

Policy title	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Written by	Director of Governance and Admissions
Policy owner	Director of School Improvement

Status	Approved
Summary of change	Review and update in line with current legislation and ways of working

Approval date	March 2026
Approval authority	Board of Trustees
Review date	Annual review

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 Our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy aims to:

- Make sure the Trust fully implements national legislation and guidance regarding pupils with SEND
- Set out how the Trust will:
 - Support and make provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
 - Provide pupils with SEND access to all aspects of academy life so they can engage in the activities of the academy alongside pupils who do not have SEND
 - Help pupils with SEND fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best
 - Help pupils with SEND become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
 - In our secondary academies, help pupils with SEND make a successful transition into adulthood
 - Communicate with pupils with SEND and their parents or carers and involve them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the pupil
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEND
- Communicate with, and involve, pupils with SEND and their parents or carers in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the pupil
- Make sure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff

2. Vision and values

2.1 The Trust will provide all pupils with access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

2.2 The Trust is committed to making sure all our pupils have the chance to thrive and supporting them to meet their full potential.

2.3 The Trust is focused on creating an inclusive environment, where provision is tailored to the needs and abilities of pupils, no matter how varied.

3. Legislation and guidance

3.1 This is based on the statutory [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#) and the following legislation:

- [Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), which sets out schools responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out local authorities' and schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out the academy's duties to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out the academy's responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes having a disability) and those who don't share it
- The [Governance Handbook](#), which sets out trustees' responsibilities for pupils with SEND

- The [Academy Admissions Code](#), which sets out the academy’s obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the academy, and its duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special educational needs

3.2 This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Inclusion and equal opportunities

4.1 The Trust strives to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all pupils, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. The Trust is committed to offering all pupils the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

4.2 This will be achieved by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the academy environment to make sure that pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of academy life.

5. Definitions

5.1 Special educational needs

5.1.1 A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

5.1.2 They have a **learning difficulty or disability** if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

5.1.3 **Special educational provision** is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

5.2 Disability

5.2.1 Pupils are considered to have a **disability** if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

5.2.2 The academy will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

5.3 The 4 areas of need

5.3.1 The needs of pupils with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Pupils can have needs that cut across more than 1 area, and their needs may change over time.

5.3.2 Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the pupil’s particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

AREA OF NEED

Communication and interaction	<p>Pupils with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or do not understand or use the social rules of communication.</p> <p>Pupils who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.</p>
AREA OF NEED	
Cognition and learning	<p>Pupils with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific learning difficulties, which impact 1 or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Moderate learning difficulties • Severe learning difficulties • Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where pupils are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment
Social, emotional and mental health	<p>These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Pupils may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder • Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder • Suffered adverse childhood experiences <p>These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated.</p>
Sensory and/or physical	<p>Pupils with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided.</p> <p>Pupils may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment <p>These pupils may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.</p>

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Details of the key staff in each academy particular responsibilities concerning SEND are provided in the academy's SEN Information Report.

6.2 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

6.2.1 Each academy will have a named SENCO.

They will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEN and then liaise with them about the pupil's needs and any provision made
- Work with the Principal to determine the strategic development of the provision in the academy
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that pupils with SEN receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support and differentiated teaching methods appropriate for individual pupils
- Advise on the deployment of the academy's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- Be a point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA) and its support services, and work with external agencies to ensure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the pupil and their parents are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned
- When a pupil moves to a different academy or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a pupil's SEN and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, academy or institution in a timely manner
- Work with the Principal to make sure the academy meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Make sure the academy keeps its records of all pupils with SEND up to date and accurate
- With the Principal, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development
- With the Principal, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the academy offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- Prepare and review information for inclusion in the academy's SEN information report and any updates to this policy
- Prepare and review information for inclusion in the academy's Accessibility Plan every 3 years
- With the Principal and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the academy's identification of SEN, both within the academy and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.2.2 For those academies with nursery provision, a specific early years SENCO will be identified, who will have the same roles and responsibilities.

6.3 Principal

6.3.1 The Principal of each academy will:

- Work with the SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND provision within the academy
- Work with the SENCO to make sure the academy meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for pupils with SEND, and their progress
- Make sure that the SENCO has enough time to carry out their duties
- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of pupils on the SEND register
- Advise the LA when a pupil needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review
- With the SENCO, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development
- With the SENCO, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the academy offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- With the SENCO and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the academy's identification of SEN, both within the academy and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.4 Class teachers

6.4.1 Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is differentiated to meet pupil needs through a graduated approach
- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the SEN information report
- Communicating with parents regularly to:
 - Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
 - Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
 - Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the academy
 - Listen to the parents' concerns and agree their aspirations for the pupil

6.5 Board of Trustees

6.5.1 The Board of Trustees, by delegation to the Education and Standards Committee, has responsibility for:

- overseeing SEND matters across the Trust's academies, including fulfilment of all statutory requirements;
- monitoring the appropriate implementation of this policy across the Trust.

6.6 Local Governing Body¹ (LGB)

6.6.1 Each academy's LGB has responsibility for:

- providing feedback from parents and community stakeholders to inform SEN provision

¹ Responsibility varies by academy – check individual LGB Terms of Reference

- receiving an annual report from the academy SENCo on academy SEND provision
- scrutinising and providing feedback on the academy's 'SEN Information Report' to the Education and Standards Committee to facilitate the annual approval;
- through the annual report, establishing a clear picture of the resources available in the academy and reporting key issues and risks to the Board of Trustees;
- monitoring how the academy meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to admissions, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements

6.7 Parents or carers

6.7.1 Parents or carers should inform the academy if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

6.7.2 Parents or carers of a pupil on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the pupil's SEND and the support provided. Whilst the format of this will look different in each of our academies, parents will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This may include:

- Being invited to termly meetings to review the provision that is in place for their child. This can include meetings with subject teachers at a parent consultation as well as meetings with a Pastoral Lead or Senior Leader.
- Being asked to provide information about the impact of SEN support outside academy and any changes in the pupil's needs
- Being given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with academy staff, agree their aspirations for the pupil
- Being given an annual report on the pupil's progress

6.7.3 The academy will take into account the views of the parent or carer in any decisions made about the pupil.

6.8 The pupil

6.8.1 Pupils will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the pupil:

- Explaining what their strengths and difficulties are
- Contributing to setting targets or outcomes
- Attending review meetings
- Giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions

6.8.2 The pupil's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

7. SEN information report

7.1 The academy publishes a SEN information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the academy.

7.2 The information report will be updated annually and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains.

8. Our approach to SEND support

8.1 Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs

8.1.1 We will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the academy. This will

build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. We will also consider any evidence that the pupil may have a disability and if so, what reasonable adjustments the academy may need to make.

8.1.2 Class teachers will regularly assess the progress of all pupils and identify any whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better their previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, wider development or social needs.

8.1.3 When teachers identify an area where a pupil is making slow progress, they will target the pupil's area of weakness with differentiated, high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve, the teacher will raise the issue with the SENCO to have an initial discussion about whether this lack of progress may be due to a special educational need. Where necessary they will, in consultation with the pupil's parents or carers, consider consulting an external specialist.

8.1.4 Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEN.

8.1.5 Potential short-term causes of impact on behaviour or performance will be considered, such as bullying or bereavement. Staff will also take particular care in identifying and assessing SEN for pupils from other cultures and whose first language is not English.

8.1.6 When deciding whether the pupil needs special educational provision, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

8.1.7 If a pupil is joining the academy, and:

- Their previous setting has already identified that they have SEN
- They are known to external agencies
- They have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) then the academy will work in a multi-agency way to make sure we get relevant information before the pupil starts at academy, so support can be put in place as early as possible.

8.2 Consulting and involving pupils and parents

8.2.1 The academy will put the pupil and their parents at the heart of all decisions made about special educational provision.

8.2.2 When we are aiming to identify whether a pupil needs special education provision, we will have an early discussion with the pupil and their parents. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty
- We take into account any concerns the parents have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

Notes of these early discussions will be added to the pupil's record and given to their parents.

8.2.3 We will formally notify parents if it is decided that a pupil will receive special educational provision.

8.3 The graduated approach to SEN support

8.3.1 Once a pupil has been identified as having SEN, we will take action to remove any barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

1. Assess

The pupil's class teacher and the SENCO will carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. The views of the pupil and their parents will be taken into account. The academy may also seek advice from external support services.

The assessment will be reviewed regularly to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the pupil's need. For many pupils, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

2. Plan

In consultation with the parents and the pupil, the teacher and the SENCO will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes, and a clear date for review.

All staff who work with the pupil will be made aware of the pupil's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed. This information will be recorded on our management information system, and will be made accessible to staff in an academy-based support plan.

Parents will be fully aware of the planned support and interventions, and may be asked to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

3. Do

The pupil's class or subject teacher retains overall responsibility for their progress.

Where the plan involves group or 1-to-1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the pupil. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.

The SENCO will support the teacher in further assessing the pupil's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on how to implement support effectively.

4. Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

We will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents and pupils
- The level of progress the pupil has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the pupil

The teacher and the SENCO will revise the outcomes and support in light of the pupil's progress and development, and in consultation with the pupil and their parents.

8.4 Levels of support

8.4.1 Academy-based SEN provision

Pupils receiving SEN provision will be placed on the academy's SEND register. These pupils have needs that can be met by the academy through the graduated approach. Where the pupil's needs cannot be adequately met with in-house expertise, staff will consider involving an external specialist as soon as possible.

The provision for these pupils is funded through the academy's notional SEND budget.

On the census these pupils will be marked with the code K.

8.4.2 Education, health and care (EHC) plan

Pupils who need more support than is available through the academy's academy-based SEN provision may be entitled to an EHC plan. The plan is a legal document that describes the needs of the pupil, the provision that will be put in place, and the outcomes sought.

The provision for these pupils will be funded from the academy's notional SEND budget, and potentially from the LA (from the high-level needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant).

On the census these pupils will be marked with the code E.

8.5 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision

8.5.1 We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEN by:

- Tracking pupils' progress, including by using provision maps
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEN support
- Using pupil questionnaires
- Monitoring by the SENCO
- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from the pupil and their parents

9. Expertise and training of staff

9.1 Training will regularly be provided to teaching and support staff. The Principal and the SENCO will continuously monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development.

10. Links with external professional agencies

10.1 The academy recognises that it won't be able to meet all the needs of every pupil. Whenever necessary the academy will work with external support services such as:

- Speech and language therapists
- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- General practitioners or paediatricians
- Academy nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services

11. Monitoring the policy

11.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees Education and Standards Committee **every year**. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.

11.2 It will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

12. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents

- SEN information report
- The local offer
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Attendance policy
- Safeguarding / child protection policy
- Complaints policy