

# **SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES**

## **General Curriculum Statement**

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*SES Avocet Ltd (4926028) and SES Turnstone Ltd (7972485)  
are subsidiary companies of Specialist Education Services Holdings Ltd (7970185)*

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## **1 THE EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES**

The stated educational purpose of SES establishments is to achieve the highest possible standard of educational achievement, as measured by:

- ✓ A movement from disaffection to engagement in the learning process
- ✓ Improvements in behaviour conducive to learning
- ✓ A growing enthusiasm for learning
- ✓ Specific and generalised achievements
- ✓ Tangible accredited outcomes
- ✓ Emerging gifts, talents and passions
- ✓ National accreditation

In doing this our philosophy is to make the curriculum fit the child not the child fit the curriculum.

## **2 OUR VISION STATEMENT VALUES**

- ✓ *we believe in a 'no limits' approach to helping children*
- ✓ *we believe in success not failure*
- ✓ *we believe learning is a lifelong process*
- ✓ *we believe in being inclusive not exclusive*
- ✓ *we believe intelligence is multifaceted*
- ✓ *we believe creativity and imagination are the keys to developing passions and talents, and preparing for life in a rapidly changing world*
- ✓ *we believe assessment of progress is based on improvements on 'previous best'*
- ✓ *we believe in a 'can do' philosophy*
- ✓ *we believe in children's abilities and potential*
- ✓ *we are future orientated*

## **3 OUR BELIEF IN A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY**

Most if not all young people admitted to our establishments will have been in repeated failure situations both in mainstream settings and possibly in previous special school settings and will usually have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). The starting points for our students are almost inevitably extremely low relative to their cognitive potential. There may well be a complicated picture of educational dysfunction and mental health issues labelled under such headings as:

- Complex Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties
- Attachment Difficulties
- General Learning Difficulties
- Specific Learning Difficulties
- Developmental Delay
- Attentional Problems

All of these require targeted individualised support. At the centre of this is a 'no limits' highly personalised education recovery package developed from their Portfolio of Achievements and Needs (see Appendix A). Our students need an

holistic framework of care, support and guidance for them to start to re-engage in the learning process. Turnstone House and Avocet House provide such a framework of high quality care and therapeutic intervention embedded in a highly personalised learning experience. **We accept no barriers to innovation, creativity and response in order to reawaken a passion for learning in each student.**

#### **4 THE LEARNING CENTRE**

Learning Centre staffing resources of a minimum of 6 adults to eight children allow for the delivery of highly individualised programmes. We place high priority on the core skills of Literacy, Numeracy, Computing, Personal and Social Development, as well as a broad exposure to stimulating spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences. Beyond that the curriculum response is specific and individually tailored to make it relevant and motivating. We aim to engage students in a skills based curriculum that recognises the importance of a deep understanding of subject content. Therefore in consideration of each learner's individual starting point, our curriculum planning leads towards 'mastery' of the learning skills necessary to access the more knowledge based content.

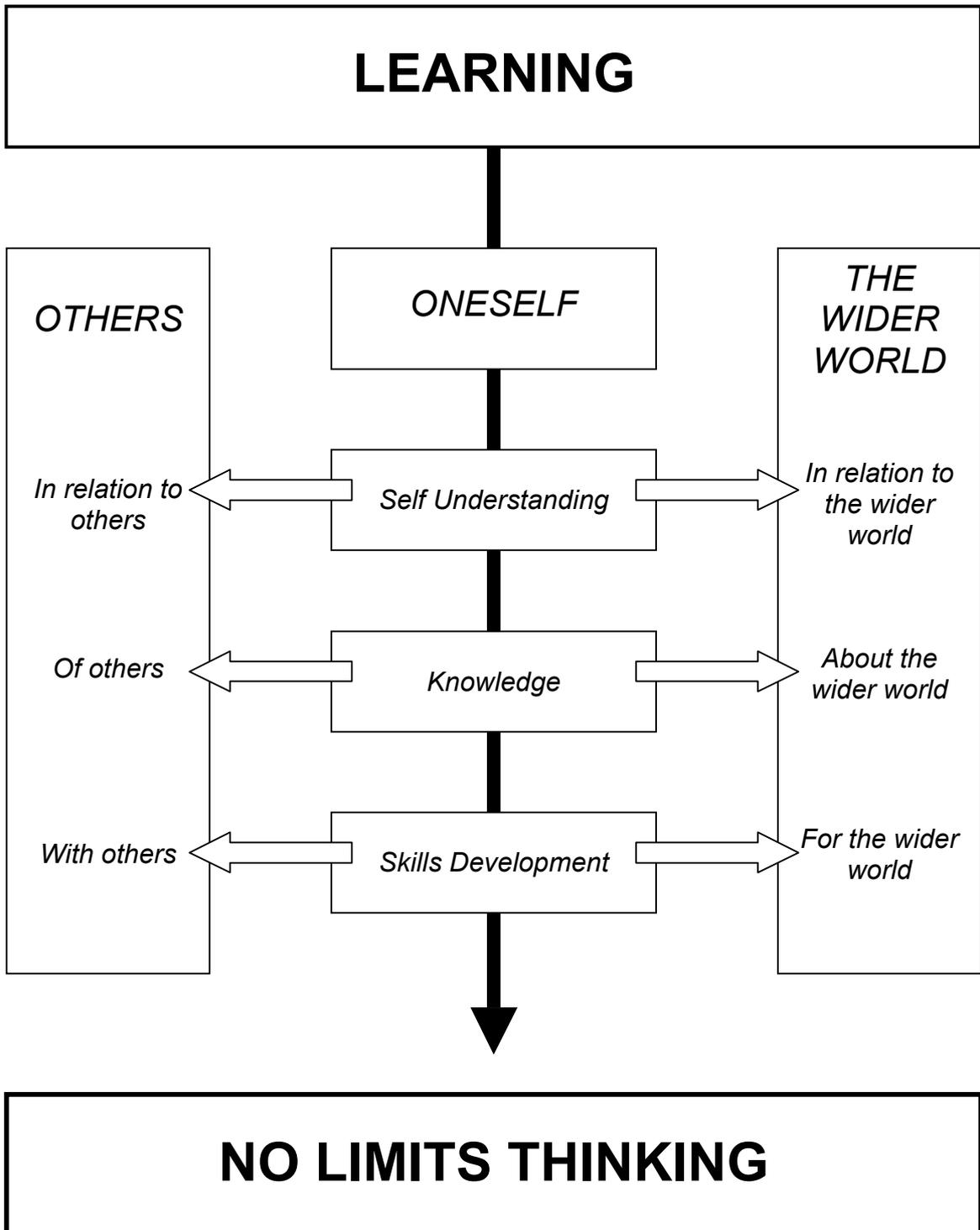
We are not bound by logistical structures that timetable large groups of students and classes – we can literally individually timetable each student with a personalised learning package. We are equally not bound by a 'standard' teaching day, but we do guarantee to provide 25hrs per week of planned learning opportunities. Our schemes of learning are highly personalised, derived from National Curriculum frameworks and tailored to each young person, in order to support them in future pathways. There is also a strong emphasis on career pathways, work experience and vocational courses, which raise aspirations and re-motivate children and young people.

The Learning Centre is equipped with Information and Communication Technology systems and each student is issued with their own personal laptop computer. The rest of each site is also fully networked as well as having alternative wireless technologies that allow students maximum opportunity for self-study and study support.

A hallmark of Turnstone House and Avocet House is high quality teaching and learning, and relationships between adults and children.

#### **5 24 HOUR LEARNING: A TOTAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Learning is a life-long pervasive process not just a 'classroom' or 'school' process. It's not even just the 'academic' process. When we talk about a total learning environment we mean learning about oneself, others around you and the world around you. When you couple this with our "no limits" philosophy it is therefore unsurprising that at SES we take advantage of all opportunities open to us for extending learning across the 24 hour cycle. (See diagrammatic representation on overleaf).



This means that all staff will be ‘educators’ in the broadest sense and that all experiences relating to individual children can be planned, monitored and used to ‘accredit’ learning with Personal and Social development being but one obvious example. Indeed there will be skills and experience across the care team that cannot be replicated in the Learning Centre team. We will take full advantage of this when planning and accounting for learning.

## 6 PERSONALISED LEARNING

Personalised Learning is at the heart of SES philosophy. Personalised learning means:

- setting high expectations and giving every learner confidence they can succeed
- establishing what learners already know and building on it
- structuring and pacing the learning experience to make it challenging and enjoyable
- inspiring learning through passion for the subject
- making individuals active partners in their learning
- developing personal learning and thinking skills and personal qualities
- enabling children to develop the skills they will need beyond school

We demonstrate high expectations of every child, given practical form by high quality teaching based on a sound knowledge and understanding of each child's needs. It means shaping teaching around the way different youngsters learn; it means taking the care to nurture the unique talents of every child.

At SES we incorporate our “no limits” philosophy with personalisation. This relies on re-exciting children with the idea of learning starting from the child's strengths, interests, talents and passions as the gateway to success. Learning becomes something one does for oneself rather than something someone else does to you.

We believe that an individual's capacity for learning is linked to their emotional well-being and that people learn in a variety of ways. We espouse an approach that allows for innovation and flexibility while guaranteeing an entitlement to high-quality educational outcomes. This embraces every aspect of school life including teaching and learning strategies, IT and Computing, curriculum choice, organisation and timetabling, assessment arrangements and relationships with the local community.

In 2007 the document “2020 Vision: Report of the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group” was produced, aimed at catalysing schools generally to consider what is meant by personalised learning.

*“Put simply, personalising learning and teaching means taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each child's and young person's learning, in order that all are able to progress, achieve and participate.”*

*“Personalisation is a matter of moral purpose and social justice: pupils from the most disadvantaged groups are the least likely to achieve well and participate in higher levels of education or training.”*

Wider changes in society..... *“mean that expectations of what all children and young people could and should achieve must be raised, along with schools' capacity to ensure that outcomes for pupils match those expectations.”*

It is exactly what the educational experience at SES is about. The following hypothetical case study on the next page illustrates this.

Josh is a 10 yr old boy who is statemented with specific learning difficulties and severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. He is subject to a full care order following a history of neglect and has witnessed his mother being the victim of a violent relationship. Records indicate that it was a difficult birth and his father is unknown. He has been out of school for over a year during which time a series of foster placements in different locations have either broken down or ceased. There are attachment disorders. Psychiatric and Psychological reports indicate that he desperately needs a period of stability but his level of challenge would require the expertise of specialist, professional foster care or specialist 52 week provision. All reports indicate that he will not cope in a mainstream setting at this stage in his life.

Previous school reports describe an unhappy and sometimes aggressive child who struggled with peer relationships, concentration, basic literacy and numeracy. He was described as frequently moving around the classroom seeking peer attention in a negative way, (4/5 times a lesson on average). He took others equipment without asking, primarily to provoke a reaction, yet reacted aggressively himself both verbally and physically if other pupils made a stand. He made provocative comments to peers and sulked if reprimanded by staff. Some of the problems with peers occurred at break and lunchtime. He does not accept responsibility for the majority of his actions. He is diagnosed as having a specific learning difficulty and becomes frustrated when presented with any written task. He enjoys PE, (and he is a Norwich football supporter), although he finds it hard to accept disappointment and becomes more exposed in team situations. He also likes working on computers and is keen fan of the Rap artist Stormzy.

Following a rigorous initial assessment period, the information in existing reports and the placement plan is gathered together with data from the assessment, and the emerging picture helps to form conclusions. These shape the child's Portfolio of Achievement and Needs, which in turn determines the level of response in terms of curriculum planning, care and therapeutic intervention. However this does not imply that we wait till the end of the assessment period before the serious work begins. Assessment and teaching are bound up as part of an immediate response.

Early discussions between Josh and the staff indicated a very negative view of himself and little faith that he would ever achieve anything worthwhile. A constant strand of his disaffection in this respect was his perception of himself as a virtual non-reader. He had a focussed literacy recovery programme planned involving specific software, spelling and reading strategies as well as some more generalised group teaching. His literacy incorporated synthetic phonics teaching, multi-sensory resources, and teaching designed to raise self-esteem with a 'no-fail' approach.

A parallel Numeracy programme incorporated a range of games and software, developing practical skills and visual teaching styles. A major element of his initial curriculum package utilised ICT and his MacBook. Early learning sessions focussed on digital creativity, including photos, movies and music.

To build upon his personal interests curriculum sessions were constructed around his passion for football, looking at its history, development and visiting local stadiums. Participation in Outdoor Adventurous Activities including wallclimbing, low and high ropes courses, developed his level of self-esteem and functioning within a team. His PE supported this with a module on basketball.

In discussion with external consultants it was felt that Josh would benefit from some more 1:1 talk time based on play therapy, to assist him in looking forward and help him find the resources within himself to start to take ownership of that future.

As part of his initial assessment Learning Centre staff identified Josh's individual learning preferences using a Learning Styles Analysis. This indicated that Josh was predominantly a right-brain processor who needed noise or music, dim lights, informality, snacking and mobility whilst learning and concentrating. In response provision was made for Josh including allowing choice of seating, lighting conditions and access to snacks during learning sessions. The profile was discussed with Josh to highlight his individual strengths and learning needs.

At Turnstone House and Avocet House there is provision to dedicate time and resources to support each child in at least one constructive activity that relates to a gift, talent or passion they might have. Josh's hero is rapper Stormzy, and he had said in one of his solution focussed therapy sessions that he would like to learn how to produce his own personalised beats and backing tracks. This triggered support for him to research opportunities available in the area for the most suitable tuition of digital music. A tutor was sourced and was brought in twice weekly to deliver high quality digital music production session alongside his Personal Tutor who could later assist in writing meaningful and purposeful lyrics.

Each student follows an individualised timetable that accounts for their educational, therapeutic and care needs. Naturally most of the academic learning is located within a typical working day but this does not exclusively have to be the case. There are other structured learning activities available across the weekdays, evenings and weekends that are tailored to individuals and have varying links to the Learning Centre curriculum. Some of these activities might have an expectation of commitment of attendance across a period of time, whereas others are more casually based such that students can opt to attend or not on the evening. Josh's timetable illustrates that he has committed to Music DJ workshops on a Wednesday evening. He also attends a local football team on a Sunday morning and the care staff work in close liaison with the coaches of the club.

Overleaf is an example of Josh's Individualised timetable 10 week's after admission.

There is a highly focussed educational assessment and review process cycle from admission. The Individual Timetable is held under constant review but is formally evaluated and reviewed by the Head of Education and Deputy Head of Education

half termly. This would be done in liaison with Josh’s Learning Mentor and Personal Tutor and contributes to the PAN process (Portfolio of Achievement and Needs, see Appendix A). This guides target setting and tracking in its widest sense around the child. The review would be against the following criteria:

- Pupil targets and outcomes in each area of study
- Curriculum coverage across the 8 week period and a projection of coverage over time.
- Correcting any deficit in the balance and breadth of the curriculum

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
<b>1</b>	Group PHSEE Tutorial	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Literacy		Football (Committed Club)
<b>2</b>	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy	Numeracy		
<b>Break</b>							
<b>3</b>	ICT	ICT	History of Football	Tutorials	History of Football		
<b>4</b>	Numeracy	Science	Science	DT	Guitar Lesson		
<b>Lunch</b>							
<b>5</b>	History of Football	Wallclimbing	Art (Group)	Basketball Module	Group OAA		
<b>6</b>	Science	Wallclimbing	Art (Group)	Basketball Module	Group OAA		
<b>7</b>	Play Therapy Session		Music – DJ Workshop		Achievements and Successes		

Accreditation for learning at Turnstone House and Avocet House will be available through nationally accredited awards be they academic, vocational and/or National Governing Body.

## **7 THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM**

We believe that progress in learning should be judged against the National Curriculum and the usual range of accreditation available to all students. Access to the National Curriculum is an entitlement across all key stages and the relevant areas of the framework are used to assist in planning curriculum delivery. This means that despite pursuing individualised learning through students’ strengths, gifts, talents and passions in an innovative and creative way, outcomes can still be mapped against the National Curriculum.

At SES we believe that the mainstream curriculum is only just catching up with what highly specialised environments have delivered for very damaged and disaffected youngsters where the priority has to be relevance and response to individual learning needs. The educational programmes and indeed wider learning

experiences (24 hr learning) have to be holistic and therapeutically orientated, but rigorous in their evidencing of progress and outcomes.

SES is strongly committed to being at the forefront of educational thinking and practise, continually developing our pedagogical approaches to best suit the needs of all students.

While being fully aware of developments in government guidance and strategy, the nature of personalised planning and delivery requires a consistent approach with a methodical, phased introduction and response to Curriculum change.

The current national curriculum provides greater freedom and choice for schools to decide how to deliver teaching and learning for students. It states that every school must offer a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society,
- promotes British Values (see Appendix B)
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

At Turnstone House and Avocet House personalised planning links relevant spiritual, moral, cultural and social opportunities for each student.

## 7.1 National Curriculum Aims

The core aims of the national curriculum are consummate with the philosophy of learning at SES.

- The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.
- The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

## 7.2 PSD and Numeracy and Literacy

At SES we place the development and improvement of oneself at the forefront of the learning process. In line with this belief, a structured curriculum plan, spanning the 24hour learning cycle ensures the progress of each individual's personal and social development. In line with the belief of learning at SES, PSD, numeracy and literacy are integral across the curriculum offered.

Teachers should plan for the development of personal and social capabilities in every area of personalised curriculum studies. Sound development of individuals in

the areas of; attention, organisation and working with others, are viewed as precursors of an ability to access the broader curriculum.

Teachers should use every relevant subject to develop pupils' mathematical fluency. Confidence in numeracy and other mathematical skills is a precondition of success across the national curriculum.

Teachers should develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.

### 7.3 How SES Policy and Practice connects with National Curriculum Subjects

Policy and Practice documents exist for all NC areas and subjects. These documents carefully outline how the subject is integrated into practice and how they interrelate.

### 7.4 Measuring Progress

At SES, across both SES establishments, we aspire to measure progress using an APP (Assessing Pupil Progress) approach. We are continually evolving a 'fit for purpose' assessment framework to support staff in planning for progress, and to ensure an effective, consistent and quantifiable measure of pupil progress.

The APP tracking system is guided by, but not limited to, the National Curriculum framework to ensure the needs of our learners are met on an individual basis.

SES have bespoke frameworks for assessment in all National Curriculum areas of Literacy, Numeracy and Personal and Social Development, although if required as part of an individual's personalised learning journey, frameworks for assessment are available to support learning in all subject areas.

Progress at SES is not limited to academic progress, and so each student's progress should be considered in line with their individual Development and Overview.

### 7.5 Promoting British Values; Spiritual, Moral, Social and Culture Development, and Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

Distinct and separate policy and practice documents for each of the above also reflect the implementation of these areas. Each subject policy and practice document illustrates how the above areas are reinforced across the curriculum.

## 8 POST 16 EDUCATION

As part of the personalised learning response delivered by SES, the opportunity for students to continue their education beyond key stage 4, when appropriate, is critical. Post 16 learning is tailored directly to the individual needs of the student, with a continuing emphasis placed on their transition towards independence. We

develop pathways using extensive baseline assessments and discussions with our young people, which are then tailored to an individual's needs and aspirations. Throughout this process we deliver high quality independent careers advice, which enables individuals to make free and independent choices.

At the point of admission, we create a Development and Learning Overview with six different areas of focus:

- Education, Training and Employment
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Physical Health/ Medical
- Family Relationships and Identity
- Practical Lifeskills for Independent Living
- Living Arrangements and Support Beyond SES

A full range of accreditation is available, alongside increasing opportunities to develop life skills, links with employment and access to college courses. The aim is to ensure the appropriate continuation of learning for all post 16 students. Turnstone House and Avocet House work in close liaison with college providers to ensure that suitable arrangements are made to support each individual through specific post 16 programmes of study, and further develop the personalised 24 hour curriculum to best ensure success at this stage of education.

## **9 APPENDIX**

The Pan Process: Portfolio Of Achievement And Needs: Integrating Learning And Care

Appendix

**THE PAN PROCESS: PORTFOLIO OF ACHIEVEMENT AND NEEDS  
INTEGRATING LEARNING AND CARE**

