# SEND Policy

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| **Policy Owner:** | **The Mercian Trust**<br>AIMS Committee |
| **Approved / Ratified:** | |
| **Date Adopted:** | September 2025 |
| **Review Dates:** | September 2026 |

Increasing Opportunities

Improving Outcomes

THE MERCIAN TRUST

**Document Version Control and Track Changes Log**

| Version | Date | Description of changes and person responsible |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | September 25 | Section 8 amended to include Mainstream, Specialist Academies and Alternative Provision to the policy. |
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## 1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 "Trust" – this refers to the multi-academy trust (MAT).

1.2 "Board of Trustees" – this refers to the MAT Board of Trustees, who have ultimate responsibility for governance.

1.3 "Local Governing Body" – this refers to the local governing body, which has delegated powers from the Board of Trustees in relation to governance for their academy. The members of the local governing body are the "local governors".

1.4 "Management Board" – this refers to the management board, which also has delegated powers from the Board of Trustees in relation to governance for their academy. Management Boards are imposed for a time-limited period, where a local governing body has failed to support and challenge academy leaders effectively. Management Boards are chaired by a member of the Group's Executive Board.

1.5 "Academy" – this refers to the individual academy.

1.6 "We/Us" – this refers to all employees and stakeholders within the MAT.

1.7 "Department for Education" – this refers to the Government's Department for Education.

1.8 "Local Authority" – this refers to the academy's local authority, based on its location within England. This may be a county, unitary authority, metropolitan borough or London borough.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This policy has been updated following changes to the law and statutory guidance from September 2014 and to reflect the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years* (July 2014). It sets our vision and principles for children and young people with SEND[1].

It also sets out our expectations for all our academies and those regarding joint working with parents, local authorities and our health and social care partners. These expectations will ensure we are compliant with both the letter and spirit of the SEND reforms and serve to improve outcomes for young people. Finally, there is an outline of our improvement model and the support we make available to all our academies.

## 3. VISION

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children in our academies. We aim *to provide outstanding education to all children and young* people. We are fully inclusive in our provision in terms of social background, ability, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexuality. We strive to ensure access for all to educational excellence in preparing young people for their futures, seeking to continually improve levels of attainment and progress for all and secure the highest levels of achievement appropriate to the individual learner.

[1] *The abbreviations SEND and SEN are used interchangeably as in the Code of Practice. The D refers to children and young people who have disabilities. They may or may not have special educational needs. There are no clear guidelines regarding when to use one or the other. Our policy is to use them consistently in line with DfE usage.*

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

- We shall ensure that all our academies have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person with SEND and the child's parents/carers.
- We shall work closely with and support the local authorities in which our academies are located to assist them in fulfilling their obligations under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and its associated guidance.
- We shall ensure that each of our academies has procedures in place which allow them to fulfill both their statutory duties and support the wider vision and ethos contained in the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015).

All academies will operate within the law:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010.

All academies will follow the statutory guidance in full:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (July 2014)
- Transition to a new 0-25 special educational needs and disability system (August 2014).

## 5. OUR MODEL

We will operate a model in all our academies for improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The model is based on five principles:

- prioritising leadership of SEND
- effectively tracking progress
- successfully impacting on progress through effective interventions
- improving provision through the development of partnerships.
- reducing pupil referral to assessment timescales to ensure earlier and accurate identification of need and plan effective interventions.

## 6. DEFINITION OF SEND

- A child or young person has SEN 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 most 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 or mainstream post-16 institutions.

The Equality Act (2010) brought together a range of previous acts into a single act, aiming to harmonise and strengthen discrimination law and support progress on equality.

Schools have a legal responsibility:

• To make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage

• To not treat disabled pupils 'less favourably'

Disability discrimination is less favourable treatment than that received by someone else for a reason related to the pupil's disability when it cannot be justified

## 7. WORKING ACROSS EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE

We will work jointly with local authority, health and social care bodies and professionals to secure effective outcomes for young people in our academies.

Each academy will make reasonable adjustments for disabled young people (including the provision of auxiliary aids and services) and will make arrangements to support those with medical conditions.

We shall provide to our academies, multi-disciplinary (MDT) clinical therapy services to improve outcomes for young people with SEND. These services may include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, education psychology, mental health services, other health and other therapeutic interventions.

## 8. PROCEDURES: MAINSTREAM, ALTERNATIVE AND SPECIALIST PROVISIONS

Mainstream and Alternative Provisions (AP) Academies will screen learners on entry by assessing a young person's skills and attainment and build on information from previous settings if available.

As part of the screening process mainstream and AP academies will consider any evidence that the child or young person may have a disability under the Equality Act (2010) and make reasonable adjustments for them. This includes adhering to The Joint Council for Qualifications annually updated regulations and guidance regarding Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations (AARASC). Each provision has a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses of study, submit applications for reasonable adjustments to the relevant organisations and make reasonable adjustments to the services and education provided to SEND children and young people.

Mainstream and AP Academies will have measures in place to accurately identify young people with SEN and will place such pupils on 'SEN Support' in consultation with their parents/carers. Only pupils that have undergone an assessment of need will be placed, where necessary, on the school SEN register. Academies will follow all necessary procedures regarding the Graduated Response and pupil review requirements as required by The SEND Code of Practice (2014) chapters 6.44 and 6.56.

After consultation with a parent/carer and young person we shall request the relevant local authority to initiate a needs-based assessment (for an EHCP) for any child or young person for whom an Academy believes this is necessary.

For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), Academies will ensure that they meet all the requirements and individual elements of an EHCP.

In mainstream and AP academies we will ensure that young people with SEN engage in the activities of the Academy alongside those who do not have SEN unless a

particular provision is agreed with the parents/carers and the young person is in place.

Mainstream and AP Academies will designate a qualified teacher to be responsible for coordinating the SEN provision (the "SENCo"), who will have or be working towards attaining the National Professional Qualification for SEN Mainstream and AP Academies will inform parents/carers when they are making special educational provision for their child and then work in partnership with them to establish the support needed and secure best outcomes, taking full account of their views and wishes.

Our Specialist Academies are an integral part of the MAT community of schools. They are designed to support children and young people with substantial physical and or learning impairments, ensuring that they can access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.

All pupils in our specialist Academies will have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place that will detail the necessary strategies and provision to support the learner.

Special Schools do not have an appointed SENCo as part of their staffs, the responsibility for arranging the provision for a learner is the responsibility of the Head Teacher. As part of receiving a new pupil the Academy will consider all aspects of the Equality Act (2010) as they apply to schools and Academies and make reasonable adjustments for them.

All Academies will prepare an SEN Information Report in accordance with paragraphs 6.79 onwards of the SEN Code of Practice and publish it on their website. The SEN Information Report will set out details regarding the implementation of our SEND Policy in the academy.

All Academies will prepare a SEND strategy and evaluation report that will set out details regarding SEND cohort data and approaches to teaching SEND pupils. This document will be reviewed termly and be available to the Director for Special Educational Needs.

All Academies will designate a member (or sub-committee) of the local delegated governing body or management board to take oversight of the academy's arrangements for SEN and disability.

All Academies will ensure that all staff accept that SEN is their responsibility, and that class and subject teachers take full responsibility for the progress of children with SEN whom they teach.

All Academies will ensure that the quality of teaching for pupils with SEN and the progress made by those pupils are a core part of performance management arrangements.

All Class and subject teachers, supported by the SENCo (except in Specialist Academies) and senior leadership team will make regular assessments of the progress for all pupils and identify appropriate actions, particularly for those making less than expected progress, given their age and prior attainment.

For all young people receiving SEN support, all academies will arrange for a member of the academy learning support department to communicate regularly with parents/carers to review progress and discuss support.

## 9. SUPPORTING OUR ACADEMIES

We shall offer a SEND service to all our academies to advise and support them in the implementation of the SEND statutory compliance and Policy and in the improvement of outcomes for all children and young people with SEND. The Director for SEND will

also all support SENCo's in a range of activities. The service offer will include:

- SEND audits and reviews of provision
- Compliance advice and guidance for Access Arrangements
- Compliance advice with statutory regulations
- support for identification and intervention
- staff professional development
- SEND professional learning community meetings to inform and share best practice
- specialist assessments
- fostering of partnership working and the brokering of support services.
- pre-Ofsted preparation

## 10. CLINICAL PROVISION

We shall offer a clinical provision, led by the Trust Multi-Disciplinary Clinical Team (MDT) to all our academies for the academic years 2025-2026. SEND students may receive such provision as identified through a process of a vulnerability 'risk' assessment undertaken by schools. The provision may include,

- Direct clinical intervention that may include screening/assessment of need, provision of therapies, treatment plans, referral to external agencies, such as the NHS and GP services,
- Staff/parent advice and guidance (signposting)
- Staff training
- Clinical reviews and evaluations