

Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Policy

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SEND Policy

Aims and Objectives of the policy:

Leigh Academies Trust's core vision and values, detailed on the Trust's website and in our Excellence Charter, underpin our unwavering commitment to eradicating disadvantage for all pupils. Our approach is aligned with the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), effective from November 2025, which includes a distinct and graded evaluation area for 'inclusion'.

Our Commitment to Inclusion and SEND

Inclusion is the "golden thread" that runs through all aspects of our work. We believe it is a whole-school responsibility to ensure that our academies are welcoming, supportive, and successful environments for everyone. This commitment is reflected in our dedication to pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), those who are disadvantaged, and those known to social care.

We are committed to:

- Providing outstanding leadership and governance, knowing that excellent leaders will prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable and ensure that inclusion is central to all decision-making. We also recognise the critical link between leadership, staff well-being, and effective inclusion. Our leaders are dedicated to supporting staff workload and providing the necessary resources for them to succeed.
- Providing an engaging and inclusive curriculum, designed to be accessible to all pupils, promoting both academic success and personal development.
- Ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their background or circumstance, make good progress. We strive to diminish the differences in attainment and well-being between different groups of pupils.
- Developing pupils' characters, ensuring they leave our schools with the desirable qualities and employable skills needed to be active future citizens. This commitment extends to our most complex pupils, guaranteeing they are prepared for life beyond the classroom.
- Fostering positive behaviour, confidence, and respect in all pupils. We understand that all pupils achieve their best in safe, supportive, and well-regulated environments.
- Recognising that pupils with SEND are being diagnosed with increasingly challenging needs. Therefore, we are committed to providing our staff with continuous high-quality professional development and support, enabling them to be passionate, lifelong learners of SEND. We understand that effective inclusion is only possible with a well-supported and knowledgeable staff body.

We are proud of our inclusive academies, many with specialist provisions, and our exceptional special schools, which provide outstanding education to our most vulnerable pupils. Across Leigh Academies Trust, we will continue to work together, utilising our broad expertise, to provide top-quality education for all our pupils.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is in full compliance with all relevant and current legal and statutory frameworks including:

- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years (2015)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- The School Admissions Code (DfE, September 2021),
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (2014)
- Part 3 Duties on Schools – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators;
- Schedule 1 regulation 51– Information to be included in the SEN information report;
- Schedule 2 regulation 53 – Information to be published by a local authority in its local offer;
- The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012;
- The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust and academy policies:

- Behaviour/Discipline Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
- Homework Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Accessibility Plan

SEND Information Report

In accordance with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015) each academy within Leigh Academies Trust produces a SEND Information Report, specific to their own academy.

The SEND Information Reports are reviewed and updated annually and are published on academy websites, for the academic year, by the end of September. All SEND Information Reports are reviewed by Trust Leadership each year for accuracy.

Definitions:

In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), Special Educational Needs refers to a child or young person with difficulties which range from mild degrees of learning difficulties to profound and multiple disabilities. Learning difficulties may be caused by hearing or visual impairment, physical disability or emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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

a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age,

or

b) 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 or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Children 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.

Special Educational Provision:

For children aged two or more, 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, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers.

Definitions of the Disability Discrimination Act:

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

Acronyms used in this policy:

- APDR - Assess, Plan, Do, Review. (Also known as The Graduated Approach)
- CPD - Continuing Professional Development
- EHCP - Education, Health and Care Plan
- LA - Local Authority
- LAT - Leigh Academies Trust
- LSA - Learning Support Assistant
- SEN - Special Educational Needs
- SENDCo - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator
- SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- SLT - Senior Leadership Team

Identifying special needs:

There are four key areas of Special Educational Needs outlined in the SEND Code of Practice:

- Cognition and Learning – e.g. moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyscalculia
- Communication and Interaction – e.g. speech and language needs and autism
- Sensory and Physical – e.g. physical disability, visual and hearing impairment
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health - e.g. attachment difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders, anxiety

The needs of young people should be identified by considering all of their needs, which will include not just the special educational needs of the pupil. This then allows us to personalise our educational offer to them. The following may impact on progress and attainment but are not SEND:

- Disability (the SEND Code of Practice outlines the ‘reasonable adjustment’ duty for all settings and schools provided under current Disability Equality legislation – these alone do not constitute SEND)
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Health and Welfare
- EAL (English as an additional language)

- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant
- Being a Looked After Child
- Being a child of a Serviceman/woman
- Behaviour.

Key Principles

SEND is a whole school responsibility requiring a holistic approach.

All pupils should receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

Staff should accurately identify any pupils with additional needs and make appropriate provision.

Teachers will make regular assessments of progress of pupils and identify those whose progress is a concern. This may include progress in areas other than academic attainment, for example, social or communication needs.

When deciding whether special educational provision is required, the process starts with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. Partnerships between home and school are important to ensure pupils and their families are treated with respect and have their views taken into account.

Staff should have opportunities to liaise with each other and appropriate external agencies in order to effectively meet the needs of pupils.

All staff working with pupils with SEND should be provided with appropriate levels of support and advice.

The needs of a pupil can and will change over time. It is the responsibility of all academy staff and additional agencies working with the pupil to respond to changing needs in order that the pupil may develop and meet their full potential.

At Leigh Academies Trust we recognise the negative impact that being identified as having SEND can potentially have on a child's potential future success (Support and Aspiration, a new approach to SEND, DfE, 2011). Therefore, before identifying a child as having SEND, academies will consider whether the child meets the following criteria, as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

The child:

- has an identified need that fits within the 4 broad areas of need
- is academically behind their peers
- has failed to make progress despite class based intervention and support
- requires 'additional to and different from' provision in order to make progress.

Roles and responsibilities

At Leigh Academies Trust, the responsibility for inclusion and special educational needs is shared across all levels, from the Trust Board to the classroom teacher. Our roles are clearly defined and directly linked to the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF), ensuring that inclusion is a "golden thread" running through our leadership, curriculum, and teaching.

The Trust Board and Community Boards (CBs) will:

- The Trust Board and CBs are directly accountable for the quality of SEND provision. They will monitor the effectiveness of the Trust-wide SEND policy, review data on outcomes for pupils with SEND, and challenge leaders to ensure continuous improvement.
- Governors and trustees will ensure that SEND is a core component of the academy's strategic plan and that all statutory duties are met.
- They will oversee the financial and resource management of SEND provision, ensuring that funding is allocated effectively to meet pupil needs.

The Principal will:

- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of pupils with SEND, fostering a whole-school culture and ethos of inclusion.
- Work with the SENDCo and the Trust's Inclusion Advisor to agree upon and progress strategic development priorities.
- Ensure that SEND is an integral part of all academy policies, practices, and strategic priorities.
- Ensure that "Every Leader is a leader of SEND" and that leadership of SEND is a key part of the senior leadership team structure.
- Ensure a robust, well-funded continuous professional development (CPD) offer is in place for all staff, directly linked to the priorities identified in the SEND review and strategic plans.
- Stay current on all national and local legislation, guidance, and initiatives to ensure compliance.

The Trust Inclusion Advisors will:

- Work collaboratively with academy leaders to review and refine SEND provision, ensuring a cohesive and effective approach across the Trust.
- Provide guidance on the new funding framework and support academies in securing and utilising resources to meet complex needs.
- Lead the development of an expert network of SENDCos and leaders, fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Develop and deliver high-quality training and support for all staff, building capacity and expertise in inclusive practices.
- Collect and analyse Trust-wide data to identify trends, celebrate successes, and target areas for improvement.

The SEN Coordinator (SENCo) will:

- Work collaboratively with all stakeholders to coordinate and manage the day-to-day provision for pupils with SEND.
- Provide guidance and support to colleagues in implementing the "Assess, Plan, Do, Review" cycle, ensuring interventions are effective and person-centred.
- Oversee the production of the SEN Information Report, the co-production of Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), and all annual reviews.
- Collect and analyse data relating to the progress, attendance, and exclusion rates of pupils with SEND, using this to inform strategic priorities.
- Ensure the views of parents, carers, and pupils with SEND are heard and actively inform decision-making.

Each Teacher is responsible for:

- As stated in the SEND Code of Practice, "Every Teacher is a teacher of SEND."
- Take full responsibility for the progress and development of every pupil in their class, including those with SEND. This is our first step in responding to pupils with SEND.
- Adapt teaching and the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of pupils with SEND. This might include providing longer processing times, pre-teaching key vocabulary, chunking texts, or using visual aids.
- Work closely with the SENCo and any additional adults to implement and review support and interventions.
- Set high academic and behavioural expectations for all pupils and ensure they receive the support needed to achieve them.
- Working with the SENDCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision
- Participate in ongoing SEND-focused professional development to continuously improve their inclusive practice.

High-Quality Teaching: The Core of Our Inclusive Practice

As our first step in responding to pupils with SEND, our focus is on high-quality teaching, which is the responsibility of every teacher. This approach directly aligns with the 'Curriculum and Teaching' evaluation area of the new Ofsted framework.

To ensure all pupils can access the curriculum and remove barriers to learning, our teachers and subject leaders are responsible for the following adaptations:

- Subject leaders ensure that curriculum plans are adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Class teachers then adapt these plans to meet the specific needs of individual pupils in their classes, ensuring all pupils can make progress.
- Teachers employ a range of strategies to make learning accessible, such as providing longer processing times, pre-teaching key vocabulary, chunking texts, and using accessibility features on Chromebooks to read instructions aloud.

- We strategically adapt our resources and deploy our staff, including Learning Support Assistants, to provide targeted support. This may include small-group or one-to-one interventions to focus on key skills.
- All staff are equipped with a deep knowledge and understanding of our pupils' additional needs. This shared information informs the 'every day, every lesson' adaptations required for pupils to maximise their learning.
- We ensure pupils have access to recommended aids and accommodations, such as laptops, visual timetables, larger fonts, and other specialist equipment, as required.

Working in partnership with pupils and families:

The Trust recognises the importance of working collaboratively with children and their families to ensure provision for pupils with SEND meets their needs. Academies ensure that they meet with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice (2015) by offering parents termly meetings to engage in the co-production of pupil plans. During these discussions the views and aspirations of the pupil and their families will be gathered, and these views will contribute to the provision planning for the pupil to ensure shared ambitions are met.

In addition to the statutory meetings, academies will each provide additional opportunities for pupils and their families to liaise with academy staff on SEND. Further information on these opportunities are detailed within the academy's SEND Information Report.

Supporting pupils with medical conditions:

The Trust maintains a separate policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions. This policy is available on all academy websites.

Monitoring and Evaluation of SEND provision

Leigh Academies Trust's approach to monitoring and evaluating SEND provision is data-led and pupil-centred. We use robust, evidence-based practices to ensure that every pupil with SEND receives the support they need to make excellent progress, both academically and in their personal development. This process aligns with Ofsted's focus on evidence-based practice and is central to our commitment to a strong curriculum and a culture of continuous improvement.

The Graduated Approach: A Cycle of Continuous Improvement

We follow the Graduated Approach as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice (2015), which uses a cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review to continuously improve pupil support.

Assess: We use regular, data-led assessments to identify and track pupil progress. This information is closely monitored by the academy's Senior Leadership Team. When a pupil isn't making expected progress, academy staff, including the SENCo, analyse this data to understand the reasons and determine if there are any special educational needs. The views of parents, pupils, and external professionals, such as Educational Psychologists, are also highly valued and contribute to this assessment.

Plan: Once a need has been identified, the teacher and SENCo will collaboratively create a plan outlining the specific, evidence-based interventions to be implemented. This plan will clearly detail the expected impact on both academic progress and personal development outcomes. This process is co-produced with the pupil and their parents, ensuring all staff are fully aware of the plan and their role in its delivery.

Do: The class teacher is responsible for the daily implementation of the plan. The teacher works closely with support staff and specialists to deliver the interventions and monitor the pupil's engagement and progress. The SENCo provides ongoing guidance and support to the teacher to ensure the plan is effective.

Review: The impact of the plan is reviewed each term by the teacher, SENCo, parent, and pupil. We go beyond simply reviewing progress; we collect and analyse data on the effectiveness of specific interventions, adjusting or stopping those that are not working. This data directly informs the planning of the next steps.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Provision

The effectiveness of our SEND provision is evaluated through a multi-faceted approach that looks at both academic outcomes and pupil well-being:

- We regularly review each pupil's individual progress and attainment to ensure they are making the gains they should be.
- We systematically review the impact of our evidence-based interventions in line with our provision mapping, ensuring that resources are being used effectively to meet specific, identified needs.
- We actively use feedback from pupils and parents to gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of our provision and ensure we are meeting their needs.
- We explicitly monitor the well-being, attendance, and behaviour of pupils with SEND. We analyse this data to identify any trends and ensure our provision is supporting their personal development and closing any gaps in attainment.
- The SENCo, Senior Leadership Team, and Principal conduct regular monitoring activities, including learning walks and data analysis, to oversee the quality of SEND provision.
- We hold annual reviews for pupils with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans to ensure their provision continues to meet their needs.
- Trust and academy leaders use Curriculum Development Reviews to monitor the support given to vulnerable pupils, ensuring our curriculum is truly inclusive.

Training and resources

Leigh Academies Trust prioritises the training and development of its staff and provides a robust training programme for all within the Trust on a range of teaching and learning priorities, including SEND. In addition, each academy creates their own annual CPD programme, which includes training for staff on meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.

The Trust is committed to providing high quality resources for all pupils, including those with SEND. These resources include digital engagement tools, well resourced classrooms and research-proven

interventions. In addition the Trust commissions additional support for pupils with SEND including Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists.

Reviewing the policy

This policy was developed in consultation with all the Trust's Academies and members of the Trust Board. It will be reviewed at least annually.

Dealing with complaints

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints within the Trust are used for complaints about provision made for SEND. Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the class or subject teacher, SENDCO or Head of Pastoral Care. Principals should meet with parents to resolve issues before a formal complaint is made to the Trust. Further details on the academies approach to complaints regarding SEND can be found within their SEND Information Report.

If the complaint is not resolved after it has been considered by the Trust, then a disagreement-resolution service or mediation service can be contracted. If it remains unresolved after this, the complainant can appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), if the case refers to disability discrimination, or to the Secretary of State for all other cases.

There are some circumstances, usually for children who have an EHCP, in which there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the local authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by the Academy.

Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Inclusion Advisors. This policy will next be reviewed in October 2026.

Note: *For Leigh Academy Milestone, please view their SEND policies on their academy website.