

The Mercian Trust

MAT SEND Policy

Policy Owner	The Mercian Trust
Date Ratified by Trust Board	October 2020
Date to be Reviewed:	October 2021
Date Adopted	October 2020

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1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 “Trust” – this refers to the multi-academy trust (MAT).
- 1.2 “Board of Trustees” – this refers to the MAT Board of Trustees, who have ultimate responsibility for governance.
- 1.3 “Local Governing Body” – this refers to the local governing body, which has delegated powers from the Board of Trustees in relation to governance for their academy. The members of the local governing body are the “local governors”.
- 1.4 “Management Board” – this refers to the management board, which also has delegated powers from the Board of Trustees in relation to governance for their academy. Management Boards are imposed for a time-limited period, where a local governing body has failed to support and challenge academy leaders effectively. Management Boards are chaired by a member of the Group’s Executive Board.
- 1.5 “Academy” – this refers to the individual academy.
- 1.6 “We/Us” – this refers to all employees and stakeholders within the MAT.
- 1.7 “Department for Education” – this refers to the Government’s Department for Education.
- 1.8 “Local Authority” – this refers to the academy’s local authority, based on its location within England. This may be a county, unitary authority, metropolitan borough or London borough.

2. INTRODUCTION

This policy has been updated following changes to the law and statutory guidance from September 2014 and to reflect the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years* (July 2014). It sets our vision and principles for children and young people with SEND¹.

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

3. VISION

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

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

4. POLICY STATEMENT

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

All academies will operate within the law:

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

All academies will follow the statutory guidance in full:

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

5. OUR MODEL

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

- prioritising leadership of SEND
- offering accurate identification
- effectively tracking progress
- successfully impacting on progress through effective interventions
- improving provision through the development of partnerships.

6. DEFINITION OF SEND

- 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.
- A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
 - has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
 - has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

7. WORKING ACROSS EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE

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

Each academy will cooperate with the relevant local authority in developing and reviewing its local offer.

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

We shall work with our academies, local and national providers to secure the services needed to improve outcomes for young people with SEND. These services could include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, education psychology, mental health services, other health and social care professionals.

8. PROCEDURES: EARLY YEARS AND NURSERY PROVISION

Our Early Years and Nursery providers will ensure that screening procedures are in place to identify children with SEN to ensure early identification and to ensure that they receive the support they need.

In our mainstream provisions children with SEN will be educated alongside children who do not have SEN.

Our Early Years or Nursery providers will designate a qualified teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEN provision (the "SENCo") who will either be an experienced SENCo or have or be working towards the prescribed qualification.

We shall inform parents/carers when we are considering making special provision for a child and shall then work in partnership with them to establish the support needed and secure best outcomes, taking full account of their views and wishes.

We shall adopt a graduated approach with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review as set out in the SEND Code of Practice 5.36-5.46.

Each Nursery provider shall prepare an annual report on the implementation of our SEN Policy including:

- arrangements for the admission of disabled children
- steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others
- the accessibility plan and how it will be improved overtime.

9. PROCEDURES: MAINSTREAM AND SPECIALIST PROVISIONS

Academies will screen on entry by assessing a young person's skills and attainment and build on information from previous settings if available.

As part of the screening process academies will consider any evidence that the young person may have a disability under the Equality Act (2010) and make reasonable adjustments for them. This includes adhering to The Joint Council for Qualifications

Community Interest Company and the Standards and Testing Agency annually updated regulations and guidance regarding Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. Each provision has a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses of study, submit applications for reasonable adjustments to the relevant organisations and make reasonable adjustments to the services and education provided to SEND children and young people.

Academies will have measures in place to accurately identify young people with SEN and will place such pupils on 'SEN Support' in consultation with their parents/carers.

Academies will do everything they can to meet the needs of young people with SEN including delivering the education elements of an Education, Health and Care Plan.

In mainstream settings academies will ensure that young people with SEN engage in the activities of the academy alongside those who do not have SEN unless a particular provision agreed with the parents/carers and the young person is in place.

Academies will designate a qualified teacher to be responsible for coordinating the SEN provision (the "SENCo"), who will have or be working towards attaining the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination.

Academies will inform parents/carers when they are making special educational provision for their child and shall then work in partnership with them to establish the support needed and secure best outcomes, taking full account of their views and wishes.

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

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

Academies will ensure that all staff understand that they are responsible for all learners and their learning if they are assigned to their class. The class teacher cannot delegate this responsibility to additional adults in the classroom or if the student regularly studies the lesson in an inclusion base (or similar). The class teacher must take the lead and work with the members of support staff to ensure that the student receives the best learning experience they can in that subject. Academies will ensure that the quality of teaching for pupils with SEN and the progress made by those pupils are a core part of performance management arrangements.

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

Academies will ensure that a Graduated Approach as set out in paragraphs 6.44-6.56 of the Code of Practice is in place for all young people on 'SEN Support'.

For all young people receiving SEN support academies will make arrangements for a member of the academy learning support department to communicate with parents/carers at least three times a year to review progress and discuss support.

After consultation with the parent and young person we shall request the relevant local authority initiates a needs based assessment for any child or young person for whom we believe this is necessary.

10. SUPPORTING OUR ACADEMIES

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

- SEND audits and reviews of provision
- legal advice
- support for identification and intervention
- staff professional development
- SEND cluster meetings to inform and share best practice
- specialist assessments
- fostering of partnership working and the brokering of support services
- pre-Ofsted preparation