Privacy Policy

Privacy Policy
The SEND Friend takes the privacy and confidentiality of the families I work with seriously. This Privacy Policy explains how I collect, use, store and protect personal information when you visit my website, contact me or use my SEND advocacy and advisory services.

The SEND Friend is operated by Laura Thorne as a sole trader.

Please be aware that The SEND Friend Limited is also a registered limited company, of which I am the director. This company is currently dormant and does not provide the services described on this website. Unless expressly stated otherwise, services provided through The SEND Friend are provided by me, Laura Thorne, trading as The SEND Friend as a sole trader.

The dormant limited company is not the data controller for client information provided in connection with these services. For the purposes of UK data protection law, the data controller is Laura Thorne trading as The SEND Friend.

The SEND Friend is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

ICO registration number: C2054040

Contact details:

Laura Thorne trading as The SEND Friend
Unit 82A, James Carter Road
Mildenhall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP28 7DE

Email: info@thesendfriend.co.uk

Before you instruct my services
Before instructing The SEND Friend, you should be aware that, by its very nature, SEND advocacy involves working with information that can be highly personal and sensitive.

In order for me to understand your child or young person's needs, circumstances and the issues you are seeking support with, you may choose to provide documents containing information about their education, disability, physical or mental health, diagnoses, development, behaviour, emotional wellbeing, family circumstances and other aspects of their life. This may include EHCPs, professional assessments, medical or diagnostic information, school records, correspondence and Tribunal documentation.

You remain in control of the information you choose to provide to me. I may explain that particular information or evidence would be helpful, or that I cannot properly complete a piece of work without it, but the decision about what you provide remains yours.

You also have a choice about how you send information to me. My primary method of receiving documents is email, and clients may also choose to use WhatsApp for messages, documents and voice notes. You may choose to use other third-party file transfer or cloud-sharing services where you prefer to do so, particularly for larger files. Where you independently choose such a service, you should satisfy yourself that you are comfortable with its privacy and security arrangements.

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I will take the privacy and security of the information you entrust to me seriously and will use reasonable and proportionate measures to protect it once received. However, no method of electronic communication, file transfer or electronic storage can be guaranteed to be completely secure.

By choosing to instruct The SEND Friend, you should therefore be comfortable with the nature of the information that may need to be processed in order for me to provide the service you require. You will never be required to provide information simply because I have requested it, although there may be circumstances where I cannot properly advise you or complete the requested work without access to relevant evidence.

Information I may collect
The information I collect will depend upon the service you use and the circumstances of your case.

This may include:

- your name and contact details;
- your child or young person's name, date of birth and educational information;
- information about schools, colleges and educational placements;
- EHCPs, draft EHCPs and EHC Needs Assessment documentation;
- professional reports and assessments, including reports from educational psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and other professionals;
- information relating to health, disability, diagnoses, development, communication, behaviour and emotional wellbeing;
- school records and information relating to attendance, exclusions, reduced timetables or difficulties accessing education;
- information relating to alternative provision, EOTAS or EOTIS;
- correspondence with schools, Local Authorities, health professionals and other organisations;
- SEND Tribunal documentation, evidence and correspondence;
- information concerning complaints, disputes or previous decisions;
- information about family circumstances where this is relevant to the matter;
- information you provide during consultations, telephone calls, emails, WhatsApp messages or voice notes;
- other information or evidence you choose to provide which is relevant to the work I have been asked to undertake; and
- basic payment and transaction information.

I will only ask for information that I reasonably believe may be relevant to the work I have been asked to undertake.

Children and young people's information
Much of my work involves processing information relating to children and young people.

This can include particularly sensitive information about a child or young person's disability, neurodevelopmental profile, physical or mental health, educational needs, behaviour, communication, family circumstances and the support they receive.

I recognise that SEND cases can involve lengthy and complex histories and that it may not always be obvious to a parent which information will ultimately prove relevant. Providing a large volume of information does not mean that all of it will necessarily be required or used in the work I complete.

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Information provided to me will be treated as confidential and used only where relevant to the service I am providing or where there is another lawful reason for processing it.

Special category personal data
Because of the nature of SEND advocacy, some of the information families choose to provide will often fall within what UK data protection law describes as special category personal data.

This particularly includes information concerning a child or young person's physical or mental health, disability, medical conditions or diagnoses.

Special category information is subject to additional protections under data protection law.

Where I process special category information, I will ensure that there is both a lawful basis for processing the personal information and an appropriate additional condition for processing special category data.

Depending upon the circumstances, this may include your explicit consent.

Where I rely upon explicit consent, you may withdraw that consent at any time. This will not affect the lawfulness of processing which took place before consent was withdrawn. However, where the information is necessary for me to undertake the work you have requested, withdrawing consent may mean that I am unable to continue providing some or all of the service.

Why I use personal information
I may use personal information to:

- respond to enquiries;
- provide SEND advice and advocacy;
- understand the history and circumstances of a case;
- review EHCPs, professional reports and other evidence;
- prepare EHC Needs Assessment requests;
- review and prepare proposed amendments to EHCPs;
- draft letters, representations, complaints and other documents;
- prepare or assist with SEND Tribunal appeals and Working Documents;
- provide meeting or Tribunal support and representation where agreed;
- communicate with you about your case;
- maintain appropriate records of work undertaken;
- administer payments and maintain financial records;
- comply with legal, regulatory, insurance and professional obligations;
- establish, exercise or defend legal claims where necessary; and
- operate and protect my business and website.

I will not use information provided to me for SEND advocacy for unrelated purposes.

My lawful bases for processing
Under UK data protection law, I must have a lawful basis for processing personal information.

Depending upon the circumstances, I may rely upon:
Contract – where processing is necessary to provide a service you have asked me to provide or to take steps at your request before providing that service.
Legitimate interests – where processing is reasonably necessary for the operation and administration of The

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SEND Friend, including managing enquiries, appropriate record keeping, maintaining the security of my systems and dealing with matters arising from services I have provided, provided those interests are not overridden by your rights and interests.
Legal obligation – where I am required to process, retain or disclose information to comply with the law.

Consent – where consent is the appropriate lawful basis for a particular type of processing.
Where special category personal data is involved, an additional condition under UK data protection law will also be required.

How I receive information
Information is provided directly by the parent, carer or young person who contacts The SEND Friend.

Information may be provided through:
email, telephone conversations, WhatsApp messages, calls and voice notes, documents sent electronically, links to documents or folders which you choose to share with me; and third-party file transfer or cloud-sharing services which you independently choose to use.

In some cases, and with your authority, information may also be provided by another person or organisation involved in your child or young person's education or support.

There is currently no facility for submitting case information through a contact form on The SEND Friend website.

Email, WhatsApp and file transfers
Email is my primary method of receiving documents and case information.

Clients may also choose to communicate with me using WhatsApp, including through messages, documents and voice notes. You are not required to use WhatsApp and may communicate with me by email instead.

You may also independently choose to use another file transfer or cloud-sharing service to provide documents, particularly where files are too large to send by email. Where you choose to use such a service, you are responsible for deciding whether you are comfortable with that provider and its privacy and security arrangements.

The SEND Friend does not control how a third-party service independently selected by you processes information while that information is being transmitted or stored using its systems.

No method of electronic communication or file transfer can be guaranteed to be completely risk-free. Please take reasonable care when sending sensitive information, including checking that information is being sent to the correct recipient.

Sharing your information
I do not routinely send your case documents directly to schools, Local Authorities, HMCTS, the SEND Tribunal or other professionals.

In most cases, I will prepare or review documentation and return it to you so that you can decide whether and when to submit it.

Where you specifically ask or authorise me to communicate with another person or organisation on your behalf, I may share information where reasonably necessary to carry out your instructions.

This might include communication with:

- schools, colleges or educational settings;
- Local Authorities;
- HMCTS and the SEND Tribunal;
- health, social care or education professionals;
- independent or specialist educational settings; or
- another professional involved in your case.

I will not sell your personal information or share it with third parties for their own advertising or marketing purposes.

Information may also be disclosed where I am required to do so by law, where disclosure is necessary to establish, exercise or defend legal claims, or in other circumstances where there is a lawful basis for doing so.

Confidentiality
Information provided to The SEND Friend is treated as confidential.

I will not discuss or disclose identifiable information about your family, child or young person to other clients or unrelated third parties.

I may use anonymised or sufficiently de-identified examples when discussing general SEND issues or explaining common scenarios, but I will not knowingly publish information that identifies a client, child or young person without appropriate permission.

How information is stored and protected
Client documents are currently stored electronically on password-protected devices used by The SEND Friend.

I take the security of client information seriously and use reasonable and proportionate technical and organisational measures to protect the information I hold against unauthorised access, loss, alteration or disclosure.

Access to client case information is restricted to me unless disclosure is authorised or otherwise lawfully required.

I will do my best to keep the information entrusted to me secure. However, no method of electronic communication, transmission or storage can provide an absolute guarantee of security.

Use of AI-assisted tools
I may use AI-assisted tools to support aspects of my work, including structuring, reviewing and refining written documents. These tools are used to support my work and improve efficiency. They do not replace my own professional knowledge, analysis or judgement.

I take a considered approach to the AI tools I use and the information I provide to them. I use a business-grade AI workspace in which business data is not used to train the provider’s models, alongside my own data-minimisation and de-identification procedures.

I do not intentionally provide AI tools with information that directly identifies clients, children or young people. Information used with these tools is anonymised or de-identified wherever reasonably possible, and I limit the information provided to what is necessary for the particular task.

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AI is not used to independently produce client documents or make professional decisions on my behalf. All work produced for clients is personally reviewed, checked and finalised by me, and I remain responsible for the content of the work I provide.

Ultimately, I use AI as a tool to support the work I do, not to do the work for me. It helps me work more efficiently, particularly around drafting and structuring documents, allowing me to focus my time on the individual analysis, knowledge and judgement that each case requires and to keep my costs as accessible as possible for families.

You are paying for my knowledge, experience, analysis and advocacy — not for an AI-generated document with my name put on it. If AI could do my job for me, you probably wouldn't be looking for an advocate in the first place.

How long I keep information
I do not keep detailed client case files indefinitely.

As a general rule, substantive case documentation may be retained for up to 12 months following completion of the work or the last substantive contact relating to the matter. This allows continuity where a client returns for further support connected with the same matter.

After this period, case documentation will normally be securely deleted unless there is a legitimate reason for retaining some or all of it for longer.

Information may be retained for longer where reasonably necessary, for example where:

- a case or related matter remains ongoing;
- further work is reasonably anticipated;
- there is an ongoing complaint or dispute;
- information may be required in connection with a legal claim;
- safeguarding considerations make retention appropriate; or
- I am required to retain particular records for legal, regulatory, insurance, tax or accounting purposes.

Basic business and financial records may therefore be retained for a different period from detailed SEND case documentation.

Clients should retain their own copies of EHCPs, reports, correspondence and other important documents. The SEND Friend should not be relied upon as a permanent storage facility for a child or young person's records.

Payments
Payments for services are currently made by bank transfer.

I may retain information necessary to identify payments, maintain appropriate financial records and comply with tax and accounting obligations.

I do not collect or store clients' payment card details.

Website information and cookies
The SEND Friend website is hosted using 123 Reg Website Builder.

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The website may use cookies or similar technologies that are necessary for the operation, security and functionality of the website. Website users are informed about the use of cookies when visiting the site.

The SEND Friend does not currently use advanced tracking or cookies for analytics, advertising or marketing purposes.

If this changes in the future and non-essential cookies are introduced, this Privacy Policy and the website's cookie settings will be updated as necessary, including obtaining consent where required.

International data transfers

Some technology and communication providers may process or store information outside the United Kingdom.

Where personal information is transferred internationally, I will take reasonable steps to ensure that an appropriate lawful mechanism or safeguard applies where required by UK data protection law.

Your data protection rights
Depending upon the circumstances, UK data protection law gives you a number of rights in relation to your personal information.

These may include the right to:

- ask for access to personal information I hold about you;
- ask for inaccurate information to be corrected;
- ask for information to be erased in certain circumstances;
- ask for processing to be restricted in certain circumstances;
- object to certain processing;
- request transfer of certain information where the right to data portability applies; and
- withdraw consent where processing is based upon consent.

These rights are not absolute. Whether a particular right applies will depend upon the circumstances and the lawful basis on which information is being processed.

If you wish to exercise a data protection right, please contact:

info@thesendfriend.co.uk

I may need to verify your identity before releasing personal information.

Data breaches
I take reasonable steps to prevent personal information from being lost, accessed, disclosed or altered without authorisation.

If a personal data breach occurs, I will assess the circumstances and take appropriate action. Where required by law, this may include notifying the Information Commissioner's Office and, where applicable, affected individuals.

Complaints about the use of your information
If you have concerns about how I have handled your personal information, please contact me in the first instance so that I have the opportunity to address your concerns.

Email: info@thesendfriend.co.uk

You also have the right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK regulator responsible for data protection.

Information Commissioner's Office

Changes to this Privacy Policy
I may update this Privacy Policy from time to time to reflect changes to my services, working practices, technology or legal requirements.

The current version will be published on The SEND Friend website together with the date it was last updated.

Version 1.0 - 8th October 2026