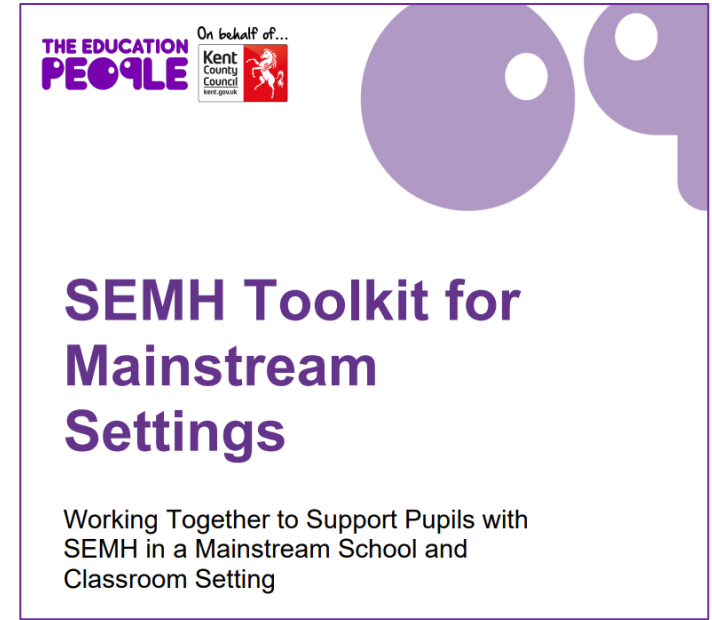
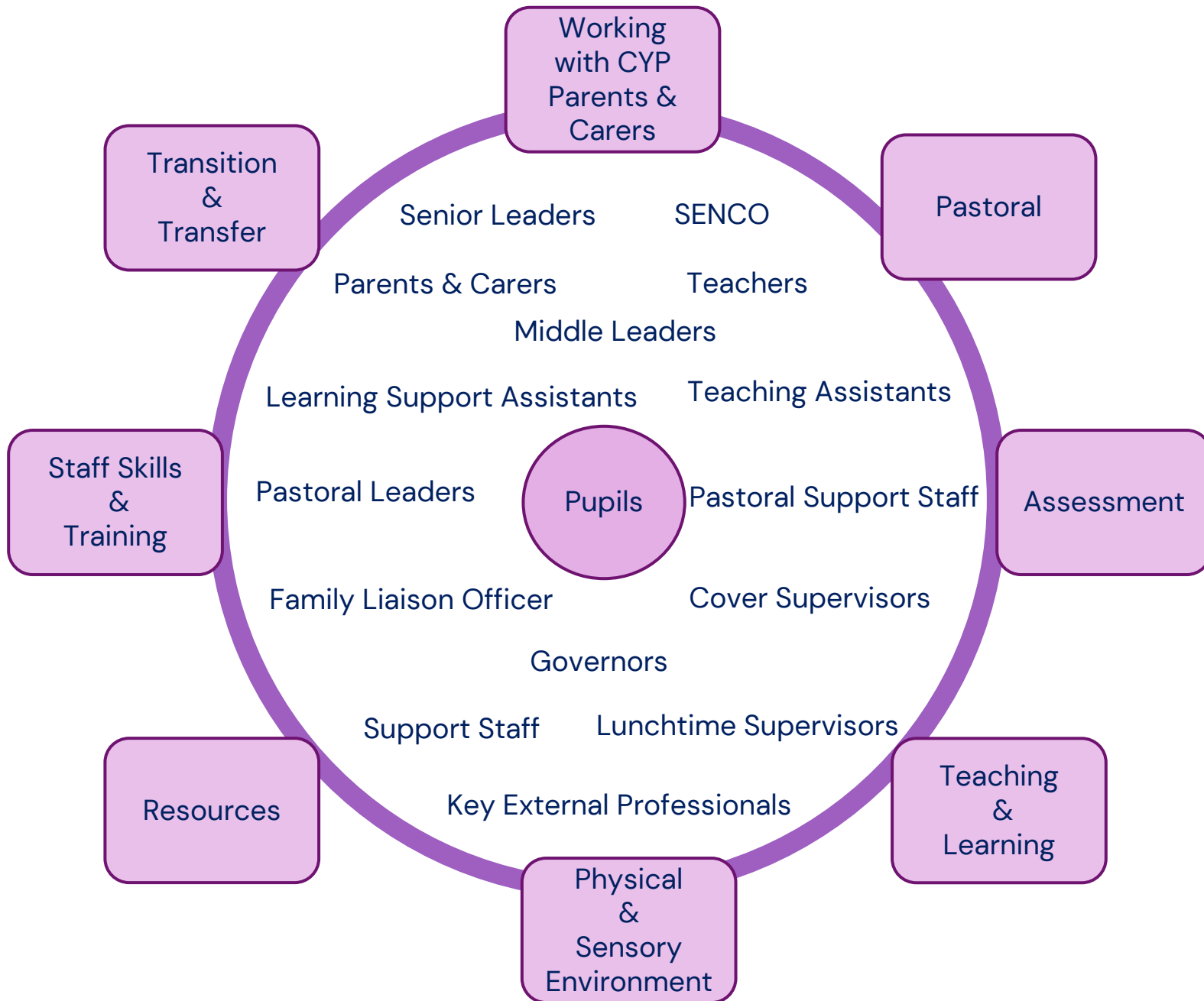


What does a Whole School SEMH Strategy Look Like?

Ruth Gately

Specialist Lead Adviser SEND





[Kelsi: SEMh Toolkit for Mainstream Settings](#)

Early Identification of Need and Assessment

Mental Health and Behaviour in schools' states (DfE 2018):

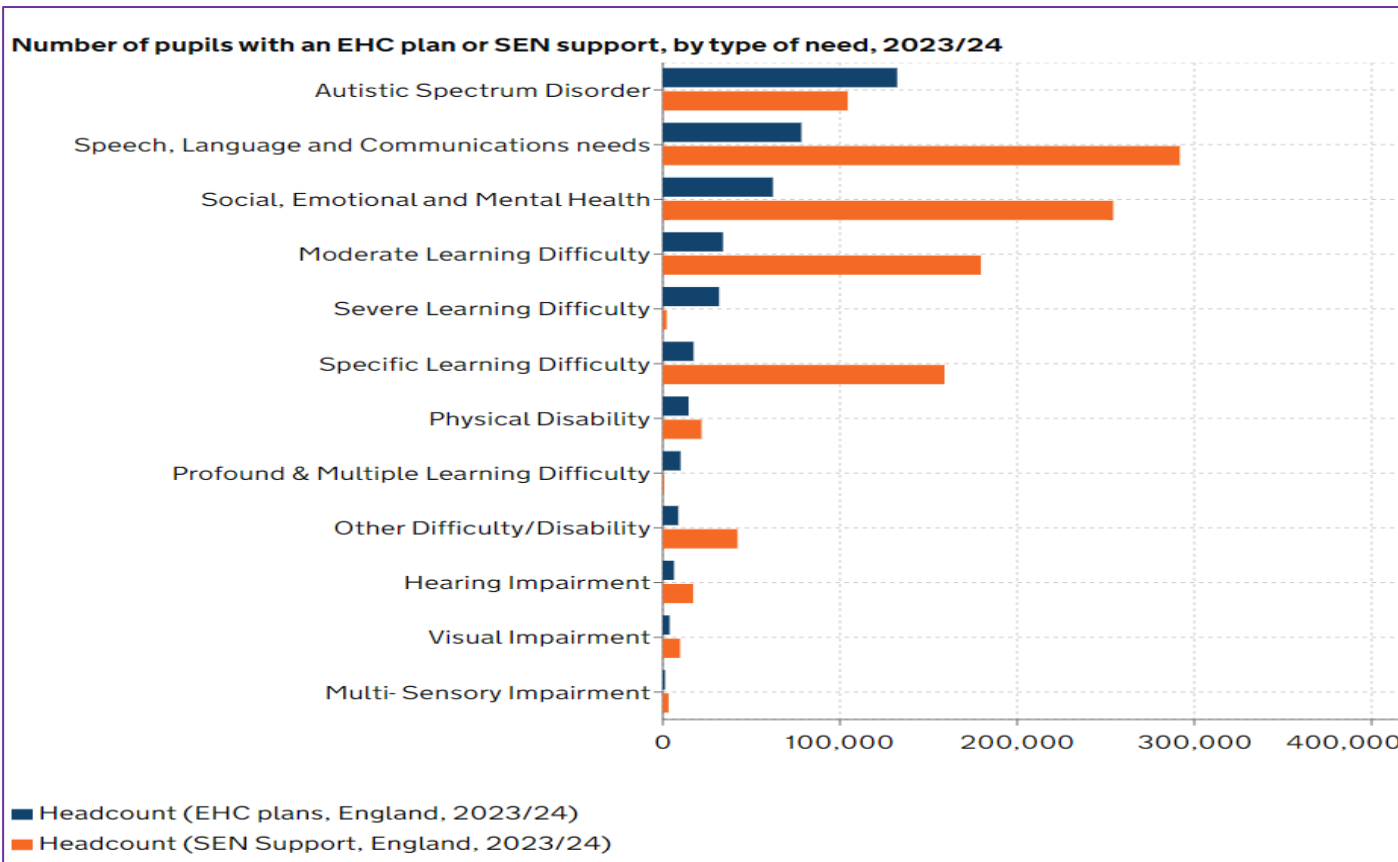
[Mental health and behaviour in schools](#)

3.25

“Not all children with mental health difficulties will have SEN. But persistent or serious mental health difficulties will often meet the definition of SEN, in that they lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. As set out above, the graduated response process set out in the SEND Code of Practice provides a framework for deciding what support to offer, which would be good practice regardless of whether a pupil has SEN.” (DfE 2018: 19,20)

Academic year 2023/24 Special Educational Needs in England

Published 20 June 2024



The most common type of need among pupils with an EHC plan is autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)

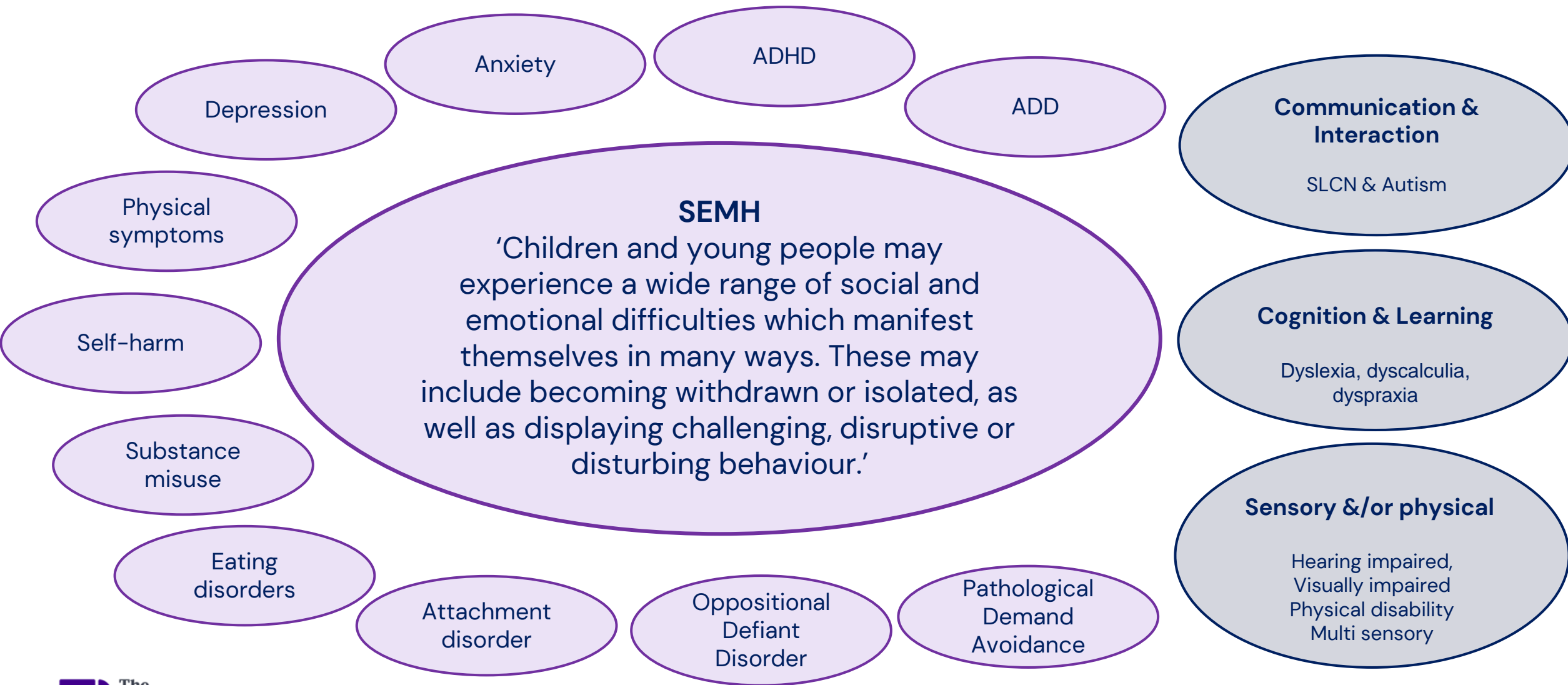
One in three pupils with an EHC plan are identified with a primary need of ASD (33.0%).

The most common type of need among pupils with SEN support are speech, language and communication needs

The primary need identified for one in four pupils is speech, language and communication needs (25.6%). This is followed by social, emotional and mental health needs (22.3%) and moderate learning difficulty (15.8%)

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>

SEND Code of Practice – Broad Areas of Need



Cambridgeshire County Council: 'Why I am rude' – a poem about our perception of 'behaviour' written by Sarah Dillon

Why I'm Rude- A
poem about our
perception of
'behaviour'

Possible Presenting Behaviour(s)

Physically

- Tired
- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Complaining about being injured, or that their body is aching.

Maybe caused by:

- Lack of sleep
- Not having breakfast before school
- Struggling to access the curriculum which manifests anxiety through physical symptoms

Socially

- Overbearing and loud,
- Overly physical with their peers,
- Invading other pupils' space; or they could be withdrawn
- Reluctant to work with their peers or interact in the lesson, prefer to work alone.
- Pupils may have difficulties making and maintaining friendships.
- Concerns/problems/subject to bullying.
- May have difficulties understanding social boundaries and following rules.

Maybe caused by:

- Linked to diagnosed area of need
- Friendship groups
- Communication
- Social skills.

Emotionally

- Extremely anxious
- Withdrawn
- Angry
- Agitated
- Sad
- Annoyed
- Over stimulated
- Frightened
- Have heightened emotions which they find difficult to manage.

Maybe caused by:

- Trauma, loss, bereavement
- Low self-esteem/confidence/belief
- Attachment and relationships
- Changes to routine
- No known trigger
- Unable to access the curriculum
- Linked to diagnosed area of need

Educationally

- Find school challenging.
- Find some subjects difficult
- Become disengaged, 'shut down'/withdrawn.
- Disrupt the lesson.
- Refusal to comply or engage
- Visual cues

Maybe caused by:

- Low self esteem
- Lack of confidence with the subject
- Unable to access the lesson –resources HQT approaches

Transition & transfer

Plan for and highlight key transition points in throughout the lesson, school day and year.

Forewarn or signpost changes of routine or activity.

Working with CYP & parents & carers

Key Information
Communication
Pupil voice
Parent/carer voice

Pastoral

Know your pupils well
Key trusted adult
Designated space
Warm & welcoming

Assessment

Know your pupils well
Early identification
SENCO advice
Curriculum
Exam access arrangements

**MCS supporting pupils with SEMH in your classroom and school environment.
Plan to **anticipate** potential barriers**

Staff skills & training

Highly effective use of TA/LSA

SENCO advice and guidance/ CPD

Resources

Assistive technology
Mini white boards
Traffic light or similar
Visualiser
SENCO advice
HQIT strategies
Organisational support

Physical & sensory environment

Know your pupils well
Seating plans
Lighting
Noise
Smell
Uniform
Reasonable adjustments

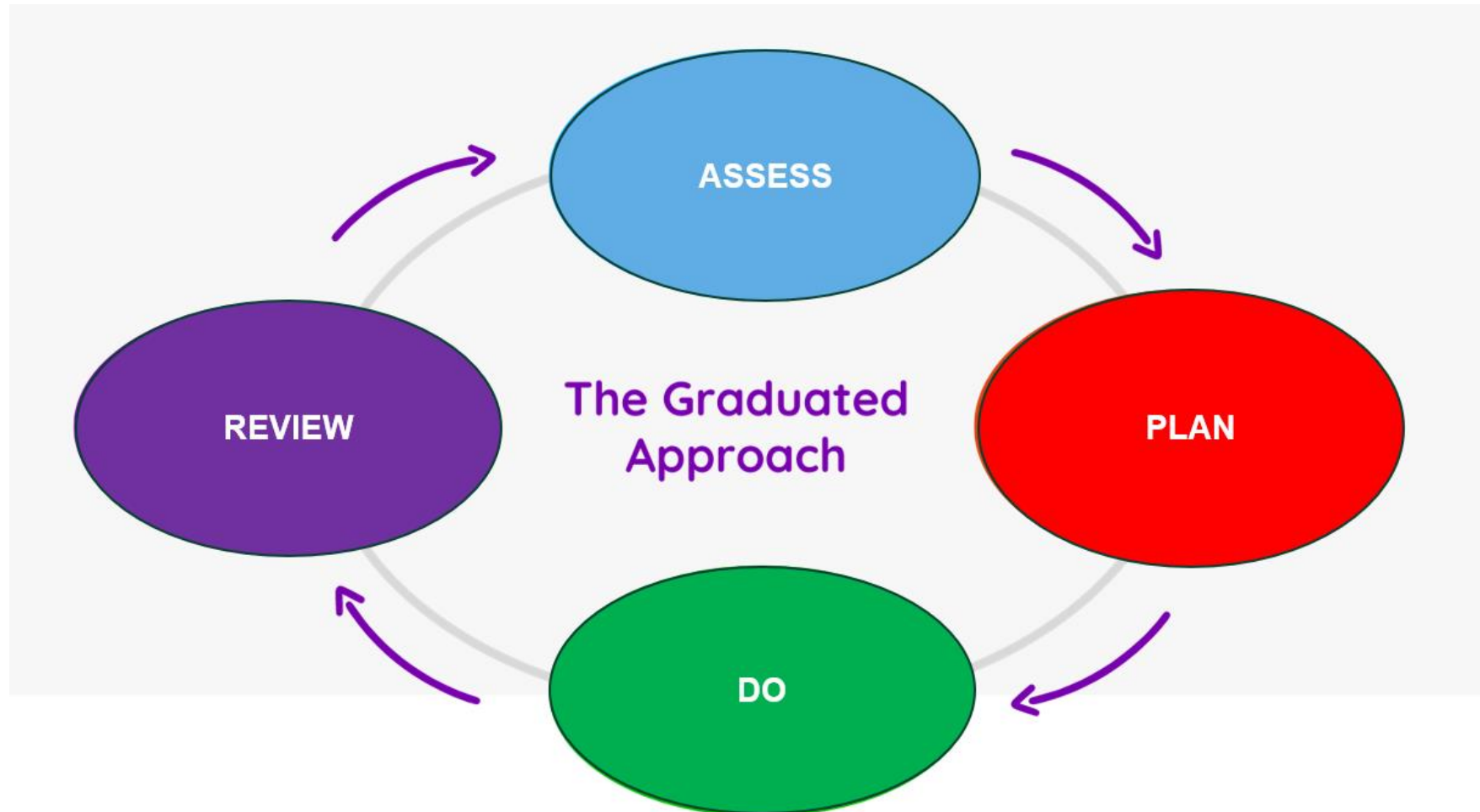
Teaching & Learning

Know your pupils well

High-quality inclusive teaching strategies (HQIT)

The Graduated Approach – Assess – Plan – Do – Review (APDR)

Irrespective of a pupil's need, the **Graduated Approach** is a key process to support all aspects of SEND provision. It enables the SENCO to effectively work with teachers, the form tutor, pastoral lead, and Teaching Assistants/Learning Support Assistants to regularly complete a cycle of reflective practice.



The Graduated Approach

ASSESS

Identify the area of need
What is your concern?
What are the characteristics?
How is the pupil behaving?
What is the pupil telling you?

PLAN

What strategies are going to be used?
Seek pupil/parent voice.
Set short term targets (how long?).
How will this be communicated?
How will the strategies be monitored?

DO

Implement the strategies and plan.
Be consistent.
Monitor changes in behaviour.
Communicate with the SENCO.

REVIEW

What has worked well?
What is the impact?
What further strategies need to be implemented?

Reflection

Time to talk and share
your experience and
practice

Key points to discuss:

- How do you support pupils with SEMH in your setting?

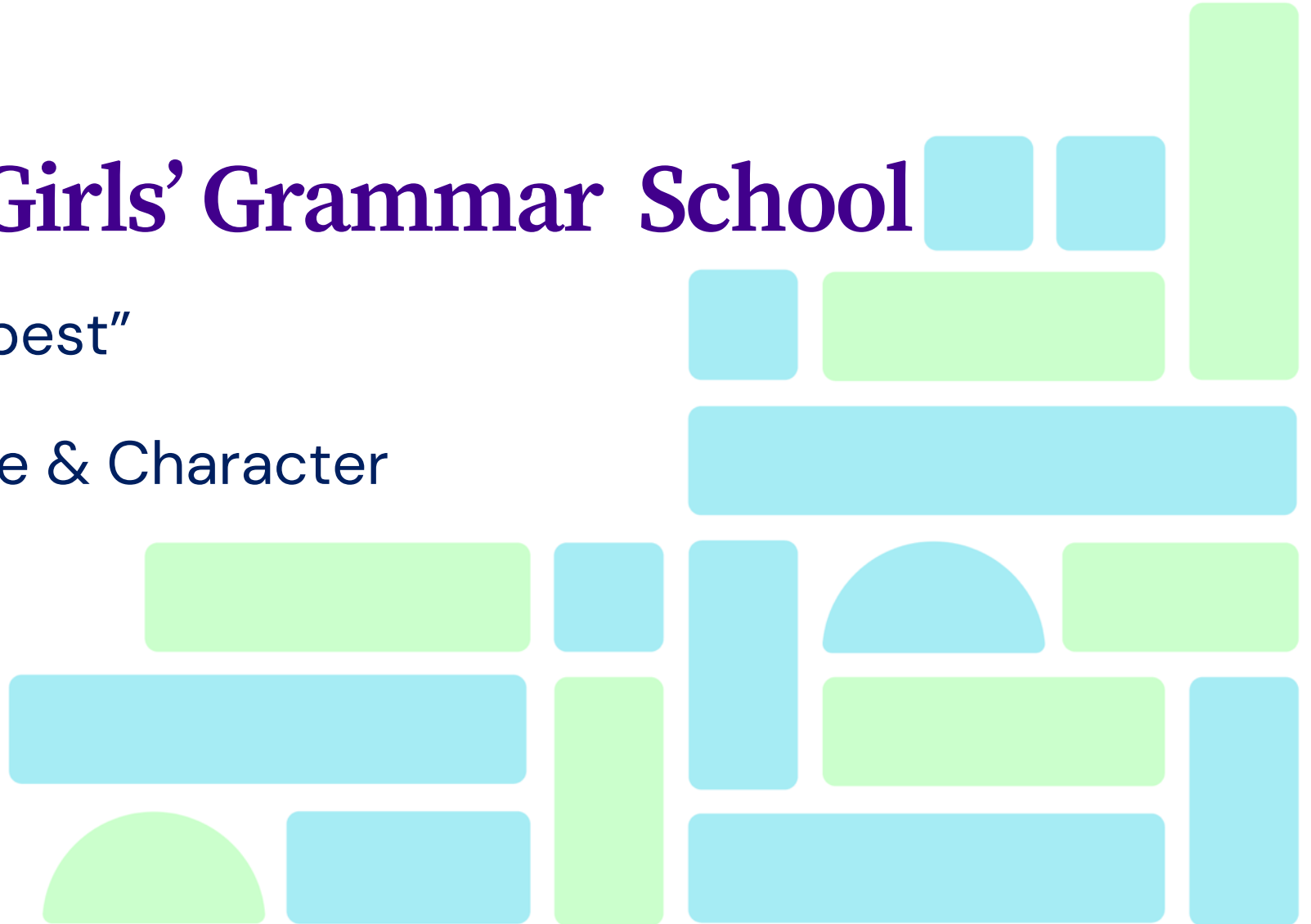


Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School

"Give your best"

Community, Challenge & Character

Sue Waddington
SENDSCO





ASSESS

- Significant and increasing levels of anxiety - persistent and severe absence figures increasing, EBSA, lesson avoidance. Post-Covid syndrome?
- Interventions ineffective - endless 'rabbit hole' cycles with minimum impact
- SEND pupils not managing demands of school - particularly evident in neurodivergent pupils
- Changes in learning behaviours across all pupil groups
- Low confidence levels in teaching staff, frustration and not knowing how to help
- Parents/Carers feeling helpless and a lack of collaboration between school and home - beyond parents' evenings most contact happening when things not going well. Parents feeling isolated and distrustful of school.
- Low profile of SEND across the school



PLAN

- Not enough to address symptoms need to address the cause - thinking about why pupils' behaviours in school have changed, what are their everyday experiences and how this impacts on their learning, capacity to engage fully in lessons, and ability to meet the social and academic demands placed on them
- Safe School and building pupil attachment to school - changing language around absences
- Building staff confidence and changing hearts and minds
- 360° approach - WHOLE school, teachers, support staff, parents, individual pupils. Building relationships and trust among all stakeholders

‘Beneficial for all, crucial for some’



DO - PARENTS

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST

- Transition meetings
- Building connections - In house training and information sessions for parents, coffee mornings and parent WhatsApp group.
- Support in building awareness and understanding - advice documents/training
- Frequent communication - positive messaging. School is just one part of a team around a child.
- Rewording and changing the design of school policies. Moving away from cold, black and white/inaccessible legal terminology to more accessible, warm and welcoming documents. Setting the tone for the school.
- Rewording and change of tone in written correspondence - attendance letters etc.
- Working with all forward facing staff to ensure language and consistent messaging



DO - PUPILS

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST

SAFE SCHOOL

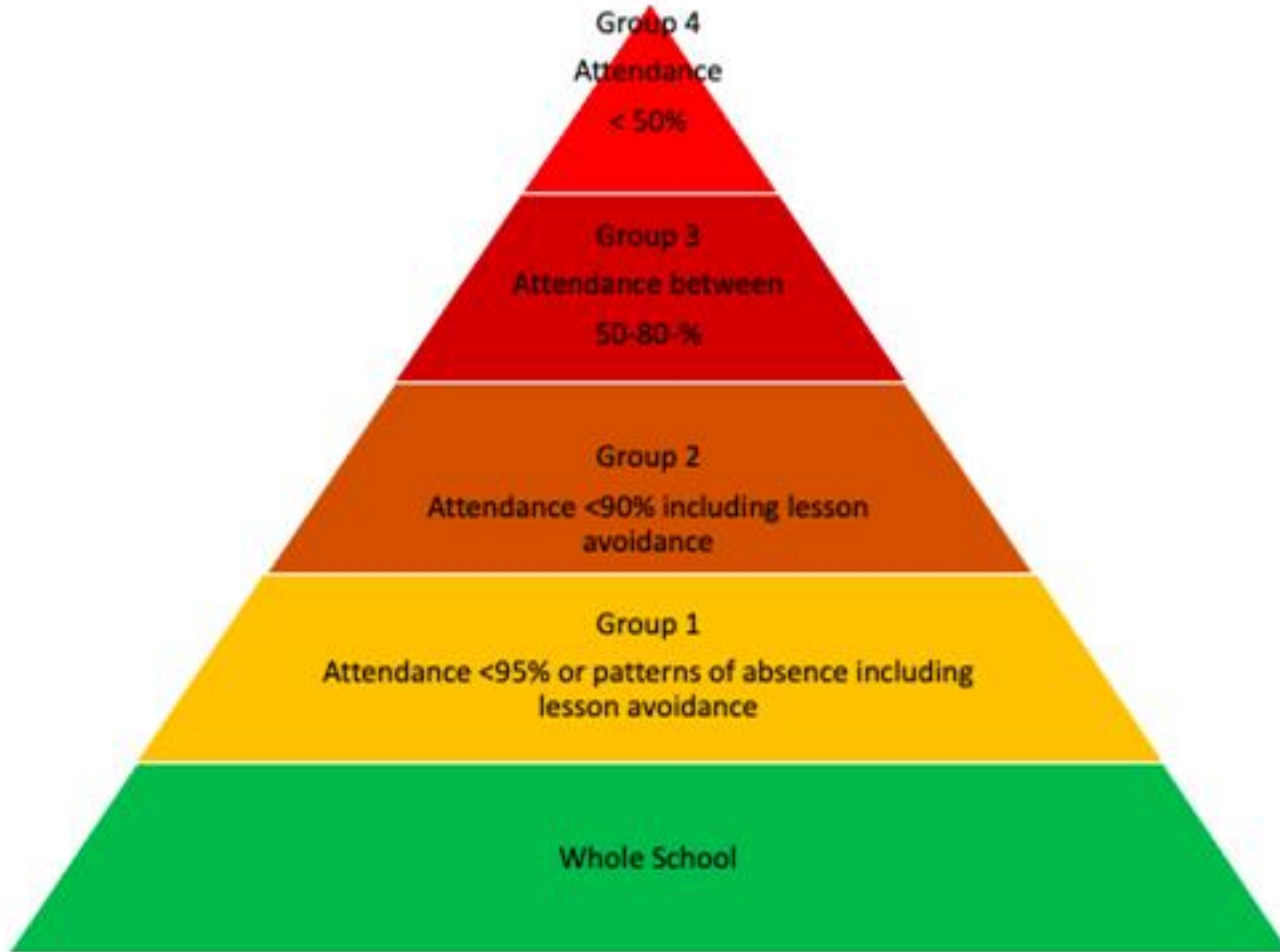
- Building attachment with school
- Positive relationships at the heart of the school - staff welcome pupils at the gate, into lessons etc
- Greater level of informed understanding from staff and lessons planned to support most vulnerable
- Pupil voice - online forms, meetings, assemblies, SEN register
- Positive intervention and support groups - safe spaces for pupils.
- Pupils supporting other pupils
- Out of lesson and re-set cards.
- Behaviour viewed as communication - listening and understanding, treating each pupil as an individual

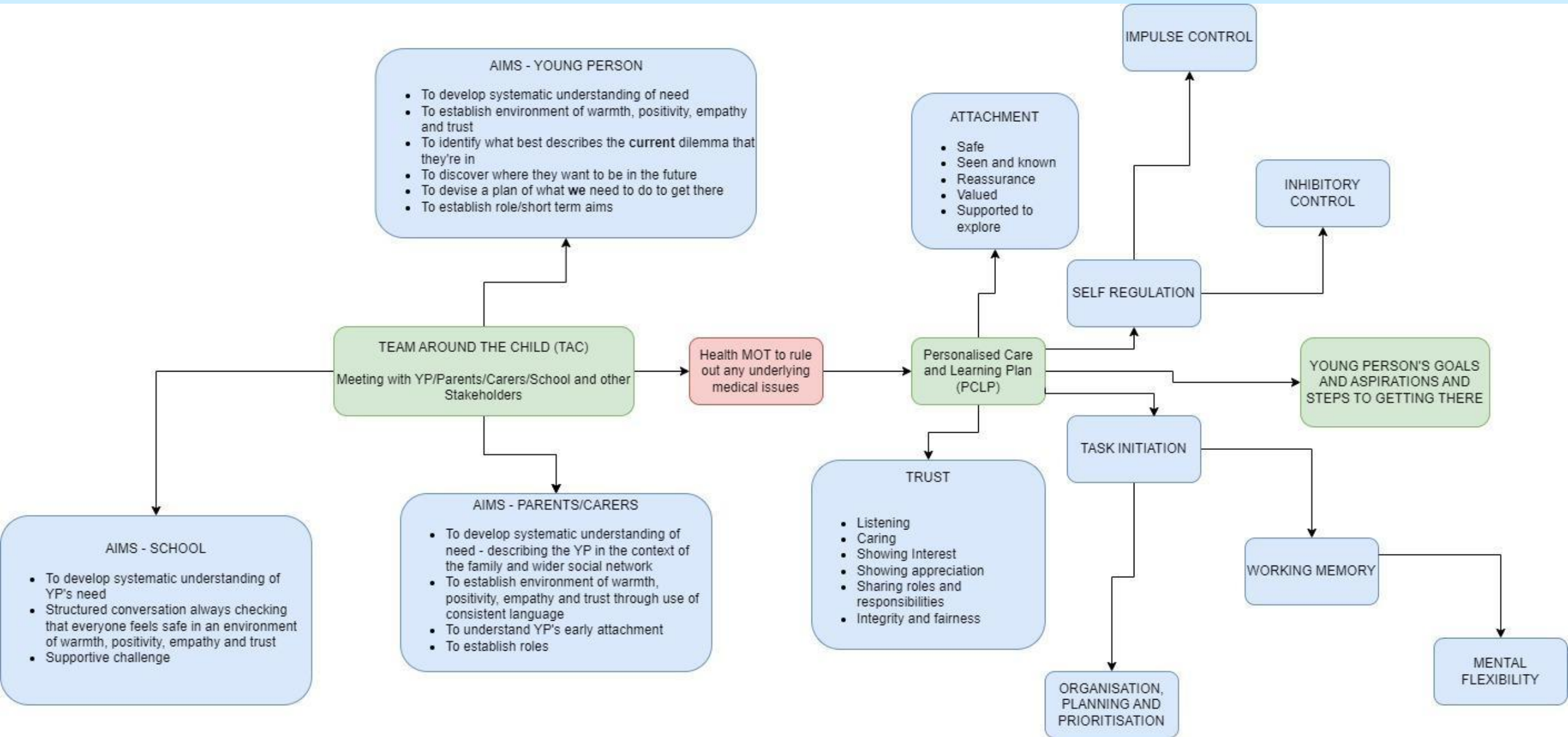


DO - PUPILS

ATTENDANCE AND AVOIDANCE

- Early identification of risk and vulnerability
- Non-judgemental - avoidance is another form of communication
- Graduated approach and early intervention
- Building attachment and sense of belonging
- EBSA stage by stage, focus on skills and necessary tools and supportive challenge
- Recognition of marginal gains
- Team around the child and all stakeholders, including pupil, working collaboratively together







DO - PUPILS

SKILLS BUILDING and EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

- Pilot - Year 7 form time activities - dance, music, chess, board and card games
- 1:1 HLTA check-ins and support with EF challenges

Dance:

Working memory, inhibition control, cognitive flexibility

Music:

Working memory, emotional regulation, attention and focus (inhibition control), impulse control, planning

Chess:

Planning, focus and attention control, strategic thinking, emotional regulation, self regulation



DO - STAFF

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING and CONFIDENCE BUILDING

- Collaborative working - SEN/Wellbeing teams/teaching and support staff
- Raising the profile of SEN within the school - supportive challenge and accountability of staff as part of school improvement process
- INSET - assessment of gaps in knowledge and understanding, myth busting and sharing of QFT strategies relevant to the context of the school
- 'Explore at 4'
- SEN representatives in each department
- SEN register - Pupils as individuals not just diagnoses, QFT strategies and pupil voice included
- Communication - SEN bulletin, weekly staff briefing, staff meetings and INSET
- Whole school strategies that benefit all pupils not just SEN
- Moving away from differentiation model towards inclusive planning



REVIEW and NEXT STEPS

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

- Since implementing our strategies we have seen a marked decrease in lesson avoidance, improved attachment and engagement with school (particularly in relation to vulnerable groups) and PA rates drop from 19.9% (22/23) to 10.9% (23/24). Current PA 5.7%.
- Significant improvement in EBSA and severe absence rates
- Individual case studies

Next steps:

- Executive function screening Y8 and fun, skills building activities tailored to each form group based on findings
- Small group executive function interventions for older pupils
- ND pupil support group
- Whole staff training on EF and actively developing skills as part of curriculum

Thank you!

SENDandInclusion@theeducationpeople.org

Ruth Gately

Specialist Lead Adviser SEND

