



SYNERGY
EDUCATION
TRUST

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

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1. Trust-Wide Approach to SEND

At Synergy Education Trust, our trust-wide approach to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is designed to raise aspirations and expectations for all pupils with SEND. Each school within the Trust is committed to focusing on positive outcomes for children and young people, while actively working to eliminate discrimination.

All schools in the Trust strive to enhance aspirations, expectations, and progress, leading to meaningful achievement for pupils with SEND. This is achieved through a commitment to equal opportunities and the delivery of high-quality teaching.

We aim to create an inclusive environment where all pupil's unique talents and achievements are recognised and celebrated. Our approach ensures that all children feel successful and are inspired to reach their full potential, regardless of their individual learning needs.

Our vision for children and young people with SEND is aligned with our vision for all pupils across the Trust: to provide an outstanding education that is inclusive and accessible to all. We are committed to equality and inclusivity, irrespective of age, disability, gender, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or belief.

We continually strive to improve attainment and progress for every learner, ensuring access to educational excellence and preparing young people for their futures. Our goal is to secure the highest levels of achievement appropriate to everyone.

We will operate a model in all our schools for improving the outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. The model is based on 5 principles:

- Prioritising leadership of SEND
- Offering accurate identification of student needs
- Effectively tracking progress
- Successfully impacting on progress through effective interventions
- Improving provision through the development of partnerships

2. Objectives

- To identify and provide for pupils who have special educational needs, disabilities and additional needs.
- To work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice
- To operate a "whole pupil, whole school" approach to the management and provision of support for special educational needs.
- Provide high quality provision to meet the needs of the children and young people with SEND.
- To provide support and advice for all staff working with special educational needs pupils.

- Successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.

3. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy 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 SEND
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out local authorities' and schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities
- The [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
- The [Governance Handbook](#), which sets out governors'/trustees' responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- The [School Admissions Code](#), which sets out the school's obligation to admit all pupils 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
- Blackpool and Lancashire Local offer
- Individual school's Accessibility Plans

Individual Synergy schools will publish specifics about their own SEND provision in the SEND Information Report to be found on each school's website.

4. Definitions

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

They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

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

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

All schools in our trust will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

4.1 Four areas of need

Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to conduct normal day-to-day activities. As a trust, we will review how well equipped our schools are to support children and young people with the following as identified in the code of practice. The needs of pupils with SEND are grouped into four broad areas. Pupils can have needs that cut across more than one area, and their needs may change over time.

Communication and interaction; Pupils 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 do not understand or use the social rules of communication. Pupils who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.

Cognition and learning; Pupils 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
- Severe learning difficulties
- Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where pupils are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Social, emotional, and mental health difficulties; These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Pupils may have:

- Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, or an eating disorder
- Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, or attachment disorder.
- Suffered adverse childhood experiences.
- These needs can manifest in many ways, for example, such as challenging, disruptive, or disturbing behaviour, or by the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated.

Sensory and/or physical needs. Pupils with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities provided.

- Pupils may have:
- A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment, or multi-sensory impairment
- A physical impairment
- These pupils may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Within each of our schools the Head has overall responsibility for SEND provision. Through the Trust scheme of delegation, the Trustees have delegated responsibility to the Local Governing Body (LGB) in each school for scrutiny, review and challenge.

5.1 The Trustees

- Ensure that provision for children and young people with SEND is an integral part of the Trust's Improvement Plan.
- Have regard for the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice 2014.
- Identify a member of the Board to be responsible for SEND provision across the Trust.
- Be fully informed about SEND issues, challenges and effective practice.
- Ensure that the quality of SEND provision is regularly monitored.
- Have appropriate staffing and funding arrangements to be able to oversee the Trust's provision for children and young people with SEND.
- Analyse patterns and distribution of SEND need across all schools via the Trust SEND register.
- Review exclusions to ensure we are in line with the Code of Practice.

5.2 Local Governors

The local governing board has delegated responsibility for making sure the following duties are carried out, though the duties can be delegated to a committee or an individual:

- Co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer
- Do all it can to make sure that every pupil with SEND gets the support they need
- Make sure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who don't have SEND
- Inform parents when the school is making special educational provision for their child
- Make sure that the school has arrangements in place to support any pupils with medical conditions

- Provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND
- Provide an annual report for parents on their child's progress
- Record accurately and keep up to date the provision made for pupils with SEND
- Publish information on the school website about how the school is implementing its SEND policy, in a SEN information report
- Publish 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
- Make sure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school and that the key responsibilities of the role are set out, and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out
- Determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEND
- Make sure that all pupils from year 8 until year 13 are provided with independent careers advice (Secondary provisions only)

5.3 The Headteacher/Head of School

The Head will:

- Work with the SENCO and SEND link governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school
- Work with the SENCO and local governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for pupils with SEND, and their progress
- Have responsibility for monitoring the school's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual pupils
- Make sure that the SENCO has enough time to carry out their duties
- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of pupils on the SEND register
- Advise the LA when a pupil needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review
- With the SENCO, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development
- With the SENCO, regularly review and 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

- With the SENCO and teaching staff, 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

5.4 The SENCO

The SENCO will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEN and then liaise with them about the pupil's needs and any provision made
- Work with the Trust lead, headteacher and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and 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 pupils with SEND, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEND support and differentiated teaching methods appropriate for individual pupils
- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' 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 ensure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the pupil and their parents are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned
- When a pupil moves to a different school or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a pupil's SEND and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution in a timely manner
- Work with the headteacher and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Make sure the school keeps its records of all pupils with SEND up to date and accurate
- With the headteacher, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development
- With the headteacher, regularly review and 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

- Prepare and review information for inclusion in the school's SEND information report and any updates to this policy
- With the Trust lead, headteacher and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEND, both within the school and in comparison, with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

5.5 Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is differentiated to meet pupil needs through a graduated approach
- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the SEN information report
- Communicating with parents regularly to:
 - o Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
 - o Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
 - o Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school
 - o Listen to the parents' concerns and agree their aspirations for the pupil

5.6 Link SEND Governor

Each individual school will have a SEND Link Governor

The SEND governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school and update the governing board on this Work with the headteacher and SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school

5.7 Parents or carers

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

Parents or carers of a pupil on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the pupil'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 pupil's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with school staff, agree their aspirations for the pupil
- Given an annual report on the pupil's progress

The school will consider the views of the parent or carer in any decisions made about the pupil.

5.8 Pupils

Pupils will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the pupil:

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

The pupil's views will be considered in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

6. Links with external Professional Agencies

The Trust and its schools recognise that they won't be able to meet all the needs of every pupil. Whenever necessary the school will work with external support services such as:

- Speech and language therapists
- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- General practitioners or paediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services

7. The Local Offer

The Trust and its schools will work in partnership with the Local Authority (Blackpool and Lancashire) agency partners in the development and review of the local offer for SEND.

8. SEND Information Report

Every school in the trust publishes a SEND information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school.

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

9. Our approach to SEND support

9.1 Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs

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

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

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Does not match or improve upon their previous rate of progress
- Does not close the attainment gap between them and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, wider development or social needs.

When teachers identify an area where a pupil is making slow progress, they will target the pupil's area of weakness with differentiated high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve the teacher will raise the issue with the SENCO to have an initial discussion about whether this lack of progress may be due to a special educational need. Where necessary they will, in consultation with the pupil's parents or carers, consider consulting an external specialist.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEN.

Potential short-term causes of impact on behaviour or performance will be considered, such as bullying or bereavement. Staff will also take particular care in identifying and assessing SEN for pupils whose first language is not English.

When deciding whether the pupil needs special educational provision, school staff will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. They will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether the school can provide it by adapting its core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

If a pupil is the school, and:

- Their previous setting has already identified that they have SEN
- They are known to external agencies
- They have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

then the school will work in a multi-agency way to make sure it gets relevant information before the pupil starts at the school, so support can be put in place as early as possible.

9.2 Consulting and involving pupils and parents

Our schools will put the pupil and their parents at the heart of all decisions made about special educational provision.

When we are aiming to identify whether a pupil needs special education provision, we will have an early discussion with the pupil and their parents. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty
- We consider any concerns the parents have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

Notes of these early discussions will be added to the pupil's record and given to their parents.

We will formally notify parents when it is decided that a pupil will receive special educational provision.

9.3 The graduated approach to SEN support

Once a pupil has been identified as having SEN, we will take action to remove any barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

1. Assess

The pupil's class teacher and the SENCO will carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. The views of the pupil and their parents will be considered. The school may also seek advice from external support services.

The assessment will be reviewed regularly to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the pupil's need. For many pupils, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

2. Plan

In consultation with the parents and the pupil, the teacher and the SENCO will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes, and a clear date for review.

All staff who work with the pupil will be made aware of the pupil's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed. This information will be recorded on a management information system and will be made accessible to staff in a pupil plan.

Parents will be fully aware of the planned support and interventions and may be asked to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

3. Do

The pupil's class or subject teacher retains overall responsibility for their progress.

Where the plan involves group or 1-to-1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the pupil. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.

The SENCO will support the teacher in further assessing the pupil's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on how to implement support effectively.

4. Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

We will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents and pupils
- The level of progress the pupil has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the pupil

The teacher and the SENCO will revise the outcomes and support considering the pupil's progress and development, and in consultation with the pupil and their parents.

9.4 Levels of support

School-based SEN support

Pupils receiving SEN support will be placed on the SEND register. These pupils have needs that can be met by the school through the graduated approach. Where the pupil'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 pupils is funded through the school's notional SEND budget.

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

Education, health and care (EHC) plan

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

The provision for these pupils will be funded from the school's notional SEND budget, and potentially from the LA (from the high-level needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant).

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

9.5 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEN by:

- Tracking pupils' progress, including by using provision maps
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEN support
- Using pupil questionnaires
- Monitoring by the SENCO
- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from the pupil and their parents

10. Expertise and training of staff

The Trust recognises all leaders are leaders of SEND and all teachers are teachers of learners with SEND. Staff receive training to ensure that they are the best they can be and are able to provide a varied and interesting curriculum that meets the needs of all our learners.

To develop staff awareness and expertise in SEND, the Trust supports SENCOs to develop appropriate training for staff in their School. The Trust encourages and supports ongoing training for all SENCOs.

All SENCOs appointed after 1st September 2008 who have not previously been a SENCO for a total period of more than 12 months must achieve the national award for Special Educational Needs coordination within three years of appointment.

All SENCOs will hold the National Award for SENCO at the time of appointment or will be supported to gain the qualification within the first three years in their post.

11. Admissions and Accessibility arrangements

Please refer to the Trust Admission Policy and individual schools SEN Information Report, available on each school's website.

12. Complaints about the SEND provision

Where parents have concerns about our school's SEND provision, they should first raise their concerns informally with the class teacher or SENCO. We will try to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve their concerns, parents are welcome to submit their complaint formally.

Formal complaints about SEND provision in our school should be made to the Head. They will be handled in line with the Trust's complaints policy available on the Trust website.

If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the school's response, they can escalate the complaint. In some circumstances, this right also applies to the pupil themselves.

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

To find out about disagreement resolution and mediation services in our local area, you can contact:

[Blackpool Council](#)

[Lancashire County Council](#)