



Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Policy 2023

This Policy applies to all academies within the Link Academy Trust.

This policy was developed by the Link Academy Trust and pays due regard to;

- The SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, July 2015
- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2015 and associated regulations

Trustees responsible for SEND: Standards and Curriculum Committee

Executive Headteacher/CEO: Nicky Dunford

Inclusion Lead: Fran McLoughlin, Becky Humphreys

Academy Heads/SENDCos:	Academy	Academy Head	SBSL (Academy Based SEND Lead)	Fully Qualified SENDCo
		Bearnes	Daniel Turner	Becky Hawling
	Broadhempston	Jill Ryder	Rosina Kellman	Becky Humphreys
	Cheriton Bishop	Pete Halford		Catherine Haynes
	Diptford	Holly Edgington	Holly Edgington	Becky Humphreys
	Drakes	Pete Halford	Victoria Gillon	Vikki Gillon
	Harbertonford	Anne Burns	Jade Morgan	Jade Morgan
	Hennock		Sarah Luxton	Becky Humphreys/ Catherine Haynes
	Illington	Samantha McCarthy-Patmore	Samantha McCarthy-Patmore	Becky Humphreys
	Landscape	Jill Ryder	Rosina Kellman	Becky Humphreys
	Morchard Bishop	Sam Butler	Helen Dodge	Helen Dodge
	Moretonhampstead	Alex Waterman	Rosina Kellman	Alex Waterman
	Otterton	Anne Pelosi	Victoria Gillon	Victoria Gillon
	Sparkwell	Fran McLoughlin	Fran McLoughlin/	Fran McLoughlin

			Karen Hyams	
	Stoke Gabriel	Alice Eeles	Lija Lewsey	Alice Eeles
	Tedburn St Mary	Andy Keay	Adrian Fowle	Adrian Fowle
	Widcombe	Anthony Arnold	Anthony Arnold	Becky Humphreys
	Yeoford	Christian Martin		Catherine Haynes

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This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing boards and the SENDCo & staff of each academy and is subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Rationale

The Link Academy Trust will do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has special educational needs or disabilities. We will ensure that all staff in the academy are able to identify and provide for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to enable pupils with SEND to join in the activities of the academy.

Many children will have an additional need at some time in their school life, sometimes for a short time or sometimes long term and we will not view this as a deficit model. We provide all children with Quality First Teaching to ensure their individual needs are met. Quality First Teaching is that which is adapted to meet the needs of the majority of pupils. Some pupils will need something **additional to** and **different from** what is provided for the majority; this is special educational provision and we will use our best endeavours to ensure that provision is made for those who need it.

Teaching and supporting pupils with SEND are therefore a whole school responsibility requiring a whole school response. Meeting the needs of pupils with SEND requires partnership working between all those involved – the Local Authority (LA), Link Academy Trust, the academy, parents/carers, pupils, children’s services and all other agencies.

The staff and local board members/trustees of The Link Academy Trust will also work to ensure that all SEND pupils reach their full potential, are fully included within the school community and are able to make successful transfers between educational establishments. This policy aims to support all members of staff in providing positive whole school approaches through our Quality First Teaching pathway towards the learning, progress and achievement of SEND pupils.

This policy is in line with our teaching and learning policy, Disability Equality Scheme, Safeguarding policy and aims to support inclusion for all our children. The responsibility for the management of this policy falls to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO); the day-to-day operation of the policy is the responsibility of the Executive/Academy Heads, academy-based SEND leads (SBSL) or Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinators (SENDCo), supported by the Inclusion and Improvement Hub (IIH) and monitored by the Director of Inclusion. The Local Boards, Executive Academy Heads and the Academy Heads/SENDCo will work together closely to ensure that this policy is working effectively.

Aims

To provide the structure for a pupil-centred process that engages pupil, family, academy and other professionals in planning for and implementing high quality, needs led provision that is consistent across the academy. This is to ensure all of our pupils are able to access the same opportunities for learning and social development achieving maximum progress, fulfilling their potential and promoting their well-being.

Objectives

The SEND Policy of the Link Academy Trust reflects the principles of the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015). The aims of this Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy are to:

- Ensure the Equality Act 2010 duties for pupils with disabilities are met,
- To enable pupils with special educational needs to have their needs met,
- To take into account the views of the pupils with special educational needs,
- To facilitate full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education, including an appropriate curriculum for the foundation stage and the National Curriculum, for pupils with special educational needs,
- In conjunction with the Medical Policy, make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions and to have regard to statutory guidance supporting pupils at the academy with medical conditions,
- To implement the graduated approach to meeting the needs of pupils using the Assess, Plan, Do, Review process,
- Develop a culture of inclusion valuing high quality teaching for all learners, with teachers using a range of effective adaptive teaching methods,
- Employ a collaborative approach and genuine partnership with learners with a SEN or disability, their families, staff within school and other external agencies including those from Health and Social Care,
- Set appropriate individual learning outcomes based on prior achievement, high aspirations and the views of the learner and family,
- Share expertise and good practice across the academy and local learning community, taking latest research and evidence into consideration

- Make efficient and effective use of academy resources,
- Have regard to the Code of Practice (2015) for the identification, assessment, support and review of special educational needs,

Identifying and supporting Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

Definition of SEND

Pupils have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special education provision to be made for him/her namely provision ***which is additional to or different from*** that normally available in a differentiated curriculum. The Link Academy Trust regards pupils as having a Special Educational Need if they:

- a) Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of the same age, or;
- b) Have a disability which prevents or hinders him/her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions
- c) A child under compulsory age has special educational needs if they fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2015)

Pupils must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

The Link Academy Trust will have regard to the SEND Code of Practice 2015 when carrying out its duties towards all pupils with SEND and ensure that parents/carers are informed by the individual academies that SEND provision is being made for their child.

There may be times in a pupil's school career when they are identified as having a Special Educational Need. These pupils will be provided with intervention and/or support that is 'additional to or different from' the normal differentiated curriculum supported by Quality First Teaching. This may be on an ongoing basis or for a limited time. Many pupils with sensory and/or physical disabilities may require adaptations, made as reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Areas of Special Educational Need

Under the SEND Code of Practice 2015 pupils identified as having a special educational need (SEN) will be considered within one or more of the following categories of need:

- Cognition and Learning; for example, dyslexia and dyspraxia
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties; for example, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Communication and Interaction needs; for example, autistic spectrum disorder or speech and language difficulties including Developmental Language Disorder.
- Sensory and/or Physical needs; for example; visual impairments, hearing impairments, processing difficulties and epilepsy

- Moderate/severe/profound and multiple learning difficulties.

How we identify and support pupils with SEN

The progress made by all pupils is regularly monitored and reviewed. Initially, concerns registered by teachers, parents/carers or other agencies are addressed by appropriate differentiation within the classroom and a record is kept of strategies used on the provision map. This can be then used in later discussions if concerns persist.

All pupils' attainment and achievements are monitored by their teacher who is required to provide Quality First teaching – see appendix 1 (and *Ordinarily Available* Inclusive Provision), adapted for individual pupils. Where a pupil is making inadequate progress or falls behind their peers, additional support will be provided under the guidance of the class teacher with support from the academy based SENCo if;

- Progress is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Progress fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- Attainment does not close the gap between the child and their peers
- The attainment gap widens

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, social and emotional needs.

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

Where pupils continue to make inadequate progress despite support and Quality First Teaching, the class teacher will work with the academy's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) to assess if a pupil has a significant learning difficulty and agree appropriate support. Further support can be requested from the Improvement and Inclusion Hub (IIH).

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

The Graduated Response

Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, we will take action to support effective learning by removing barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This **SEND support** will take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. This is known as **the graduated approach – assess, plan, do, review**.

For pupils with low level special educational needs the cycle of **Assess, Plan, Do** and **Review** will fit into the regular termly assessment and planning cycle for all pupils. These are known as Pupil Progress Meetings. For those pupils with more complex needs or for whom a more frequent cycle needs to be employed additional meeting dates will be set and will include the

termly Pupil Progress Meetings. Support for schools is also available through the SENCo plan and review meetings and the termly SENCo hub meetings.

When a pupil has made sufficient progress in their area of need that they no longer require any provision that is **different from** or **additional to** that which is normally available as part of high quality and differentiated teaching they will no longer be seen as requiring SEN Support. At this point, through discussion and agreement with parents/carers the pupil will be removed from the schools SEN register.

Statutory Assessment of Needs (EHC)

Where, despite the academy having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities of the pupil and through working with the support of the IIH, the child has not made expected progress, the school or parents/carers should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment. The evidence gathered through regular review of the Graduated Response, Provision Maps, external professional reports and TAF (Team Around The Family) meetings will help the Local Authority (LA) in determining when this statutory assessment of needs is required.

Where a pupil has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the Local Authority must review the plan every twelve months as a minimum. Schools have a duty to co-operate so schools will hold annual review meetings on the behalf of Devon LA and complete the appropriate paperwork for this process.

Monitoring and Evaluation of SEND

Pupil progress is tracked with data drops termly. Where pupils are not making sufficient progress additional information is sought and appropriate action taken. Additional assessments may be carried out by the school based SENCo or with support from the IIH.

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

- Reviewing pupils' individual progress towards their goals each term
 - Seeking pupil voice regarding their views
- Reviewing the impact of interventions
- Monitoring by the SENDCo
- Using provision maps to measure progress
- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans

Additional training, advice and support will be provided to teaching staff where necessary in order to facilitate pupil progress and to meet pupil needs.

Supporting Pupils and Families

We value and accept the positive role and contribution parents/carers can make. We make every effort to work in full co-operation with parents/carers, recognising and respecting their roles and responsibilities. Parents/carers are encouraged to work with the academy and other professionals to ensure that their child's needs are identified properly and met as early as possible.

At the Link Academy Trust we endeavour to support parents/carers so that they are able to:

- Feel fully supported and taken seriously should they raise a concern about their child

- Recognise and fulfil their responsibilities and play an active and valued role in their child's education
- Understand procedures and documentation
- Make their views known about how their child is educated
- Have access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision-making process about special educational provision.

Parents/carers of a child with SEND support will have the opportunity to meet with the class teacher and/or the SENDCo throughout the year to review progress. The SENDCo is happy to meet with parents/carers, with prior arrangement, whenever possible.

Parents/carers are encouraged to seek help and advice from Independent Information Advice and Support services, including Devon Parent Partnership (DPP). These are able to provide impartial and independent advice, support and information on special educational needs and disabilities.

Parents/carers are also encouraged to visit the Devon County Council Local Offer website www.devon.gov.uk/send. This website provides valuable information about different agencies, services and resources for children, young people with SEND and their families in addition to academyresources and information.

Role of the Improvement and Inclusion Hub (IIH)

Link Academy Trust have set up and support the running of an inclusion hub that supports all Link Academies with support for SENCOs, headteachers and with individual pupils requiring more targeted or specialist support. There is a particular strength in support for pupils with SEMH needs through the woodland courses. For full details visit [Inclusion and Improvement Hub \(The Link\) - Home](#).

Partnership with External Agencies

The Trust is supported by a wide range of different agencies and teams. The individual academy SEND Information report details which agencies the academy has worked with in the last 12 months. This report can be found on the individual school websites and is up-dated annually.

Transition

We endeavour to make sure periods of change are carefully managed in a sensitive way to provide continuity of high-quality provision and reassurance to pupils and families. Our processes for transition will be adapted to suit the child's best interests and transition needs. This may include transition from pre-school to school or Year 6 to Year 7.

Adaptions to the Curriculum and Learning Environment

We make the following adaptations to ensure all pupils' needs are met:

- Adapting our curriculum to ensure all pupils are able to access it, for example, by flexible grouping, 1:1 work, use of visuals, content of the lesson, etc.
- Adapting our resources and staffing
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc.

- Adapting our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Special Educational Needs

- The Link Academy Trust Improvement and Inclusion Hub, SENDCO, SBSL, and other SLT members provide regular CPD to other staff in school in specific aspects of meeting the needs of pupils with SEND
- All staff have regular CPD to support them to meet the needs of all children. The progress of all pupils including those with SEND is a core aspect of the appraisal process and appraisal targets will look at how to develop staff skills in meeting individual pupil needs as necessary.
- Teaching assistants are engaged in an ongoing training whereby the role of the teaching assistant is developed.
- External trainers are brought in periodically to address more specialist training needs such as dealing with specific medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy) or to train staff in the use of specific interventions.
- Peer support and guidance is available daily for all staff in school and some of the best training development occurs through professional dialogue with colleagues looking at meeting the specific needs of a pupil.

Roles and Responsibilities

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a matter for the academy as a whole. In addition to the Local Board, CEO, IIH, Executive/Academy Head, SBSL and SENDCo, all members of staff have important responsibilities.

Board of Trustees:

The Board of Trustees has responsibility under the guidelines laid down in the SEND Code of Practice to:

- Ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENDCo for the academy who will achieve the National Award within 3 years of appointment

Local Board:

The Local Board endeavours to follow the guidelines as laid down in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) to:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at local board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND and disability provision within the academy and update the local board on this
- Work with the Academy Head and SENDCO to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the academy

Role of the Trust's Improvement and Inclusion Hub

The CEO and Executive/Academy Heads have responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the academy's work, including provision for children with special educational

needs. The IIH lead will keep the Local Boards fully informed on Special Educational Need issues. The Executive/Academy Heads will work closely with the Director of Inclusion, IIH lead, SBSL, SENDCo and the local board members with responsibility for SEND.

Academy Head / SENDCo:

In collaboration with the Director of Inclusion, IIH Lead and Local Board, the Executive/Academy Head / SENDCo/SBSL determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision with the ultimate aim of raising the achievement of pupils with SEND and ensuring our schools deliver best practice. All Academy Heads have an accountability/duty towards SEND within the Headteacher standards.

The principal responsibilities for the SENDCo/SBSL include:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEND policy
- Co-ordinating provision for SEND pupils and reporting on progress
- Advising on the graduated response to providing SEND support – Assess, Plan, Do, Review
- Advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- Monitoring relevant SEN CPD for all staff in collaboration with the Improvement and Inclusion Hub Manager
- Overseeing the records of all children with special educational needs and ensuring they are up to date and comply with Data Protection requirements.
- Liaising with parents/carers of children with special educational needs
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff
- Being a point of contact with external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- Liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals and independent or voluntary bodies
- Liaising with potential next providers of education to ensure a pupil and their parents/carers are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- Monitoring the impact of interventions provided for pupils with SEND
- To lead on the development of high quality SEND provision as an integral part of the school improvement plan
- Working with the IIH Lead, Executive/Academy Head and the Local Board to ensure that the academy meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements

All Teaching Staff:

Each teacher is responsible for:

- Delivering high quality teaching that benefits all children
- 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 how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENCO/SBSL to review each pupil's progress and outcomes and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy
- All teachers have an accountability/duty towards SEND within the Teacher Standards.

Pupils with medical needs:

- Pupils with medical needs will be provided with an Individual Health Care Plan, compiled in partnership with parents/carers and, if appropriate, the pupil themselves. See separate policy.
- Staff who administer medicine complete training and are approved by the school nurse as competent. All medicine administration procedures adhere to the Trust's Policy Supporting Pupils Medical Conditions in School & Administration of Medicines (2023) and DfE guidelines included within Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE) 2014

SEND Information Report

The academy will ensure that the SEND information is accessible on the individual academy's websites. Academies have a legal duty to publish information on their websites about the implementation of the policy for pupils with SEND. The information published will be updated annually and any changes to the information occurring during the year will be updated as soon as possible. For SEND reports please visit the individual schools' websites and search SEND report or email the academy to request a copy.

Monitoring and Accountability

Accessibility

The Trust is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and Accessibility legislation. It is fully accessible for wheelchair users as the individual academies are only on a ground floor level. All academies work hard to develop their accessibility and the schools' accessibility plan detailing how this is being developed can be accessed from the individual websites.

Storing and Managing Information

Pupils' SEND records will be kept in accordance to the DfE guidance contained in "Statutory Policies for Schools" outlined in the trust's Storing and Managing Information policy (January 2023) - available on the trust website

Responding to Complaints

In the first instance, parent/carer complaints about the provision or organisation of SEND are dealt with through the procedures outlined in the Trust's Complaints Policy. Parents are advised they may receive support from Devon Inclusion and Advice Service (DIAS). If there continues to be disagreement regarding SEND provision, the Local Authority should make arrangements that include the appointment of independent persons with a view to avoiding or resolving disagreements between the parents/carers and the school. This includes access to mediation before tribunal. Parents/carers have a right to appeal to a SEND tribunal at any stage.

This Policy will be reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee on an annual cycle and must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Reviewed and approved by Standards & Curriculum Committee: 25th January 2023

Reviewed and approved by Standards & Curriculum Committee: 10th October 2024

Next Review: Autumn 2024

