



Woodview School

Neuro-Affirming Local Procedure

Woodview School
Crockenhill Road
Orpington
Bromley
BR5 4EP

Email: woodviewschool@aspriscs.co.uk

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1 Purpose

Aspris Woodview School is committed to creating an environment where neurodivergent pupils feel respected, understood, and celebrated. This policy outlines our whole-school approach to neuro-affirming practice and ensures that all staff, pupils, and families experience a culture of acceptance, safety, and belonging.

2 Our Neuro-Affirming Principles

- Acceptance, Not "Fixing"
- We do not aim to change, cure, or normalise neurodivergent pupils.
- We prioritise strengths-based approaches and identity-affirming language.

Co-Regulation Before Expectation

- Emotional safety is prioritised over compliance.
- Staff use co-regulation, attunement, and supportive communication.

Respect for Communication Differences

- All communication methods are valid (speech, gesture, typing, behaviour).
- Pupils never lose access to preferred or alternative communication systems.

Autonomy and Agency

- Pupils have the right to say no, ask for breaks, and advocate for their needs.
- We avoid behavioural approaches that rely on control, forced eye-contact, masking, or compliance-based demands.
- We understand that behaviour is communication and we give space, time and support to understand what a young person is trying to communicate.

Sensory Safety and Accessibility

- Sensory needs are supported proactively through personalised adaptations, and extensive universal support overseen by our occupation therapist.
- Pupils can access sensory regulation freely without punishment or judgement.

Collaboration with Families and Pupils

- Parents/carers are partners, not bystanders.
- Pupils lived experiences are central to all planning and support.

3. Whole-School Commitments

Environment

- Calm, predictable, low-arousal spaces.
- Visual supports available in all classrooms.
- Respect for stimming and natural regulation behaviours.

Curriculum & Learning

- Personalised learning pathways.
- Alternatives to written output.
- Flexible pacing and reduced cognitive load.

Emotional Wellbeing

- Regular check-ins.
- Mentor support
- Access to safe spaces.
- Staff model emotional regulation.

4. Neuro-Affirming Communication Guidelines

Staff will:

- Use clear, respectful language.

- Allow extended processing time.
- Validate feelings.

Staff will NOT:

- Use compliance-based scripts.
- Demand eye contact.
- Withdraw sensory tools as consequences.

5. Behaviour Support

- Behaviour is communication.
- Identify unmet needs.
- Prioritise de-escalation and relationships.
- No punitive systems.

6. Staff Development

- Ongoing training in neuro-affirming practice, SEN needs, neuro divergent presentations and support, communication support, adaptations, sensory needs, universal sensory support.

7. Pupil Voice

- Promote autonomy and self-advocacy.
- Value all communication forms.
- Mentor/Mentee time
- Structured and unstructured ways of gaining pupil voice, through passports, feedback forms, reflection exercises, steering groups.
- Pupil's voice, sensory and communication needs are conveyed through their passports and discussed with the pupil weekly as a minimum.

8. Partnerships with Parents/Carers

- Use clear communication.
- Share supportive strategies.
- Involve families in decisions.
- Regular opportunities for feedback
- Daily communication

9. Monitoring and Review

- Policy reviewed annually.
- Feedback from pupils, staff, and families informs improvements.

10. Commitment Statement

Aspris Woodview School is dedicated to fostering a culture where every neurodivergent pupil can thrive as their authentic self.