



## Mereside Primary Academy

### Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

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Date review:	September 2025
Next review	September 2026

### Introduction

Mereside is an inclusive Primary Academy, situated in Blackpool, with a nursery setting educating pupils from age 2. Mereside Primary Academy is part of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT). As an inclusive academy, we are committed to ensuring every pupil has access to an education which meets their needs and prepares them for adulthood. Mereside Primary Academy is committed to working with all our pupils, families and a range of external partners to ensure all aspects of academy life are accessible and appropriately adapted to meet a wide range of individual needs.

### Our SEND Intent Statement

**All FCAT academies strive to provide an inclusive and welcoming education for all learners, enabling pupils with SEND to be 'the best they can be,' now and in the future.**

Mereside Primary Academy aims to achieve this intent by embedding the following principles:

- Pupils come first
- Positive relationships underpin all our work
- High expectations for all – understanding that everyone, given the correct support, can achieve (FCAT Improvement Model)

At Mereside Primary Academy our SEND Policy enables all pupils to 'learn together and achieve together', by providing them with the right support at the right time.



## Definition of SEND

The definition of SEND used across Mereside Primary Academy is taken from the SEND Code of Practice which states a child or young person has SEND if they have:

“A learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. \* A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she: has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her\* from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.” (SEND Code of Practice, January 2015 updated 2020. Introduction section xii & xiv Pages 15 & 16)

\*him/her/they/them

## Categories of SEND

SEND is recognised as four broad areas of need:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs

It is recognised pupils may have multiple needs, but the primary area of need is the need which is creating the main barrier to learning.

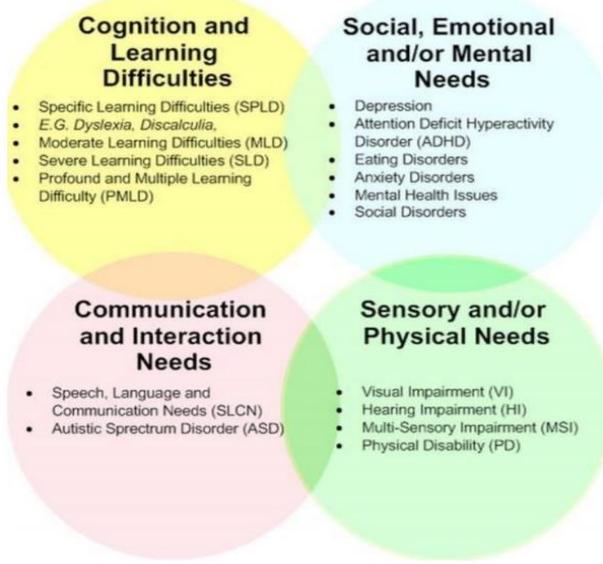


Figure 1: Categories of Need

Many pupils identified with SEND needs are well placed in our inclusive mainstream provision. As an inclusive Primary Academy, we strive to meet an increasing number of children's needs through **High Quality Adaptive Teaching and a Trauma Informed Approach.**

## Creating Enabling Learning Environments

Mereside Primary Academy aims to provide pupils with learning environments which are:

- Emotionally supportive and Trauma Informed, with an atmosphere of encouragement and respect of individual needs.
- Welcoming for pupils with diverse needs and where reasonable adjustments are made, so the curriculum is accessible for all
- Well-resourced with appropriately adapted materials, including ICT
- High quality, structured and tidy learning spaces appropriate to the age and developmental needs of the children.

## Trauma Informed Approach

Within Mereside Primary Academy, a Trauma-Informed Approach means that all staff recognise how life experiences, particularly those involving significant stress or adversity, can affect a pupil's ability to learn and feel safe. Rather than focusing solely on a pupil's behaviour, we seek to understand the underlying causes, prioritising the building of stable,



respectful relationships to create a sense of physical and emotional security for every learner.

## Ensuring Effective SEND Provision: FCAT's Eight Areas of SEND Practice

To enable Mereside Academy to provide high quality provision for pupils with SEND the following eight areas of practice are developed across our academy:

- 1) **Effective Leadership of SEND**, ensuring clear direction and accountability for SEND provision.
- 2) **Early and accurate assessment and identification of need**, with systems and processes which enable our SENCO and SEND Manager to work closely with teachers, TAs and parent/ carers to support the early identification of pupils with SEND. Early identification is the process where concerns about an individual are noted and acted upon as soon as they become apparent; this could be prior to a child entering nursery provisions, to a need arising in Year 6.
- 3) **High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning and a developing Trauma Informed Approach** for all pupils, including those with SEND.
- 4) **A graduated and holistic approach to SEND provision** which is responsive to the needs, development and wellbeing of the pupils.
- 5) **Effective monitoring, tracking and evaluation** of pupil progress and attainment of learners with SEND.
- 6) **The efficient use of resources** to support children's needs, including staff access to SEND CPD (Continuing Professional Development).
- 7) **SEND improvement processes** to support the identification of success and address areas which require development.
- 8) **Systems which ensure our academy meets the statutory responsibilities** for pupils with SEND.

These eight areas of practice align to the recommendations set out in the NASEN SEND review frameworks and the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice.

## Working in Partnership

Staff at Mereside Primary Academy are committed to working in partnership with integrity and an outward mindset with the following stakeholders:

- **Pupils** with SEND - listening to and responding to pupil voice.
- **Parent/carers** of pupils with SEND - working in partnership to support their child.
- **External agencies** - supporting children, their families and staff. At Mereside Primary Academy we work in partnership with educational specialists and external agencies,



including health and Children's Social Care, as well as Blackpool and Lancashire Local Authority SEND teams.

- **Colleagues** across our academy and Trust - working together to develop shared staff expertise and support.

## Roles and Responsibilities

All leaders at Mereside Primary Academy are leaders of SEND and therefore have a responsibility to include developing SEND provision and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND, as part of their leadership roles.

The role of the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) is fundamental to the leadership of SEND within each academy. Therefore, each academy appoints a SENCO with appropriate leadership responsibility, who enables pupils with identified SEND needs to receive support at a level appropriate to their needs.

Across FCAT we concur with the SEND code of Practice which identifies all teachers as responsible for meeting the needs and the progress of all pupils in their class including those with SEND.

In this policy the term 'teachers' encompasses Teaching Assistants and Support Staff (SLSA) who work alongside teachers to support and teach our pupils.

See appendix 1 for specific SEND roles and responsibilities across FCAT.

## Interventions

Interventions are used across Mereside Primary Academy to support pupils to progress and secure positive outcomes. An intervention is defined as, "any action or series of actions which are taken specifically to meet the particular identified needs of a pupil." (5 supporting Documents for Early Identification of Children's Needs, 2021, [asset.nasen.org.uk](http://asset.nasen.org.uk)). These include micro inventions used to support pupils as part of FCAT's inclusive universal + provision.

## Graduated Approach to supporting pupils with SEND



At Mereside Primary Academy we follow the Assess-Plan-Do Review cycle to monitor the impact of interventions, helping our staff to develop a growing understanding of pupils' needs and effective ways to support pupils.



**Figure 2: Assess, Plan, Do and Review Cycle (APDR)**

The Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle is part of Mereside Primary Academy's graduated SEND provision. Parents/ Carers and pupils will be supported to be involved at all stages of the graduated approach.

## Identification of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The early and accurate identification of SEN is a collaborative process involving education staff, parents and carers, pupils and multi-agency professionals. At Mereside Primary School, we ensure needs are identified promptly through:

- Transition Information: Reviewing records and data from previous settings.
- Continuous Monitoring: This involves a clear analysis of the pupil's needs, drawing on teacher observations and assessments, the pupil's previous progress and their development compared to peers.
- Parent/Carer Insight: We recognise that parents and carers hold unique knowledge of their child's development. We encourage open communication and support parents/carers in sharing concerns via the Class Teacher, Form Tutor or Academy SENCO.
- Pupil Voice: Listening and responding to pupils is an essential part of knowing, identifying and providing appropriate support.



When a potential need is identified, Mereside Primary Academy follow the Graduated Approach to supporting pupils with SEND (see figure 2 page 4), identifying appropriate SEND Provision. This process is overseen by the SENCO and SEND Manager, who monitors progress and coordinates a holistic assessment to ensure the accurate identification of need.

## Specialist Assessment and Profiling

Where appropriate, the SENCO will implement screening and profiling tools to ensure the accurate identification of SEN. These assessments may be conducted by:

- The SENCO or internal SEN team.
- Specialist teachers.
- Multi-agency professionals, such as Speech and Language Therapists and Educational Psychologists.

Screening resources include the use of checklists, profiling tools, diagnostic screening, norm-referenced assessments and ipsative assessment tools.

## Graduated SEND Provision

### 1. Universal Provision

The first stage of provision for all our pupils at Mereside Primary Academy including those with SEND is High Quality Adaptive Teaching and developing Trauma Informed Approach to meeting need.

If children's needs are being met, universal provision continues.

### 2. Universal + Provision

If pupils' needs are identified as not progressing as expected, universal + provision will be implemented. The purpose of this provision is to provide a) effective monitoring and b) micro interventions.

This provision ensures effective inclusive practices and reasonable adjustments are applied across our inclusive classrooms. When successful, pupils receiving Universal Plus support thrive, make progress and have their needs met effectively. Successful micro interventions will be recorded as part of Mereside Primary Academy's monitoring and transition information.

For pupils whose needs are not met through this provision, the process ensures pupils are accurately identified so they can receive appropriate targeted support in a timely manner.



### 3. Targeted SEN Support (K)

If pupils' needs are identified as not progressing as expected and pupils are identified as requiring provision which is, "Different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age," they will receive targeted SEN support. (SEND Code of Practice, op.cit, section 6 para 6.15 Page 94)

These pupils will be on the SEN register, coded K. These pupils will have a SEN Support Plan (K). The SEN Support Plan (K) will detail the targeted, timed interventions the pupil will receive.

SEN support plans will be reviewed at least termly with families, pupils and staff as part of the assess, plan, do, review cycle. If pupils' outcomes are met, and no further outcomes are necessary the pupil will return to universal plus provision.

If outcomes are not met pupils will continue to receive targeted SEN support. If needed, as part of FCAT's graduated SEND provision, additional external agency support will be sought to help develop the interventions being provided by the academy and ensure there are no unmet SEND needs.

### 4. Specialist SEND support - Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

For identified pupils it may be appropriate to progress to an EHC needs assessment request, to support more complex needs. The SENCO will coordinate the necessary specialist support and prepare the documentation for the external assessment panel.

The assessment panel is an external body of professionals who will decide based upon all the evidence whether it is appropriate for an EHCP to be issued, or for a pupil to remain on Targeted SEN support.

A pupil's EHCP will include detailed information about their needs, the arrangements to support the child, identified provision and agreed outcomes for the end of the pupil's current or next key stage.

Pupils with an EHCP will be on the SEN register, coded E. These pupils will have a Specialist SEND Support Plan (E). The Specialist SEND Support Plan will detail the targeted, timed interventions detailed in Section F of the pupil's EHCP.

Progress towards the end of key stage outcomes identified in these children's EHCPs will be reviewed at least termly with families, pupils and staff and will include an Annual Review.



Annual reviews will always include parents/carers and pupils. External agencies supporting the pupil will be invited to attend the review, or provide written advice and reports where attendance is not possible.

If a pupil's outcomes are met, and no further outcomes are necessary, an EHCP can cease at the annual review and the pupil will return to the appropriate level of Mereside Primary Academy's graduated SEND provision.

If a pupil is working towards outcomes in their EHCP, the plan will be maintained.

If needs cannot be met, as stated in the EHCP, the SENCO will call an emergency Annual Review to seek further specialist advice including the consideration of specialist or alternative provision.

## 5. Enhanced SEND Provision

As part of FCAT's commitment to inclusion, Blackpool Local Authority, from September 2025, has commissioned Enhanced SEND Provisions within two of our mainstream academies, creating highly supportive environments for children and young people who have or are being assessed for an Education, Health and Care Plan and have been identified as requiring specialist support. These enhanced provisions offer specialist facilities and smaller class sizes, providing more intensive, targeted support for pupils whose needs cannot be fully met in a mainstream classroom. At present, FCAT operates two enhanced provisions:

The Westminster Primary Academy SEN Unit is in its first year of providing specialist support for Reception and Year 1 pupils with EHCPs whose primary need is identified as Communication and Interaction. Armfield Academy continues to develop its Resource Provision for pupils with an EHCP identifying Cognition and Learning as their primary need. This is being delivered through a phased intake model for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. This growth is supported by a significant new build project commissioned by the Local Authority. These specialist places within FCAT's enhanced provisions remain subject to Blackpool Local Authority's commissioning and consultation processes, ensuring that resources are directed to pupils with the highest level of need as identified in their EHCPs.

## Monitoring List

Mereside Primary Academy has a monitoring list of pupils who are receiving Universal + provision. The SENCO will ensure these records are accurate, kept up to date and shared with staff who work or will be working with these pupils.



## SEN Register

Mereside Primary Academy has a SEN register. The register will enable Senior Leaders, teachers and support staff to be aware of pupils who are receiving targeted, specialist or enhanced provision. The SEN register will have additional information about these pupils to support staff across each academy to provide effective support.

## Curriculum Entitlement

All pupils with SEND at Mereside Primary Academy will access a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the child's age, developmental and SEND needs.

## Uniform

Academy uniforms play an important role in promoting a sense of community and belonging. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Mereside Primary Academy is committed to making reasonable adjustments if a pupil's SEN needs or their disability is identified as a barrier to wearing a specific uniform item. Agreed adjustments will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Adjustments must be formally noted within the pupil's SEN Support Plan (K) or Specialist Support Plan (E).

## High-Quality Teaching (Quality First Teaching)

Mereside Primary Academy recognises that high-quality teaching, adapted for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have, or may have, SEND. In line with the EEF Guidance Report: Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, our teachers prioritise the 'Five-a-Day' principle to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum within the classroom:

- Explicit Instruction: Providing clear explanations, modelling and frequent checks for understanding.
- Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies: Supporting pupils to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning while managing cognitive load.
- Scaffolding: Providing temporary supports (such as writing frames or visual prompts) that are gradually removed as a pupil gains independence.
- Flexible Grouping: Allocating groups based on relative need for a specific task.
- Using Technology: Using technology to support and remove barriers to learning and recording.

As per NASEN guidance, we believe that "every teacher is a teacher of SEND." Mereside Primary Academy regularly review the quality of classroom teaching to ensure it is inclusive



by design, acknowledging that additional intervention cannot compensate for a lack of high-quality, universal provision.

## Assessment

All pupils, including those with SEND, will be assessed formatively to ensure barriers to learning can be broken down, gaps in learning can be quickly addressed and interventions adapted to meet need. This is the start of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.

The Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle for pupils on the SEN register will be completed formally at least termly.

Pupils will also be assessed using a range of summative assessments. Children's progress and attainment will be tracked and monitored to ensure there is a positive impact of SEND provision or to identify areas requiring development, these will be actioned.

## Ambitious End points

Assessment information will be used to enable Mereside Primary Academy staff to understand each pupil's starting point. From these starting points ambitious end points will be identified for pupils with SEND.

## Transition

Mereside Primary Academy recognises times of transition are challenging for all pupils and particularly for pupils with SEND. Therefore, our SENCO, or designated person, will coordinate meetings and/or discussions with pupils, parents, external agencies, feeder providers and secondary or specialist provisions, to ensure effective and efficient communication and transfer of information. At Mereside Primary Academy, we also recognise transition takes place every time a learner moves class or lesson. The SEND team at Mereside Primary Academy will coordinate the transfer of information as appropriate, to ensure that no gaps to learning occur during these times.

## Staff Development

To develop staff awareness, knowledge and expertise in SEND, FCAT supports SENCOs to facilitate appropriate training opportunities for all staff in their academy. FCAT encourages and supports ongoing training for all SENCOs. SENCOs also attend the termly SENCO Primary and Secondary FCAT network meetings, receive support from the Director for SEND and have the opportunity to participate in FCAT SEND reviews, alongside joining Blackpool's SENCO Network Meetings.



## The Local Offer

Mereside Primary Academy work in partnership with the Local Authority, Blackpool and or Lancashire, as agency partners in the development, review and publication of the Blackpool or Lancashire Local Offer for SEND. Links to the Local Offer are available on all FCAT academy websites.

The Local Offer gives pupils with SEND and their families' information about the support services local authority provides for pupils with SEND. This includes access to impartial advice from the SEND Information Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS).

<https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Education-and-schools/Local-offer/Local-offer-home.aspx>

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/>

Date reviewed: January 2026

Date to review policy: January 2027



## Appendix 1:

### Specific Roles and Responsibilities in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.

All staff have a responsibility to work towards meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. This includes the following specific SEND roles across FCAT and within Mereside Primary Academy.

#### **The Local Authority**

To support children, young people and their families, the 2014 Act requires all local authorities to publish a Local Offer. The Local Offer is a description of support and services which are available to children and young people who have SEND, and their families. It provides details of how services can be accessed. The Local Offer is required to bring together in one place, information about provision, including how this can be accessed from a wide range of statutory and non-statutory providers including voluntary organisations. Refer to the FCAT SEND Policy for links to both the Blackpool and Lancashire SEND Local Offers.

#### **Trust Level**

##### **The Board of Trustees**

In cooperation with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) the Trustees agree the Trust's SEND policy and approach to provision for SEND pupils maintaining oversight of the Trust's work. In addition, the Trustees appoint a member of the Board of Trustees to take a particular interest in and closely monitor the Trust's work on behalf of pupils with SEND, reporting on the Trust's policy in relation to SEND.

##### **CEO and Executive team**

The CEO is responsible and accountable across the organisation for implementing strategy, leading growth and representing the Trust. The CEO of FCAT works directly with the Executive FCAT Team and Directors to ensure every pupil including those with SEND receives a high-quality education.

##### **Director for SEND**

The Director for SEND is responsible for providing strategic direction for SEND across the Trust and is responsible for facilitating cooperation and knowledge sharing across the Trust to ensure pupils with SEND receive a high-quality education. This role includes carrying out Solution Focused SEND Reviews across the Trust.



## FCAT Governors

Mereside Primary Academy's Governing Body has appointed a Governor to champion the needs of pupils with SEND. The role of the FCAT Governor is a strategic role. A key part of this role is to monitor and professionally challenge SEND and inclusion provision whilst supporting the wellbeing of the SENCO. FCAT SEND Governors attend termly network meetings to enable them to receive training and liaise with the SEND Trustee.

## Academy Level

### Headteacher

The Headteacher for Mereside Primary Academy is responsible for the leadership and management of all aspects of the academy's work including provision for pupils with SEND. The Headteacher works closely with the SENCO to ensure pupils with SEND have their needs met. The Headteacher keeps the Governing Body fully informed about SEND provision and impact.

### SENCO

The SENCO in collaboration with the Headteacher and Governing Body determines the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in Mereside Primary Academy to ensure the wellbeing and progress of pupils with SEND. The SENCO is responsible for the day-to-day development and operation of the SEND policy and coordination of the provision made for individual pupils with SEND. The SENCO works closely with pupils, staff, parents /carers and other agencies.

The SENCO provides professional guidance to colleagues with the aims of securing high quality adaptive teaching for pupils with SEND. The SENCO collaborates with class teachers, so that learning for all pupils has equal priority and available resources are used to maximum effect.

Support for staff and pupils is achieved through the: analysis and assessment of pupils' needs, progress and achievement; monitoring and supporting the development of high quality adaptive teaching and the setting of targets for improvement. The SENCO requests external professional involvement and advice, when appropriate, this may include advisory teachers, educational psychologists and speech and language therapists.

The SENCO works with the Headteacher and the SEND Governor to ensure the academy meets its legislative responsibilities, regarding SEND. This includes keeping an accurate register of pupils with SEND; developing and publishing an annual SEND Information Report and SEND policy. Ensuring there is a Link to the LEA Local Offer and FCAT Accessibility Plan via the academies' website.



The SENCO is supported by a SEND manager who works closely with the SENCO to help implement SEND provision across the academy.

## Teachers

Teachers are responsible for meeting the needs and the progress of all pupils in their class including those with SEND. Teachers strive to deliver High Quality Adaptive Teaching and a Trauma Informed Approach based on accurate assessment to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers with the support of the SENCO identify, as early as possible, pupils with SEND within their own class. Teachers consult with the SENCO to meet the needs of pupils with SEND in their class. Teachers liaise with and support parents /carers of pupils in their class at all stages of the graduated approach and ensure SEND related paperwork for pupils in their class is kept up to date and is of high quality. Teachers ensure Teaching Assistants and Support Staff assigned to their class are well deployed and effective.

## Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Support Staff (SLSA)

Teaching Assistants and Support staff, with the support and direction of the teacher and SENCO, support, teach and assess pupils. They take time to develop their knowledge of the needs of the pupils therefore helping to break down barriers to learning and support pupil progress in a way which maximises pupil's independence and self-esteem.

## External Agencies

External Agencies work in partnership with Mereside Primary Academy staff and parents /carers to share their expertise and professional support to help meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

## Parents/ Carers

The relationship between parents/carers is crucial to all pupil's educational progress and wellbeing. Therefore, all Mereside Primary Academy staff work towards achieving positive and effective partnerships with all parents/ carers.