

Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document	
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Introduction

This document maps out national and local expectations for SEND as policy and practice prompts for our Academies, and places these alongside illustrations and examples of how those expectations can be met. It seeks to cover key aspects of processes and support for SEND pupils in our Academies and to enable the further development and maintenance of good practice for the education of SEND learners and a trust wide inclusive ethos. Each Academy is encouraged to use these prompts and illustrations when formulating a SEND policy and Information report that is specific to their Academy, which will be displayed on that Academy's web site. Thus we hope to ensure that individual policies are comprehensive in meeting requirements, helpful to practitioners, and consistent with Trust values.

Legislation and guidance

This policy and information report 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 SEN and disabilities
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026/the-national-strategy-for-autistic-children>-SEN coordinators (SENCOs) and the SEN information report

Our aims and principles

Schools within the Staffordshire University Academy Trust (SUAT) share common values and an ethos that all children are at the heart of all that it does. The Trust seeks to ensure that there is an ambitious curriculum delivered expertly through engaging quality first teaching which leads to outstanding outcomes for all students.

This policy guidance derives from the Teaching and Learning framework of the Trust, and works alongside and in conjunction with the Staffordshire Local Offer, and the SEND School Policy and Information Report (School offer), which can be found on individual school websites.

Each academy within the SUAT shall ensure that:

- the special educational needs of students will be addressed (promptly), and they will not be labelled or disadvantaged by any policy or procedure operated within the Trust;
- it works in partnership with parents, carers and appropriate external agencies to support students with special educational needs and will use its best endeavours to ensure that
- appropriate provision is secured for any student with special educational needs in order to achieve agreed outcomes;
- it has a trained Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO). The SENDCO will maintain and regularly review the SEND record held in respect of an individual student and co-ordinate

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support. However, it will be the responsibility of all staff to support individual pupils, to implement strategies suggested by the SENDCO and generally be responsible for ensuring that students receive provision appropriate to their needs and agreed outcomes; and

- Children and young people with SEND engage in the activities of the academy alongside pupils who do not have SEND.
- The SEND Policy and information report of Staffordshire University Academy Trust reflects the principles of the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015).

The aims of this Special Educational Needs Information report and SEND Policy are to:

- ensure the Equality Act 2010 duties for pupils with disabilities are met,
- enable pupils with special educational needs to have their needs met,
- take into account the views of the pupils with special educational needs,
- encourage good communication and genuine partnerships with parents/carers of children with special educational needs,
- facilitate full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education, including an appropriate curriculum for the foundation stage and the National Curriculum, for pupils with special educational needs,
- in conjunction with the Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions and to have regard to statutory guidance supporting pupils at school with medical conditions,
- implement a graduated approach to meeting the needs of pupils using the Assess, Plan, Do, Review process,
- develop a culture of inclusion valuing high quality teaching for all learners, with teachers using a range of effective differentiation methods,
- employ a collaborative approach with learners with a SEND or disability, their families, staff within school, other external agencies including those from Health and Social Care,
- set appropriate individual learning outcomes based on prior achievement, high aspirations and the views of the learner and family,
- share expertise and good practice across the school, Multi Academy Trust and partnership schools.
- make efficient and effective use of school resources,
- Have regard to the Code of Practice (2015) for the identification, assessment, support and review of special educational needs.

Aspects of SEND Policy and related practice.

When putting into place or reviewing their individual policies, schools will want to pay attention to key aspects of policy such as those outlined below, and may wish to build on examples provided. They are prompted by discussions and questions in school/Trust networks and visits. They are not comprehensive; themes and examples will be added as they emerge through dialogues between schools and the Trust.

A: Definitions

Under the Children & Families Act 2014, a child/young person will have SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

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A Child or Young Person will have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

1. A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age; or
2. 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 or mainstream post-16 institutions in England.

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer.

A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if they fall within the definition at (1) or (2) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014)

B: Areas of Special Educational Need and Disabilities

Under the SEND Code of Practice 2015 pupils identified as having a special educational need (SEN) will be considered within one or more of the following categories of need:

Cognition and Learning

- Children with cognition and learning needs may learn at a slower pace than other children and may have difficulty developing literacy or numeracy skills or understanding new concepts. Learning needs may be in addition to or as a result of other special educational needs.
- Children with a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) will have difficulties related to one or more of dyslexia (reading and spelling), dyscalculia (Math’s), dyspraxia (co-ordination) and dysgraphia (writing).
- Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties

- Children may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained.
- Other children may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

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Communication and Interaction needs

- Children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or because they do not understand or use social rules of communication.
- The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives. Children with autism are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Sensory and/or Physical needs

- Some children require special educational provision because they have a disability and this prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time.
- Many children with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning. Children with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties. Some children with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

C: Special Educational Needs Provision

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. Staffordshire University Academy Trust will have regard to the SEND Code of Practice 2015 when carrying out its duties towards all pupils with SEND and ensure that parents/carers are informed by the school that SEND provision is being made for their child. There may be times in a pupil's school career when they are identified as having a Special Educational Need. These pupils will be provided with intervention and/or support that is 'additional to or different from' the normal differentiated curriculum. This may be on an ongoing basis or for a limited time. Many pupils with sensory and/or physical disabilities may require adaptations, made as reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

D: Roles & Responsibilities

The principle that underpins this section is that all teachers are teachers of Special Educational Needs, and therefore responsible and accountable for progress and development of all pupils in their class even where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. Teaching and supporting pupils with SEND is therefore a whole school responsibility requiring a whole school response. Meeting the needs of pupils with SEND requires partnership working between all those involved: Local authority, school, parents/carers, children's services and all other agencies.

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Trust Board and officers

The Trust Board will monitor and support policy implementation by overseeing strategic SEND matters across the Trust's academies, including fulfilment of all statutory requirements.

- monitoring the appropriate implementation of this policy across the Trust
- The Trustee with portfolio responsibilities for SEND will have a strategic overview of SEND provision across the Trust and provide a voice for children with SEND at Trust Board level.

SEND Hubs

Our SEND Hubs bring together Headteacher and SENDCO representatives from each local area, ensuring partnership working with each Local Authority and leadership collaboration. Each Hub is led by either a Headteacher or SENDCO alongside an EPDO.

Each SEND Hub Leader has responsibility for:

- Leading termly meetings, to bring SENCOs together and share best practice and research, gain leadership feedback and offer support.
- Analysis of Hub data dashboards to inform the district CPD offer, linked to profile of pupil need within the local area
- Work in partnership with the Local Authority SEND representative, linked to the Hub

Academy Trust Schools

- The **Headteacher** will work with the **SENDCO** to develop the SEND policy and information report and provision within the school. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEND. The Headteacher will provide governors with updates on the SEND provision, and will review the policy annually.
- The **SENDCO** will work with the Headteacher to put into place the SEND policy and information report, offering specialist advice starting from their own SEND training and qualification. They will co-ordinate the academy's SEND provision. They will work with class and subject teachers to put support into place and to monitor pupil progress. They (or the Headteacher) will liaise with external agencies who are supporting individual children. They will undertake those duties set out in chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015.
- **Class and subject teachers** are responsible for the progress and development of every student in their class and will work with the SENDCO and TAs to ensure the "assess plan do review" cycle is appropriately implemented to support any student with SEND.

The **Local Authority** carries an overarching responsibility for Special Needs including where this is in Academies. The local authority holds a budget for high level SEND and is responsible for the provision of an Education and Health Care Plan ("EHCP") for those of our pupils who require such a plan in order to access the curriculum.

External agencies may be part of a Local Authority provision, or independent. They may play a part in the assessment of a child's needs for an EHCP, and possibly in the resulting provision. Thus in Staffordshire for example educational psychologists, speech and language therapists or Camhs.

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Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers of SEND students need to play a full part in the planning and review of their child's special needs. They need to be able to discuss the needs of their child with the relevant person, e.g. with their child's teacher, tutor, the Progress Coordinator/Head of Year and/or the SENDCO.

E: A Graduated Response to SEND

We should always aim to identify a special educational need as soon as possible; the importance of this really cannot be over emphasised. If we are able to address needs in a timely fashion, longer-term educational outcomes are improved.

Our first approach to teaching children with SEND is always quality first teaching; high quality teaching, adaptation for individual learning needs through practical and human resources. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement; this includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the aspects of SEND most frequently encountered (SEND Code of Practice (2014, 6.37))

Early Concerns

The progress made by all pupils is regularly monitored and reviewed. Initially, concerns registered by teachers, parents/carers or other agencies are addressed by appropriate differentiation and high-quality teaching within the classroom and a record is kept of strategies used. This can be then used in later discussions if concerns persist.

If a parent or carer refer their child to the academy as they believe their child has special educational needs they should contact the class teacher initially, who will undertake preliminary investigations alongside the SENDCo (with input from relevant staff)

The SEND Code of Practice (2014, 6.17) describes inadequate progress thus:

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

Formalising SEND support

Where pupils continue to make inadequate progress despite support and high-quality teaching, the class teacher will initiate investigate and will work with the schools SENDCO to assess if a pupil has a special educational need and agree appropriate next steps.

When considering whether a pupil has a special educational need any of the following may be evident:

- Makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in a pupil's identified area of weakness;

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- Shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or mathematics skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas;
- Has sensory or physical problems and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment;
- Has communication and /or interaction difficulties and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of an appropriate differentiated curriculum.
- Has emotional difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the pupil's own learning or that of the class groups, despite having an individualised support programme;
- Has SEND or physical needs that require additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits by a specialist service;
- Has a communication and/or an interaction difficulty that impedes the development of social relationships and cause a substantial barrier to learning.

Note: Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviour does not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEND. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine where there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behavior a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of approaches such as the Early Help Assessment, may be appropriate. In all cases, early identification and intervention can significantly reduce the use of costlier intervention at a later stage.

It is important to note that slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean that a pupil is recorded as having SEN.

At this point a full investigation into their needs may be carried out including the following as appropriate:

- Information is provided by parents and carers, and perhaps the previous educational setting.
- Pupil views will be taken into consideration
- Observations will be carried out by the SENDCO.
- The pupil's class exercise books will be analysed
- Views will be sought from all members of school staff that are involved with the pupil, e.g., the nurture team, teaching assistants, form tutors.
- Previous assessment data will also be analysed
- Some 'screening' tools or tests may be used, such as.....
- In some cases, it may be necessary to seek assessment by, or advice from, an external professional such as a specialist teacher or educational psychologist. This will always involve discussion and agreement with the pupil's parents/carers. This is relatively unlikely at this stage, and more likely if there is an EHCP application (see below)

All of these strategies will help to give us an overall picture of the child, i.e., their strengths as well as their areas for development. This will help to ensure that our assessments of need and provision are as accurate and effective as possible from the very start.

The result of this initial assessment process is likely to be that the child is placed on the school's special needs register, with an IEP or similar document which outlines the agreed actions or reasonable adjustments that will be taken.

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F: Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Where a pupil is identified as having SEND, we will take action to support effective learning by removing barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This SEND support will take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what

supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. This is known as the graduated response – assess, plan, do, review.

For all pupils with special educational needs the cycle of Assess, Plan, Do and Review will be adhered to and progress will be discussed at the end of every half-term with the SENDCO. These pupils will also be discussed at Pupil Progress Meetings with the Head of School/Head of year/SLT

Assess

See section above

Plan

If review of the action taken indicates that “additional to and different from” support will be required, then the views of all involved including the parents/carers and the child will be obtained and appropriate evidence-based interventions identified, recorded and implemented by the class teacher with advice from the SENCo.

All students regardless of needs are set targets. Data collected during the academy reporting process is analysed and strategies are put in place to support the areas of need. All SEND interventions delivered outside of the classroom have Specific, Measurable, Achievable Targets (SMART) set to ensure that progress is made. These can be recorded on an individual plan and are monitored and reviewed against a set time-frame, agreed within the plan.

Strategies are planned for pupils to support them to make progress that will address the areas of need. At this stage planning will be done either on an individual, class or year group provision map. As well as providing an overview of provision in the class, the provision map helps to inform the deployment of teaching assistants and are used to monitor the effectiveness of interventions for the children involved.

Do

SEND support will be recorded on a support plan that will identify a clear set of expected outcomes, which will include stretching and relevant academic and developmental targets that take into account parents' aspirations for their child. Parents/carers and child will also be consulted on the action they can take to support attainment of the desired outcomes. This will be recorded and a date made for reviewing attainment.

The class teacher will be responsible for working with the child on a daily basis ensuring that all planned provision takes place and, as far as possible, additional support will take place in the classroom with reasonable adjustments. We will ensure all other teachers and support staff who work with the pupil is aware of the support to be provided either as an intervention or reasonable adjustments. The SENDCO will work closely with class teacher, subject teachers, pastoral leads and external agencies ensuring a holistic approach is achieved. A range of teaching approaches, appropriate equipment, interventions and reasonable adjustments will be considered. All interventions are tracked regularly so that they can be adjusted as the need arises.

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Review

Progress towards these outcomes will be tracked and reviewed termly with the parents and the child.

The assessment information will be reviewed regularly.

All teachers and support staff who work with the pupil will be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided, and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. We will regularly review the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress.

Following very close monitoring to determine the impact throughout the term, and high-quality teaching, some pupils may continue to make inadequate progress. For these pupils, and in consultation with parents, we are able access external agencies who can provide more specific and detailed assessments and provide further strategies. All provision will be recorded either on the whole class provision and/or on personalized plans.

The SENDCo will complete on-going assessments of pupils with additional needs. Personalised plans for pupils with more complex needs are reviewed three times a year, more frequently if necessary, and the attainment of every child on the SEND register is evaluated at least 3 times a year.

Academies aim to hold parent consultation evenings at least twice a year and parents of pupils with personal plan will be invited to attend additional review meetings. At these meetings progress will be discussed, parent's views and pupil's views of support and the advice from any outside agencies which may be involved.

Statutory Assessment of Needs, perhaps leading to and Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

Where, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities of the pupil, the child has not made expected progress, the school or parents/carers should consider requesting and Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) needs assessment. The evidence gathered through the regular review of the My Plan will help the Local Authority (LA) in determining when this statutory assessment of needs is required. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), the Local Authority must review the plan every twelve months as a minimum. Schools have a duty to co-operate so will hold annual review meetings on the behalf of Staffordshire LA, or other LA where required, and complete the appropriate paperwork for this, in accordance with legal requirements.

G: Enabling pupils with SEND to engage in activities available to those in the school who do not have SEND

There are no barriers to pupils with SEND enjoying the same activities as other pupils in school. All of our extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all pupils who are encouraged to go on residential trips; to take part in sports day, school plays and special workshops. No pupil is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEND.

We aim to support pupils with disabilities. Admission arrangements for all pupils do not discriminate against, or disadvantage, disabled children or those with special educational needs.

We regularly review our practice and facilities; consulting with other professionals in order to prevent disabled pupils from being treated less favourably than other pupils.

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Further information regarding this can be found on each individual school's equality and accessibility plan.

Equipment, facilities and other forms of support for children with special educational needs

We engage with the following bodies to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and to support their families:

- Specialist Teaching Services
- Educational Psychology Service
- Access to local authority's service level agreement with Speech and Language Therapy Services
- Occupational Therapy Services
- Autism specialists (Autism Inclusion Team)
- Early Help to provide integrated support for children, young people and families
- Virtual Schools including Staffordshire (specifically for Looked after Children)
- Social Services
- Camhs

H: Transition arrangements

A change of school, class and staff can be an exciting, yet anxious time for all pupils. We recognise that this can be very challenging for some pupils with SEND. Our academies endeavour to ensure these periods of change are carefully managed in a sensitive way to provide continuity of high-quality provision and reassurance to both pupils and families.

Academies ensure that a transition programme is put in place well in advance. For example, pupils and parents can visit the new school and get to know the relevant staff.

The annual review in Y5 for pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan begins the process where parents are supported to make decisions regarding secondary school choice.

Parents will be encouraged to consider options for the next phase of education and the school will involve outside agencies, as appropriate, to ensure information provided is comprehensive but accessible.

Accompanied visits to other providers may be arranged as appropriate.

For pupils transferring to local schools, SENDCos from both schools will discuss the needs of pupils with SEND in order to ensure a smooth transition.

The records of pupils who leave the school mid-phase will be transferred within five working days of the parents notifying their child has been enrolled at another school; these will be signed for.

I: Responding to Complaints

In the first instance, parent/carer complaints about the provision or organisation of SEND are dealt with through the procedures outlined in the School's Complaints Policy. If there continues to be disagreement with regard to SEND provision, the Trust Central Team will engage with a view to avoiding or resolving disagreements between the parents/carers and the school. This may include access to mediation before tribunal.

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Parents/carers have a right to appeal to a SEND tribunal at any stage. The parents of pupils with disabilities have the right to make disability discrimination claims to the first-tier SEND tribunal if they believe that the school has potentially discriminated against their children. They can make a claim about alleged discrimination regarding:

- Exclusions
- Provision of education and associated services
- Making reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services
- For parents who are unhappy with the Local Authority or school responses to their child's SEND, parents may seek mediation from the regional mediation services.

J: Policy links

This policy should be read in conjunction with each Academies:

- SEND Information report and SEND Policy
- Equality Policy and objectives
- Accessibility Plan
- Complaints policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities including Race Equality Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Local Offer
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy