

Sutton Information Advice and Support Service (SIASS)

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose:

The SIASS Steering group:

- Ensures that SIASS is effective in providing impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND), and their parents/carers, in accordance with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice the national good practice guidance set out in IASSN Quality Standards.
- Ensures that SIASS Terms of reference (ToR) are published and up to date.
- Has delegated responsibility for SIASS policy and procedures.
- Ensures that the steering group has broad representation as defined in section 2.0.
- Provides a forum for discussion to identify and promote good practice, raise issues and concerns, identify gaps in service.
- Ensures that SIASS is not used to carry out other statutory duties on behalf of the LA that may compromise the impartiality of the support that SIASS offers.
- Collaborates with SIASS in the formation of a service development plan and associated plans.
- Will monitor and evaluate the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the service and ensure that it is responsible to the needs of Suttons parents, carers, children and young people.
- Work in partnership with SIASS and the local authority (LA) whilst at all time preserving the impartial nature of the service.
- Support SIASS staff.

2.0 Membership and Meetings:

- Membership will represent a range of service users, individuals and agencies with an interest in the work SIASS, which may include:
 - Youth participation groups
 - Representative from Sutton parent, carer forum
 - Parents and /or, carers
 - Representative(s) of community or voluntary sector organisation(s) supporting local families
 - Representative(s) from local school(s) and further education establishments who work closely with children and young people with SEND, and their families
 - Representative(s) of health service for children and young people and their families
 - Representative(s) of the Children and Young People's Disability Service (CYPDS)
 - IAS Service Manager and IAS Caseworkers
 - Representative(s) of the Local Authority
- The Chair and Vice-Chair of the steering group shall be independent and, wherever possible parents/carers.

- All members are equal partners and the individual skills, knowledge and views that each member brings to the steering group are recognised and equally valued.
- All members will support the work of SIASS and will act in the best interests of the service as defined by the steering group.
- Members will not act solely in the specific interests of their own agency or constituency. They will identify and acknowledge with the Steering Group any conflict of interest if and when it arises.
- Expenses may be paid as appropriate to enable members to attend meetings. This will not cover salaries and expenses for those attending as part of their paid work.
- Members will make every effort to attend meetings and notify the group if unable to attend. In that case, an appropriate alternative member of that organisation or agency can attend instead. If a member misses 3 Steering Group meetings in a row (i.e. one year):
 - The SIASS Manager will discuss the reasons for this with the member and ask if they need additional support to continue as a member.
 - If the member is sure that the difficulty is past and they will be able to attend meetings regularly from now on, then the SIASS Manager will welcome their continued membership and continue to monitor attendance.
 - If the member cannot guarantee attendance at the Steering Group on subsequent occasions, the SIASS Manager will explain to the member that to ensure the effectiveness of the Steering Group it would be appropriate for the member to resign or to suggest an alternative person to represent the organisation or stakeholder group.
- Membership will be reviewed annually. Interest from parents and young people who wish to become involved is welcomed.
- Term of service is for a maximum of 2 terms. A term is defined as 3 years in length.
- All members will adhere to all relevant policies which include but are not limited to
 - Behaviour code of conduct
 - Confidentiality policy
 - GDPR
 - Safeguarding
 - Conflict of interest
 - Declaration of interest
- Meetings will usually take place three times a year; spring, summer and autumn. On occasion the Steering Group may decide to hold an additional meeting for a specific purpose. Meetings will be as accessible as possible.
- The Chair of the Steering Group will liaise with SIASS to set the agenda prior to each Steering Group meeting.
 - SIASS will

- Endeavour to recruit and retain a representative membership on the Steering Group, as per the membership list above, in consultation with the Chair
- Provide feedback to update the Steering Group on SIASS activities at each meeting
- Facilitate all meetings of the Steering Group, including
 - arranging venue
 - discussing and setting the agenda with the Parent Chair prior to meetings
 - providing agenda and supporting papers to Steering Group members prior to meetings
 - providing minutes of meetings to all members

- The Steering Group will not address issues relating to individual parents, carers, their children or young people or members of staff.

3.0 Monitoring and Evaluation:

The steering group will

- Review the purpose and aims of the SIASS Steering Group annually
- Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the subsequent year at the end of their term
- Present an annual report on the performance of the SIASS and their own activities to the Local Authority.

Appendix A

Roles and Responsibilities of the SIASS Steering Group

- Monitor and evaluate the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the service and ensure that it is responsive to the needs of Sutton parents.
- Promote new initiatives to raise the profile of SIASS
- Take responsibility for setting and monitoring the overall standards of the service and ensure it is subject to best value principles.
- Ensure appropriate management structures for the service.
- Raise appropriate concerns regarding resources, management structure and staffing to meet the needs of the parents in their area and to be compliant with the IAS minimum standards.
- Ensure that the service has a development plan which sets out clear targets and is regularly reviewed; such plans should specify short, medium and long term strategies and arrangements for evaluation and quality assurance.
- Ensure that an annual budget is set and monitored
- Have appropriate arrangements for overseeing, regularly monitoring and reviewing the service, taking account of best practice both locally and nationally.
- Ensure that the information and advice SIASS provides for parents, carers, children and young people within the legislation and the Code of Practice (even where this may differ from local policy or practice)
- Enable the SIASS to challenge policy and practice when it is not compatible with the legislation and guidance
- Agree protocols with the Local Authority for keeping the Steering Group informed of developments for all relevant matters concerning education and special educational needs within the authority
- Include routine agenda items from issues brought in by parents
- Invite the Head of Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Service (LDDS) from Sutton to a meeting annually and SEND Commissioner
- Ensure the continued development of this high quality, well established, key service in a way that best meets the needs of its local clients

- To ensure that the voices of parents and carers in Sutton underpin the work and development of SIASS
- To ensure that impartiality and confidentiality policies are appropriate and implemented consistently and effectively
- To ensure that the SIASS Business Development Plan is reviewed annually to reflect current legislative and local requirements, and to monitor its implementation
- To ensure that SIASS provides information and support for parents and carers of children and young people excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from school
- To ensure that SIASS is engaging effectively with all relevant partners, locally, regionally and nationally.

Appendix B

Steering group members will adhere to the Nolan principles of public life when carrying out their duties.

Nolan Principles of Public Life

Introduction In 1994, the UK government established a Committee on Standards in Public Life. The remit of the committee was to make recommendations to improve standards of behaviour in public life. The committee was chaired by Lord Nolan, and the first report of the committee established the seven principles of public life, also known as the “Nolan principles”.

7 Principles

1. Selflessness – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. Integrity – Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. Objectivity – In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
4. Accountability – Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. Openness – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. Honesty – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. Leadership – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.