



# Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy 2024

## Document Control

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## 1 Introduction

The ACT Multi Academy Trust recognises its responsibility for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). It is a statutory requirement for all schools/academies to have a Special Educational Needs and Disability policy.

**ACT** delegates the responsibility for SEND support to the Executive and school based SENDCOs, who can be contacted via school offices.

This ACT SEND Policy explains the broad aims and principles of the add in

Each school within the Trust must produce their own annual SEND Information Report which explains each individual school's approach to the SEND policy implementation and should be read alongside this document.

## 2 Our Mission and Ethos

Our mission is to create schools where learning is unstoppable and aspirations have no limit, enabling all children to flourish, no matter what their starting point or needs. Everyone in **ACT MAT** takes collective responsibility for success across the Trust and we work together to bring about the best outcomes across all our schools. We ensure that there is equality of experience and opportunity for all children, no matter which school they attend.

Schools within the ACT Trust will ensure that all pupils, whatever their special educational needs, receive appropriate educational provision through a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant and differentiated, and that demonstrates coherence and progression in learning.

We believe in Inclusion, Diversity and Equality - setting high aspirations to inspire all students to succeed at their individual level, in an environment we have helped sustain.

At ACT Academy Trust we believe that every teacher is a teacher of SEND and every leader a leader of SEND.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

### Aims

- To give equitable opportunities to all SEND pupils to take part in all aspects of the school's provision.
- To provide high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised.
- To support pupils to develop individual confidence and a positive attitude towards learning.
- To give opportunities for pupils to make decisions on their own learning, including support and progress.
- To develop a close partnership with families, so that their knowledge, views and experience can help support needs and individual requirements and inform school and trust policy and provision.
- To ensure that the responsibility held by all staff, governors and trustees for SEND is implemented and maintained.

### Objectives

- To monitor the progress of all pupils in order to aid early identification of pupils with SEND
- Make appropriate provision to overcome all barriers to learning and ensure pupils with SEND have full access to the curriculum
- Work with parents to gain a better understanding of their child and involve them in all stages of their child's education.
- Provide support and advice for all staff working with special educational needs pupils.
- Work with and in support of outside agencies when the pupils' needs cannot be met by the school alone.
- Work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### CEO and Trustees

- will ensure all statutory requirements are in place and met
- will monitor the impact of SEND provision and outcomes for SEND pupils across the Trust

### Headteachers and Governing Bodies

- will monitor the impact of SEND provision and outcomes for SEND pupils in their schools.
- will ensure staff follow the trust's SEN and disability procedures as outlined in the SEN and disability policy.

### The Inclusion Director

- will oversee the implementation of SEND Policy and provision across the trust
- will liaise with and support the school SENDCos
- will agree appropriate SEND training and support
- liaise with and report to ACT Trustees

### The School SENDCo

- will be a member of the school's senior leadership team
- will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND Procedures as outlined in the SEN Information Report
- liaise regularly with the Inclusion Director and the School's SEN Governor
- will work with Governors, parents and pupils to produce the annual SEN Information report and the Annual SEND Report to Governors in the Autumn term of each academic year.

### Teaching and non-teaching staff are responsible for:

- Follow the trust's SEN and disability procedures as outlined in the SEN and disability policy.
- Following each school's procedures for identifying, assessing, and making provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
- Ensure all reasonable adjustments for individual SEND pupils are consistently applied.

## 5. Overcoming Barriers to learning

All staff within the Trust work together, using advice from professionals to meet the needs of pupils and to determine ways to help the pupil to be successful in school.

In line with guidance provided in the National Inclusion Statement on providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils, the Trust provides an inclusive curriculum based on three principles:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to pupils' diverse needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual groups of pupils.

The Trust provides access for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to a balanced and broadly-based curriculum, including the National Curriculum:

- Consider pupil's different learning styles and trying to ensure a balance of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic stimuli for learning.
- Consider and promote the impact of the physical environment on learning.
- Promote a high level of pupil participation and pupil feedback throughout the school.
- All pupils follow a common curriculum, which has been written and developed by the school and is tailored to meet the needs of the full range of learner types. All children have access to this curriculum and provision is made to ensure equality for all learners.
- It is the policy of the Trust that all schools provide differentiated class work within the common framework of each subject.
- As appropriate, support teaching is provided in lessons.

The Trust believes that integration of children with special educational needs and disability is key:

- All pupils belong to mixed ability classes. The dynamics of each group of learners is considered very carefully when arranging class groups.

- For most of the academic school day children are taught in mixed ability groups.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities are available to all pupils.
- Learning support materials are made available to ALL pupils in ALL classrooms in a way that enables independent access.
- Equity is key; all children should be given what they need and when they need it. This message is echoed across all Trust settings.
- All Academies within the Trust have a Pastoral lead with a focus on pupil Wellbeing. Interventions and support is in place for Social, Emotional and Mental health needs in every setting, as it is valued as a key tool to ensuring that children are ready and able to learn.

## 6. Pupil Voice

A high value is placed upon pupil participation in many aspects of school life with the Trust: School Council/Parliament, House System, Buddy Groups etc. Pupils are involved in celebrating significant dates in the communal life of the school. Extra-curricular activities offer many chances for pupils to participate positively in school life. In keeping with this, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are involved in assessment of their needs and reviewing their progress. Each school within the Trust has systems in place to ensure that the pupils are given opportunities to contribute to decisions on how they would like to be supported. Please refer to each school's Information Report for further information on this.

## 7. Identifying and Supporting Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Pupils will be identified as having SEND through a review of progress at termly pupil progress meeting and monitoring the pupil's response to the provision already in place through high quality teaching –the Code of Practice suggests that pupils are only identified as having SEN if they do not make adequate progress once they have had all the interventions/adjustments and good quality personalised teaching. Pg. 88 Section 6.37 onwards.

The SEND Code of Practice recognises four broad areas of need which give an overview of the range of needs which should be planned for. These are:

- Communication & Interaction
- Cognition & Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
- Sensory and/or Physical needs

The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category.

Pupil's needs are identified by considering the whole child, not just their special educational needs but other needs too. It must be noted that some pupils may have more than one of the four areas of need. It is also important to examine whether other factors may be contributing to the child's presentation of need, including.

- ~ 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 Serviceman/woman
- ~Being a young carer for a family member
- ~Having experienced Trauma or ACES (adverse childhood experiences)

The Code of Practice (2015) outlines a graduated response to pupils' needs, recognising that there is a continuum of need matched by a continuum of support.

The graduated response is defined as an action that is **additional to** or **different from** the provision made as part of the school's usual curriculum and strategies.

**Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the pupils in their class, including pupils who access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. Additional intervention and**

**support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.**

### **The SEND Register**

The Register is maintained by the SENDCO at each school within the trust. It is reviewed regularly to ensure that:

- new pupils who have SEND are put into the system quickly
- it informs teachers which pupils are on the SEND register
- it can be used to inform termly pupil progress meetings

In each school the provision, strategies and targets for pupils who are on the SEND register is recorded and reviewed on at least a termly basis.

These records should be shared with all staff so that everyone who is involved with the pupil knows what they are working towards. Teachers should plan for pupils to have opportunities to work towards their targets and record their progress.

### **A Graduated Approach to SEN Support**

This is the PROCESS by which schools within the ACT Trust identify and manage children and young people with SEN.

- Once pupils are identified as having SEN needs these will be recorded on the SEN register.
- 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.
- High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN and that additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.
- Schools regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered.
- Teachers decide whether to make special educational provision in consultation with the SENCo and together consider all the information gathered from within the school about the pupil's progress, alongside national data and expectations of progress. This includes high quality and accurate formative assessment, using effective tools and early assessment materials. It may also include advice from external agencies where relevant.
- Parents, families, children and young people are involved in this process through ongoing meetings and reviews between the class teacher and parents.

### **SEND Support**

Where it is determined that a pupil does have SEND, parents will be advised and the child will be added to the SEND register. The aim of formally identifying a pupil with SEND is to help school ensure that effective provision is put in place and so remove barriers to learning. The support provided consists of a four part process:

#### Assess – Plan – Do – Review

This is an on-going cycle of the graduated response to enable the provision to be refined and revised as the understanding of the needs of the pupil grows. This APDR cycle enables the identification of provision that most effectively supports the pupil to achieve good progress and outcomes.

- Pupil progress will be monitored on at least a termly basis in line with the SEND Code of Practice. If SEND needs are felt to be significant and complex, support will be requested from external professionals. In this

case the SENDCo would seek to engage additional support or specialist services. Referral documentation will be completed i.e., Early Help Assessment. This is funded by the SEN budget and is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. Parents, families and children are involved in this process from the outset and their opinions are sought. Parent permission is compulsory when seeking external support.

- When monitored using the APDR cycle over time, if it is judged that additional funding and support are needed long term, ie when the child's needs are having a significant impact on their education, then a request for an Education, Health and Care (EHCP) Needs assessment can be made. Information will be gathered from school staff and reports from any outside agencies consulted. Parents will be informed and their views will be included in any application.

### **Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)**

The application for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment will combine information from a variety of sources including:

- Parents
- Teachers
- SENDCo
- Inclusion Director
- Outside professionals

Information will be gathered relating to the current provision, actions that have been taken, and outcomes of targets set. A decision will be made by a panel of professionals from education, health and social care under direction of the Statutory Assessment Team about whether or not the pupil meets the criteria for an EHCP, once all assessments have been carried out. Parents have the right to appeal against a decision not to initiate a statutory assessment leading to an EHCP through the Local Authority.

### **Assessment Arrangements for all SEND pupils**

Pupils who are on the SEND Register may be eligible for support in Statutory and Summative Assessments

This may include:

- having a reader
- having a prompter
- working in a quieter room
- having rest breaks to aid concentration.
- additional time

The individual school SENDCO will discuss the needs of individuals with the class teacher/s and apply for arrangements in accordance with the DFE guidance and the exams access arrangements policy.

### **Criteria for Exiting the SEN Register**

In a case where the class teacher has evidence that a pupil no longer needs the extra support provided through their SEN status and IEP, the teacher will consult in the first instance with the SENDCo. If they are in agreement and the child's progress reflects this success, then the teacher will meet with the Parents and pupil to explain this. This pupil will still be carefully monitored through pupil progress meetings and the provision map and if the progress is not maintained then the pupil can be re-assessed for SEN. Any previous SEN records will be kept on file.

## **8. Training of Staff**

Training needs of staff are identified using a skills audit and in response, the needs of the children, the changing face of special educational needs, disabilities and the Code of Practice.

- In order to maintain and develop the quality of teaching and provision to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils, all staff are encouraged to undertake training and development.

- There are regular Professional Development Meetings for teachers to improve their understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEND most frequently encountered. Each Academy follows a training schedule that is tailored to meet the needs of their cohorts.
- All new teachers and support staff undertake an induction programme and this includes an explanation of the systems and structures in place around the Trust's SEND provision.
- The SENDCos at each Academy are invited to attend SENDCo cluster meetings with the Strategic Inclusion Director in order to keep up to date with local and national updates in SEND in addition to the Local Authority termly SEND Briefings.

## 9. External Agencies and Professional Support

A variety of support can be offered by external services such as advice to the school about targets and strategies, specialised assessment or direct work with the child. The specialist services will always contribute to the planning, monitoring and reviewing of the child's progress.

These services include:

- SEND Specialist Services 0-25 (Specialist Teachers, Specialist Practitioners and Educational Psychologists)
- Speech and Language Therapy Service
- School Nursing
- Community Paediatrician
- Locality Team (Family Workers and Education Inclusion Family Advisors)
- Hearing Impairment Team
- Visual Impairment Team
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Other therapeutic support (ie, counselling, CBT, therapies)

When involving external agencies, it may be necessary to open an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or other referral pathway to access this support.

## 10. Links with Other Schools and Transition Arrangements

We recognise that transitions can be difficult for all children but especially so for a pupil with SEND and take steps to ensure that any transition is as smooth as possible.

- Liaison with other schools in respect of pupils who have an EHC Plan or receive substantial special education support is made where appropriate.
- When a pupil is due to transfer to another phase the SENDCo will liaise with the SENDCo of the secondary schools serving the area to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to support children at the time of transfer. A transition support programme is put into place for individuals / groups of children with higher needs e.g. extra visits to new school/ making a support pack with the child.
- The SENDCo will be responsible for the handover of information about children receiving School Support and for children with an EHC Plan.
- Arrangements to share with other schools resources, expertise, good practice and linked INSET will be co-ordinated by the Headteacher.
- The SENDCo has responsibility for maintaining records for pupils with special educational needs. These records will be made available at appropriate times to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to other schools or institutions.
- Information will be passed on to the new class teacher in advance and in most cases, they will be invited to join the final review meeting in the previous class. Support plans will be written collaboratively, ensuring that the transition is as smooth as possible.

## **11. Storing and Managing Information**

- All information on pupils is stored securely in each school using a provision map software. The school office holds ongoing information including contact information for each child. The SENDCo and class teacher hold any information related to SEND and any correspondence from outside agencies referring to a child. These documents are held on file for the period that the pupil attends the school and is then transferred on to their feeder school. These documents are kept strictly confidential at all times.

## **12. Reviewing the Policy**

- The SEND policy will be reviewed in line with the other Trust policies, on a three year schedule.
- Each Academy within the Trust also have their own Information Report, which is reviewed annually. This document lays out the processes for which the school follows in regard to its SEND provision and should therefore be read in collaboration with the overarching Trust SEND policy.

## **13 Accessibility**

- The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the SEN and Disability act (2001) placed a duty on all schools to increase over time the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils. Schools are now required to produce an accessibility plan to explain how the school identifies and removes barriers to learning for all pupils. Please see each school's Accessibility Plan for more information