

# Handbook for Pupil Support Assistants

in Highland Council Educational Settings

# Leabhar-làimhe airson Luchd-cuideachaidh Taic Sgoilearan

ann an suidheachaidhean foghlaim  
Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd

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# Introduction and context

The purpose of this **Handbook for Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs)** is to:

- Provide a pack of basic information to be used as a reference point, and to which notes, information etc can be added.
- Support induction training for newly appointed Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs).
- Contribute to Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

## The intended audience:

- Pupil Support Assistants.
- Educational setting managers and staff.

## Additional Support for Learning

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 introduced the term additional support needs to replace the term special educational needs. This Act, which came into force in November 2005, improved and modernised systems for identifying and meeting the needs of all learners who may need support with their learning. A Code of Practice accompanied the Act, explaining the new duties on The Highland Council and setting out good practice.

The Highland Council has produced the policy document Additional Support for Learning Act Policy Guidance.

Thriving families has also produced a very helpful set of eleven Information Sheets which summarise the content of the Act.

[www.thrivingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.thrivingfamilies.org.uk)

The term 'Additional Support Needs' applies to children and young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support, long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their education.

The additional support needs of learners will be met through a staged approach (Appendix A).

A small number of learners will have additional support needs which are significant, are multiple or complex, will last for a year or more, and will require a high level of support from more than one agency. Learners with these needs may require a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP).

**This Handbook will be reviewed to reflect the implementation of the Scottish Government Additional Support for Learning Review.**

## Inclusion

The UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994) states that mainstream educational settings with an inclusive orientation 'are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.'

Along with other legislation, The Standards in Scotland's Educational settings etc Act (2000) had an emphasis on inclusion and equal entitlement, with the presumption of mainstreaming by 2003.

Inclusion is enshrined in Highland Council Education and Learning Service policies.

Highland Learning and Teaching Policy Toolkit states:

"Inclusion is more than meeting additional support needs. It is to ensure the participation and highest achievement of all groups at risk of underachievement. The inclusive Educational setting or community recognises and values the richness of pupil diversity and develops appropriate responses to this."

## Additional Support for Learning Teams in Highland

Educational settings in Highland are supported in ensuring learners' learning needs are met by Additional Support Teams.

The area teams consist of Additional Support for Learning Teachers and Pupil Support Assistants. Allocation of additional support to individual educational settings is made by Head Teachers in consultation with the Area Additional Support Needs Manager and Area Support Needs Officer with the Area Education and Learning Leadership Team.

PSAs and Additional Support for Learning Teachers are appointed to an area team and may be required to move to another educational setting at the discretion of the Area Education Manager.

Pupil Support Assistants are highly valued members of the team. It is recognised that their part is significant in promoting inclusion, fostering participation, and enabling learners to become more independent.

# Roles and responsibilities

The role of non-teaching staff varies within educational settings depending on:

- whether it is secondary or primary mainstream class, nursery, or special provision
- the organisation of the educational setting
- the individual learner or group of learners
- post held.

However, the aims must be:

- to ensure the inclusion of learners with additional support needs
- to ensure learners' health and safety
- to support access to the curriculum
- to encourage learners to be as independent as possible
- to support learners in the acquisition of new skills or improve those already learned
- to foster co-operative working and facilitate the development of friendships
- to promote self-esteem through positive approaches
- to support learners to access a range of experiences
- to adapt to the range of teaching and learning approaches.

**This will result in confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners, and responsible citizens.**

All staff are responsible for getting it right for every learner, ensuring they are:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected and responsible
- Included.

## Pupil Support Assistant (PSA)

All staff have a job description to define duties (Appendix B).

Supporting educational settings to meet the needs of **all** learners determines the deployment of PSAs within a local area and within educational settings.

Therefore, PSA staff sometimes move from working in one educational setting to another, and from one age group to another - nursery, primary and secondary settings.

The first aid training recommended for PSA's is the 'Introduction to Basic First Aid' course. This is emergency responder training only. Schools should have a registered First Aider on their staff, if appropriate. However, if PSAs are working within ELC settings the Care Inspectorate require them to complete a 1 day Paediatric First Aid course.

The role of a PSA is to support learning and teaching within the curriculum and the personal development of learners with additional support needs. How to provide support for learners is usually identified by the Additional Support for Learning teacher for the designated young people. This may be through particular things such as encouragement, proximity, scribing, practical help, confidence building, assistance with communication etc. Class teachers/Subject teachers will usually direct PSAs with respect to when they use such approaches.

The PSA may be able to support the maintenance of friendships. Through small group work and their presence in teaching groups, extend the socialisation of vulnerable pupils. They can also act as a conduit for vulnerable pupils to communicate anxieties and problems. They can model positive behaviour, often in circumstances where the pupil has considerable difficulties sustaining a positive demeanour.

### What responsibilities do you have?

PSAs undertake duties as directed by teaching staff and school management. PSAs work with individuals or groups of learners to promote inclusion and independence. A PSA may work in a class to support a particular individual or group of pupils.

### What authority do you have?

When a teacher, Subject or Support for Learning, is present authority is as directed by the teacher. Employees of The Highland Council have a duty of care and are expected to follow educational setting policies.

### What might you be asked to do?

A PSA will be asked to undertake a range of tasks in line with the job description for the post. (Appendix B)

## Remember

- **The aim of your work is to help the learners to develop as much independence as possible and their inclusion in the life of the educational setting.**

- In the lives of some children and young people, a PSA will be one of the few adults offering unconditional acceptance, warmth and respect, contributing to their fragile sense of self-worth.

## Teamwork and support

A PSA will be part of a team, and teamwork depends upon working together, so regular consultation with Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) staff, class teachers, subject teachers, Additional Support for Learning teams and outside agencies is essential. Parents/Carers are to be considered as active partners in the learning and teaching process.

Enhancing the learning of **all** learners is the responsibility of every member of the team. Although a PSA may be present in a class due to the level of need of one or more learners, the expectation is that access to appropriate support is available to all learners so when in a mainstream class a PSA should always look to be helping different pupils.

## Remember

- The emotional demands of the job may be greater than anticipated. Other members of the educational setting team will be familiar with these emotional demands and stresses and will be able to discuss matters.
- The communication style of some learners may be displayed by challenging behaviour and aggressive outbursts. It is important to remember that a young person is communicating through what they say and how they behave. At times this behaviour can be targeted at members of the team. It is important to have an understanding and to separate the learner from the behaviour, follow agreed protocols and strategies, and seek support from the team.
- A great deal of patience is required. Some learners take a long time to achieve their targets. A small development can be a significant step and cause for celebration.
- **The aim is to help the learner to develop as much independence as possible. Be aware that over support can disable learners, preventing them realising their full potential.**

## Class Teacher/Subject Teacher

The class/subject teacher is the **key provider** of support to all learners in the class. They are responsible for meeting the needs of all learners. Teachers will use a variety of approaches for learning and teaching. Approaches to learning and teaching should vary to meet the needs of individual learners.

Good working relationships are essential. Teachers are individuals and may approach their jobs in different ways. When working in a classroom respect the teacher's approach.

**Never undermine their authority.** If there is a need for further discussion on any approach taken, this should be done away from the pupils. If you still have concerns you should speak with the appropriate member of the school management team.

The teacher should establish:

- how and when you will be introduced to the class
- classroom rules (these will vary from class to class)
- support needs within the class
- how to respond to particular needs
- the learning expectations and outcomes
- contact/consultation PSA will have with parents/carers/ outside agencies.

**The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the education of every learner in the educational setting.**



# Policies, procedures and guidance

## Introduction to an educational setting

Like all Highland Council staff, all PSAs should also be familiar with:

- **The Highland Council Values** which staff need to demonstrate in their work.
- **The Highland Council Whistleblowing Policy**

<https://bit.ly/OrganisationalValues>

<https://bit.ly/HCWhistleblowingPolicy>

PSAs working within ELC settings should also complete the Care Inspectorate National Induction training which can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/early-learning-childcare-national-induction-resource/documents/>

Alternatively, staff can link in with Highland wide induction programme for ELC staff.

## General procedures

- If possible, a visit to the educational setting prior to starting work should be arranged (even if you have worked as a PSA before).
- Report to the Head Teacher/Manager or a delegated member of the staff on arrival who will speak with you about the most important information and procedures.
- A PSA is contracted for the total number of hours they work supporting pupils. The UK Government's 'Working Time Directive' states that a rest break is not an entitlement until employees have worked more than six hours. After this time, they are entitled to a 20 minute break.

It also states that rest breaks are not in addition to lunch breaks. A tea break is not an entitlement and both tea breaks and lunch breaks are unpaid.

The line manager will determine the work pattern required for the contracted hours to best support the needs of the service. Work patterns may be subject to review on an annual basis and there may be occasions for a request to vary regular hours again to meet the needs of the service. Any changes will be negotiated with staff and appropriate notice given.

- Through the school year there are several (a maximum of 5) In-Service Training days (INSET) days when staff development is arranged by the school or sometimes the Area Additional Support Needs team.

When a member of the PSA staff is employed part-time (less than 27.5 hours per week), identifying which of the INSET days are to be worked by part-time PSA staff should be discussed and agreed with the school manager in the early part of the school session. All PSAs who are employed on a full-time basis are required to attend all INSET days as payment for this is made as part of their contracted hours. Part-time PSAs who work for less than 27.5 hours per week, are required to attend INSET days on a proportionate basis to be agreed with their line manager at the start of the session.

Over the course of the school year, a part-time PSA member of staff should work a proportionate number of INSET days. For example, if they work 3 full days a week, they should work on three of five INSET days. Depending on their work pattern, and what day the INSET falls, PSAs may be required to work on a day that they do not normally work. This change will be negotiated with their line manager to ensure that the needs of the service are met and they do not exceed their contracted weekly hours.

- It is important to note that there is no formal arrangement for Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) for PSAs. If staff are asked to work additional hours (for training emergency cover, absence etc.) then **before** the additional hours are worked, it should be agreed by the individual with **the member of the educational setting's Senior Management**

**Team (SMT)** responsible for support staff when they will have time off in place of the hours worked.

- It must be taken at a time agreed by SMT so that it meets the requirements of the school
  - This should usually be within one or two weeks of the extra time worked (this echoes the way flexi-time staff working in the Council's offices have to take time owed within a month)
  - It may be a whole day or be taken, for example, by arriving/departing a little late/early over two or three days (e.g., two hours taken by departing half an hour early over four days)
  - It should **not** be 'banked' without the SMT and the PSA determining when it will be taken
  - It should **not** be taken on an INSET day – unless this has been discussed with the Area Office.
- 
- Establish form of address with the educational setting staff.
  - Meet the class/subject teacher/s before working with learners.
  - Ensure a clear understanding of the type of support required.
  - It is important to regularly read protocols and other relevant learner information for those pupils you are working with. You should ask where relevant policies and protocols can be accessed. You will be given time to see relevant policies and guidance.
  - Be aware of procedures regarding absence, leave from work, reporting and recording incidents with pupils.
  - Be aware of fire drill and exits, and other Health and Safety issues (clarify with your educational setting(s) – procedures may vary).
  - Discuss arrangements for pay
  - Communication with Parents: In order to maintain communication on a professional level, PSAs should not communicate with parents using their personal email, personal mobile phones, social media or by texting or from home landlines. If you are in any doubt about communication with parents and pupils, you should consult the Head Teacher in the first instance.
  - It is advised that PSAs should not have parents or pupils as friends on any social media sites such as Facebook. **To ensure the confidentiality of information about pupils and staff, PSAs should not make comments on social media concerning their workplace, staff, pupils or parents. Even general comments about their work or about Highland Council should not be made.**

Staff should make themselves aware of the contents of the Council's ICT Acceptable Use Policy:

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/peopleandperformance/downloads/file/354/ict-acceptable-use-policy-2015pdf>

- PSAs should not take or hold images of pupils on personal phones or their personal cameras.

## What if help is required?

If someone is injured your first priorities must be to:

- Ensure that first aid is given, and they are safe (clarify your Educational setting's process).
- Ensure that the incident is reported to your line manager **immediately**.
- If **you** are injured, ensure the incident is reported and recorded. You should have an opportunity to debrief – to talk through the incident with someone in the educational setting.

Some difficult or unusual situations may occur. You should be clear what to do if for example:

- The fire alarm sounds
- You are the first person an angry parent encounters when they enter your educational setting
- A learner leaves the educational setting premises without permission
- A learner communicates that they are very upset through their physical and/or verbal behaviour
- A learner has an epileptic fit
- A diabetic learner becomes hypoglycaemic (blood sugar falls too low).

There are many policies and guidance documents issued by The Highland Council that inform and direct work within educational settings. They are directly influenced by the Scottish Government.

Educational settings have a range of policies and strategies in place, which will be specific to their needs. The Highland Council has a range of **Additional Support for Learning policies and guidelines** to inform practice. Head Teachers can advise on policies and guidance that are of particular importance.

<https://bit.ly/ASLGuidance>

## Promoting positive relationships

There are a range of positive behaviour strategies such as:

- Developing Emotional Literacy
- Peer mentoring
- De-escalation
- Circle Time
- Restorative Approaches
- Structured Intervention Approach.

Educational settings usually adopt strategies which aim to develop positive relationships from a number of different solution focused approaches, but the overall approach should be nurturing to develop emotional literacy, using restorative practices to build and repair relationships where appropriate.

A small number of learners can display very challenging behaviour in educational settings, with some others exhibiting more 'low-level' disruptive behaviour. It is important to remember that all behaviours result from a learner's attempts to communicate.

Individual educational settings will have their own behaviour policies and strategies in place. A consistent whole-setting approach will have a significant impact on minimising disruption and promoting positive relationships. The usual practice when disruptive behaviour occurs is take your lead from the teacher.

## Child protection

All Highland Council Education and Learning staff should receive basic child protection information when joining an education establishment. On an annual basis they will attend the in-house child protection course and every third year a more in-depth training course. Dates will be arranged by their line manager.

**Highland Interagency Child Protection Guidelines** are available online at <https://hcpc.scot/> under “Policies and Guidance”.

These guidance documents should be available to all staff in every educational setting within the Highland Council area. They have been written to promote and extend the practice of inter-agency working to protect children and to provide a reliable and effective response whenever there is a concern about possible or actual abuse.

If there is not enough information to be sure that the child has not been abused or neglected, there is a duty to that child, to report concerns. Children have a right not to be abused and to be protected from abuse and neglect.

For the purpose of child protection, any visiting member of the Education and Learning Service (for example, development officer, educational psychologist (or tutor) will also be treated as a member of educational setting staff when they are in an educational establishment.

### Remember

- **Any concerns about the well-being of a child need to be shared immediately.**

No matter how good we are at evaluating and assessing matters to do with children in our classes, when it comes to the child’s welfare we **cannot** evaluate and assess potential danger, risk, damage, as we only know a tiny part of the whole picture. We **must** share our concerns with the designated person without delay - usually the designated person will be the Head teacher or a Depute Head Teacher or whoever is tasked as the Designated Child Protection Coordinator.

## Child Protection procedure 3 step checklist for staff

### Step 1

In the event that:

- a child discloses abuse
- a member of staff suspects a child may have been abused
- a third party expresses concern they should be directed to inform social services or the police about this
- a staff member witnesses an abusive situation involving another staff member

- a member of staff has concerns about a child from something they see or hear in the community, as any member of the public, they should inform social services or the police about this.

## Step 2

A member of staff must '**RECORD**':

- R** **Respond** without showing any signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock.
- E** **Enquire** casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset.
- C** **Confidentiality** must not be promised to children or adults in this situation.
- O** **Observe** carefully the demeanour or behaviour of the child.
- R** **Record** in detail what has been seen and heard.
- D** **Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations.** Rather encourage the child to say what he/she wants until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate.

## Step 3

Then **report** to the Designated Child Protection Coordinator **without delay**.

Members of staff **must not**:

- Investigate suspected/alleged abuse themselves
- Evaluate the grounds for concern
- Seek or wait for proof
- Discuss the matter with anyone other than Head Teacher/Designated Child Protection Coordinator.

# Confidentiality

Learners and staff have a right to respect and privacy, and learners have a need for safety and security. Information about individual learners/teachers, in the course of your work, is confidential. Discussing information with other professionals should be on a 'need to know' basis only. Respect the need for confidentiality within (and outwith) the educational setting. Conversation in the staffroom should remain professional at all times.

As a general guide, consider these four basic questions:

- Will sharing this information promote, support and safeguard the well-being of this young person?
- Who needs to know?
- What do they need to know?
- How are you going to share that information?

It is most important that you should appear welcoming to parents and it is perfectly appropriate to chat to them in a friendly way. The level of information sharing with Parents/Carers should be decided in consultation with management.

## Remember

Under the Freedom of Information Act, information written or recorded by you, can be requested by the learner or the parent/carer of the learner and **must** be given to them. It should be remembered that the parents/carers and the young person themselves can request copies of all documents, emails etc. even after they have left school.

## Exceptions to these general rules

Confidentiality does not apply to disclosure of child abuse, which is information that you have a duty to share with the Designated Child Protection Coordinator or Head Teacher.



## Meetings about individual learners

A PSA may be asked to attend a meeting or case conference to speak about a learner. Always remember that those who have been asked to attend have valuable knowledge or experience.

Before attending a meeting, you should know:

- Why the meeting is being held?
- Who is likely to attend the meeting?
- What will happen in the meeting?

It is helpful to make a few notes before the meeting. Always start with positive comments about a learner's strengths before identifying pressures. Refer to any records kept. Do remember that there will always be people within the educational setting who will help with this. It is important to remember that any comments made should be based on evidence or observation, not on personal opinion or gossip.

When attending a meeting or a case conference, it is important to remember that the information shared and any discussions are confidential. Do not discuss these matters with anyone who was not at the meeting unless permission has been given to do so.

If you have any concerns about meetings and case conferences, should be noted and discussed with management.

# Personal care needs of learners

## Definition of intimate care

Intimate care involves helping learners with aspects of personal care which they are not able to undertake for themselves, either because of their age and maturity or because of developmental delay or disability. Children and young people with disabilities may require help with moving and handling, eating and drinking and all aspects of care including:

- Washing, dressing and undressing (including swimming)
- Supported eating (including tube feeding)
- Administering medication
- Toileting & Menstruation
- Physiotherapy Exercise Programme/Manual handling
- Massage/Intensive interaction
- Dental Hygiene
- Care of Tracheotomy
- Catheterisation
- Applying topical medicines (e.g. sun creams, eczema creams).

The Highland Council policy is at <https://bit.ly/IntimateCarePolicy>

## Aims

- Safeguard the rights and well-being of children and young people with regard to dignity, privacy, choice and safety.
- To ensure that children and young people are treated consistently when they experience intimate personal care in two or more settings.
- Assure parent/carers that all staff are knowledgeable about intimate care and that individual concerns are taken into account and when possible are acted upon.
- Parent/carers to be involved in any decision about the intimate care of their children
- To provide appropriate guidance, training, supervision and reassurance to staff, and to ensure safe practice.
- To ensure that parents/carers and children and young people (**where appropriate**) are actively involved in the development of agreed intimate care protocols.

## Protocols

If a learner requires any type of intimate care, then there should be a written protocol in place which has been agreed by staff and parents. This document should include a risk assessment of the tasks to be carried out and staffing allocated to assist with this task should be based on that assessment.

Any protocol should be reviewed regularly or amended when circumstances change. This protocol must be shared with all adults likely to carry out tasks to ensure consistency of practice. Wherever possible, this protocol should include and be influenced by the wishes of the pupil. Training required by staff to carry out this task should be highlighted via the risk assessment process.

You **need** to see the protocols for pupils you are supporting in your work as a PSA.

- The child or young person's choices will be taken into consideration in developing an individual Intimate Care protocol with parent/carer agreement.
- Provide staff with information and **appropriate** training in intimate care, based on the requirements listed in the Child Intimate Care Protocol. Please see the policy and guidance referred to above.
- Some children and young people may prefer to be changed by a single member of staff for reasons of privacy and dignity. Where an individual expresses a clear preference, this must be respected if possible. It is acceptable for a single member of staff to change a child providing they ensure that:
  - another member of staff is aware of what is happening.
  - the event is recorded and initialled by the member of staff who changes the child. Any issue or problem, such as bad nappy rash, which may have arisen or been noticed should also be recorded. This should be shared with the parent/carer and a copy of the written record supplied.
  - the task has been risk assessed as being safe for one person to carry out.

# Continuing Professional Development

The Education and Learning Service aims to ensure that all staff are valued and enable them to develop their skills, knowledge and professional expertise.

All Personal Development Plan/Employee Review and Development activities undertaken should be recorded in a Personal Training Log (Appendix D). **It is the employee's responsibility to maintain a personal log of CPD undertaken.**

## Employee Review & Development (ERD)

The Highland Council is committed to improving the job satisfaction, motivation and personal development which people experience as a result of working for the organisation. All staff should receive feedback on their performance and other work-related issues and this should be tied to improved training and development and career development. It is a priority that all staff have an annual ERD meeting and plan.

ERD offers an opportunity for acknowledging success and making clear to PSAs that they are valued and appreciated. The process should have a positive impact on morale. It should encourage PSAs to reflect on their good practice and to share this with colleagues.

The ERD process has 3 main parts:

- Staff Induction
- An annual ERD Plan agreed between the employee and their manager
- Regular review between the employee and their manager.

The annual ERD planning meeting will be a face-to-face meeting between the employee and their manager and will focus on the following topics:

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Workloads and Objectives
- Performance
- Skills & Development
- Future Plans

The outcome of the ERD planning meeting will be agreed actions relating to these topics to be addressed in the coming year.

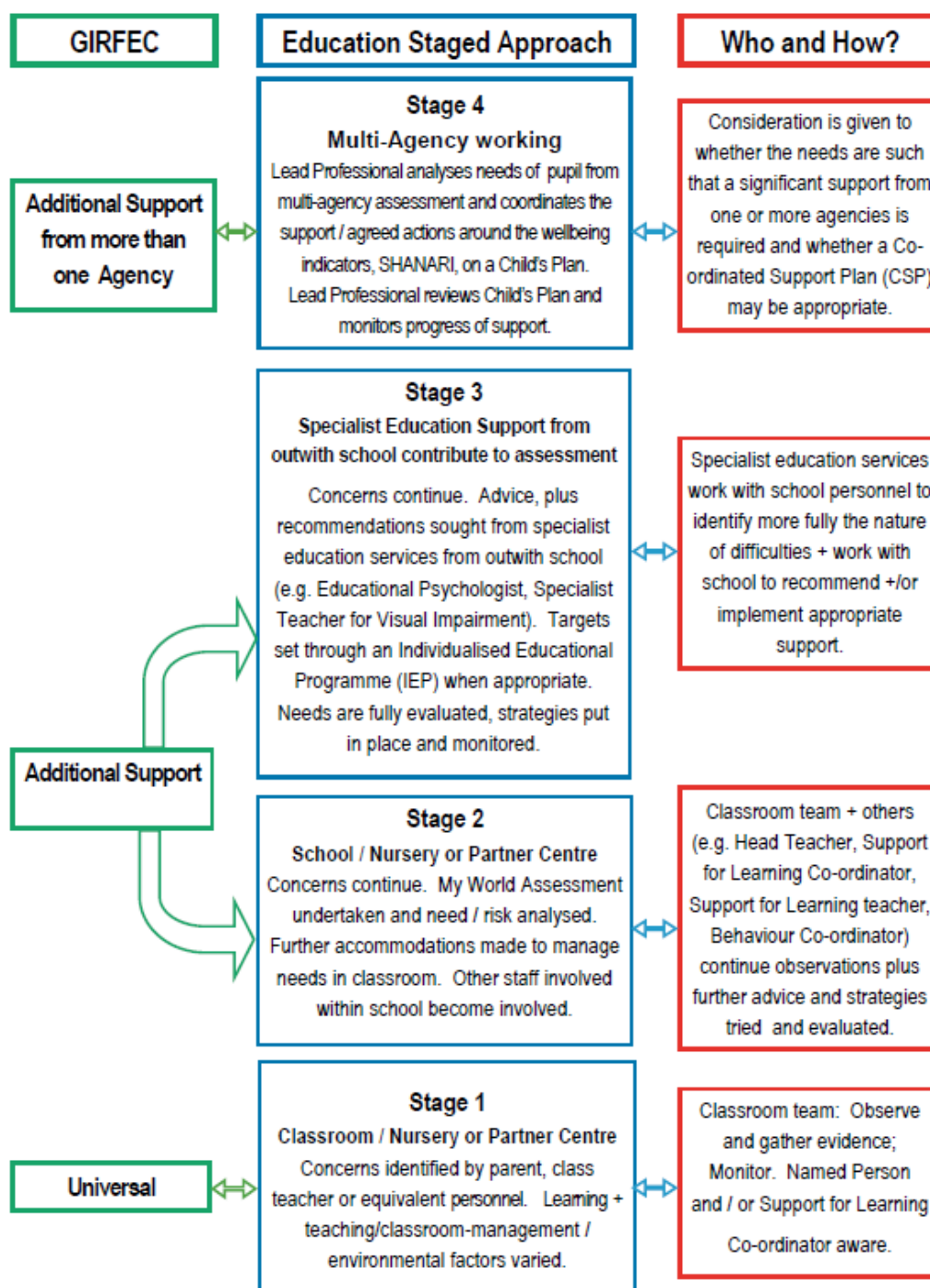
When preparing for your ERD, it may be helpful to focus on specific questions (Appendix E).

One of the Senior Management Team of the school or the Principal Teacher ASN should annually review your ERD Plan with you.

# Appendix A - Highland Practice Model

<https://bit.ly/HighlandPracticeModel>

## IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS



Tel: 01463 711189

[info@chipplus.org.uk](mailto:info@chipplus.org.uk)

[www.chipplus.org.uk](http://www.chipplus.org.uk)

## Appendix B - Job Description

### The Highland Council Education and Learning

#### Job Description Pupil Support Assistant 1

<b>Service:</b>	Education and Learning
<b>Job Title:</b>	Pupil Support Assistant 1
<b>Grade and Salary:</b>	HC04 (Salary placing will normally be on the first point of the scale.)
<b>Area:</b>	
<b>Base:</b>	
<b>Line Management:</b> (for posts based in special schools)	The Head Teacher of the school in which the post holder is based will be responsible for the day to day line management of the post holder.
<b>Line Management:</b> (for posts based in mainstream schools)	The Post Holder will be a member of the Area Additional Support Needs Team, with professional line management provided by the Area ASN Officer and Area Education and Learning Manager. The base of the post holder may vary over time depending on the changing needs of the pupils in the Area. The Head Teacher of the school in which the post holder is based will be responsible for the day to day line management of the post holder.
<b>Job Purpose:</b>	To support learning and teaching within the curriculum and the personal development of pupils with additional support needs.
<b>Key Duties and Responsibilities:</b>	<p><u>Organisation and Preparation of Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classroom administration and clerical tasks e.g., photocopying, laminating, filing and displaying pupils' work, creating classroom displays, taking dinner money etc</li><li>• Resource Management e.g., setting up the classroom for specific tasks, clearing away and tidying resources, cataloguing, retrieving and preparing materials for learning and teaching, setting up ICT equipment and various forms of media, preparing homework folders etc</li></ul> <p><u>Curriculum Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-class generic support e.g., general support while pupils are processing new information and ideas, contributing to a positive classroom climate and positive school ethos in building positive relationships with pupils and colleagues etc.</li><li>• Individual and group support e.g., reading, scribing, supporting Highland Literacy and Numeracy Programmes, supporting the use of ICT etc.</li><li>• Listening to children and using praise and encouragement to support the development of self-esteem, communicating appropriately e.g., using appropriate language and non-verbal supports, using specialist communication systems e.g. signing, makaton etc.</li></ul>

- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language or support in Gaelic Medium education.
- Additional individual support e.g., observation and contributing to the assessment and planning for individuals and groups, providing nurture and emotional support, supporting language programmes and/or movement programmes as recommended by specialist children's services etc.
- Support out-with the classroom e.g., supporting pupils to achieve the desired outcomes while involved in activities outwith the classroom or on visits and trips. Supporting pupils in practical activities e.g., swimming, horse riding, art, science etc.

#### Personal Care and Development

- Supervision out-with the classroom e.g., in cloakrooms, corridors, dining area, playground etc.
- Providing reassurance, comfort and first aid for minor ailments and playground accidents etc.
- Providing personal care to pupils requiring intimate care e.g., toileting, feeding, intimate medical care etc., in line with agreed protocols and the child's plan, maintaining dignity and enabling independence as far as possible.
- Providing personal care to pupils requiring moving and handling, in line with agreed protocols and the child's plan, maintaining dignity and enabling independence as far as possible.
- Administration of medicines, in line with medical protocols and the child's plan.
- Supporting the development of mobility, language and emotional literacy by following programmes and activities recommended by specialist support services within the child's plan e.g., speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, behaviour support etc.

#### **Other Duties:**

The post holder will be a member of a school team, supporting the development of all pupils. When supporting pupils with significant needs the post holder may also be part of a wider multi-agency team and will contribute to the support identified within the child's plans for those pupils.

#### **Date Compiled:**

**The Highland Council  
Education and Learning Service**

**Person Specification  
Pupil Support Assistant Post**

**Service:** Education and Learning  
**Job Title:** Pupil Support Assistant 1  
**Location:**

**Essential Competencies – the following are minimum acceptable levels for safe and effective job performance**

1. Ability to develop good working relationships with colleagues, children and families.
2. Able to demonstrate a good level of education to Standard Grade (or equivalent)
3. Good communication skills including good skills of written and verbal communication and an ability to practice active listening.
4. PSAs applying for posts in Gaelic Medium should be able to communicate fluently and be fully literate in Gaelic.
5. Ability to work as an active member of a team and to provide support to professional colleagues.
6. Willingness to work with pupils who have significant needs and/or a willingness to participate in continued professional development opportunities to develop the skills required to undertake appropriate tasks in relation to supporting pupils with high levels of need.
7. Ability to remain calm under pressure and to be solution focused when presented with challenges.
8. A commitment to ongoing professional development.
9. Ability to work creatively and independently.
10. Enthusiasm, flexibility and self motivation.



## Appendix C - PSA Induction

Discussion and activities might include:

Activity	Date
Administration of medicine	
Approaches to behaviour that challenge school staff	
Awareness of resources	
Access to Child Plans protocols etc.	
Access to information on additional needs/barriers to learning	
Child Plan Meetings	
Child Protection Training	
Compulsory course dates/time frame for online course access agreed	
Conditions of service	
Confidentiality.	
CPD in school – including Employee Development Review/Personal Development Plan	
Data protection	
Email	
Emergency Procedures	
Food Hygiene	
General Procedures and Rules and tour of school	
Home/School diaries	
Hours of work/breaks, holiday entitlement, sickness, Special Leave	
How information is passed to teaching and support staff in school	
Information about key children	
Intimate Care – principles	
Introduction to colleagues	
Introduction to the children	
Introduction to the school	
Job description and main duties	
Key Terms – Highland Practice Model (GIRFEC), IEP, CfE, Child's Plan, Risk Assessments	
Line management arrangements	
Looked After Children – who they include	
Physical incidents against staff – responses, recording, debriefing	
PSA Handbook	
Policies and where to find them	
Principles of moving and handing	
Principles of supporting Numeracy, Reading and Writing	
Role of class teachers and ASL teachers	
School security – access & ID	
Shadowing colleagues in the base school and also another school	

## Area Additional Support for Learning Team



Course Title	Compulsory	Original Training Date	Refresh Required	Date of Refresh	Comments
Induction Process	Yes				To be completed with the Head Teacher and/or Support for Learning Teacher. <b>Ideally this should all be completed within 1 month</b>
Child Protection	Yes		Every 3 years		
Introduction to Basic First Aid	Yes		Every 5 years		
Awareness Raising – Intimate Care (Online)	Yes		As required, or move to higher level child specific training		
Awareness Raising – Moving & Handling	Yes		As required, or move to higher level child specific training		
De-escalation	Yes		As required, or move to higher level child specific training		
Neurodevelopmental Differences	Yes		As required, or move to higher level child specific training		

## Other Specific Skills Building and Advanced Skills

Course Title	Level Awareness Skills Building	Original Training Date	Refresh Required	Date of Refresh	Comments
<b>CALM</b> Crisis & Aggression Limitation Management					
<b>MOVE</b> Movement Opportunities via Education					
Moving & Handling Equipment					
Preparing for Digital Exams					
Movement Groups					
Using an Epipen					
Epilepsy					
Medical Protocols					
Sign Supported Communication					
Playground Games					

## Additional Courses and Training

Course Title	Compulsory	Original Training Date	Refresh Required	Date of Refresh	Comments

Appendix E - Employee Review & Development (ERD)

## Employee Review & Development

Personal Details	
Employee Name:	Line Manager Name:
Employee Post Title:	Line Manager Post Title:
Employee Pay Number:	
Review Period:      to	

A member of the Senior Management Team or a Principal Teacher will complete an Annual ERD with you.

To be completed by a PSA before meeting for their annual review

## Employee Review and Development Self-Assessment

**Post Holder:** Please complete the following questions and the self-assessment against the Core Competency Framework and bring them to your Personal Development Plan meeting.

<b>1. What do you consider to be your work achievements in the past year?</b>
<b>2. What has not gone so well and why?</b>
<b>3. What do you consider are the most important tasks for the coming year?</b>
<b>What could your manager do differently or change in the work environment that would assist you in your job?</b>

## Core Competency Framework – Post Holder Assessment

<b>Strengths</b> Assess your capability against the Core Competency Framework. Note down the behaviours from each competency that you consider are <b>strengths</b> and tick if fully competent.	<b>Areas for development</b> Assess your capability against the Core Competency Framework. Note down any behaviours from each competency where you consider you <b>need to</b> develop further.
<b>1. Promotes the Council's goals and values</b>	<b>1. Promotes the Council's goals and values</b>
Fully competent <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>2. Focuses on service delivery</b>	<b>2. Focuses on service delivery</b>
Fully competent <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>3. Achieves results through working with people</b>	<b>3. Achieves results through working with people</b>
Fully competent <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>4. Uses resources to achieve objectives</b>	<b>4. Uses resources to achieve objectives</b>
Fully competent <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>5. Participates in improvement and change</b>	<b>5. Participates in improvement and change</b>
Fully competent <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>6. Manages personal development and improvement</b>	<b>6. Manages personal development and improvement</b>
Fully competent <input type="checkbox"/>	



# TOOLS that might be used by a PSA when completing the Employee Review and Development self-assessment in preparation for the annual review.

## 1. Self-evaluation wheels

### Self-Evaluation Wheel

#### PSA Self-Reflection Tool—Competence

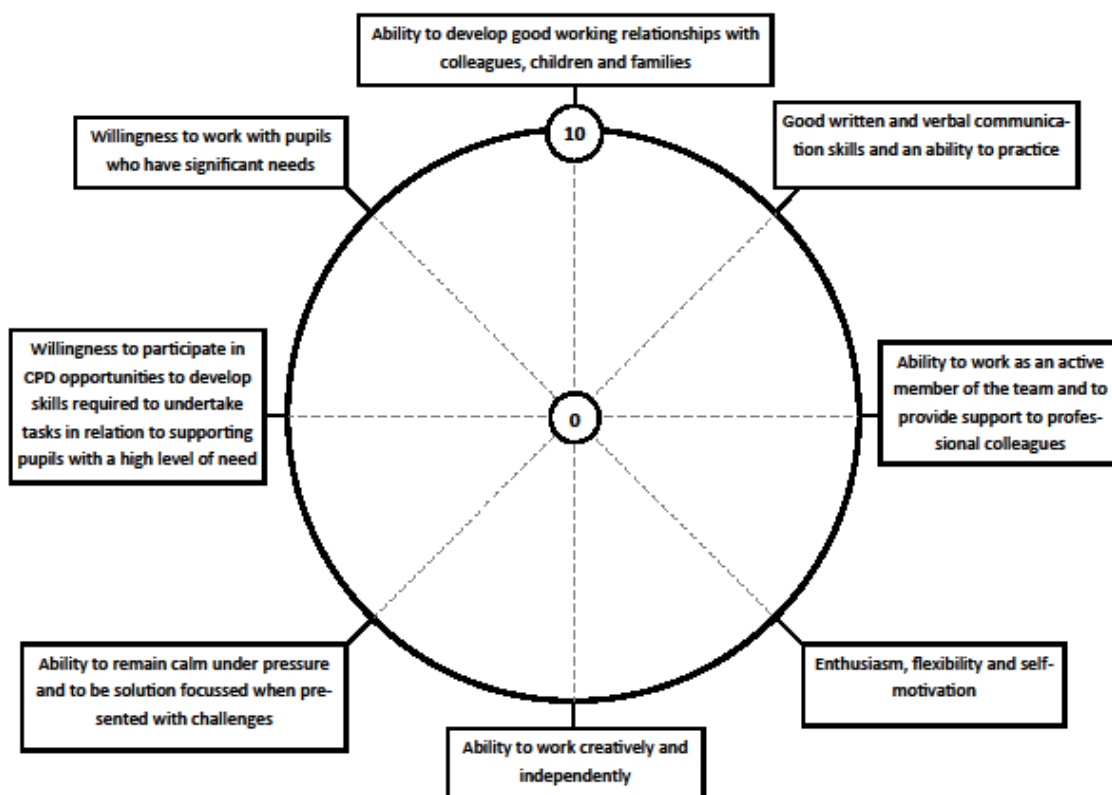
A Coaching Wheel is a valuable tool for supporting self-evaluation, exploring current reality and helping you to critically reflect on yourself and your practice.

Self evaluation should support you to:

- Reflect on what you have done
- Think about what you might do next
- Consider your own progress and development
- Deeply understand your professional work practice, your professional learning and the impact of this on your thinking, professional actions, those you work with/support and the pupils and their learning.

The Steps are;

- Rate the different elements on the self-reflection wheel (1 - 10 where 1 is the lowest mark).
- Each element is one of the essential competencies for a PSA post.
- Once you have given each element a score, ask yourself the following -
  - What do you see? What stands out? Where are there gaps? What's your priority?



## Self-Evaluation Wheel

### PSA Self-Reflection Tool—Curriculum Support, Personal Care and Development

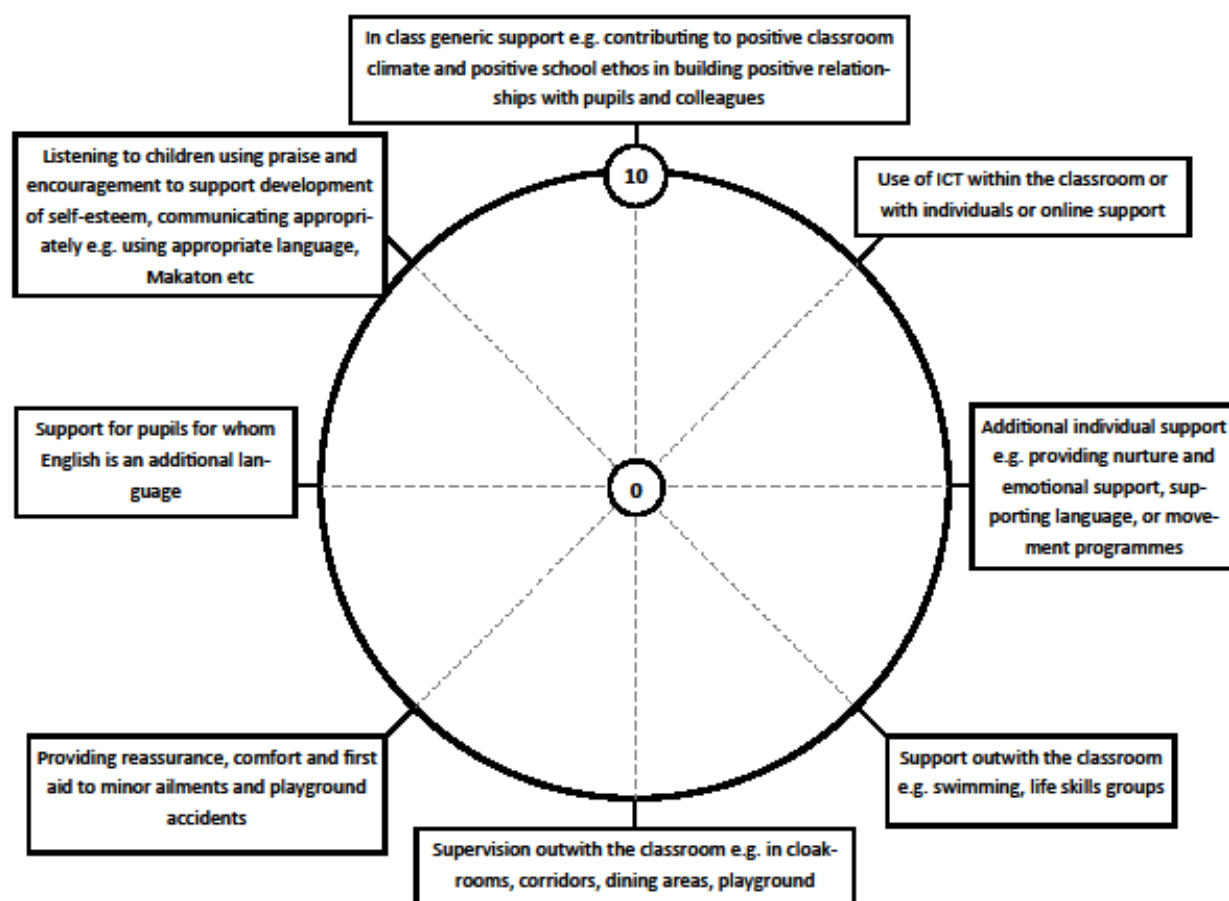
A Coaching Wheel is a valuable tool for supporting self-evaluation, exploring current reality and helping you to critically reflect on yourself and your practice.

#### Self evaluation should support you to:

- Reflect on what you have done
- Think about what you might do next
- Consider your own progress and development
- Deeply understand your professional work practice, your professional learning and the impact of this on your thinking, professional actions, those you work with/support and the pupils and their learning.

#### The Steps are;

- Rate the different elements on the self-reflection wheel (1 - 10 where 1 is the lowest mark).
- Each element is related to Curriculum Support, Personal Care and Development responsibilities of a PSA.
- Once you have given each element a score, ask yourself the following -  
What do you see? What stands out? Where are there gaps? What's your priority?



## Personal Development Plan

Areas for development from Competency Assessment	Objectives from Service and Operational/Team/Work Plans	Personal Development Priorities required to support achievement of competency and work objectives	
Agreed Objectives	Agreed Critical Results		
<b>Post Holder:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Informal Review Date:</b>	<b>Formal Review Date:</b>
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**Informal Review**

**Progress against Work Objectives:**

<b>Completed</b>	<b>Work in Progress</b>	<b>New Objectives</b>

**Progress against Areas for Development:**

**Progress against Personal Development Priorities:**

<b>Post Holder:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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## Appendix F – Flexible Working and Flexible Retirement

The Highland Council Flexible Working policy information can be accessed through the link. After discussion with the Head Teacher application can be made to the **Area ASN Manager** after two years full-time employment in post and is dependent on delivery of service.

PSAs are employed for the hours they work and not for when they work those hours. If a particular pattern of work on certain days is requested, it should be borne in mind that in the future because of changing pupil needs this might need to alter.

Information about these and the form to complete can be found at:

[www.highland.gov.uk/peopleandperformance/info/28/hr\\_topics/25/flexible\\_working](http://www.highland.gov.uk/peopleandperformance/info/28/hr_topics/25/flexible_working)

## Appendix G – Glossary

### A

#### **Additional Support Needs (ASN)**

Needs which are additional to those of most learners at any given time and may include learners who have needs because of:

##### **The Learning Environment**

- inflexible curricular arrangements
- inappropriate approaches to learning and teaching
- more able children
- children with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

##### **Family Circumstances**

- homelessness
- parental drug or alcohol misuse
- parents separating or divorcing
- terminal illness in the family
- a family member in prison
- children who are parents
- children who are carers
- children looked after by the local authority
- from a travelling family, interrupted learner.

##### **Disability or Health Need**

- motor or sensory impairment
- persistent literacy difficulties
- autism
- learning difficulties
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- depression or other mental health problems
- a temporary medical condition
- hospital admission
- school-age pregnancy.

##### **Social & Emotional Factors**

- children who are being bullied
- children who are suffering racial discrimination
- children who are bullying
- children with behavioural difficulties.

### **Advocate, Advocacy worker**

Someone chosen by a parent, or young person, to conduct discussions on their behalf.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)/ Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)**

A term frequently used to describe the academic and behavioural problems of learners who have difficulty focusing and maintaining attention, with the addition of marked hyperactivity in ADHD.

### **Auditory Discrimination**

Ability to detect differences in sounds; may be gross ability, such as detecting the differences between the noises made by a cat and a dog, or fine ability, such as detecting the differences made by the sounds of letters "m" and "n."

### **Auditory Memory**

Ability to retain information which has been presented orally; may be short term memory, such as recalling information presented several seconds before; long term memory, such as recalling information presented more than a minute before; or sequential memory, such as recalling a series of information in proper order.

### **Autism**

A disability which affects the development of language, communication, social interaction and flexibility of thought.

## **B**

### **Behaviour Modification**

A technique intended to change behaviour by rewarding desirable actions and ignoring or "negatively rewarding" undesirable actions.

### **Bilingual**

Speaking two languages fluently.

### **Binocular Vision**

The blending of separate images from each eye into a single meaningful image.

## C

### **Care Experienced Children and Young people**

This is the term now used with reference to Looked After Children and Young people.

### **Cerebral Palsy**

A disability caused by damage to the part of the brain controlling movement.

### **Code of Practice**

Document issued by the Scottish Executive to accompany the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act.

### **Cognitive Ability**

Intellectual ability; thinking and reasoning skills.

### **Complex Factors (see CSP also Multiple Factors)**

Factor which is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the school education of a learner or young person. It is likely it will affect most aspects of learning. There are 4 categories: Family Circumstance; Learning Environment; Health and Disability; Social and Emotional issues.

### **Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP)**

Plan drawn up to co-ordinate the support required for a small group of learners whose additional support needs are, complex or multiple (see separate entry for definition), have a significant adverse effect on their learning, will last for more than a year and require a high level of support from Education and at least one other agency.

### **Criterion Referenced Test**

Designed to provide information on specific knowledge or skills possessed by a student. Such tests usually cover relatively small units of content and are closely related to instruction. Their scores have meaning in terms of what the student knows or can do, rather than their relation to the scores made by some external reference group.

### **Cross Dominance**

A condition in which the preferred eye, hand, or foot are not on the same side of the body. For example, a person may be right-footed and right-eyed but left-handed. Also called mixed dominance.



## D

### **Decoding**

Perceiving and interpreting symbols in order to understand meaning.

### **Developmental Delay**

A delay in the acquisition of skills which would usually have appeared by the learner's chronological age.

### **Differentiation**

Adaptation of the curriculum to enable access to learners experiencing difficulty.

### **Down's Syndrome**

A disability caused by having 47 chromosomes in every cell of the body instead of 46, resulting in a degree of developmental delay. It also produces a number of distinctive physical characteristics.

### **Dysarthria**

A disorder of the speech muscles that affects the ability to pronounce words.

### **Dyscalculia**

Difficulty in understanding or using mathematical symbols or functions. A learner with dyscalculia may be able to read and write but have difficulty in performing mathematical calculations.

### **Dysgraphia**

Difficulty in producing legible handwriting with age-appropriate speed.

### **Dyslexia**

Definitions vary greatly but according to the British Dyslexia Association, dyslexia is a specific learning difference which is constitutional in origin (in the make up of the person) independent of socio-economic or language background, and can occur at any level of intellectual ability. It can cause unexpected and persistent difficulties in acquiring certain skills in one or more of the following areas: Reading, writing, spelling and sometimes numeracy and spoken language. There may be accompanying weaknesses in: speed of processing, short term memory, sequencing, motor skills, auditory or visual perception.

## **Dyspraxia**

Difficulty in performing gross and fine motor acts such as balancing, drawing, writing, etc.

## **E**

### **EAL**

English as an Additional Language. This includes young people whose first language is English

### **Emotional Literacy**

Emotional Literacy is widely seen as a set of skills that are essential for the development of positive relationships and personal growth in each one of us. Without emotional self-awareness and self-management skills, learning and general development will suffer. Without awareness of the emotional state of others, the ability to manage relationships, friendships and social support will diminish.

### **Expressive Language**

Communication through writing, speaking and/or gestures.

### **Eye-Hand Coordination**

The ability of the eyes and hands to work together to complete a task. Examples are drawing, writing, ball-catching.

### **Encoding**

The process of expressing language ie selecting words; formulating them into ideas; producing them through speaking or writing.

### **ESOL**

English to Speakers of Other Languages. Is an approach for young people who did not learn English as their native tongue and/or continue to use a language other than English as a dominant language.

## **F**

### **Fine Motor**

The use of small muscles for precision tasks such as writing, tying bows, zipping a zipper, typing, holding a pencil.

## **G**

### **Gross Motor**

The use of large muscles for activities requiring strength and balance eg. walking, running, jumping.

## **H**

### **Holistic**

A holistic view is one which addresses the whole learner and his/her circumstances rather than focusing on specific isolated aspects

### **Hyperactivity (or Hyperkinesis)**

Disorganised and disruptive behaviour characterised by constant and excessive movement. A hyperactive learner usually has difficulty sticking to one task for an extended period and may react more intensely to a situation than a normal learner.

### **Hypoactivity**

Underactivity; learner may appear to be in a daze, lacking energy.

## I

### **Individualised Education Plan (IEP)**

IEPs are written plans for learners who have additional support needs, which set out specific, measurable targets, the means of achieving them, and a realistic timescale.

### **Insertions**

In reading/spelling or maths, the addition of letters or numbers which do not belong in a word or numeral, e.g. sinceare for sincere.

### **Integrated Assessment Framework**

A common process for all agencies and professionals to assess children and young people's needs and to share information about them in order to ensure that interventions at any level lead to improvements in the learner or young person's life.

### **Integrated Community Schools**

Introduced in 1998 by the Scottish Executive, focus on the range of needs of the learner or young person and bring together all the various agencies to ensure that these needs are met.

### **Inversions**

In reading, spelling, or maths, confusion of up / down directionality of letters or numbers, eg m for w, 6 for 9, etc.

## K

### **Kinaesthetic Method**

A way of teaching words by using the muscles. For example, a student might trace the outline of a word with a finger while looking at the word and saying aloud the word, or its letters, in sequence.

## L

### **Lateral Confusion or Mixed Laterality**

Tendency to perform some acts with a right-side preference and others with a left, or the shifting from right to left for certain activities.

### **Learning Style**

The channels through which a person best understands and retains learning. All individuals learn best through one or more channels: vision, hearing, movement, touching, or a combination of these.

### **Looked After Learner or Young Person (LAC)**

Under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 this covers not only children or young people who are accommodated by the local authority but also children or young people who are subject to one of the specified orders, including a learner protection order; a parental responsibilities order; or who are subject to a supervision requirement while living at home. It also includes children who have respite care organised by the local authority.

### **Liaison Groups**

Inter-agency Groups operating within the Integrated Community Schools framework, which meet with parents/carers and children/young people with a view to adopting a solution focused approach to ensuring appropriate provision for the learner or young person.

### **Linguistic Approach**

Method for teaching reading (decoding skills) which emphasises use of word families. For example, the learner is taught to read "at" and then subsequently is taught to decode words such as "cat," "bat," "sat," "mat," etc.

## M

### **Mediation**

A voluntary process whereby an independent third party seeks to enable parties to a disagreement to reach an agreed resolution of their differences.

### **Multi-agency**

Where professionals from different agencies work together (eg teachers and health professionals).

## **Multi-disciplinary**

Where more than one professional from different disciplines within the same agency work together (e.g. teacher and Educational Psychologist).

## **Multiple Factors (see CSP & Complex Factors)**

Where the factors listed under Complex Factors are not in themselves significant but when combined have a significant adverse effect on the school education of the learner or young person.

## **Multiple Intelligences**

In addition to verbal-linguistic intelligence and logical-mathematical intelligence there are five other recognised intelligences - visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Most people have at least three of the seven intelligences but not necessarily the two which are most valued in a school setting 'linguistic and logical-mathematical'

## **Multisensory**

Involving most or all of the senses.

## **Muscular Dystrophy**

A disability causing a breakdown of muscle fibre and gradually increasing muscle weakness.

# **N**

## **Norm**

Norms represent average or typical performance. They should not be regarded as standards or universally desirable levels of achievement.

## **Norm-Referenced Test**

Scale on which a score is interpreted by comparison with others, often to determine whether and by how much the score is better or worse than average.

## **P**

### **Personal Education Plans (PEP)**

Co-ordinated plans drawn up for children and young people who are 'looked after' by the local authority. They include social and educational aims.

### **Perseveration**

The repeating of words, motions or tasks. A learner who perseverates often has difficulty shifting to a new task and continues working on an old task long after classmates have stopped.

### **Phonics Approach**

Method for teaching reading and spelling in which emphasis is placed on learning the sounds which individual and various combinations of letters make in a word. In decoding a word, the learner sounds out individual letters or letter combinations and then blends them to form a word.

### **Promoting Positive Relationships**

Approaches which aim to create an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and corporate responsibility.

### **Pupil Profile Record (PPR)**

A folder containing information about a learner and their progress throughout their educational schooling.

## **R**

### **Reasoning Ability**

Specific meaning of this term varies, depending upon the manner in which a given test measures this ability; generally refers to nonverbal, deductive, inductive, analytical thinking.

### **Receptive Language**

Language that is spoken or written by others and received by the individual. The receptive language skills are listening and reading.

## **Restorative Approaches**

Restorative approaches are fundamentally grounded in relationships and in repairing, restoring and consolidating relationships when they have been harmed.

## **Reversals**

Difficulty in reading or reproducing letters alone, letters in words, or words in sentences in their proper position in space or in proper order. May also refer to reversal of mathematical numbers, concepts (add / subtract, multiply / divide) and symbols.

## **Ritalin**

Trade name for one of several stimulant drugs often given to modify hyperactivity in children.

## **S**

### **Semantics**

The meaning or understanding given to oral or written language.

### **Sight Words**

Words a learner can instantly recognise without aid of phonics or other word-attack skills.

### **Sight Word Approach**

Also known as whole word approach; method for teaching reading which relies heavily upon a learner's visual memory skills, with minimal emphasis on sounding out a word; learner memorises the word based on its overall configuration.

### **SLD / SpLD**

Specific learning difficulty. Difficulty in certain areas of learning as opposed to a general learning difficulty i.e. difficulty in all areas of learning. Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty.

### **SMART targets**

Targets which are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timed.

### **Sound Blending**

The ability to combine smoothly all the sounds or parts of a word into the whole.



## **Spatial Awareness**

The ability to perceive the relationships between objects occupying space.

## **S.P.E.L.L.**

Stands for Structure, Positive, Empathy, Low Arousal, Links. It is a framework for understanding and responding to the needs of individual people affected by autism.

## **Spina Bifida**

A disability caused by a failure of some of the bones in the spine to fuse together causing damage to the nerves below the affected area.

## **Standardised Test**

A test which meets various criteria, in particular a test which has been tried out on a representative sample, which provides data on its validity and reliability, which has set procedures for administration and scoring, and which provides a table for converting raw scores into standardised scores.

## **Structural Analysis**

Using syllabification, prefix, suffix, and root word clues, etc. to read or spell a word.

## **Substitution**

In reading, spelling, or maths, interchanging a given letter, number, or word for another eg. was for saw.

## T

### **Task Analysis**

The technique of breaking down a defined task into its component parts.

### **Transition**

Refers to changes in education, for example, starting nursery school, moving from primary to secondary school, transferring schools and so on.

### **Transposition**

In reading, spelling or maths, confusion of the order of letters in a word or digits in a number, e.g. sliver for silver, 432 for 423, etc.

## V

### **VAKT**

Acronym for visual-auditory-kinaesthetic-tactile; multi-sensory teaching approach which emphasises using all of the senses to teach skills and concepts.

### **Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)**

Video Interaction Guidance uses analysis and reflection of video clips of authentic situations to enhance communication within relationships. It is often used with families.

### **Visual Discrimination**

Ability to detect similarities and / or differences in materials which are presented visually, e.g. ability to discriminate h from n, o from c, b from d, etc.

### **Visual Memory**

Ability to retain information which is presented visually; may be short term such as recalling information presented several seconds before; long term such as recalling information presented more than a minute before; or sequential such as recalling a series of information in proper order.

## **Visual Motor**

Ability to translate information received visually into a motor response i.e. ability to coordinate eye and body muscles. Difficulties are often characterised by poor handwriting etc.

## **Visual Perception**

Ability to correctly interpret what is seen. For example, a learner sees a triangle and identifies it as a triangle.

## **W**

### **Word Attack Skills**

Ability to analyse unfamiliar words visually and phonetically.

### **Word Recognition**

Ability to read or pronounce a word; usually implies that the word is recognised immediately by sight and that the learner does not need to apply word analysis skills. Does not imply understanding of the word.

## **Y**

### **Young Carer**

Children and young people who provide care to a family member.

### **Young People**

People who are over school age (generally over 16 years) but not yet 18 years of age.