

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## - Impartiality Policy



“The role of the SENDIAS Service 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 SENDIAS is in confidence unless permission has been obtained to share 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 (LA) and integrated care boards (ICBs)

### **Impartiality**

The West Sussex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS) 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, based on national law and guidance. Advisers would not offer their personal opinions but will explain different options to take within a situation, outlining any possible outcomes or consequences that may occur from choosing a particular pathway. 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 exercise autonomy and make informed choices for themselves.

SENDIAS will assist parents and CYP to express their views and wishes by providing them with a range of information to empower them to take their situation forward. On occasions, if a parent is unable to do so themselves, they will assist them in liaising with schools and the LA, 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 the service's funding comes from West Sussex County Council, with an added contribution from the National Health Service. However, the service maintains an 'arms-length' position from the LA and ICBs, as envisaged in the [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#) and in the [national standards for an IAS service](#). There is also a [partnership agreement](#) in place that ensures the minimum standards are being met by all parties. The SENDIAS Service therefore does not share information unless it is fair and lawful to do so. 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 & young people who have used the service, including whether they felt the service acted in an impartial manner. This will be reported to the SENDIAS Steering Group who monitor the impartiality of the service. Feedback is included in SENDIAS Annual reports.

**All SENDIAS 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: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025    Next review due: 3rd January 2026*