

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) POLICY and SEND INFORMATION

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Compliance

This policy applies to all schools in Ascend Learning Trust and sets out our vision and principles for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It aligns with all statutory requirements, including those relating to the legislation contained in the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014. The Trust follows the statutory guidance within the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2014 revised 2015), this policy also takes into account the SEND & AP Review Green Paper: “Right Support, Right Place, Right Time” (2022) and subsequent SEND and AP Improvement Plan (2023).

Copies of the policy are available on request and are published on each school's website. It can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

This is the third SEND and Information Policy, developed by the Trust lead for inclusion, in consultation with the Trustees, Trust Central Team Members and SENDCo from the Trust Schools.

Vision and Values

Ascend Learning Trust – *Together we belong, believe, become*

Our values of compassion, aspiration, respect, dedication and integrity, apply equally to all our young people in our schools.

At ALT, we are committed to creating a sense of belonging for everyone. All our young people receive a holistic world class education regardless of where they have come from or their life challenges. They will leave their Ascend Community with outcomes that open doors to a fulfilling and successful future.

Our mission is to promote a culture of compassion and inclusivity with high expectations and standards for all our young people, including those with special educational needs. We aim to deliver unmissable education which inspires limitless horizons for all our young people at Ascend.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice, 0-25 years (January 2015) is clear that: ‘All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential. This should enable them to: achieve their best, become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training.’

We are clear that, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, **every teacher is a teacher of SEND** and importantly, **every leader is a leader of SEND**.

Definition of special educational needs and disability (SEND)

Special Educational Needs: Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

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

Special Educational Provision means: educational provision which is **additional to** or otherwise **different from** the educational provision made generally for children of the same age in mainstream schools in England. This means provision that goes beyond the quality first teaching and adaptive approaches which are normally provided as part of inclusive, high quality, bespoke teaching.

The SEND Code of Practice describes four broad areas of SEND:

- **Communication and Interaction (C&I)**, for example, Autism or speech and language difficulties.
- **Cognition and Learning (C&L)**, for example, moderate/severe/profound and multiple learning difficulties or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)**, for example, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), anxiety, depression, emotionally based school avoidance.
- **Sensory and/or physical needs (S&P)**, for example, visual impairment, Hearing impairment or Physical Disabilities.

Identifying special educational needs

ALT is committed to the early identification of special educational needs in line with the Code of Practice for SEND 0-25 years 2015. It is essential that we understand every student's individual learning needs. In our Trust Schools we have a range of summative and formative measures to ascertain baseline data and progress. During transition(s) we gather information from previous schools and when appropriate hold meetings with professionals, outside agencies, parents and carers.

SEND is identified through regular assessment of pupil progress and application of the graduated approach. Assessment should flow from everyday classroom work, be part of normal school life, be shared across the school community and be useful for everyone involved.

Pupils with SEND may, despite Quality First teaching, be characterised by progress which:

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

The Trust recognises that there are factors other than SEND which may impact on progress and attainment such as; attendance, English as an additional language, social deprivation, bereavement etc., our schools have in place a range of robust support packages to support individual students with these challenges; the SENDCo may or may not be directly involved in these strategies.

Our approach to supporting pupils with SEND

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, Key Stages and information from parents and carers, 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 may be a cause for concern (as described under identification of SEND). 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 quality first 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. See comments under Identifying Special Educational Needs. 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.

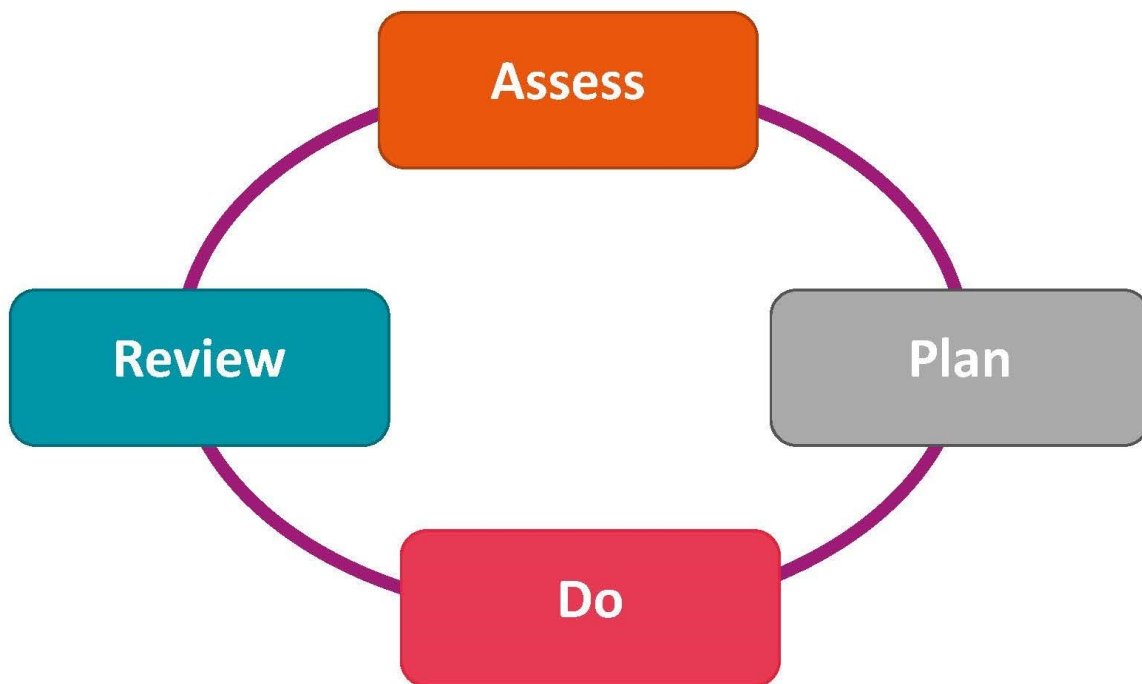
In addition, during transition from one school to another, a pupil is placed on the SEND register if:

- Their previous setting has already identified that they have SEN
- They are known to external agencies
- They have confirmed diagnosis which affects their educational needs
- They have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

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.

Graduated approach

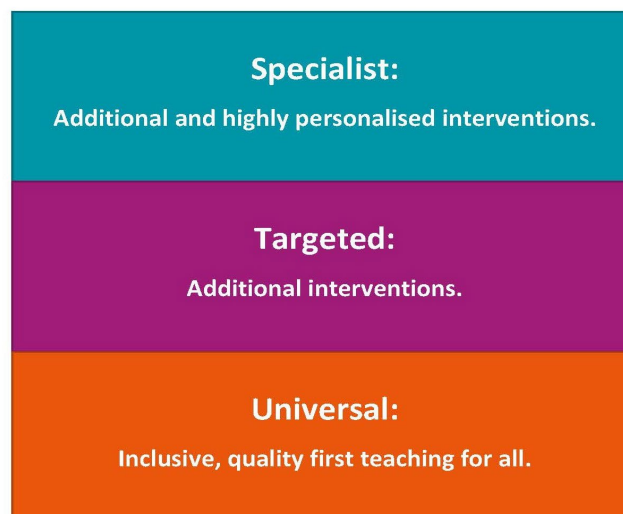
The SEND Code of Practice recommends a four part graduated response so that decisions and actions are assessed, planned, actioned and evaluated. This graduated approach can be explained in the diagram below.



Each case is considered on an individual basis and teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class. ALT schools follow an 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' process. All pupils on the SEND register should have a Pupil Passport / Pupil Profile / Support Plan / Individual Learning Plan (see individual school policies for details). The Code of Practice 2015 states that schools should communicate regularly with parents to set out clear outcomes which are reviewed at least three times each year. In line with the Graduated Response, schools apply different levels or Waves of interventions depending on need. This ranges from Quality First Adapted Teaching (Wave 1), targeted support (Wave 2) to multi-agency involvement (wave 3)

This approach is shown in graph form below:

Waves of Intervention Model



Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP)

Where a pupil is failing to make adequate progress despite various high level interventions and support from external agencies, the school (as well as parents/carers) can apply to the Local Authority for an EHCP assessment of the pupil. The school will always consult with parents/carers before exercising this right. Equally it would always be the Trust's recommendation that parents or carers inform their school if they wish to apply for a parent-led EHCP request. If the LA refuses to make an Assessment, the parents (but not the school) have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

For pupils who have an EHCP, in addition to the review of mentoring targets and progress data, their development towards the outcomes outlined in their EHCP will be reviewed annually and a report provided for the Local Authority.

The SENDCO is responsible for organising reviews of EHCP for SEND pupils. All parents/carers of pupils with an EHCP are invited to contribute to and attend their child's annual review meeting. Pupils are also invited to contribute through person-centred planning activities prior to the meeting and in person at the review if they wish to attend.

Schools will liaise with schools, colleges and other education providers to ensure that all relevant parties are invited to transition reviews for pupils with EHCPs, these Transition Plans are updated as part of the Annual Review process.

SEND Coordinator (SENDCo)

This is a member of staff at each of the Trust's schools who has responsibility for coordinating SEND provision. The school SENDCo's name and contact details are available from the school website.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is responsible for:

- Working with the leadership team and the ALT central team to determine the strategic development of SEND provision in their school
- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy
- Co-ordinating the provision for pupils with SEND
- Liaising with the designated teacher where a Looked after Child (CLA) has SEND
- Advising on the graduated approach and providing SEND support
- Contributing to the in service training of staff, liaising with and advising fellow teachers to support pupils with SEND
- Advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupil's needs effectively
- Managing the SEND team
- Alongside the school pastoral team, liaising with parents/carers of pupils with SEND
- Liaising with partner primaries and other schools and colleges, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals and independent or voluntary bodies
- Being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- Working with the school's Headteacher, LGB and ALT central team to ensure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Ensuring the school keeps the record of all pupils with SEND up to date and that these are regularly reviewed
- Co-ordinating transition arrangements for pupils who have SEND (into and out of school)

All ALT SENDCOs are members of the MAT SEND - Inclusion and Development Group and meet regularly to discuss SEND needs across the MAT. The Inclusion Lead for ALT facilitates this group and reports directly to the CEO.

The responsibilities of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

- Work with the SENDCo and the ALT Head of Inclusion to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of students with SEND within the school.
- Ensure that the current SEND report and policy are available on the school's website.
- The SENDCO is line managed by a member of SLT, wherever possible the Headteacher.

Class teacher responsibility

- The progress and development of every student in their class.
- Planning high quality teaching which is adapted to meet the needs of each pupil through a graduated approach

- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.
- Working with the SENDCo to review each student's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision.
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy.

The Governors' Role

- The Local Governing Board (LGB) will ensure the necessary provision is made for any child who has SEND. There is a link Governor who takes responsibility for SEND in each school. The Board of Governors play an important part in developing and monitoring the school's SEND policy.

The role of the ALT Inclusion Lead

- Help to raise awareness of SEND progress at ALT meetings.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEN and disability provision within the Trust and to update the ALT central team on this.
- Provide advice and support to the SENDCo's, Inclusion Leads and Headteachers on all matters of SEND.
- Work with the Headteacher and SENDCo to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.

The Trustees Role

The Trustees will ensure that all ALT schools have a LINK Governor responsible for SEND, an appropriately trained SENDCo in post and the following documentation in place:

- SEND Policy
- SEND Information report
- Accessibility Plan

Communication with parents and carers

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, ALT believes that all parents of pupils with SEND should be treated as equal partners. The Trust has positive attitudes to parents, provides user-friendly information and strives to ensure that they understand the procedures and are aware of how to access advice.

Parents will be supported and empowered to:

- Recognise and fulfil their responsibilities as parents and play an active and valued role in their child's education
- Have knowledge of their child's entitlement within the SEND framework
- Make their views known about how their child is educated
- Have access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision making processes about special educational provision.
- Contribute to review meetings

Parents will be made welcome in the schools and will be invited to attend such meetings as concern their child. In order to make communications effective Trust schools will:

- Acknowledge and draw on parental knowledge and expertise in relation to their child
- Focus on the pupil's strengths as well as areas of additional need
- Recognise the personal investment of parents and be aware of their feelings
- Ensure that parents understand procedures, are aware of how to access support in preparing their contributions to be discussed well before meetings
- Respect the validity of differing perspectives and seek constructive ways of reconciling different viewpoints
- Respect the differing needs parents themselves may have, such as a disability, or communication and linguistic barriers
- Recognise the need for flexibility in the timing and structure of meetings.

Pupil Voice

Pupils in ALT schools are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, and one that meets their educational needs. As such all pupils with SEND can expect the following:

- Involvement in decisions that affect their education

- Participation in their annual review
- A safe school environment
- Support, where necessary, for exams and controlled assessments
- Interventions that address their needs
- Access to help and support from the SENDCo, SEND team or pupil support team for specific needs whether these be long or short term
- Recognition and reward for achievement

Keeping records of SEND pupils

Trust schools keeps records of the support, intervention and advice put in place for pupils with SEND to ensure that provision remains suitable and that progress is monitored. SEND data is kept secure and is only shared with external agencies in accordance with the Data Protection Act and with parental permission. The SENDCo has responsibility for ensuring that records are properly kept and available as needed.

Dealing with complaints from parents and carers

All complaints will be treated seriously and investigated thoroughly according to the school's complaints procedure. The Trust is committed to working with parents and to keeping them fully informed of sources of independent support and advice in regards to SENDIASS (SEND information and Advice Service) in Swindon and SENDIASS in Wiltshire.

Details of how to access this disagreement resolution service can be obtained from the relevant Local Authority and support will be given to parents in accessing the information.

Arrangements for staff training

It is the school's policy to provide appropriate professional development for the SENDCo, teachers, teaching assistants and other staff according to needs identified in the School Improvement or Development Plan and as part of the staff Performance Management process. At the heart of SEND school provision is excellent classroom practice to ensure the very best possible outcomes for all our SEND pupils. Each ALT school is committed to providing world class teaching which is adapted to meet the needs of SEND pupils in their classroom. Through continuous professional development class teachers will learn about the current best practice in supporting pupils with SEND and will be supported to implement this through coaching and deliberate practice. The collaboration of our academies will support the sharing and implementation of best practice for SEND.

Monitoring and evaluating the education for pupils with SEND

The Trust is committed to regular and systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of its work. In this respect, the Trustees will ensure all Trust schools have an updated SEND Policy and Information Report on the school website.

Trust schools employ a series of methods to gather data for analysis including, but not limited to:

- Observation of teaching by outside agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist and advisory teachers
- Analysis of the attainment and achievement of different cohorts of pupils with SEND
- Success rates in respect of academic targets at Progress Review Days and outcomes at Annual reviews for pupils with an EHCP.
- Various assessments summative and diagnostic assessments
- Post 16 and 18 destinations of pupils with SEND
- The views of parents and carers and the pupils at Parents Evenings
- Pupil voice
- Maintenance of assessment records e.g. reading and spelling ages that illustrate progress over time (standardised scores)
- Regular meetings between SENDCo, school leaders, class teachers and teaching assistants
- Performance management, coaching and mentoring

Review of the SEND policy and Information Report

The Board of Trustees, on at least an annual basis, will consider and report to parents, as appropriate, on the effectiveness of MAT schools' work on behalf of children with SEND. They may wish to consult support services used by the school, other schools and parents. The Trust will advise schools as to whether any amendments to the policy are required.

SEND information report

The Trustees will ensure that the Governing Body for each MAT school will, in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2015 publish information on the school's website about the implementation of this policy. The information will be updated at least annually. Each school will ensure that their SEND Information Report is easily accessible and set out in clear, straight forward language. The SEND Information Report should include relevant named contacts who are available at the academy. It must also include information on the school's contribution to the Local Offer and information on where the Local Offer is published.

These Information Reports are bespoke to each setting but should include the following:

1. What types of SEND does the school provide for?
2. Which staff will support my child, and what training have they had?
3. What should I do if I think my child SEN?
4. How will the school know if my child needs SEN support?
5. How will the school measure my child's progress?
6. How will I be involved in decisions made about my child's education?
7. How will my child be involved in decisions made about their education?
8. How will the school adapt its teaching for my child?
9. How will the school evaluate whether the support in place is helping my child?
10. How will the resources be secured for my child?
11. How will the school make sure my child is included in activities alongside pupils who do not have SEND?
12. How does the school make sure the admissions process is fair for pupils with SEND?
13. How does the school support pupils with disabilities?
14. How will the school support my child's mental health and emotional development?
15. What support is available for my child a they transition between classes or settings or in preparing for adulthood?
16. What support is in place for looked-after and previously looked after children with SEND?
17. What should I do if I have a complaint about my child's SEND support?
18. What support is available for me and my family?
19. Glossary

ALT schools should have two separate SEND policies relating to SEND – one being the SEND Policy and the other the SEND Information Report.

The SEN Policy and SEND Information Report should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies such as:

- Accessibility Policy
- Exam Access Arrangements
- E-safety
- Safeguarding and Child protection
- Anti-bullying
- Positive handling
- Behaviour for Learning
- Administration of Medication
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions
- Admissions Policy
- Health and Safety