



Autism Angels SEND Policy

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Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Policy Owner:	Charity Lead
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1. Purpose and Scope

Autism Angels is committed to supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in a way that is inclusive, person-centred, trauma-informed and responsive to each individual's strengths, needs and circumstances. Our approach is to meet children and young people where they are, recognising their starting point and adapting support to help them feel safe, understood and able to engage.

This policy sits alongside **Autism Angels' Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** and explains how we identify, understand and respond to SEND within our educational, therapeutic, wellbeing, equine, animal, nature and community-based provision.

Autism Angels is an alternative provision and charitable organisation. We work in partnership with children and young people, parents/carers, schools, local authorities and other professionals to provide safe, meaningful and accessible support.

2. Our Approach to SEND

No formal diagnosis of any kind is required to access Autism Angels. We recognise that children and young people may have identified, emerging or suspected additional needs, may be awaiting assessment, or may not have a diagnosis at all. Access to Autism Angels is based on the individual child or young person, their needs and whether we can provide safe and appropriate support, rather than on a diagnostic label.

We recognise that every child and young person is individual. A diagnosis, where one exists, does not define the individual, and children and young people with the same or similar diagnoses may have very different strengths, needs and support requirements. Our practice focuses on meeting each child or young person where they are, understanding what matters to them, reducing barriers to participation and creating low demand environments in which they can feel safe, regulated, understood and able to engage.

3. Legal and Guidance Framework

Autism Angels will have regard, where relevant to its role and provision, to current legislation and statutory guidance relating to SEND, equality, safeguarding and education. This includes the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

This policy should be read alongside Autism Angels' Safeguarding, Equality, Health and Safety, Data Protection and other relevant policies and procedures.

4. Identifying and Understanding Individual Needs

Information about a child or young person's needs may come from the child or young person themselves, parents/carers, schools, local authorities, Education, Health and Care Plans



(EHCPs), professional reports, registration information, taster sessions, observations and ongoing communication.

A formal diagnosis is not required for Autism Angels to recognise or respond to an individual need. Where a child or young person has identified, emerging or suspected needs, is awaiting assessment, or has no diagnosis, we will seek to understand how their individual needs affect their access, communication, regulation, learning, wellbeing and participation within our provision. Support will be shaped around the individual rather than a diagnostic label.

5. Planning and Individualised Support

Individualised learning journeys are central to our practice. Support will be planned around the individual child or young person, their strengths, needs, interests and where they are at that point in time. Its aim is to ensure that every child and young person receives personalised support and that their individual achievements, progress and development are recognised and celebrated. Where appropriate, this will be informed by the child or young person themselves and those who know them well, including parents/carers, the placing school or local authority and relevant professionals. We recognise that needs can change over time and will adapt our approach where reasonably possible.

Depending on the individual child or young person, their needs and the nature of the provision, approaches may include:

- adapted communication and reduced verbal demand;
- additional processing time;
- visual, practical or alternative approaches to learning and engagement;
- access to quieter, lower-sensory or low-demand environments;
- flexibility around transitions, participation and the pace of activities;
- movement, nature, animals and outdoor environments to support engagement and regulation;
- individualised routines, strategies or reasonable adjustments;
- appropriate support towards agreed educational, wellbeing or preparation-for-adulthood outcomes.

6. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Where a child or young person has an EHCP, Autism Angels will request or have access to relevant information needed to understand their individual needs, strengths, outcomes and provision. The EHCP will inform our understanding but will not replace getting to know the individual child or young person and meeting them where they are. We will work with the commissioning school, local authority and family as appropriate to support agreed outcomes within the scope of the placement.



Where agreed as part of the commissioned package, Autism Angels may provide information for reviews and attend EHCP review meetings, subject to the terms of the placement and appropriate notice.

7. Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility

Autism Angels will consider reasonable adjustments to reduce substantial disadvantage and enable children and young people with disabilities to participate as fully as possible. Adjustments will be considered individually, with the aim of meeting the child or young person where they are and responding to their particular needs. Adjustments may relate to communication, environment, routines, equipment, activities or the way support is delivered.

In deciding what is reasonable and safe, Autism Angels will consider the individual child's needs, safeguarding, health and safety, the physical environment, available resources and the nature of the activity.

8. Safety and the Limits of Our Provision

Some Autism Angels activities, particularly equine, animal, farm and outdoor activities, involve inherent risks. Autism Angels will consider each child or young person individually and whether their needs can be supported safely through registration information, discussion, taster sessions, professional information where relevant and individual risk assessment.

Where Autism Angels cannot safely or appropriately meet a particular individual need, we will explain this sensitively and work with the child or young person, family and commissioning organisation, where applicable, to consider alternative activities, adjustments or other specialist support. Decisions will be based on the individual's needs and the safe delivery of the activity, not simply on a diagnosis, disability or label.

9. Working in Partnership

Positive outcomes are supported by open and timely communication. Autism Angels will work collaboratively, as appropriate, with children and young people, parents/carers, schools, local authorities and relevant professionals so that support reflects the individual's current needs and circumstances.

We ask parents/carers and commissioning organisations to share relevant and up-to-date information that may affect the child's safety, wellbeing, access or support. Significant changes in need, medication, health, behaviour, risk or circumstances should be communicated promptly.

10. Voice of the Child or Young Person

Young people's voices, as well as those of their families, are valued and are central to our person-centred approach. Children and young people will be encouraged and supported to express their views, preferences, strengths, interests and needs in ways that are accessible to



them. Communication may be verbal, written, visual, or through other appropriate means. We will seek to meet each child or young person where they are rather than expecting them to communicate or participate in one particular way.

Their views, together with the knowledge and views of their families where appropriate, will be listened to, valued and considered when planning their individualised learning journey, reviewing participation and making decisions that affect their experience at Autism Angels. Where appropriate, support will be adapted as their needs, confidence, regulation, interests and engagement change. Progress will be considered in relation to the individual young person, recognising and celebrating achievements and development in ways that are meaningful to them.

11. Safeguarding

Children and young people with SEND may experience additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting harm. Autism Angels will remain alert to these barriers and will not assume that changes in behaviour, communication or presentation are simply related to a child's SEND.

Any safeguarding concern will be responded to in accordance with Autism Angels' Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and associated procedures.

12. Training and Responsibilities

All team members and volunteers are expected to support inclusive, individualised practice, to meet children and young people where they are, and to follow agreed strategies and reasonable adjustments relevant to their role.

Autism Angels will provide appropriate information, guidance and training to help team members and volunteers understand SEND, communication, regulation, safeguarding and inclusive practice. Ultimate responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the Charity Lead and Board of Trustees.

13. Concerns and Complaints

Parents/carers, children and young people, schools, local authorities and other partners are encouraged to raise any concern about SEND support as early as possible so that it can be discussed and, where appropriate, resolved.

Formal concerns or complaints will be managed in accordance with Autism Angels' Complaints Policy and Procedure. Safeguarding concerns will be managed under safeguarding procedures.

14. Monitoring and Review

Autism Angels will review the effectiveness of its SEND practice through feedback, review of individual placements, safeguarding and incident learning, reasonable adjustment requests, quality assurance activity and communication with children and young people, families and



commissioning organisations. Review will consider whether individual needs continue to be understood and appropriately supported.

This policy will normally be reviewed annually and sooner where there are relevant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or Autism Angels' provision.

15. Related Autism Angels Policies and Documents

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection / GDPR Policy
- Essence Policy

16. Contacts

Charity Lead: Sarah Kekoa - 07764 277146

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Amanda Whittaker - 07969 017325