

LPPA

improving
parental
engagement

Parent/Carer Handbook

2019-2020

Our Vision

To provide all students that attend Valence School with a learning pathway that meets their intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs. By working together with families and a wide range of support agencies, we will ensure that students within each learning pathway are valued, supported and challenged to do their very best in preparation for the next stage of their learning and life in modern Britain.

Contents

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT	4
CONTACTING US	5
CONTACTING YOU	5
ACCESS TO SCHOOL GROUNDS.....	7
THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM – LEARNING PATHWAYS AT VALENCE SCHOOL	8
HOMEWORK	10
TRANSITION POINTS AT VALENCE SCHOOL	11
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM (MDT) WORKING	13
RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION	14
HEALTH & THERAPY TEAMS AT VALENCE SCHOOL	15
OUTREACH SERVICES AND CLINICS	19
HOW WE WORK WITH OUR PARENTS & CARERS.....	20
STUDENTS & TECHNOLOGY	24
EQUIPMENT	25
ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE	27
THE SCHOOL DAY / WEEK.....	28
SCHOOL MEALS.....	29
STUDENT ORGANISERS.....	30
SCHOOL UNIFORM.....	31

WELCOME TO VALENCE SCHOOL

(ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-2020)

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to Valence School.

Our school is a vibrant and friendly place to be and is dedicated to providing an enabling and exciting environment for young people. We aim to give all students the very best opportunities to achieve and reach their aspirations. To make this happen our teams of experts adopt a multidisciplinary approach by integrating therapy and care into our academic curriculum.

The work and commitment of the staff and the resilience and positive attitude of our young people is inspirational and we will be involving you regularly as we continue to improve all aspects of life at Valence School.

We asked parents, through a survey, what information they would like to have included in a parent and career information pack. The following sections were arrived at in agreement with parents and carers.

I hope that this handbook will provide you with some useful information for the year ahead, but if you do have more questions or suggestions, please do let us know.

I very much look forward to working with you.

Jo Bleasdale

Assistant Principal / Leading Parent Partnership Award Coordinator

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Our commitment to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination extends to all applicants, students, parents, staff, governors, trustees, contractors, volunteers and visitors.

Evidence of our commitment is detailed below:

Ofsted Inspection 2017 found that *'Pupils are kind to each other and are supportive of each other's needs. They work well together, sharing ideas and respecting one another's points of view'.*

Students spoken with during an Ofsted Social Care inspection in September 2018 stated that *'the school is an inclusive environment'.*

In May 2019, the school embarked on a journey to gain the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) part of which is a whole school commitment to working effectively with parents and carers. One objective involves the school's ongoing commitment to *'celebrating community and cultural diversity'* within our work with parents.

Our school Code of Conduct states that all staff should *'Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of students and their families, by demonstrating openness, honesty and integrity'*

Ofsted Inspection 2019 stated that *'This is a friendly, welcoming school. Smiles and positive attitudes can be seen everywhere at Valence.'*

PARENT/CARER/STUDENT

Main school reception: 01959 562156

CONTACTING US

Is it a query or message about a therapeutic or medical need?

PHYSIOTHERAPY

physiotherapists@valence.kent.sch.uk

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

occtherapists@valence.kent.sch.uk

SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY

salt@valence.kent.sch.uk

NURSE

nurses@valence.kent.sch.uk

OR

KEY WORKER OR PASTORAL SUPPORT

OR

Is it a query or message relating to education?

LEAD FOR PATHWAY

STAR & KELLER mstrange@valence.kent.sch.uk

SIMMONDS 1,2,3 jbleasdale@valence.kent.sch.uk

SIMMONDS 4,5 tlongthorne@valence.kent.sch.uk

HAWKING zbelton@valence.kent.sch.uk

OR

Is it a query or message about uniform, payments or general school details?

STUDENTS SERVICES MANAGER

ebrown@valence.kent.sch.uk

Is it a query relating to residential provision?

RESIDENTIAL MANAGER

jchivers@valence.kent.sch.uk

Is it a query that you feel no one else has dealt with sufficiently?

**VICE PRINCIPAL
SOCIAL CARE & SAFEGUARDING**

lkavanagh@valence.kent.sch.uk

PRINCIPAL

rgooding@valence.kent.sch.uk

**VICE PRINCIPAL
TEACHING & LEARNING**

mstrange@valence.kent.sch.uk

School to Home Communication

What we communicate	How the school communicates	Where this will be stored
Day to day updates about student e.g. how they are getting on at school	Ideally we prefer to phone home, but some parents and carers prefer email.	A log of a phone conversation or email is kept on ISAMS - our cloud based school information system.
An urgent message e.g. student is unwell and may need to go home	A call will be made using the normal or emergency contact number on ISAMS. A nurse/HCA and the senior leader will make the decision whether a student is too ill to remain at school,	Once the emergency has been dealt with, this urgent communication will be logged on ISAMS.
A general whole school message to parents and carers e.g. a special event such as sports day	This will usually be sent via the school newsletter or individual letter.	Our student admin team keep an electronic archive of newsletters and school event letters.
An urgent whole school message e.g. school closure due to bad weather	This would usually be organised and triggered by senior leaders and carried out through our <i>teachers2parents</i> text service or by individual phone calls.	Any parent <i>teachers2parents</i> message is logged and archived within the texting system. If cascade phone calls are made, logs are kept at that time and discussed in strategy meetings.
A message to a group of students e.g. a letter from a class teacher about a trip	This will usually be sent via an individual letter.	A hard copy of the letter will be left with reception for reference and an electronic copy should be stored securely by the individual staff member.
A formal message about a school meeting or appointment e.g. annual review or appointment with a consultant	This is usually organised by our student admin and health teams and will be communicated by an official school letter and back up email.	These formal school letters and emails are stored by the admin team within individual student folders linked to ISAMS.
A formal information sharing and administrative messages e.g. school reports or progress data	This is usually organised by our student admin team and will be communicated by an official school letter. Sometimes this may be sent to a parent via email if they have requested an electronic copy.	These formal school letters and emails are stored by the admin team within individual student folders linked to ISAMS.

Staff making phone calls who reach an answer machine, will leave a clear message giving their name and a brief message before trying alternative contact numbers.

ACCESS TO SCHOOL GROUNDS

ID Badges

Students are issued with electronic access ID badges or key fobs which allow independent access to the areas of the school which are open to them. Parent/Carer access to the classrooms or Home Living Areas is by invitation only and guests will be accompanied at **all** times.

Parents/Carers must register their presence at school by signing in and out in Reception in the main school building. Printed temporary ID badges should be worn where they can be seen. A temporary badge can be obtained when signing in. Please contact the School Office if an ID badge is lost so that it can be cancelled and a replacement issued.

In the event of a fire alarm, a member of staff will direct Parents/Carers to the designated assembly point.

Parents/carers must always sign their son/daughter in and out of school with a member of staff on duty at their home living area or reception.

Vehicle Access and Parking

Parents/Carers will access the school site via the security barrier. The main Visitors' Car Parking is at the top of the drive on the right and reception is signposted from here. If the barrier fails to operate, the Intercom may be used to speak to a member of staff. If nearer parking is needed in order to drop off or pick up their son/daughter, then spaces are available outside the main building, but these must not be used during school minibus arrival and departure times. Further information about finding us and where to park can be found on the 'Contact Us' section of our website or by scanning this QR code.



Local Authority Transport

Parents/Carers should liaise directly with their Local Authority's Transport Department regarding drop off and collection times. If the School needs to close at short notice (e.g. in the event of bad weather) we will inform all Local Authorities that the School is closing but individual arrangements will be the responsibility of Parents/Carers.

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM – LEARNING PATHWAYS AT VALENCE SCHOOL

Aims

Rooted in the documents such as the SEND Code of Practice, The Rochford Review and the National Curriculum, we can express Valence School's curricular vision and learning ethos as follows:

The Valence Vision

To provide all students that attend Valence School with a curriculum pathway that meets their intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs. Working together with families and a wide range of support agencies, we ensure that students within each curriculum pathway are valued, supported and challenged to do their very best in preparation for the next stage of their learning and life.

To do this, we work as a whole school team striving to create a distinct identity for each curriculum pathway. Central to everything we do and key to the success of each curriculum pathway is our:

Learning Ethos:

- Respectful learners - Valence students respect the rights, needs and views of others. They seek to create an environment where support for each other is commonplace so that everyone feels that they belong.
- Resilient learners – Valence students take risks and view failure as a good thing. They are encouraged not to give up easily and always try their best.
- Independent learners – Valence students oversee their own learning. They are provided with a wide range of support to enable independence in everything that is required of them.
- Positive learners - Valence students focus on what they 'can do' in order to develop as an individual and not what they 'cannot do' as a result of their disability
- Passionate learners - Valence students are encouraged to find and develop their own range of interests and to express themselves as they wish in support of their learning.

Rationale

We believe that achievements and outcomes, for our students, are not related to their age but should be set against their needs and their individual aspirations and goals. This means that our students require a curriculum that is broad and is delivered using approaches that address students as individuals. We are aspirational so our curriculum offer is flexible and close monitoring ensures that students are well matched to their pathway. Resilience and independence are key features of learning and we ensure that all pathways offer suitable challenges and opportunities for students to take charge of their own learning. We believe that learning should be stimulating and interesting and strive to ensure that all pathways offer rich learning and strong, relevant, experiences.

Curriculum Structure

In order to provide students across Valence School with experiences that are relevant, interesting and challenging, and to identify opportunities for progression, we have adopted a curriculum approach and structure with 3 broad levels: pre-formal, semi-formal and formal. These levels are not defined by age but by need and achievement; students may therefore move from one level to the next at any point in their school career.

Pre-formal approach

Students at very early levels of development (typically assessed at P1-P4) access a curriculum that enables them to develop a sense of security in the school environment, to establish positive relationships with familiar adults, to explore the world around them using their sensory and physical capabilities to the full and to establish behaviours through which they can communicate with other people.

Semi-formal approach

Students following our semi-formal curriculum learn best when learning is related to their own experience. Some may learn through structured exploration; others will learn more effectively through functional activities, and yet others will respond to a topic-based approach. The curriculum content broadly corresponds to the ground covered within the National Curriculum, but the teaching approach will reflect the age and learning needs of the students.

Older students working at the semi-formal level may be entered for Entry Level exams or for ASDAN qualifications.

Formal approach

Students following our formal curriculum access the range of National Curriculum subjects for their Key Stage, modified in light of their special educational needs. As the term 'formal' implies there is a high level of structure. However, we avoid making this curriculum too abstract; teachers ensure that learning is linked to practical activities and consolidated and applied in practical sessions.

Older students working at the formal level will be entered for Entry Level, GCSE's and A level examinations following the appropriate syllabus.

HOMework

The school recognises that homework is a valuable element of the school curriculum and can be an important means to raise a pupil's self-esteem, as well as supporting work done in the classroom. That being said, it is not good to overload pupils with a very rigid and strict policy of homework, as this can be counterproductive. At Valence School, one arrangement for homework would not suit all young people and their learning development. We create individualised programs and bespoke arrangements in consultation with the teacher in order to appropriately meet the needs of the learner. Each class or subject teacher will be responsible for monitoring his or her pupils' homework. Approaches to homework reflect the pathway being followed.

Early Years and Keller Pathway approach to homework: Class teachers let parents know what their children are learning by sending a termly newsletter that includes a section about how to reinforce learning at home within specific topic areas. Teachers may also communicate individually with parents about book suggestions to encourage joint reading experiences and the opportunities to enjoy reading at home.

Simmonds approach to homework: The School recognises that homework may take many forms and may include reading, written work, observations, research and practice of other skills as appropriate. We consider that reading regularly is an essential part of building literacy skills.

In other subjects, homework may be set at the discretion of the teacher or upon request from the child or parents, as long as the level and frequency of the work does not place an unrealistic burden on the pupil. Please contact teachers to discuss individual homework arrangements with them.

Hawking Pathway approach to homework: Homework is work that is set to be done outside the timetabled curriculum. It contains an element of independent study in that it is not usually directly supervised by a teacher. As with the other pathways, homework will continue to take many forms and will include reading, written work, observations, research and practice of other skills as appropriate. In the Hawking Pathway, there will be an expectation that students read outside of class time as an essential part of building literacy skills.

Valence School does not have a fixed homework timetable with time allocated for different subjects on different evenings. Students will need to learn to manage their time so that they complete homework or reading each evening. Each department will set meaningful homework when appropriate for that subject to support the learning taking place. In order to assist students with their homework, parents and home living area staff should seek to provide an appropriate place for work to be completed, and make it clear to the student that they value homework. Students should always be encouraged to attempt work and be praised for completion within deadlines.

TRANSITION POINTS AT VALENCE SCHOOL

KS1 to KS2 - Students who are transitioning from Key Stage 1 move to a new primary class into key stage 2. These are two KS2 classrooms (which are mixed year group classes). The KS1 class teacher will liaise and plan with the KS2 teachers and ensure that detailed information is handed over about the students learning style and progress. Nearing the time for transition, the student will begin to visit the class for some social sessions, or where appropriate for some core sessions such as maths or phonics programmes. This allows the KS1 student to prepare both socially, environmentally academically for the change to come in September.

In mid July we have 'Transition Days' where we 'pretend' it is September and all students try out their new classes. This also involves the movement of support staff which allows student time to make new relationships and settle into the idea of a new class before they have their summer holidays.

We often prepare a transition book or folder for the student so that they have photographs and information that will help them prepare alongside their family members. The Class based keyworker often plays a role here in liaising with the family about changes to expect.

KS2 to KS3 - At the end of their primary years, in preparation for transition into KS3 and secondary education, as above, class teachers will liaise and plan with the KS3 teachers and ensure that detailed information is handed over about the students learning style and progress. This is often done over the course of a number of teachers' meetings.

A student's keyworker will organise for opportunities to visit KS3 classes on social occasions or just touring various secondary facilities in order to familiarise themselves with the environment.

As with KS1 transition students, those students moving to secondary also engage in the July 'Moving Up Days'. Additionally, and where appropriate, students compile transition books or folders with the help of their keyworker.

Parents of year 6 students who will be transitioning into year 7 are invited in for a guided tour of the secondary facilities and a general presentation about the secondary curriculum.

KS3 to KS4 - As students prepare to move from KS3 to KS4 there is a more subtle preparation. Student will after all be continuing with the same teaching staffing the same lessons and within the same environment. The difference here is that students may begin to start following accreditation pathways. The assistant principal of the next pathway attends all year 9 transition reviews (where parents are present) to ensure a smooth handover of information. Additionally, this allows for planning of an appropriate curriculum pathway for the individual student.

These students also join in the 'Transition Days' as part of their preparation process. Information about courses and pathways is also shared with the family.

KS4 to 5 - As students prepare to move from KS4 to KS5 (into the sixth form), there is again a more subtle preparation. As with KS3 students will be continuing with the same teaching staffing the same lessons and within the same environment. For some students they will be continuing with the same courses that they have started in KS4.

KS5 to further education or employment - During the annual review meetings from Year 11 there is a section where the student, their families and student discuss their options for after Valence School.

An information pack is provided to the students and their parents. At Valence we use the services of an independent careers advisor to meet with all the students and contact all parents Year 12 –year 14 to support them with this process. Students also complete a work experience / work taster session.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM (MDT) WORKING

Each student has his/her own Multi-Disciplinary Team which may consist of some or all of the following;

- Class Teacher/teachers
- Learning Support Supervisor (LSS)
- Home living area manager (if a residential student)
- Key worker or pastoral support teacher
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Speech & Language Therapist
- Nurse
- Health Care Assistant
- Dietitian
- Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) for Visual Impairment
- Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) for Hearing Impairment
- School Counsellor

The team for each student is firstly decided through the Education Health and Care Plan process according to the provision a young person needs in order to meet their needs holistically. In consultation with parents, changes may be made to the team throughout the student's school career to ensure that whilst they are supported effectively, they are also enabled to be independent and assertive in preparation for life after Valence School.

RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation at Valence School is arranged into small Home Living Areas (HLA's) to ensure a homelier atmosphere is maintained. Each HLA has its own Manager and Assistant Manager and team of dedicated staff who are specifically trained to meet the needs of the young people they support. Each student has his or her own living space, in either an individual room or sharing with one other young person. Students are encouraged to personalize their space with posters, photos and soft furnishings to make it feel like home.

There is either a Home Living Area Manager or Deputy Manager on shift throughout the evening, working in the bungalow along with student support assistants and Keyworkers. Support is provided to enable young people to do as many of the home living tasks as possible. Students bring in spending money if they choose to take part in trips out.

We hold student meetings weekly so that young people can have a say on how they wish to run their home living areas. We also plan the weekly menus and any activities altogether. We have a cooking schedule and young people can have the choice to go and buy their weekly shopping and be involved in preparation and cooking.

Every evening various activities and after school clubs are run, creating a varied programme suiting each student. These may include boccia, fitness club, karaoke, drama club, cooking, physical management, independent swim, hydrotherapy, table cricket and power chair football.

Home visits will be held before your son/daughter has a taster day or night at Valence to ensure we are familiar with key information before they begin boarding. We will take notes and amend support plans if needed at the stage on their sleeping style, whether they use a particular mattress, recommended cutlery, favourite foods and interests, medication, any emergency protocols, method of communication, family life and any physical management your young person can do.

HEALTH & THERAPY TEAMS AT VALENCE SCHOOL

Introduction

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) provides Special Schools Nurses and therapists within Valence School, in order to support students with complex needs access their education. We work in partnership with the school staff empowering them to support the care and therapy of students whose needs can be safely delegated. This increases the number of people available that can care for and support the student at school. We work in partnership with the parents and school staff to ensure that where students needs are identified they are met.

Some students may have health needs that are not suitable to delegate to school staff. Where this is the case the nurses and therapists will discuss with parents /carers and the school to assess what arrangements or plans need to be made.

The Teams

Nursing service- we are a team of qualified nurses with a wealth of specialist knowledge, skills and expertise working in special schools, supporting children and young people with complex health needs. We assess the students with more complex needs and delegate their care to school staff by ensuring they are trained and competent. We provide support during and beyond the school day.

Therapies - We are qualified, HCPC registered physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists with a wealth of specialist knowledge, skills and expertise working in special schools, supporting children and young people with complex physical needs. Our team also includes experienced therapy assistants.

As the NHS therapy team based at Valence, we aim to provide personalised and holistic care to each student. Our intervention is aimed at supporting students to access the curriculum and therefore is implemented into learning rather than through sessions out of the classroom. We are committed to training and supporting school staff in delivering these personalised programmes and using bespoke equipment in daily classroom activities to ensure students are comfortable, happy and ready to learn.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

Students are seen by the Speech and Language Therapy team for their Communication and/or Eating & Drinking (Dysphagia) needs. The nature of their involvement will be determined by an assessment of need and by the provision listed within your son/daughter's EHCP. Reviews by the team will also be conducted if parents/carers, the student or the school highlight a change in need or presentation.

Students are issued with a personal placemat which details our recommendations for safe and adequate nutrition and hydration. Every student in the school is issued with a placemat and a copy of this can be found in the dining hall, in their student organiser and when appropriate, in their home living area.

Eating & Drinking

- Assessment & reviews
- Feeding Clinic
- Personal Placemats (Eating and Drinking Guidelines)
- Oro-motor programmes
- Texture modification guidance
- Training to school and residential staff

Communication

- One to one and group therapy sessions
- Joint teaching and modelling
- Access workshop
- Eye Gaze Clinics
- VOCA (Voice Output Communication Aids) programming (a form of Augmentative and Alternative Communication)
- Other communication resources and symbol support

PHYSIOTHERAPY

An overview of our service

- Establishing postural management recommendations alongside OTs, devising specific exercise programmes and training school support staff to integrate within the school week
- Hip surveillance for cerebral palsy (Cerebral Palsy Integrated Pathway—CPIPs assessments)
- School equipment assessments/reviews/adjustments for equipment such as standers, walkers
- Supporting students following surgery or other medical interventions such as Botox, orthopaedic or spinal surgery. This may include;
 - Blocks of targeted therapy e.g. hydrotherapy
 - Advice for school staff for water based activities
 - Joint exercise programmes
 - Recommendations for appropriate classroom activities to maintain ranges and function

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

An overview of our service

- Access to regular upper limb clinics within school as appropriate
- School equipment assessments/reviews/adjustments for toilet chairs, specialist seating and comfy seating as needed
- Eating and drinking assessments jointly with speech and language therapists to provide appropriate specialist equipment and reviewing positioning during meal times
- Supporting students following surgery or other medical interventions such as Botox, orthopaedic or spinal surgery. This may include;
 - Joint therapy programmes
 - Upper limb splinting
 - Recommendations for appropriate class based activities to maintain ranges and function
 - Advice regarding activities of daily living to promote independence in home living areas
 - Blocks of targeted therapy

We have a team of qualified nurses, who are employed by the NHS and provide a wealth of specialist knowledge, skills and expertise working in special schools, supporting children and young people with complex health needs and the school staff. We assess the children and delegate their care to school staff that have been trained and signed off as competent. We provide support during the school day and for the residential students. We support staff to respond to children who may require urgent care to contact emergency services when needed. We support students with more complex needs by undertaking nursing assessments and liaison with other health professionals to ensure tasks can be safely delegated. We support students by providing:

- Core health training of school staff – medication administration, seizure management and enteral feeding
- Training and competency assessment of school staff to safely undertake specific health tasks bespoke to your child, for example tracheostomy care, oral suctioning.
- Support to school for completing personalised care plans.
- Support for returning to schools following a change in your child's health needs.
- Nursing contribution to the Education Health Care Plan and annual review if required.
- Promoting continence, through proactive toileting assessments, advice and product management.
- Supporting transition to adult services.

In the event that a student is unwell at school or is not responding as expected, there is a clear escalation process which the school will follow. This may include contacting parents if the student is not well enough to remain at school or calling an ambulance in an emergency. Both school staff and nursing staff refer to NHS Choices for guidance in managing acute illnesses and you will be notified if there is a concern about your child.

In order to ensure your child receives the best health care we need a list of medications which has been signed by a doctor, this can be in form of a consultant letter or a GP prescription. We cannot alter doses of medication without this. This also applies for short term medication for example antibiotics – you can send in a photo of the prescription before you give it to the pharmacy. We would also need you to tell us of any medical changes in your child's health and ask for the nursing team to be copied into any clinic letters.

If your child has had a long time off school or an operation or new intervention started then we will need to arrange for an assessment to take place before they return to school to ensure all the school staff can deliver the new care or be updated.

We look forward to meeting and working with you.

OUTREACH SERVICES AND CLINICS

Where it is appropriate, members of our multidisciplinary therapy and health team may refer onwards to outreach services such as:

- Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) for Visual Impairment
- Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) for Hearing Impairment
- Wheelchair services
- AAC hubs e.g. Kent CAT team, Chailey clinical services
- Consultant clinics
- Dentist
- Additional tertiary medical services

Your consent will be sought in the first instance. Where possible, these services will be accessed through on-site appointments however, in some cases, it is necessary to attend appointments at additional sites. The providers will contact you directly and the School has limited control over the management of these services.

HOW WE WORK WITH OUR PARENTS & CARERS

At Valence School Parents and Carers are encouraged to participate in school life. Throughout the year we hold a number of events to celebrate students' achievements, including special assemblies, sports events, and music and drama performances. In addition, there are opportunities to get involved in many fundraising events and participate in the series of exhibitions which are held. Many of our parents are active supporters and helpers of our school.

Annual Reviews and Reports

A full Report is issued in advance of the Annual Review of the EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan). The EHCP Administrator will contact Parents/Carers with a date for the Annual Review Meeting. Please understand that, due to the high number of Annual Reviews held during the academic year, it is very difficult to change the date or time proposed for the meeting. Invitations are also sent to the representative of the funding Local Authority and other professionals involved with the student. Contributions from the student and his/her Parents/Carers are sought and attached to the Annual Review Report. We would like to encourage all parents to take this opportunity to provide us with feedback.

Newsletters

The school Principal writes weekly newsletters which are sent to Parents/Carers. A variety of staff also contribute to these newsletters so that parents can be included in the latest events and news. Teachers also produce termly curriculum newsletters for each family. This details topics covered in class, planned trips and events and suggestions of how to help reinforce concepts at home.

Support Plans

Each student has a Support Plan and input from the student and his/her Parents/Carers is sought before creating this document. Support Plans are kept updated as targets are achieved or need reviewing, or when there are significant changes. Annual Reviews and MDT meetings with Parents/Carers provide an opportunity for parents to discuss Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) with the staff team. Alternatively, parents can request and arrange a meeting at a different time.

Parent/Carer Voice

On an annual basis, Parents/Carers will be sent an on-line survey which will cover all aspects of the provision at Valence School. Specific themed surveys will be issued to Parents/Carers to help us gain views on a specific service or new development. There are active parent governors who represent parental views within the Governing Body. There is also a working group who meet and contact each other regularly as part of the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) to discuss the importance of parental engagement.

New Students Parents/Carers Meetings/Review of Contract

For those students with a September start date, we invite families in in the summer term prior to the start for a 'Parent Meet Up' as part of a family induction process. We also hold a New Student/Parent/Carers meeting within the first six weeks of the student joining the school. Parents/Carers will be contacted to arrange a mutually convenient date and time to meet with their child's Multi-Disciplinary Team to review how the student is settling into school, discuss targets and to review the provision within the placement. In instances where parents are unable to attend this meeting we will still ask to hold a telephone call beforehand to ensure these views are taken. We also hold a parents evening within the first two terms so that families can meet teachers and discuss progress

Teachers2Parents

We use the Teachers2Parents system to communicate with our Parents and Carers via text. It is used to communicate quickly about situations that affect all students or certain student groups, for example in the event of an emergency, or to remind parents quickly of up and coming events. There is no facility for reply. It is vital that you help us to keep your emergency contact details up to date.

Permission – celebrating students' achievements

Unless parents complete and return Media Permission Form, available from our Student Services Manager, consent is given for the use of photographs for external promotional purposes. Photography or video coverage of the student may then be used in the public domain.

Parents/Carers Taking Photographs at School Events

Photographs and videos for school and family use are a source of innocent pleasure and pride, which can enhance the self-esteem of children and young people and their families. However, we do ask all parents to keep to the following basic guidelines:

- Parents/Carers and others attend school events at the invitation of School.
- The Senior Leadership Team will decide if photography and videoing of any school events is permitted.
- The Senior Leadership Team will decide the conditions that will apply so that children are kept safe and that the event is not disrupted in any way.
- Parents and Carers can use photographs and videos for their own personal use only. Such photos and videos must not be sold or put on the internet, including social networking sites e.g. Facebook, if they contain images of any student other than their own son or daughter.
- Recording or/photographing other than for your own personal use requires written consent from all the other parents whose children may be included in the images.
- Parents and carers must follow guidance from staff as to when photography and videoing is permitted and where to stand in order to minimise disruption to the activity.
- Remember that for images taken on mobile phones the same rules apply as for other photography, you should recognise that any images taken for personal use.

Photographs being sent home

Members of staff may send photos home to parents as a record and celebration of student engagement, achievement and progress. This is often a really meaningful way of sharing the work and activities of a student's school life, and we know that they are appreciated by parents. On receiving these photographs, parents must be aware that if the image includes other students (although this is rare) they must not upload these to the internet including any social media.

Complaints

Valence School aims to offer an excellent service to all its students, all of the time. However, we are aware that, on occasion, Parents/Carers or students may be unhappy about aspects of life within education. When this happens, we are very keen to hear what the problem is, as soon as it arises, so that we can investigate and put things right where necessary.

Most issues can be dealt with informally by the person delivering the service, be they within the School, the Residential setting, Therapies or Health. For those complaints that cannot be resolved easily, we will instigate a formal investigation. Please do not hold all of your concerns until an annual review or a meeting; please let us know of any problems as soon as they arise.

A copy of our Concerns & Complaints Policy is on the Valence Website.

Safeguarding

We take the welfare of our students very seriously. The Vice Principal (Safeguarding & Social Care) ensures that all staff are trained and able to respond to any concerns; these concerns may be related to a student's home life, bullying by other students or the care provided by a member of staff. Our comprehensive policies and guidance explain how people should respond whenever a child needs safeguarding.

We have a strict policy of openness and zero tolerance over abuse and neglect, so when problems arise, we may need to report concerns to Kent County Council (our lead Authority) or Ofsted. We will always speak to Parents/Carers about the concerns whenever possible.

Behaviour and Sanctions

The School's Behaviour Policy is on the Valence Website. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour is our primary method of managing behaviour. The holistic support we give to students – in terms of their emotional wellbeing, communication and understanding of their impact on others – promotes positive behaviour. Individual positive behaviour support plans are produced for students and staff teams as required and include strategies and appropriate consequences.

Policies & Procedures that Parents/Carers may need to refer to:

At Valence we aim to ensure that everyone has an enjoyable, safe and healthy environment to learn, live and work where they can reach their full potential. Learner activities, staff procedures, guidance policies and resources are continually reviewed to ensure there are the greatest opportunities for success. Policies are available on the Valence School website.

STUDENTS & TECHNOLOGY

Students have access to a wide range of technologies at the School. All students will have a technology assessment when they start and will have a dedicated PC set up specifically to their requirements. Individual IT requirements are regularly reviewed and modified as appropriate.

We have Wi-Fi across the whole of the School site, including the home living areas, so students can keep in contact with home and their friends. E-Safety is of paramount importance to us and is addressed specifically with the students, as well as being integrated into the curriculum. In addition, internet access is limited to suitable sites by a filter.

All students have an email address and are encouraged to send and receive messages, both internally and externally. There is a Student Acceptable Use IT Policy which students must sign and abide by.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) is actively encouraged but all such equipment remains the responsibility of the student. If you wish to learn more about your son or daughter using a mobile phone or device in school, please contact us.

EQUIPMENT

All students are required to have anti-tip bars on their self-propelled manual wheelchairs.

All students who use wheelchairs are required to wear lap belts, unless they have agreed otherwise with therapists.

All students who use a powered wheelchair must also have a suitable manual wheelchair to be used in case of breakdown, and if required for emergency purposes.

If anti-tip bars and headrests have been supplied by the home Wheelchair Service, please send them into school. If this is not the case, please contact the home Wheelchair Service to explain the policy at Valence School. If they are not able to supply these items, your child's Physiotherapist will be able to advise you.

- please ensure that all valuable equipment is appropriately insured.
- wheelchair users should have third party indemnity insurance.
- all equipment should be clearly named.

Valence School has a requirement to risk assess students to ensure that their wheelchairs are secured safely in school vehicles. Each student is assessed in school and the harness restraint points on their wheelchair are marked with stickers.

All wheelchairs must be fitted with either an integral headrest or have the facility to fit a detachable headrest if they have been assessed for or provided with one by their wheelchair provider if deemed necessary for postural reasons. We cannot supply additional headrests for any chairs.

Driving Skills & Mobility

All students have an assessment of their safety and driving skills for the School and wider campus area – this is done via the Multi-Disciplinary Team.

Please find below information on some of the equipment that your child may use and may bring to school:

NHS Wheelchairs

Adaptations and repairs to NHS wheelchairs need to be carried out by the home Wheelchair Service. Wheelchair clinics are run in school for Kent students. For students outside of Kent, wheelchair appointments need to be arranged by parents/carers wherever possible. Emergency repairs for residential students can be referred to our Therapy Department and Millbrook Wheelchair Services.

Privately Purchased Wheelchairs

Adaptations, maintenance and repairs to privately purchased wheelchairs should be in liaison with the dealer that provided them. The Therapy Department will contact Parents/Carers to discuss details of problems with the chair and assist if necessary, to source a repair.

Trikes

Your child may be able to ride a trike at school. Please liaise with your Physiotherapist before bringing one in. We have limited storage and for those using a trike on an occasional basis we may have one at school that they can use. Students using a trike at school need a well-fitted bicycle helmet.

Footwear & Orthotic Equipment

We recommend that, where possible, your child continues with their current Orthotic Service. If your child does not have access to an Orthotist, we have a limited service at school. We will need the student's NHS number in case the school service is used.

Standing Frames & Walkers

If your child has been issued with these, and they are still appropriate, please send them into school.

Night Sleep Systems

Please bring any sleep systems or night positioning equipment into school. If this is difficult, please liaise with your child's Physiotherapist / Occupational Therapist.

Communication Equipment

Please bring any communication equipment that your child uses, including low-tech e.g. Word/Symbol Books and ensure that chargers, instruction manuals and other accessories are brought in too. Please supply details of any warranties.

Shower Chairs/Toileting Equipment

If you have any specialised or bespoke equipment, please bring it with you, especially for the first few weeks of a placement. We will then do our best to duplicate it for longer term use in school.

Switches

If your child uses switches for accessing their wheelchair, computer or communication equipment, please bring them into school.

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE

Attendance is logged and forms part of the annual Census return to the Department of Education. It is also recorded in the paperwork for a student's Annual Review and shared with the funding Local Authority.

If your son/daughter is not well enough to come to school, please telephone one of the contacts listed on page 5 or inform our receptionist. This information will be shared with the student's Multi-Disciplinary Team.

Medical Appointments

Parents/Carers are not required to obtain permission for their son/daughter to attend medical appointments in term time. However, we do need to know in advance so that the absence can be logged and the information shared with the Multi-Disciplinary Team. Please speak to our receptionist, keyworker or pastoral support teacher to obtain a copy of an absence request form.

Other Absence during Term Time

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal is permitted to authorise absence in term time. Please avoid arranging holidays in term time. To request permission for authorised absence in term from the Assistant Principals please complete an absence request form for us to consider authorisation.

THE SCHOOL DAY / WEEK

The School Day is as follows;

Monday-Thursday - 8.45 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Friday - 8.45 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.

Each student has an individual timetable which he/she carries a copy of (in their student organiser folder).

Day students must arrive at school for 8.45 am. Students are signed in/out by school staff at the main hall entrance. If students arrive or leave during the school day they are signed in/out by Reception.

Some residential students share transport with day students and for this reason they are also signed in by staff at the main hall entrance. On Friday afternoons students leave from different designated areas but they are also signed out by staff.

Term dates are available on our school website in the 'Parents' section. As well as being part of each individual student's organiser folder, copies of a term dates can also be obtained from reception. This document also lists INSET days where staff will be attending school, but students need not attend.

SCHOOL MEALS

School Dinners currently cost £3.00 per day. For those students who are light eaters the current charge per day is £1.50. You will need to inform the school which of the 3 following meal option you would like for your son / daughter.

- I would like my son/daughter to have a school meal
- My son/daughter will bring a packed lunch
- My son/daughter is gastrostomy fed

School meals can be paid for weekly or termly in advance. If you are entitled to free school meals, please contact us and we will send you the relevant application form. If you would like a copy of our menu emailed to you please contact the Student Service Manager. We also provide a paper copy of the Menu for your son/daughter's student organiser.

We work closely with our Eating and Drinking team and caterers, in consultation with you, to ensure that students are happy and healthy and eating nutritionally balanced meals. Additionally, our catering team are able to tailor meals to support those students with specific dietary requirements.

STUDENT ORGANISERS

All student carry a student organiser in his or her bag. This is the “go to folder” for all our students if they want to share information about themselves with others. The folder includes information for the individual student; an information sheet, timetable, Education, Health and Care plan outcomes, Support Plan, the term’s curriculum plan, computer set up, communication profile, eating and drinking passport and any other important information that others may need to know about a young person to help them support appropriately.

There are also whole school information documents such as internet safety guidelines, term dates, dress code. There may be some differences between primary and secondary students’ folders. These folders will be student led and they will be consulted as to what they feel would be useful to have in them.

Please let us know if you think a document is missing from this folder or if the folder is misplaced at home and we can replace it.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

For Key Stages 1 - 4

Students should wear a white polo shirt with or without school logo. Trousers must be black with fully elasticated waistband such as track suit bottoms or bootleg trousers – Plain black zipped top or zipped fleece with or without school logo. Please also provide a rain covering, trainers or sports specific medical shoes and swimwear (all students must have swimwear to be kept in school at all times. Boys should be mid–thigh trunks or can be all in one mid-thigh surf suit – Not wet suit Girls should be all in one with crossed back straps or can be a leg-suit.) Additional items - a school bag to fit an A4 student organiser file.

Everything must be clearly and permanently named.

Please note any clothing with the School logo on should be purchased from the School.

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Key Stage 5 (Post 16)

Students should wear clothing which is appropriate and consistent with safety, hygiene, decency and physical management, is not likely to be viewed as too revealing, offensive, discriminatory, culturally sensitive and sexually provocative and does not contain any political or otherwise contentious slogans. Students are asked to wear appropriate sportswear for any physical activity (not jeans). Swimwear (as detailed above) Additional items - a school bag to fit an A4 student organiser file.

For all students

Jewellery – This should be safe piercing, ideally studs and must be removable for PE. Tattoos should not be visible.

Everything must be clearly and permanently named.