



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2026 – 2027

Service: Richmond House Social Care Service

Services covered: Short Breaks, Alternative Provision, Group Activities

Age range: 0–25 years

Version: 8.0

Date approved: 1 September 2026

Approved and signed by: Senior Leadership Team, led by Jay Al Karaki

Review date: 1 September 2027 (or sooner in response to legislative change or significant incident)



1. Policy Statement

Richmond House is committed to providing high-quality, safe, inclusive and person-centred Short Breaks, Alternative Provision and group activities for children and young people (CYP) aged 0–25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We aim to promote independence, wellbeing, social inclusion, learning and community participation in line with statutory duties and best practice.

This policy outlines our approach to identifying needs, delivering tailored support, safeguarding, staff training, partnership with families and multi-agency working, data protection and continuous quality assurance.

This policy is written in accordance with the following 2026–2027 legislative and regulatory frameworks:

- **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026** (Royal Assent 29 April 2026) – introducing a new four-tier support structure (Universal, Targeted, Targeted Plus and Specialist), with EHCPs reserved for learners requiring nationally defined Specialist Provision Packages
- **SEND Code of Practice (0–25)** – currently in force with updates expected to clarify responsibilities and refresh the four broad areas of need
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (September 2026)** – with 'inclusion' as a specific graded area for the first time
- **CQC Single Assessment Framework** – transitioning to sector-specific frameworks in 2026/27
- **Ofsted and CQC Area SEND Inspection Framework** – updated to align with clarified statutory roles
- **Equality Act 2010** – duty to make reasonable adjustments, not dependent on diagnosis
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)** – updated 18 March 2026
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**



2. Principles and Objectives

Richmond House will:

- Treat CYP and families with dignity and respect, listening to their views and promoting choice and control.
- Provide equitable access to services and make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to participation.
- Work collaboratively with parents, carers, education, health and other local services to meet identified needs and achieve positive outcomes.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of CYP through robust safeguarding, risk assessment and behaviour support arrangements.
- Ensure staff are trained, competent and supported to deliver specialist care and education where appropriate.
- Monitor, evaluate and continually improve services through feedback, incident review and performance data.

Ofsted 2026 Expectation: Inclusion is a central theme across all inspections. Ofsted now defines inclusion more broadly, covering not only pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged, but also a wider "contextualised" group facing other barriers to learning or wellbeing.



3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and senior leadership involved in delivering services at Richmond House, including outreach activities, day activities, alternative provision placements and community group events for CYP with SEND.

4. Legal and Statutory Framework

Richmond House will operate in accordance with the current legal and statutory framework relevant to children, young people and disabled people in England, including but not limited to:

Legislation / Guidance	2026–2027 Updates
Children and Families Act (2014)	Remains the primary legislative framework
SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years	Being updated; full public consultation to follow; stronger emphasis on evidence-based approach and early intervention
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026	New four-tier support structure; EHCPs reserved for Specialist Provision Packages
Working Together to Safeguard Children	Updated 18 March 2026
Equality Act 2010	Reasonable adjustments not dependent on diagnosis
Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR	Special category data and confidentiality
Care Act 2014	Transition to adult services
Mental Capacity Act 2005	For those within scope
Ofsted Education Inspection Framework	Inclusion as a specific graded area
CQC Sector-Specific Frameworks	Transitioning from Single Assessment Framework in 2026/27

All staff must keep up to date with statutory guidance and local protocols as they evolve. The current statutory framework, including the SEND Code of Practice and EHCPs, remains in force during the transition period.



5. Definitions

- **SEND:** Special educational needs and disabilities, where a child or young person has significantly greater difficulty learning than their peers, or has a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age.
- **Short Breaks:** A range of services provided to give children and young people and their carers a break from caring responsibilities, which may include day provision, evening sessions, overnight stays, sitting services and activities delivered in community settings.
- **Alternative Provision (AP):** Placement or programme of learning and activities provided as an alternative to mainstream education, where appropriate for the child's learning, social and emotional needs.
- **EHCP Plan:** Education, Health and Care Plan, statutory plan for children and young people with the most complex needs. Under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, EHCPs will be reserved for learners requiring nationally defined Specialist Provision Packages.

6. Eligibility, Referral and Assessment

6.1 Eligibility

Richmond House provides services to children and young people aged 0–25 who have an identified SEND and who meet the service criteria set by Richmond House and/or its commissioning local authority. Eligibility will be determined through an initial screening and risk assessment and, where necessary, a multidisciplinary assessment.

6.2 Referral Routes

Referrals may be received from:

- Parents/carers or young people (self-referral where appropriate)
- Local authorities or social care teams
- Schools, colleges or alternative providers
- Health professionals (e.g., paediatricians, therapists)
- Other statutory or voluntary sector partners



6.3 Assessment Process

- On receipt of a referral, Richmond House will undertake an initial contact within a defined timeframe (as per service level agreement), gather relevant information and, where required, arrange an access assessment.
- Assessments will be person-centred, drawing on multi-disciplinary reports, EHC plans (if present), health care plans, behaviour plans, risk assessments and parental/carers input.
- For CYP with an EHC plan, Richmond House will work to deliver outcomes agreed within the plan and liaise with the local authority and other professionals.
- The assessment will identify reasonable adjustments, additional staffing, equipment or training required to meet needs safely.

Ofsted 2026 Expectation: Inspectors will evaluate how leaders support SEND pupils, the rationale for their approach, and the evidence underpinning it. This includes discussions with leaders, reviewing data, speaking with pupils, sampling cases and considering parents' views.

6.4 Prioritisation and Allocation

When demand exceeds capacity, Richmond House will apply transparent prioritisation criteria based on need, risk to health and wellbeing, family circumstances and statutory duty to provide short breaks. Prioritisation decisions will be recorded and communicated to families with information on appeals and complaints.

7. Person-Centred Planning and Support

- All CYP accessing services will have a personalised support plan (PSP) that records needs, strengths, communication preferences, ASD/ADHD or other diagnoses, medical and medication requirements, eating/feeding needs, sensory needs, mobility needs and emergency protocols.
- PSPs will be co-produced with the CYP and their family, updated after each placement or at agreed review points, and shared with relevant staff and partner agencies with consent.
- Reasonable adjustments will be documented and implemented to ensure meaningful participation and equality of access.



Under the SEND reforms, Individual Support Plans (ISPs) will be formally introduced through an updated SEND Code of Practice, with the statutory duty to produce ISPs expected from September 2029.

8. Education, Learning and Outcomes

- For Alternative Provision placements, Richmond House will set clear learning and personal development outcomes, align with the young person's EHC plan where applicable, and maintain regular communication with the placing school or college.
- Activities will be developmentally appropriate, inclusive and accessible. Staff will use differentiated approaches to enable participation and progress.
- Progress will be recorded, reviewed with families and shared with relevant professionals.

Ofsted 2026 Expectation: Inspection reports must always include an evaluation of the experiences and achievement of pupils with SEND. Inspectors will examine whether leaders and governors have developed and published plans for inclusive practice, including the use of SEND inclusion funding.

9. Safeguarding and Child Protection

- Richmond House will comply with statutory safeguarding guidance and local safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- All staff (including volunteers and agency staff) must undertake safeguarding training at induction and at regular intervals thereafter, including online safety, recognising abuse, reporting processes, and working with children with disabilities who may present differently.
- Richmond House will maintain a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy who are trained to an advanced level and who liaise with Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), children's social care and other partners as needed.
- Allegations against staff will be managed in accordance with local and national guidance and Richmond House's disciplinary and safeguarding procedures.



Ofsted 2026 Update: Serious mental health concerns such as eating disorders, self-harm or suicide ideation are now explicitly listed as safeguarding risks in new inspection guidance.

10. Health, Medication and Clinical Care

- Richmond House will maintain clear policies and procedures for medication administration, clinical care, health care plans and the management of health emergencies.
 - Only trained staff will administer medication, and records will be kept in line with professional and regulatory standards.
 - For CYP with complex health needs, Richmond House will ensure that appropriate clinical competencies are in place, liaising with NHS professionals, community nurses and therapists.
 - Where clinical interventions require provision beyond staff competencies, Richmond House will not provide the element of care unless a named competent clinician (or commissioned provider) is present and a formal agreement is in place.
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11. Behaviour Support, Positive Handling and De-escalation

- Richmond House promotes positive behaviour support approaches that focus on understanding the purpose of behaviour and teaching alternative strategies rather than punitive responses.
 - Physical intervention will only be used as a last resort, in line with legal frameworks and only by staff trained in approved restrictive intervention techniques. All incidents must be recorded, reviewed and reported.
 - Behaviour support plans will be developed with families and professionals, and will include proactive strategies, sensory supports and personalised de-escalation techniques.
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12. Risk Management and Outings

- Individual and activity-specific risk assessments will be completed for each CYP and for each trip or community activity.
 - Risk assessments will be dynamic, reviewed regularly and will inform staffing ratios, transport arrangements and equipment needs.
 - For overnight stays or residential short breaks, Richmond House will follow enhanced safeguarding and clinical protocols and seek parental consent for the duration of the stay, activities and emergency procedures.
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13. Staffing, Recruitment and Training

- Richmond House will recruit staff in line with safer recruitment practices, including DBS checks, identity verification, employment history checks and references.
- Induction for new staff will cover safeguarding, SEND awareness, behaviour support, medication, health & safety, data protection, equality & diversity and Richmond House's policies and values.
- Continuous professional development (CPD) will be provided to maintain competency in supporting complex needs, communication methods (e.g., Makaton, PECS), medication, epilepsy awareness, manual handling and positive behaviour support.
- Supervision and appraisal arrangements will ensure staff competence and wellbeing.

Specialist training includes:

- Autism, ADHD, and other specific conditions
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Makaton/PECS/other communication aids
- Manual Handling and Medical Needs (e.g., administration of emergency medication, epilepsy)
- Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)



SEND Reform 2026: A key policy change includes a proposed new requirement in the SEND Code of Practice that all education staff receive training on SEND and inclusion.

14. Working in Partnership

With Parents and Carers: We maintain regular, open communication with parents and carers through home-day books, meetings, phone calls, and structured reviews.

With Other Agencies: We work collaboratively with Local Authority SEND teams, schools, health services (e.g., Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy), and other relevant agencies to ensure a coordinated approach.

Commissioners: We work transparently with local authority commissioners to demonstrate outcomes and value for money.

Ofsted 2026 Expectation: Responsibility for inclusion is seen as whole-setting, with inspectors considering the role of a wider range of leaders, not just the SENCo. Schools will be required to publish an annual Inclusion Strategy.

15. Preparing for Adulthood

From year 9 onwards, our support will explicitly include preparation for adulthood, focusing on the four key pathways:

- **Higher Education and Employment:** Exploring interests, developing work-related skills, and supporting with transitions to college or supported internships.
- **Independent Living:** Developing skills for self-care, cooking, money management, and understanding tenancies.
- **Community Participation:** Supporting involvement in leisure activities, friendships, and using community facilities.
- **Good Health:** Supporting young people to manage their own health as they move into adult health services.



SEND Reform 2026: The reforms propose stronger 12-month transition planning, improved careers guidance, and continued expansion of supported internships and inclusive apprenticeships.

16. Compliments, Complaints, and Feedback

- We actively seek feedback from children, young people, and their families to continually improve our service.
 - We have a clear and accessible complaints procedure, available in easy-read formats, to ensure any concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.
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17. Monitoring and Review

- **Individual Level:** Personalised plans are reviewed termly, or more frequently if needed, with the full involvement of the young person and their family.
- **Service Level:** The Senior Management Team, led by Jay Al Karaki, will monitor the effectiveness of this SEND policy and the quality of our provision through:
 - Analysis of outcomes and progress data
 - Feedback from children, young people, and families
 - Staff supervision and appraisal records
 - Safeguarding and incident reports

Ofsted 2026 Expectation: Inspectors will use a wider range of evidence to understand pupil outcomes fairly. A new statistical model will support comparisons between schools with similar intakes, with continued focus on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

18. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and compliant with any changes in legislation or statutory guidance.

Next Review Date: 1 September 2027 (or sooner if statutory guidance changes)



Document Control

Document Version	Vr 008
Review Period	2026 – 2027
Effective Date	1 September 2026
Next Review Date	1 September 2027

Summary of Key Legislative and Regulatory Updates (2026–2027)

Guidance / Legislation	Key Changes
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026	Royal Assent 29 April 2026; new four-tier support structure (Universal, Targeted, Targeted Plus, Specialist); EHCPs reserved for Specialist Provision Packages
Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (September 2026)	Inclusion as a specific graded area for the first time; broader definition of inclusion covering SEND, disadvantaged and other barriers; responsibility for inclusion seen as whole-setting; mental health concerns (eating disorders, self-harm, suicide ideation) now listed as safeguarding risks
SEND Code of Practice (2026 Update)	Being updated with stronger emphasis on evidence-based approach and early intervention; full public consultation to follow; Individual Support Plans (ISPs) to be introduced; proposed requirement for all education staff to receive SEND and inclusion training
CQC Single Assessment Framework	Transitioning to sector-specific frameworks in 2026/27; Quality Statements being replaced with Key Lines of Enquiry
Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspections	Updated framework aligning with clarified statutory roles; thematic visits focusing on the local offer
SEND White Paper: "Every Child Achieving and Thriving"	Schools required to publish annual Inclusion Strategy; stronger accountability across the system; strengthened guidance on reasonable adjustments, not dependent on diagnosis
Working Together to Safeguard Children	Updated 18 March 2026; strengthened multi-agency accountability

This SEND Policy should be read in conjunction with Richmond House's Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, Medication Policy, and other relevant policies.