



**Acorn**  
Education Trust

# Link 2 – Guide for Schools

*Vision for SEND:*

*We believe that every child in every school should aspire to achieve their potential. We embrace the philosophy of learning for all and strive to prepare the children in our schools for their future in their time.*

*Vision for Link 2:*

*Every child attending Link 2 will progress in their social and emotional and/or communication and interaction skills to ensure that they can either re-integrate fully to their mainstream primary school or move on to the next stage in their education. Children will feel safe, valued and supported at Link 2 in order that they aspire to be the best they can be.*

## What is Link 2?

The Link 2 will be a purpose-designed set of two classrooms annexed to New Close Primary School. It is a nurture group centre offering temporary education placements to children who find learning in a mainstream primary school extremely challenging. It will be staffed by one teacher and one TA in the first instance.

## Why Link 2?

A need for Link 2 has been established in collaboration with all the schools in Acorn Education Trust who highlight that nurture provision is highly desirable and indeed necessary for some children who experience extreme social and emotional difficulties.

We will focus on the following as key aims and objectives:

- To support children to recognise their emotions, conduct and learning needs and the impact on their behaviour.
- To support children to become more independent in managing their behaviour.
- To support children to be ready to re-integrate to their own primary school and have a bank of strategies to employ in the classroom.
- To support schools in diagnosing reasons for poor behaviour and having effective strategies to manage it.

## Access to Link 2

All Link 2 children should already be supported at SEN Support (with a My Support Plan) or EHCP. Schools will need to evidence strategies already implemented through their SEND paperwork. Schools will need to apply to the SEND Director for a place who will visit the child in their own setting prior to placement at Link 2. Schools will need to provide the following documentation to apply for a placement:

- A comprehensive MSP or EHCP and review documents.
- A risk assessment.
- Any de-escalation or manual handling plans.
- A One Page Profile showing the child's voice.
- A Link 2 application form.
- A completed SNIP behaviour audit.
- Any outside agency reports in relation to the child for the last two years.

Discussions would then be held with the SENCo and Headteacher of the primary school alongside the parents/carers. A personalised action plan would be developed for the child's time at Link 2. The child and their parents will have the opportunity to visit Link 2 and meet the staff.

Placements will not usually start straightaway in September of an academic year as we believe all children should have the opportunity for a fresh start each year.

**There is not a guaranteed place for each school.** Places will be allocated strictly according to need.

### Placement in Link 2

Children may be offered a placement of 8 weeks initially at Link 2. The placement would then be reviewed with a re-integration plan to the primary school. Some children may require longer intervention. Some children may need a regular part-time placement. Some children may require extended transition back to their home primary school. The placement will be bespoke to the individual. There would be **no more than 10** children placed at Link 2 at any one time. This is in order to offer children an appropriate level of support. Consideration is carefully given to the mix of children in the setting at any one time. There are not 10 places per se as it will depend on who is attending and the extent of their needs.

Children will wear their own primary school uniform.

Children remain the responsibility of the home school in terms of behaviour, attendance and academic progress. Weekly updates will be sent to schools and parents. The Link 2 is **not** a separate school. We will make our best endeavours to ensure that no child is excluded from Link 2, however there may be circumstances where this proves necessary.

Schools are responsible for arranging with parents/carers as to how the child will get to Link 2.

### What programmes will the children follow?

Children will be taught Maths and English on a daily basis and as far as possible will build on their current skills in these areas in order that they continue to progress in basic skills. Another significant part of the learning is based around a social, emotional and mental health curriculum.

Students will have access to personalised behaviour programmes and will build their own "toolkit" to take back to their home primary school. Many children require a programme focussing on engagement to begin with.

Children will also have access to:

- Outdoor learning
- PE
- Games and social skills
- Topic – could be science, geography, history etc.

As far as possible, learning will be personalised and tailored to individual need. There will be some whole-class, some 1:1 and some smaller group work. Some students may need choices for independent work. Learning will be shared with the home primary school and there will be an expectation that this is acknowledged in order to continue the “link” and ensure that children do not become isolated in Link 2.

See curriculum statement for Link 2 alongside this.

### Assessment

The SNIP behaviour audit will be used to inform the Link 2 teacher of key behaviours prior to starting at Link 2. As the teacher gets to know the child, the Thrive group profiling will be used. Individual Thrive profiles may be requested if needed. All students using Link 2 will undertake some work with a member of staff to identify their likes and dislikes, any anxieties and how they feel about school. They’ll also be helped to identify what they would like to change and plans to achieve this. Other assessments may be carried out during the placement period in order to further identify need, for example, a Resiliency Scale, Boxall Profile, any cognitive assessment required (e.g. reading, spelling, numeracy, vocabulary, dyslexia portfolio) where there is evidence of need. Ongoing tracking of an individual will take place to monitor longer term impact using the Thrive group profile. All assessment will be shared with the home school.

### Staffing

Link 2 is staffed by three members of staff. The SEND Director will have oversight of the effectiveness of the provision and the placement of children according to need.

### Timetable for Link 2

The Link 2 will operate Monday to Friday on a slightly reduced basis to mainstream schools. The starting timetable will be:

<b>Day</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Finish</b>
Monday	9.15	14.30
Tuesday	9.15	13.15
Wednesday	9.15	14.30
Thursday	9.15	13.15
Friday	9.15	14.30

Timetables for each day will vary slightly, but will be shared with parents at the end of the week in preparation for the following week.

## Safeguarding

See separate document.

## Applying for a place

An application form is available from the Senior SEND Administrator, Heather Taylor ([hrt@kingdown.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:hrt@kingdown.wilts.sch.uk)) who will forward the necessary details and arrange for the SEND Director to visit your school.