

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

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Purpose and scope

This SEND policy sets out our approach to SEND across Learning Community Trust (LCT). To find out exactly how this policy is implemented in our academies, see the SEN information report published on each academy's website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in practice.

Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents which are trust and/or academy policies:

- 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

This policy establishes a consistent Trust-wide approach, while allowing academies the flexibility to respond to their individual contexts

Aims and objectives

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

- Make sure the schools in our trust fully implement national legislation and guidance regarding pupils with SEND
- Set out how our Trust will, across all of our academies:
 - Support and make provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities
 - Provide young people with SEND access to all aspects of school life so they can engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEND
 - Help young people with SEND fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best
 - Help young people with SEND become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
 - Help young people with SEND make a successful transition into adulthood
 - Communicate with young people 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 young people with SEND
- Make sure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff
- Ensure that high-quality, adaptive teaching is the first response to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND."

Vision and values

Our vision is to develop compassionate, resilient and inspirational young people who can thrive within an ever-changing global community.

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

Legislation and guidance

This is based on the statutory guidance [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#), [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) 2026 and [working together to improve school attendance](#).

This policy is also based on 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 schools' duties to make reasonable adjustments for young people with disabilities
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out schools' 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 those with a disability) and those who don't share it
- The [academy trust governance guide](#) which sets out Governors and Trustees responsibilities for young people with SEND
- The [School Admissions Code](#), which sets out schools' obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and their duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special education needs
- The [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#) which introduces changes across safeguarding, children's social care, attendance, admissions, academies, school uniforms, breakfast clubs, allergy safety and school regulation.
- The Trust will also take account of updated operational guidance and national expectations relating to SEND where these evolve.

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

Inclusion and equal opportunities

In our Trust we strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all pupils, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all pupils the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the academy environment to make sure that young people with SEND are included in all aspects of academy life.

We promote a culture of high expectations and belonging, ensuring that pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of academy life.

Definitions

Special educational needs

A young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

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

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.

Disability

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

All academies in our Trust will make reasonable adjustments for young people with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

The 4 areas of need

The needs of young people with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Young people can have needs across more than 1 area, and their needs may change over time.

Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the young person's particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

Area of need	
Communication and interaction	Young people 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 not understand or use the social rules of communication. Young people who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.
Cognition and learning	Young people with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including: • 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	These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Pupils may have: • 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 These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated.
Sensory and/or physical	Young people with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. Pupils may have: • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment These pupils may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

Roles and responsibilities

The SENCO

The SENCO of each academy in the Trust will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEN and then liaise with them about the young person's needs and any provision made
- Work with the Headteacher/Principal, Director of SEND and SEN Governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and 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 young people 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 young people with SEN receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support and adapted teaching methods appropriate for individual young people
- Advise on the deployment of the academy's delegated budget and other resources to meet young people's needs effectively
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA) and its support services, and work with external agencies to make sure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the young person and their parents/carers are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned
- When a young person moves to a different school or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a young person's SEN and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution, in a timely manner
- Work with the Headteacher/Principal, and governing board to make sure that 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 young people with SEND up to date and accurate
- With the Headteacher/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 Headteacher/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
- With the Headteacher/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

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for making sure the following duties are carried out, though the duties can be delegated to a committee or an individual:

- Co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer
- Do all it can to make sure that every young person with SEND gets the support they need

- Make sure that young people with SEND engage in the activities of the academy alongside young people who don't have SEND
- Inform parents/carers when their child's academy is making special educational provision for the child
- Make sure that arrangements are in place in our academies to support any young people with medical conditions
- Provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND
- Provide an annual report for parents/carers on their child's progress
- Record accurately and keep up to date records of the provision made for young people with SEND
- Publish information on each academy's website about how the schools are implementing their SEND policy, in an SEN information report
- Publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled young people, the steps taken to prevent disabled young people being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled young people, and academy accessibility plans
- Make sure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for each academy and that the key responsibilities of the role are set out, and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out
- Determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of young people with SEND
- Make sure that all young people from year 8 until year 13 are provided with independent careers advice
- Seek assurance on the quality, impact and consistency of SEND provision across the Trust.

The SEND local governor

The SEND local governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at local governing body meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within their academy and update the board on this
- Work with the Headteacher/Principal and SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in their academy

The Headteacher/Principal

The Headteacher/Principal will:

- Work with the SENCO and SEND local governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the academy
- Work with the SENCO and local governors 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 young with SEND in the academy, and their progress
- Have responsibility for monitoring the academy's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual young people
- 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 Local Authority when a young person needs an EHC 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
- Ensure that SEND provision is fully integrated into whole-school improvement priorities.

Class teachers

High-quality, adaptive teaching remains the primary approach to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is adapted to meet young people's needs through a graduated approach
- The progress and development of every young person 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 young person'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/carers 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 young person and the academy
 - Listen to the parents'/carers' concerns and agree their aspirations for the young person

Parents or carers

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

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 young person's SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support.

They will be:

- Invited to termly meetings to review the provision that is in place for their child
- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEN support outside the academy and any changes in the young person's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with academy staff, agree their aspirations for the young person
- Given an annual report on the young person's progress

The academy will take into account the views of the parents or carers in any decisions made about the young person.

The young person

Young people 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 young person:

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

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

SEN information report

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

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

Our approach to SEND support

Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs

Staff will assess each young person's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the school. This will build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. They will also consider any evidence that the young person may have a disability and if so, what reasonable adjustments the academy may need to make.

High-quality, adaptive teaching will always be the first response to identified need before additional SEND provision is considered

Class teachers will regularly assess the progress for all young people and identify those whose progress:

- Is significantly less 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.

When teachers identify an area where a young person is making less progress, they will target the young person's area of weakness with adapted 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 young person's parents or carers, consider consulting an external specialist.

Care will be taken to avoid the over-identification of SEND where needs can be met through high-quality teaching or where other factors are influencing progress.

Less progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a young person is recorded as having SEN. 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 young people whose first language is not English.

When deciding whether the young person needs special educational provision, academy staff will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the young person and their parents/carers. They will use this to

determine the support that is needed and whether the academy can provide it by adapting its core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

If a young person 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 it gets relevant information before the young person starts at the academy, so support can be put in place as early as possible.

Consulting and involving pupils and parents/carers

Our academies will put the young person and their parents/carers at the heart of all decisions made about special educational provision.

When we are aiming to identify whether a young person needs special education provision, we will have an early discussion with the young person and their parents/carers. 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/carers have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the young person
- 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/carers. We will formally notify parents/carers when it is decided that a young person will receive special educational provision.

The graduated approach to SEN support

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

The assessment will be reviewed at least termly, or more frequently where required to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the young person's need. For many young people, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

2. Plan

In consultation with the parents/carers and the young person, 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 young person will be made aware of the young person's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed. This information will be recorded on each of our academy's information management systems and will be made accessible to staff in a pupil passport, individual education plan or school-based support plan.

Parents/carers 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 class or subject teacher retains overall responsibility for the pupil's progress, including in secondary phases where multiple teachers are involved.

Where the plan involves group or 1-to-1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the young person. 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 young person'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 young person'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/carers and young person
- The level of progress the young person has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the young person

The teacher and the SENCO will revise the outcomes and support in light of the young person's progress and development, and in consultation with them and their parents/carers.

Levels of support

School-based SEN support

Young people receiving SEN support will be placed on the SEND register. These young people have needs that can be met by the academy through the graduated approach. Where the young person'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 young people is funded through the school's notional SEND budget.

On the census these young people will be marked with the code K.

Education, health and care (EHC) plan

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

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

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

Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for young people with SEN by:

- Tracking young people's progress, including by using provision maps
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEN support
- Using pupil questionnaires
- Quality assuring the education provision by the SENCO
- Holding annual reviews for young people with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from the young person and their parents/carers

Attendance

Many young people with SEND face complex barriers to attendance. Their right to an education is the same as any other young person and therefore the attendance ambition for these young people is the same as it is for any other young person. However, they may need additional support.

Our approach to supporting young people who are absent from school due to their SEND is set out in our attendance policy.

Safeguarding

We recognise that young people with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers and additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group. Staff will be trained to recognise and respond to these additional vulnerabilities.

For more details of the pastoral support we offer young people with SEND, and the support we provide to help young people overcome any communication barriers they face, see our safeguarding/child protection policy.

Expertise and training of staff

Training will regularly be provided to teaching and support staff. The Headteacher/Principal, SLT and the SENCOs will continuously monitor to identify any staff in their academy who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development. The Director of SEND will support each academy with their SEND training strategy planning. The Director of SEND will coordinate regular SENCO meetings and planned ongoing CPD for the wider workforce. The Trust maintains a strategic overview of SEND workforce development to ensure consistency and quality across academies.

Links with external professional agencies

The Trust recognises that we won't be able to meet all the needs of every young person. Where possible, our academies 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
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services

Admission and accessibility arrangements

Admission arrangements

Young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan which specifically names the academy will be allocated a place.

Accessibility arrangements

Each academy in our Trust has an accessibility policy. These set out the steps to prevent disabled young people from being treated less favourably than other young people.

The policy describes the facilities each academy provides to help disabled young people access the academy including the provision of auxiliary aids and services

Each of our academies publish their Accessibility arrangements on their website.

Complaints about SEND provision

Where parents/carers have concerns about the SEND provision at a school in our trust, they should first raise their concerns informally with the class teacher, SENCO or headteacher. We will try to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve their concerns, parents/carers are welcome to submit their complaint formally via our complaints portal on our website [Complaints - Learning Community Trust](#)

Formal complaints about SEND provision in any of our schools should be made using the complaints portal in the first instance. They will be handled in line with the trust's complaints policy [LCT Complaints PolicyProcedure V1.pdf](#)

If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the response, they can escalate the complaint, as explained in the policy. In some circumstances, this right also applies to the pupil themselves.

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEN Code of Practice](#).

To find out about disagreement resolution and mediation services in our local area, please see: [What is Disagreement Resolution and Mediation? - SEND - Local offer](#) for Telford and Wrekin Local Authority and [What is Disagreement Resolution and Mediation? - SEND - Local offer](#) for Shropshire Local Authority.

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our SEND policy. We will do this by evaluating whether or not we are meeting our objectives set out in section 1.

We will evaluate how effective our SEND provision is with regards to:

- All staff's awareness of young with SEND at the start of the autumn term
- How early young people are identified as having SEND
- Young people's progress and attainment once they have been identified as having SEND
- Whether young people with SEND feel safe, valued and included in the academy community
- Comments and feedback from pupils and their parents/carers

Monitoring the policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Director of SEND every year. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.