

## **17.1 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy**

### **Policy Version Control**

Policy type	Trust Policy for Academies
Policy prepared by	Paula Smith
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## **1. Policy Aim**

The aims of our SEN policy and practice in The Alpha Academies Trust are:

- To provide curriculum access for all.
- To secure high levels of achievement for all.
- To meet individual needs through a wide range of provision.
- To provide a person-centred approach by involving the student wherever possible in the planning and decision making of their support and provision.
- To attain high levels of satisfaction and participation from students, parents and carers.
- To carefully map provision for all vulnerable learners to ensure that staffing deployment, resource allocation and choice of intervention is leading to good learning outcomes.
- To ensure a high level of staff expertise to meet student need, through well targeted continuing professional development.
- To work in cooperative and productive partnership with parents/carers, the Local Authority and other outside agencies, to ensure there is a holistic and multi-professional approach to meeting the needs of all vulnerable learners.

## **2. Relationship to Guidelines, Procedures, Other Policies & Legal Requirements**

2.1 This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2015) 3.65 and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools DfE Feb 2013
- SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2015)
- Schools SEN Information Report Regulations (2014)
- Statutory guidance on supporting students at school with medical conditions April 2014
- Safeguarding Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Teachers Standards 2012
- Sick Child/Medical Treatment Policy
- Complaints Policy

## **3. Policy Statements**

3.1 The Alpha Academies Trust strives to be an inclusive Trust where the achievements, views and attitudes of all members of the community are valued. Each Academy seeks to include all students in all aspects of academy life.

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All staff commit themselves to uphold the principles embedded in the Equalities Act (2010) and in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015), to identify needs promptly, and put in place appropriate provision for all students who have SEND, in order to minimise potential barriers to achievement. We firmly believe that every teacher is a teacher of every student including those with SEN.

3.2 We endeavour to achieve maximum inclusion of all students (including vulnerable learners) whilst meeting their individual needs. Teachers provide adaptive learning opportunities for all the students within the Academy and provide materials appropriate to the student's interests and abilities. This ensures that students have full access to the Academy curriculum. Special Educational Need might be an explanation for delayed or slower progress but is not an excuse, and we make every effort to narrow the gap in attainment between vulnerable groups of learners and others. English as an Additional Language (EAL) is not considered a Special Education Need. We focus on individual progress as the main indicator of success. We strive to make a clear distinction between "underachievement" – often caused by a poor early experience of learning - and special educational needs. Some students at the Academy may be underachieving but will not necessarily have a special educational need. It is our responsibility to spot this quickly and ensure that appropriate interventions are put in place to help these students catch up. Other students will genuinely have special educational needs and this may lead to lower-attainment (though not necessarily to under-achievement).

### 3.3 Identifying Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs have needs and requirements which may fall into at least one of the following areas:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical

The purpose of identification is to work out what action the Academy needs to take, not to fit a student into a category, therefore at The Alpha Academies Trust identify the needs of students by considering the needs of the whole child which will include not just the special educational needs of the child or young person.

We are also mindful that there are a number of other aspects that are not SEN but may impact on a student's progress and attainment;

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- Disability (the Code of Practice outlines the “reasonable adjustment “duty for all settings and school provided under current Disability Equality legislation – these alone do not constitute SEN).
- Attendance and Punctuality.
- Health and Welfare.
- English as an Additional Language
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant.
- Being a Looked After Child or a previous Looked After Child.
- Being a child of Serviceman/woman.

### 3.4 A Graduated Approach

We ensure that all our teachers are able to deliver quality first teaching through an extensive programme of continuing professional development. At the Alpha Academies Trust teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class, including where students access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. It is high quality teaching, adapted for individual students, that is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.

At the Alpha Academies Trust we regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all students, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable students and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered. This is done through a variety of ways including:

- Student progress tracking, meetings and assessment data;
- Classroom observations;
- On-going assessment of progress made by intervention groups;
- Work sampling;
- Scrutiny of planning;
- Student interviews.

### Identification and Assessment

When making the decision as to whether a student requires special educational provision the teacher and SENCO consider all of the information gathered from within the Academy about the student's progress, alongside national data and expectations of progress. This includes high quality and accurate formative assessment, and uses effective tools and early assessment materials.

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Student's needs are identified and met as early as possible through:

- The analysis of data including entry profiles, end of Key Stage scores, reading and spelling ages, other whole-academy student progress data.
- Classroom-based assessment and monitoring arrangements, following up parental concerns.
- Tracking individual student's progress over time.
- Liaison with feeder schools on transfer.
- Information from previous schools.
- Information from other services.

Students will be offered additional SEN support when it is clear that their needs require intervention which is “additional to” or “different from” the well-differentiated curriculum offer for all students in the Academy i.e. they have a special educational need as defined by the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015), which states that:

*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 them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.*

Where a student is identified as having higher levels of need we draw on more specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.

### 3.5 Supporting Students and Families

As per Regulation 53, Part 4 of the Children and Families Act (2014) additional support for students and families can be found in the LA local offer. This can be found in the SEN section of the LA website. ([www.stoke.gov.uk](http://www.stoke.gov.uk)). We also provide an SEN Information Report on our website as per Regulation 51, Part 3, section 69(3)(a) of the Act.

The Academy makes excellent use of outside agencies. Funding is used flexibly to purchase additional support and advice, and effective use is made of external agencies that provide statutory services at the point of contact, including:

- Educational Psychology Service

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- Children and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- School Health Service
- Educational Welfare Officer
- Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy services

Permission will be sought before any work takes place.

Our admissions policy can be found on the Academy website, further information with regard to admissions procedures can be obtained from the Academy Office.

### 3.6 Supporting students at the Academy with Medical Conditions

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools, proprietors of academies and management committees of PRUs to make arrangements for supporting students at their academy with medical conditions.

The Academy recognises that students with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school/academy trips and physical education. Some students with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the Academy will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Some may also have special educational needs (SEN) and may have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their special educational provision and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) is followed.

Our policy for managing the medical conditions of students can be found on our website.

### 3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation of SEND

The Governing Body, at each Academy in partnership with the SENCO and staff, will monitor the success of the education provided for students with SEND in a variety of ways, including:

- Monitor and evaluate the success of short/medium term targets set for students.
- Monitor and evaluate the progress made by students with Education, Health Care plans in relation to objectives set within their EHC plans.
- Monitor progress made on 'P' scales, National Curriculum teacher assessments, and exam results on a student profile graph and determine 'value added' for each student and cohort.
- Seek the degree of satisfaction of parents/carers and students with the quality of education provided, during parents' meetings and, for students with statements of SEND, at annual review meetings.

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- Analyse faculty attendance and progress data for targeted groups of students, including students with SEND.
- Evaluate evidence from monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning for students with SEND, through the regular cycle of monitoring as part of the appraisal structure and themed visits.
- Evaluate the impact of tailored provision and programmes of study for students with SEND.
- Analyse attendance and exclusion data for students with SEND.

### 3.8 Roles and Responsibilities

#### Special Educational Needs Coordinator

In line with the recommendations in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015), the SENCO at each Academy will oversee the day- to-day operation of this policy in the following ways:

- Maintenance and analysis of whole-academy provision map for vulnerable learners.
- Identifying on this provision map a staged list of students with special educational needs – those in receipt of additional SEN support from the Academy's devolved budget, those in receipt of High Needs funding and those with Education Health and Care plans.
- Co-ordinating provision for students with special educational needs.
- Liaising with and advising teachers.
- Managing other staff involved in supporting vulnerable learners.
- Overseeing the records on all students with Special Educational Needs.
- Liaising with parents of students with SEN, in conjunction with class teachers.
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff.
- Implementing a programme of Annual Review for all students with an Education Health and Care Plan.
- Carrying out referral procedures to the Local Authority to request High Needs funding and/or an Education Health and Care Plan when it is suspected, on strong evidence arising from previous intervention (additional SEN support from devolved budget), that a student may have a special educational need which will require significant support.
- Overseeing the smooth running of transition arrangements for SEN students and transfer of information for Year 6 & 11 SEN students on the vulnerable learners' provision map.
- Monitoring the Academy's system for ensuring that any support plans, where it is agreed they will be useful for a student with special educational needs, have a high profile in the classroom and with students.

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- Evaluating regularly the impact and effectiveness of all additional interventions for all vulnerable learners (including those with special educational needs).
- Liaising sensitively with parents and families of students with SEND, keeping them informed of progress and listening to their views of progress.
- Attending area SENCO network meetings and training as appropriate.
- Liaising with the Academy's SEN Governor, keeping them informed of current issues regarding provision for vulnerable learners, including those with Special Educational Needs (nationally, locally and within the Academy).
- Liaising closely with a range of outside agencies to support vulnerable learners.

### **SEN Governance**

The Governing Body at each Academy will:

- Delegate a named governor to be responsible for SEND.
- Ensure that teachers in the Academy are aware of the importance of early identification and provision for students with SEND.
- Ensure that, where the SENCO has been informed by the local authority that a student has SEND, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them and that statutory processes are implemented.
- Do its best to ensure that inclusion and SEND resources are matched to need, and the necessary provision is made for any student with SEND.
- Work in partnership with other professionals in the Academy and the wider community and to coordinate provision, where necessary.
- Ensure that students with SEND are included fully in the life of the Academy and wider educational community and receive the necessary educational provision and resources.
- Arrange regular meetings with the SENCO and arrange attendance at relevant Governors' sub-committees in order to monitor the implementation and success of the SEND Policy.
- Ensure that parents and carers are notified that SEND provision is being made for their child and that progress on the implementation of the school's policy for SEND is reported to parents and carers.

### **3.9 Storing and Managing Information**

All student records are kept securely at all times. Paper records are kept in lockable storage areas with restricted access. Equally, electronic records have appropriate security. Access arrangements for student records ensure that confidentiality is maintained whilst equally enabling information to be shared lawfully and appropriately, and to be accessible for those authorised to see it.

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In line with the Limitation Act 1980 which allows that a claim can be made against an organisation by a minor for up to 7 years from their 18th birthday, the Academy is responsible for retaining student records until the student reaches the age of 25 years, unless they leave the Academy prior to statutory school leaving age. Any records are subsequently disposed of in accordance with the safe disposal of records guidelines.

For further information please see the Academy policy on Information Management.

### 3.10 Accessibility

The Alpha Academies Trust is committed to the principles within the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement in that we always strive to:

- Set suitable learning challenges for students with SEND.
- Respond to students' diverse and individual needs.
- Attempt to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for students with SEND.

Each Academy will:

- Modify, as necessary, the programmes of study to provide all students with relevant, appropriately challenging work at each key stage.
- Develop an increasingly personalised curriculum which supports the individual learning styles of students with SEND and caters for students with disabilities.
- Where appropriate, provide flexible programmes of study with an emphasis on personal pathways and opportunities for appropriate academic or preparation for adulthood programmes.
- Ensure that support is deployed effectively so that students with SEN and disabilities can make progress and participate fully in the life of the Academy, as independently as possible.
- Maintain high expectations that all students will have access to a broad, balanced but flexible curriculum, where any disapplication is fully in accordance with statutory regulations and are discussed with parents/carers and students.
- Map curriculum provision at student, cohort and academy level, to maximise achievement and ensure that curriculum provision is matched to need.
- Use assessment for learning and effective target setting as an integral part of the planning process.
- All students with SEND are provided with full access to the Academy's extra-curricular activities.

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There is an on-going programme of CPD to enable staff to gain an understanding of how to improve the delivery of written information to disabled students.

### 3.11 Dealing with Complaints

The Trust has well-established procedures for dealing with complaints from parents and carers.

In the event of a complaint relating to the provision for a student with a special educational need or disability they should be referred, in the first instance, to the SENCO of the Academy in question. In the unlikely event of the need to take the matter further, the Principal will deal with the complaint and refer it to the Governing Body if the issue remains unresolved.

The LA offers a SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). Further information can be found on the LA website.

Further details regarding our complaints procedures and policy can be found on our website.

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#### **4 Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed every 3 years and any recommendations for improvement will be made as required.

Approval

Approved by the Chief Executive Officer

Signed: *Simon French*

(Chief Executive Officer)

Approved by the Alpha Academies Trust Board

Signed: *Kate Townshend*

(Chair)

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024

For the purpose of this policy and unless otherwise indicated the term 'Academy' applies to all academies and establishments within the Alpha Academies Trust.

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