



INFORMATION, ADVICE, AND GUIDANCE (IAG) POLICY

2026 – 2027

Document Title	Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) Policy
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Applies To: Small Steps employees, Behaviour Therapists, Case Supervisors, administrative staff, contractors and other professionals involved in supporting students and families

1. Purpose

Small Steps Learning Difficulties Centre LLC is committed to providing students and their families with clear, accurate, balanced and appropriate Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). The purpose of this policy is to ensure that families receive timely and meaningful support when making decisions concerning their child's education, inclusion, intervention, therapeutic support, development, wellbeing and access to external services. As a centre supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), developmental differences, learning needs and related support requirements, Small Steps recognises that families may require guidance beyond the direct services provided by the centre. IAG is therefore an important part of Small Steps' family-centred, person-centred and multidisciplinary approach. This policy establishes the principles and procedures through which Small Steps will provide IAG while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, respecting parental choice and ensuring that recommendations remain within the competence, authorised scope and available resources of the Small Steps team.

2. Policy Statement

Small Steps Clinical Team (Programme Director and Case Supervisors) will provide Information, Advice and Guidance that is:

- Child-centred and focused on the student's safety, dignity, wellbeing, development, independence and quality of life.
- Individualised according to the student's assessed strengths, needs, circumstances and educational setting.
- Evidence-informed and based on available assessment findings, direct observation, clinical data and relevant information from the family, school and involved professionals.
- Clear, balanced and understandable to families.
- Consistent with the professional competence and authorised scope of the staff member providing the guidance.
- Respectful of the family's values, circumstances, preferences and right to make informed decisions.
- Free from inappropriate pressure, conflicts of interest or guarantees regarding outcomes.
- Provided in a manner that promotes continuity of support and collaborative working.
- Documented appropriately where the guidance relates to significant clinical, educational, safeguarding, referral or transition decisions.

IAG does not replace independent medical, diagnostic, psychological, educational or other specialist professional advice where such expertise falls outside the scope of Small Steps services.

3. Scope

Small Steps Learning Difficulties Centre LLC operates as a social care service provider licensed by the Community Development Authority (CDA), Dubai. IAG is provided only within the activities, professional categories, conditions, and scope of services authorised under Small Steps' current CDA licence and applicable CDA requirements.

This policy applies to Information, Advice and Guidance provided in connection with:

- Initial enquiries and intake.
- Student observation and enrolment.
- Assessment and goal setting.
- Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) programmes.
- Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy where applicable.
- Mainstream classroom inclusion.
- Individualised Education Plans and educational planning.
- Behavioural and developmental support.
- Parent collaboration and coaching.
- Safeguarding and wellbeing.
- External assessments and referrals.
- Transitions between services, schools or providers.
- Discharge or the ending of Small Steps services.

4. Principles of Information, Advice and Guidance

4.1 Student-Centred Practice

All IAG must place the student's best interests at the centre of decision-making. Guidance should support meaningful outcomes including communication, independence, self-regulation, participation, social development, learning, functional skills and inclusion. Clinicians will not recommend intervention solely for the purpose of making a student appear or behave more typically. Recommendations should instead promote functional skills, autonomy, participation, safety and quality of life.

4.2 Family-Centred Practice

Families are key partners in the intervention process. Parents and guardians should be provided with sufficient information to understand:

- Their child's identified strengths and needs.
- The reason guidance or referral is being provided.
- The available options where known.
- The potential benefits and limitations of different forms of support.
- Appropriate next steps.
- Any relevant consent, documentation, scheduling or fee requirements.

Families remain responsible for deciding whether to follow a recommendation or access an external service, except where required by safeguarding or legal reporting obligations.

4.3 Professional Competence and Scope

Staff must only provide advice or recommendations within their professional competence, authorised role and scope of practice. Where a student requires support beyond the competence, resources or authorised scope of Small Steps, the matter must be referred to the appropriate Case Supervisor, Programme Director or other relevant professional. Staff must not present themselves as qualified to provide medical, diagnostic, psychological, educational or therapeutic opinions outside their recognised role or qualifications.

4.4 Accuracy and Transparency

Information provided to families must be accurate to the best of the staff member's professional knowledge and based on available evidence and information. Staff must communicate honestly regarding:

- Qualifications and professional roles.
- The services available through Small Steps, expected outcomes, risks, and limitations of services.
- Assessment findings and Progress.
- Fees where applicable.

Small Steps does not guarantee treatment, educational, behavioural or developmental outcomes.

5. Information Provided to Families

Small Steps clinicians may provide information concerning:

- The Small Steps programme and intervention approach.
- Applied Behaviour Analysis and evidence-based teaching strategies.
- Initial observation and assessment procedures.
- Individualised programme development.
- Student goals and progress.
- Mainstream inclusion and readiness.
- Individualised Education Plans.
- Communication, functional, behavioural, adaptive and developmental needs.
- Speech and Language Therapy.
- Occupational Therapy.
- Parent collaboration and generalisation of skills.
- Attendance and participation expectations.
- Safeguarding, health and safety procedures.
- External services and referral pathways.
- Transition and continuity planning.

Information should be presented in a form that is appropriate to the family's needs and, where possible, explained in clear and accessible language.

6. Advice and Guidance Relating to Student Needs

Advice may be provided when Small Steps identifies a need through:

- Direct observation.
- Initial or ongoing assessment.
- Daily intervention and behavioural data.
- Progress monitoring.
- Mainstream classroom observation.
- Parent/School/External reports.
- Multidisciplinary consultation.
- Changes in the student's presentation, functioning, risk or circumstances.

Advice should be proportionate to the identified need and should clearly distinguish between:

- Strategies included in the student's Small Steps programme.
- General guidance that families may consider.
- Recommendations for consultation with another professional.
- External referrals where support falls outside the scope or resources of Small Steps.

7. External Referral and Signposting

Where information identified during intake, assessment, intervention, school participation, transition or discharge indicates that a student may benefit from assessment, treatment, medical care, specialist expertise or a level of support beyond what Small Steps can safely or effectively provide, an external referral or signposting recommendation may be made. Before making a referral, the Case Supervisor should review relevant information, which may include:

- Direct observations.
- Assessment findings and Progress data.
- Behavioural information.
- Risk information.
- Family and School input.
- Information from other professionals involved with the student.

The family should then receive clear and balanced IAG explaining, as applicable:

- The identified area of need.
- The reason further assessment or specialist input is recommended.
- The type of professional or service that may be appropriate.
- Relevant professional qualifications or authorisation requirements.
- Available referral pathways known to Small Steps.
- Any information that may assist the family in making an informed decision.

Small Steps will not require families to use a particular external provider unless this is required by the partner school, competent authority or another applicable formal arrangement. Families remain free to choose an appropriately qualified and authorised provider.

8. Conflicts of Interest and Provider Recommendations

Where Small Steps provides information regarding an external professional, clinic or service, staff must act transparently and, in the student's, best interests. Any relevant professional, organisational or financial relationship between Small Steps and a suggested provider must be disclosed. Staff must not accept personal incentives, commissions, or benefits in exchange for directing families to a particular provider. Guidance should focus on the type of expertise or service required rather than presenting a single provider as the only suitable option.

9. Continuity of Support

Small Steps recognises the importance of avoiding unnecessary interruption to a student's support. Where appropriate and safe, the team may support continuity by:

- Maintaining suitable elements of the current programme during a transition period.
- Providing reasonable time for transition planning.
- Coordinating with the receiving professional or service with appropriate consent.
- Sharing relevant information necessary to support continuity.
- Preparing a transition or discharge summary where appropriate.
- Identifying strategies, or accommodations that may assist the student in the next setting.

Continuity arrangements will depend on the student's needs, the nature of the referral, available resources, safeguarding considerations and the responsibilities of the receiving service.

10. Information Sharing and Consent

Personal and student information must be handled in accordance with Small Steps' confidentiality and data protection requirements. Where Small Steps proposes to share information with an external professional or organisation, written parent or guardian consent should normally be obtained. With appropriate consent, information shared may include:

- Relevant assessment information.
- Current goals and targets.
- Progress information.
- Effective teaching or behavioural supports.
- Communication strategies.
- Inclusion information.
- Relevant risk information.
- Information necessary to support transition or continuity.

Only information that is relevant and necessary for the stated purpose should be shared. Information may be disclosed without parental consent where required by law, safeguarding duties, regulatory requirements or where necessary to respond to a serious and immediate risk.

11. Safeguarding and Urgent Concerns

Safeguarding takes priority over routine IAG procedures. If information obtained during discussion, assessment, intervention or consultation indicates an urgent concern relating to abuse, neglect, exploitation, immediate medical risk or other significant danger to the student or another person, staff must follow Small Steps' safeguarding and emergency procedures. The matter must be escalated immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate. Where required, information may also be shared with the partner school safeguarding team, School Clinic, competent authority, regulator, emergency service or law-enforcement agency. Routine referral procedures must not delay action necessary to protect a student from immediate harm.

12. IAG and Diagnostic Services

Small Steps does not currently provide diagnostic assessment as part of its standard ABA, Speech and Language Therapy or Occupational Therapy assessment processes. Where a family requires diagnostic clarification, Small Steps may provide IAG concerning appropriate external referral pathways and the type of suitably qualified professional who may be able to undertake the required assessment. Families should be informed clearly that developmental, behavioural, ABA, SLT or OT assessment conducted for intervention planning does not in itself constitute a diagnosis unless the assessment is expressly provided as an authorised diagnostic service by an appropriately qualified clinician. If diagnostic services are introduced by Small Steps in the future, families will receive separate information concerning clinician qualifications, scope, assessment procedures, consent, fees, reporting and any applicable regulatory approvals before the service begins.

13. IAG in Relation to Mainstream Inclusion

Information and guidance regarding mainstream inclusion should be developed collaboratively with the student's family, Small Steps team and the partner school. Considerations should include:

- Behaviour regulation and Sensory processing needs.
- Communication and social engagement.
- Group learning skills, and ability to tolerate and participate in classroom routines.
- Academic and developmental goals.
- Level of adult support required.

Guidance regarding inclusion should be individualised and reviewed regularly. No single assessment result should determine a student's inclusion plan in isolation. Decisions should take account of the student's overall presentation and the perspectives of members of the multidisciplinary team.

14. Parent Advice and Coaching

Case Supervisors may provide reasonable advice and coaching to parents to support the generalisation of skills beyond the intervention setting. This may include guidance concerning:

- Routines.
- Behaviour support and use of visual support, prompting, and reinforcement strategies.
- Communication.
- Functional independence.
- Consistency across environments.

The student's Small Steps intervention programme remains primarily focused on school-based intervention and functioning. General parent guidance does not mean that Small Steps assumes responsibility for implementing or supervising a home-based treatment programme. Home sessions are not currently provided by Small Steps. Where home concerns require specialist assessment or intervention beyond what can reasonably be supported through parent guidance, an external referral may be recommended.

15. Communication of IAG

IAG may be communicated through appropriate channels including:

- Observation feedback.
- Clinic meetings.
- Progress reports.
- Individualised Education Plan meetings.
- Written recommendations.
- Transition or discharge summaries.
- Email communication with the Case Supervisor.
- Multidisciplinary meetings involving authorised professionals.

Detailed questions concerning programming, assessment or recommendations should be directed to the student's Case Supervisor through email or within a dedicated meeting time.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

16.1 Programme Director

The Programme Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that IAG provided by Small Steps is appropriate, ethical and consistent with organisational policy. Responsibilities include:

- Providing oversight for complex or high-risk referrals.
- Ensuring advice remains within professional scope.
- Supporting ethical decision-making.
- Reviewing concerns regarding the quality or appropriateness of guidance.

- Supporting safeguarding escalation where necessary.
- Overseeing multidisciplinary and external professional collaboration.
- Ensuring that IAG processes are implemented consistently across Small Steps.

16.2 Case Supervisors

Case Supervisors are primarily responsible for student-specific IAG. Responsibilities include:

- Reviewing assessment, observation and progress information.
- Discussing recommendations with families.
- Identifying needs requiring further assessment or referral.
- Coordinating with schools and involved professionals.
- Documenting significant guidance and referral decisions.
- Supporting continuity and transitions.
- Escalating issues outside their competence or authority to the Programme Director.

16.3 Behaviour Therapists

Behaviour Therapists may provide routine factual information about the student's day and implementation of approved programmes, but must not independently make clinical diagnoses, alter programme recommendations, recommend specialist services, or provide advice outside their authorised role. Any question requiring supervisory or professional judgement must be referred to the Case Supervisor.

16.4 Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are encouraged to share relevant information about their child, communicate significant changes in health, medication, behaviour, educational circumstances, or outside services, ask questions where recommendations are unclear, participate in meetings and planning, consider referrals and guidance in the context of their child's individual needs, and provide consent where they wish Small Steps to liaise with an external professional.

17. Recording IAG

Significant IAG should be documented in the student's records, including the identified concern or need, advice or guidance provided, reason for any referral, provider or service type discussed, agreed actions and follow-up arrangements, and any transition planning where applicable. Routine day-to-day communication does not require a formal referral record unless it results in a significant programme, safeguarding, referral, or service decision.

18. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All IAG records are confidential and must be handled in accordance with Small Steps' Data Protection Policy. Staff must ensure that personal information is collected and used only for legitimate purposes, shared only where accurate, relevant, and proportionate, accessed only by authorised individuals,

communicated through appropriate channels, stored on approved systems, and supported by clear records of parent consent and information-sharing decisions.

19. Equality, Dignity and Respect

IAG must be delivered in a manner that respects each student and family regardless of disability, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, family circumstances or other personal characteristics. Staff must avoid judgemental, discriminatory or stigmatising language. Small Steps recognises neurodiversity and seeks to provide guidance that supports each student's individual strengths, preferences, needs and right to meaningful participation.

20. Concerns About Information, Advice or Guidance

Parents who have concerns regarding information, advice or guidance provided by Small Steps may raise the matter with:

- The student's Case Supervisor.
- The Programme Director.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead where the concern relates to student safety or welfare.
- The Head of Operations where appropriate.

Concerns should be reviewed promptly and without retaliation. Where appropriate, a family may also seek independent professional advice or contact the relevant professional credentialing body or competent authority directly.

21. Monitoring and Review

Small Steps will review this policy at least annually and may revise it sooner where required due to changes in services, professional practice, regulatory or safeguarding requirements, identified risks or incidents, feedback from families, schools or professionals, or changes in referral pathways or multidisciplinary arrangements. The most current approved version of this policy will apply.

22. Related Small Steps Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Small Steps Parent Handbook 2026–2027.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Applicable partner school policies and procedures.

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