provision are directed via the school Complaints Procedure.

The SEN Policy will be evaluated annually, and in light of:

- changes in legislation
- OFSTED requirements
- changes in school organisation/provision
- Consultation Policy

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Abbey Court School: Organisational Structure

Appendix 2 – Governors and Responsibilities

Appendix 3 – Working with External Professionals

## APPENDIX I

Governing Body				
Headteacher				
Deputy Headteacher - Primary			Deputy Headteacher - Secondary	
		Assistant Headteacher		
Nursey	Primary Department		Secondary Department	Further Education
N1/N2 1 Teacher 3 TAs	R 1 Teacher 3.5 TAs		S1 1 Teacher 3 TAs	FE1 1 Teacher 3 TAs
	P1 1 Teacher 3 TAs		S2 1 Teacher 3 TAs	FE2 1 Teacher 3 TAs
	P2 1 Teacher 3 TAs		S3 1 Teacher 4 TAs	FE3 1 Teacher 3 TAs
	P3 1 Teacher 3.5 TAs		S4 1 Teacher 3 TAs	FE4 1 Teacher 3 TAs
	P4 1 Teacher 3.5 TAs		S5 1 Teacher 3 TAs	
	P5 1 Teacher 3 TAs		S6 1 Teacher 3 TAs	
	P6 1 Teacher 3 TAs		S7 1 Teacher 3 TAs	
	P7 1 Teacher 3 TAs		S8 1 Teacher 3 TAs	
	P8 1 Teacher 3 TAs		S9 1 Teacher 3 TAs	
	P9 1 Teacher 3 TAs		S10 1 Teacher 3 TAs	
	P10 1 Teacher 3 TAs			
	P11 1 Teacher 3 TAs			
	P12 1 Teacher 3 TAs			

**NB. Some classes have additional 1:1 TAs supporting individual-named children.**

**APPENDIX 2****Governors and Responsibilities**

<b>ACCOMMODATION WORKING PARTY</b>	Headteacher Jane Heyes
<b>CAREERS GOVERNOR</b>	Matt Powell
<b>FINANCE COMMITTEE</b>	Chair Headteacher Jon Carthy Barry Kemp David Lane In attendance: Finance Manager, Finance Officer
<b>GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	Jane Heyes
<b>HEADTEACHER'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>	Chair and Vice Chair
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY GOVERNOR</b>	David Lane
<b>LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</b>	Chloe Knight
<b>MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b>	David Lane
<b>PAY COMMITTEE</b>	Jane Heyes David Lane Barry Kemp
<b>PAY COMMITTEE APPEALS PANEL</b>	Chloe Knight David Field Matthew Powell
<b>PUPIL DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE</b>	Jane Heyes Matthew Powell David Lane
<b>PUPIL PREMIUM GOVERNOR</b>	Matthew Powell
<b>SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR</b>	Jon Carthy
<b>SEND GOVERNOR</b>	Matt Powell
<b>STAFF DISMISSAL APPEALS PANEL</b>	Jon Carthy Chloe Knight Matt Powell
<b>STAFF DISMISSAL COMMITTEE</b>	Jane Heyes David Field David Lane

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Working with External Professionals**

Every pupil at Abbey Court School has numerous professionals (our co-providers) who have an interest in supporting their various needs. This means that when a request is made to observe a pupil, there may be others also making the same request for that pupil and also for the other pupils in the class. These may be professionals, both locally based (Occupational, Speech and Physio Therapists, Doctors, Psychologists, social workers, etc) and regionally based (Paediatric specialists, Consultants and other medical staff from specialist London hospitals, etc). As the school day coincides with the work day of most of these groups of professionals, Abbey Court becomes the first port of call for information regarding their clients. We receive numerous requests for visits every day the school is open.

Therefore, if a request to observe a pupil in school is made, we have to manage these requests in order to minimise the impact on the learning of our pupils, which must remain our priority. It is our responsibility to minimise disruption to the teaching and learning that will take place if we call teachers out of lessons or host observations during teaching time. If we do not, then the progress of pupils will be jeopardised, and pupil behaviour can become impacted or dysregulated. A typical lesson is, in any case, interrupted each day by school-employed therapists and nursing staff visiting to support pupils or administer medication. The majority of pupils are unable to meet their own primary care needs, which also means that teaching assistants have to regularly take pupils out of lessons to support them with these.

For these reasons, we will actively avoid intrusions in order to protect pupil learning. The flow chart helps to simplify this and show you how our systems work:

Contact should always be through the school office for any entry request. At this point, the request will be directed to the appropriate person responsible. Office contacts are 01634 338220 and [office@abbeycourt.medway.sch.uk](mailto:office@abbeycourt.medway.sch.uk)



The appropriate person will respond to you, but this may not be immediate. All of our teachers teach all day. A call back will be made as soon as is practicable during the school day or after school.



In discussion with you, we will then decide whether the information you require can be sent to you (with parental permission) or whether a discussion with the teacher is required (which will need to be outside of lesson time) or whether, in exceptional and specific circumstances, an observation is appropriate.

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We recognise the importance of sharing pertinent information in order to effectively offer relevant support to the pupils at Abbey Court. Therefore, we also try to:

- Send representatives to meetings (multi-professional meetings, CHIN meetings, feeding clinics, CP conferences, etc.) To facilitate this, we require a minimum of 2 weeks' notice from other professionals. For meetings that may have regular slots, we will work with professionals to identify the best possible days and times, taking into consideration teaching/educational duties.

- Set up, where necessary, virtual or face-to-face professional discussions to provide up-to-date pupil information (nature of needs, academic progress, behaviour, health and well-being, etc.).
- Share documentation (with parental permission) to provide updates as above and also discuss particular Abbey Court approaches, e.g. Behaviour Support Plans; IEPs; communication tools/systems; pupil progress data, etc.)
- Invite to Annual Reviews

Where written information is requested, we will offer pertinent school reports such as IEPs, annual reports and behaviour support plans in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. Our busy teaching staff have no allocated time to prepare additional reports for other professionals.