



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
OA – Thurrock

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Aims and objectives

Our SEND policy aims to:

- Set out how our academy will support and make provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEND
- Demonstrate how Olive Academies (OA) will fully implement national legislation and guidance regarding pupils with SEND.

In line with our values, our objectives are to:

- Achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils with SEND and disabilities
- Ensure early identification of pupils with SEND
- Personalise provision for those pupils
- Monitor pupil progress in order to maintain and develop the right provision for individuals
- Ensure that pupils have access to a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum

- Monitor pupil progress, ensuring that all pupils make good progress commensurate with their ability
- Communicate with pupils with SEND and their parents / carers so that they are fully involved in discussions, decisions, support and provision for the pupil.
- Help pupils with SEND make a successful transition into adulthood

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the statutory guidance [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#) and [working together to improve school attendance](#).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- [Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEN and disabilities
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEND coordinators (SENDCOs) and the SEND information report
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out schools' duties to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out schools' responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes those with a disability) and those who don't share it
- The [academy trust governance guide](#) which sets out trustees' responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- The [School Admissions Code](#), which sets out schools' obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and their duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special education needs

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

OA strives to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all pupils, no matter what their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced, and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all pupils the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

- We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the academy/school environment to make sure that pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of academy/school life.

Definitions

Special educational needs

A pupil has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a **learning difficulty or disability** if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or
- 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

Special educational provision is an educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that is made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

Disability

Pupils are considered to have a **disability** if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

All academies/schools in our trust will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

The 4 areas of need

The needs of pupils with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Pupils can have needs that cut across more than 1 area, and their needs may change over time.

Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the pupil's particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

Area of Need	
Communication and interaction	Pupils with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or not understand or use the social rules of communication. Pupils who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.

Cognition and learning	Pupils with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including: • Specific learning difficulties, which impact 1 or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Moderate learning difficulties • Severe learning difficulties • Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where pupils are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment
Social, emotional and mental health	These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Pupils may have: • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder • Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder • Suffered adverse childhood experiences These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated.
Sensory and/or physical	Pupils with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. Pupils may have: • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment These pupils may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust SEND Lead

The Trust SEND Lead plays a pivotal role in ensuring high-quality, inclusive education for all pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This role provides strategic leadership, oversight,

and support to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and the delivery of effective SEND provision across the trust.

The Trust SEND leader will provide support by:

- Developing and implementing a Trust-wide SEND strategy aligned with the SEND Code of Practice (2014) and relevant legislation.
- Leading the development, review, and implementation of the Trust SEND Policy.
- Promoting a culture of inclusion and high expectations for all pupils with SEND.
- Providing professional guidance and support to school/academy-based SENDCos.
- Facilitating regular SEND network meetings to share best practices and updates.
- Coordinating and delivering training and CPD opportunities for staff on SEND-related topics.
- Monitoring and evaluating the quality and impact of SEND provision across all Trust academy/schools.
- Conducting SEND audits and support academy/schools in action planning for improvement.
- Ensuring compliance with statutory duties, including Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) processes and annual reviews.
- Acting as the key liaison between the Trust and external agencies, including local authorities and health services.
- Ensuring effective communication with parents/carers and promoting the voice of pupils with SEND.
- Reporting regularly to the Trust Board and senior leadership on SEND performance, priorities, and outcomes.
- Overseeing the effective use of SEND funding, including notional SEND budgets and high-needs funding.
- Ensuring accurate and consistent SEND data collection and reporting across the Trust.
- Supporting academies in preparing for Ofsted inspections and local authority reviews related to SEND.

The Academy SENDCO

The SENDCO will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEN and then liaise with them about the pupil's needs and any provision made
- Work in collaboration with leaders, Academy Advisory Board (AAB) members and trustees to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the academy
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that pupils with SEN receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching

- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support and differentiated teaching methods appropriate for individual pupils
- Advise on the deployment of the academy's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA) and its support services, and work with external agencies to make sure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the pupil and their parents/carers are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned
- When a pupil moves to a different academy or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a pupil's SEN and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, academy or institution, in a timely manner
- Work with leaders and the board of trustees to make sure that the academy meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Make sure the academy keeps its records of all pupils with SEND up to date and accurate
- With the Head of Academy, monitor SEND provision to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development
- With the Head of Academy and the Executive Headteacher regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the academy offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- Prepare and review information for inclusion in the academy's SEND information report and any updates to this policy
- With the Head of Academy, executive headteacher, Data Leader, trust SEND leader and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the academy's identification of SEND, both within the academy and in comparison, with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

Board of trustees

The Olive Academies **Board of Trustees** has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all policies and procedures in relation to SEND are in place and implemented appropriately and with due regard to the needs of each pupil.

The **Academy Advisory Board** (AAB) reviews progress and provision for pupils with SEND and supports and challenges implementation of SEND policy and performance of SEND students.

The SEND trustee and AAB members will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at board and AAB meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within their academy and update the board on this

- Work with the executive headteacher, head of academy, SENDCO and Trust SEND Lead to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the academy

The Executive Headteacher and The Head of Academy

The Executive Headteacher and the Head of academy will work with the SENDCO, SEND Leader for the trust, SEND trustee and AAB member to:

- Determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the academy
- Make sure the academy meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for pupils with SEND in the academy, and their progress
- Have responsibility for monitoring the academy's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual pupils
- Make sure that the SENCO has enough time to carry out their duties
- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of pupils on the SEND register
- Advise the LA when a pupil needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review
- Monitor and identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development
- Regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the academy offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- Identify any patterns in the academy's identification of SEND, both within the academy and in comparison, with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is differentiated to meet pupil needs through a graduated approach
- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any academy staff or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the SEN information report
- Communicating with parents/carers regularly to:

- Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
- Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
- Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the academy
- Listen to the parents'/carers' concerns and agree their aspirations for the pupil.

Parents or carers

Parents or carers should inform the academy if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

Parents or carers of a pupil on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the pupil's SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. They will be:

- Invited to half termly meetings to review the provision that is in place for their child
- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEN support outside academy and any changes in the pupil's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with academy staff, agree their aspirations for the pupil
- Given an annual report on the pupil's progress

The academy will take into account the views of the parents or carers in any decisions made about the pupil.

The pupil

Pupils will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the pupil:

- Explaining what their strengths and difficulties are
- Contributing to setting targets or outcomes
- Attending review meetings
- Giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions

The pupil's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

Our Approach to SEND Support

Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs

Staff will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the academy. This will build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. They will also

consider any evidence that the pupil may have a disability and if so, what reasonable adjustments the academy may need to make.

Class teachers will regularly assess the progress for all pupils and identify those whose progress:

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

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 differentiated high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve, the teacher will raise the issue with the SENDCO 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.

Potential short-term causes of impact on behaviour or performance will be considered, such as bullying or bereavement. Staff will also take particular care in identifying and assessing SEN for pupils whose first language is not English.

When deciding whether the pupil needs special educational provision, academy 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/carers. They will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether the academy can provide it by adapting its core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

If a pupil is joining the academy, and:

- Their previous setting has already identified that they have SEN
- They are known to external agencies
- They have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

then the academy will work in a multi-agency way to make sure it gets relevant information before the pupil starts at the academy, so support can be put in place as early as possible.

Consulting and involving pupils and parents/carers

Olive Academies will put the pupil and their parents/carers at the heart of all decisions made about special educational provision.

When aiming to identify whether a pupil needs special education provision, an early discussion with the pupil and their parents/carers. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty
- We take into account any concerns the parents/carers have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

Notes of these early discussions will be added to the pupil's record and given to their parents/carers.

We will formally notify parents/carers when it is decided that a pupil will receive special educational provision.

The graduated approach to SEND support

Once a pupil has been identified as having SEND, OA will endeavour to take action to remove or overcome barriers to learning by putting effective special educational provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

- Assess
- Plan
- Do
- Review

Levels of Support

Academy-based SEN support

Pupils receiving SEN support will be placed on the SEND register. These pupils have needs that can be met by the academy through the graduated approach. Where the pupil's needs cannot be adequately met with in-house expertise, staff will consider involving an external specialist as soon as possible.

The provision for these pupils is funded through the academy's notional SEND budget.

On the census these pupils will be marked with the code K.

Education, health and care plan (EHCP)

Pupils who need more support than is available through the academy's academy-based SEN provision may be entitled to an EHCP. The plan is a legal document that describes the needs of the pupil, the provision that will be put in place, and the outcomes sought.

On the census these pupils will be marked with the code E.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of SEN Provision

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

- Getting feedback from the pupil and their parents/carers
- Tracking pupils' progress, including by using provision maps
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEN support
- Using pupil questionnaires

- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans
- Monitoring by the SENDCO
- Monitoring by the trustee for SEND and the AAB member responsible for SEND.

SEND Information Report

Every academy in the trust publishes a SEND information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the academy.

The information report will be updated annually and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains.

The cycle will be evaluated, the effectiveness of the support and interventions, and their impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed.

This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents/carers and pupils
- The level of progress the pupil has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the pupil

The report will be published on the website at the end of March.

Attendance

Many pupils with SEND face complex barriers to attendance. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as it is for any other pupil. However, they may need additional support.

Our approach to supporting pupils who are absent from academy due to their SEND is set out in our attendance policy.

Safeguarding

We recognise that pupils with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers and additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group.

For more details of pastoral support, we offer pupils with SEND, and the support we provide to help pupils overcome any communication barriers they face, see our safeguarding/child protection policy.

Expertise and Training of Staff

Training will regularly be provided to the teaching and support staff. The head of academy and the SENCOs will continuously monitor to identify any staff in their academy who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development.

Links with External Professional Agencies

The trust recognises that we won't be able to meet all the needs of every pupil. Whenever necessary, our academies will work within resources to gain support from external services such as:

- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- General practitioners or pediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services

Admission and Accessibility Arrangements

In accordance with statutory guidance and the local authority's Fair Access Protocol (FAP), our academies work collaboratively with the Fair Access Inclusion Panel (FAIP) to ensure that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), who require Alternative Provision (AP), are placed in appropriate educational settings without delay.

The FAIP facilitates equitable access to education for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream school due to complex needs, exclusions, or other vulnerabilities. All decisions regarding placement into AP are made with consideration of the child's individual needs, safeguarding requirements, and the capacity of available provisions.

We are committed to:

- Supporting the local authority in identifying suitable AP placements.
- Ensuring that pupils with SEND are not disadvantaged in the admissions process.
- Working in partnership with families, professionals, and AP providers to promote continuity of education and positive outcomes.
- Our academy complies with the expectations of the Fair Access Protocol and contributes to the shared responsibility of placing pupils fairly and inclusively across the local area.

Accessibility arrangements

OA's Accessibility Strategy has been produced in response to, and in accordance with, the Equality Act (2010). Our aims are to:

- Improve and maintain access to the physical environment
- Improve access to information for pupils
- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability

Olive Academies-Thurrock accessibility plan can be found [here](#) where you will find information about how we ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to the curriculum and the alternative provision opportunities that are provided.

Complaints About SEND Provision

Where parents/carers have concerns about the SEND provision at an academy/ school in our trust, they should first raise their concerns informally with the class teacher. We will try to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve their concerns, parents/carers are welcome to submit their complaint formally.

Formal complaints about SEND provision in any of our academies/schools should be made to the SENCO in the first instance. They will be handled in line with the trust's complaints policy [insert link to complaints policy which can be found on the trust/ academy website].

If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the academy/ school's response, they can escalate the complaint. In some circumstances, this right also applies to the pupil themselves.

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEN Code of Practice](#).

To find out about disagreement resolution and mediation services in our local area, please see:

Thurrock's SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), which is provided by the Parent Advisory Team Thurrock (PATT):

- **Phone:** 07702 127 252
- **Email:** info@patt.org.uk
- **Website:** www.patt.org.uk
- **Address:**
PATT SENDIASS
51 Lodge Lane
Grays
RM17 5RZ
- **Text Service:** You can send a text message to the phone number above to request a call back

Monitoring arrangements

This policy and information report will be updated by OA central and the SENDCO and reviewed by Education Performance and Standards Committee annually. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

6. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents [delete those that aren't relevant and add others specific to your trust, as well as links to web pages where each policy can be found, if available]:

- SEN information report
- The local offer
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Attendance policy
- Safeguarding / child protection policy
- Complaints policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions