Special educational needs and disabilities policy

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Diverse Academies

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1 Policy Statement

1.1 Purpose and intent

1.1.1 We are committed to ensuring that all children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to play a full and active role in academy life and achieve their potential. Our child-centred approach prioritises student and parental engagement, ensuring every child's voice is heard.

Through a policy of a structured, graduated response, we aim to provide tailored support that adapts to each child's needs, fostering confidence, resilience and independence in a nurturing and inclusive environment. Our teachers have high expectations for all our students and are equipped with the skills and enthusiasm to remove barriers to learning. We believe that high-quality, inclusive teaching is the foundation for success, with additional interventions enhancing, rather than replacing, classroom learning. By embedding a graduated response, we ensure every child receives the right level of support to thrive academically and personally.

1.1.2 Through this policy and associated procedures, we shall ensure that:

- Students will not be labelled or disadvantaged by any policy or procedure operated within our organisation;
- we work in partnership with parents/carers and appropriate external agencies to support students with special educational needs and, through our best endeavours, we will ensure that appropriate provision is secured for any student with special educational needs in order to achieve agreed outcomes;
- we have a special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDCO), who will maintain and regularly review the SEN register held in respective of an individual student and co-ordinate support. However, it will be the responsibility of all staff to support individual students, to implement strategies suggested by the SENDCO and generally be responsible for ensuring that students receive provision appropriate to their needs and agreed outcomes;
- children and young people with SEN engage in the activities of the academy alongside students who do not have SEN; and
- all support provided and decisions taken will have regard to these general principles as well as the legal framework set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Regulations 2014 and the SEND code of practice.

1.1.3 **Definition of special education needs and disabilities** – for the purposes of this policy and under the Children and Families Act 2014, a child/young person will have SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child or young person will have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities that are generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools in England.

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

1.1.4 This policy also has regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010, particularly the duty to make reasonable adjustments and eliminate discrimination.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR regarding the processing of SEND related personal data; and
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

1.1.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- academy SEND information report (updated annually);
- academy accessibility plan;
- equity, diversity and inclusion policy;
- behaviour policy; and
- supporting pupils with medical conditions policy.

1.2 Roles and responsibilities

1.2.1 Board of trustees

Trustees, working with local academy committees in line with the scheme of delegation, will monitor and evaluate the impact of the policy, and will hold the chief executive team to account for its implementation.

1.2.2 Local academy committee

A governor will be appointed with linked responsibilities for SEN. They will raise SEN issues at local academy meetings, monitor the quality and effectiveness of the SEN provision within the academy, and work with designated senior leaders to develop the SEN provision.

1.2.3 Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEND within their academy. They will work with the SENDCO and link governor to develop the SEND provision within the academy. The principal will ensure that the academy works in partnership with students,

teachers, parents and, where appropriate, other external agencies to ensure that individual learning needs are addressed within the context of the school curriculum.

1.2.4 Special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDCO)

The SENDCO will co-ordinate the academy's approach to SEND provision and will undertake those duties set out in chapter six of the SEND code of practice.

1.2.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for the progress and development of every student in their class and will work with the SENDCO and teaching assistants to ensure the 'assess, plan, do review' cycle is appropriately implemented to support any student with SEND.

1.2.6 Parents and carers

Parents/carers of students with SEND will be able to discuss the needs of their child with their child's tutor, the progress co-ordinator/head of year or the SENDCO.

2 Policy

2.1 Identification and assessment of SEN

2.1.1 Four broad areas of need

We recognise that it is important to carefully identify and establish the need for each individual child or young person in order to best understand and meet their needs. In defining need, we use the four broad categories of need outlined in the SEND code of practice: communication and interaction (including autism spectrum conditions); cognition and learning (including specific learning difficulties); social, emotional and mental health difficulties; and sensory and/or physical needs.

2.1.2 Transition and initial assessment

Information about previous special educational needs typically accompanies students on entry to the academy. The SENDCO uses this data – collected from school transfer files and transition meetings with feeder schools or early years settings – to ensure continued appropriate provision. Where necessary, an initial one-page profile/pupil passport will be created and shared with relevant staff.

2.1.3 Assessment on entry to secondary provision

On starting secondary provision, some students undergo baseline assessments, including reading and spelling tests. The SENDCO and subject leads analyse this data to identify students requiring additional support. If a student is found to have special educational needs, they may be added to the SEN register in line with the SEND code of practice.

2.1.4 Transition and entry to specialist settings

Children and young people must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place to be considered for admission to a specialist provision. The EHCP outlines the individual's specific areas of need and the support required to meet those needs. It serves as the formal mechanism through which placement decisions are made, ensuring that the provision is appropriate, targeted, and aligned with the child or young person's profile of need.

2.1.5 Ongoing identification and intervention

Identification is an ongoing process that occurs alongside the academy reporting cycle as new data is collected and analysed. If a student does not make expected progress, interventions will be implemented as needed.

If a staff member identifies that a student's needs are not being met through standard classroom adaptations, the class teacher will set clear targets and provide tailored support. If progress is made, no further action is required. However, if concerns persist, the SENDCO will be informed to initiate further assessment.

2.1.6 Parental involvement and referral

If a parent or carer believes their child has special educational needs, they should contact the SENDCO, who will conduct assessments with input from relevant teachers. If the student is not making adequate progress, internal support will be provided in line with academy procedures. If additional intervention is required, parents/carers will be consulted, and a one-page profile/pupil passport may be developed.

2.1.7 Further support and external referrals

If internal interventions do not result in sufficient progress, a referral to a relevant specialist may be made, with parental consent. Information and recommended strategies will be shared with staff to ensure co-ordinated support.

2.1.8 Ongoing monitoring and classroom support

If there are no significant concerns about a student's academic progress, classroom adaptations will continue, and interventions will be applied if appropriate. All staff teaching students on the SEN register will be made aware of their individual needs. Subject/phase leads and the SEN team will assist teachers in developing appropriate support strategies and resources.

2.1.9 Access to external assessments and support plans

Parents will be provided with contact details for external professionals should they wish to pursue a private assessment. Whenever special educational provision is made, parents/carers and students will be involved in developing and reviewing support plans to ensure their needs are met.

2.2 Reviewing

2.2.1 Once students have been identified as needing SEN support, their progress is continuously monitored through structured reviews. The effectiveness of interventions is assessed, and adjustments are made to ensure students receive appropriate support. This process ensures that all students receive the necessary interventions to help them achieve their full potential.

2.2.2 Target setting and progress monitoring

All students, regardless of need, are set academic and personal development targets. The academy reporting process includes regular data analysis by teachers and the SENDCO to track progress. If a student is not achieving as expected, targeted support is provided.

For SEN students, all interventions delivered outside the classroom follow the SMART framework (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) to ensure effectiveness. These targets are recorded using individual provision plans, which are monitored and reviewed against agreed timeframes. If expected progress is not made, the SENDCO may refer the student to a specialist service, such as an educational psychologist.

2.2.3 Considering an education, health and care needs assessment

If, despite targeted interventions, differentiated support and external referrals, a student still does not make sufficient progress, the academy will consider requesting an EHC needs assessment in consultation with parents/carers.

2.2.4 Annual reviews for students with an EHCP

Students with an EHCP will have an annual review in accordance with legal requirements, ensuring that the plan remains relevant and appropriate to the student's evolving needs.

2.2.5 Monitoring after removal from the SEN register

If a student makes significant progress and is removed from the SEN register, their progress will continue to be monitored through the academy's structured reporting system. The class teacher, tutor and subject/phase leads will oversee this process to ensure the student remains on track.