

Policy 3.2: Signposting & Referral Policy

1. Policy Administration

Policy Version	Effective Date	Review Date	Lead Authority
1.0	 Date	 Date	 Person

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes the formal protocols for SENbetweeners Hub UK when directing families toward statutory services, Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) support, or medical placements. The scope encompasses all children and young people (aged 0–25) with emerging, unmet, or undiagnosed Special Educational Needs (SEN), Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) challenges, or learning difficulties.

The primary objective is to ensure that when universal or internal SEN support is insufficient to meet a child's needs, families are transitioned seamlessly and safely to appropriate external statutory or clinical services.

3. Statutory and Legal Framework

This policy is compliant with the following UK legislation and statutory guidance:

- **Children and Families Act 2014 (Sections 19–21):** Outlines the duty to identify and support SEN.
- **SEND Code of Practice 2015 (Paragraphs 6.33–6.54):** Mandates the Graduated Approach (Assess → Plan → Do → Review) for identifying when external referral is required.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Requires reasonable adjustments and prohibits discrimination based on disability, including undiagnosed conditions.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025):** Governs the safe referral of vulnerable children.

4. Core Principles of Referral

- **Need Over Label:** Referrals are initiated based on evidence of functional need and impact, rather than the presence of a formal medical diagnosis.
- **The Graduated Approach:** We utilize the cycle of *Assess, Plan, Do, and Review* to determine the necessity of external referral.
- **Early Intervention:** Referrals are made at the earliest possible stage to prevent the escalation of difficulties or crisis.
- **Partnership:** All referrals are made in collaboration with the child, young person, and their family, recognizing them as experts in their own lived experience.

5. Referral Pathways

5.1 Statutory Education Support (EHCP)

Where evidence demonstrates that a child's needs cannot be met through universal provision or SEN Support, we will support families in requesting a **Statutory EHC Needs Assessment**.

- **Evidence Collection:** We assist in gathering observation records, work samples, and impact statements to support the application.
- **Process Guidance:** We provide families with information regarding local authority timelines and their legal rights throughout the assessment process.

5.2 Clinical and Medical Placements

If SEMH or learning difficulties indicate a potential underlying clinical need, we signpost to:

- **National Health Service (NHS):** Including General Practitioners (GP), Paediatrics, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- **Specialist Therapies:** Referrals or signposting to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), Occupational Therapy (OT), and Educational Psychology (EP).

5.3 Statutory Social Care

When a child's needs involve significant risks to welfare or require multi-agency support under Section 17 or Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, a referral is made to the **Local Authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**.

6. Thresholds for External Referral

Referral pathways are triggered when:

1. **Persistent Lack of Progress:** Despite evidence-based adjustments, the child is not meeting SMART outcomes over at least two "Review" cycles.
2. **Specialist Knowledge Required:** The nature of the SEN/SEMH need requires assessment tools or clinical expertise beyond the scope of this setting.
3. **Risk to Inclusion:** The child is at risk of permanent exclusion or significant educational disengagement due to unmet needs.
4. **Health and Safety:** The child's SEMH needs present an escalating risk to themselves or others.

7. Legal Safeguarding and Breach of Confidentiality Clause

7.1 Principle of Informed Consent

In accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, we generally seek explicit consent from parents/carers (or the young person if they have capacity) before sharing identifiable information with third-party services.

7.2 Lawful Breach of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a qualified right, not an absolute one. In line with KCSIE 2025 and the **Children Act 2023**, the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child overrides the duty of confidentiality.

- **Safeguarding Priority:** We reserve the right to share information with statutory agencies (Police, Social Care, or Medical Professionals) **without consent** if there

is a reasonable belief that a child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, **Significant Harm**.

- **Justification:** Any such breach will be strictly limited to information necessary to protect the child, will be recorded in the confidential Safeguarding Log, and will be authorized by the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
- **Seven Golden Rules:** Information sharing will always adhere to the "Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing" as defined in statutory guidance.

8. Monitoring and Review

The efficacy of signposting and referrals is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure families are receiving timely and appropriate support.

Authorized by:  Person

Position:  Person

Date of Issue:  Date

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