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1. **Statement of intent**

All students attending Wider Ambition will have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Wider Ambition makes strenuous efforts to minimise the impact of these and ensure that every student is offered a wealth of opportunities and experiences that meet their individual needs and maximise their ability to learn and achieve. Advice from onsite therapists and embedded therapeutic interventions are used effectively to differentiate the social, emotional, and academic learning opportunities to the diverse needs of our student cohort.

Wider Ambition recognises that students may have previous negative experiences of education and priority is given to promoting feelings of safety, the ability to express wishes, thoughts and feelings and the creation of honest, trusting, and communicative relationships. Barriers to learning will be removed or minimised by default and students will be taught to recognise and build on their own strengths.

Wider Ambition recognises the expertise parents have in their own child and their needs and works in close co-production with parents and students to identify each student's needs, plan and implement carefully individualised support to meet those needs and review the efficacy of that support at appropriate intervals.

2. About our policies

- 2.1. Our policies have been developed to comply with all relevant legislation and associated guidance. Policies will be updated periodically as necessary.
- 2.2. Our policies are inter-related and are intended to be read, understood and used collectively.
- 2.3. All staff and governors are expected to be familiar with and abide by our policies.
- 2.4. The School Administrator is responsible for ensuring volunteers and visitors are familiar with any policies which are relevant to their involvement and for taking reasonable steps to ensure compliance.
- 2.5. By accepting and maintaining a placement at a Wider Ambition setting, parents agree to support the ethos and policies. Parents are able to access these documents via the website, or by emailing the School Administrator.
- 2.6. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring policies are implemented fairly, effectively, and consistently in each setting.
- 2.7. The Headteacher is responsible for identifying any training needs in relation to our policies. The School Administrator is responsible for arranging the required training. All staff are expected to engage in continuous learning and ongoing training appropriate to their roles.
- 2.8. The effectiveness of our policies and their implementation is monitored by the Governing Body. Unless otherwise stated, the Governing Body reviews each policy annually.
- 2.9. The Governing Bodies for Wider Ambition settings are provided by Governing for Ambition, an independent community interest company. The Governing Body uses its expertise to monitor the performance of each setting and to advise the Proprietor of any recommended actions. Responsibilities assigned to the Governing Body are limited to these advisory and accountability functions.
- 2.10. Wider Ambition Ltd is a subsidiary of Wider Plan Ltd. References to the Proprietor mean a Director of Wider Ambition or a senior representative from Wider Plan with delegated authority.
- 2.11. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) includes the Headteacher, Proprietor, Pastoral Lead, Curriculum and Assessment Lead, and any member of staff to whom responsibility is temporarily delegated by the Headteacher or Proprietor

2.12. All references to parents within our policies should be interpreted to include parent carers.

3. Definitions

3.1. The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states - 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 him or her.

3.2. Special educational provision means: Education or training provision that is additional to or different from, that made generally for others of the same age

3.3. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she: has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

3.4. Many children who have SEND 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’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEND, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and those with SEND.

3.5. A student with a disability is covered by the definition of SEND if they require special educational provision.

3.6. The role of SENCO at Wider Ambition is currently fulfilled by the Pastoral Lead.

4. Areas of need

4.1. The SEND Code of Practice 2015 outlines four broad areas of need: Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; Sensory and Physical.

4.2. Students at Wider Ambition will typically have needs in multiple areas and these will be described in the student’s Education, Health and Care Plan.

4.3. The premises, facilities, staffing and day-to-day operations of Wider Ambition are designed to meet the typical needs of academically able students with autism or anxiety and related conditions.

- 4.4. Wider Ambition recognises that every student is unique, that they will often require individually tailored provision which is appropriate, accessible and effective in meeting their needs, and that their needs and the suitability of provision may change over time.
- 4.5. The effectiveness of each student's provision in meeting their needs will be monitored and regularly reviewed and appropriate changes will be made to provision as necessary, with input from all parties as detailed within this policy.
- 4.6. All staff and others working with a student will be provided with sufficient information about their identified needs, aspirations and required provision. Agreed support will be implemented consistently and reliably throughout the school day.
- 4.7. Wider Ambition recognises that needs fluctuate on a day-to-day basis, for reasons which are not always identifiable, and that a student who is able to achieve a goal on one day may not necessarily be able to achieve the same goal on another day. Students will be supported to recognise and accept non-linear progress and will not be put under pressure to maintain and build on progress in a linear manner. Wider Ambition will ensure that any review of needs and progress allows for this non-linearity.

5. Communication and Interaction

- 5.1. Students with Speech, Language and Communication Needs have difficulty in communicating with others, often because they have difficulty saying what they want, they cannot understand what is being said to them, or they do not understand or use social rules of communication.
- 5.2. Wider Ambition offers on-site integrated speech and language therapy. In addition to any individual or group therapy, speech, and language professionals work with school staff to ensure that strategies which support communication and interaction are implemented throughout the school day.
- 5.3. Staff will be mindful that students who are prone to masking may try to communicate discomfort, distress, a need or wish by politely attempting to avoid an activity, deflecting questions, or attempting to distract the adults around them from an activity or situation they find unmanageable. Unless there is clear advice from therapists to the contrary, staff will respond to these incidents in the same way as they would to a student expressing their wishes and feelings more directly. This will be followed up with efforts to obtain feedback about the activity or situation concerned in a way that will enable the student to express their views more directly, e.g. via an email to parents asking them to seek feedback from the student.

6. Cognition and Learning

- 6.1. Students at Wider Ambition may have Specific Learning Difficulties which affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia.
- 6.2. Wider Ambition will liaise with relevant professionals to facilitate the identification of Specific Learning Difficulties and to provide appropriate facilities and support.
- 6.3. Wider Ambition works with an Educational Psychologist on-site to provide integrated therapy. In addition to any individual or group therapy, the Educational Psychologist works with school staff to ensure that strategies which support access to learning are implemented throughout the school day.

7. Social, Emotional and Mental Health

- 7.1. Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs include a wide range of difficulties that manifest themselves in many and complex ways. These needs may, for example, severely limit a student's ability to access and enjoy school, cause them to be vulnerable to self-harm, or lead to disruptive behaviour.
- 7.2. Staff at Wider Ambition will be vigilant to the possibility of students masking their difficulties and being unable to express needs which may become evident later, for example at home after the school day.
- 7.3. Wider Ambition recognises that students may be able to mask very effectively and that staff and therapists, regardless of their skill level, may be unable to determine whether the views and behaviour expressed by a student represent their true underlying feelings.
- 7.4. When staff seek students' opinions or feedback, they will be mindful of the likelihood of masking and will use appropriate strategies to mitigate this as far as possible. This could include, for example: asking questions in a way which indicates that there is no right, wrong or preferred answer; asking students to provide feedback via multiple choice polls or through other depersonalised approaches; giving students clear and simple opportunities to revise their responses after they have had thinking time, for example later in the week; and enabling students to communicate their views via parents or another adult where they find this helpful.
- 7.5. Wider Ambition recognises that the extent to which a student's needs are successfully met at school cannot be assessed solely by observation at school or through feedback from students when they are in a situation where they may be masking. Decisions about how effectively needs have been met and whether any changes in support are appropriate will be made collaboratively and will recognise the possibility of both staff observations and student feedback being impacted by masking.

8. Sensory or physical needs

- 8.1. Wider Ambition actively manages an Accessibility Plan to ensure that school facilities are accessible, as far as possible, to students with physical difficulties.
- 8.2. Students at Wider Ambition will often have sensory difficulties. These can make it difficult for students to access or remain in certain environments and can trigger high anxiety and disruptive behaviour.
- 8.3. Wider Ambition offers on-site integrated Occupational Therapy. In addition to any individual or group therapy, Occupational Therapy professionals work with school staff to ensure that strategies which support sensory needs are implemented throughout the school day.

9. Staff responsibilities

- 9.1. The key people are the primary points of contact for students in their classes and will work closely with Pastoral Lead in the role of SENCO.
- 9.2. The SENCO will liaise with all relevant parties, provide professional advice to colleagues and coordinate SEND provision.
- 9.3. The SENCO will be familiar with the provision in the SEND Local Offer and be able to work with professionals who are providing a supporting role to the family.
- 9.4. The SENCO will maintain a good understanding of best practice, including any emerging changes, and will disseminate their knowledge to staff.
- 9.5. All staff are expected to maintain a culture of high expectations and to support students in achieving their aspirations.
- 9.6. All staff are expected to remain aware of individual needs and provision throughout the school day, to devote sufficient time to planning, to implement agreed strategies consistently and to respond to students appropriately in light of their needs.
- 9.7. Staff will plan lessons and other activities carefully, taking into account individual needs to ensure that any barriers to learning, participation, or enjoyment are appropriately mitigated.

10. Children with specific circumstances

- 10.1. Looked after Children (LAC), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), and privately fostered children

10.1.1. Children at Wider Ambition who are being accommodated, or who have been taken into care, by the Local Authority are legally defined as being 'looked after' by the LA.

10.1.2. The Headteacher will be the person responsible for LAC and coordinate SEND support with the LA for Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children, and privately fostered children.

10.2. English as an Additional Language (EAL)

10.2.1. Wider Ambition gives particular care to the identification and assessment of students whose first language is not English.

10.2.2. It is necessary to consider the student within the context of their home, culture and community.

10.2.3. Where there is uncertainty about an individual student, Wider Ambition will make full use of any local sources of advice relevant to the ethnic group concerned, drawing on community liaison arrangements wherever they exist.

10.2.4. Wider Ambition appreciates having EAL is not equated to having learning difficulties. At the same time, when students with EAL make slow progress, it should not be assumed that their language status is the only reason; they may have learning difficulties.

11. Involving students and parents in decision-making

11.1. Parents of all students are encouraged to share their knowledge of their child; their views will be actively sought at every appropriate opportunity. Their contributions will be valued and will be given appropriate weight.

11.2. Parents will ordinarily be fully involved in decisions about the support and provision which their child is, or will be, receiving. An exception will be made if Wider Ambition considers that the full involvement of a parent is contrary to the best interests of a student, for example where there is a safeguarding concern or an unreasonable denial of need. In these circumstances parents will be involved to the extent which is considered to be in the student's best interests, a record will be kept of decisions made about the extent of their involvement and these decisions will be reviewed as appropriate.

11.3. Students will be fully involved in decisions made about the support they will receive unless this would have a negative impact on them. In these circumstances, the decision to limit their involvement will be recorded on their Ambition Pathway, they will be supported to participate to the extent which is considered to be in their best interests, and strategies will be implemented to assist them in becoming able to participate more fully in future.

11.4. Decisions made in relation to the provision offered by Wider Ambition will not unnecessarily disrupt a student's education or any health treatment or other support which the student is receiving outside Wider Ambition.

- 11.5. Information about a student's needs, wishes and aspirations will be sought from students and parents when interventions and support are being planned, reviewed, or adjusted. Students will be provided with appropriate support to ensure they have a good understanding of the topics under discussion and to enable them to communicate their views effectively.
- 11.6. Staff will be mindful that students may be masking during any conversations, including those about their needs, wishes and aspirations, and may give the answer which they think staff want to hear. Staff will use appropriate strategies to mitigate this, for example:
- 11.6.1. Presenting choices as a variety of options, rather than yes/no questions.
 - 11.6.2. Allowing students sufficient time to process the options available to them.
 - 11.6.3. Providing information and options to students in a format which allows decision making to take place offsite.
 - 11.6.4. Encouraging students to record their wishes with an adult of their choice.
 - 11.6.5. Not expressing personal preferences when asking students to make decisions, unless the context enables other adults to demonstrate that they have differing opinions and thereby modelling that any choice is acceptable.
 - 11.6.6. Reminding students that they may feel differently about a choice in the future and make it clear that it is fine to change their mind.
 - 11.6.7. Recognising that students may not feel that they can give an opinion about a future event, for example because they are unable to predict how they may feel at that time.
 - 11.6.8. Allowing students to provide a range of answers, for example X if I am having a good day and Y if I am having a difficult day.
- 11.7. Where support or access to resources is part of the ordinarily available provision at Wider Ambition, e.g. access to fiddle toys or school animals, or has been agreed as part of the provision for an individual student, these will not be withdrawn without full consultation with the student and parents and the decision recorded in the student's Ambition Pathway.
- 11.8. Paperwork and assessments will:
- 11.8.1. Focus on the student as an individual
 - 11.8.2. Highlight the student's strengths and capabilities without minimising their needs
 - 11.8.3. Enable relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach
 - 11.8.4. Use clear, ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon
 - 11.8.5. Be reviewed for quality and accuracy
 - 11.8.6. Be organised in a way which avoids unreasonable demands on families
- 11.9. Each student's needs, aspirations, and progress towards agreed outcomes will be recorded in their individual Ambition Pathway.

- 11.10. Where staff identify or become aware that a student may have new or previously unrecognised needs, or changes in their existing needs, they should complete an 'Arising Needs' form and email it to the key person. The key person is then responsible for considering the matter in co-production with the student's parents and, where appropriate, the headteacher, therapists, the student and the member of staff who highlighted the need. In situations where a member of staff highlights a matter which has recently been considered in co-production, and where the key person is satisfied that the form does not highlight a further change, the key person should update the member of staff who reported the need and record on the form the reason for not taking further action. Completed Arising Needs forms should be saved in the student's folder alongside their latest Ambition Pathway and used to inform the content of students' Ambition Pathways and EHCP reviews.
- 11.11. Staff will communicate with parents as often as necessary to ensure that:
- 11.11.1. Parents are fully informed about:
 - 11.11.1.1. Any changes in the student's needs, behaviour, or progress at school.
 - 11.11.1.2. Any changes to plans or arrangements, for example staff absence, re-scheduling of events, introduction of new resources etc.
 - 11.11.1.3. Any likelihood of Wider Ambition recommending a change in provision.
 - 11.11.2. Parents are able to keep Wider Ambition appropriately informed about:
 - 11.11.2.1. Any changes in the student's needs, behaviour, or progress outside school.
 - 11.11.2.2. Any changes to a student's support, environment, or circumstances outside school.
 - 11.11.2.3. Any likelihood of the parent or student requesting a change in provision.
 - 11.11.3. Parents are able to participate fully in decisions about their child's support.
- 11.12. The frequency and nature of communication between parents and staff will vary depending on need and parental preferences but should be at such a level that information is shared on an ongoing basis rather than being reserved to routine or statutory meetings.
- 11.13. The student's main teacher, supported by the SENCO, will offer a half termly meeting with students and their parents to agree clear outcomes, review progress, discuss activities and support, and identify ongoing support that will be delivered both by school and home.
- 11.14. Wider Ambition will invite parents to attend workshops and social occasions to facilitate a shared understanding of challenges which students face inside and outside school and strategies which may prove helpful.

13 Joint commissioning, planning and delivery

- 13.1 Wider Ambition is committed to ensuring that all students at Wider Ambition can achieve their full potential and the best possible educational outcomes, as well as other opportunities, such as securing employment and living as independently as possible
- 13.2 Wider Ambition will work closely with its on-site therapists, other professionals, and health and social care services as appropriate to facilitate these aims.
- 13.3 Where students with SEND also have a medical condition, their provision will be planned and delivered in coordination with their IHCP.

14 Reviewing a student's Education, Health and Care Plan

- 14.1 Reviews will focus on student's progress towards achieving the outcomes specified in the EHC plan and consider whether these outcomes and supporting targets remain appropriate.

Wider Ambition will:

- 14.2 Arrange EHCP reviews, as a minimum, every 12 months
- 14.3 Cooperate with the relevant individuals to arrange for an annual review meeting to take place, including convening the meeting on behalf of the LA if requested
- 14.4 Ensure that all professionals, the students and their families are notified of the meeting time, date and location at least four weeks in advance.
- 14.5 Contribute any relevant information and recommendations about the EHC plan to the LA, keeping parents involved at all times
- 14.6 Ensure that sufficient arrangements are put in place at Wider Ambition to host the annual review meeting
- 14.7 Liaise with the LA during annual reviews
- 14.8 Conduct the review in such a way as to ensure that students and their families are full and equal partners throughout the process.
- 14.9 Seek advice and information about the student from the families and professionals involved with sufficient notice to be able to provide written reports and contributions to be circulated at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.
- 14.10 Circulate all written contributions and reports to all parties at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

14.11 Inform parents and students of the names and roles of expected attendees at least two weeks in advance of the meeting and provide timely updates if this changes.

14.12 Clarify to the parents and student that they have the right to appeal the content of the EHC Plan, including any amendments, when it is reissued by the LA following the review.

14.13 Send a copy of this policy to parents between two and four weeks prior to each annual review.

15 Preparing for further stages of education and adulthood

15.1 EHC plans will be reviewed and amendments will be suggested prior to a student moving between key phases of education, to allow for planning for and, where necessary, commissioning of, support and provision at the new phase.

15.2 For students moving from Wider Ambition to further education, the review and any amendments to the EHC plan, including specifying the provision and naming the institution, must be completed by the spring half term in the calendar year of the transfer.

15.3 Wider Ambition will work closely with students and their families to create and implement detailed, personalised transition plans and ensure that students are supported to make a smooth transition onto further or higher education.

15.4 Wider Ambition will engage with further and higher education providers, as necessary, to help plan for any transitions.

15.5 Wider Ambition will take an active role in preparing all students for their transition into adult life, preparing them to achieve their ambitions in terms of further education, higher education, or employment and to take responsibility for their health, where they will live, their relationships, their finances, social integration and independence.

16 Data Protection

16.1 Wider Ambition recognises that SEND information (including EHC Plans and associated documentation) contains confidential and sensitive information.

16.2 Wider Ambition recognises that SEND information follows a student between placements and that it is therefore particularly important for it to be accurate and complete.

- 16.3 SEND information will be processed in accordance with Wider Ambition's Data Protection Policy, extended as follows:
- 16.3.1 The explicit wishes of parents and of students who are competent to make decisions about their personal data will be given due regard and communicated, as appropriate and with consent, to other professionals who may be in receipt of SEND information.
 - 16.3.2 SEND information will be shared, to the extent we consider necessary for the purpose of implementing and monitoring provision, with school staff, on-site therapists, visitors, volunteers, governors, inspectors, and other personnel who are formally connected with Wider Ambition, subject to an appropriate confidentiality agreement being in place.
 - 16.3.3 SEND information will be shared at an appropriate level with the relevant Local Authority for the purpose of monitoring and maintaining EHC Plans and ensuring appropriate provision is in place.
 - 16.3.4 Wider Ambition will not disclose SEND information to other third parties without appropriate consent from the student (if they are competent to make their decisions about their personal data) and/or their parents as applicable, except as required by law. Students and parents will be kept appropriately informed if any information is shared as a result of a statutory obligation.