

Policy Statement for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Additional Needs



Approved by: Trust Board

Date: March 2025

Next review due by: Autumn 26 – Awaiting new
Green Paper to be published
before updating

1. Inclusion – Policy and Practice

Vision

Unity Schools Partnership academies all strive to ensure that pupils leave their settings as confident, resilient individuals, positive about their future and equipped to deal with challenges – having a special educational need is not seen as a barrier to personal achievement. We believe that all pupils can make good progress, whatever their starting point. We encourage pupils to strive constantly to gain independent learning skills and develop personal responsibility to make a successful transition into adulthood. The Code of Practice expects all schools to support pupils with SEND to:

1. achieve their best
2. become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
3. make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training

(Code of Practice 6.1)

Inclusive Practice

Schools in the trust welcome pupils with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) We do our best, in partnership with parents, to meet the special educational needs of all pupils they attend mainstream schools, specialist hubs or special schools.

At Unity Schools Partnership, we endeavour to offer all pupils equal opportunities which are tailored to their individual needs to participate fully in school life, including after-school activities and school trips.

Schools in the trust follow the requirement of the SEND Code of Practice to make 'reasonable adjustments' to the physical and learning environment; to address all pupils' needs by alleviating substantial disadvantage and being fully compliant with equalities legislation.

This includes a duty on schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to pupils with physical disabilities.

All academies will ensure that the dignity and modesty of pupils with physical disabilities, requiring personal care, is maintained.

As a trust we are rolling forward a programme of Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP), mental health lead training and encourage all our schools to strive towards the standards embodied in the IQM Inclusive School Award whether or not they choose to pursue accreditation.

Objectives

Unity Schools Partnership academies ensure teachers receive training and support to be able to identify and, through quality first teaching, provide for those pupils who have SEND. The Partnership academies have high aspirations of and expectations for all learners. The focus is on improving outcomes for all children and young people.

Key objective – to enable all pupils to participate in lessons fully and effectively.

In order to achieve this, we will:

1. work in partnership with parents/carers who play a fundamental role in enabling children and young people with SEND to be the best they can be.
 - a. All academies in the Partnership recognise and value the unique knowledge and experience that parents/carers can contribute to a shared understanding of how to meet children and young people's needs.
2. include the views of young people about what sort of help they would like to make the most of their education.
 - a. Pupils will be included in all decision-making processes, reflecting on their learning needs.
3. identify at the earliest opportunity any pupils who are not making expected progress.
 - a. Class and subject teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class
 - b. Quality first teaching, adapted for individual pupils is the first step in responding to those who have or may have special educational needs
 - c. The Partnership academies follow the SEND Code of Practice 2014: 0-25 years' graduated approach with regard to the identification and review of pupils with special educational needs: The four key actions are:
 - i. Assess
 - ii. Plan
 - iii. Do
 - iv. Review
4. ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and advice to support quality first teaching and learning for all pupils.
 - a. Special educational provision is underpinned by quality first teaching
 - b. The SENCO is responsible for providing professional guidance and support to class/subject teachers and leaders
 - c. The SENCO will ensure research-informed, targeted, time limited interventions are in place when they are needed to accelerate progress in

learning identified by class/subject teachers and leaders for those pupils with SEND including those who are also eligible for Pupil Premium (PP).

- d. The SENCO is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of interventions, working closely with the PP co-ordinator to ensure there is a cohesive approach to meeting needs.
 - e. The SENCO will work closely with leads in school for safeguarding/ wellbeing and attendance to ensure pupils receive the best holistic support.
 - f. The SENCO will work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the needs of individual pupils. To comply with the Joint Council for Qualifications requirements, any external assessor, requested by parents to undertake assessments, must liaise with schools if assessments are intended to be used for exam access arrangements or for statutory assessment purposes (EHCP inclusion)
5. ensure Local Governing Bodies undertake the trust's statutory responsibilities to monitor the impact of the SEND Policy in their school as well as their school's Accessibility Plan. The Local Governing Body of each academy must ensure the SEN Information Report is updated annually.

2. Identification, Assessment and Provision

Identifying SEN

A child or young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of the same age
 1. *learns significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline*
 2. *fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress*
 3. *fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers*
 4. *widens the attainment gap*

(Code of Practice 6.17)

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.

(Code of Practice P4 xiv)

The four broad categories of need identified in the SEN Code of Practice are:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory/Physical

Disability and Equality

Some young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010:

A physical or mental impairment which has a long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This definition includes sensory impairments affecting sight, hearing and long-term conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Unity Schools Partnership complies with The Children and Families Act 2014 regarding supporting young people with medical conditions. Provision is planned and delivered in accordance with healthcare plans. Schools have regard to

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf

English as an Additional Language

Pupils who speak English as an Additional Language are not automatically considered to have a special educational need. National guidelines on expected progress of pupils new to English are used to support the identification of underlying learning difficulties if concerns are raised by teachers and/or parents/carers.

Under-achievement

Unity Schools Partnership recognises that progress may be affected by factors other than SEND. Each school has staff responsible for dealing with day-to-day concerns.

All academies offer formal opportunities for parents/carers to review their children's progress and support arrangements.

Where pupils present with behavioural concerns, the Partnership's holistic approach is to try to identify the underlying causes of the behaviour and then put in place support strategies through the SEND and/or pastoral systems. The Partnership is committed to supporting children and young people to become responsible and resilient.

The wellbeing of pupils is a high priority for the Partnership. Trauma informed practice is promoted, with schools employing Emotional Literacy Teaching Assistants (ELSAs) to work with individuals and small groups of pupils who are presenting with emotional difficulties which impact on relationships with others and on readiness to learn.

Parents and carers will be involved in any decision making about their child being on the SEND register. SENDCos oversee the management of the SEND register, including keeping track of those being monitored and under consideration.

Health

The School Nursing service can offer advice/support for pupils where there are health-related concerns. Drop-in sessions are available at the Partnership's secondary academies, but also regular appointments can be made. The school Nurses can meet with parents/carers of pupils with medical needs and support the setting up of healthcare plans. Training sessions for staff ensure pupils' support needs are understood, ensuring correct management.

Emotional wellbeing is promoted across the Unity Schools Partnership, with workshops and training offered to staff.

3. Responsibilities and Resources

The Special Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENCO) in each academy takes responsibility for the strategic development and day to day operation of the SEND policy and co-ordination of special needs provision, working closely with staff, parents/carers and external agencies. The SENCO also provides professional guidance to colleagues so that pupils with SEND have full access to the curriculum, ensuring the school is meeting its statutory duties. The SENCO has the additional responsibility for ensuring all pupils' SEND records are kept up to date.

Leaders in schools who are not the SENCO share in the responsibilities for monitoring progress and provision within their departments for children who struggle including those with SEND.

The Partnership's CEO and the headteachers have responsibility for the overall management of provision for all pupils. A Team of SEND Directors support this work offering guidance and expertise.

The SEND Governor for each academy has responsibility to meet regularly with the SENCO. They report back to the whole governing body, which has responsibility to ensure policies and procedures meet statutory requirements, and that the school is using SEND funding

appropriately. The trust provides two levels of governor training on SEND: one for all governors and one for the named SEND governor from each school.

The duties of the Local Governing Body on behalf of the trust are set out in the SEN Code of Practice 2015. (see link below)

Specialisms

All the Academies' SENCOs have or will be working towards attaining the NPQSENCO qualification. A comprehensive programme of continuing Professional Development is undertaken by all staff working within the Partnership's SEND teams. The trust will keep SENCOs and aspiring SENCOs up to date with changes in SEND training opportunities and requirements as they alter nationally through a range of channels including SENCO network meetings, conferences and newsletters.

Identification, Assessment and Review

The importance of partnership with parents in the identification and initial assessment process cannot be overstated. Parents must have the opportunity to share their knowledge and concerns about their child and they must feel confident that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon. (SEN Code of Practice P1.7)

The identification of SEN within Unity Schools Partnership is through the overall monitoring of progress for all pupils.

The Partnership academies follow the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years' graduated approach regarding the identification, assessment, and review of pupils with special educational needs. The four key actions are:

Assess:

Class/subject teachers are responsible for tracking all learners' progress. Where a pupil is under-performing, a teacher will adapt their teaching. If no progress is evident, the teacher will liaise with the SENCO to discuss current provision and appropriate interventions.

Further adaptations will be applied and continue to be monitored. If, after a second cycle of support has been implemented, there is no or very little progress, the SENCO will undertake further assessments to identify areas of difficulty. Specialist assessments by external agencies may also be requested.

Plan:

Following assessments (which may include psychometric, norm-referenced assessments), the SENCO will feed back to teachers and parents. Further strategies for support will be agreed. The pupil will be involved in this process of identifying

what helps them to learn best.

Do:

The class/subject teachers remain responsible for the progress of all pupils. Where interventions involve group or 1:1 teaching away from the main teacher, he/she still retains responsibility for that pupil's learning. Longer-term progress for all pupils will be tracked by senior members of staff in the academies.

Review:

The effectiveness of the support will be reviewed regularly.

All children and young people with complex needs will usually have a one-page profile (pupil passport). This will outline the hopes and aspirations of the pupil, the difficulties the pupil is experiencing, support strategies with statements by the pupils regarding how they are going to help themselves. Targets will be written with the pupil and will be discussed with parents. These will be reviewed regularly, at least three times a year, with pupils and parents to monitor progress.

All SENCOs monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions provided and their value for money. Schools may choose to use a commercial provision mapping tool. Provision Maps enable the SENCO to track interventions across the school and monitor and evaluate the cost and impact of provision.

Within the Partnership Academies there are specialists who can support staff across the Trust to develop quality first teaching, supporting inclusion and ensuring pupils with literacy needs and communication needs can make good progress. This includes our SEND Directors, subject specialists, our special schools such as Churchill school for pupils with communication and interaction needs and Sir Bobby Robson, a school for children with SEMH, our mainstream schools who have already achieved the inclusion award, and our schools with specialist hubs. We are determined as a trust to be able to meet the needs of all learners and to make best use of our collective expertise.

SEND and Additional Needs Register

All pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will automatically be placed on the academies' SEND register. 'E' annotation

Pupils may be placed on academies' SEND register as 'supported' if they present with more complex needs and within-class support has not impacted positively on progress. This will be done in consultation with parents/carers. 'K' annotation

Pupils may be placed on the school's 'monitoring' register if there are on-going concerns, which all staff should be aware of, where pupils may be at risk of underachievement.

The progress of all pupils on any register is monitored and reviewed regularly in partnership with parents/ carers. The numbers of pupils who are considered to need support or to have additional needs can change over time.

Education, Health and Care Plans

Where, despite action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of a pupil, but the pupil has not made expected progress, the school or parents should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment. To inform its decision the local authority will expect to see evidence of the action taken by the school as part of SEN support. (SEN Code of Practice 6.63)

In addition to the academies' usual systems of reporting progress, pupils with an EHC plan will have an annual review to evaluate outcomes from interventions and other support strategies. Teaching Assistants may attend these reviews along with other invited professionals; attendees at reviews are in line with individual needs.

From Y9, Annual Reviews must include a focus on supporting successful preparation for adulthood.

(All Local Authorities must publish their Local Offer, including information on the process for applying for an EHCP, links should be provided on individual academies' websites.

Academies should also ensure parents have information about their local SEND Information, Advice and Support Service – SENDIASS)

Transition

Transition into school and at important Key Stage changes can be a time of anxiety for children with SEND and their parents/carers. We recognise that in all transitions it is important to offer the opportunity for parents/carers to discuss the needs of their children, and any concerns with the receiving school staff. We recognise that parents/carers know their children best and therefore transition is considered the start or continuation of a partnership.

Early Years staff will liaise with pre-school settings to gain an understanding of children's skills so that strengths can be built upon and any gaps addressed. For very young children, early identification of SEND and timely assessments and interventions is essential to prevent difficulties escalating and impacting negatively on their self-esteem and long-term attitudes to learning. We know that the pandemic has had a particular impact on many children's language and vocabulary acquisition, and this may not be an indicator of a special educational needs but will require focussed attention.

Transition support between years will be offered to all pupils who are particularly anxious or who have complex needs. Parents/carers will also be involved in preparing

their children for change. Meetings with the receiving teacher will be offered and resources may be specifically prepared to be shared over the long summer holiday. Transition arrangements will be specific to individual schools.

At transition in Y7, SATs results and records from your child's previous school are available to staff to enable progression. Attainment data will be shared but not relied upon in identifying additional needs. It will instead only be used to help identify areas in which a child may require accelerated support.

The secondary school SENCO meets with Year 6 teachers and/or SENCO in all key feeder primary schools to gain information about more vulnerable pupils. Additional meetings with parents are encouraged.

The SENCO from secondary academies will be invited to attend Y6, and where possible, Y5 Annual Reviews so that an early relationship with pupil and parents can be built and preparation for the next Key Stage can be planned well in advance – particularly important for children with the most complex needs.

Tracking Progress

The tracking of progress is on-going. Each academy will have its own internal assessment systems in addition to several Partnership-wide formative assessment measures.

- Class/subject teachers monitor pupils' progress through classwork, homework and assessments – referrals to the SENCO are made for pupils not making progress despite classroom-based support strategies being put in place.
- In primary and secondary academies standardised assessments, which provide diagnostic information, are carried out in Early Years, KS1, 2 and 3.
- All planned interventions will be monitored for effectiveness in meeting expected outcomes.

Support arrangements

Quality first teaching, appropriately adapted is the first step in responding to pupils who may or may not have SEN. If pupils do not make progress despite a variety of teaching strategies and approaches being in place within a well-constructed curriculum, then the SENCO will undertake additional assessments to identify if pupils have any underlying learning needs.

Following discussion with subject teachers, pupils and parents/carers the most suitable support arrangements will be put in place. This may include Teaching Assistant support. Teaching Assistants may work with individuals and small groups on focused learning tasks under the direction of teachers and in alignment with the main curriculum. Teaching Assistants and class/subject teachers will plan support arrangements in advance of lessons,

and feedback from interventions will be given. Skills (and the knowledge blocks underpinning them) focussed on in interventions will be reinforced in class to ensure long-term impact.

In addition to the SENCO, the Partnership's academies have a number of support staff. All Academies have Teaching Assistants. The role of the Teaching Assistants across the Partnership may differ depending on the diversity of needs of learners. All Teaching Assistants will have access to quality training, and many will have developed specialisms.

The Teaching Assistants' role is often to help pupils to develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning. Teaching Assistants may be deployed to deliver high-quality one to one and small group support through providing pre- and post-teaching opportunities and targeted, time-limited, structured interventions. Teaching Assistants may support teaching staff through making additional resources for individual pupils. Only in very exceptional cases will a Teaching Assistant work with an individual pupil for extended periods during the day. Teaching Assistants will work in partnership with class/subject teachers and leaders, enabling all learners access to quality first teaching.

Additionally, personal support assistants are trained to provide personal care for pupils with physical disabilities.

Access Arrangements for national curriculum tests/public exams

In Y6, teachers may make additional arrangements to allow pupils with specific needs to take part in KS2 SATS. These arrangements will be based on normal classroom practice. They are not designed to provide an unfair advantage, but to compensate for disadvantage.

For public exams in KS4/5, Exam Access Arrangements are put in place for pupils meeting the Joint Council for Qualifications' criteria. The need for Exam Access Arrangements should have been identified well in advance of exams taking place, with the exception of an injury, so that pupils are very familiar with the arrangements. Special Consideration may be given to pupils facing exceptional circumstances occurring during the exam period.

A range of Access Arrangements are available, including the use of a reader, scribe, laptop or having extra time. For some pupils, enlarged papers and voice activated software is provided. For pupils to qualify for Exam Access Arrangements, there must be evidence of a history of need provided by subject teachers. Pupils and parents/carers are asked for consent before requests are made to exam boards. Assessments are carried out by the SENCO/Specialist Assessor and applications processed by the academy's Exams Officer. Access Arrangements are only granted to pupils when this is their 'normal way of working'.

Working with other agencies

All academies work in partnership with professionals from a range of local agencies –

including County Advisory Services, Educational Psychology Services, Health and Social Care on a needs led basis. Speech and Language Therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, or Mental health providers may work with pupils in schools. A teaching assistant may attend these sessions (as appropriate) to ensure programmes are followed up in the classroom.

4. Accessibility

Individual academies' Accessibility Plans aim to

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the school in order to help pupils with disabilities to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school; and
- improve the delivery to pupils with disabilities of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled

Each academy's Accessibility Plan is reviewed regularly. Environmental alterations are made to accommodate pupils with physical and sensory needs. Individual evacuation plans are in place for all wheelchair users.

Manual Handling training is updated regularly for Teaching Assistants and other support staff as required.

5. Behaviour

Behaviour

Positive behaviour and attendance are essential foundations for a creative and effective learning and teaching environment in which all members of the academy community can thrive and feel respected, safe and secure – in a positive climate for learning.

Principles

The Behaviour Policy of all academies forms an integral part of their curriculum. We believe it is important to teach values such as respect, fairness and inclusion as well as knowledge and skills. These clear values are reflected in the Partnership's principles and in the social, moral and religious education programmes and the development of social and emotional aspects of learning in our schools.

The highest standards of behaviour and conduct is expected, with support and encouragement provided from all members of our Partnership communities as we base our teaching and our school ethos on these values, whether in or out of school, at weekends and after school hours.

We appreciate that for some of our younger pupils, and some older pupils with more complex needs, positive behaviour still needs to be fully developed and our academies are committed to supporting them to become responsible, resilient, well behaved young people. School behaviour policies are implemented with a reasonable degree of adjustment in expectation and support in line with individual needs. Consequences for lapses in appropriate behaviour are also adjusted to be in line with individual understanding and maturity.

Racial, Religious and Sexual harassment and Bullying

Our Partnership strives to promote equality and eradicate all forms of bullying in all its academies.

Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated. Adults are advised to follow reporting procedures as outlined in the individual academies' anti-bullying policies. Sanctions and restorative justice approaches are used as appropriate to the circumstances, and in some cases the police will be contacted.

We recognise that pupils with SEND can be particularly vulnerable to bullying, and that children with communication difficulties may be unable to recount events. It is important that parents have confidence these vulnerabilities are taken into account by staff when dealing with issues of bullying involving pupils with SEND.

Please see our separate policies for safeguarding and behaviour for more details.

6. Complaints

Complaints Policies can be found on individual academies' websites.

There is a clear staged approach to complaints, however the Partnership expects that before seeking to use the formal policy the complainant:

- a) will have raised the matter with a relevant member of staff, if the matter relates to a pupil.
- b) will have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution.

Please see separate complaints policy for more details.

Data Protection

Unity Schools Partnership and all our schools comply with the GDPR (General Data Protection Requirement) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Each school in the Partnership has a data protection lead and the Partnership has a Data Protection Officer (DPO). More detail about our commitment to data protection can be

found in the following policies, which are available on the Partnership website:

- Combined data protection and freedom of information policy
- Records retention policy
- Pupil privacy notice

Information about someone's physical or mental health or condition is regarded as sensitive personal data and is treated with greater care than other personal data. We may share personal data, including sensitive personal data, with professionals providing services connected with SEND (special educational needs or disabilities) support.

The Data Protection Act gives children rights over their own data, e.g. whether to be photographed or videoed, when they are considered to have adequate capacity to understand. Most children will reach this level of understanding at around age 12. For this reason, for most pupils in a secondary school, it will normally be up to the individual child to decide whether to be photographed or videoed. Where the school considers that the child does not have the capacity to make such a decision the school will act as it considers to be in the best interests of the child and in doing so will take account of any stated parental preference. For more detail please see the photography and video policy, which is available on the Partnership website.

SEN Code of Practice:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

