



Annual SEND Statement

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An academy within:



Learning together, to be the best we can be



1. Context

- 1.1. Hilltop School is a special school which offers provision for children and young people aged 2-19 with profound and multiple, severe and complex learning difficulties. Most pupils have additional sensory and / or communication needs. Some pupils have specific medical needs and others may require support for their Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

2. Aims and Values

- 2.1. Our core values are the make-up of our ethos and culture and what we as adults endeavour to model and instill amongst our children and young people and go hand in hand with our curriculum intent.
- 2.2. All staff at Hilltop School believe in the importance of **TEAM WORK** in supporting our young people and each other
- 2.3. Children and young people at Hilltop School are treated with the utmost **CARE** and **EMPATHY**
- 2.4. We strive to enable our students to be as **INDEPENDENT** as they possibly can be
- 2.5. All staff at Hilltop School are **CHILD CENTRED** and treat every child and young person as an individual
- 2.6. We want every child and young person to feel **VALUED** and **HAPPY** during their time at Hilltop School.
- 2.7. Our Values:
- Should apply equally to pupils, to our staff and to how we treat people outside our organisation
 - Should be reflected in how we recruit, reward and manage staff
 - Should be part of how we are held to account by our Trust Board and our Academy Council.
- 2.8. All activities are driven by the Nexus Trust vision: **"Learning together, to be the best we can be"**
- 2.9. Linked to our Nexus mission statement:
- Our learners and their families are at the center of what we do.



- Our employees and partners are passionate about being the best that they can be.
- Our trust is relentlessly focused on improvement.

3. Admissions

- 3.1. All pupils who attend Hilltop School will have had a Statutory Assessment of their special educational needs (SEND) by the Local Authority. Following this assessment, the school will be consulted as part of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process, if it is agreed at panel that it can meet the needs of the child.
- 3.2. Prospective parents/carers are encouraged to visit the school as part of the preparation of their contribution towards their child's special needs assessment.
- 3.3. Subsequent to Hilltop being named in the child's Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and the school receiving a copy of this, the school will arrange a school/setting and home visit to collate the school's admissions information.
- 3.4. The child will start their transition into school as soon as practically possible following the admissions information being completed and transport arrangements being made.
- 3.5. For pupils in the Foundation Stage, a flexible place can be offered at either the point of the place being commissioned, or during the placement itself.

4. Areas Served

- 4.1. Children are admitted from the whole of the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council area. Currently some children and young people living in Nottinghamshire, Sheffield, Doncaster and Barnsley attend Hilltop school where the journey would be shorter than that to similar schools in their area or provision is more appropriate.

5. Pupil Numbers



5.1. The school has planned places for up to 167 pupils. We are significantly over capacity and it is difficult to offer places and as at September 2025 we have 183 pupils on roll.

6. School Organisation

6.1. For teaching and organisational purposes, the school has three phases:

- Hilltop Early Years – Nursery, Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Hilltop school – Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 (years 1 to 9)
- Hilltop Forest View – Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 (years 10 to 14)

6.2. Staff work in upper/lower teams. Pupils are in a class group of 6-10 children of a similar age. In KS5 they have a register base and then work in different groups. On a day-to-day basis parents/carers and other professionals link with the teacher and educational support staff (TAs) in their child's class.

6.3. Senior Leaders are accountable for day-to-day matters within their team. The executive head is Sam MacDonald. There are two Deputy Heads, Claire Rose and Joanne Grantham. There is Two Assistant Headteacher Zara Skidmore (SENDCO) and Alice Williams.. The first point of contact for financial and administrative matters is the School Office Team. You can email any of us at hilltopschool@nexusmat.org

7. Staffing Structure

7.1. Senior Leadership

Level	Number	Full Time Equivalent
Executive Headteacher	1	1
Deputy Headteacher	2	2
Assistant Headteacher	2	2



7.2. Teaching

Level	Number	Full Time Equivalent
Teacher with additional responsibilities (TLRs)	3	2.8
Teachers		
Early Career Teachers	1	1

7.3. Teaching Support

Level	Number	Full Time Equivalent
HLTA/Tutor	2	2
Level Four	9	6.13
Level Three	27	24.99
Level Two	68	55.55
Level One	0	0
Apprentice	0	0

7.4. Administration / Site Management

Level	Number	Full Time Equivalent
Term time only	6	3.07
Office Manager	1	1
Site Manager	1	1



8. Curriculum and assessment

- 8.1. The priority outcomes for individual children and young people will be different dependent upon their needs, learning styles and aspirations.
- 8.2. To meet the needs of our students the Core curriculum is focused on achievement of EHCP outcomes, alongside PSHE objectives plus aspects of Preparing for Adulthood. In addition, the bespoke curriculum aims to meet the very diverse needs of our students by offering Academic, Therapeutic, and further Preparing for Adulthood learning. For identified students they may need to follow the re-stabilisation provision for a period of time until they are able to re-integrate back into the main classroom full time.

9. Curriculum Content

- 9.1. At Hilltop School we provide a needs-led, person-centered curriculum which is flexible and creative and works toward the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes.
- 9.2. We recognise the need for a range of approaches, strategies and resources and the need for Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Parents/Carers and multiagency practitioners to work in partnership.
- 9.3. We promote the moral, cultural, spiritual, mental and physical development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities and responsibilities of later life.
- 9.4. We also acknowledge the importance of developing life skills and that fun and enjoyment is essential to well-being, emotional development and a passion for learning.
- 9.5. In addition, pupils will require a range of opportunities to develop key learning skills which link to their own EHCP. They will need to acquire, develop, practise, apply and extend these skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum.
- 9.6. These skills include:



- Communication skills – including the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), developing signing skills, developing verbal skills and the ability to reason.
- Physical development, gross and fine motor skills, including positioning, maintenance of posture, muscle tone and ease of movement).
- Personal, social, emotional development (including self-help, independence, hygiene, self-esteem, working with others, readiness to learn and feeding skills)
- Sensory awareness (making sense of auditory, taste, tactile, visual and olfactory experiences – includes moderating and maintaining an appropriate level of 'input' to ensure learners are in a 'calm alert' state and ready to learn).
- A rich and varied curriculum is offered to all pupils. The whole curriculum includes National Curriculum programmes of study modified to meet individual needs, as well as therapies and planned multi-sensory experiences. Communication and personal, social and emotional development are core areas of the school's curriculum.

10. Specialist resources

- Staff with a range of relevant experience and training.
- Personalised timetables.
- Alternative curriculums.
- Individual class play areas appropriate for all our primary learners.
- Therapy rooms.
- A hydrotherapy pool.
- A Sensory Integration room.
- Adapted hygiene areas with tracking hoists and specialist equipment.
- Sensory outdoor spaces with covered canopies.
- Augmentative and alternative communication including communication assessments and pathways.
- Computers in every classroom including touchscreens and iPads.
- 2 trampolines for Rebound Therapy.
- School dinners prepared on-site catering for individual dietary requirements where required.
- Access to a Minibus.
- Family Support Worker/Behaviour Lead, Transitions lead and Key workers to link with and support families.
- There is a school nurse team funded through health and they run regular 'drop in', medicals and support our learners at meetings, with care and medication plans.
- There is an essential team of other professionals that are based in school. This includes physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy (SALT) teams.
- We have regular support from the visual and hearing-impaired service.



- Rotherham/Sheffield/Barnsley transport liaises with school and families to ensure transport to school works well.

11. Staff Training and development

- 11.1. All staff have access to a programme of Continuing Professional Development which includes training in Makaton, Moving and Handling, Emergency First Aid, Fire safety, Feeding and Swallowing, Safeguarding and Team Teach positive behaviour management. We also have had routine safeguarding training, medication administration which includes buccal and epipen.
- 11.2. In addition, all staff have annual Professional Development Reviews which identifies bespoke training needs. Training needs are a key area of the School Improvement Plan and the school is committed to staff development.
- 11.3. The school has a number of staff who have Specialist knowledge in specific areas of learning or needs and these staff share best practice and lead elements of the school's work.
- 11.4. Examples of Specialist knowledge and training include:
 - Autism
 - Multi-sensory
 - Hydrotherapy
 - Intensive interaction
 - Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)
 - Visual Impairment
 - Hearing Impairment
 - Picture Exchange Communication (PECS)
 - Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
 - Child Protection
 - Medication administration, tracheostomy care, gastrostomy care etc.
 - Behaviour Management
 - Team Teach tutors
 - Makaton Regional Tutors
 - NVQs in supporting teaching and learning
 - National Professional Qualification in (Middle / Senior / Headteacher) Leadership
 - Rebound Trainers
 - ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support)



12. Meeting individual needs

- 12.1. At Hilltop School, we pride ourselves on appropriately placing every student to ensure we are best meeting their needs. Students are grouped in classes which best cater for their identified needs – SLD, PMLD, ASC. This enables different strategies, environments and approaches to be in place to support overcoming their barriers and maximizing opportunities for learning. (This includes low arousal classroom environments, sensory diet provision, specialist moving and handling equipment to support mobility). Providing specific training for staff working in classes ensures they are skilled to best support the students in their care.
- 12.2. Regardless of class, all students have an individual curriculum pathway that allows them to focus on their EHCP outcomes and also to access wider provision and resources to support learning and development in more holistic aspects. Students have access to the therapeutic provision which support development through therapies such as swimming, Rebound Therapy & Sensory Integration.
- 12.3. We strive for all students to leave Hilltop as independent and confident as possible and provide them with a range of opportunities through our Preparing for Adulthood curriculum and personalised interventions and opportunities. Staff plan frequent opportunities for students to engage in their local community and to experience aspects of daily life beyond school. Visits to the local shops, cafes, etc are encouraged and provide students with invaluable real-life experiences.
- 12.4. Staff support students to develop their tolerance of everyday situations by arranging visits to the hairdressers, dentist and doctors.
- 12.5. We work closely with external agencies to support mental health and well-being and regularly liaise with Educational Psychologist and CAMHs.
- 12.6. Hilltop involves other bodies, including health and social care, early help, family support workers, local authority support services and voluntary sector organisations, in meeting children and young people's SEND and supporting their families.
- 12.7. Often a number of regular meetings support the student and include;
 - CIN – Child in Need Meetings generated by Social Workers to address any issues
 - TAC or TAF – Team around the Child/Family Meetings – Multi-Agency meetings to ensure sharing of information and joined up thinking regarding strategies and approaches



- LAC – Looked after Child meetings once a term and this feeds into updating the EPEP (Electronic Personal Educational Plan). The focus is how well the LAC are making progress and what support is in place.
- PCR – Person Centered Reviews. Exploring the needs, hopes and aspirations of our young people with the young person's views at the center of the discussion.
- Medicals – for our learners from Rotherham routine medicals take place in school.

13. Partnerships with other schools and Inclusion

- 13.1. As a constituent academy of Nexus Multi Academy Trust, the school has positive partnerships with the other schools within the Trust which enables sharing of practice, knowledge and resources.
- 13.2. We have strong links with other local and regional schools through our sporting partnerships.
- 13.3. Post 16 students attend leisure and work experience activities off site. Some students in our Post 16 attend courses at other provisions or have links with Post 19 providers. Some students, according to their individual need and aspirations participate in vocational links with the local business community.
- 13.4. We run a programme of work experiences throughout the year.

14. Partnerships with parents

- 14.1. Parents and carers are key partners in the education of their child. The views of parents are actively sought and respected in order that a trusting partnership can be developed in the best interest of the child. Parents/carers, with their child, make a significant contribution to the Individual Education Plan based upon their priorities and aspirations. These are linked to their EHCP. The teacher supports and facilitates this through the Review held annually and reviewed each term at the parent/carer meetings. The school believes that these meetings form the foundation of the personalised programme for each child.



- 14.2. Termly Parent Carer Consultation Meetings are held each term.
- 14.3. If parents/carers have difficulties attending meetings arrangements are made for alternative times or venues to accommodate. Meetings can be held via Teams or via phone call if this suits the parents better.
- 14.4. Yearly Annual Review or PCR (Person Centered Review) for every child
- 14.5. Annual Parent/Carer Surveys sent requesting the views of families regarding their child's experiences at Hilltop.
- 14.6. Year 14 students have a minimum of 3 Interim meetings to effectively plan for Post 19 Transition
- 14.7. In addition, contact is maintained with families through the home/school diary (daily) and telephone calls (as often as the parent requests, usually through the key worker).
- 14.8. Wider school information is sent to parents through the Headteacher newsletter. The school website and X account also contains parent friendly information.
- 14.9. We have a group of Parent Ambassadors who offer direct support for parents.
- 14.10. Our Family Support worker and transitions lead offer a range of support to families.
- 14.11. It is the policy of this school to actively engage with parents/carers and involve them as much as is practical in the life and work of the school and the teaching and learning of their child.

15. Pupil voice

- 15.1. Listening to and responding to our "student's voice" plays a major part in their education at Hilltop. Students are asked their views on a range of issues; they are invited to join Annual Reviews and PCRs if this is appropriate dependent on complexity of need.
- 15.2. We have a Pupil Parliament via which we are able to capture the



opinions and voice of the students throughout school.

- 15.3. As part of the EPEP process all LAC learners are consulted on their views of how they see their education at Hilltop, exploring likes and dislikes and evaluating their progress.

16. Assessment, recording and reporting

16.1. This will:

- Provide all pupils with opportunities to show what they know, understand and can do and involve them in self-assessment.
- Help pupils to understand what they can do and what they need to develop.
- Recognise that the National Curriculum does not encompass all learning and ensure that the curriculum offer meets needs.
- Enable Teachers to plan more effectively.
- Support parents to be involved in their children's learning.
- Provide schools with information to evaluate work and set appropriate targets.

16.2. We have introduced Evidence for Learning, a cloud based assessment tool which captures the progress and achievements of all students using photographic evidence using iPads and assessing targets being met via the relevant assessment framework.

16.3. On a termly basis all teachers work alongside SLT/ELT on Pupil Progress meetings. This is an opportunity to spend focused time analysing each individual student needs and progress in order to assess the major barriers to their learning and devise strategies and action plans to overcome them. We can then mobilize school resources to address the issues to ensure progress.

16.4. Termly data analysis of The Early Years Assessment Framework and routine assessments enables us to track progress and target those identified as not making expected progress.

16.5. All Assessment Data is shared with parents as are Termly IEPs. If appropriate students play an active role in assessing their own progress and set new challenges and goals for themselves. In Post 16 this is embedded in sessions.

16.6. There are key outcomes at 19 that we aspire to for our pupils and these are fundamental to our leavers being successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.



17. Transport Arrangements

- 17.1. Every pupil is offered free transport to and from school until they are 16. The Local Education Authority in which the child lives makes transport arrangements. In practice pupils come to school by variety of means, by taxis and minibuses, in specialist transport (i.e. vehicles with tail lifts for wheelchairs) and independently. Generally, an escort is provided on home-school transport. Some parents/carers choose to bring and collect their child from school.

18. Complaints

- 18.1. Hilltop School offers a high level of education and support to its pupils. We welcome comments and suggestions about the education and support provided to our children and young people. The school works within the Trust Complaints Policy framework.
- 18.2. All complaints are seen as an opportunity for the school to evaluate its performance. Complaints can be about any aspect of the services provided at the school. In the first instance contact is with the child's teacher, unless a parent feels that it should be with the Head Teacher or Senior Leadership Team.
- 18.3. Pupils are encouraged to speak to any member of staff regarding any concern or complaint. The pupils can also make their complaint known to the school council whereby it will be dealt with.
- 18.4. Complaints are acknowledged promptly, usually in writing and the appropriate person in school will undertake an investigation. Generally, parents should expect a response within 5 working days. If school staff are unable to resolve the issue parents are urged to contact the Chief Executive Officer.

19. Monitoring and evaluation

- 19.1. The senior leadership team, The Hilltop Academy Council, Trust Executive and the Board of Directors will measure the success or otherwise of Hilltop School by consideration of, for example:
- Achievement and outcomes for pupils and students



- Happy, contented children
- Inspection reports and external reviews
- Review of Curriculum development
- Quality and regularity of Home-School liaison
- Quality of assessment, planning, record keeping and records of achievement
- The school's financial management
- Reviewing Action Plans as part of the School Improvement Planning process.

20. Transition

- 20.1. All students who are new to Hilltop School, no matter at what age they arrive, will undergo a full transition which includes visits with existing staff so that vital information can be shared building up to full days and eventually weeks to ensure transition is smooth.
- 20.2. As the majority of our pupils are grouped by age this does mean that they encounter transition into a new class every 2 or 3 years. Toward the end of each academic year transition meetings are held between class teachers in order for the transfer of vital academic and care information of individual students moving into new classes and Key Stages. Students will spend time in their new class settings before the end of the academic year in order to ensure that the new academic year starts smoothly.
- 20.3. Some students in the Key Stage 4 attend sessions at other providers with the aim of them getting used to new academic environments and laying the foundations for a positive Post 19 transition.
- 20.4. Year 14 Students for whom a Post 19 college placement is deemed appropriate have weekly college days throughout the year ready for their transition.
- 20.5. As part of the preparing for adulthood process other Post 19 provision is identified along with the Social Work team for our more complex students for whom college would not be appropriate. Visits to providers and Specialist College provision are set up and students and families explore the Post 19 options with the support of Hilltop Staff.
- 20.6. Other Post 16 experiences which prepare the students for life after Hilltop and adulthood are weekly Work Related learning lessons. These explore a range of work experiences in school such as Catering, Horticulture, Office Skills, Grounds Maintenance and Library Skills.
- 20.7. Post 16 Students are also given the opportunity to explore a range of Work Experience Placements such as Supermarkets, Fast Food Restaurants, Charity Shops, Florists, Hair and Beauty Salons. Staff whose responsibility it is to organise Work Experience Placements strive hard to find opportunities in the students own community with a view to it becoming long term and



sustainable after students leave Hilltop.

- 20.8. For the few students that it is relevant for, Independent Travel Training is delivered and supported with the help of the Local Authority. Through years of shadowing and modelling a small number of students work towards being able to use public transport independently and problem solve if there are any changes to routine or an issue occurs.
- 20.9. As from September 2024 students in 14 -19 phase who are following the Preparation for Adulthood curriculum will be based at our Forest View site in Rawmarsh, Rotherham. This will be a co-located site with similar students from Kelford school – also in the NEXUS Multi-Academy Trust.

21. Further information

- 21.1. Rotherham have produced a Local Offer which details services, resources, support, provision and activities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This can be found at www.rotherhamsendlocaloffer.org/
- 21.2. Rotherham SENDIASS can also give you:
- information and advice about SEN and disability support and provision
 - more information about local services, organisations, and resources which might help
 - advice and support to get more involved. This can be found at <http://www.rotherhamsendiass.org.uk>
- 21.3. Rotherham parents and carers forum are a group run by parents for parents and their website can be accessed at [https://www.rpcf.co.uk/about- us](https://www.rpcf.co.uk/about-us)