

Trust Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Policy type	Trust wide (Tier 1)
Review	Annually
Author/Responsible Officer	Trust Inclusion Lead
To be ratified by	Education and Ethos Committee
Approved by	Trust Board
Date of ratification	January 2025
Date of next review	December 2025

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

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Our mission, vision and values

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 of 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 the 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 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 children and young people 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 expectation, 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.

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Statement of Intent

This is the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) over-arching SEND 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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Contents

1. Introduction

- Development of the policy
- Aims and objectives

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

3. Roles and responsibilities

4. Our approach to SEND

- The Graduated Approach
- Assessing and identifying needs
- Working in partnership with learners and families
- Our approach to teaching learners with SEND

5. Working in partnership with other professionals

6. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

7. Complaints about SEND provision

8. Links with other policies and documents

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our vision, mission and aims make clear our aspirations for the growth and progression of all children and young people in our care both educationally and pastorally, so that they can flourish.
- 1.2 Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is a focus for every school in our Trust: every leader is a leader of SEND and every teacher is a teacher of SEND.
- 1.3 As a Trust, we are committed to providing all pupils with access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- 1.4 This policy has been developed as a Trust-wide policy with stakeholder consultation.
- 1.5 Terminology: we believe the terminology used in relation to children who have Special Educational Needs is of great importance. We refer to children who have special educational needs or SEND (not special needs children or SEN / SEND children) and we use positive language relating to SEND.

Aims and Objectives

- 1.6 In line with the 2014 Children and families Act, SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equalities Act (2010), our special educational needs and disabilities policy will enable each school to:
 - identify, at the earliest possible opportunity, barriers to learning and ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and achieves their best possible educational outcomes
 - enable all children to participate in lessons fully and effectively, in line with the school's curriculum intent
 - value and encourage the contribution of all children to the life of the school and ensure that all children/young people are enabled to participate fully in all opportunities available to them
 - work in partnership with parents/carers, involving them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for their child
 - work with the Local Governing Boards to enable them to fulfill their statutory monitoring role regarding SEND
 - work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the needs of individual pupils
 - ensure that all staff have access to training and advice to support high quality teaching and learning for all pupils

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

2.1 The definition of Special Education Needs, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2015:

‘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.’

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 be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or

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b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

2.3 A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if they fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them. Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the main language at school.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Meeting the needs of children and young people 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 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 **SEND Coordinator (SENCO)** will:

- Promote and maintain an ethos of inclusion across the school
- Establish a strategic overview and work collaboratively with stakeholders to coordinate the provision for children and young people with SEND across the school
- Work jointly with leaders and stakeholders to promote a culture in which teaching and learning is ambitious, inclusive and person-centred and leads to improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Work with leaders and governors to ensure that SEND is an integral part of all the educational establishments' policies, strategic priorities and initiatives.
- Identify training needs and provide guidance to colleagues on teaching, supporting and identifying children and young people with SEND and advise on the graduated approach to SEND support.
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure pupils with SEND receive effective support and high-quality teaching.
- Identify, plan for and review the needs of children and young people with SEND and work collaboratively with all stakeholders in order to achieve agreed outcomes.
- Communicate with all internal stakeholders about the needs of children and young people with SEND and work with the headteacher to effectively deploy staff and resources to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of national and local legislation, guidance, and initiatives which may affect the school's relevant policies and practice relating to SEND.
- Gather, collate, critically analyse, interpret and evaluate qualitative and quantitative data. Use this to inform processes and practice to ensure best outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Monitor and evaluate attendance and exclusion rates for pupils with SEND in comparison to all other pupils in the school and use this to inform interventions and monitor outcomes for pupils.
- Chair meetings using a person-centred approach which focus on achieving best outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Manage systems to implement and maintain the educational establishment's adherence to SEND statutory regulations e.g. production of the SEN Information Report, co-production of

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Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) for children and young people with SEND and annual reviews.

- Work with parents, carers and children and young people with SEND to ensure that their views inform co-production and decision making.
- Support the school to use its best endeavours to make reasonable adjustments to provision so that all children and young people with SEND can access appropriate education (including personalised provision), whilst still maintaining access to a diverse, coherent and cumulative curriculum.
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEND policy and the coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND.
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and all support services.
- Work with the headteacher and local governing board to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Ensure the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND fully maintained and up to date.
- Monitor the effectiveness of any special educational provision made and where necessary secure relevant services provision.
- Liaise with parents/carers, external agencies and the Local Authority regularly to provide information on pupils' needs, provision and outcomes.
- Ensure that, where the pupil transfers to/from another school or provision, information on provision and SEND files are shared with the appropriate authority or the proprietor of that school or institution in accordance with GDPR.

3.4 The **Trust Board** will:

- Ensure that the local governing board (LGB) is fulfilling its responsibilities
- Monitor SEND provision in all DSAMAT schools, and such provision is appropriately resourced
- Appoint a link Director who regularly receives feedback from the Trust Inclusion Lead on provision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND

3.5 The **Trust Inclusion Lead**, has responsibility for:

- Overseeing the day-to-day implementation of this policy
- Ensure that an agreed, consistent approach is adopted
- Helping staff to identify and plan provision for children and young people with SEND.
- Supporting schools in adopting a graduated approach to providing SEN support. This may include devising strategies, providing support in setting targets appropriate to the needs of the students, and advising on appropriate resources and materials for use with students with SEND and on the effective use of materials and personnel in the classroom
- Assist in the monitoring and evaluation of progress of students with SEND through the use of school assessment information
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of national and local legislation, guidance, and initiatives which may affect the schools' relevant policies and practice relating to SEND and cascade to SENCos
- Contribute to the in-service training of staff as required through in-school support or CPD
- Provide a template for the school's SEN Information report at least annually, ensuring that relevant stakeholders are consulted
- Write and review the Trust SEND Policy annually, ensuring it is compliant with the legal framework and that all stakeholders are consulted.

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- Lead an annual SEND review in each school to support the review and development of the school's strategic direction in SEND

3.6 The Local Governing Board (LGB), usually through the work of the Designated SEND governor will:

- Meet with the SENCo termly, complete the designated SEND governor's report and provide both support and challenge to the school
- Ensure that the designated SEND governor's report receives appropriate consideration at the LGB meeting
- Triangulate on behalf of the Trust Board the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school and update the LGB on this termly.
- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at LGB meetings.
- Ensure all LGB members are familiar with Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice
- 'Think SEND!' - ensure that the impact for pupils with SEND is considered by the wider LGB for all strategic decisions.
- Work with the Headteacher and SENCo to support the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- Help to review the school's policy implementation and provision for pupils with SEND.
- Assure the LGB that the school website publishes the SEND Information Report that includes a working link to the SEND Local offer.
- Consider the culture, values and ethos of inclusion across the school
- Attend regular training on SEND and inclusion

3.7 The Headteacher will:

- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of pupils with SEND.
- Ensure that SEND is a whole school priority and maintain a culture and ethos of inclusion throughout the school
- Work with the SENCo and designated SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- Ensure that SEND is an integral part of all the educational establishments' policies, strategic priorities and initiatives.
- Ensure that "every leader is a leader of SEND" at the school.
- Ensure that the SENCo is either part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of the school or is regularly invited to SLT meetings to contribute and advise on whole school policies and practices and how these may impact on engagement and progress of SEND pupils.
- Ensure that the SENDCo has the knowledge, expertise and is given appropriate non-contact time to undertake their role efficiently and effectively.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of national and local legislation, guidance, and initiatives which may affect the educational establishments' relevant policies and practice relating to SEND.
- Ensure that the whole school CPD programme includes a robust SEND CPD offer.

3.8 Each teacher is responsible for:

As stated in the SEND Code of Practice, "**every teacher is a teacher of SEND**"

- The progress and development of every pupil in their class, including those with SEND
- Adapting teaching and curriculum for pupils with SEND and incorporating guidance provided by the SENCo and external professionals.
- Working closely with any additional adults to assess, plan, do and review support and interventions for each pupil with SEND in their class

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- Working with the SENCo to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision
- Setting high academic and behavioural expectations for all pupils, including pupils with SEND and supporting their achievement.
- Identify pupils with SEND in their class.
- Engage in the on-going SEND CPD offer

4. Our approach to SEND

4.1 The Graduated Approach

We follow the **graduated approach** and the four-part cycle of **assess, plan, do, review (APDR)** as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.



Assess: We will ensure that we regularly assess all pupils' needs so that each child's progress and development is carefully tracked compared to their peers and national expectations. We will listen to the views and experience of parents and the pupil. We may draw on assessments and guidance from other education professionals e.g. Educational Psychologists (EPs) and from health and social services.

Plan: Where SEND support is required the teacher, supported by the SENCo as needed, will put together a plan outlining the provision to be put in place for the pupil as well as the expected impact on progress and outcomes. This will be done in partnership with the pupil and parents and all staff who work with the pupil will be made aware of the plan.

Do: The class teacher is responsible for working with the pupil on a daily basis. The teacher will also liaise closely with teaching assistants or specialists who provide support set out in the plan and monitor the progress being made. The SENCO will provide support and guidance for the teacher.

Review: The impact of the plan will be reviewed each term by the teacher, SENCO, parent and pupil. This will inform the planning of next steps.

4.2 Assessing and identifying needs

Accurate and timely identification of special educational needs allows for tailored support to be provided as quickly as possible. We aim to identify pupils through:

- Effective transition arrangements with both parents and previous settings provides important information on the already identified areas of need or those areas in which there are concerns regarding a child's development.
- Class and subject teachers make regular assessments of progress for all pupils. These identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances. This can be characterised by progress which is:
 - significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
 - fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
 - fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
 - widens the attainment gap
- Reports from medical professionals or other support services who may be working with children to identify needs outside of the school setting.

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4.3 Working in partnership with learners and families

Schools have a duty to inform parents if educational provision is being made for their child (Children & Families Act 2014). We believe that parents of children/young people with SEND are invaluable partners in sustaining a culture of high expectations. Therefore, it is always our aim to:

- Seek and value the information that parents can provide that will be pertinent to supporting the education of their child
- Provide access to information concerning their children's needs and education
- Provide guidance to parents on how they can effectively support their child/young person at home
- Deal sensitively and effectively with any parental complaints about SEND provision.

4.4 Our approach to teaching learners with SEND

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the pupils in their class. High quality teaching is our first step in responding to pupils who have SEND. The following adaptations are made to ensure all pupils' needs are met:

- Adapting and/or differentiating the curriculum to ensure all pupils are able to access it
- Adapting resources and staffing
- Using the deep knowledge and understanding of our children and young people and information about their additional needs that is shared with all staff, for example so that they are aware of the 'every day, every lesson' adaptations that need to be made for pupils to maximise their learning.
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, visual timetables, larger font, etc.
- Differentiating and adapting teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.
- Providing small groups or 1 to 1 interventions to focus on key skills.

5. Working in partnership with other professionals

We recognise that specialist support may be needed to better understand the needs of children and young people. Whenever necessary the school will work with external support services such as:

- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- General practitioners or paediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services

6. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

This policy will be monitored and evaluated by each local governing board, headteachers, leadership teams and the governor responsible for SEND and SEND staff through:

- annual SEND reviews.
- monitoring of pupil progress against set targets
- information from pupil and parent voice questionnaires
- evaluation and review of curriculum provision
- internal and external audit
- SEN Information Report

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7. Complaints about SEND provision

Where parents have concerns about the SEND provision in their child or young person's school, they should, in the first instance, raise their concerns with the school's SENCo. If this remains unresolved, then further steps are outlined in the Trust Complaints Policy <https://www.stalbansdmat.co.uk/governance/key-documents/>

8. Links with other policies and documents

This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2015) 3.65 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 co-ordinators were invited to contribute to this policy.