



Social Inclusion Links

Introduction

Stephen Hawking School seeks to enrich children's education through many different opportunities. Part of this may be delivered through a social inclusion link to a local mainstream school.

A social inclusion link is usually a well-planned weekly visit to a mainstream school with a member of staff from Stephen Hawking School. The child remains on role and the responsibility of Stephen Hawking School.

Legal Requirements

None

Aims & Objectives

Why provide a social inclusion link?

Children gain lots of benefits from trips off school site. For children with severe learning difficulties, regular weekly trips can be most beneficial in order that they can build on their experiences.

Aims for a weekly visit to a mainstream school might include:

Having access to a school environment with more children

New experiences, especially social interactions with other children

What is a social inclusion link and who might they be suitable for?

For children who are interested in other children around them and are beginning to initiate interactions with them.

For children who have a developing intentional communication system and may enjoy the interaction of the busier environment of a mainstream school.

For children who might benefit from the social challenges that a mainstream school would present, e.g. having access to an age appropriate peer group.

What are the advantages of a social inclusion placement?

Greater opportunities to develop relationships with other children.

Broader curriculum access.

Opportunity to experience working in a larger learning community.

Programmes of study tailored to meet children's individual needs.

A high level of pastoral care to build their confidence, develop their independence and enhance their self-esteem.

Implementation

A social inclusion link will be facilitated by a Teaching Assistant from Stephen Hawking School who knows your child well, to support them in the mainstream setting.

The class teacher from Stephen Hawking School will liaise with the mainstream class teacher once a term, this may take the form of sharing photographic reports, having a telephone conversation or exchanging emails about your child's learning.

A teacher from the outreach team will be available, if required, to advise on the coordination between the two schools.

Any specialist aids or equipment will be made available in both settings in order to ensure your child has access to the curriculum.

The class teacher from the mainstream school, and/or the SENCO, will be invited to your child's Annual Review. This invitation must be sent out at least half a term before the review date.

Peers from the mainstream school will be invited to special events held at Stephen Hawking School. It is hoped that these invitations will be reciprocal.

To support this policy, the outreach team in conjunction with the local authority PD advisor and a class teacher at Stephen Hawking School have created a fact sheet of "top tips for successful inclusion links". Please contact the outreach team for a copy.

Who can I contact at school about a social inclusion link?

The Outreach Team Leader is available to talk to parents or practitioners about children who have existing, or would benefit from beginning, a social inclusion link.

Tel: 020 7423 9848 **email:** outreach@stephenhawking.towerhamlets.sch.uk

The Parents Advice Centre is available to assist parents in finding a local mainstream school.

Tel: 020 7364 7489 **email:** pac@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Assessment

How will I know if my child is benefiting from a social inclusion link?

They will be reaching their optimum potential in both school settings and their IEP evaluations will reflect this.

Their contributions will be valued.

They will be welcomed and accepted as members of an additional local learning community.

Your child's link will be reviewed as part of their Annual Review.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's agreed review schedule.