

Snowflake School

'Improving the quality of family life'

Staff Survival Guide

Introduction



Snowflake School is dedicated to providing a specialist education for pupils, aged 5–16 years, with a diagnosis of autism. Snowflake School addresses each pupil's special educational need through the scientific application of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), Verbal Behaviour (VB) methodology and access to a highly individualised curriculum.

Snowflake School Vision

- To improve the quality of life for our pupils and their families.
- To be a centre of ABA/VB excellence.
- To provide high quality, individual and group teaching and learning experiences for all our pupils using evidence-based practices.
- To ensure all our pupils reach their full potential.
- To provide a safe, secure, motivating and fun teaching and learning environment.
- To share our practice with others (families, other schools etc.)

We achieve this by:

- Motivating pupils to learn through relevant, reinforcing and exciting activities in a safe environment.
- Building self-esteem, empowering pupils to become valued citizens, making a contribution to society.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity within an inclusive setting.
- Working in close partnership with families to ensure consistency of practice between school and home.
- Partnership with other schools, professional agencies and the community.
- Disseminating knowledge of ABA VB through high quality practice and continued research (Snowflake School respects BCABA and BCBA and provides training for all staff).

Our school

Snowflake School opened in September 2008. The school was founded by a parent, Mrs. Faryaneh Akhavan, and is run as a not-for-profit charity by a group of Trustees. All pupils are funded, either by Local Authorities or privately, and receive 1:1 provision. Pupils are also taught in groups and by specialist music, PE and Yoga teachers, as well as weekly swimming lessons and group drama therapy (in secondary). Our maximum group size is 6.

Contacts and contact numbers

The telephone 020 7370 3232 is normally staffed in term time from 8.00am to 4.15pm. An answer phone operates outside these times. You must call your supervisor before 7.30am if you are unable to attend school for any reason. Text messages for this purpose are not acceptable.

You can also contact the Headteacher on: 07875 653597 (mobile)



Safeguarding



You are responsible for the health and safety of the pupils in your care. We follow the guidelines in KCSIE 2021, you must make sure you have read and understood Part 1.

Please note:

- Pupils should be supervised at all times. At lunchtimes, and playtimes pupils may only be in classrooms under supervision.
- The health and safety representatives for the school are the Headteacher and Chair of Trustees and they will make an inspection each term. You must, check the environment before use and report any immediate hazards – e.g. exposed wires, ripped and raised carpeting, etc, to the representatives ASAP.
- Snowflake School ensures that we safeguard our pupils at all times. Our site is CCTV monitored 24/7 and people can only access the site when invited via controls in the office and entrance.
- All staff and volunteers are DBS checked and the school follows the national Safer Recruitment guidelines.
- Our Designated Lead for Safeguarding is our Head Teacher, Kerry Sternstein. All child protection concerns are passed onto her or the deputy DSLs (Deputy or Assistant Heads). If you have any concerns about a child, you must report them immediately. If you have any whistle blowing concerns you must pass them on to Fay, the Chair of Trustees.
- The school has qualified First Aid trained staff and all staff are trained in basic first aid. Parents/carers must be informed of any first aid needs/accidents via a phone call or through the Home/School diary.
- Our site is Risk Assessed on a regular basis to ensure the health and safety of all. We also complete risk assessments for all trips and activities outside school.
- No visitor is allowed entry to the school unless known to us or has an appointment. If staff are unsure, they must ask the person to wait at the entrance and check with the office. Proof of identity must be asked for. All visitors should sign in/out using the computerized system.

Fire drills

Fire drills are held regularly. Fire exits must be always kept clear, and pupils must be familiar with the route to be taken to the assembly point in event of fire. When the fire alarm rings pupils must use the external doors to exit and walk quietly to the playground. The supervisors will call their registers. Staff and pupils **MUST NOT** re-enter school until they are given the 'all-clear' by the Headteacher, Assistant Head or person in charge of the premises on that day i.e. Teacher/Supervisor.

Equal Opportunities

Snowflake School is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all employees, workers and applicants, adheres to this policy at all times and will review on an on-going basis all aspects of recruitment to avoid unlawful or undesirable discrimination. Snowflake School will treat everyone equally irrespective of sex or marital status (including civil partnerships), sexual orientation, gender identification, race, disability, age or religious belief and places an obligation upon all staff to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

Snowflake School does not discriminate unlawfully when recruiting or in offering any terms of employment or terms of engagement for temporary workers. Snowflake School requires that each candidate for employment is assessed only in accordance with the candidate's merits, qualifications and ability to perform the relevant duties required by the vacancy.

Complaints and monitoring procedures

Any complaints of discrimination on any ground should be brought to the immediate attention of the Headteacher of Snowflake School in writing. If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, it should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Trustees.

Part-time workers

Snowflake School recognises that part-time employees must be treated on the same terms as full-time employees (albeit on a pro rata basis) in matters such as rates of pay, holiday entitlement, maternity leave and parental leave. The school also recognises that part-time employees must be treated the same as full-time employees in relation to training and redundancy situations.

Harassment policy

Snowflake School is committed to providing a work environment free from unlawful harassment. We have a comprehensive set of policies, many of which can be viewed by visiting our website, and all are available in the policy folder in the office and by request from the School Administrator. All staff must be aware of and adhere to all school policies.

Whos Who



Trustees

- Chair of Trustees: Mrs Faryaneh Akhavan
faryaneh@snowflakeschool.org.uk

- Mr Shahrokh Bagherzadeh.
- Mr Ardavan Farmanfarmaian.
- Mrs Mahnaz Kamel.
- Mr Simon Cheetham.

Primary



Andrea Moldovan-Grunfeld
Assistant Head



Athina Vasileiadou
Speech and Language
Therapist



Camila Etchevers
Admin Assistant



Jessica Floyd
Supervisor



Paulina Prochniak
Supervisor



Samantha Martin
Supervisor



Siddiqua Hassan
Primary Admin



Stephanie Wellington
Lunchtime Supervisor

Primary & Secondary



Jody Tranter
Deputy Headteacher



Victoria Knight
Teacher



Molly Sutton
Trainee Teacher



Kerry Sternstein
Headteacher

Secondary



Aibhín O'Neill
Supervisor



Angel Moore
PA to HT and CEO



Azar Alekanan
Lunchtime Supervisor



Catherine Stephenson
Assistant Head



Muna Mohamed
Speech and
Language Therapist



Poonam Sharma
Supervisor



Sandra Wright
Secondary Admin



Polita Lopez
Supervisor



Leah Jasubhoy
Senior Teacher



Tara Morgan
Senior ABA/VB
Supervisor



Charlotte Chu
Music Teacher



Faryaneh Akhavan
CEO



The School Day



8.30am	All staff should be at school.
9.00am	Staff collect pupils from the entrance area or taxi.
9.15am	Morning sessions begin.
10.15-10.45am	Snack and Playtime (refer to duty rota).
12.00 midday	Lunch and Playtime (refer to duty rota).
1.00pm	Afternoon sessions begin.
2.45pm	Circle time.
3.00pm	End of school for pupils.
3.00-4.00pm	Data/Prep time for staff (Mon/Wed/Thurs/Fri).
4.00-5.00pm	Whole staff training until 5pm (Tuesday).

School organisation

The Snowflake Leadership Group (SLG) is made up of the Headteacher, Deputy and Assistant Heads, Senior Teacher and Lead Supervisor. All new members of staff are allocated a line manager/supervisor. All staff are expected to support new staff and lead by example.

- New staff will meet their line manager on a regular basis and will follow induction procedures. All new staff with have a mentor for the first term until they have passed their induction period, (two terms probation).
- Each tutor has a key pupil for 1 term.
- Staff must not walk around school carrying hot drinks or glass containers during school sessions.
- Data and programmes must be kept up to date.
- Staff must write in the pupils' Home/School diaries on a daily basis.
- All staff are expected to take part and contribute towards training.
- Staff must sign in/out using the computerised Inventory system.
- Staff should follow all policies. New staff will be given time to read key policies as part of their induction. All policies available on website.
- Staff will be regularly observed, and feedback will be given.
- Training will be provided as a regular programme.
- Staff must be prepared take part in all activities (including swimming).

Educational visits

Visits are encouraged. A risk assessment must be filled in and given to the Headteacher before the visit. Where possible a preliminary visit by the teacher concerned should be arranged to ensure suitability. Although many galleries, etc, charge admission, staff may, on many occasions, be able to get in free by arrangement and are encouraged to do so. The following procedure must be carried out when planning an outing:

- Decide on the venue and whether it supports the curriculum.
- Availability of places and dates should be determined by the teacher/tutor and a provisional booking made after consultation with the Headteacher.
- A risk assessment form should be filled in and given to the Headteacher, who will then authorize. The school Bursar should be asked to book transport if necessary. A letter about the trip will be sent to parents/carers.
- A Designated Group Leader will lead the trip/outing.

Behaviour

Snowflake School uses an individually centred approach to learning with the aim of increasing communication and independence through scientific analysis (ABA/VB) to enable all within its care to flourish. It is designed to help all members of the community to make sound judgements and take appropriate actions which are consistent with relevant legislation and the aims and values of the school.

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

Using Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Snowflake School actively encourages socially significant acceptable behaviours and reduces and replaces socially significant unacceptable behaviours. This is largely done through positive reinforcement. While this policy encompasses all at the school, pupils may have their own individual behaviour plan and risk assessment to enable their time at the school to be as positive and successful as possible. We share these with parents.

Team Teach training

We offer Team Teach training to all staff to help them positively handle pupils in a safe and appropriate manner (the Headteacher leads on this). Staff should adhere to our guidelines at all times. Physical management of a child is always the last approach to be used unless there is a SIGNIFICANT RISK OF HARM. Our full policy is available from the school office in the Policy File.

Medicines and Pupil Welfare

- No medicines should be kept in school without the parent completing a medication form and the Headteacher being made aware of this. All medicines should be locked in the medicine cabinet (medical room).
- Medicines can be administered in school if the parents complete and sign medication Request Form. (MARS).
- If a child leaves the school premises for any reason, such as a dental appointment, the parent must report to the office with the appointment card/or have previously informed the tutor and sign the pupil out.
- If a pupil is absent, this must be noted in the register.
- Pupils that feel unwell/are hurt must be taken to the medical room (as appropriate).
- If a child is sick/has an 'accident' the bodily fluid must be cleaned up ASAP by any available staff.
- Care plans for the pupils with medical needs are kept near the medical room and these plans explain how to treat their condition and what to do in a medical emergency.
- The Headteacher Deputy/Asst Head always makes the final decision as to whether or not parents need to be asked to collect their child due to illness.

Unplanned/planned staff absence

Leave for dentist/doctor appointments must be made outside school hours, unless in the case of an emergency or a specialist appointment (i.e. with a consultant). If you are not well enough to come into school, you must phone your Supervisor before 7.30am. You must contact the school before 3.00pm if you are aware that you will be absent the following day.

A certificate is needed from your doctor if an absence extends to seven working days. If this falls either side of a school holiday a letter from the doctor is required to say that you were fit to work on the day that the holiday began. Otherwise pay may be stopped for this period. See absence policy for paid/unpaid leave. Unpaid leave of absence may be available with permission of the Headteacher/Chair of Trustees.

School Development Plan

The school has a development plan (SDP) which sets out the targets for the school year, the time scale, and person responsible for implementing any change. Ideas from staff are incorporated into the Development Plan.

Monitoring a pupil

Effective monitoring and recording is vital in cases where there is no direct disclosure of abuse or when the child has communication problems. Tutors and Supervisors play a valuable role due to their closeness to the pupils and the regular contact they have with them. Good records can be valuable contributions to children protection conferences.

Consider these elements when there is a concern for a child:

- Patterns of attendance.
- Changes in mood.
- Changes in attitude.
- Changes in social groups.
- New or more extreme behaviours.
- Changes in relationships with peers and staff.
- Appearance.
- Changes in family situations.
- Responses to swimming or changing.
- Parental comments in home school diaries.

Dealing with disclosures:

- It is vital to offer the child time to talk.
- Don't judge or express horror.
- Only use open ended questions e.g. Can you tell me what happened?
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Never use leading questions e.g. Was it that hit you?
- Record what the child is saying using the actual words they are using.
- Note any questions that child raises.
- Make notes as soon as possible.
- These notes must be secure and confidential.
- If possible, use a silent witness (someone close by) to listen and record clearly and to clarify.
- Check the notes with the pupil.
- Always sign and date the notes.
- Show to the safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

Never:

- Take photographs.
- Attempt a medical judgement.
- Remove clothing.
- Record a disclosure.

Fundamental principles for protecting yourself

- Always treat the young person with dignity and respect.
- Look after the young person in the same way in which you expect to be looked after.
- Use the same rules you would in any situation.
- If something does go wrong, then tell someone.
- Be as public as you can.
- Always avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Do not bring your mobile phone into class. Any valuable possessions brought into school including mobile phones are done so at your own risk, the school will not replace lost, broken or stole items.
- Do not post any pictures of yourself at school or students on social media.
- Do not ever take photos of students on your personal devices.
- Be careful of what and where you post private photos on social media as some pupils or staff may be able to access your private photographs or information.



ABA Tutor Case Study: Nasteya loves to see children make progress as a result of her teaching at Snowflake School

Nasteya Mahamud has been trained in Applied Behaviour Analysis and is in her first year as a tutor.

Seeing improvements

Nasteya loves being a tutor and says it is the only job she has done where she gets to see the results of her efforts on a weekly basis. She says: "It is lovely to see that a child has mastered a task or improved their social skills as a result of your work with them. At the end of term you can marvel about how far a particular child you have been working with has come."

Intensive teaching

Nasteya has been trained in the science of ABA and has been putting what she has learned into practice for a year. She says: "I give one-to-one support, which is very rewarding. I worked intensively with one child on his postural stability. The occupational therapist put together exercises I implemented on a daily basis to help with this and I provided data on how well the child was doing on a weekly basis. It was evident that the exercises had an effect on him as he became more balanced, physically. It was great to see him make improvement."

Good support

As with any job there are, of course, challenges. For me personally, it can be upsetting to see a child I work with being unsettled. However, we are equipped to deal with this in the best way possible for that particular child. What makes times like this easier is the support you get from colleagues and regular training. You never feel you are on your own, there is always someone with a wealth of knowledge to answer any questions you may have."

Small classes

Nasteya graduated in Law and worked as a mental health law paralegal and then with a charity that aimed to support disadvantaged children London-wide, before transitioning into teaching children with special needs. She says: "There are six children in each class and they all have different needs so they are not in the classroom at the same time. The children are timetabled to work in various parts of the school and are brought together during registration at the beginning of the day and circle time at the end of the day."



One-to-one tuition

"On a typical working day I come in at 8am to give myself an hour before the children arrive to look at targets for the child I am working with and prepare the resources I need. I do table teaching on a one-to-one basis where we engage in structured work. This focuses on the child listening to instructions and working on a particular skill for a certain amount of time that is tailored to that child. This may be for one minute or 30 minutes."

Fun activities

"With each table session follows a natural environment teaching session. This mainly consists of teaching the child more targets, but in a fun way. I follow the child's motivation and teach without the child even knowing they're being taught something. The school day finishes at 3pm for the children, but at 4pm for the staff. The last hour gives us chance to input data about the work we have been doing. There are days that are more difficult than others and I personally love that our Assistant Head often encourages everyone to leave as soon as the kids have left."

Devising programmes

Nasteya worked with one child who would bolt quite regularly. "We put programmes in place to replace this behaviour. First, we encouraged him to request if he wanted to bolt. Then, slowly, we started to teach him where he can and cannot run. We encouraged him to have a good run round the playground at lunchtime and in a garden that we take the children to regularly, but we explained to him that when we are in school, we walk. Through months of repeating this, he learnt to not bolt as much as he used to. It's still a work in progress, but progress nonetheless."

Asking for help

"I like Snowflake School because it is a place where you are equipped well to do your job. There is always someone to answer your questions and the consistent training we receive on a weekly basis is fantastic. In addition to this, I personally like that there is no unnecessary micromanagement and paperwork. All of this combined makes it a joyful space to work in. I would tell new teachers starting at Snowflake School that to begin with, it might seem like you have a lot to take in. But take it one day at a time, the ease of the job will come with practice, so don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Everyone is very approachable and helpful."



Teacher Case Study: Leah enjoys every moment of her varied day teaching at Snowflake School

Leah Dhote is now a Senior Teacher at Snowflake School, having previously worked there as both a Tutor and Supervisor.

Rewarding role

Leah finds teaching at Snowflake School both rewarding and satisfying. She says: "No two days are ever the same and I never know exactly what is going to happen, but I love seeing children I have taught make progress. I had a pupil who started at the same time as I did at Snowflake School. He was four years old, non-verbal and not toilet trained. Last year I was his class teacher and he was verbal, able to learn in a group, can communicate, and write sentences. His Mum says she is now able to take him out and he can make friends with other children, which is fantastic."

Career progress

Snowflake was Leah's first school after leaving university. She says: "I graduated in Psychology and then did a Masters in Special and Inclusive education. I volunteered for a while to get some experience and then joined Snowflake School, where I was a Tutor for the first four years, before taking on the Supervisor role. Last year, I did my teacher training while continuing to work at the school and now I have become a Senior Teacher."

Variety of subjects

"There are six pupils per class and a primary and secondary site. I work four days a week at the primary site and one day a week at the secondary site. I teach academic subjects, such as Phonics, Maths, Science and Art and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education. I am also the Relationships and Sex Education lead for the school."

Challenging work

"It is challenging delivering the RSE curriculum to pupils as the information has to be both age appropriate and suitable for their levels of understanding. We have to educate them about personal space and what is appropriate touch, and what is inappropriate. We also have to educate them about privacy and on-line safety."



Important steps

"The day starts at 8.30 and I see pupils either one-to-one, or in small groups for national curriculum lessons. Each pupil will have different targets to achieve. Progress can sometimes seem slow, but even tiny steps are important. It is great to see someone with no form of communication whatsoever begin to communicate in a small way and immediately their barriers to learning reduce."

New ideas welcome

"I would tell new staff starting at the school that first of all, we have a great team. It is now quite a big team as it has expanded to cover two sites, but we work together well. There is a lot of opportunity for career progression here as my own path shows. There are plenty of chances for training and lots of potential for trying new things. The school is always open to new ideas. If you are dedicated and willing to put in the work, you will be able to follow your interests and try out new ways of providing learning experiences for our children."

Get to know pupils

"New staff should be open to learning and prepared to ask lots of questions. Our senior supervisor gives new tutors two weeks of intensive training before they even go into a classroom. You have to be willing to take on all the information, and must never underestimate the importance of getting to know the child you are teaching and forming a good relationship with them," Leah says.

Learning journey

"A piece of good advice I was once given that has always stayed with me is to remember that it is about the learning journey and not just the end result. If things don't work out exactly as you planned it doesn't matter, provided the pupil has learnt from the process and you have both enjoyed it."



I don't want to get it wrong, so...

What do I call everyone?

We all use first names.

What should I wear?

Sweatshirts and school polo shirts (provided) must be worn at all times with practical trouser/leggings or a suitable skirt. Footwear must be robust and suitable. If staff choose to wear jewellery it is at their own risk. The school will not replace/pay for items of jewellery that may be broken in the course of their work.

Where should I park?

There is no parking at the Primary site.

There is parking available for the Secondary site at the nearby Morrisons car park, off Steyne Road, for £6 a day.

Can I go out at lunchtime?

This time is your own time. If you do leave the building, please remember to sign out and then in again. The signing out book is kept in the office. Please ensure you are back on the premises in good time to prepare for the afternoon's lessons.

What would it be inappropriate for me to ask pupils to do?

- To return your drink cup at playtimes.
- To escort strangers around school.
- To leave the buildings and grounds.
- To admit adults or pupils onto the premises.
- To keep a secret.

What is expected of me in school?

- To maintain a commitment to raising the achievement of all pupils in school and to high expectations and respect for their social, cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds.
- To recognise the importance of being part of a team and to develop good working relationships with all members of staff.
- To demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour that you expect from your pupils.
- To remain motivated and to take responsibility for your own professional development with support from senior members of staff.
- To have a professional attitude towards your teaching and to establish a purposeful learning environment where your pupils feel secure and confident.

Are there any things that are frowned upon?

- Smoking: this is not allowed anywhere on the school site.
- Shouting: raising your voice at pupils or other adults in anger is unacceptable.
- Humiliation: this is an unacceptable form of punishment.
- Leaving cups around school, in your classroom or in communal areas.
- Untidy, outdated or irrelevant displays: it is your responsibility to create a stimulating environment for your pupils.
- Clutter: your classroom should be well organised and an efficient, work-like environment (tidy classroom = tidy thinking).
- Mobile phone not permitted in school and MUST always remain in lockers.

Snowflake School Vision and Values

At Snowflake School our principal Aim is: "To improve the lives of the children and families by working with our community of staff, pupils and families and following our underpinning **SUPER** values of;



Safe



Understanding



Patient



Enthusiastic



Respectful

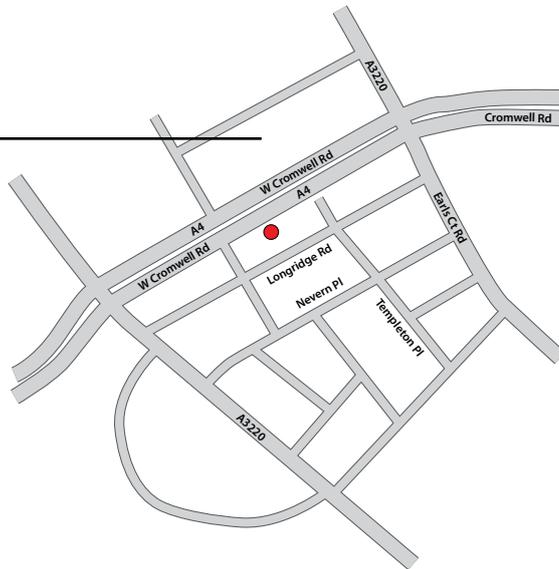




How to find us

Primary Site:

46a Longridge Road, London SW5 9SJ



Secondary Site:

10-14 Crown Street, London W3 8SB

