SENDIASS Impartiality Policy

Statutory Framework

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015) states that SENDIASS services should be:

“impartial, confidential and accessible and should have the capacity to handle face-to-face, telephone and electronic enquiries.”
SEND Code of Practice January 2016 2.5

In addition when designing SENDIASS services local authorities should take into account those services should be:

“impartial and provided at arm’s length from the local authority and CCGs”
SEND Code of Practice January 2016 2.5

Impartial in this context means:

“Not biased towards or influenced by any particular party, point of view or policy, including local authorities, schools, education ideologies, and campaigns. Not giving priority to any particular impairment, disability or SEN over another; accurately reflects the law.”
IASS Quality Standards Appendix A Definitions

We work in partnership with children, young people, parents and carers towards ‘enabling him or her to achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes’ Children and Families Act 2014, part 3, 19(d)

1. Cambridgeshire County Council SENDIASS is an in-house “arm’s length” statutory service. All SENDIASS staff aspires to offer accurate and impartial advice to all service users, this includes parents, young people, children, practitioners and any other party.

2. SENDIASS policies
   2.1 SENDIASS takes the policies of the local authority into account but does not rely on them and adopts its own policies on key issues
   2.2 SENDIASS policies reflect the values and principles of the service
   2.3 SENDIASS policies reflect the specific role of SENDIASS e.g. Confidentiality Policy
3. The SENDIASS Quality standards for impartial Information and Advice Services states that SENDIASS adopts an impartial stance by:

- offering free, accurate and up to date impartial information
- offering free, accurate and up to date impartial advice
- offering free, accurate and up to date impartial support
- having an impartiality policy that sets out to its users and staff what impartiality is and how impartiality is maintained and demonstrated by the service
- obtains feedback from service users of their perceptions of its impartiality
- access to Independent Support for Parents (IS4P)
- ensuring its staff are trained in SEN law
- Reflecting the perspectives and wishes of parents
- Being seen not to have a vested interest in the outcomes of any discussions
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers who attend decision making meetings are clear whether their role is to
  - support or represent an individual family
  - contribute to discussions on strategic issues
  - participate in making decisions

4. SENDIASS will not:

- Take decisions on behalf of a parent, young person or child
- Give directive advice
- Act on behalf of the Local Authority or other agency

5. SENDIASS will:

- Ensure all its staff are aware and follow its impartiality policy
- Not take sides with any party
- Provides factual information and advice based on what legislation and guidance says
- Provide, parents, carers young people and children with enough information so they can make their own informed decisions.
- Support parents, carers young people and children to speak for themselves and take part in decision making procedures
- Respect, parents, carers, young peoples and children’s views and decisions without making judgments, irrespective of their own views as individuals
- Ensure there is a well-defined relationship between SENDIASS and the Local Authority that encompasses a clear understanding of the impartiality and arm’s length position of the PPS
- Through its best endeavours reflect the views and concerns of parents and parent groups to the local authority and other relevant agencies
- Ensure its staff completes all available levels of the IASS Network/IPSEA legal training so they are aware of law and legal guidance relating to their role.
- Ensure staff is well trained and able to support the partnership approach when attending meetings with parents and professionals, enabling everyone to have a voice.
- Ensure that parents, young people, children and practitioners clearly understand that the role of SENDIASS is to offer impartial support and information
Establish that SENDIASS staff does not have any vested interests in the outcome of any decisions taken in relation to an individual child, young person or family.

Ensure its staff will be well trained and able to support partnership working when attending meetings with parents, carers, young people, children and professionals to enable everyone to have a voice.

Ensure a wide range of literature from both local and national organisations is available to send to parents along with that produced by SENDIASS.

Ensure its literature has its own branding including a service logo which is prominently displayed.

Ensure its website offers leaflets with impartial information about SEN and Disability.

Ensure it provides parents with information about changes to legislation, new guidance, resources, training and consultations relating to SEN and Disability across education, health and social care.

Ensure parents sit on interview panels to recruit SENDIASS staff.

Ensure parents are part of important service development decisions.

Ensure parents needs for advice and information inform its training and information provision.

Sit within a department of the local authority that is separate from the SEND Department.

6. SENDIASS Staff will:

- Inform the SENDIASS manager of any conflict of interest in relation to individual families; parent support groups, schools, nurseries, colleagues or other agencies.
- Inform the SENDIASS manager of any personal or voluntary involvement in issues relating to education or SEN that might impact upon their work.

7. Monitoring

- All casework will be confidentially evaluated to ensure the services provides and is seen to provide impartial information, advice and support.
- All SENDIASS training will be confidentially evaluated to ensure it was impartial.
- Produce an Annual Report with details of service users in relation to its impartiality.
- Publish its Annual Report on its website.
- Ensure the Impartiality Policy is on the SENDIASS website so service users are aware of this policy and can provide feedback, positive or otherwise about how it manages and demonstrates its impartiality.

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