**Green Lane School**

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**SCERTS Policy**

**(Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Supports)**

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**Introduction**

Pupils at Green Lane School have a statement that defines them has having learning difficulties or complex needs. A large section of our pupils also have a diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder. A proportion of those pupils also require the added support of an autism-specific class due to the complexity of their autism and their learning difficulties.

**Rationale**

At Green Lane we recognise that pupils in our autism-specific classes need a wider reaching curriculum that enables them to work on the skills connected to a clearer understanding of non-verbal and verbal communication, social understanding and social behaviour, understanding and controlling their own emotions and thinking and behaving flexibly.

**Aims**

To ensure that the following principles inform our practice and enable us to use SCERTS to help provide the best possible provision for pupils who are taught in the autism-specific classrooms;

* A good knowledge of autistic spectrum disorders.
* A good knowledge of SCERTS, the targets and evaluation methods.
* SCERTS is used as a framework which enables a range of interventions to be used in a holistic approach to autism (e.g. TEACCH, PECS, Intensive Interaction, AAC, Attention Autism, etc.)
* We will work to understand what the child’s behaviour is achieving for them and use the SCERTS programme to help teach alternate skills as a substitute for the less desirable ones.
* SCERTS will be taught within aspects of the National Curriculum as identified by subject leaders
* As pupils begin to move successfully through the SCERTS programme, they will be able to access more aspects of the National Curriculum, ASDAN, and Personal Progress etc.
* The SCERTS programme will be used in cooperation with Parents, S.A.L.T, Occupational Therapist and outside agencies when required.
* We consider SCERTS an important part of our curriculum and it will therefore, form an important part of the I.E.Ps for pupils in the autism-specific classrooms.
* Provision for these pupils will be continuously monitored as part of the school self-evaluation process.

**Inclusion**

All pupils in the autism-specific classrooms will access the SCERTS programme. Pupils in the main body of the school may access aspects of the programme if appropriate.

**Core Domains of the SCERTS programme**

**Social Communication**

The Social Communication domain of the SCERTS Programme addresses the goals of helping a child to be an increasingly competent, confident and active participant in social activities. This includes;

* Communicating with others in everyday activities and sharing pleasure in social relationships. In order to do this we must help our pupils to acquire capacities in joint attention (i.e. learning to share attention and emotion with partners and to communicate intentions) and symbol use (i.e. communicative means: these may be presymbolic such as gesture or use of objects; or symbolic such as signs, picture symbols, or speech).
* Capacities in joint attention will enable our pupils to attend to and respond to the overtures of others and to ultimately participate in reciprocal social communication. Pupils work to be able to communicate for a range of purposes, such as expressing needs, sharing observations and experiences, expressing emotions and engaging others in social interactions.

Social communication and language abilities are essential tools for learning.

**Emotional Regulation**

The Emotional Regulation domain of the SCERTS Programme focuses on the child’s ability to regulate emotional arousal. In order to achieve emotional regulation a pupil must have the skills to;

* Seek assistance or respond to others’ attempts to provide support for emotional regulation when faced with stressful, over stimulating experiences or situations (mutual regulation).
* Remain well-regulated in the face of potentially stressful situations (self-regulation).
* Recover from being ‘pushed over the edge’ into states of extreme emotional dysregulation or shut down through the use of mutual or self-regulatory strategies.

Emotional regulation is needed to ensure that a pupil is equipped to deal with the daily challenges he/she will face and ensuring that a well-regulated state of arousal is maintained thus providing the state most conducive to learning and relating to others. Emotional Regulation is an essential capacity that supports a child’s availability for learning.

 **Transactional Support**

The Transactional Domain of the SCERTS Programme includes;

* Interpersonal supports e.g. adjustments to language, emotional expression and interactive style.
* Learning supports e.g. environmental changes, the setting up of activities to ensure social communication and emotional regulation, the use of visual supports for social communication, curriculum modifications etc.
* Support to families e.g. sharing of strategies, working on activities parents struggle with, instructing parents on use of visual supports etc.

Transactional supports are essential to ensure pupils have the necessary learning supports and to ensure that efforts are coordinated between professionals and families.

**Curriculum**

We recognise that pupils in the autism-specific classes will respond more successfully to learning experiences that occur in the social context of daily activities and experiences and we believe that the SCERTS programme is an appropriate tool to further these goals.

Younger pupils in the autism-specific class work on a thematic approach with activities geared towards the basic skills outlined in the ‘Social Partner’ stage of the SCERTS programme. Lessons in SCERTS sessions are based around experiences of everyday life and the skills needed to cope with these (including the development of play skills). We recognize that the acquisition of these skills is a prerequisite to learning and a more formal participation in the National Curriculum goals.

As pupils move through the school and progress on SCERTS, they will work within the ‘Language Partner’ and the ‘Conversational Partner’ stages of the programme. The lessons in these SCERTS sessions are linked more closely with the National Curriculum, ASDAN, Personal Progress, etc.

Reviewed by: M. Gaskell (Assistant Head of Autism)

Person responsible: J. Barnes (Head of Autism)

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