

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

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| Date review: | December 2025 |
| Next review | December 2026 |

Introduction

Unity Academy is an inclusive All through Academy, situated in Blackpool. Unity 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. Unity 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

Unity Academy strives 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.

We aim to achieve this intent by embedding the following principles:

- Children 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 Unity Academy we aim to achieve this intent by ensuring all our pupils are able to access their fullest potential by being included in their educational journey.

Definition of SEND

The definition of SEND used across Unity 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.

At Unity Academy we recognise pupils may have multiple needs. A pupil's primary area of need is the need which is creating the main barrier to learning.

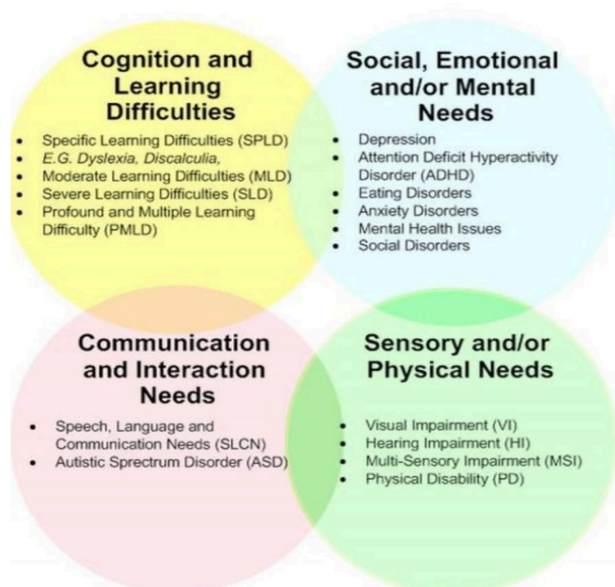


Figure 1: Categories of need

Many pupils identified with SEND needs are well placed in our inclusive mainstream provision. As an inclusive academy we strive to meet our pupils' needs through High Quality Adaptive Teaching, deliberate practice and a developing Trauma Informed Approach.

Creating Enabling Learning Environments

Unity 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 building, curriculum and resources are accessible for all.
- Well-resourced with appropriately adapted resources, including ICT.
- High quality, structured and tidy learning spaces appropriate to the age and developmental needs of the pupils.

Trauma Informed Approach

Within Unity 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

To enable Unity 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 (Nicola McGuinness) and SEND team to work closely with teachers, teaching assistants, support staff 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 11.
- 3) **High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning and a 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 pupils' 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 all academies meet their statutory responsibilities** for pupils with SEND.

Working in Partnership

Staff at Unity Academy are committed to working in partnership with integrity and an open mind set 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 pupils, their families and staff. At Unity Academy we work in partnership with educational specialists and external agencies, including

health, social services, as well as Blackpool, Lancashire and wider 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 Unity 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 Unity Academy. Therefore, Unity 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.

All teachers at Unity Academy are 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 who work alongside teachers to support and teach our pupils.

Interventions

Interventions are used across Unity 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) These include micro inventions used to support pupils as part of Unity's inclusive universal plus provision.

Graduated Approach to supporting pupils with SEND.

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



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

The Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle is part of Unity 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. Across Unity Academy, 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, FCAT academies follow the Graduated Approach to supporting pupils with SEND (see figure 2 p 5) identifying appropriate SEND Provision. This process is overseen by the SENCO, 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 Unity Academy including those with SEND is High Quality Adaptive Teaching and a Trauma Informed Approach to meeting need based around Deliberate Practice.

If pupils' needs are being met, universal provision continues.

2. Universal +

If pupils' needs are assessed and are identified as not progressing as expected, further interventions and monitoring will be implemented as part of universal + provision. 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 + support thrive,

make progress and have their needs met effectively. Successful micro interventions will be recorded as part of our academies 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

If pupils' needs are identified as not progressing as expected, these 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, section 6 para 6.15 Page 94)

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

Targeted 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 the Academies' graduated SEND provision additional external agency support will be sought to help develop the interventions being provided 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 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 plan to be issued or for a pupil to remain on Targeted SEN support.

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

Pupils with an EHCP will be on the SEN register, coded E. These pupils will have a Specialist SEN Support Plan. The Specialist SEN Support Plan will detail the targeted, timed interventions detailed in the pupils EHCP section F.

Progress towards the end of key stage outcomes identified in these pupils' 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 the graduated SEND provision at Unity.

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 specialist advice and/or consider alternative provision.

Monitoring List

Unity 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

Unity Academy has a SEN register. The register enables Senior Leaders, teachers and support staff to be aware of pupils' receiving targeted or specialist SEND provision. The SEN register will have additional information about these pupils to support staff across Unity Academy to provide effective support.

Curriculum Entitlement

All pupils with SEND at Unity Academy will access a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the pupil's age, development and SEND needs.

Uniform

Uniform plays an important role in promoting a sense of community and belonging at Unity Academy. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Unity 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)

Unity 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 are working towards the 'Five-a-Day' principle to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum within the classroom. In 2025-2026 we are focussing on upskilling our staff in Explicit Instruction, Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies and Scaffolding:

- 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'. Our academy regularly reviews 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 pupils 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 for all pupils on the SEN register.

Pupils will also be assessed using a range of summative assessments. Pupils' 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 staff at Unity Academy to understand each pupil's starting point. From these starting points ambitious end points will be identified for pupils with SEND.

Transition

Unity Academy recognises times of transition are challenging for all pupils and particularly for pupils with SEND. Therefore, our SEND and pastoral team will coordinate meetings and or discussions with pupils, parents, feeder providers and destination organisations to ensure effective and efficient communication and transfer of information. At Unity Academy we also recognise transition takes place every time a learner moves class or lesson. The SEND team at Unity will therefore 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, the SENCO facilitates appropriate training opportunities for all staff. FCAT encourages and supports ongoing training for all SENCOs.

The SENCO also attends the termly SENCO Primary and Secondary FCAT network meetings, receive support from the Director for SEND and has the opportunity to participate in a FCAT SEND reviews

The Local Offer

Unity Academy works in partnership with Blackpool Local Authority as agency partners in the development, review and publication of the Blackpool Local Offer.

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

The Local Offer can be assessed through this link:

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