



Waterloo Lodge
School

Options Autism



Part of Outcomes First Group

26th February 2026

Parent Update: SEND Reform White Paper

Dear families,

The Government has recently published its SEND Reform White Paper, *Putting Children and Young People First*. We know parents may naturally have questions about what this means for their child and we promised to share a further update once we'd had time to digest the proposals.

The most important message is this: Nothing is changing for your child or their education.

Their support, EHCP, school placement and daily routines remain exactly the same.

Below is a short explanation of what has been proposed and why this doesn't impact your child's provision and day to day experience.

What is the White Paper?

A White Paper sets out the Government's long-term ideas and priorities for education. It is not new law, and it will take several years before any changes are introduced. The Government's goals include:

- improving outcomes for all pupils
- strengthening inclusion and SEND support in mainstream schools
- improving attendance and wellbeing
- supporting the education workforce

What changes have been proposed?

The proposals focus on improving the SEND system by:

- giving mainstream schools more training and dedicated inclusion units
- creating a clearer pathway of support so children can get help earlier
- setting national expectations for specialist support
- strengthening the way local authorities plan and arrange places
- confirming that specialist schools have a clear and important role

What does this mean for specialist schools like ours?

1. Specialist schools remain essential

The Government is clear that specialist provision is a vital part of the system, and that some children will always need a specialist environment. Your child's school place remains secure and unchanged.

2. EHCP protections ("triple lock")

The Government has also made it clear that:

- children will not lose their EHCPs
- families will not be forced to move to any new type of plan
- any future changes will be gradual, with no break in support

Your child's EHCP remains fully in place.



**Waterloo Lodge
School**

Options Autism



Part of Outcomes First Group

3. Better planning and consistency locally

The aim is to help agencies work more closely together so children receive the right support sooner. This is about improving the system, not changing the support your child receives now.

4. Strengthening mainstream schools

More support will be put into mainstream schools so children can get help earlier, reducing delays. This does not replace specialist schools for children who need them.

5. Earlier help for families

Earlier identification and intervention is a major theme of the reforms, something we have supported for many years to ensure children and families can access effective help as early as possible.

When would any changes happen?

Not for several years.

- There is now a 12-week public consultation.
- The Government will then spend years developing the ideas.
- Any legal changes are unlikely before 2029, and even then will be phased in gradually.

There are no immediate changes for any child or family.

How is OFG responding?

We welcome many of the proposals, as they reflect changes we have been calling for, such as clearer pathways, earlier support, and better planning.

We are actively contributing to the consultation and will continue making sure the voices of our pupils and families are heard.

We also know that inclusion only works when backed by strong specialist expertise. Specialist schools like ours remain central to the system, and we will continue delivering the exceptional education and care your children deserve.

What happens next?

You do not need to do anything. We will continue to keep families updated as the proposals develop over the coming years.

If you have any questions, please speak to your school team - we are always here to support you and your child.

Yours sincerely

Helen Rigby

Mrs Helen Rigby
Executive Head Teacher