

THE HAVEN

Operated by the Autistic Girls Network charity — 1196655 (England and Wales), SC054837 (Scotland)

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Specialist online education for neurodivergent young people

Document	English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy
Version	05.26
Status	live
Last reviewed	21 May 2026
Next review	21 May 2027
Owner	Head of Curriculum
Approved by	Proprietor + Governing Body

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how The Haven supports learners for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). It recognises that linguistic diversity is a strength, and that learners' first languages are an asset to be valued, not a difficulty to be overcome.

2. Our context

As an online provision, The Haven's curriculum is delivered in English. The majority of our learner population is English-first, but we welcome and support learners for whom English is an additional language. EAL is treated as a feature of the learner's profile, not a deficit.

3. Principles

- Bilingualism and multilingualism are strengths, not problems.
- EAL is not, in itself, a special educational need.
- Need for language support and need for SEND support are assessed separately.
- First-language use at home is supported and encouraged.
- Learner well-being and identity are central; cultural identity is respected.

4. Identification and assessment

At admission, families are invited to share information about the learner's language background, including:

- First language(s).
- Languages used in the home.

- Prior schooling and the language(s) of instruction.
- Current English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Where appropriate, an initial assessment is carried out to identify support needs. This is done with care: where the learner has experienced significant disengagement from education, the priority remains re-engagement, not formal testing.

5. Support in practice

Practical support for EAL learners at The Haven includes:

- Use of visual material, demonstrations and worked examples alongside spoken and written instruction.
- Permission to use chat-based contributions where this lowers the language demand.
- Access to lesson recordings and transcripts for repeated review at the learner's own pace.
- Adjustment to the pace of new vocabulary introduction in any subject.
- Where possible, peer or mentor support.
- Examination access arrangements where applicable, including bilingual dictionaries in line with awarding body rules.

6. Distinguishing EAL from SEND

Difficulties with English do not, in themselves, constitute special educational needs. Where a learner appears to have additional needs alongside EAL, assessment is carried out carefully to distinguish language acquisition from underlying SEND. The SEND Policy applies where additional needs are identified.

7. Cultural respect

Educators are expected to:

- Pronounce names correctly and check pronunciation with the learner.
- Avoid assumptions about cultural background based on language.
- Engage with cultural identity as a strength in curriculum content.
- Address any prejudicial behaviour from peers in line with the Anti-Bullying and Anti-Racism policies.

8. Working with families

Communication with families is provided in plain English. Where it would help, key information may be translated, summarised or supplemented with visual material. Families are encouraged to maintain first-language use at home.

9. Roles and responsibilities

- Head: Strategic oversight of EAL provision.
- SEND lead: Distinguishes EAL from SEND where there is overlap.
- Educators: Apply EAL-supportive practice in lesson design and delivery.
- Mentor: Supports the learner's wider engagement and identity.

10. Related documents

- SEND Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Anti-Racism Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Examinations Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy

11. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head and approved by the Board of Governors.

Document version	1.0
Date issued	May 2026
Next review	May 2027
Document owner	Head
Approved by	Board of Governors

This PDF was generated from the published policy at policies.thehavenonline.school on 26 August 2026. The website is the authoritative, most current version of this policy.