

St Michael's CE (A) Primary School

See, I am sending an angel
before you to protect you on
your journey and lead you
safely to the place I have
prepared for you.

Exodus 23:20



Operating Protocol for The Ark

(A Social, Emotional and Mental Health SEND Unit for 4 - 11-year-olds)

Date: 11th January 2022

Review Date: January 2023

Shared with Governors: 12th January 2022

ADMISSIONS POLICY for THE ARK

INTRODUCTION

Ethos and underpinning principles

Children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) may experience a wide range of difficulties that manifest in many ways. These include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying behaviours that challenge. It is recognised that these behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harm, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. At St Michael's we offer a nurturing environment where forgiveness, reconciliation and second chances are given; and we ensure the principles of a nurturing environment underpin the curriculum we offer, namely that:

- children's learning is understood developmentally.
- the classroom offers a safe base.
- nurture is important for the development of self-esteem.
- language is understood as a vital means of communication.
- all behaviour is communication.
- transitions are significant in the lives of children.

At 'The Ark' we aim to support children whose SEMH needs mean they need provision that is not routinely found within mainstream educational settings. Our service is positioned to support children whose SEMH needs present primarily through behaviours which make them vulnerable: attachment needs, anxiety, low mood, low self-esteem (etc). While sometimes these underlying difficulties may result in challenging behaviour, this should not be the pupil's primary form of communication.

We believe the evidence to be compelling that providing a safe, nurturing, predictable and caring environment - based upon attachment principles - is likely to support our pupil's SEMH development. Therefore, our provision is designed with this in mind.

In order to achieve this goal, we have provision which includes: a nurture room, therapeutic spaces, availability of sensory equipment, an enhanced PSHE curriculum focused on specific areas of need for individual young people and partnerships with supportive external agencies such as CAMHS.

Our aim is that children who access The Ark provision can return to their mainstream school, with support as necessary.

Overall, it is our responsibility to show all the young people in our care that they are loved unconditionally, valued as a child uniquely made in the image of God and given the opportunity to flourish, realising their hopes and aspirations.

ADMISSION NUMBERS

The Ark operates an admission limit of 16 full-time places, operating in 2 groups. For the year 2022/2023, all places will be full-time.

ADMISSION

Admission to The Ark, is only by consultation through the SENSTART team and with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming The Ark as the named setting on the finalised EHC. Children will be on the St Michael's CE (A) Primary School roll and attending The Ark.

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN

As part of the application for an EHCP, parents can express a preference for a particular school, and the LA must comply with this unless it would be 'unsuitable for the age, ability, or aptitude of the child', or 'the child's attendance there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources. The Education, Health and Care Plan describes the specific needs of the child and indicates what is required to support the child's education. Therefore, the expectation is that to access a place at The Ark as part of an EHCP a consultation through SENSTART will be required. As a Church of England, voluntary aided primary school, admission to The Ark, remains the responsibility of the School's Governing Board as they are their own 'admissions authority'.

Assessment

For all children attending The Ark, a 'Team Around the Child' meeting will take place every 6 weeks. This will involve key staff at The Ark, parents and carers, and professionals, as appropriate. Additional 'Team Around the Child' meetings will be conducted as needed during the child's placement.

Progress towards the child's EHCP outcomes will be reviewed as part of the Statutory EHCP Annual Review.

Transition

At the point of transition out of The Ark, either to another mainstream setting, as the child has made progress and no longer requires the specialist provision provided in the SEMH SEND Unit, or to another type of educational provider i.e. alternative or special school, a transition plan will be prepared collaboratively by The Ark, the next setting, the parents/carers and the professionals. Transitions will be phased depending on children's individual needs and this will be detailed in their Individual Transition Plan.

FUNDING

All places in The Ark, are commissioned places by the Local Authority. Each individual child will also receive additional top-up funds from the local authority, linked to the individual needs and provision requirements laid out in their EHCP.

APPEALS

Education, Health and Care Plan

If a parent or carer wishes to appeal the Local Authority's decision in relation to a placement at The Ark, then they should appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

REVIEW OF THE OPERATING PROTOCOL

The Operating Protocol will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body of St Michael's CE (A) Primary School in collaboration with the Diocese and City of Wolverhampton Local Authority.