

ATLP Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Policy



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1. Statement of intent

This policy, and our approach at ATLP, is defined by our values:

- **Children are at the heart of everything we do.** We believe that every child has the right to be a powerful learner. Our schools work collaboratively to ensure children receive the best support – not just in teaching and learning – but across all their needs.
- **Together we are stronger.** By working in partnership, we can create a lasting legacy and make an even greater difference where it counts the most.
- **One trust.** We are all responsible for all children across our family of schools. Our focus is to improve outcomes and experiences for every single child by working together and supporting each other.

2. The 5 principles of inclusion

This policy is based on the ‘5 principles for inclusion’ [Five principles for inclusion \(cstuk.org.uk\)](https://www.cstuk.org.uk). While not a statutory document we believe that this policy paper offers a positive model of inclusion for children with SEND.

1. **Dignity, not deficit.** Students with a learning or physical disability are not broken and do not need fixing. We treat them with dignity. We avoid deficit language that suggests they are special cases. We recognise their full worth as members of our school communities. We don’t patronise students with SEND or have low expectations of them. We challenge those who do.
2. **Greater complexity merits greater expertise**
Students with SEND are entitled to the expertise which enables them to learn well, be challenged and achieve ambitious things. When extra support is needed, it should be expert in nature.
3. **Different, but not apart**
Our schools are places where children with different learning needs learn alongside each other and grow up together. We welcome the role we play in building an inclusive society by allowing children to encounter difference. We see difference as normal.
4. **Success in all its forms**
Success takes many forms – we value and celebrate a wide range of achievements. We value and recognise when our students contribute to school life and the community. We celebrate difference and our common values. We place intrinsic value on the process of learning and work. This does not mean that we have low expectations for children with SEND. Our children and their families are entitled to a more ambitious and fuller articulation of what a good life is, than a narrow definition of success allows for. We celebrate everyday success, and the things that matter to families and communities.
5. **Action at all levels**
In our schools this means that we encourage all our staff to see and understand the lived experience of children with SEND, in a positive, affirmative way. All staff understand their roles in making a positive difference to the lives of children with SEND.

3. A relational approach

This policy builds on the principles of the ATLP vulnerable children strategy, which aims to ensure that in our family of schools, all children experience equity, understanding, belonging, and love. These principles will help to nurture a respectful and inclusive ethos in our schools.

A relational approach means prioritising trusting, healthy and safe relationships, getting to know each child individually and recognising the unique worth and value of every child. We seek to build belonging and acceptance, remove barriers to learning and participation and treat difference as normal. Knowing our children well means that we are better placed to understand their needs and provide the support they need to flourish. We are open, curious and interested in our children, their interests and lives. We avoid making assumptions or having low expectations. We work in partnership with parents and caregivers and external agencies to create a strong support network for our students.

4. A culture of belonging

Our curriculum should whisper to our children “you belong. You did not come from nowhere. You are one of us. All this came before you, and one day you too might add to it.” – Ben Newmark.

A culture of belonging means that every member of the school community feels welcome, safe and valued. It is evident in the language we use, our interactions with children and young people and their families, our curriculum and pedagogy and our routines. It is reflected in policies and practice. We all have a part to play in creating a culture of belonging. It is the responsibility of every member of the school community: leaders, staff, parents, children, young people, professionals from partner agencies, and the wider community. No child, no parent and no family are less than any other in our schools.

5. Expert teaching and support

Our pedagogical approach is determined by the principles of cognitive science. In how they think and learn, children are more alike than different. All children will benefit from a knowledge-rich, well-structured and carefully sequenced curriculum that builds on previous learning and skills. Children with SEND are not less than their peers. They are entitled to the same curriculum, whenever possible, the same expert teaching and high expectations as their peers. They may learn through the curriculum at a different pace. We adapt teaching as appropriate. We challenge the perception that students with SEND cannot access the curriculum. When we think this is the case, we ask whether the curriculum may be the problem to be solved. The child is never the problem.

Students will not all achieve the same outcomes. We do not expect that they do. We value and celebrate success in all its forms. This does not mean that lower our expectations of what children with SEND can and should access and achieve.

We will ensure that:

- teaching is broken down into manageable chunks of learning, which may include smaller steps for children with SEND;
- when needed, we provide a scaffold for learning; this does not necessarily mean a differentiated approach;
- teaching staff routinely check for understanding with students who may find learning difficult;
- teaching staff routinely use information from formative and summative assessments to plan the next steps in learning;
- teaching and support staff share their observations of children’s learning and development to ensure that the best possible support is in place.

Greater complexity merits greater expertise. The more complex the needs of the child, the more expertise is required to teach them well and ensure that they are prepared for transition to the next step of learning, the next phase of education or training, or adulthood. We will ensure that we share best practice across our Trust, so that all children benefit from expert teaching and support. We will ensure that all those who teach and support children with SEND have the knowledge and skills to ensure that these children reach their full potential.

6. The 4 areas of SEND

The four areas of SEND are:

- Communication and interaction (SLCN)
- Cognition and learning (CL)
- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Sensory and/or physical difficulty (S/PD).

Many children and young people will have more than one area of need. The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to give a child a label. At The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, we identify the needs of our pupils by considering the needs of the whole child. This will not just include their special educational needs.

The first response to such progress should be **high-quality teaching** targeted at their areas of weakness.

Where progress continues to be less than expected the class or subject teacher, working with the SENDCO, should assess whether the child has SEND.

We abide by the principle that **greater complexity merits greater expertise. This includes the expertise of the class teacher.**

A child or young person may be provided with additional support if their difficulties persist even when teaching and behaviour strategies are targeted to their need and they are supported to access the curriculum.

It is important to recognise that a child or young person who may struggle to access the curriculum may also have a particular gift or talent in another area.

7. Identification of need

- ATLP schools should have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. Identifying need at the earliest point and then making effective provision improves long-term outcomes for the child or young person.
- Under the current guidance, a pupil has SEND when their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision. This is described as provision 'different from or additional to' that normally available to pupils of the same age.
- Notwithstanding this guidance, we accept that not all students with SEND will need provision that is different from or additional to what is normally available.
- Making **higher-quality teaching normally available** to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require provision that is different or additional to what is normally available.
- Class and subject teachers, supported by the senior leadership team, should make regular assessments of progress for all pupils. These assessments should identify pupils who are not keeping up with their peers, or who are making less progress than previously. This includes progress in other areas of development, for example to make a successful transition to adult life.

How do we identify whether a child has SEND?

During the summer term, we hold transition meetings with all feeder schools and early years settings to discuss each child's needs. When appropriate, we will create a tailored strategy sheet for a child or young person with SEND.

Schools use this information from previous settings and key stages in addition to their own assessments and observations to check whether children need specific approaches or additional support. Schools should assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry. They should also consider whether a pupil may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and, if so, what reasonable adjustments may need to be made for them.

At the start of secondary school children and young people take specific tests to see how well they are doing in key subjects. Our SENDCO, along with subject and phase leads, carefully analyses the data from these tests to identify any potential areas of need. Based on this analysis and following the Code of Practice guidance for SEND, students may be added to the SEND Record.

This information is considered alongside the views of parents, carers and students to determine the appropriate support and provision for each pupil.

8. Graduated response

At our family of schools, we use the graduated response (assess, plan, do, review) as outlined in the SEND code of practice (2015):

Assess:

We assess progress and learning through:

- ongoing checking for understanding in class;
- observations of learning and development by teaching staff;
- listening to and acknowledging the concerns of parents or carers;
- summative assessment of progress and attainment and

- assessments carried out by the SEND team in school.

Additional assessments may be carried out by specialists in speech and language, occupational health, educational psychology and sensory support services, and/or medical professionals such as a school nurse, local GP and CAHMS.

Assessments will be reviewed regularly to ensure interventions are matched to need, barriers to learning are identified and overcome and support is effective.

Plan:

When additional support is required, the SENDCO, with the support of relevant staff and external agencies as appropriate, will put together a plan outlining the provision to be put in place and the expected impact on progress and outcomes. The starting principle is that students and their families are involved in this process. All staff who work with the student will be made aware of the plan and the intended outcomes.

Do:

The class/subject teacher, supported by teaching and pastoral staff, is responsible for working with the pupil daily. The teacher will also liaise closely with any teaching assistants or specialists who provide support set out in the plan and monitor the progress being made. The SENDCO will provide support and guidance for teaching staff.

Review:

The impact of the plan will be reviewed at least each term by the teacher, student, SENDCO, parent and carers and external agencies as appropriate. This will feed back into the assess, plan, do and review cycle and identify next steps and any additional support that is needed.

9. Additional Support

Additional support is provided to help children catch up by:

- identifying and assessing individual needs;
- the best available teaching and support expertise;
- an appropriate curriculum to meet individual learning and development needs;
- small group, expert teaching or 1:1 when required;
- individualised timetables, interventions, and behaviour plans;
- working with a range of external partners to provide and co-ordinate the most effective support for children and young people, and their families/carers.

We will ensure that we are providing the best possible support for children and young people by:

- sharing learning and best practice approaches across our Trust;
- regular review of practices across schools, reporting to local advocate committees and the board of trustees/LA;
- carrying out equalities impact assessments of our policies and procedures, and

- listening, acknowledging and respecting the views and lived experiences of our children, families and communities.

10. Points to note

- A slower rate of progress and/or low attainment do not necessarily mean that a student has SEND.
- Equally, attainment in line with chronological age does not mean that there is no learning difficulty or disability.
- Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a pupil has SEND.
- Assessments should be used to determine whether there are undiagnosed learning difficulties, health/medical conditions, or whether contextual factors are contributing to the presenting need and/or behaviour.
- Difficulties related to limitations in English, from pupils whose first language is not English, are **not** special educational needs.

11. Listening to children and young people

Central to our approach is listening to the voice of children and young people with SEND, to understand their experiences and improve our provision. All ATLP schools should have in place mechanisms to capture the voice of students with SEND. What this looks like will differ in each school. Schools should report to the Trust board on any adaptations that have been made to the curriculum or other provision as a result of listening to the views and experiences of children with SEND.

12. Working with families

For too many parents and carers, navigating the SEND system can feel frustrating and overwhelming. In our family of schools, we try to ensure that we communicate clearly and in a timely manner with parents and carers. We will listen respectfully to the voices and experiences of parents and carers. We will seek to develop a strengths-based approach to our work with children and their families, understanding the successes that are important to children and their families and not viewing SEND as a deficit.

We will liaise with our families to understand the underlying causes of any difficulties or behaviours in school, so that we can support all children and young people to achieve our high expectations. We will involve parents and carers in the co-construction of support plans. Some schools may choose to arrange workshops, coffee mornings and other events for parents and carers of children with SEND. The aim of such events is to enable parents and carers to understand the school's approaches and connect with key staff and other parents and carers. They should also feel reassured that their children are loved and valued.

If children are not keeping up with their peers, we will seek to share observations with parents and carers at the earliest possible opportunity. We will seek to:

- develop a good understanding of the child or young person's areas of strengths and difficulties;
- listen to and consider the views and concerns of parents and carers;
- ensure that everyone understands the outcomes being sought for the child or young person;
- ensure that everyone is clear on the process and next steps to be pursued.

As set out above, the first response to children having difficulty in any area of the curriculum or their development is high-quality teaching targeted at the child's area of need. When additional support is required, this should be agreed with parents and carers. If school considers that no additional support is required, this will be explained to parents and carers. The type of support needed will be determined using the available information, taking into account the views of parents and carers and external agencies when appropriate. This support will be reviewed, in discussion with parents and carers, regularly throughout the year.

13. Roles and responsibilities

All roles detailed below are in accordance with the Code of Practice (2015) guidelines and trust job descriptions.

Each school will have a responsible Special Education Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCO), who will be identified on the school website.

The Trust Vulnerable Children Lead will:

- lead on the trust strategy for children with SEND, ensuring that all staff know their role in implementing the 5 principles of inclusion;
- report to trustees about the effectiveness of this policy and the partnership provision for children and young people with SEND;
- coordinate networking meetings for SENDCOs across the partnership to develop the provision, share challenges and best practice/processes;
- offer group supervision for SENDCOs;
- meet with vulnerable children advocates at the committee to gather their views and feedback.

The headteacher/head of school will:

- work with the SENDCO and vulnerable children advocate to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and develop the provision across their school;
- have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of students with SEND;
- support SENDCO, phase and subject leaders, and class teachers to ensure that appropriate resources are made available for agreed schemes of work or interventions;
- ensure that appropriate supervision is in place for SENDCOs.

The Vulnerable Children Advocate will:

- support the effective implementation of the partnership/school policies and approaches to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND;
- monitor the effectiveness of the provision, ensuring that clear objectives are set out in the school improvement plan;
- report to the Trust Vulnerable Children Lead and relevant governance meetings on the effectiveness of the policy and provision.

The SEND coordinator (SENDCO) will:

- lead on implementing the 5 principles of inclusion in school;
- develop and embed an inclusive vision for SEND in which children's different learning needs are normalised, children with SEND learn in class alongside their peers wherever possible and are encouraged to take a full and active role in school life;
- work with the headteacher, advocate and trust vulnerable children lead to determine the strategic development of SEND policy and provision across their school;
- support and champion children with SEND in school, encouraging the whole school community to see and value success in all its forms;
- ensure that across the school there are high expectations for children with SEND
- recognise that students with the greatest have access to the greatest expertise, and that all teaching staff supporting children with SEND have the skills and expertise to do so effectively;
- support and monitor teaching and learning of children and young people with SEND;
- support colleagues to understand the lived experience of children with SEND in their schools;
- assume day-to-day responsibility for the co-ordination of specific provision to support individuals with SEND including those with EHCP plans;
- advise and deploy support team appropriately to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND;
- provide professional guidance to all colleagues, parents, carers, and other agencies to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching;
- adopt, embed, and advise on the graduated approach with the four stages of 'assess, plan, do, review' (Code of Practice, 2015);
- advise on the Local Authority Local Offer, and relevant local tools such as Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP), Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review (EAPDR) etc., ensuring effective provision of SEND support;
- act as the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority, and its support services;
- support applications for statutory assessments in consultation with parents, carers, and partners to access appropriate funding from the Local Authority;
- support the headteacher or head of school in preparing reports to be presented to the Trust Board as required;
- attend network meetings and contribute to the wider understanding of and expertise in SEND across the Trust, supporting other schools and colleagues with expertise when needed;
- take responsibility for their own wellbeing and ensure that they access supervision as needed.

Teaching staff will:

- understand their role in implementing the 5 principles of inclusion in school;
- support children with SEND to play a full and active role in school life, acknowledging that their experiences and successes may be different to their peers, and helping children and young people to see different learning needs as normal;
- know individual children and young people well, and seek to understand the lived experience of children with SEND in their classes;
- monitor and support progress and development of every child and young person in their class;
- work with SENDCO and TAs to ensure the 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle is appropriately implemented to support any child or young person with SEND;
- work with the SENDCO to review progress and agree changes in provision, if required;
- support teaching assistants to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions linking back to classroom teaching;
- seek support when needed to ensure that their classroom practice meets the needs of students.

Teaching assistants will:

- understand their role in implementing the 5 principles of inclusion in school;
- work with the SENDCO and class teachers to review progress and agree changes in provision;
- deliver specific interventions under the guidance of teachers & the SENDCO and feedback about the effectiveness of these;
- support children with SEND to take a full and active part in school life.

14. Early years

The early identification of SEND, including through formal diagnosis and obtaining a support plan in the early years, makes it more likely that children will have a positive experience at school in later years. When children have access to expert teaching, and the right interventions and care in the early years, they are more likely to be school-ready at the age of 5, and will have greater opportunities to thrive at school, in further education and in their working lives. Children who are happy, healthy, supported and develop relationships with their peers early on, are more likely to have positive educational experiences in the future. Therefore it is vital that children's needs are identified as soon as possible after starting school, so that additional support is put in place and expert help sought when needed.

We will work strategically with local authorities, parents and carers, health colleagues and other professionals to ensure that children who need it have access to expert, coordinated support. We will provide training, resources and a means to share learning across our Trust. This includes in the impact of early childhood trauma.

15. Accessibility Plan

All schools are required by the SEND Act 2001 to develop accessibility plans. These are available on individual school websites. These plans set out the school's responsibility to ensure:

- developing participation in the curriculum for children and young people with disabilities.

- developing physical access to the site and buildings.
- improving access to information for parents and children and young people with disabilities.

16. The Local Offer

What is the Local Offer?

The Local Offer is published as part of the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms included in the Government's Children and Families Bill (2013). The Local Offer will:

- give you information about education, health and care services;
- give you information about leisure activities and support groups;
- hold all the information in one place;
- be clear, comprehensive, and accessible;
- make service provision more responsive to local needs, and
- be developed and reviewed with service providers and service users.

Who is the Local Offer for? The Local Offer is for:

- children and young people with SEND from 0-25 years.
- their parents and carers.
- practitioners and professionals.

17. Definitions

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that children and young people have special education needs if they:

- have difficulty accessing the curriculum, temporarily or more long-term, requiring special educational provision to be made for them;
- have significant difficulties learning in comparison with the majority of others at the same age;
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities generally provided for children of the same age and provision.

A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial, long term (at least a year) and adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities. (Equality Act 2010).

- Substantial means that the impairment is more than minor or trivial: the time taken to carry out an activity. This could mean the way the activity is carried out, or the effects of the environment or medical treatment. It could also mean that a student takes much longer to do something; for example, because of the adverse effects of obsessive-compulsive disorder.
- Long term means 12 months or more.
- Day-to-day activities include reading and writing, getting washed and dressed, preparing and eating food, taking part in social activities, interacting with others, following instructions and keeping to a timetable.

According to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, an impairment is to be treated as affecting the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities, only if it affects one or more of the following:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- speech
- hearing
- eyesight
- memory
- ability to concentrate
- ability to learn
- ability to understand
- ability to perceive the risk of physical danger.
- have difficulty accessing the curriculum, temporarily or more long-term, requiring special educational provision to be made for them;
- have significant difficulties learning in comparison with the majority of others at the same age;
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities generally provided for children of the same age and provision.

Notwithstanding these definitions, at ATLP we have high expectations of all children. We treat difference as normal. We value success in all its forms.

18. Discrimination

Section 85(2) of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the steps that schools must take to ensure that they do not discriminate against pupils who share a protected characteristic such as a disability. A school must not discriminate against a pupil:

- in the way it provides education for the pupil;
- in the way it affords the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service;
- by not providing education for the pupil;
- by not affording the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service;
- by excluding the pupil from the school;
- by subjecting the pupil to any other detriment.

19. Reasonable adjustments

Section 85(6) of the same Act sets out the school's duty to make reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments are the adaptations needed to mitigate or overcome the substantial disadvantage suffered by disabled pupils compared with non-disabled pupils when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to pupils generally. They are the changes that schools must anticipate and make, so that while a child is at the setting, they are not at a disadvantage compared to others. Any reasonable adjustments required will depend on a child's needs. When considering what reasonable adjustments to make, schools should take into account:

- Provisions, criteria and practices. This is about the way in which a school operates on a daily basis, including their decisions and actions. For example, the school uniform policy would need to be adjusted for pupils with an allergy to synthetic materials to allow them to wear non-synthetic clothing.
- Auxiliary aids and services. This includes equipment or support from a member of staff. It could include things such as coloured overlays, pen grips, adapted PE equipment, adapted keyboards and computer software.
- Physical features. Schools must make their buildings accessible for disabled pupils as part of their overall planning duties

20. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy and information report is based on the statutory SEND code of practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out the school's responsibilities for children and young people with SEND.
- The Special Education Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which sets out the school's responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEND coordinators (SENDCOs) and the SEND information report.
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
- Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 95)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Disability Equality Duty 2005 (DDA05)
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002

This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2015) Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- DfE (2022) SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan
- [Ordinarily-Available-Guidance.pdf \(localofferbirmingham.co.uk\)](https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/ordinarily-available-guidance.pdf)

It complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

21. Appendix 1: Resources

[Five principles for inclusion \(cstuk.org.uk\)](http://cstuk.org.uk)

[CST Ambition Institute White paper A Good Life \(3\).pdf.](#)

[Early Years SEND \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](http://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

[*Ordinarily-Available-Guidance.pdf \(localofferbirmingham.co.uk\)](#)

[Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review - Staffordshire County Council](#)