TOM TOM UNIVERSE • PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

FOUR PILLARS STAFF TRAINING

Complete school delivery package

LEVEL 1 • All-staff introduction

LEVEL 2 • Teachers and teaching assistants

LEVEL 3 • SENCOs and school leaders

BRIAN'S / BRAINS • WAVES • CIRCLES • BRIDGES

Written and developed by Counsellor Tomass J. Wood

Facilitator guide, quizzes, case studies, practical tools and certificates

Edition 1.0 • 20 October 2026

Programme overview

A ready-to-deliver CPD pathway for primary, secondary, specialist and inclusive settings in England.

The Four Pillars are a practical, neurodiversity-affirming way of talking about internal experience, emotional and sensory intensity, supportive structure and pathways into communication or learning. The framework is educational and evidence-informed: it draws on established inclusive principles but has not been independently validated as a clinical or school-effectiveness intervention. [R2–R8]

Pillar	Core question	What adults do
Brian's (Brains)	What might be happening inside?	Offer vocabulary, recognise competing experiences, do not infer diagnosis.
Waves	How intense is the experience?	Notice changes, reduce demands, offer regulation supports and safety.
Circles	What reliable structure helps?	Plan schedules, preparation, familiarity, predictable transition supports.
Bridges	What enables next-step connection?	Offer choices, relationships, AAC, interests and routes into learning.

Level	Audience	Guided time	Completion evidence
1 - Introduction	All staff	100 minutes	8/10 quiz; short scenario; one safe action
2 - Implementation	Teachers and TAs	180 minutes	8/10 quiz; case role-play; 2-week plan
3 - Leadership	SENCOs and leaders	150 minutes	8/10 quiz; pilot plan; critical evaluation

Important boundary

Use alongside the school's SEND, safeguarding, behaviour, accessibility and health-and-safety policies. Never use the pillars to withhold statutory support, investigate abuse, diagnose, force emotion disclosure or replace clinical care.

Included in this package

Trainer preparation checklist; detailed timings and speaker notes for 25 presentation slides; seven fictional case studies with worked responses; 30 scored quiz questions and answer rationales; competency rubrics; printable classroom, leadership and feedback templates; an evidence and legal-reference guide; three printable level-specific certificates. The complete slide deck is appended in landscape format and also provided separately.

Delivery instructions

For school CPD leads, SENCOs, inclusion teams and visiting trainers.

Before training

- Read your school's current safeguarding and behaviour policies, local DSL route, accessible communication practices and emergency arrangements.
- Choose an appropriate facilitator: a SENCO, experienced inclusion practitioner or trained school leader familiar with the Four Pillars and the school context.
- Ask staff about accessibility needs. Provide large print, plain text, captioned verbal information, quieter participation and breaks where needed.
- Prepare the slide deck, two coloured markers, optional Wave scale, example now/next board and symbol/AAC examples that do not use real pupil data.
- Print Level 1 quiz for all, Level 2/3 assessment and planning tools for relevant roles; nominate assessor and record holder.

During training

- Open with a confidentiality reminder: examples must be fictional or anonymised; do not invite disclosure of pupil or staff trauma.
- Allow participants to pass on personal sharing; role-play as staff observing a fictional pupil, not as someone acting out disability or distress.
- Use whole-group or paired discussion as an option, not a compulsory disclosure activity.
- Keep all staff aware that any safeguarding concerns arising must follow existing reporting routes immediately.

After training

- Mark quizzes against answer keys and check applied competency evidence. Use constructive re-teaching for missed items.
- Issue a level-specific local completion certificate only when criteria are met; it is not formal external accreditation.
- For Level 2, review the plan within 2 weeks; for Level 3, review pilot measures at 2, 6 and 12 weeks.
- Record only minimum necessary staff CPD data according to school retention and security arrangements.

Safeguarding in 2026

Keeping children safe in education 2026 has been in force since 1 September 2026. All staff must read Part One in full and follow their school or college safeguarding policies. This training does not replace that requirement. [R1]

Ethical principles and practical boundaries

The standards that apply at every level.

Practice principle	Required behaviour	Avoid
Respect and agency	Offer choice, opt-out and non-speaking responses.	Mandatory public feelings check-ins.
Equality of access	Adjust environment/task routes; retain learning ambition.	Withholding support until diagnosis.
Interpret cautiously	Ask what may be contributing to distress.	Assuming motives from behaviour alone.
Accessible communication	Use the learner's established AAC, symbols or words.	Requiring speech, eye contact or fixed metaphors.
Safety first	Follow risk, emergency and safeguarding plans.	Using a metaphor in place of urgent action.
Privacy and trust	Collect minimum necessary information privately.	Public Wave charts, named training case records.
Implementation humility	Measure both benefit and unintended harm.	Claims that the method is proven to treat autism.

Suggested adult language: "What do you need right now?" "Would a picture or written option help?" "Something changed; here is what happens next." "We can solve the next step together when you are ready."

Avoid: "Which Brain is making you behave badly?" "You must get to a Small Wave." "The poster says you should be calm." "Earn your Bridge."

Four Pillars response sequence

1 • NOTICE	2 • REDUCE	3 • OFFER	4 • REVIEW
Observe facts, safety and barriers	Lower avoidable demands or sensory load	Provide accessible choice and a Bridge	Ask what helped; adapt and document as appropriate

This sequence is a flexible prompt, not a rigid protocol. Immediate safety and mandated safeguarding reporting are never delayed. The same pupil may need different supports on different days.

Facilitator method | making the sessions work

Short explanations, safe rehearsal, applied feedback.

Suggested ground rules (read aloud): “We discuss fictional situations rather than named children. We do not ask colleagues to reveal diagnoses or personal experiences. We respect communication differences and the right to pass. We distinguish observed facts from guesses. Safeguarding information is acted upon using our established procedures.”

Suggested presentation rhythm

Step	Trainer action	Participant action
Set up (1–2 min)	State slide question and one example	Listen or read
Explain (2–3 min)	Teach one concept; model a short script	Notice options
Practise (2–5 min)	Give one low-risk fictional problem	Write, gesture or discuss
Reflect (1–2 min)	Check what would change in real practice	Choose an action

Assessment and local certificate conditions

Issue a certificate only where staff (a) attend the relevant taught content or equivalent supported make-up learning, (b) score at least 8 out of 10 on the relevant knowledge quiz and (c) meet the associated applied criterion below. These thresholds are proposed local quality controls, not a legal or externally accredited standard.

Level	Applied evidence	Assessor criterion
1	Respond to one fictional case and name a 24-hour action	Safe, respectful, recognises safeguarding and one adjustment.
2	Submit lesson/transition plan and demonstrate one response	Accessible, specific, pupil-centred, measurable and safeguarded.
3	Submit six-week pilot and decision rule	Governance, baseline, pupil voice, counter-evidence and stop criteria addressed.

Level 1 | Introduction for all staff

All staff, including teaching, support, office, pastoral and lunchtime teams | 100 minutes

Session purpose. Understand the four metaphors, use respectful language, identify immediate adjustments and safeguard appropriately.

By the end, participants can:

- Explain Brian's, Waves, Circles and Bridges in plain English.
- Apply the Notice–Reduce–Offer–Review response to a fictional scenario.
- State confidentiality limits and the school's DSL reporting route.
- Commit to one low-risk adjustment to trial in usual practice.

Timed facilitator agenda

Segment	Minutes
Welcome, boundaries and quick poll	10
Shared concepts and four pillars	30
Responding to Waves and accessibility	20
Case practice and paired reflection	20
Safeguarding application	10
Knowledge quiz and exit ticket	10

Preparation: Printed quiz and answer sheet; relevant case cards; access to the school's current policy, DSL route and any specific classroom/AAC resources relevant to the group.

Level 1 output

An action card: "Tomorrow I will make [specific change] during [time/context]. I will check its usefulness by [pupil feedback or observation]."

Slide-by-slide presenter notes

SLIDE 01 / L1

Why the Four Pillars?

A shared language for noticing needs - not a way to label a child.

On-slide points: Understand what a pupil may be experiencing. · Respond to barriers before interpreting behaviour. · Offer support without requiring personal disclosure.

Explain / demonstrate. Open with a short story: two pupils hear the same loud bell but experience different levels of distress. Stress that Four Pillars is an optional communication and planning language, not a diagnostic assessment.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What might adults miss if they only observe outward behaviour?

Boundary check. Do not present the framework as a cure, clinical treatment or replacement for assessed provision.

SLIDE 02 / L1

Brian's (Brains)

What is happening in my mind?

On-slide points: Thoughts, worries, curiosity, attention and impulses. · Different "Brains" can be active together. · Invite, never demand, a pupil's own words or symbols.

Explain / demonstrate. Model: "My Worry Brain is telling me this is difficult and my Curious Brain wants to try." Write two thought bubbles. Some pupils dislike metaphor; accept plain language instead.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask pairs to rewrite "She is refusing" as three possible internal experiences.

Boundary check. Never claim that a metaphor describes actual brain anatomy or reveals diagnosis.

SLIDE 03 / L1

Waves

How intense is this experience right now?

On-slide points: Small / Medium / Big / Storm are optional labels. · Waves can represent joy, excitement, distress or sensory load. · Support regulation before explanation or problem-solving.

Explain / demonstrate. Invite staff to use colours, hand signals or a non-verbal pointer for a fictional Wave. Emphasise that quietness can also conceal a high Wave.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: Can a very happy pupil have a Big Wave? What about a silent pupil?

Boundary check. Do not require a pupil to disclose a number, perform calmness or tolerate preventable distress.

SLIDE 04 / L1

Circles

What brings predictability, familiarity or safe structure?

On-slide points: A consistent opening, visual schedule or choice board. · Preparing pupils for transitions and changes. · Flexible anchors - routines serve the learner, not the other way round.

Explain / demonstrate. Show a first-then example and a respectful change warning. Note that visual supports must be age-appropriate and accessible.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What part of the school day changes without warning?

Boundary check. Do not insist on a rigid routine when the pupil has indicated it is no longer supportive.

SLIDE 05 / L1

Bridges

What will connect this pupil to help, communication or learning?

On-slide points: A trusted adult, peer, object, interest or communication tool. · Choices, sensory adjustments, accessible materials. · Small, co-produced routes into participation.

Explain / demonstrate. Demonstrate a Bridge from interest in trains to a literacy task, and one from a visual choice card to requesting a break.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: Which Bridge could reduce the demand without lowering the learning goal?

Boundary check. A Bridge must never be used as a bargaining chip to force compliance.

SLIDE 06 / L1

The response sequence

Notice → reduce barriers → offer a Bridge → review.

On-slide points: Observe without assumption. · Reduce sensory and task demand when the Wave is high. · Offer two accessible options and reconnect later.

Explain / demonstrate. Perform a 90-second model script for a distressed pupil: “I can see this is hard. You can sit by the door or use your calm card. We can talk later.”

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask groups to replace a corrective script with an accessible one.

Boundary check. Do not use the sequence to delay a safeguarding report or necessary emergency response.

SLIDE 07 / L1

Safety, dignity and consent

Safeguarding obligations always take precedence.

On-slide points: All staff follow school policies and KCSIE 2026 part one. · No forced sharing of feelings, diagnosis or trauma history. · No public Wave charts, rank lists or unsolicited physical contact.

Explain / demonstrate. Read the school DSL reporting pathway aloud; participants identify the internal route for a child protection concern. Distinguish supportive questions from investigating an allegation.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: When would you stop a Four Pillars conversation and report?

Boundary check. Staff must never promise confidentiality when a child may be at risk.

SLIDE 08 / L1

From concept to action

One safe change in one school day.

On-slide points: Select one routine, language adjustment or Bridge. · Check whether the pupil experiences it as helpful. · Share only necessary information with the right colleagues.

Explain / demonstrate. Invite each person to write a 24-hour action on their exit ticket and name an appropriate colleague for peer review.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What will you change tomorrow, and how will you know it helps?

Boundary check. Complete the Level 1 quiz and one brief scenario; do not equate quiz completion with accreditation.

Level 1 | Introduction for all staff | practical workshop

Facilitator activity with observable outputs

Activity A — Same event, different experiences (10 min)

Scenario: a bell rings without warning. Group A imagines a pupil excited by the sound; group B a pupil distressed by it; group C a pupil who shows nothing externally. Each team identifies one Brian's possibility, one Wave clue, one Circle and one Bridge. Debrief: do not infer subjective state from body language.

Activity B — The first 60 seconds (10 min)

Use case C1 or C2. In pairs, write a safe 3-sentence response that recognises the difficulty, reduces one barrier and offers an accessible choice. Ask what the pupil could do if not speaking.

Activity C — Duty, not metaphor (10 min)

Use case C7. Each participant states the immediate safeguarding response, how not to promise secrecy, and where the school's established DSL/escalation route sits.

Exit ticket (5 min)

State: one phrase I will stop using; one adjustment I can try tomorrow; one point I still need to ask the SENCO or DSL.

Facilitator debrief question

"What changed for the pupil's access, agency or safety - and what evidence would show that?"

Level 1 | Introduction for all staff | quiz

10 scored knowledge questions · choose one answer per question.

1. Which statement best describes the Four Pillars?

A. A diagnostic tool

B. An optional shared language for support and access

C. A compulsory feelings test

D. A replacement for SEND support

2. Brian's describes:

A. Anatomically separate brains

B. Possible thoughts, feelings and competing internal responses

C. Only anxiety

D. A test score

3. A Big Wave may refer to:

A. Only anger

B. High intensity, including excitement or sensory overload

C. Deliberate defiance

D. Poor parenting

4. A useful Circle is:

A. A fixed rule regardless of need

B. Predictable support that can be adapted

C. Public ranking of pupils

D. Removing choice

5. A Bridge could be:

A. An AAC card or trusted relationship

B. A punishment

C. Loss of breaks

D. Forced discussion

6. When a pupil is visibly overwhelmed, staff should first:

A. Demand an explanation

B. Reduce demands and assess safety

C. Ask peers to watch

D. Withdraw support

7. Pupils should share their Wave:

A. Publicly every day

B. Only with a speaking response

C. Voluntarily and in a safe accessible way

D. With all classmates

8. A pupil discloses abuse. What is correct?

A. Promise secrecy

B. Report through safeguarding procedures promptly

C. Wait for a Wave to reduce first

D. Record only on Four Pillars form

9. Which is a good use of observation?

A. “He seeks attention”

B. “He left when the alarm sounded”

C. “She is manipulative”

D. “He is always difficult”

10. What must Level 1 participants do?

A. Diagnose pupils

B. Choose a low-risk action and complete assessment

C. Complete psychotherapy training

D. Stop following their usual school policies

Name / staff ID: _____ Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10 Assessor: _____ Applied criterion met: YES / NOT YET

No answer key should be displayed until learners have submitted their initial responses. An assessor may offer accessible reading formats and equivalent response modes without changing the intended content.

Level 1 | Introduction for all staff | quiz key

Retain in the facilitator version; distribute after marking.

1. B — It is an optional, educational communication and planning framework.
2. B — The metaphor is not literal neuroanatomy.
3. B — Wave labels describe intensity, not morality or diagnosis.
4. B — Routines must serve the learner.
5. A — Bridges create routes to communication, connection or participation.
6. B — Safety, adjustment and co-regulation take priority over lengthy reasoning.
7. C — Private, accessible alternatives protect agency.
8. B — Safeguarding supersedes this framework.
9. B — Report observable facts rather than inferred intent.
10. B — Local completion requires knowledge plus a practical application.

Re-teaching policy: Review incorrectly answered concepts; recheck them verbally, with text or using a new equivalent item. Record meaningful understanding and safe practice, not simply test-taking fluency.

Level 2 | Practical implementation

Teachers, teaching assistants, pastoral staff and specialist support practitioners | 180 minutes

Session purpose. Design, teach and review adaptable Four Pillars classroom practices with pupil voice and professional collaboration.

By the end, participants can:

- Plan differentiated but age-respectful strategies across phases.
- Adapt delivery for non-speaking/AAC users and sensory needs.
- Rehearse co-regulation, teacher–TA briefing and supportive re-entry.
- Complete an observation and a two-week review plan.

Timed facilitator agenda

Segment	Minutes
Retrieval and lesson barriers	15
Brian's and Wave-aware classroom language	25
Circles and Bridges workshop	30
AAC, accessibility and TA practice	30
Scenario simulation and debrief	35
Individual/lesson plan construction	25
Assessment, quiz and commitment	20

Preparation: Printed quiz and answer sheet; relevant case cards; access to the school's current policy, DSL route and any specific classroom/AAC resources relevant to the group.

Level 2 output

A short pupil-informed teaching/transition plan, modelled adult script, observation plan and review date within two weeks.

Slide-by-slide presenter notes

SLIDE 09 / L2

Plan for variability

Design access before an incident occurs.

On-slide points: Keep the curricular goal; vary routes to participation. · Preview sensory, language, transition and social barriers. · Offer choices in representation and response.

Explain / demonstrate. Display a Year 5 or Year 9 task. Ask staff to create three routes into the same knowledge target using visuals, words, and manipulation/technology.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: Which barriers are created by the environment rather than the pupil?

Boundary check. Do not use a broad autism or ADHD label as a substitute for a personalised plan.

SLIDE 10 / L2

Brian's in lessons

Give pupils safe ways to notice thinking.

On-slide points: Optional thought bubbles, symbols, writing or private check-ins. · Model competing needs, not "good" and "bad" minds. · Pair noticing with a practical support choice.

Explain / demonstrate. Model a 30-second private check-in. For younger learners use two simple thought cards; for teenagers offer private text or a discreet signal.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What if the pupil declines to answer?

Boundary check. Staff may record an observed support need, not a speculative psychological label.

SLIDE 11 / L2

Wave-aware response

Match support to present needs, not assumptions.

On-slide points: Early cues can include withdrawal, motion or reduced communication. · Adjust demands, noise, proximity and pace. · Return to learning when the pupil is ready; repair later.

Explain / demonstrate. Rehearse co-regulation scripts and an environment-first response. Separate imminent danger response from routine distress.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: Which adult behaviours can unintentionally intensify a Wave?

Boundary check. Avoid staged public calming, countdown threats, or recording a child's "Storm" as misconduct.

SLIDE 12 / L2

Circle design

Make transitions predictable, not inflexible.

On-slide points: Now / Next / Later or written agendas. · Advance notice and visual alternatives when plans change. · Consistent entry, exit and movement routines.

Explain / demonstrate. Co-design a 5-minute transition support plan for an unexpected assembly or cover lesson. Identify who informs the pupil, when and how.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: How might the Circle change for Year 10?

Boundary check. A visual timetable is not a substitute for listening to the individual.

SLIDE 13 / L2

Bridge design

Build the smallest useful connection.

On-slide points: Interest-led hooks and trusted relationships. · AAC, symbols, written options and meaningful choices. · Breaks, quieter routes and supported re-entry.

Explain / demonstrate. Demonstrate a Bridge menu: different ways to enter, work and communicate, all tied to the learning objective.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What does the pupil identify as a useful Bridge?

Boundary check. Do not remove essential communication tools as punishment.

SLIDE 14 / L2

Adaptive teaching & TAs

Protect independence and instructional access.

On-slide points: Teacher retains responsibility for the pupil's learning. · TA scaffolds, prompts and fades support where appropriate. · Brief before lessons; debrief patterns without blame.

Explain / demonstrate. Role-play a teacher–TA 2-minute briefing: learning goal, barriers, expected prompt, fade criteria, safeguarding flags.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: How could continuous adult proximity reduce peer participation?

Boundary check. Do not assign SEND pupils solely to TAs instead of teacher instruction.

SLIDE 15 / L2

Non-speaking and AAC access

Communication is more than spoken language.

On-slide points: Respect established AAC systems and vocabulary. · Accept gestures, symbols, typing, eye gaze or silence. · Allow processing time; make consent/choice accessible.

Explain / demonstrate. Model a visual two-choice board and an “I need a break” option while keeping language and dignity age-respectful.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: How does a pupil refuse or say “no” with our current materials?

Boundary check. Never withhold an AAC device or require speech to access help.

SLIDE 16 / L2

Observe - adjust - review

Use data to learn, not to label.

On-slide points: Record antecedents, access barriers and support offered. · Ask the pupil or communication partner what helped. · Check learning, participation and autonomy over time.

Explain / demonstrate. Give staff a fictional incident log; distinguish facts (“left after bell”) from interpretations (“attention seeking”).

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What evidence would change our initial hypothesis?

Boundary check. Do not share identifiable support logs in unsecured channels.

SLIDE 17 / L2

Co-design a working plan

Teach → notice → adjust → reflect.

On-slide points: Choose one class, one barrier and one pupil-defined goal. · Specify adult response and accessible options. · Revisit within two weeks and adapt.

Explain / demonstrate. Teams complete the lesson/transition planner, apply it to a case study, and practise a brief pupil-facing explanation.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: Is this support sustainable when the usual TA is absent?

Boundary check. Practical competency and Level 2 quiz are both required for local completion.

Level 2 | Practical implementation | practical workshop

Facilitator activity with observable outputs

Activity A — Access-first lesson plan (20 min)

Choose a genuine learning goal but use no identifying pupil information. Write three methods of engagement or response: spoken/written, symbol/AAC and practical/visual. Design a Circle for entry and Bridge for first participation.

Activity B — Wave response rehearsal (20 min)

Three roles: adult, observer and facilitator. Use C2 or C4. Adult practises lowering language load, privately offering options and planning later re-entry. Observer checks dignity, timing, safety and genuine choice.

Activity C — AAC and transition rehearsal (20 min)

Use C3 or C5. Build “now / next / change” visuals, a “break / help / no / stop” menu and a cover-staff briefing. Learner’s existing communication system must guide final symbols and vocabulary.

Activity D — Two-week micro-cycle (20 min)

Complete the support profile, observe only necessary indicators, record a review date and identify teacher/TA responsibilities. Ask how the support continues during staffing absence.

Facilitator debrief question

“What changed for the pupil’s access, agency or safety - and what evidence would show that?”

Level 2 | Practical implementation | quiz

10 scored knowledge questions · choose one answer per question.

1. What should remain consistent when adapting a lesson?

A. The route each child uses

B. The curricular learning goal

C. The presentation format

D. The pupil's seating

2. If a pupil declines a Brian's check-in:

A. Insist

B. Accept refusal and offer practical options

C. Announce this to class

D. Write "non-compliant"

3. A helpful Wave-aware adult response is:

A. Repeated rapid questions

B. Reduced noise, simple options and space

C. Public countdown

D. Removing communication aids

4. For a planned Circle change:

A. Give no warning

B. Offer accessible warning and alternative

C. Cancel all learning

D. Withhold the timetable

5. A Bridge in secondary maths could be:

A. Public sticker chart only

B. Written entry instructions and an interest-based example

C. Lowering the pupil's grade target automatically

D. Keeping the pupil outside indefinitely

6. Which AAC principle is correct?

A. Require speech before access

B. Do not remove or withhold AAC

C. Guess what non-speaking pupils want

D. Use only babyish symbols

7. The teacher–TA relationship should:

A. Replace teacher instruction

B. Include planned briefings and support independence

C. Be entirely improvised

D. Keep TAs unaware of goals

8. Which observation is least interpretive?

A. “Had a meltdown for attention”

B. “Closed the book when peers laughed”

C. “Is oppositional”

D. “Hates science”

9. How should a support plan be reviewed?

A. Only by counting sanctions

B. Using pupil feedback, access and participation with observation

C. Never change once written

D. Only by comparing diagnosis labels

10. For case C3 (alarm drill), the overriding priority is:

A. Completing an emotion chart

B. The approved evacuation and immediate safety plan

C. Keeping slides in order

D. Waiting for speech

Name / staff ID: _____ Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10 Assessor: _____ Applied criterion met: YES / NOT YET

No answer key should be displayed until learners have submitted their initial responses. An assessor may offer accessible reading formats and equivalent response modes without changing the intended content.

Level 2 | Practical implementation | quiz key

Retain in the facilitator version; distribute after marking.

1. B — Change routes without automatically lowering intellectual ambition.
2. B — Learner autonomy is core.
3. B — Minimise further input and support safety.
4. B — Notice improves predictability.
5. B — The route should support participation in the same learning.
6. B — AAC is the pupil's communication access.
7. B — TAs complement—not replace—high-quality teaching.
8. B — Fact-first recording reduces attribution errors.
9. B — Review impact and acceptability, not only outward quietness.
10. B — Emergency procedures take precedence.

Re-teaching policy: Review incorrectly answered concepts; recheck them verbally, with text or using a new equivalent item. Record meaningful understanding and safe practice, not simply test-taking fluency.

Level 3 | Leadership and evaluation

SENCOs, SEND leaders, headteachers, governors, inclusion leads and implementation teams | 150 minutes

Session purpose. Select, pilot, govern and evaluate implementation without overstating evidence or displacing statutory duties.

By the end, participants can:

- Specify core components, adaptations and accountable roles.
- Design a proportionate six-week pilot with a credible baseline.
- Choose balanced outcomes and safe data processes.
- Make an evidence-informed continue/adapt/stop decision.

Timed facilitator agenda

Segment	Minutes
Rationale, problem definition and success criteria	15
Theory of change and baseline workshop	25
Implementation controls and governance	25
Data, pupil voice and safeguarding audit	25
Case simulation and decision-making	30
Pilot plan, peer review and quiz	30

Preparation: Printed quiz and answer sheet; relevant case cards; access to the school's current policy, DSL route and any specific classroom/AAC resources relevant to the group.

Level 3 output

A proportionate six-week pilot with baseline, ownership, supervision, equity, safeguards, measures and continue/adapt/stop criteria.

Slide-by-slide presenter notes

SLIDE 18 / L3

Implementation is a school change

Use a defined theory of change, not a poster campaign.

On-slide points: Core components: child voice, accessible language, barrier reduction, review. · Adaptable components: visuals, routines, symbols and subject examples. · Agree who is accountable for safe delivery.

Explain / demonstrate. Facilitate a quick distinction between what must be consistent and what staff can customise. Invite challenge to the proposed change.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What would be implementation in name only?

Boundary check. Do not replace statutory provision or existing EHCP outcomes with Four Pillars language.

SLIDE 19 / L3

Explore and establish a baseline

Identify the problem before choosing the rollout.

On-slide points: Audit learner experiences and existing support quality. · Review complaints, attendance patterns and access barriers carefully. · Invite pupil, family and staff voice; protect confidentiality.

Explain / demonstrate. Show a baseline matrix (fidelity, participation, pupil-reported safety, workload). Examine what each measure does and does not mean.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: How will we know whether the school needs this?

Boundary check. Do not infer framework effectiveness from a single before/after anecdote.

SLIDE 20 / L3

Prepare roles and controls

Name the decisions, training and safeguarding owners.

On-slide points: SENCO/SLT sponsor; staff champions; DSL and DPO consultation. · Accessible materials; alternative communication options. · Pilot scope, coaching schedule, consent/information practices.

Explain / demonstrate. Draft a one-page RACI-style responsibility sheet and a stop/escalate route; test absence cover.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: Which risks need mitigation before a pilot?

Boundary check. Do not collect pupils' special-category data merely to populate a dashboard.

SLIDE 21 / L3

Deliver with coaching

Model, rehearse, observe and improve.

On-slide points: Short cycles with protected feedback time. · Leadership models psychologically safe reflection. · Use fidelity checks without punitive scoring.

Explain / demonstrate. Simulate a 5-minute coaching conversation following a classroom observation; focus on evidence and one next step.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: How will cover staff and midday supervisors be included?

Boundary check. Attendance at training alone does not show effective implementation.

SLIDE 22 / L3

Evaluation and uncertainty

Measure what matters without overclaiming.

On-slide points: Implementation: training uptake, appropriate use, consistency. · Experience: pupil agency, access, belonging and family feedback. · Equity and adverse effects: stigma, burden, exclusion, unwanted disclosure.

Explain / demonstrate. Compare a promising improvement with alternative explanations: term variation, staffing, concurrent supports, reporting changes.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What would make us pause or change the programme?

Boundary check. Describe observed change, not proven causation; no clinical effectiveness claims.

SLIDE 23 / L3

Pupil voice and fairness

Every learner must be able to shape support.

On-slide points: Accessible participation: spoken, written, symbol, AAC or trusted advocate. · Check variation across phases, languages and disability needs. · Provide an opt-out without reducing entitlement to support.

Explain / demonstrate. Invite leaders to redesign a pupil questionnaire for a non-speaking Year 8 pupil and a verbal pupil with high anxiety.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: Whose views are missing from our data?

Boundary check. Publicly displayed feelings data and compulsory sharing undermine safety and trust.

SLIDE 24 / L3

Safeguarding, data and governance

Keep legal duties independent of Four Pillars.

On-slide points: KCSIE 2026, school DSL process and allegation routes. · Data minimisation, appropriate access and retention rules. · Reasonable adjustments and SEND graduated response remain.

Explain / demonstrate. Run the safeguarding scenario: a pupil discloses abuse during a Wave check-in. Practise immediate reporting and accurate recording.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What must happen even if the pupil asks us to keep it secret?

Boundary check. This training does not authorise therapy, risk assessment beyond competence or changes to emergency plans.

SLIDE 25 / L3

Sustain or adapt

Make a documented decision after the pilot.

On-slide points: Review at 2, 6 and 12 weeks; listen to critical feedback. · Continue, refine or discontinue using explicit criteria. · Refresh training, materials, responsibilities and family information.

Explain / demonstrate. Use the six-week implementation template to state owner, measure, risk, decision date and next feedback mechanism.

Discussion or rehearsal. Ask: What evidence would justify scaling beyond the pilot?

Boundary check. Completion requires Level 3 quiz, a defensible pilot plan and a critical evaluation statement.

Level 3 | Leadership and evaluation | practical workshop

Facilitator activity with observable outputs

Activity A — Define the problem (15 min)

List current challenges in access/participation, not diagnosis counts. Rate confidence in baseline evidence and identify whose voice is missing.

Activity B — Core and adaptable (15 min)

Write four non-negotiable delivery principles and four school-specific adaptable formats. Challenge anything that creates public labelling.

Activity C — Mixed evidence review (20 min)

Use C6. Write a one-paragraph conclusion that distinguishes staff uptake from pupil outcomes, includes alternative explanations and names an adverse effect.

Activity D — Governance stress test (15 min)

Use C7 and C5. Specify DSL, SENCO, teacher, TA, data lead and escalation responsibilities. Test cover-staff continuity and privacy.

Activity E — Pilot decision (25 min)

Create a six-week plan: owner, cohort, access baseline, pupil feedback, fidelity check, workload check, risk, review dates and stopping criteria.

Facilitator debrief question

“What changed for the pupil’s access, agency or safety - and what evidence would show that?”

Level 3 | Leadership and evaluation | quiz

10 scored knowledge questions · choose one answer per question.

1. Which is a core component?

A. Identical posters everywhere

B. Voluntary pupil voice, accessible support and review

C. Exactly four colours

D. Use of one specific card design

2. A reasonable first phase is:

A. Announce impact claims

B. Explore the problem and baseline needs

C. Buy materials for every school

D. Publish pupil Wave data

3. Training attendance measures:

A. Implementation exposure

B. Pupil wellbeing improvement

C. Causality

D. Safeguarding compliance alone

4. What is an adverse outcome worth tracking?

A. Pupil feeling shamed by public checks

B. Staff using accessible choice

C. Clearer transitions

D. Pupil-led adaptations

5. What should a school say after a simple before/after incident reduction?

A. The programme is proven

B. An observed change occurred; alternative explanations remain

C. All pupils benefited

D. Future monitoring is unnecessary

6. Who owns pupil safeguarding concerns?

A. Only the Four Pillars champion

B. Existing DSL and safeguarding structures

C. The trainer alone

D. Any pupil volunteer

7. Which is best for governance?

A. Collect every feeling from every child

B. Minimum necessary data with controlled access

C. Store on public charts

D. Share named cases widely for training

8. When adapting materials for secondary staff, leaders should:

A. Reject all adaptation

B. Retain principles but change age-appropriate presentation

C. Use infant visuals by rule

D. Remove pupil voice

9. A strong pilot plan includes:

A. Owners, timelines, baseline, feedback, risks and decision gates

B. Only a launch event

C. Only positive testimonials

D. Only behaviour counts

10. Which decision is credible when pupil feedback highlights stigma?

A. Continue unchanged

B. Pause public charts, review and co-design safer options

C. Suppress criticism

D. Ask pupils to get used to it

Name / staff ID: _____ Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10 Assessor: _____ Applied criterion met: YES / NOT YET

No answer key should be displayed until learners have submitted their initial responses. An assessor may offer accessible reading formats and equivalent response modes without changing the intended content.

Level 3 | Leadership and evaluation | quiz key

Retain in the facilitator version; distribute after marking.

1. B — Core practices can be maintained across varied contexts.
2. B — Explore before scaling.
3. A — Attendance is a process indicator, not proof of pupil benefit.
4. A — Unintended harm can outweigh apparent compliance gains.
5. B — A simple uncontrolled comparison cannot establish causation.
6. B — Maintain statutory routes and accountability.
7. B — Data minimisation and access control are essential.
8. B — Maintain function, adapt format.
9. A — A decision needs balanced, specified evidence.
10. B — Participant experience should shape implementation and stopping rules.

Re-teaching policy: Review incorrectly answered concepts; recheck them verbally, with text or using a new equivalent item. Record meaningful understanding and safe practice, not simply test-taking fluency.

Case study pack

Fictional composites for facilitated discussion, never actual identifiable pupils.

Each scenario is intentionally incomplete. Participants should test interpretations, offer accessible choices, respect pupil input, use assessed provision and escalate safeguarding concerns. Case studies are training prompts, not specialist assessments.

C1 | Reception / primary | Level 1

Maya: the disrupted classroom Circle

What staff notice. Maya, aged five, usually enters class after a picture-based arrival routine. One rainy morning the outdoor entry is closed. Maya stands by the original door, cries and pushes away a familiar adult who urges her to "use your words". Several children are watching.

Additional context. Maya has limited confidence with unexpected changes but enjoys choosing a morning job and can use picture cards. Staff know the change was not announced beforehand. No diagnosis is assumed.

Discussion tasks

- What might the adult be missing about the Wave and Circle?
- What would a respectful first 60 seconds look like?
- How could the change be prepared next time?

Worked facilitator response

- Lower audience and demand; give space; use known picture symbols or a trusted adult at a comfortable distance.
- Acknowledge the routine changed: "Different door today. Here is the picture. You can walk with me or with Sam."
- Check if a visual "change" card, pre-entry notice and choice of morning job improve arrival; record what actually happens.

Safety / inclusion check: Do not treat distress as deliberate disobedience or insist on eye contact. Reassess if the child seems physically unwell or unsafe.

C2 | Year 8 / secondary | Levels 1–2

Isaac: a crowded secondary corridor

What staff notice. Isaac, aged 12, arrives late to maths after a noisy changeover. He jokes loudly, refuses to open his book, and tells the teacher that the classroom is “too much”. His peers laugh. Staff describe him as disruptive.

Additional context. Isaac has ADHD; an autism assessment has been requested but is not needed to make adjustments. He values robotics and dislikes being singled out. He reports corridor noise is exhausting.

Discussion tasks

- Which observations are facts, and which are interpretations?
- What short-term response preserves dignity and access to maths?
- How could the teacher and TA create a Bridge without using robotics as a reward/punishment?

Worked facilitator response

- Privately offer a seat choice, quieter entry or brief reset; deliver instructions in writing.
- Retain the same mathematical learning goal but allow a robotics-related first example or short stepwise entry task.
- Plan a low-profile arrival Circle and gather Isaac’s feedback after he is settled; monitor maths engagement rather than only lateness.

Safety / inclusion check: Investigate peer teasing through school procedures; do not allow a “sensory” explanation to obscure bullying or safeguarding concerns.

C3 | Year 4 specialist provision / Level 2

Ava: non-speaking communication during a drill

What staff notice. Ava is an autistic non-speaking pupil who uses a symbol-based AAC device and communication book. During an unexpected alarm test she covers her ears, drops her device and runs towards the classroom library. An adult tries to hold her hand and asks repeated questions.

Additional context. Ava has a current evacuation plan and responds best to visual warnings, noise-reduction supports and familiar adults. The test was unexpectedly rescheduled.

Discussion tasks

- What must happen first under the school evacuation/emergency plan?
- How can adults respect communication in a safety-critical moment?
- What changes should follow this event?

Worked facilitator response

- Follow the agreed emergency and evacuation procedures immediately, taking any required protective action under policy and training.
- Use brief familiar visuals and gestures where feasible without delaying safety; preserve access to AAC and avoid redundant questions.
- Review the pupil’s evacuation plan with the pupil/family/multidisciplinary team, practice arrangements and adult handover; record precise antecedents.

Safety / inclusion check: Never prioritise a Four Pillars routine over immediate physical safety or withhold the pupil’s communication equipment.

C4 | Secondary / Level 2

Noor: quiet overwhelm in Year 10

What staff notice. Noor, 14, is academically able and rarely challenges staff. She has begun avoiding PE and asking to work alone. In a private note she writes, “Changing rooms make me feel sick and everyone stares.” The team’s attainment data still look strong.

Additional context. Noor is anxious about changing-room noise and peer comments. She prefers written communication and does not want her private feelings discussed with her form group.

Discussion tasks

- What would a purely attainment-based evaluation miss?
- What Circle and Bridge could be co-designed respectfully?
- How should possible bullying or safeguarding information be handled?

Worked facilitator response

- Privately listen and involve appropriate pastoral/SEND staff under safeguarding and information-sharing policy.
- Explore alternative changing arrangements, staggered access, written choices and a trusted adult contact while protecting full PE access.
- Track Noor’s own experience of safety, participation and autonomy in addition to attendance; review without publicity.

Safety / inclusion check: Do not demand that Noor disclose the issue publicly. Escalate suspected bullying or harm through established procedures.

C5 | Year 6 / transition planning | Levels 2–3

Jay: communication and a change of key adult

What staff notice. Jay, aged 11, has significant learning and communication needs and uses a tablet-based AAC system. His long-standing TA is absent for two weeks. After lunch, he sweeps materials from his desk and cannot access the usual “first–then” board. Adults are unsure which symbols Jay recognises.

Additional context. Jay’s EHCP includes communication-related provision. His parents report that familiar symbols, advance warnings and sensory rest breaks support him. Current classroom processes rely too much on one member of staff.

Discussion tasks

- What provision remains non-negotiable while the TA is absent?
- What does this reveal about staff training and sustainability?
- How do leaders prevent an individualised plan becoming dependent on one adult?

Worked facilitator response

- Maintain statutory provision and communication access; seek the SENCO’s coordination and consult knowledgeable staff/family as appropriate.
- Create shared but confidential instructions for AAC, symbol meanings and transition Circles; train cover staff.
- Establish implementation fidelity checks and a staffing contingency; ensure the teacher remains instructional lead.

Safety / inclusion check: Do not delete AAC vocabulary, substitute guessed symbols or treat lack of speech as lack of understanding.

C6 | Whole-school leadership | Level 3

A school pilot with mixed results

What staff notice. After six weeks, 92% of staff completed introductory training. Posters are visible in most classrooms. Recorded behaviour incidents dropped in Year 5, but one pupil reports that a public Wave chart makes them feel ashamed. Secondary staff say the visuals are too childish. Teachers describe unclear expectations and workload.

Additional context. A leadership team wants to describe the pilot as “proven to reduce challenging behaviour”. No baseline pupil voice was collected, and a new behaviour policy was introduced simultaneously.

Discussion tasks

- What can and cannot be concluded from these data?
- Which risks demand immediate change?
- What evidence and adaptations would justify continuing?

Worked facilitator response

- Report training participation accurately but reject causal claims; the policy change confounds comparison.
- Remove public emotion displays and co-design private alternatives immediately.
- Adapt secondary visuals; clarify core components; collect pupil experience, staff workload and participation data; decide after a defined improvement cycle.

Safety / inclusion check: Do not present the Four Pillars as validated or ignore unintended stigma.

C7 | All phases / Levels 1–3

A disclosure during a Wave check-in

What staff notice. A Year 7 pupil points to “Storm” on a private check-in card and says, “I’m scared to go home. Someone there hits me. Please don’t tell anyone.” A member of staff considers asking which Brian is speaking and keeping a separate Four Pillars note.

Additional context. The learner may be at risk of significant harm; the adult must follow the school’s existing safeguarding procedures.

Discussion tasks

- What is the first safeguarding action?
- What should the adult say about confidentiality?
- What should be recorded, and where?

Worked facilitator response

- Listen calmly, take the child seriously, avoid leading questions and do not promise secrecy.
- Explain in age-appropriate words that information must be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
- Report immediately through the school DSL or emergency safeguarding route, record accurately and follow the school’s safeguarding policy / KCSIE.

Safety / inclusion check: Never investigate independently, delay a report for a Four Pillars activity or store a disclosure only on a classroom worksheet.

Practical assessment rubric

Use consistently for the live demonstration or plan review.

Dimension	1 | Not yet	2 | Developing	3 | Ready to use
Learner agency	Mandated emotion disclosure or no choices	Limited or superficial choices	Voluntary, accessible and meaningful choice
Pillar accuracy	Terms used as labels or discipline	Mostly accurate but vague	Pillars used flexibly and clearly
Practical response	Unsafe/undefined or escalates demand	Some adjustment; incomplete	Specific, low-demand, proportionate support
Communication & dignity	Inaccessible or age-inappropriate	Partial adaptations	AAC/alternatives and privacy addressed
Monitoring / review	No way to know if help works	One informal check	Pupil voice plus sensible outcome and review date
Safeguarding & law	Displaces mandatory duties	Mentions policies, lacks clear route	Clearly retains DSL/EHCP/adjustments/emergency duties

Suggested local pass rule: no “1” on Safeguarding & law or Communication & dignity, an overall average of at least 2.5, and all level-specific outputs completed. For participants who do not yet meet this: provide modelling, follow-up rehearsal and a new attempt.

Template A | Four Pillars pupil support profile

Use only when consistent with the school's information-governance arrangements.

This form is a working educational summary, not an alternative to an EHCP, healthcare plan, individual risk assessment or safeguarding record. In training, fill using fictional initials only.

Pupil / group code (no full personal identifiers in training):

Strengths, interests and pupil-defined successes:

BRIAN'S • How does the learner express thinking, worries or preferences? What language or visuals do they accept?

WAVES • What early signs and support preferences have been communicated or observed?

CIRCLES • Which predictability, schedule, setting or person is helpful?

BRIDGES • Which accessible routes, AAC, relationships, interests or choices support participation?

Pupil / family input and chosen communication method:

Specific adult action / who / when / review date:

Existing provision / plans checked with SENCO or appropriate owner:

Template B | Lesson and transition planner

Target: accessible participation in the same ambitious learning goal.

Year group, subject and learning goal:

Potential sensory, language, attention, mobility or social barriers:

Brian's: language offered privately; optional refusal alternative:

Waves: early support, de-escalation and safety route:

Circles: entry routine, warnings, change preparation:

Bridges: two or more meaningful routes to participate:

Teacher role / TA scaffold / independence and fade plan:

Learner feedback method (spoken, written, symbols, AAC, other):

Observation and review date:

Success is evidenced by access, agency, participation and learning - not forced calmness or a lower incident count alone.

Template C | Neutral observation and adjustment record

Record the smallest amount of information necessary.

Date/context	What happened (facts)	Barrier or trigger to test	Support offered	Pupil feedback & next step
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Fact / inference example. Fact: “Pupil covered ears as the alarm sounded.” Inference to avoid: “The pupil is attention-seeking.” Record alternative hypotheses and ask the pupil where accessible.

Data handling: Do not duplicate child protection records into this log. Use school-approved systems and local retention/access procedures; keep sensitive data restricted. [R1, R9]

Template D | Pupil voice and communication choice

Ask without pressuring pupils to describe inner experiences.

Offer: conversation, private writing, symbols, AAC, pointing, gesture, drawing or a trusted adult assisting communication. An opt-out is always available.

Which parts of the day feel easy to enter?

Is there anything we should change before a difficult moment?

What is the best way for staff to offer you help?

Which routine (Circle) or connection (Bridge) would you choose?

Did the support help? YES / SOMETIMES / NO / NOT SURE / DO NOT WANT TO SAY

Would you like us to try a different option?

Staff record response in the pupil's own terms wherever feasible; do not convert silence into assumed agreement. Do not seek personal trauma histories through this tool.

Template E | Teacher–TA two-minute briefing

For Level 2 and routine classroom planning.

Question	Brief answer / agreement
What is the learning goal?	_____
What can the pupil already do independently?	_____
What accessibility barriers may arise?	_____
What is the first prompt or scaffold?	_____
When can we fade adult support?	_____
What is the safety / escalation route?	_____
How will we quickly review at lesson end?	_____

Deployment principle

Teaching assistants add to the teacher's instruction and support independence; the teacher remains responsible for teaching and monitoring learning. [R5]

Template F | Six-week school pilot plan

A practical implementation sheet for SENCOs and leaders.

Field	Decision / named owner
Problem we are trying to solve	_____
Pilot phase, size and rationale	_____
Core components / safe adaptations	_____
Lead, SENCO, DSL and data lead	_____
Staff training and coaching plan	_____
Pupil/family communication and input	_____
Baseline date and meaningful indicators	_____
Risks, mitigations and escalation	_____
Week 2: early safety/usability check	_____
Week 6: continue / adapt / stop decision	_____
Week 12: longer-term review	_____

Pre-agreed decision rule: Continue only if pupil experience and learning access are acceptable, safeguarding/privacy concerns are managed and staff can deliver core components. Adapt or stop if stigma, unmet provision or workload harms outweigh benefits.

Template G | Evaluation dashboard

Balance implementation, experience, learning and risk.

Domain	Measure to choose	Baseline	Week 2	Week 6	Limitation / interpretation
Reach	Staff trained / eligible	____	____	____	Training is not impact
Fidelity	Safe components observed	____	____	____	Avoid surveillance tone
Access	Participation / work access	____	____	____	Other changes matter
Pupil voice	Reported helpfulness / agency	____	____	____	Allow non-response
Equity	Who is not benefiting?	____	____	____	Small samples limit claims
Risk	Stigma / incidents / unmet plans	____	____	____	Act immediately on harm
Workload	Staff time and feasibility	____	____	____	Do not shift burden

Interpreting findings: Compare like-for-like periods cautiously. If another support or policy changed, note it. Use quotations only with appropriate permissions and protect pupil identity. Seek alternative explanations; avoid claiming causality from before/after data. [R6]

Template H | Coaching and observation feedback

Reflect, name an adjustment, then review.

Observed practice	Evidence / notes	One constructive next step
Access options available	_____	_____
Agency and pupil voice protected	_____	_____
Wave-aware response	_____	_____
Circle / Bridge use	_____	_____
Teacher–TA collaboration	_____	_____
Privacy / safeguarding maintained	_____	_____

Coaching sequence: What were you trying to achieve? What did we observe? What might pupils have experienced? What will we alter? When will we check?

Template I | Attendance, assessment and CPD review

This should be stored only on school-approved staff systems.

Participant / staff ID	Level	Attended / make-up	Quiz /10	Applied criterion	Assessor & date
_____	____	_____	____	Pass / revisit	_____
_____	____	_____	____	Pass / revisit	_____
_____	____	_____	____	Pass / revisit	_____
_____	____	_____	____	Pass / revisit	_____
_____	____	_____	____	Pass / revisit	_____
_____	____	_____	____	Pass / revisit	_____

Participant evaluation: What will I use? Which element was unclear? What additional accessible resource do I need? What school policy or team support must be aligned first?

Quick-reference: scripts and common errors

A printable final-page reminder for staff.

Situation	Supportive response	Avoid
Sudden change	“This is different today. Here is now/next.”	“Stop overreacting.”
Overload	“Would space, a break card or written instructions help?”	“Tell me exactly why right now.”
Non-speaking pupil	Present their established AAC options and wait.	Withholding device / insisting on speech.
Task refusal	Offer a Bridge into the same learning goal.	Using interests only as rewards.
Peer difficulty	Privately check safety, bullying and support needs.	Assuming disability explains everything.
Safeguarding disclosure	Listen, reassure appropriately and report to DSL.	Promising secrecy / investigating.

Four questions to keep

What might be happening inside? • How intense is it? • What familiar support helps? • What Bridge would make the next step accessible?

Evidence, references and publication notes

Research-informed, not a substitute for statutory requirements.

The Four Pillars are an original educational framework by Counsellor Tomass J. Wood. The underlying principles are compatible with work on inclusive classroom practice, visual supports, pupil agency, implementation quality and adjusted communication. The existence of evidence for those wider principles does not itself establish that the named Four Pillars programme is effective. School leaders should evaluate acceptability, feasibility, and effects locally and independently.

[R1] Department for Education — Keeping children safe in education 2026 (in force 1 September 2026)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

[R2] Department for Education / DHSC — SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (page updated 12 September 2024)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

[R3] GOV.UK — Help if you have a disabled child: education - reasonable adjustments

https://www.gov.uk/help-for-disabled-child/education

[R4] Education Endowment Foundation — Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2020)

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/SEND/

[R5] Education Endowment Foundation — Deployment of Teaching Assistants (2025)

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants/

[R6] Education Endowment Foundation — A School's Guide to Implementation (2024)

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/implementation

[R7] NICE — Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: support and management, CG170

https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg170/chapter/Recommendations

[R8] CAST — Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 3.0 (2024)

https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

[R9] Information Commissioner's Office — Children's information / privacy resources

https://ico.org.uk/childrensprivacy

Source check: 20 October 2026. Official documents and local policies may change; confirm the current version before each school delivery. References describe the wider evidence/policy basis and are not endorsements of the Four Pillars by the named bodies.

Copyright / use: © 2026 Counsellor Tomass J. Wood — Tom Tom Universe. Intended as a school training resource. Fictional examples; no pupil data included. Adapt administrative fields to local policy while retaining safeguarding and accessibility principles.

TOM TOM UNIVERSE • SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

FOUR PILLARS STAFF TRAINING

Three levels • One inclusive language



BRIAN'S



WAVES



CIRCLES



BRIDGES

Counsellor Tomass J. Wood • October 2026

Why the Four Pillars?

A shared language for noticing needs - not a way to label a child.

- Understand what a pupil may be experiencing.
- Respond to barriers before interpreting behaviour.
- Offer support without requiring personal disclosure.

PROMPT / What might adults miss if they only observe outward behaviour?

Brian’s (Brains)

What is happening in my mind?

- Thoughts, worries, curiosity, attention and impulses.
- Different "Brains" can be active together.
- Invite, never demand, a pupil’s own words or symbols.

PROMPT / Ask pairs to rewrite “She is refusing” as three possible internal experiences.

Waves

How intense is this experience right now?

- Small / Medium / Big / Storm are optional labels.
- Waves can represent joy, excitement, distress or sensory load.
- Support regulation before explanation or problem-solving.

PROMPT / Can a very happy pupil have a Big Wave? What about a silent pupil?

Circles

What brings predictability, familiarity or safe structure?

- A consistent opening, visual schedule or choice board.
- Preparing pupils for transitions and changes.
- Flexible anchors - routines serve the learner, not the other way round.

PROMPT / What part of the school day changes without warning?

Bridges

What will connect this pupil to help, communication or learning?

- A trusted adult, peer, object, interest or communication tool.
- Choices, sensory adjustments, accessible materials.
- Small, co-produced routes into participation.

PROMPT / Which Bridge could reduce the demand without lowering the learning goal?

The response sequence

Notice → reduce barriers → offer a Bridge → review.

- Observe without assumption.
- Reduce sensory and task demand when the Wave is high.
- Offer two accessible options and reconnect later.

PROMPT / Ask groups to replace a corrective script with an accessible one.

Safety, dignity and consent

Safeguarding obligations always take precedence.

- All staff follow school policies and KCSIE 2026 part one.
- No forced sharing of feelings, diagnosis or trauma history.
- No public Wave charts, rank lists or unsolicited physical contact.

PROMPT / When would you stop a Four Pillars conversation and report?

From concept to action

One safe change in one school day.

- Select one routine, language adjustment or Bridge.
- Check whether the pupil experiences it as helpful.
- Share only necessary information with the right colleagues.

PROMPT / What will you change tomorrow, and how will you know it helps?

Plan for variability

Design access before an incident occurs.

- Keep the curricular goal; vary routes to participation.
- Preview sensory, language, transition and social barriers.
- Offer choices in representation and response.

PROMPT / Which barriers are created by the environment rather than the pupil?

Brian’s in lessons

Give pupils safe ways to notice thinking.

- Optional thought bubbles, symbols, writing or private check-ins.
- Model competing needs, not "good" and "bad" minds.
- Pair noticing with a practical support choice.

PROMPT / What if the pupil declines to answer?

Wave-aware response

Match support to present needs, not assumptions.

- Early cues can include withdrawal, motion or reduced communication.
- Adjust demands, noise, proximity and pace.
- Return to learning when the pupil is ready; repair later.

PROMPT / Which adult behaviours can unintentionally intensify a Wave?

Circle design

Make transitions predictable, not inflexible.

- Now / Next / Later or written agendas.
- Advance notice and visual alternatives when plans change.
- Consistent entry, exit and movement routines.

PROMPT / How might the Circle change for Year 10?

Bridge design

Build the smallest useful connection.

- Interest-led hooks and trusted relationships.
- AAC, symbols, written options and meaningful choices.
- Breaks, quieter routes and supported re-entry.

PROMPT / What does the pupil identify as a useful Bridge?

Adaptive teaching & TAs

Protect independence and instructional access.

- Teacher retains responsibility for the pupil's learning.
- TA scaffolds, prompts and fades support where appropriate.
- Brief before lessons; debrief patterns without blame.

PROMPT / How could continuous adult proximity reduce peer participation?

Non-speaking and AAC access

Communication is more than spoken language.

- Respect established AAC systems and vocabulary.
- Accept gestures, symbols, typing, eye gaze or silence.
- Allow processing time; make consent/choice accessible.

PROMPT / How does a pupil refuse or say “no” with our current materials?

Observe - adjust - review

Use data to learn, not to label.

- Record antecedents, access barriers and support offered.
- Ask the pupil or communication partner what helped.
- Check learning, participation and autonomy over time.

PROMPT / What evidence would change our initial hypothesis?

Co-design a working plan

Teach → notice → adjust → reflect.

- Choose one class, one barrier and one pupil-defined goal.
- Specify adult response and accessible options.
- Revisit within two weeks and adapt.

PROMPT / Is this support sustainable when the usual TA is absent?

Implementation is a school change

Use a defined theory of change, not a poster campaign.

- Core components: child voice, accessible language, barrier reduction, review.
- Adaptable components: visuals, routines, symbols and subject examples.
- Agree who is accountable for safe delivery.

PROMPT / What would be implementation in name only?

Explore and establish a baseline

Identify the problem before choosing the rollout.

- Audit learner experiences and existing support quality.
- Review complaints, attendance patterns and access barriers carefully.
- Invite pupil, family and staff voice; protect confidentiality.

PROMPT / How will we know whether the school needs this?

Prepare roles and controls

Name the decisions, training and safeguarding owners.

- SENCO/SLT sponsor; staff champions; DSL and DPO consultation.
- Accessible materials; alternative communication options.
- Pilot scope, coaching schedule, consent/information practices.

PROMPT / Which risks need mitigation before a pilot?

Deliver with coaching

Model, rehearse, observe and improve.

- Short cycles with protected feedback time.
- Leadership models psychologically safe reflection.
- Use fidelity checks without punitive scoring.

PROMPT / How will cover staff and midday supervisors be included?

Evaluation and uncertainty

Measure what matters without overclaiming.

- Implementation: training uptake, appropriate use, consistency.
- Experience: pupil agency, access, belonging and family feedback.
- Equity and adverse effects: stigma, burden, exclusion, unwanted disclosure.

PROMPT / What would make us pause or change the programme?

Pupil voice and fairness

Every learner must be able to shape support.

- Accessible participation: spoken, written, symbol, AAC or trusted advocate.
- Check variation across phases, languages and disability needs.
- Provide an opt-out without reducing entitlement to support.

PROMPT / Whose views are missing from our data?

Safeguarding, data and governance

Keep legal duties independent of Four Pillars.

- KCSIE 2026, school DSL process and allegation routes.
- Data minimisation, appropriate access and retention rules.
- Reasonable adjustments and SEND graduated response remain.

PROMPT / What must happen even if the pupil asks us to keep it secret?

Sustain or adapt

Make a documented decision after the pilot.

- Review at 2, 6 and 12 weeks; listen to critical feedback.
- Continue, refine or discontinue using explicit criteria.
- Refresh training, materials, responsibilities and family information.

PROMPT / What evidence would justify scaling beyond the pilot?

TOM TOM UNIVERSE • FOUR PILLARS

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

This certifies that

Participant name

Level 1 | Introduction for all staff

Knowledge assessment and applied school-practice criteria completed under local CPD arrangements

Date	Facilitator / assessor	School / setting

Locally awarded participation and competency record • Not externally accredited

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

This certifies that

Participant name

Level 2 | Practical implementation

Knowledge assessment and applied school-practice criteria completed under local CPD arrangements

Date	Facilitator / assessor	School / setting

Locally awarded participation and competency record • Not externally accredited

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

This certifies that

Participant name

Level 3 | Leadership and evaluation

Knowledge assessment and applied school-practice criteria completed under local CPD arrangements

Date	Facilitator / assessor	School / setting

Locally awarded participation and competency record • Not externally accredited