Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

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version control	Approved by

Aims and Principles

Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy sets out our commitment to meeting the needs of every student, in line with national legislation and guidance. We aim to ensure that all students with SEND are fully supported to access a broad and balanced education, participate in all aspects of school life, and achieve their full potential.

We believe that every child, including those with SEND, should be supported to thrive at school.

Our core principles are:

- **Early Identification and Intervention:** We are committed to identifying needs early and providing timely intervention to address barriers to learning at the earliest opportunity.
- **High Aspirations:** We set high aspirations for all students, tailoring provision to individual strengths and needs. Our goal is to help every student develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead fulfilling lives and participate in society in a meaningful way.
- **Collaboration and Partnership:** We place great importance on working in partnership with students, their parents/carers, all staff, and external agencies. We believe that decisions about support are most effective when they are informed, collaborative, and person-centred.
- **Integrity and Accountability:** We act with integrity, ensuring fairness, equity, and trust in everything we do. We hold ourselves accountable for the outcomes of all students and make decisions that put their best interests at heart.
- **Continuous Improvement:** We are dedicated to continually seeking new approaches and strategies to improve outcomes for students with SEND. We support staff to reflect, learn, and adapt, ensuring our practice evolves in response to student needs and emerging evidence.

Legislation and guidance

This policy complies with the statutory requirements laid out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and has been written with reference to the following key guidance documents and legislation:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working together to improve school attendance
- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for students 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
- Equality Act 2010 (section 20), which sets out the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities
- Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out the school'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
- School Admissions Code, which sets out the school's obligation to admit all students whose Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan names the school, and its duty not to disadvantage unfairly, children with a disability or with Special Educational Needs.

This SEND Policy should be read alongside the school's **SEND Information Report**, which is published annually on our website for parents and pupils to access and sets out in detail how provision is implemented in practice.

Inclusion and equal opportunities

We are committed to ensuring that every student, irrespective of their individual needs or disabilities, is welcomed, valued and enabled to thrive. We celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of all students, and uphold the principles of equity and fairness for everyone, regardless of difference, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and its protected characteristics.

We aim for all students to have access to high-quality teaching, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum, and opportunities to secure the best possible outcomes. We listen to and respond to students and their families, working together to build an ongoing, holistic understanding of each child or young person's needs. This understanding informs our provision, staff training and the allocation of resources, so that every learner has the support they need to achieve and to prepare effectively for adulthood.

In practice, this means:

- Making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the learning environment so that all students, including those with medical conditions, can participate fully in school life.
- Supporting teachers to adapt lessons as part of individual planning, ensuring high expectations for all.
- Embedding inclusive practices which ensure students with SEND are engaged in the same opportunities as their peers, including enrichment activities, trips and wider experiences.
- Working with school leaders and the Trust Board to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and that responsibilities for reasonable adjustments and access arrangements are met.

Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all students and preventing disabled students from being treated less favourably than their peers. We work proactively to remove barriers to learning and participation, and to promote inclusion in every aspect of school life.

We make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, so that disabled students are not disadvantaged. Staff are trained to understand and respond to a range of needs, and our policies and practices are reviewed regularly to ensure they promote equity and inclusion. We are able to provide a range of facilities to enable disabled students to access our school, which may include:

- adapted classrooms and specialist equipment where required
- access to auxiliary aids (e.g. assistive technology, adapted resources)

- additional adult support and/or personalised teaching strategies
- modified learning materials and differentiated teaching to ensure curriculum access
- pastoral support to help overcome barriers to participation

Our Accessibility Plan is available on our website and sets out the steps we are taking to:

- increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, facilities and services provided by the school; and
- improve the availability of accessible information for disabled students and their families

Definitions

SEND is set out in the SEND Code of Practice 2015 (6.28-6.35):

A student has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires 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 an education 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: students 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. The school will make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

The four areas of need:

Communication and interaction	Students 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. *Students who are on the Autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.*

Cognition and learning	Students 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 one or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia; ● Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD); ● Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD); and/or ● Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where students are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.
Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)	Students with SEMH needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Students may have: ● mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder; ● Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) or Attachment Disorder; and/or ● Suffered adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) These needs can manifest in many ways e.g. as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the student becoming withdrawn or isolated.
Sensory and/or physical	Students with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. They may have: ● a sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment; and/or ● a physical impairment. These students may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

Roles and responsibilities

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

The SENCO is a qualified teacher who if appointed after 1st September 2009 holds the National Award for SEN Coordination or has completed/is enrolled on training to complete the NPQSENCO within 3 years of appointment.

The SENCo will:

- inform any parents/carers that their child may have SEN and then liaise with them about the student's needs and any provision made;
- work with the Head Teacher, SEND team and SEN governor (from the Local Governing Body) to determine the strategic development of the SEND provision in the school;
- have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual students with SEN, including those with EHCPs;

- provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents/carers, and other agencies to make sure that students with SEN receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching;
- advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support and differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual students;
- advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet students' 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 make sure that appropriate provision is in place;
- liaise with other providers to make sure that the student and their parents/carers are informed about their options and that a smooth transition is planned;
- when a student moves to a different school or institution, ensure that all relevant information about the student's SEN and the provision for them are sent on in a timely manner;
- work with the Head Teacher and governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- make sure the school keeps its records of all students with SEND up to date and accurate;
- monitor the quality of teaching and learning with the SLT, and identify specific or generic training needs regarding SEN, incorporating this into the school's Professional Development (PD) plan;
- work with others to identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching;
- evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer; and
- prepare and update as appropriate, the school's annual SEN Information Report, setting out how this policy is implemented locally and ensuring it is published on the school's website (Regulation 51 of the SEND Regulations 2014).

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will:

- work with other SEND professionals, the SEND team and SEN governor to determine the strategic development of SEND provision within the school;
- work with other SEND professionals, the SEND team and SEN governor to ensure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- have overall responsibility for the provision for students with SEND, and their progress;
- have overall responsibility for monitoring the school's SEND funding including the notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual students;
- ensure that the SENCO has sufficient time to carry out their duties;
- have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of students on the SEND register;
- advise the LA when a student needs an EHC Needs Assessment, or when an EHC Plan needs an early review;

- ensure there are systems in place to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, incorporating this into the school's Professional Development plan;
- evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer; and
- work with others to identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching.

The class teacher

Class teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class, including where students access support from Teaching Assistants and/or specialist staff (COP 6.36). Each class teacher is responsible for:

- the progress and development of every student in their class;
- having a clear understanding of the needs of all students, including those with Special Educational Needs and being able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them (Teacher Standards 5.4);
- planning and providing high-quality teaching and learning that is differentiated to meet student needs through a graduated approach;
- 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 a team around the child, including other SEND professionals to review each student's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision;
- ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the school's SEN information report; and
- communicating with parents/carers regularly to: set clear targets and review progress towards them; discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set targets; identify the responsibilities of the parent, the student and the school; and listen to the parents/carers' concerns and aspirations for the student.

The Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that the following duties are carried out, and delegates this to the Trust Leadership Group to ensure the school:

- provides access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- has a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND;
- does all it can to ensure that every student with SEND gets the support they need;
- informs parents/carers when making special educational provision for their child;
- enables students with SEND to engage in activities alongside students who don't have SEND;
- has arrangements in place to support any students with medical conditions;
- keeps accurate records and updates the provision made for students with SEND;
- provides an annual report for parents/carers on their child's progress;
- publishes information on the school website about how the school is implementing its SEND policy, in an SEN information report;
- publishes information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and the school's accessibility plans;

- has a qualified teacher designated as SENCO, that the key responsibilities of the role are set out, and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out;
- co-operates with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer;

The SEND Governor

The school has a Local Governing Body, with governors holding specific portfolios. The role of the SEND Governor is to:

- help to raise awareness of SEND issues at Local Governing Body meetings;
- update the Local Governing Body on the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision; and
- support the SENCo and SEND team in school through portfolio visits, by taking an interest, showing curiosity and providing both challenge and support.

The Parents and Carers

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

Parents/carers of a student on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the student'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 school and any changes in the student's needs;
- given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with school staff, agree their aspirations for the student; and
- given an annual report on the student's progress and development.

The Student

Students will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views in an appropriate way about their SEND and the support provided to contribute to reviews. The student's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

Our approach to SEND support

Identifying students with SEND and assessing their needs

We recognise the importance of early identification so that effective provision can be put in place quickly to improve the long-term outcomes for students. When a student joins our school, we will assess their current levels of attainment, building on information from previous settings where appropriate. We will also consider any evidence that the student may have a disability and, if so, what reasonable adjustments may need to be made in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Class teachers will regularly assess the progress of all students. A special educational need may be indicated where 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; or
- widens the attainment gap.

We will also consider progress in areas other than attainment, such as students' personal development, social needs or emotional wellbeing.

When teachers identify that a student is making slower than expected progress, they will provide targeted, high-quality teaching to address any areas of weakness. If progress does not improve, the class teacher will discuss their concerns with the SENCo. In consultation with parents/carers, we may seek advice from external specialists.

Slow progress and/or low attainment does not automatically mean a student is recorded as having SEND. We will also consider potential short-term factors (e.g. social issues, family context etc.) and take particular care when assessing students whose first language is not English.

When deciding whether a student requires special educational provision, we will:

- begin with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment;
- take account of the views and wishes of the student and their parents/carers; and
- consider whether support can be provided by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional is required.

We will work closely with all relevant professionals and the family to ensure that appropriate support is in place as early as possible if a student is joining the school and:

- their previous setting has already identified that they have SEND;
- they are known to external agencies; or
- they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

When it is identified that a student does have SEND, parents/carers will be formally notified, and the child will be placed on the SEND Register. This ensures provision can be put in place.

Consulting and involving the family

We believe that strong, collaborative relationships with students and their families are essential to ensuring effective identification of need, high-quality provision and positive long-term outcomes. Parents/carers know their children best, and their insights, alongside the student's own views, are central to our decision-making.

When a potential special educational need is identified, we hold an early discussion with the student and their parents/carers. These conversations will ensure that:

- everyone develops a clear understanding of the student's strengths and areas of difficulty;
- the concerns of parents/carers are taken into account;
- the intended outcomes and next steps are agreed together; and

- everyone is clear about the support to be put in place and how progress will be reviewed.

Notes of these discussions will be recorded and used to inform the first cycle of the graduated approach (Assess > Plan > Do > Review). Parents/carers will be formally notified if their child is placed on the SEND Register and will be involved at every stage of provision, including where a statutory assessment may be required.

We are committed to regular, open and meaningful communication with parents/carers, including:

- termly consultation meetings and annual reviews, with a person-centred approach;
- sharing students' Personal Learning Goals (PLGs), targets and support plans so parents/carers understand how to help at home;
- regular updates on progress through reports, phone calls, emails, newsletters or home–school communication books, depending on what works best for families;
- opportunities to provide feedback through surveys, forums and other informal events; and
- invitations to attend meetings with external agencies, ensuring families are involved in multi-agency decision-making.

We also recognise that some students and families may need more frequent contact. This can be arranged based on individual needs, and the SENCo may signpost families to additional support, such as SENDIASS.

We believe that students are at the heart of all decisions about their special educational provision. We empower them to share their views on their learning and support in a variety of ways. Our staff use a range of communication methods when students have additional needs, to ensure every student's voice is heard and respected. This approach allows students to explain their strengths and difficulties, contribute to setting their own goals, and give feedback on interventions.

Through this ongoing partnership with students and families, we ensure that support is personalised, responsive and effective, and that everyone is working together towards the best possible outcomes.

The graduated approach to SEN Support

We follow the graduated approach, a four-part cycle of: Assess; Plan; Do; Review.

- **Assess**: The class teacher(s) and SENCo will carry out an analysis of need, drawing on formative and summative assessment, prior attainment, comparisons with peers and national expectations, parent/carer views, student views, and where relevant, the advice from external agencies.

- **Plan**: In consultation with parents/carers, the student, class teacher(s) and SENCo, agree adjustments, interventions and support, with clear outcomes and review dates. All staff working with the student are made aware of the plan. Parents/carers may be asked to contribute to support at home.

- **Do**: The class teacher(s) retains overall responsibility for the student's learning and progress, working closely with support staff and the SENCo to implement strategies and interventions. The class teacher(s) will plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how these can be linked to classroom teaching. The SENCo will support the teacher(s) in further assessing the student's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on how to implement support effectively.

- **Review**: Regular evaluation of the impact and quality of support on the student's progress will take place, considering the views of the student, parents/carers and staff. Provision and outcomes are revised accordingly in consultation with the student and their parents/carers.

All teachers and support staff who work with the student will be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided, and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required are identified on the student's support plan. The *Assess > Plan > Do > Review* cycle is ongoing and enables provision to be refined and adjusted as the school's understanding of the student's needs develops. Where, after cycles of support, it is identified that needs cannot be met through SEN Support, the school may request a statutory assessment that could lead to an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Levels of support

There are two levels of support: SEN support which is school-based SEN provision, and Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). These are defined below:

Students receiving **school-based SEN provision** will be placed on the school's SEND Register. These students generally have needs that can be met by the school through the graduated approach. Where a student'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 students is funded through the school's notional SEND budget.

Students who need more support than is available through the school's SEN provision may be entitled to an **EHCP**. Students undergo a statutory assessment process, which is usually requested by the school but can also be requested by a parent. If agreed, an EHCP is a legal document that describes the needs of the student, the provision that will be put in place, and the outcomes sought. The provision for these students will be funded from the school's notional SEND budget, and potentially topped up by the LA (from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools' Grant).

Annual Reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Annual Reviews are a statutory requirement under the SEND Code of Practice and provide an opportunity to reflect on progress, provision and future planning.

- The Annual Review Coordinator (usually the SENCo) is responsible for organising the review, which is chaired by a senior leader and led by the student's class teacher.

- Meetings are person-centred parents/carers and all relevant professionals. Students are included in meetings as appropriate, with the views, wishes and feelings of the student and family actively sought and placed at the heart of decision-making.
- The review considers:
    - the progress made towards EHCP outcomes over the past 12 months;
    - any new evidence about the student's needs or provision; and
    - amendments required to the EHCP to ensure needs continue to be met effectively.
- A review may recommend changes if:
    - significant new evidence has emerged;
    - some needs are no longer present; and/or
    - provision needs updating to meet the child's changing needs.

Following the meeting, the LA decides whether to amend the EHCP. Parents/carers are informed of decisions in writing, and an amended legal document is issued where changes are made. All annual review documentation is filed in the school's electronic record to ensure continuity and accountability.

In addition to the statutory review, parents/carers are invited to termly consultation meetings and receive end-of-year reports, with the option to request feedback at any time. This ensures an ongoing dialogue between home and school, so that provision remains responsive, person-centred and ambitious.

Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

We are committed to ensuring that our provision for students with SEND is effective, evidence-based and leads to good progress. With support from the Trust, we undertake rigorous ongoing evaluation of our provision, and use this to inform future planning around whole school improvement and professional development.

Professional Development

We are committed to ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and confidence to support students with SEND effectively. Regular training and updates are delivered through induction, professional development opportunities and staff meetings, linked to the school improvement plan and the needs of students. The SENCo and SLT regularly monitor staff development needs and plan appropriate training. Staff also benefit from additional training and opportunities for collaboration across our Trust, with specialist schools who are able to share expertise.

The SENCO attends local cluster groups, trust meetings, externally provided courses and national training as appropriate, and ensures relevant opportunities are cascaded to staff.

We recognise that no school can meet all the needs of every student with SEND in isolation. To ensure students receive the best possible support, we actively seek advice and work in partnership with a range of external agencies in the identification, assessment and provision of SEND.

Complaints about SEND provision

We hope that concerns can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with staff, but we recognise that parents/carers, carers or students may sometimes wish to pursue matters more formally. Please refer to our Complaints Policy on the school website for more information.

The SEND Code of Practice (2015), pages 246–247 provides further information on appropriate routes for complaints about SEND provision (SEND Code of Practice 0–25, 2015).

Parents and carers are also entitled to use disagreement resolution and mediation services, which are independent and designed to help resolve disputes in a fair and supportive way. Details of local disagreement resolution and mediation services can be found on the Local Authority website (*https://www.livewellsouthend.com/education-health-care-plans/sen-mediation-appeals/2*). Mediation can be requested by contacting 03330 062 835 or mediationlondon@kids.org.uk

If, after using these processes, parents or carers remain dissatisfied, they may appeal to the SEND Tribunal, which makes legally binding decisions on disputes relating to Education, Health and Care Plans. More information about the SEND Tribunal is available here: First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).