

SENDIASS in Essex - Impartiality Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SEND IASS).

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Introduction:

The role of the SEND IASS in Essex is to ensure children, young people and parents/carers have access to impartial information, advice and support so that they can make informed decisions about their child's special educational needs. This is achieved by working in partnership with parents, children and young people, providing information, services and training, working with relevant agencies and ensuring parents' views influence local policy and practice.

What Impartiality means:

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) states that:

'When designing Information, Advice and Support Services, local authorities should take into account of the following principles:

- The information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the local authority and CCGs
- The information, advice and support offered should be free, accurate, confidential and in formats which are accessible and responsive to the needs of users'

SEN Code of Practice 2015 2.8

This means:

Staff will not take sides with any party.

Staff will provide factual information and advice based on what the guidance and legislation says.

Staff will endeavour to provide children, young people and parents with enough information and support so that they can make their own decisions, we will not tell children, young or parents what to do.

Staff do not have any vested interests in the outcome of any decisions taken in relation to an individual child or family.

How we ensure impartiality:

SEND IASS in Essex is funded by Essex County Council (i.e. it is an “in house” service). It operates at “arms length” from the Local Authority as an impartial and confidential service for children and young people with special educational needs/a disability and their parents/carers.

SEND IASS sits within the Directorate of Education and is a part of Specialist Education Services.

The Service has access to work spaces within the area quadrant bases across Essex and has a central base within a Youth Service building in Chelmsford. All buildings are accessible to parents.

All SEND IASS staff aspire to offer accurate and neutral advice to all service users, this includes parents, children, young people, practitioners and any other party.

Achieving the best educational outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities is the ultimate aim of SEND IASS and our role is to support parents, children and young people in securing this.

Staff will provide information based on national guidance and legislation and will not offer their own individual opinions or alter information to reflect local policy.

Staff will respect parents’ and young people’s decisions without making judgements, irrespective of their own views as individuals.

Staff will empower parents, children and young people to speak for themselves and make their own decisions.

SEND IASS does not undertake Local Authority functions, or act on behalf of the Local Authority, educational settings or any other agency.

The Local Authority, education settings and other agencies will be informed of the impartial nature of the service.

Staff will be well trained and able to support the partnership approach when attending meetings with children, young people, parents and professionals, enabling everyone to have a voice.

A wide range of literature from both local and national organisations is available to send to parents along with that produced by SEND IASS.

Monitoring:

All staff will be made aware of the Impartiality Policy.

Staff are required to inform the SEND IASS manager of any conflict of interest in relation to individual families; parent support groups, schools, nurseries, colleagues or other agencies.

Staff are required to inform the SEND IASS manager of any personal or voluntary involvement in issues relating to education or SEN that might impact upon their work.

The policy will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies so that they are aware of it and understand it.

The policy will be reviewed Annually.

Date Agreed: October 2021

Review date: October 2022