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Whole School SEND Sector-Led Improvement: Professional Development Groups 2023-2024

Membership Pack



# Forward

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the professional development groups. We are thrilled to have you as a member and look forward to supporting you in your professional journey.

We are a consortium of organisations committed to sharing knowledge and building capacity across the school system for SEND. We believe that good practice exists within the system, and we should seek and create opportunities to share. Working in partnership with the Education and Training Foundation and the Autism Education Trust, we are delivering the DfE Universal SEND Services programme.

As a member of the groups, you will have access to a range of resources and a supportive community of colleagues who are committed to equity in education for children and young people. We believe that this community will be an invaluable source of knowledge, inspiration, and guidance for your ongoing professional development.

We look forward to working with you and supporting you in your professional development. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of children and young people with SEND.

Erica Wolstenholme – National SEND Coordinator

Contents

[Forward 2](#_Toc133576508)

[Introduction to the Professional Development Groups 3](#_Toc133576509)

[Expectations of participants 4](#_Toc133576510)

[Time Requirements 4](#_Toc133576511)

[Code of Conduct 4](#_Toc133576512)

[Project Timeline 5](#_Toc133576513)

[Pre-Reading 5](#_Toc133576514)

[Ethics Pre-Reading for Meeting 1 5](#_Toc133576515)

[FAQs 6](#_Toc133576516)

[Legal and Data Protection Information 7](#_Toc133576517)

# Introduction to the Professional Development Groups

Thank you for your interest in joining Whole School SEND’s Professional Development Groups.

You should now have been contacted by Whole School SEND with an offer to join one of our regional groups.

[Please complete and sign the participation agreement](https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/2F68-6Q5/professional-development-groups-participation-agreement?pfredir=1) using the link below by Friday 19th May.

Please contact helenc@nasen.org.uk if you have any further questions or require this document in an alternative format.

Outcomes for children and young people with SEND continue to be below outcomes for those with no SEND; exclusion and absence rates are higher for those with SEND, and there is growing concern about the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND. Improving SEND provision across all schools is key to improving all outcomes.

Building on the successful implementation of our Professional Development Groups in 2022-23, we are continuing the project and recruiting to new groups for this academic year.

Each group will be facilitated by a WSS Regional SEND Lead but will be driven by its members, providing a space for peer-to-peer reflection, challenge, and support. Each participant will be supported to design, implement, and evaluate their own school-improvement project. The groups are open to school-based colleagues in all roles and across all school types, including colleagues from further education, and particularly those with an interest in leading projects within their schools. These small, focused professional development groups will enable the deepening of understanding and embedding of effective practice across schools through a collaborative and iterative process of trialling over time.

While this cycle of professional development groups will run until February 2024, we hope to support participants to remain involved with professional development networks. We hope the outputs of this project will also demonstrate to other practitioners the benefits of a sector-led model of improvement and development and inspire them to create their own networks.

# Expectations of participants

In order to ensure each group is worthwhile for participants, we ask that each member attends every group meeting (barring exceptional circumstances).

Each member will be sent a Learning Journal which we will ask you to complete over the course of the project. The Regional SEND Lead who is facilitating your group will spend some of the first session explaining how best to use this journal.

We require that your learning journals are submitted to Whole School SEND at the end of the project (March 2023). This is to allow us to collate findings from the project and provide evidence of our work to the Department for Education.

All information from the learning journals will be anonymised and school data removed before final reports/public findings are published.

We ask participants to communicate with the wider school community that they will be participating in this work, and to give opportunity for further questions if asked. This is so that we can ensure that we are operating under ethical guidelines.

Participants will also be asked to complete two surveys – one at the beginning of the project and one at the end – to help us evaluate the impact of the project. The first survey will be shared with you and completed during the first meeting.

# Time Requirements

The idea is that the groups will be very much sector-led and the amount of time you devote to the group will depend on your own individual circumstances. Sufficient time needs to be available to include:

» Time spent developing and implementing your school-improvement project.

» Five virtual group meetings lasting no longer than 60 minutes.

» Up to three professional conversations across the course of the project and lasting approximately an hour each.

» Time spent recording learnings in your learning journal and reflecting/implementing practice and strategies in your setting.

# Code of Conduct

These groups are designed to be supportive spaces for practitioners to share experiences and develop together, with the aim of improving provision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

As such, we ask that all group members agree to the following:

» Remain respectful in all group meetings and discussions.

» Do not share information relating to other schools/settings.

» Challenge differing opinions and viewpoints constructively and in a non-judgemental fashion.

# Project Timeline

The below gives approximate timings for aspects of the project and lists key dates for your participation. Please note that project timings are provisional, and some dates may change throughout the course of the project. Any deadlines will be confirmed to you in direct communications throughout the course of the project. You will shortly receive any email detailing your groups specific meeting dates/times and a series of calendar invitations.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 18th May – 30th May | Read the Ethics Pre-reading |
| Wednesday 24th May | Deadline to return signed [Participation Agreement](https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/2F68-6Q5/professional-development-groups-participation-agreement) to confirm participation in the project. |
| June to July | The first group meetings in each region will take place.  Members will complete a [baseline](https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/2F68-5IY/pd-groups-baseline-survey) survey during this meeting.  Individual professional conversations will begin - Regional Leads will contact participants directly to arrange dates and times |
| September | Second group meetings will take place |
| October | Third group meetings will take place |
| December to January | Fourth group meetings will take place |
| February | Fifth group meetings will take place.  Survey 2 will be distributed to participants |
| Friday 1st March | Deadline to return completed Learning Journal to WSS central team (details will be shared closer to the time) |

# Pre-Reading

In advance of your first group meeting, we recommend reading and familiarising yourself with the below documents and resources.

These will help you understand the approach of the WSS Professional Development Groups and ensure you are prepared for the start of the project.

» [2021-22 WSS Professional Development Groups Overview](https://nasen-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/WSS%20Professional%20Development%20Groups%202021-22.pdf)

» [EEF SEND in Mainstream Guidance Report](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send)

» [EEF A School’s Guide to Implementation](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/implementation)

» [Ethics Pre-Reading for Meeting 1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gwv3OJCkQ4eZstv2CCePhD-cWNKRMPmg/view?usp=sharing)

## Ethics Pre-Reading for Meeting 1

Ethical considerations for school-based projects

When planning your project, ask yourself these questions to ensure that the project is ethical:

1. Is the proposed project of benefit to our pupils and/or their families and/or our staff? 2. Does the proposed project address pertinent question(s)?
2. Is your project appropriate for the question(s) being asked?
3. Will you have access to all necessary skills and resources to carry out the project? 5. Do you need to conduct a risk assessment to determine?
   1. whether there are any ethical issues
   2. the potential for risks to the organisation, or the health, safety and well-being of participants; and
4. 6. Will your project comply with all requirements of legislation and good practice relating to safeguarding and health and safety?
5. 7. Have you agreed the roles and responsibilities of those carrying out the project with your Headteacher or equivalent?

Once you have decided on the content and scope of your project, you will need to:

Provide a summary/overview of the intended project for staff, pupils and parents – this could be part of a school newsletter, in a staff meeting, on the website etc ∙ This should include information about how the outcomes of the project may be shared beyond the school, emphasising anonymity as well as the benefits of the work ∙ Provide contact details (probably for yourself) of someone to discuss it with further, and to enable opt-out if desired. This rarely happens in practice but is an important step.

When conducting your project, ask yourself:

1. Are you following best practice for the collection, storage, and management of data?
2. Are agreed roles and responsibilities being fulfilled?

Please speak with your professional development lead if you have any concerns or further questions relating to ethics.

# FAQs

1. **Who should I contact if I cannot attend a meeting/1:1 session?**

If you cannot attend a meeting or 1:1 session, you should contact the Regional Lead facilitating your group.

1. **Will meetings/professional conversations take place during school hours?**

Some of the meetings and professional conversations may take place during school hours. Please ensure you can attend all group meetings for your region before accepting a place on this project.

1. **Can one of my colleagues attend a meeting/1:1 session in my place?**

Unfortunately, the project is designed as a professional development network for individuals. Although we hope you will share learnings and reflections with your colleagues, they are not able to attend the meetings or sessions in your place.

1. **Can I share learnings/reflections from the group across my school/setting?**

Yes! We very much hope that the discussions you have in the group settings will enable you to implement new strategies in your own setting.

1. **I am not an expert in SEND, can I still take part?**

Yes. The groups are designed to be a supportive space for practitioners to develop their skills and confidence with regards to SEND. You do not need to have any level of prior knowledge with regards to SEND and we are not expecting participants to be experts.

1. **I am not a SENCO, can I still take part?**

Yes. The groups are open to practitioners from all roles, to support our ethos of a whole-school approach to SEND. We hope each group will have a mix of individuals from different roles, settings and phases to promote collaboration and provide new perspectives.

1. **If I change my role/setting during the school year, can I remain part of the group?**

Please let your Regional SEND Lead know if you will be changing role or setting during the course of the academic year. We will consider each case individually but will endeavour to have all members remain part of the group.

1. **What happens if I decide to withdraw from the group?**

We understand that your commitment to your school may mean you have to leave the group midway through the project. If this occurs, we ask that you still submit your learning journal, even if incomplete, to support the group findings from the project.

# Legal and Data Protection Information

As part of this project [Whole School SEND: Professional Development Groups], we will collect personal data relating to you and information relating to your school and/or employer.

The personal data we will collect relating to you is as follows:

» Your name;

» Your email address;

» Your school/employer;

» Your job title;

All data is collected solely for purposes of the Whole School SEND contract and will be kept confidential and stored securely. We will share data and information relating to this project with our funder, the Department for Education, solely for the purposes of reporting on our contract. We will only share the following personal information with our funder relating to you:

» Your school/employer;

» Your job title;

Information collected during other parts of the project, including data and information taken from participants’ Learning Journals and survey responses, may be used in reports and publications disseminated on the Whole School SEND website but all identifiable school information will be removed. This information may be shared with the Department for Education for the purposes of reporting on our contract.

Full information about nasen’s legal and data protection policies, terms and conditions for membership and other useful information can be found on our website: <https://nasen.org.uk/nasen-policies-and-legal>

If you have any questions in relation to our privacy policy or how we use your personal data they should be sent to dpo@nasen.org.uk or addressed to the Data Protection Officer, nasen, 4&5 Amber Business Village, Amber Close, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 4RP.

The confidentiality of this work may be breached if a safeguarding concern arises, in which case we will follow the school/setting policy. If you have any concerns relating to safeguarding during the course of this project, please contact Helen Chidler – [helenc@nasen.org.uk](mailto:helenc@nasen.org.uk)

By signing the attached participation agreement, you agree to nasen’s Terms and Conditions and Legal and Privacy policies.

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