



Trust Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion

Policy type	Trust wide (Tier 1)
Review	Annually
Author/Responsible Officer	SEND and Disadvantage Lead
To be ratified by	Education and Ethos Committee
Approved by	Trust Board
Date of ratification	February 2026
Date of next review	January 2027

This policy is a mandatory policy for all DSAMAT Academies and must be implemented without any amendments

Our mission, vision and values

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The Trust has a clear **mission** at its core, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to flourish, rooted in God's Love - academically, socially, spiritually, physically and mentally. This is central to our work and rooted in our Christian foundation (John 10 v 10). Our commitment to mutual flourishing within the school community is built upon our shared belief in Church of England principles. In our Trust, just as in the wider Church of England community, flourish' refers to prospering, thriving and growing. It means prayerfully encouraging all within our schools so that they might prove fruitful, successful and contented in the longer term. We seek to provide space generously for all to flourish in life and all its structures. Equitable treatment for all pupils, staff and the wider community is a core part of enabling this long-term, holistic flourishing.

We have a clear **vision** about creating successful schools for the benefit of their communities and we expect every school in our Trust to continuously improve. All schools provide rich and diverse curricula which evolve to meet the needs of their children and local communities, as well as delivering educational excellence to enable them to continue to flourish in later life.

The way we work and deliver against our mission is critical to our Trust. We have shared, agreed **values** of:

Hope; Nurture; Equality; Respect; Collaboration

The Our Trust's vision is underpinned by a Christian values framework which is adopted by all schools. It provides clear expectations for all Trust employees on how we wish our values to impact on all areas of school life. It draws on, and is informed by, the National Church of England Vision for Education and the Diocesan Board of Education Vision."

Each school within the Trust has a personalised vision for education, developed locally to reflect the individual character and needs of the school community. This vision is underpinned by the Trust's wider vision, and agreed with the Trust, but it is owned and driven by the headteacher and their LGB.

Our community

The Trust are dedicated to delivering education that serves local communities. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those from all and no faiths, from all abilities and backgrounds. We believe in providing a high-quality education, underpinned by Christian values, which enables every child to flourish.

Underpinning all of the Trust's work is a belief in educational excellence. The Trust serves all stakeholders by providing schools with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care.

Our schools are places where pupils develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally, and spiritually. All of the Trust's schools teach a broad and balanced curriculum within national guidelines focusing on core skills. This is designed to ensure that all pupils reach their academic potential and seek to enrich their experience along the way. Pupils will be enabled to succeed in an atmosphere of high expectations, aspiring to educational excellence with a firm foundation of values.

This policy forms part of our Trust governance and ensures that we are held to the highest standards as we carry out our duties.

Our commitment

We believe that inclusion is central to educational excellence.

We are committed to:

- high expectations for all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged
- inclusive, ambitious curricula that are accessible to all
- early identification and reduction of barriers to learning and wellbeing

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- shared responsibility for SEND and inclusion across all roles

Every leader is a leader of SEND and inclusion, and every teacher is a teacher of SEND.

Statement of Intent

This is the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) over-arching SEND and Inclusion policy and must be implemented and adhered to in each of the academies within the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust along with those working within the central team.

This policy will also be implemented and adhered to from the first day of any other school joining the Trust.

For the remainder of this document, the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust will be referred to as DSAMAT.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our Trusts vision, mission and aims make clear expectations for the growth, development and progression of all pupils, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, and those who may face barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. DSAMAT is committed to ensuring every pupil can flourish both educationally and pastorally.
- 1.2 Inclusion is central to the Trusts work. The Trust expects all schools to identify and reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing for all pupils, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers.
- 1.3 Leaders are expected to ensure that staff understand the range of barrier pupils may face and that systems are in place to support timely and accurate identification.
- 1.4 Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion are a strategic priority. All leaders are accountable for SEND and Inclusion and all teachers are responsible for the progress and outcomes of pupils with SEND.
- 1.5 The Trust is committed to ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. High expectations must be maintained for all pupils, including those with SEND. The Trust expects schools to recognize high quality teaching as the foundation of effective inclusion.
- 1.6 The Trust expects schools to work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, and external professionals to support pupils learning, wellbeing and outcomes.
- 1.7 The Trust sets clear expectations for respectful and inclusive language. Person-first terminology must be used in relation to pupils with SEND and all communication and practice across the Trust must reflect positive and respectful attitudes towards SEND and Inclusion.
- 1.8 This policy has been developed as a Trust-wide policy through stakeholder consultation and is approved as a non-negotiable framework for all schools.

Aims and Objectives

- 1.9 In line with the Children and families Act (2014), the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equalities Act (2010), this policy sets out the Trusts non-negotiable expectations for SEND and Inclusion. All schools must demonstrate that the following conditions are met:
 - high-quality teaching is the foundation of provision for all pupils with SEND and that any differentiation adaptations or interventions build upon this foundation rather than replace it.
 - All pupils are enabled to access, participate and benefit from all aspects of school life including the curriculum, through the identification and reduction of barriers to learning and wellbeing.
 - The contribution of all pupils is valued, and pupils are enabled to participate fully in the life opportunities of the school.
 - Barriers to learning and participation are identified early and accurately, and effective support is in place to reduce those barriers, so that pupils experience success and achieve strong outcomes with high expectations maintained for all pupils including those with SEND
 - A graduated approach consistent with the SEND Code of Practice, is in place to identify, plan for, review and respond to pupils' needs and is used effectively where additional support is required.
 - Parents/carers are engaged as partners in decisions about support and provision.
 - Pupils are meaningfully involved in decisions about their support, listening to their views and aspirations and taking these into account when planning provision

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- Where appropriate, external professionals and agencies are engaged to support pupils' needs effectively.
- work in partnership with parents/carers, involving them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for their child
- Work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the needs of individual pupils
- Statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 are met, including making reasonable adjustments to prevent for pupils with protected characteristics from being placed at a substantial disadvantage
- Local Governing Boards are enabled to fulfill their statutory monitoring responsibilities in relation to SEND and Inclusion
- The SENCO has the authority, time and resources to carry out their role effectively in co-ordinating provision and supporting staff
- Staff are appropriately trained and supported to deliver high quality teaching and learning for all pupils
- Safeguarding arrangements recognize that children with SEND can face additional vulnerabilities and appropriate systems are in place to ensure all pupils are kept safe

2. Definitions

Term	Core Definition	Key Groups Included
Pupils with SEND	<p>The definition of Special Education Needs, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2015:</p> <p>‘A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.’</p> <p>2.2 Section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014 states that a child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to</p> <p>for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:</p> <p>a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or</p> <p>b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils with SEN support (K) - Pupils with EHC plans - Pupils with disabilities

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	same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.	
Disadvantaged Pupils	Pupils who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, primarily defined by pupil premium eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ever 6 FSM pupils - Looked-after children - Previously looked-after children - Pupils with a social worker - Pupils with a child in need (CIN) plan
Inclusion	<p>We define inclusion as ensuring that all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, are identified early, supported effectively, and enabled to access, participate in and achieve within a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.</p> <p>This definition aligns with our duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice 2015, and the Equality Act 2010.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disadvantaged pupils - Pupils with SEND - Pupils known or previously known to social care. - Pupils who may be considered vulnerable or at risk - Other pupils facing barriers (context-specific) <p>A child from any other group that you have identified as significant to your school's context, which could be for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) ○ Young carers ○ Pupils from specific ethnic minority groups ○ Pupils with a refugee or asylum-seeking backgrounds ○ Pupils from service families

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Meeting the needs of pupils with SEN is everyone's responsibility. This policy sets out the specific responsibilities relating to each role.

3.2 All schools must have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). The SENCo must be a qualified teacher working at the school. All SENCos must complete the mandatory SENCo

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qualification within three years of appointment. Since September 2024, this is the National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for SEND. SENCOs appointed before 1 September 2009 are not required to take the NPQ but will be expected to ensure compliance with the regulations.

3.3 The SENCO must have sufficient authority within the leadership structure to make a positive difference for pupils with SEND. The SENCO will be a member of the senior leadership team and will have dedicated time and resources to carry out their role effectively.

3.4 Trust Board

Our Trust Board will:

- set strategic direction for SEND and inclusion across the Trust
- ensure equitable resourcing and capacity-building
- monitor outcomes, attendance and exclusions for pupils with SEND and those facing disadvantages
- ensure statutory compliance across all academies

3.5 Trust SEND and Disadvantage Lead

Our Trust SEND and Disadvantage Lead will:

- oversee implementation of this policy
- support schools in SEND strategy, leadership and practice
- provide Trust-wide guidance, templates and professional development
- lead annual Trust SEND reviews

3.6 Local Governing Boards

Local Governing Boards will:

- monitor SEND and inclusion provision and outcomes
- meet with the SENCO
- apply a SEND and inclusion lens to strategic decisions
- ensure statutory duties are met at school level

3.7 Headteachers

Headteachers are responsible for:

- overall SEND and inclusion provision and outcomes
- embedding a culture of inclusion and high expectations
- ensuring the SENCO has authority, time and resources
- ensuring staff receive appropriate training

3.8 SENCOs

SENCOs will:

- lead SEND strategy and coordination within the school
- support staff with identification, planning and review
- ensure accurate records and statutory compliance
- work with pupils, families and external professionals
- monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision

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3.9 Teachers

All staff will:

- take responsibility for pupils facing barriers to learning
- deliver high-quality, inclusive teaching
- implement agreed adaptations and support
- contribute to assessment and review processes
- promote independence and aspiration
- have responsibility and direct support staff to undertake specific identified support and interventions for pupils

3.10 Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

Work in partnership with the school to support their child's learning and development

- Communicate regularly with school staff about their child's needs, progress and wellbeing
- Participate in discussions and decisions about their child's support and provision
- Attend review meetings and contribute to the assessment and planning process
- Share their knowledge of their child and their aspirations for their child's future
- Inform the school of any changes in their child's needs or circumstances

4. Trust Vision for SEND and Inclusion

4.1 The Graduated Approach

The Graduated approach is used flexibly for pupils facing disadvantage or contextual barrier. We follow the graduated approach and the four-part cycle of assess, plan, do, review (APDR) as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.

Foundation: Quality-First Teaching

The graduated approach is built on the foundation of high-quality, inclusive teaching that is differentiated to meet individual needs. Before implementing the graduated approach, teachers will ensure that quality-first teaching strategies and classroom differentiation are in place. Where a pupil continues to make less than expected progress despite high-quality teaching, the graduated approach will be implemented.

Where pupils make less than expected progress, schools implement the four-part cycle:

- **Assess:** identify needs through assessment and dialogue
- **Plan:** agree with outcomes and support with pupils and parents/carers
- **Do:** implement support, led by the class teacher
- **Review:** evaluate impact and adapt provision

External specialists may be involved where needs are complex or persistent. Where appropriate, an Education, Health and Care needs assessment may be requested.

4.2 Assessing and identifying needs

Identification of SEND within DSAMAT is a whole-school, multi-disciplinary process and not a single

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event or the responsibility of one individual.

High-quality, teaching is the foundation of identification. Before considering whether a pupil has SEND, teachers will ensure that appropriate differentiation and adaptations are in place and that barriers within the classroom have been addressed. Where a pupil continues to make less than expected progress despite this, further assessment will be undertaken.

Slow progress alone does not automatically indicate SEND. Schools will consider a range of factors that may affect progress, including gaps in learning, attendance, wellbeing, safeguarding concerns, English as an additional language, and wider contextual or family circumstances.

Identification draws on shared professional judgement and evidence gathered collaboratively by teachers, the SENCO and wider staff, which may include pastoral, safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and EAL leads, alongside support staff who work closely with the pupil. This ensures that pupils facing multiple or overlapping barriers are identified accurately and supported holistically.

Schools use a range of information to inform identification, including ongoing assessment, observation, pupil voice, parental/carer insight, transition information and reports from external professionals where appropriate. Concerns identified by any member of staff must be shared promptly with the SENCO.

Where SEND support is agreed, parents/carers will be informed, and the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review will be implemented. Support will be reviewed at least termly to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

4.3 Partnership with Pupils, Parents/Carers and Professionals

DSAMAT values strong partnerships. Schools will:

- involve pupils in decisions about their support.
- work collaboratively with parents/carers.
- engage external professionals where appropriate.
- ensure effective transition between phases and settings.

4.4 Our approach to teaching learners with SEND

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class, including those with SEND. High-quality, teaching is the foundation of DSAMAT's approach to supporting pupils with SEND.

Schools will ensure that teaching is adapted appropriately so that all pupils can access the curriculum and make progress. This may include:

- adapting and differentiating the curriculum to reduce barriers to learning
- adjusting resources, staffing and learning environments where appropriate
- using shared knowledge of pupils' needs to inform consistent "everyday, every lesson" adaptations
- using appropriate assistive aids and technology
- adapting teaching approaches, including pace, language and structure
- providing targeted small-group or individual interventions where required

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SEND support is designed to enhance access to learning, promote independence and enable pupils to participate fully in the life of the school.

5. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

SEND and inclusion provision is monitored through:

- pupil progress and attainment
- readiness for next stages of education
- attendance and behaviour data
- review of SEND plans and EHCPs.
- pupil and parent voice
- Trust and governance review processes

Findings inform continuous improvement at school and Trust level.

6. Complaints about SEND provision

Concerns regarding SEND provision should be raised with the SENCO in the first instance, followed by the Headteacher if required. Unresolved concerns may be escalated through the Trust complaints process.

<https://www.stalbansdmat.co.uk/governance/key-documents/>

7. Links with other policies and documents

This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015) and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE Feb 2013)
- SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 (DfE 2015)
- Statutory Guidance on Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (last updated Aug 17)
- The National Curriculum in England Key Stage 1 and 2 framework document (Sept 2013)
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Complaints Policy
- Teachers' Standards (last updated Dec 21)

All Trust headteachers and special needs coordinators were invited to contribute to this policy.

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