

Policies and Procedures

IMPARTIALITY POLICY



“The role of the SEND IAS is to ensure that all parents, children and young people have access to impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions. Any information that is shared with the SEND IAS is in confidence unless permission has been obtained to share this with other individuals, services and agencies that may be able to help the individual/family with their circumstances.”

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) states that Information, Advice and Support Services must ensure the “information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm’s length from the local authority and CCGs”

Impartiality

The SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS) believes it can best support parents, children and young people (CYP) by maintaining a neutral viewpoint that considers the individual’s and her/his parent(s) position from a standpoint that takes into account all sides.

SENDIAS will provide parents and CYP with accurate, factual information on their rights, roles and responsibilities, and on the different options in their situation. The information and advice provided by SENDIAS will be unbiased and will not favour one side over another because of preconceived ideas or beliefs, ensuring that all available facts, truths, opinions and perceptions are being shared openly. By SENDIAS Advisers empowering parents and CYP, they can make informed choices for themselves. Advisers will offer an impartial viewpoint on an individual circumstance.

SENDIAS will assist parents and CYP to express their views and wishes by providing them with a range of information and by liaising with schools and local authority personnel to empower parents and CYP without taking sides and without having a vested interest in one outcome or another.

An Adviser or volunteer will inform the Team Manager of any conflict of interest in relation to individual families, parent groups, education settings or other agencies. In this instance, the case will be reassigned to someone else.

Relationship with the Local Authority

The majority of West Sussex SENDIAS Service’s funding comes from West Sussex County Council. However, the service maintains an ‘arms-length’ position from the Local Authority, as envisaged in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and in the national standards for an IAS service. SENDIAS therefore does not share information without the individuals’ consent, unless there is a safeguarding concern (see SENDIAS Confidentiality Policy). The SENDIAS service is based in confidential surroundings and has a dedicated telephone line for parents, children and young people.

Monitoring impartiality

SENDIAS will seek feedback from parents, children and young people who have used the service, including whether they felt the service acted in an impartial manner. This will be reported to all stakeholders and included in the SENDIAS Annual report.

All SEND IAS staff and volunteers have a copy of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Date of issue: 1 October 2008 Date reviewed: 25 January 2021 Next review due: 25 January 2022