

Southwark Inclusion Charter 2021

Our aspiration is for 100% inclusion of children in education that keeps them safe and enables them to flourish

Introduction

Children have a fundamental right to a good education. Everyone has a part to play in reducing barriers to education, and we are all accountable and responsible for supporting inclusion in Southwark.

The Southwark Inclusion Charter is a joint undertaking between the council, schools, health services (including mental health), colleges, and safeguarding partnership agencies across the borough, with the expectation that all relevant parties will endorse it.

The need for the Charter is driven by a shared recognition that permanent exclusion from education can have a significant negative impact on the wellbeing of children and their future. We are further motivated by our desire to confront and tackle inequalities exposed by the disproportionate exclusion of children with particular characteristics.

Our Charter principles

1. We will commit to supporting a robust multi-agency approach to working with those children who are struggling with inclusion at an early stage. This will emphasise solution-focused interventions between the family, the school, and professionals from services including SEND, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, School Nursing, Family Early Help, Children's Social Care, Youth Offending and the Police.
2. Our approach to inclusion will be driven by evidence of what works in practice for our children in Southwark, and models of practice that promote an inclusive education environment will be identified and shared.
3. We will develop and continually evaluate high quality Alternative Provision for children who may need to be outside mainstream settings.
4. We will ensure that children's additional needs are identified early, clearly communicated and supported through evidence-based interventions that are regularly reviewed for impact.
5. We will identify what policy actions we can take to be more inclusive of students from a wider range of social and cultural backgrounds.
6. We will identify the inequalities that drive disproportionate exclusions and put actions in place to better understand and specifically address them. Additional

multi-agency support will be provided where there are high levels of exclusion.

7. We will communicate clearly and honestly with parents and children when there are issues with inclusion and build relationships by proactively engaging them in solutions and decision-making.
8. We will not encourage parents to explore Elective Home Education as a resolution to issues with inclusion.
9. We recognise that change - such as the transition to secondary school - requires effective communication between phases, and we will provide additional multi-agency support to children who will struggle with new expectations of behaviour.
10. We believe that managed moves can provide an effective 'fresh start' and we will agree a Southwark protocol to promote best practice. Any discussions with a child or parent around moving school should not take place informally or unofficially, but form part of a properly planned process.
11. Where appropriate, we will implement a trauma-informed response to behaviour of concern in children. By this, we mean not taking concerning behaviour at face value, but striving to understand what is driving that behaviour.
12. We will strive for best practice across our policies and processes and towards 100% inclusion approaches to behaviour in education settings, whilst recognising that there are rare instances where exclusion is unavoidable to safeguard children.
13. We recognise that engagement of vulnerable children requires skilled staff with the qualities of persistence and consistency and we will provide appropriate training and support.
14. In delivering the Southwark Inclusion Charter we will commit to collaboration and respectful communication through a restorative approach: working *with* children, rather than doing things *to* them or *for* them.

