WOOLTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

INCLUSION POLICY

2026-2027

BELIEVE • BELONG • BECOME

Belonging • Inclusion • Ambition • Independence

Every child known. Every barrier understood. Every pupil supported to access, belong, participate and achieve. Inclusion is not a separate initiative; it is how Woolton designs teaching, relationships, systems, environments and opportunities.

Policy owner	Inclusion Lead
Senior accountable leader	Headteacher
Approval	Governing Body
Status	Whole-school policy supporting statutory duties
Review	At least annually; earlier if legislation, statutory guidance or school practice changes

Believe in every child. Belong to a strong community. Become the best we can be - together.

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USING THIS POLICY

This policy is an overarching statement of Woolton's approach. It does not replace the school's statutory SEND Information Report, Accessibility Plan, equality information/objectives, safeguarding, attendance, medical conditions or other linked policies.

1. Purpose, status and scope

This policy brings together Woolton Primary School's whole-school approach to inclusion. It explains how the school identifies and reduces barriers to learning, participation, attendance and wellbeing, and how leaders evaluate whether provision makes a difference.

There is no separate statutory requirement for schools to hold a document specifically titled an Inclusion Policy. Woolton chooses to maintain this policy because inclusion cuts across several statutory duties and school systems. Those duties remain anchored in the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and other legislation and statutory guidance, together with required documents such as the SEND Information Report and Accessibility Plan.

This policy is deliberately broader than SEND. It applies to every pupil, with particular attention to disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils known or previously known to children's social care and pupils who face other barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. These groups may overlap.

CORE PRINCIPLE
Inclusion is not achieved by giving every child identical provision. Equity means securing meaningful access, high expectations, belonging, participation and progress through the right teaching, reasonable adjustments, support and environment.

2. Our vision: Believe • Belong • Become

Anchor	What it means for inclusion at Woolton
BELIEVE	We start from possibility, not deficit. We hold ambitious expectations for every child and adapt access without automatically lowering the ambition of the curriculum.
BELONG	Every child is a member of the Woolton community. Pupils should be safe, known, valued and able to participate meaningfully in their class and the wider life of the school.
BECOME	We focus on growth: knowledge, communication, independence, regulation, character, wellbeing and achievement. We review whether support makes a sustained difference over time.

Our practical test is whether a pupil can access, participate, learn, contribute and thrive. Provision is judged by impact, not by the number of adults, interventions or documents attached to a child.

3. What inclusion means at Woolton

Inclusion is the deliberate removal or reduction of barriers that prevent pupils from participating fully and succeeding in school. Barriers may be educational, communication-based, physical, sensory, social, emotional, behavioural, medical, attendance-related, financial, environmental or connected to discrimination or disadvantage.

Identification starts with the child's strengths, needs and experience rather than a label or diagnosis. A pupil may experience several overlapping barriers and those barriers may change over time.

English as an additional language is not, in itself, a special educational need. Staff distinguish language acquisition from SEND while responding appropriately where both are present.

Inclusion does not mean that every pupil must spend every moment in the same space or complete identical tasks. It means that any different or additional provision has a clear purpose, remains connected to ambitious learning and belonging, is reviewed and is in the pupil's best interests.

Woolton is committed to ensuring that no pupil experiences discrimination, disadvantage or exclusion because of disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The school actively promotes equality, dignity and respect for all members of its community

4. Legal, statutory and policy framework

Woolton complies with current law and statutory guidance and distinguishes these from grant conditions, inspection expectations and emerging policy proposals. This matters because the national SEND system is changing, but current rights and duties remain in force until legislation is enacted and commenced.

Framework	Status and relevance at August 2026
Equality Act 2010	Current law. Prohibits unlawful discrimination and requires reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils; underpins the Public Sector Equality Duty and Accessibility Plan.
Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice	Current law and statutory guidance. Includes best-endeavours duties, the graduated approach, EHC processes, SENCO leadership and the SEND Information Report.
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 / Working Together	Current statutory safeguarding guidance. Safeguarding duties apply to all pupils, with particular vigilance where SEND, communication needs or vulnerability can increase risk or create barriers to disclosure.
Working Together to Improve School Attendance	Current statutory guidance. Requires barrier-focused attendance work and close analysis of attendance patterns and vulnerable groups.
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026	Royal Assent received in 2026. It creates and expands duties across children's wellbeing, safeguarding and schools; Woolton will implement relevant provisions as they commence and associated guidance is issued.
Inclusive Mainstream Fund 2026/27	Condition of grant. Schools receiving the fund must publish an annual Inclusion Strategy Statement, including activities and budgeted costs, by 31 December 2026.
Ofsted state-funded school inspection toolkit - September 2026	Inspection framework, not a school policy duty. Inclusion is a separate evaluation area and inspectors consider how pupils achieve, belong and thrive, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those known or previously known to social care and others facing barriers.
Every child achieving and thriving / SEND reform consultation	Government policy direction and proposed reform. Current SEND law, EHCP rights and the existing Code remain in place until legislative change takes effect.

5. Aims and objectives

- identify needs and barriers early and act without waiting for difficulties to become entrenched;
- maintain high aspirations and widen access to an ambitious curriculum through strong teaching, adaptation and reasonable adjustment;
- ensure pupils can participate meaningfully in classroom life, enrichment, trips, sport, performance, leadership and the wider community;
- use the graduated approach consistently and evaluate whether additional provision is implemented as intended and improves outcomes;
- develop pupils' communication, regulation and independence rather than creating avoidable adult dependency;
- work in genuine partnership with pupils, parents and carers while retaining professional responsibility for evidence-based and lawful decision-making;
- use staffing, funding, environments and specialist advice intelligently and sustainably; and
- evaluate progress, participation, independence, wellbeing and belonging, not simply activity completed.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Core responsibility
Governing Body	Sets strategic expectations; fulfils statutory duties; scrutinises the published Inclusion Strategy, funding and impact; appoints appropriate link oversight; and challenges leaders on equity, outcomes and compliance.
Headteacher	Holds overall accountability for inclusive culture, quality of provision, resourcing, staffing, statutory compliance and implementation.

Role	Core responsibility
Inclusion Lead / Lead SENDCo	Leads whole-school inclusion and SEND strategy; coordinates the graduated approach; advises and develops staff; quality-assures provision; works with families and external partners; and reports impact to leaders and governors. The SENCO function is appropriately qualified in line with current requirements.
SENDCo and pastoral teams	Coordinate assessment, provision, intervention and review within delegated roles; maintain accurate records; support staff capability; and ensure agreed actions are followed through.
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ensures inclusion practice remains safeguarding-aware; leads responses where information indicates risk of harm; and works with social care and other agencies in line with statutory guidance.
Phase and subject leaders	Ensure curriculum and teaching expectations are inclusive in practice; identify inconsistency; monitor participation and outcomes; and support teachers to improve.
Class teachers	Remain responsible and accountable for the progress and development of every pupil in their class, including when pupils receive intervention, specialist advice, 1:1 support or spend part of their week in The Bridge.
Teaching assistants / support staff	Deliver agreed support accurately; promote access and independence; provide useful feedback to teachers; and follow safeguarding and recording expectations.
All staff	Create a safe, respectful and inclusive culture; know pupils; maintain high expectations; remove barriers within their role; and record or escalate concerns appropriately.

7. High-quality inclusive teaching

The most effective inclusion strategy begins with high-quality everyday teaching. Universal provision should meet commonly occurring needs and reduce unnecessary reliance on individual adaptations or removal from class.

Woolton uses an evidence-informed two-part model: strong universal classroom practice for all, complemented by carefully selected adaptations and additional support where needed. The effectiveness of support is judged by its impact on learning, participation and independence rather than its intensity or quantity, adaptations must help rather than hinder learning, participation and independence.

7.1 Universal classroom expectations

- Ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum planning that identifies the most important knowledge, vocabulary and skills.
- Clear explanation, modelling and worked examples, with careful checking for understanding.
- Purposeful questioning, talk and opportunities to explain thinking, with particular attention to communication and language.
- Predictable routines, calm and communication-friendly environments and clear organisation.
- Scaffolds that enable access to ambitious learning and are reduced when pupils are ready.
- Flexible grouping based on current learning rather than fixed notions of ability.
- Accessible resources, including visual, sensory, communication and assistive supports where appropriate.
- Effective deployment of additional adults so support increases participation and independence rather than dependency.
- Assessment used diagnostically to identify gaps, misconceptions and the next teaching response.
- Planned access to the full life of the school, including trips, sport, performances, clubs, leadership and enrichment.

7.2 Adapted curriculum

Where a pupil is working significantly outside age-related expectations, curriculum adaptation may be necessary. Adaptation must be coherent, purposeful and ambitious. It should identify appropriate next steps from the pupil's starting points while creating as many meaningful links as possible to the class curriculum and mainstream peers.

For some pupils, communication, interaction, regulation, cognition, physical development, self-care or independence may need to be taught explicitly alongside academic knowledge. A developmentally appropriate curriculum is not a low-expectation curriculum.

8. Early identification and graduated approach

Needs are identified as early and accurately as possible. Staff consider what the pupil can do, what is getting in the way, what has already been tried, what evidence is available and what difference any support has made.

8.1 Assess

- Teacher assessment and observation
- Pupil voice and lived experience
- Parent/carer information
- Attendance, behaviour, participation and wellbeing information
- Screening or assessment tools where appropriate
- Previous records and transition information
- Advice from SEND, pastoral, safeguarding and external professionals

8.2 Plan

The teacher, pupil, family and relevant staff agree the barrier being addressed, the intended outcome, the strategy or provision, who will deliver it, how often it will happen and when impact will be reviewed. Plans should be precise enough to evaluate.

8.3 Do

The class teacher retains responsibility. Additional adults and interventions support the agreed outcome and should link back to everyday classroom learning and participation.

8.4 Review

Review asks whether the strategy reduced the barrier and improved learning, participation, independence or wellbeing. Provision is continued, adjusted, stepped up or stopped according to evidence. A diagnosis is not required before school provides appropriate support.

WOOLTON REVIEW QUESTION
What changed for this child because we did this? If the answer is unclear, the provision needs sharper outcomes, stronger implementation or a different approach.

9. SEND and current statutory plans

Woolton will use its best endeavours to secure the special educational provision required by pupils with SEN and will deliver provision specified in an Education, Health and Care Plan where the school is responsible for doing so. The SEND Information Report sets out the school's detailed SEND arrangements and local offer information.

Requests for specialist advice, EHC needs assessment or changes to provision are evidence-led and based on need. Behavioural presentation alone does not determine whether a pupil has SEND; equally, absence of a diagnosis does not prevent the school from providing additional support or making reasonable adjustments.

EHCPs and current statutory rights remain fully in force. Government proposals for Targeted, Targeted Plus, Individual Support Plans, National Inclusion Standards and Specialist Provision Packages are important future direction, but Woolton will not describe proposed arrangements as current statutory entitlements until the relevant legislation is enacted and commenced.

10. The Bridge - Woolton's inclusion base

The Bridge is being developed during 2026/27 as part of Woolton's mainstream inclusive offer. It is not a separate school, a behaviour sanction or a place to remove pupils from the responsibility of their class teacher. Its purpose is to provide a highly adapted environment for pupils whose level of need cannot always be met safely or effectively in the classroom alone, while preserving belonging to class and school.

10.1 Core principles

- Access is planned, needs-led, reviewed and based on the pupil's best interests.
- Class-teacher responsibility remains. Learning and communication between The Bridge and class must be coherent.
- Mainstream participation is maximised purposefully; it is not measured simply by minutes spent in class, and is evaluated through meaningful engagement, learning and belonging.
- The curriculum remains broad and ambitious, with appropriate developmental priorities including communication, interaction, regulation, cognition, physical development, self-care and independence.
- Entry, use, review and movement out of provision are based on evidence, not diagnosis or behaviour alone.
- Safe staffing, supervision, safeguarding, personal-care arrangements and risk assessment must be secure before provision opens or expands.
- Families and pupils are involved in planning and review in accessible ways.
- Leaders monitor unintended consequences such as separation, reduced curriculum breadth, prompt dependency or loss of peer relationships.

10.2 Review and success measures

Success will be evaluated through individual progress and experience, including academic/developmental learning, communication, regulation, independence, attendance, participation, confidence, relationships, mainstream access and successful transition or reintegration where appropriate.

11. Environment, accessibility and reasonable adjustments

The school environment is part of the inclusive offer. Woolton continues phased improvement of classrooms, EYFS, sensory spaces, the wellbeing corridor and other provision, with calm, organised and communication-friendly environments as the expectation.

The school anticipates barriers where reasonably possible and makes reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Adjustments may relate to teaching, assessment, communication, routines, the physical environment, equipment, timetabling, behaviour responses or access to activities. The Accessibility Plan sets out longer-term improvement across curriculum access, the physical environment and accessible information.

Pupils with medical conditions will be supported so they can access education and wider school opportunities as fully as possible in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

12. Disadvantage and social care

12.1 Disadvantaged pupils

Disadvantage can affect attendance, attainment, wellbeing, confidence and access to wider opportunities. Leaders use the Pupil Premium Strategy and wider school resources to identify and address barriers, monitor outcomes and ensure disadvantage does not become an assumed limit on achievement or participation.

12.2 Pupils known or previously known to children's social care

Pupils known or previously known to children's social care, including looked-after and previously looked-after children, may need coordinated educational, pastoral and safeguarding support. Relevant leaders work with social workers, the Virtual School, families and other professionals, taking account of Personal Education Plans where applicable and maintaining continuity through transition.

Information-sharing is timely, necessary and proportionate. Woolton will implement relevant provisions of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 as they commence rather than assuming that every provision of the Act is already operational.

13. Attendance as an inclusion outcome

Attendance is both an educational entitlement and an inclusion outcome. Woolton does not treat lower attendance among vulnerable groups as inevitable. Leaders analyse attendance and persistent absence at whole-school, group and individual level and look for patterns that may be hidden by headline figures.

Support focuses on identifying the barrier, agreeing action with the family and relevant professionals, reviewing whether attendance improves and escalating appropriately where support does not secure change. SEND, medical or mental-health needs may require reasonable adjustments; reduced timetables are exceptional, time-limited, reviewed and used only in line with statutory and local authority guidance.

14. Behaviour, regulation and relationships

Woolton combines calm, predictable expectations with appropriate individual adjustment. Consistency provides a reliable foundation; it does not mean identical responses in every circumstance.

Behaviour can communicate unmet need, distress, skill deficits or dysregulation, but not every incident is caused by SEND and recognising a function does not remove the need for safety, boundaries or accountability. Where patterns suggest an unmet need, staff review teaching, environment, reasonable adjustments and graduated support alongside proportionate consequences.

Before suspension, exclusion or other significant removal, leaders consider SEND, safeguarding, equality, attendance and unmet need, alongside the impact on other pupils and staff. Any response must be lawful, proportionate and in the pupil's best interests while maintaining a safe and orderly school.

15. Personal development, participation and belonging

Inclusion extends beyond lessons. Pupils should be able to participate, contribute, lead, perform, compete, serve others and develop interests and talents. Leaders track access to enrichment, trips, sport, music, clubs and leadership opportunities by relevant pupil groups and make reasonable adjustments where barriers are identified.

Pupil voice is used to test whether children feel known, safe, valued and able to contribute. Leaders should not infer belonging from provision alone; they consider participation, relationships, attendance, confidence and pupils' own accounts of school life.

16. Safeguarding and vulnerability

Safeguarding and inclusion are closely connected but are not interchangeable. A learning, pastoral, behaviour or SEND concern is managed through the appropriate system; where information indicates risk of harm or a safeguarding need, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSIE 2026 take precedence.

Pupils with SEND and communication needs may face additional safeguarding risks or barriers to recognition and disclosure. Staff remain alert to changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation or communication and avoid explaining away safeguarding indicators because a pupil has SEND or a known diagnosis.

17. Pupil voice and partnership with families

Pupils and families are partners in inclusion. Their views are essential evidence about strengths, needs, barriers and the practicality of support, while professional judgement, statutory responsibility and the child's best interests remain central to decisions.

- Children are supported to communicate views in ways accessible to them, including visual, augmentative or supported communication where needed.
- Families receive clear explanations of needs, provision, intended outcomes, review points and any limits on what the school can provide.
- Difficult conversations are handled respectfully, honestly and transparently, with rationale grounded in evidence.
- Where there is disagreement, leaders record the concern, decision, rationale, agreed actions and routes for review or complaint.

18. External agencies and local partnership

Woolton works with the local authority, health services, social care, educational psychology, specialist outreach, behaviour support, therapy services, the Virtual School and other partners where this is likely to improve outcomes. Advice is not treated as complete when received; leaders record what action was taken and review the impact.

Inclusive transition arrangements are planned for pupils moving between classes, key stages and educational settings, with particular attention to pupils who may experience increased vulnerability during periods of change.

The school promotes the Local Offer and supports families to understand routes to external help. Multi-agency work follows safeguarding, consent and information-sharing requirements, recognising circumstances in which information may need to be shared without consent to protect a child.

19. Training and professional development

Inclusive practice is a whole-workforce responsibility. Professional development is evidence-informed, linked to actual barriers in the school cohort and followed by implementation support rather than treated as a one-off event.

- Teachers and support staff receive development in high-quality inclusive teaching, adaptation, communication and language, SEND and reasonable adjustments relevant to their roles.
- Additional training is prioritised where pupil need, case review, monitoring or new statutory guidance identifies a gap.
- Leaders use coaching, modelling, learning walks, case review and staff voice to check whether training changes practice.
- Specialist and external advice is translated into practical classroom action and shared with the staff who need it.
- Leaders recognise that sustainable inclusion requires effective workforce support, manageable systems and appropriate staff training, enabling staff to meet pupil needs safely and consistently

20. Funding, resources and Inclusion Strategy

Inclusion is funded through the school's overall resources, including core funding, the notional SEN budget, Pupil Premium where relevant, high-needs/top-up funding where applicable and the Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF). Funding streams are not treated as isolated pots where this would prevent coherent provision.

The annual Inclusion Strategy Statement identifies commonly occurring barriers in the cohort, planned evidence-informed activity, intended outcomes, budgeted costs and review of previous impact. IMF expenditure must comply with its conditions of grant and align with at least one of the seven DfE principles of inclusion.

Resources are allocated according to need and likely impact. An EHCP does not automatically imply permanent individual adult support, and the absence of an EHCP does not prevent additional support. Staffing decisions consider safety, learning, independence, sustainability and the needs of the wider cohort.

21. Monitoring, quality assurance and impact

Woolton aims to move beyond evidence that provision exists to evidence that it works. Leaders use quantitative and qualitative information to identify variation, test implementation and adjust strategy. This aligns deliberately with the September 2026 Ofsted strong standard, which places emphasis on rigorous monitoring, swift response to barriers, systematic adjustment and sustained difference.

Question	Examples of evidence
Are needs identified accurately and early?	Teacher assessment; referrals; review records; pupil profiles; timeliness; specialist advice; parent and pupil voice.
Is inclusive practice consistent?	Learning walks; work scrutiny; planning; environmental reviews; provision fidelity; staff voice; case sampling.
Are pupils learning and progressing?	Curriculum assessment; progress from starting points; EHCP/SEN outcomes; communication and developmental measures where appropriate.
Do pupils belong and participate?	Attendance; enrichment participation; trips; clubs; pupil leadership; peer relationships; pupil voice; wider-school participation.
Is support developing independence?	Prompt dependency; self-regulation; communication; transfer of learning; ability to use strategies with less adult support.
Are families experiencing effective partnership?	Meeting records; parent voice; complaints/themes; co-production evidence; follow-through on agreed actions.
Are leaders responding to patterns?	Group analysis; monitoring-to-action trail; adjusted provision; professional development; governor challenge and review.

THE WOOLTON IMPACT CYCLE
Need → evidence → action → review → impact → next action. Leaders should be able to explain what has improved, for whom, how they know and what will happen next.

22. Complaints and concerns

Families are encouraged to raise concerns early with the class teacher, relevant leader or Inclusion Lead so that issues can be understood and resolved promptly. Formal complaints are managed under the school Complaints Policy. Matters relating to statutory EHC processes may also involve local authority decision-making, mediation or tribunal routes as set out in law.

23. Linked policies and documents

- SEND Information Report
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- Complaints Policy
- Inclusion Strategy Statement & Action Plan
- School Development Plan and Self-Evaluation

24. Review and publication

The Governing Body will review this policy at least annually and sooner when legislation, statutory guidance or significant school practice changes. The Inclusion Lead will ensure linked documents remain aligned and staff understand changes affecting practice. The school's Inclusion Strategy Statement is separately updated and published annually in accordance with the IMF conditions of grant.

Governors receive regular reports on attendance, SEND, disadvantage, safeguarding vulnerability indicators, inclusion strategy progress and outcomes for key groups in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's inclusive practice.

Appendix A - Legal and guidance framework

Source	How it informs Woolton practice
Equality Act 2010 and DfE Equality Act advice for schools	Non-discrimination, reasonable adjustments, Public Sector Equality Duty, accessibility.
Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3	SEND duties including best endeavours, SENCO arrangements, EHC processes and SEN information.
SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years	Statutory guidance on graduated response, participation, teacher responsibility and SEND leadership.
Education Act 1996	Core education and attendance duties and relevant SEN provisions.
Children Act 1989 / Children Act 2004	Safeguarding, welfare and inter-agency cooperation.
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026	New and amended duties across wellbeing, safeguarding and schools; relevant provisions implemented as commenced.
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026	Statutory safeguarding guidance effective from 1 September 2026.
Working Together to Safeguard Children	Statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance.
Working Together to Improve School Attendance	Statutory attendance guidance, updated July 2026.
Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions	Statutory guidance on medical needs and participation.
Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance	Statutory guidance relevant to lawful, proportionate decision-making and vulnerable pupils.
Inclusion bases in schools - DfE, June 2026	Non-statutory guidance for high-quality inclusion bases within mainstream schools.
Inclusive Mainstream Fund 2026/27	Conditions of grant and non-statutory support guidance for inclusion strategy and evidence-informed spend.
Ofsted State-funded School Inspection Toolkit	Inspection standards for use from 7 September 2026; Inclusion is a separate evaluation area.
EEF Guide to Inclusive Teaching - July 2026	Evidence base for high-quality universal practice plus carefully selected adaptations and additional support.
EYFS statutory framework	Statutory framework for Nursery and Reception, including equality of opportunity and curriculum expectations.
Every child achieving and thriving / SEND reform consultation	Government white paper and consultation direction. Current law remains in force while reform is developed and legislated.

Appendix B - Glossary

Term	Meaning
SEND	Special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Term	Meaning
SENDCo / SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator.
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan.
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead.
PP	Pupil Premium.
FSM	Free school meals.
PA	Persistent absence - attendance below 90%.
APDR	Assess, plan, do, review - the graduated approach.
IMF	Inclusive Mainstream Fund.
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty.
Reasonable adjustment	A change to avoid substantial disadvantage for a disabled pupil.
Inclusion base	Targeted provision within a mainstream school that remains part of the school and should support meaningful participation and belonging.