

COGNITA



DOWNSEND
SCHOOL

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

September 2023-26

1. Introduction

The School is committed to the equal treatment of all pupils including those with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, collectively (SEND). This policy works towards eliminating disadvantages for such pupils by:

- using best endeavours to ensure that all pupils (including those with medical conditions) get the support needed in order to access the School's educational provision;
- not treating disabled pupils less favourably than their peers;
- making reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage in matters of admission and education;
- ensuring that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities engage as fully as practicable in the activities of school alongside pupils who do not have SEN and disabilities; and
- ensuring parents are informed when special educational provision is made for their child and are kept up to date as to their child's progress and development.

1.1. This policy has regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010;
- The Children and Families Act 2014;
- SEN and Disability Code of Practice, 0-25 years 2014 (SEND Code 2015) (DFE) (the **Code of Practice**); and
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR)

1.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Applications and Admissions Policy, and Accessibility Plan.

1.3. This policy is available on the School website and also on request from the School Office and can be made available in large print or other accessible format, if required.

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

2.1. 'A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.' (Code of Practice)

2.2. In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, a child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age;
- have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or early years providers;
- are under five years old and would be likely to have such difficulties if special educational provision were not made for them.

The expression 'learning difficulty' covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as an autistic spectrum condition, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The expression may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing.

Children will 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.

- 2.3. Children and young people who have SEN may also 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’. Long term means that it will have lasted or be likely to last for 12 months or more.
- 2.4. ‘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.’ (Code of Practice)

3. Principles underlying Practice

- 3.1. The Code of Practice describes the principles that should be observed by all professionals working with children who have SEN and/or disabilities. The school aims to:
 - Focus on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning;
 - Identify early the special educational needs of children;
 - Make high quality provision to meet the needs of children and to ensure equality of opportunity;
 - Take into account the views of children and their families;
 - Enable children and their parents to participate in decision-making;
 - Collaborate with partners in education, health and social care where appropriate;
 - Ensure that appropriate resources are available for pupils with temporary or long-term special needs; and
 - Provide support for teachers to meet the learning needs of all pupils, making reasonable adjustment to provision to meet such needs.
- 3.2. The School takes a positive and professional whole-school approach to pupils with SEND.
- 3.3. Pupils with SEND are the shared responsibility of all staff. All staff are expected to have an understanding and awareness of the impact of specific learning profiles on teaching and learning.
- 3.4. To ensure the needs of pupils with SEND are addressed, the Learning Support Team will:
 - Identify and assess pupils with SEND, and where necessary, refer for further assessment by other professionals such as educational psychologists, specialist teachers and therapists;
 - Develop and monitor support measures where a need is identified;
 - Develop and update the SEND Register and ensure that these are circulated amongst teaching staff;
 - Work in close liaison with teaching staff to ensure confidential communication on learning needs and progress of pupils;
 - Teach pupils according to their specific needs, recognising their particular strengths and learning needs to promote achievement of their academic potential;
 - Communicate effectively with parents/guardians on the learning needs of pupils and provide a Learning Plan for those pupils on the Learning Support Register and ensure that these are circulated to the staff of specific pupils; and
 - Collate evidence to support applications for additional funding and access arrangements in examinations.

4. Identifying Special Educational Needs

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

- 4.1. Early identification of pupils' needs is the key to unlocking the potential of pupils who may have special educational needs. We adopt a graduated approach to ensure that pupils who do not develop age-appropriate knowledge and skills, or who fall behind their peers, are identified as early as possible.
- 4.2. In attempts to understand the learning needs of pupils, we apply the four broad categories of need as set out in the SEN and Disability Code of Practice:

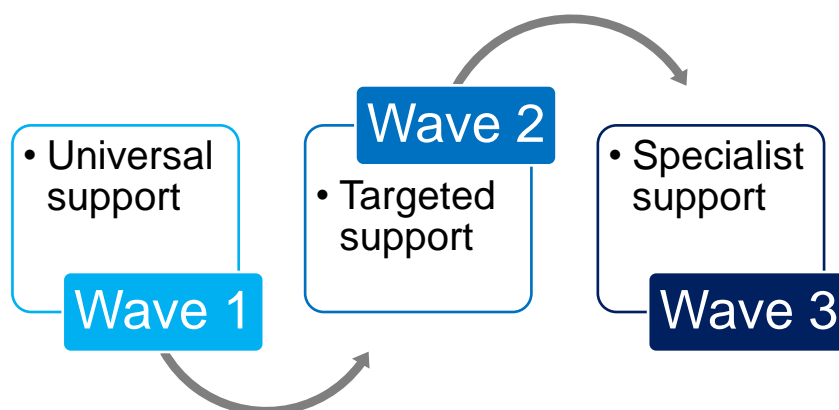
Communication and interaction needs	Cognition and learning needs	Social, emotional and mental health needs	Sensory and/or physical needs
Pupils who experience difficulty with speech, language and communication.	Pupils who learn at a slower pace than their peers, or who have difficulties acquiring skills in a specific area such as literacy. This includes students with moderate learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties, requiring support in all areas of the curriculum and participation in school life in general.	Pupils' needs may be manifested in different ways, such as becoming withdrawn or displaying challenging behaviour. These may include being disruptive or self-harming. Pupils who have difficulty paying attention or forming attachments with adults also fall into this category.	Pupils who require special educational provision because they have a disability that prevents them from accessing the educational facilities that are generally available.

5. Early Years

- 5.1. A Little Downsend policy exists which applies to children in the Early Years. The person with responsibility for SEND in the Early Years is Kirsty Buckland

6. Categorisation of Students

- 6.1. We use a simple categorisation of pupils which helps provide a consistent and understood language:



Wave 1 Universal Support	Wave 2 Targeted Support	Wave 3 Specialist Support
<p>It is our firm belief that pupils' needs are best met in the classroom and that, therefore, every teacher is responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils they teach, including those with SEND. At this universal level, we train teachers to deliver quality first teaching, differentiated for individual pupils. We review the progress of all pupils at least three times per year and make rapid adjustments to support strategies and, where necessary, teachers' understanding of the needs of individual pupils they teach. In addition, we talk to students and their parents to gain as full an understanding of their learning needs as possible.</p>	<p>We provide targeted support when we consider it appropriate to make additional short term special educational provision to remove or reduce any obstacle to a pupil's learning, or to help them catch up when termly data analysis shows they have fallen behind their peers. Such specific, targeted one to one or small group interventions may be run outside the classroom, and limited to a number of weeks to minimise disruption to the regular curriculum.</p>	<p>We provide specialist support when we consider it necessary to seek specialist advice and/or regular long-term support from a specialist professional outside the academy in order to plan for the best possible learning outcomes for those pupils who fail to make progress in spite of high-quality teaching and targeted intervention. This may include assessment and/or support from: an Educational Psychologist, an Assistant Educational Psychologist, a Speech and Language Therapist, Specialist Dyslexia Teacher, Specialist Sensory Advisory Teachers (for students with hearing or visual impairments); an Occupational Therapist; a Physiotherapist; a Therapeutic Learning Mentor; an Arts Psychotherapist; a Psychotherapist or a Counsellor. This is not an exhaustive list.</p>

7. The Graduated Approach

- 7.1. The School's approach to identifying and supporting SEN is informed by the Code of Practice, which recommends a graduated response to pupils who may be underachieving, based on a continuous process of assessment, planning and review. The school will make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning or to increase access to all aspects of school life, including academic and extra-curricular activities.
- 7.2. The first response to existing SEN or possible SEN is Quality First teaching in subject lessons, using differentiated teaching strategies to target specific difficulties. Teachers use data that has been collected by the school and any available information regarding existing SEN to gain a full understanding of progress and individual needs. Sources of information might include:
- Standardised tests (e.g. GL Assessment, NFER, CAT4, MIDYIS, YELLIS, ALIS);
 - Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher reports;
 - Information from previous schools for new pupils;
 - Discussions with parents;
 - Observations in lessons;
 - In-class assessments; and
 - Discussions with Learning Support Team.

- 7.3. Subject teachers will implement strategies in response to the picture of need and then review outcomes within a reasonable time frame. Where pupils have not made progress despite this approach the cycle will begin again but may incorporate further specific interventions such as:
- Additional assessment by the Learning Support Team;
 - Targeted one-to-one or small group lessons with a specialist in the Learning Support Team to help with literacy, comprehension, study skills, writing skills, or revision techniques;
 - Mentoring sessions; and
 - The Learning Support Team may observe lessons and offer advice regarding additional strategies in subject lessons.
- 7.4. Once again, the pupil's progress will be reviewed following these specific interventions and if the desired progress has not been made, the level of support may increase to include liaison with outside agencies such as:
- Education or Clinical Psychologist, or Psychiatric Assessment;
 - Full Specialist Teacher assessment;
 - CAMHS involvement;
 - EHCP request; and/or
 - GP review.
- 7.5. Using all the information gathered at this stage, the process of applying new strategies and reviewing progress will continue.

8. Working with Parents

- 8.1. To ensure that parents and pupils can be given the most appropriate advice and support, it is important that all relevant information and documentation about any possible special educational need and any history of learning support is shared with the School. Parents must provide the SENCo with copies of any reports or recommendations concerning the pupil's special educational needs or disability from previous schools or elsewhere. Parents agree to do this when completing the registration form and accepting the terms and conditions of the parent contract. We expect parents to communicate proactively and transparently about their child's needs and work collaboratively with the School to help ensure the School can best support their child as far as reasonably possible.

9. Managing Learning for Pupils on the SEND Register

- 9.1. The needs of learners with SEND are planned for within the classroom, using Quality First Teaching (QFT) whenever possible. Differentiated learning opportunities are provided to enable maximum success and progress. In some cases, additional support is provided alongside the curriculum through small group or 1:1 sessions. There are occasions when children receive additional targeted group support that run in addition to the curriculum groups, these children will be placed on Wave 2. Wave 2 progress is reviewed at least termly by class teachers, SENCo and Head of Year. Progress is shared with parents who meet regularly with the teacher and SENCo to discuss the learning support plan in place.

- 9.2. All children who receive external Specialist Support will have a Personal Learning Plan and be placed on Wave 3 on the SEND Register. Some children may also be supported through an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 9.3. Once a pupil's learning support needs can be accommodated fully by QFT in class, the pupil will be taken off the SEND Register and added to the Additional Needs List where their progress will continue to be monitored.
- 9.4. Interventions are regularly reviewed throughout each term, however informally our SEND children are discussed every week in planning meetings. To enable transitions to occur, children are discussed by the relevant school SENCoS and their departments.
- 9.5. Management of learners on the SEND register is managed by the sectional SENCo.

10. Education Health Care Plans (EHC Plan)

- 10.1. The needs of the majority of pupils with SEN will be met effectively through the School's SEN support. However, where the child or young person has not made expected progress despite the SEN support in place, parents and the School have the right to ask the Local Authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC Plan for their child. Parents are asked to consult with the School before exercising this right. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right.
- 10.2. Where a child has an EHC Plan it will be normally be reviewed annually, working with the local authority as appropriate.
- 10.3. Schools must also make sure that particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans is made available to parents, parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, Secretary of State or independent inspectorate.
- 10.4. Where a prospective pupil has an EHC Plan, the School will consult with the parents and the Local Authority (where appropriate) to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC Plan can be delivered by the School. For further information see the School's Applications and Admissions Policy.

11. Recording SEND

- 11.1. We are required by law to keep a record of those pupils who have been identified as having SEND, and the provision we make for such pupils. For each pupil with SEND, the SENCo will record on the school data management system their broad area/s of need as listed above, as well as a description of any specific areas of need. This will make up the school SEND Register. Where a pupil no longer requires the additional provision or support, the entry will be deleted from the SEND Register.

12. External Agencies

- 12.1. We always seek to work proactively and collaboratively with external agencies.

13. Exam Concessions and Extra Time

- 13.1. Exam boards set out the regulations that all schools are required to follow when considering exam concessions. Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments while ensuring that no pupil is given an unfair advantage. The Learning Support Team will assess needs and update the evidence.
- 13.2. In order to qualify for extra time in an examination, the School will adhere to exam board regulations. Alongside specific assessment test outcomes stipulated by exam boards, it is usual practice to demonstrate that the use of additional time is part of a normal way of working in school.
- 13.3. Parents should speak with the Senior School SENCo with regard to any application for additional support as soon as reasonably practicable. They will process applications for appropriate examination access in conjunction with other staff, as appropriate.

14. Use of Laptops and Word Processing

- 14.1. Laptop use in School can be accommodated if this is a specific recommendation from a report by an Educational Psychologist or other professional, such as an Occupational Therapist. If the laptop is part of a normal way of working in lessons then it will normally be available for use in examinations but will be subject to the specific requirements of the relevant examination board.

15. Transition

- 15.1. Transition to a new school or educational setting can be challenging for many children, but in particular for those pupils with SEND. The following key steps are adhered to in order to support successful transitions for children with SEND:
 - An exchange of effective and meaningful documentation in order to understand learning needs and support in place;
 - The relevant sectional SENCo will contact the previous school;
 - Transition arrangements are made for pupils needing support with SEND matters in collaboration with the family, the receiving school and any outside agencies involved; and
 - Where children with SEND leave the school, the SENCo will work cooperatively with the receiving school to provide appropriate information about the pupil to assist transition.

16. Management and Roles

- 16.1. All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010, not only to ensure that 'reasonable adjustments' are made for pupils already attending the school, but also to consider what might be needed to ensure that any future pupils with a disability are not disadvantaged.
- 16.2. The Code of Practice makes explicit that, 'Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff'. All subject staff are required to be aware of a pupil's specific needs and be prepared to differentiate work appropriately with particular regard to the advice included in the Personalised Learning Plan.

16.3. The Learning Support Team works closely with pupils and parents when reviewing targets and assessing effectiveness of strategies/interventions. In cases where there is a complex need (including pupils who have an EHC Plan), reviews may need to include outside agencies/specialists.

16.4. The Senior Leadership Team, led by the Head, should regularly review how expertise and resources used to address SEND can be used to build the quality of whole-school provision as part of their approach to school improvement. The SENCo for the Junior School is Mrs Sarah Hallsworth and the Senior School SENCo is Mrs Laura Kenny. To ensure best practice, both SENCOs are experienced and qualified in teaching children with SEND needs.

16.5. Class and subject teachers

Class and subject teachers are responsible for the progress of pupils with SEND.

16.6. The SENCo

- The SENCo has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEND Policy and coordinating provision made for pupils with SEND.
- The SENCo provides professional guidance to colleagues with the aim of securing high quality teaching for pupils with SEND, and works closely with pupils, parents and other professionals to ensure pupils with SEND receive appropriate support.
- The SENCo plays an important role with the Head and proprietor in determining the strategic development of the SEND Policy and provision within the school in order to raise the achievements of pupils with SEND.

16.7. In compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, the SENCo is also responsible for the following:

- In relation to each of the registered pupils who the SENCo considers may have special educational needs, informing a parent/carer of the pupil that this may be the case as soon as is reasonably practicable;
- In relation to each of the registered pupils who have special educational needs:
 - Identifying the pupil's special educational needs, and co-ordinating the making of special educational provision which meets those needs;
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of any special educational provision made;
 - Securing relevant services for the pupil where necessary;
 - Ensuring the records of the pupil's special educational needs and the special educational provision made are maintained and kept up to date;
 - Liaising with and providing information to a parent/carer of the pupil on a regular basis about that pupil's special educational needs and the special educational provision made;
 - Ensuring that, where the pupil transfers to another school or educational institution, educational provision made is conveyed to the appropriate authority or the proprietor of that school or institution;
 - Promoting the pupil's inclusion in the school community and access to the school's curriculum, facilities and extra-curricular activities;
 - Selecting, supervising and training learning support assistants who work with pupils with special educational needs;
 - Advising teachers at the school about differentiated teaching methods appropriate for individual pupils with special educational needs;

- Contributing to in-service training for teachers at the school to assist them to carry out necessary tasks to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs; and
- Preparing and reviewing the information required by law to be published in relation to special educational needs provision.

16.8. The Executive Head

The Executive Head has overall responsibility for the strategic planning and day-to-day delivery of SEND provision.

17. Three Year Accessibility Plan

17.1. In line with its duty under the Equality Act 2010 the School's three-year Accessibility Plan sets out how the School will:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

17.2. A copy of the School's Accessibility Plan can be provided upon request by writing to Symone Campbell, Operations Manager.

18. Document Retention

18.1. We are required to keep SEND documents for specified amounts of time in accordance with legislation, please ask us about our Data Retention Policy for specific guidelines.

19. Complaints

19.1. The School will listen to any concerns expressed by parents about their child's development and any concerns raised by children themselves. Parents must notify their child's Head of Year, and subsequently their Head of School, if their child's progress or behaviour gives cause for concern.

19.2. We hope that any difficulty or concern can be sensitively and efficiently handled and resolved informally before it reaches the formal complaints stage.

19.3. The School's Complaints Procedure [(which apply equally in the EYFS setting)] is on our website and sets out how current parents can raise a formal complaint and how the School will handle it.

20. Inability to Meet Need

20.1. There may be situations when the pupil's place at the School will not be offered, will be cancelled or withdrawn, where in the professional judgement of the Executive Head (and after consultation with the parents and the pupil (where appropriate) following the consideration of reasonable adjustments, the School is unable to provide adequately for the pupil's needs. Any decision to request withdrawal or require the removal of a pupil will be made as a last resort and in line with the terms of the parent contract.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Ownership and consultation	
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