

SEN AND DISABILITY POLICY/SEN INFORMATION REPORT

The Folkestone School for Girls Academy Trust is known as "the school" in this policy.

This policy has been written in accordance with the levelling up principle of The Folkestone School for Girls Single Equalities Scheme and takes account of the six equalities strands, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, belief and age.

This policy is written in line with the requirements of:-

- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years 2015;
- SEN Code of Practice 2015;
- SI 2014 1530 Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
 Part 3 Duties on Schools Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
 Schedule 1 regulation 51 Information to be included in the SEN information report;
 Schedule 2 regulation 53 Information to be published by a local authority in its local offer;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Schools Admissions Code, DfE 1 Feb 2012;
- SI 2012 1124 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012;
- SI 2013 758 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies - Accessibility, Admissions, Behaviour, Complaints, Disability, Whole School Equality Policy, Safeguarding Policy & Supporting Students with medical conditions Policy. This policy has been developed with the board of trustees and parents of children with special educational needs and will be reviewed annually.

Definition of SEN

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

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty if they:

- (a) have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- (b) have 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, or mainstream post-16 institutions. SEN Code of Practice (2015, p 16).

Definition of Disability

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 - that is '...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial' - SEN Code of Practice (2015, p16).

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A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision. - SEN Code of Practice (2015, p94, Para 6.15).

However, this definition could be misunderstood. Whilst 'educational provision' is suggestive of academic education and much of the code of practice itself concerns academic attainment and academic progress, as per the SEN Code of Practice, 2015, para 6.18 we must also seek to identify students who need to make additional progress in areas other than attainment; for instance where a pupil needs to make additional progress with wider development or social needs in order to make a successful transition to adult life.

Indeed, as an academically selective school, this could be, perhaps, seen as our greatest need.

SEND - A wider definition of SEN could be perhaps better understood at FSG to be;

"A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision to be made including that which would allow a pupil to make additional progress in areas other than attainment; for instance where a pupil needs to make additional progress with wider development or social needs in order to make a successful transition to adult life."

SECTION 1 - the kinds of special educational need for which provision is made at the school

At the school we can make provision for every kind of frequently occurring special educational need without an Education, Health and Care Plan, for instance dyslexia, dyspraxia, speech and language needs, visual impairment, hearing impairment, autism, Asperger's syndrome, learning difficulties and emotional and social difficulties. There are other kinds of special educational need which do not occur as frequently and with which the school is less familiar, but we can access training and advice so that these kinds of needs can be met. Our profile of need, currently, tends to be around **Social emotional and mental health** and **Communication and Interaction** with the post pandemic surge in need seen nationally similarly evident at this school. Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) & Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) are a very real concern for many students.

We employ 2 full time emotional health and well-being practitioners and referrals to them are not necessarily considered part of our SEND provision and not always shared with parents. These staff are line managed by the pastoral team and considered to be a pastoral resource and intervention. For clarity we distinguish the boundary between emotional wellbeing (pastoral) and social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEND) as being where education/progress and/or wider development is becoming hindered. In this way we are better able to rationalise the resources we have on site and to secure the most appropriate level of support for students.

The school also currently meets the needs of students with an Education, Health and Care plan with the following kinds of special educational need: autism spectrum disorders, multi-sensory impairment, visual impairment, hearing impairment and social and emotional difficulties. Decisions on the admission of students with an Education, Health and Care Plan are made by the Local Authority.

We are much less adept and suited, as yet to catering for students with physical conditions which significantly impair their mobility. The school is not yet fully DDA compliant and with an expansive site, several separate buildings and some seven stories of classroom accommodation, mobility issues and/or wheelchair access would prove challenging. Students with restricted mobility, similarly, may not be able to access a full, broad and balanced curriculum, as many of our specialist

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teaching rooms simply cannot be accessed easily. The school has a duty to plan strategically to increase physical access over time and to provide effective learning opportunities for all students – and indeed has done this in recent developments. New classroom block, Sherlock is fully DDA compliant with a link bridge to Prospect to improve accessibility there too. Similarly, a new path was created at Penfold to address changes in ground levels that previously meant a flight of steps needed to be negotiated. Penfold therefore and the depts housed therein are now accessible – at least on the ground floor, as is Drama. However, older parts of the school remain challenging in terms of access. We aim to make all **reasonable adjustments** and **best endeavours** to limit the impact of our school site and the ramifications on an individual student's education, should they develop a medical condition or should this worsen whilst at the school. Even so, accessing science laboratories and/or other specialist facilities, may still require the ability to climb stairs, but it should be acknowledged that admission to the school for students with, or very likely to develop mobility issues would be challenging as we are simply unable to ensure that they can access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other student. The school has worked hard to increase physical access over time and a has a duty to continue to do so - but we are not there yet.

Recommendations on the admission of students with an Education, Health and Care Plan are made by the Local Authority in consultation with the school. The admission arrangements for pupils without an Education, Health and Care Plan do not discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children or those with special educational needs.

SECTION 2 - information about the policy for identification and assessment of students with SEN

At The Folkestone School for Girls we monitor the progress of all students three times a year, to review their academic progress. For students on the SEN register, there may be additional progress data requested to fit with the provision review cycle. On entry into Year 7, we also use a range of assessments including Hodder Reading and Spelling assessments.

Where progress is not sufficient, even if a special educational need has not been identified, we put extra support in place to enable the student to catch up. Examples of extra support include: soundswrite, talkabout for teenagers, drawing and talking, small group support for handwriting, spelling and reading etc.

Some students may continue to make inadequate progress, despite high-quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness. For these students, and in consultation with parents, we will use a range of assessments to determine the cause of the learning difficulty. Additionally, we have access to external advisors, for example experts in Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychologists and the Specialist Teaching Service, who are able to use further assessments should this be necessary. We also liaise with CYPMHS and other medical professionals in order to identify and support students with mental health issues.

The purpose of this more detailed assessment is to understand what additional resources and different approaches are required to enable the student to make better progress. These will be shared with parents, reviewed regularly, and refined / revised if necessary. At this point we will have identified that the student has a special educational need because the school is making special educational provision for the student which is additional and different to what is normally available.

If the student is able to make good progress using this additional and different resource (but would not be able to maintain this good progress without it) we will continue to identify the student as having a special educational need. If the student is able to maintain good progress without the additional and different resources she will not be identified with special educational needs. When

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any change in identification of SEN is changed parents will be notified. We will ensure that all teachers and support staff who work with the student are aware of the support to be provided and the teaching approaches to be used.

However, as per the wider definition of SEND, we must also seek to identify students who need to make additional progress in areas other than attainment; for instance where a pupil needs to make additional progress with wider development or social needs in order to make a successful transition to adult life.

In this regard the school has other mechanisms to identify students who may potentially have SEN

- Attendance and/or Punctuality data termly data trawl
- Behaviour Data termly data trawl
- ATL Data from reports
- Extra-curricular engagement
- Information from Primary schools
- Referral from Teaching Staff
- Referral from Pastoral Staff
- Referral from Parents/Carers
- Information from students themselves

For some children, SEN can be identified at an early age. However, for other children and young people difficulties become evident only as they develop. All those who work with children and young people should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. It is imperative therefore that all staff and data indicators are alert to newly identified students no matter which year group a student is in and/or no historic concerns being evident.

At FSG our current SEND profile lies not in Cognition and learning and more common issues tend to surround **communication and interaction** and **social, emotional and mental health** difficulties.

Communication and interaction

We must be alert to the fact that girls with ASD, which is a specific need here at FSG, may present very differently to their male peers with girls often using more strategies to 'mask' their difficulties. Anecdotally, at FSG, these seem to present most typically in Year 9

For that reason we highlight potential behaviours as part of this policy - as taken from SEND Core Standards:

- withdrawn behaviours
- appearing to be in a 'world of their own'
- frustration, resulting in challenging behaviours
- poor progress not associated with a learning need
- Social isolation and vulnerability.
- Can appear rude or aggressive.
- Makes mistakes in social interactions and lacks the skills to repair.
- Appearing to struggle with boundaries, e.g. open discussion of matters considered private or social taboos.

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- Not knowing that whole class/group instructions are meant for them can appear that learners are reluctant or unwilling to follow instructions.
- Interpreting language literally; struggling to understand idioms, some jokes and sarcasm, which can lead to vulnerability and embarrassment.
- Struggling to differentiate or misinterpreting tone of voice.
- Initiating interactions inappropriately shouting out, touching others to get attention, interrupting.
- Difficulty in understanding body language.
- Difficulty in recognising and interpreting facial expressions.
- Flat, monotonous tone can lead others to believe that learner is unemotional.
- Immature tone.
- Adoption of the accent of another language often American.
- Loud voice regardless of time or place can appear opinionated and rude.
- Lecturing tone can cause difficulties with peer relationships.
- Unusual eye contact often avoidant and fleeting but can be overly intense.
- Struggle to understand another person's point of view which can lead to others believing the child or young person lacks emotion and compassion.
- May struggle with some aspects of the curriculum requiring this skill.
- May be sensitive to (or afraid of) loud noises or particular sounds, smells or sights, leading to inability to concentrate, increased anxiety and agitation.
- May experience visual, auditory or olfactory overload leading to intense feelings of anxiety, being overwhelmed, 'fright, fight or flight response.
- May exit intolerable environments without warning or create a situation leading to their removal from the environment.
- May refuse to enter certain environments.

Difficulties combine, (sometimes including the impact of the continuous challenge and effort of continually attempting to 'mask' difficulties) leading to escalation in anxiety and deteriorating well-being and mental health:

- Increased withdrawn behaviours.
- Increase in challenging behaviours.
- Escalation in behaviours in order to be sent home or excluded.
- Difficulties around eating in school or at home.
- Escalating difficulties with emotional regulation at home.
- Increase in demand avoidance.
- Increase in perfectionism/ 'overworking.'
- Increasingly reporting feeling unwell.
- Refusing to attend school, or parental efforts to ensure attendance are met with increasing resistance.

Social, emotional and mental health

We employ 2 full time emotional health and well-being practitioners and referrals to them are not necessarily considered part of our SEND provision and not always shared with parents. These staff are line managed and considered to be a pastoral resource and intervention and for clarity we distinguish the boundary between emotional wellbeing (pastoral) and social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEND) as being where education/progress and/or wider development

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is becoming hindered. In this way we are better able to rationalise the resources we have on site and to secure the most appropriate level of support for students.

In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.

<u>SECTION 3 - information about the school's policies for making provision for students with special educational needs whether or not they have EHC Plans, including.</u>

3a how the school evaluates the effectiveness of its provision for such students.

Each review of the SEN support plan will be informed by the views of the student, parents and class/ subject teachers and the assessment information from teachers which will show whether adequate progress is being made.

The SEN Code of Practice (2015, 6.17) describes inadequate progress thus:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress.
- fails to close the attainment gap between rate of progress.
- widens the attainment gap.

But once again, due regard and perhaps especially so in our setting, should be given to seek to identify students who need to make additional progress in areas other than attainment; for instance where a pupil needs to make additional progress with wider development or social needs in order to make a successful transition to adult life.

For students with or without a statement of special educational needs/Education, Health and Care Plan, there will be an annual review of the provision made for the child, which will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the special provision. The collation of all annual review evaluations of effectiveness will be reported to the Board of Trustees.

3b the school's arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of students with special educational needs

Every student in the school has their progress tracked regularly throughout the year. In addition to this, students with special educational needs may have more frequent assessments of reading age, spelling age etc. The assessments we use at The Folkestone School for Gils are noted in Section 2 of this policy. Using these it will be possible to see if students are increasing their level of skills in key areas. If these assessments do not show adequate progress is being made the SEN support will be reviewed and adjusted.

As per that wider definition of SEND, for students identified as having a potential SEND because they **need to make additional progress with wider development or social needs** such assessment and review may consider data such as attendance, punctuality, behaviour or ATL or may focus more broadly on improved relationships, confidence, class contributions and extra-curricular engagement.

3c the school's approach to teaching students with special educational needs

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High quality teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools should regularly & carefully review the quality of teaching for all students, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable students and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered SEN Code of Practice (2015, 6.37).

We follow the Mainstream Core Standards advice developed by Kent County Council to ensure that our teaching conforms to best practice, which is available from:

MCS guide: https://www.kelsi.org.uk/data/assets/pdf file/0004/117256/Special-educational-needs-mainstream-core-standards.pdf.

MCS guide for parents: https://www.kelsi.org.uk/data/assets/pdf file/0005/117256/Special-educational-needs-mainstream-core-standards-for-parents.pdf.

In meeting the Mainstream Core Standards the school employs some additional teaching approaches, as advised by internal and external assessments for example, precision teaching, mentoring, small group teaching, use of ICT software learning packages, Cognitive Behaviour Approaches, counselling etc. These are delivered by additional staff employed through the funding provided to the school as 'notional SEN funding.'

3d how the school adapts the curriculum and learning environment for students with special educational needs

At The Folkestone School for Girls we follow the advice in the Mainstream Core Standards on how to adapt the curriculum and the learning environment for students with special educational needs. We also incorporate the advice provided as a result of assessments, both internal and external, and the strategies described in statements of special educational needs / Education, Health and Care Plans. Where appropriate, for example with Visually Impaired students, individual risk assessments have been carried out in order to identify and address any relevant issues. In addition, we have a detailed Accessibility Policy in place.

<u>3e additional support for learning that is available to students with special educational needs.</u>

As part of our budget we receive 'notional SEN funding.' This funding is used to ensure that the quality of teaching is good in the school and that there are sufficient resources to deploy additional and different teaching for students requiring SEN support. The amount of support required for each student to make good progress will be different in each case and a full list of the interventions we can offer is on our provision map. In very few cases a very high level of resource is required. The funding arrangements require schools to provide up to £6000 per year of resource for students with high needs. Anything above that amount the Local Authority should provide a top up to the school. Refer to high needs top up funding here.

3f how the school enables students with special educational needs to engage in activities of the school (including physical activities) together with children who do not have special educational needs.

Wherever possible, clubs, trips and activities offered are also available to students with special educational needs either with or without a statement of special educational needs / Education,

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Health and Care Plan. Where it is necessary, the school will use the resources available to provide additional adult support to enable the safe participation of the student in the activity.

3g support that is available for improving the emotional and social development of students with special educational needs

We provide an enhanced pastoral team - including 2 full time emotional health and well-being practitioners and an enhanced SEN team for more personalised teaching or pastoral interventions. In addition, the school has an extensive personal development offer to build confidence, resilience and create other opportunities for wider social development, with both specific specialist staffing and facilities. We understand that an important feature of the school is to enable all students to develop emotional resilience and social skills, through direct teaching, for instance in tutorial, PSHE and in spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) in lessons. Additionally, students are supported indirectly with every conversation adults have with students throughout the day and through our personal development and character education programme, the FSGBacc.

For some students with the most need for help in this area we also can provide the following: access to mentoring, Cognitive Behaviour Approaches, counselling and Pastoral Support Programmes, support from SALT and Educational Psychologists. External referrals can also be made to agencies such as, CXK, Early Help, CYPMHS or CHATTS counsellors.

SECTION 4 - the name and contact details of the SEN Coordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO at The Folkestone School for Girls is Mrs Charlotte Dahroug. She is a qualified teacher and has successfully completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Charlotte is available on Tel: 01303 251125 Ext 224 or can be emailed via: cdahroug@folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk.

Furthermore, SEN also has representation on the school Senior Leadership Team in Assistant Principal, Kerry Sauntry who also holds the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Kerry is available on Tel: 01303 251125 Ext 389 or can be emailed via: ksauntry@folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk.

<u>SECTION 5 - information about the expertise and training of staff in relation to children & young people with special educational needs and how specialist expertise will be secured.</u>

All teachers and teaching assistants have had the following awareness training:

- Child Protection (Key members of staff are trained as Designated Child Protection Officers);
- Health and Safety.

Other areas of training for identified staff include:

- Dyslexia awareness;
- Visual Impairment Training;
- ASD Awareness;
- Attachment Training;
- Speech and Language difficulties;
- Mental Health, including specific training on anxiety and panic attacks;
- Selective Mutism;
- Cognitive Behaviour Strategies;
- Phonics;
- Trauma awareness training;
- Behaviour and Safety.

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Where a training need is identified beyond this, we will find a provider who is able to deliver it. Training providers we can approach include Educational Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service etc. The cost of training is covered by the notional SEN funding. We currently have a Service Level Agreement in place with CHATTS to provide twenty-four hours of counselling per week. The cost of training is covered by the notional SEN funding.

At FSG our profile of need is currently around communication and interaction and social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

We employ 2 full time emotional health and well-being practitioners and referrals to them are not necessarily considered part of our SEND provision and not always shared with parents. These staff are line managed and considered to be a pastoral resource and intervention and for clarity we distinguish the boundary between emotional wellbeing (pastoral) and social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEND) as being where education/progress is becoming hindered. In this way we are better able to rationalise the resources we have on site and to secure the most appropriate level of support for students.

<u>SECTION 6 - information about how equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs will be secured.</u>

Where external advisors recommend the use of equipment or facilities which the school does not have, we will purchase it using the notional SEN funding, or seek it by loan. For highly specialist communication equipment the school will seek the advice of the KCC Communication and Assistive Technology team.

<u>SECTION 7 - the arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education</u>

All parents of students at The Folkestone School for Girls are invited to discuss the progress of their children during parents' evenings and receive a written report two times per year. In addition we are happy to arrange meetings outside these times. As part of our normal teaching arrangements, all students will access some additional teaching to help them catch-up if the progress monitoring indicates that this is necessary; this will not imply that the student has a special educational need. All such provision will be recorded, tracked and evaluated.

If following this normal provision improvements in progress are not seen, we will contact parents to discuss the use of internal or external assessments which will help us to address these needs better. From this point onwards the student will be identified as having special educational needs because special educational provision is being made and the parent will be invited to be part of the planning and review of this provision. Parents will be actively supported to contribute to assessment, planning and review.

In addition to this, parents of students with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be invited to contribute to and attend an annual review, which, wherever possible will also include other agencies involved with the student. Information will be made accessible for parents.

<u>SECTION 8 - the arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education.</u>

When a student has been identified to have special educational needs, because special educational provision is being made for her, the student will be consulted about and involved in the arrangements made as part of person-centred planning. Parents are likely to play a more significant

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role in the childhood years with the young person taking more responsibility and acting with greater independence in later years.

SECTION 9 - the arrangements made by the board of trustees relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of students with special educational needs regarding the provision made at the school

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints at the school are used for complaints about provision made for special educational needs. We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the school to resolve the issue before making the complaint formal to the Chair of Trustees.

If the complaint is not resolved after it has been considered by the board of trustees, then a disagreement resolution service or mediation service can be contracted. If it remains unresolved after this, the complainant can appeal to the First—tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), if the case refers to disability discrimination, or to the Secretary of State for all other cases.

There are some circumstances, usually for children who have a Statement of SEN where there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by the school.

<u>SECTION 10 - how the board of trustees involves other bodies, including health and social services bodies, local authority support services and voluntary organisations, in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and in supporting the families of such students</u>

The board of trustees have engaged with the following bodies:-

- Free membership of LIFT for access to specialist teaching and learning service;
- The option of a Service Level Agreement with Educational Psychology service;
- Access to local authority's Speech and Language Therapy Services for students with requirements for direct therapy or advice;
- Membership of professional networks for the SENCO e.g. NAS, SENCO forum, NASEN etc.;
- Close contact with Local Social Services teams;
- Engagement with Kent Early Help Services.

<u>SECTION 11 The contact details of support services for the parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and children and young people with SEND up to age 25 (Code of Practice 2015, 6.39)</u>

Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provides a free and confidential information, advice and support service, for parents of a disabled child or child with special educational needs and to children and young people up to age 25 who have a special educational need or disability.

Trained staff can provide impartial legally based information and support on educational matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities, including health and social care. The aim is to empower parents, children and young people to fully participate in discussions and make informed choices and decisions. Also to feel confident to express their views and wishes about education and future aspirations.

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They can be contacted on:-

Helpline: 03000 413000 Office: 03000 412412 E-mail: iask@kent.gov.uk www.kent.gov.uk/iask

<u>SECTION 12 - the school's arrangements for supporting students with special educational needs in transferring between phases of education or in preparing for adulthood and independent living</u>

At the school we work closely with the educational settings used by the students before they transfer to us in order to seek the information that will make the transfer as seamless as possible. The main primary schools are visited, and information is gathered from the class teacher to support transition, prior to students joining the school in Year 7. All students are invited to attend a transition day. Children who are identified as anxious or vulnerable are invited to an additional transition day with parents, so information can be shared, and students can meet key staff and familiarise with the surroundings, environment and expectations.

The school has also invested in bushcraft training for several staff and use this to create small group interventions surrounding transition whereby more vulnerable students are able to focus together on simple tasks such as building a fire and to hopefully develop small friendship groups to ease transition and hopefully support beyond this. Similarly, we have overnight transition camps for students and the LRC acts a lunchtime reading room/quiet place/ safe space for quieter students to gather. The Loft too acts as a safe space and an expanded SEND team are intended to provide a safe face too.

We also contribute information to a students' onward destination by providing information to the next setting, e.g. universities, further education colleges, apprenticeship providers etc. to ensure details of the support in place is communicated.

SECTION 13 - information on where the local authority's local offer is published.

This is published on: https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/local-offer-your-voice and parents without internet access can make an appointment with the SENCO for support to gain the information they require.

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