



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

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This document applies to all schools and operations of the Vale Academy Trust. www.vale-academy.org

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Contents

1. Aims and objectives
2. Vision and values
3. Legislation and Guidance
4. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities
5. Definitions
6. Roles and responsibilities
7. SEND information report
8. Our approach to SEND support
9. Expertise and training of staff
10. Links with external professional agencies
11. Admission and accessibility
12. Complaints about SEND provision
13. Monitoring arrangements
14. Links with other policies and documents

In this document:

‘the Trust’, ‘we’ and ‘our’ means the Vale Academy Trust.

Parent refers to:

- All natural parents, whether married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child)

1. Aims and objectives

The Trust recognises that all students have the right to access a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum. Trust schools aim to create a safe, secure, educationally exciting and positive environment in which all students can develop to their full potential and become confident and independent learners.

Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy aims to:

- Make sure our Trust schools fully implement national legislation and guidance regarding students with SEND
- Set out how our Trust schools will:
 - Support and make provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities
 - Provide students with SEND access to all aspects of school life
 - Help students with SEND fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best
 - Help students with SEND become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
 - Help students with SEND make a successful transition into the next stage of their lives
 - Communicate with students with SEND and their parents or carers and involve them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the student
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for students with SEND
- Communicate with, and involve, students with SEND and their parents or carers in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the student
- Make sure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff

2. Vision and values

The Trust’s vision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is the same as for all students within our schools. The Vale Academy Trust aspires to be a family of schools

recognised for providing exceptional, stimulating, inclusive learning opportunities in a safe, happy environment where all can flourish; to inspire the highest standards of achievement and personal growth for all children within our schools: and through working together and sharing excellent practice, to support the learning needs of all within our local communities, preparing students for the future, seeking to continually improve levels of attainment and progress, and secure the highest levels of achievement as appropriate to the individual.

Our Trust schools:

- Provide all students with access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensure all our students have the chance to thrive and are supported in achieving their full potential
- Focus on creating inclusive environments, where provision is tailored to the needs and abilities of students, no matter how varied.

3. Legislation and guidance

This is based on the statutory [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#) and the following legislation:

- [Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), which sets out schools' responsibilities for students with SEND
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which sets out local authorities' and schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which sets out the school's responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes having a disability) and those who don't share it
- The [Governance Handbook](#), which sets out governance responsibilities for students with SEND
- The [School Admissions Code](#), which sets out the school's obligation to admit all students whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and its duty not to unfairly disadvantage children with a disability or with special educational needs. This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Inclusion and equal opportunities

The Trust schools strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all students, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. Schools are committed to offering all students the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

We will achieve this by high-quality teaching, making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the school environment to make sure that students with SEND are included in all aspects of school life, including enrichment opportunities.

5. Definitions

5.1 Special Educational Needs

A student has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a **learning difficulty or disability** if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

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.

5.2 Disability

Students are considered to have a **disability** if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

5.3 The 4 areas of need

The needs of students with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Students can have needs that cover more than one area, and their needs may change or improve over time.

Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the student’s particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

AREA OF NEED	
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<p>Communication and Interaction</p>	<p>Students with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or do not understand or use the social rules of communication.</p> <p>Students who are on the Autism Spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.</p>
<p>AREA OF NEED</p>	
<p>Cognition and Learning</p>	<p>Students with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers.</p> <p>A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific learning difficulties, which impacts one specific aspect of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Moderate/Severe learning difficulties impact learning across the curriculum, such as difficulties with processing, working memory, comprehension and retrieval • Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where students are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment
<p>Social, Emotional and Mental Health</p>	<p>These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Students may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder • Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and aspects of ASD • Suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and associated difficulties such as Attachment Disorders <p>These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the student becoming withdrawn or isolated.</p>

Sensory and/or Physical	<p>Students with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities or environment generally provided.</p> <p>Students may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment – or sensitivities extreme • A physical impairment <p>These students may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.</p>
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6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Board of Directors

The Trust's Board of Directors holds ultimate legal accountability for all outcomes for students, including matters concerning SEND. The Board sets overall policy for SEND through this policy document and delegates, through a Scheme of Delegated Authority, operational and procedural SEND responsibilities to the following groups and individuals.

6.2 The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB of each school, together with the Headteacher, has a responsibility for overseeing all aspects of the school's work, including provision for students with Special Educational Needs. The LGB is also required to do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any student who has Special Educational Needs. It should determine the school's general approach to provision for students with Special Educational Needs and establish the appropriate staffing and funding arrangements.

An appointed representative from a school's LGB should be actively involved with the Headteacher and SEND Coordinator (SENDCo) during self-review, when considering the provision for students with special needs and implementation of SEND procedures within the school. SEND should also be an integral part of the School Development Plan (SDP).

6.3 The SEND link governor

The SEND link governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing body meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school and update the governing body on this
- Work with the Headteacher and SENDCo to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school

6.4 The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Work with the SENDCo and SEND link governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school
- Work with the SENDCo and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for students with SEND and their progress
- Have responsibility for monitoring the school's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual students
- Make sure that the SENDCo has enough time to carry out required duties
- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of students on the SEND register
- With the SENDCo, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development
- With the SENDCo, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- With the SENDCo and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEND, both within the school, and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.5 Trust Director for Pupil Inclusion & Wellbeing

The Trust Director for Pupil Inclusion & Wellbeing has a Trust-wide responsibility for:

- Working with stakeholders to maintain the Trust SEND policy to ensure it is in accordance with current legislation, guidance and good practice
- Maintaining a strategic overview of SEND within Trust schools this may be through SEND audits, SEND learning walks and reviews of provision
- Sharing SEND information with Board Directors, as and when required
- Supporting the effectiveness of SEND provision within the schools on a needs basis
- Supporting and challenging the work of the Headteachers, SENDCo's and inclusion teams within the schools with regard to students with SEND
- Communicating with the local authority as required, to further support students with SEND across our Trust schools
- Leading of SENDCo forum meetings to inform and share best practice

6.6 The SENDCo

The SENDCo at our Trust schools will:

- Work with the Headteacher and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school
- Inform any parents that their child may have SEND and then liaise with them about the student's needs and any provision made
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the coordination of specific provision made to support individual students with SEND, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that students with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEND support and differentiated teaching methods appropriate for individual students
- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet students' needs effectively
- Be a point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA) and its support services, and work with external agencies to ensure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that students and parents are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned
- When a student moves to a different school or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a student's SEND and the provision for them is sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution in a timely manner
- Work with the Headteacher and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Advise the LA when a student requires an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan requires an early review
- Make sure the school keeps its records of all students with SEND up to date and accurate
- With the Headteacher, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development

- With the Headteacher, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- Prepare and review information for inclusion in the school's SEND information report and any updates to this policy
- With the Headteacher and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEND, both within the school and in comparison with other schools in the Trust and with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching
- Attend SENDCo forums across the trust regularly, with the aim of sharing good practice and developments with other Trust SENDCo's
- Investigate and assess students for potential reasons behind learning difficulties, liaising with appropriate professionals (both internal and external) to do so

6.7 Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is differentiated to meet student needs through a graduated approach
- The progress and development of every student in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENDCo to review each student's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the SEND information report
- Communicating with parents regularly to:
 - Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
 - Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
 - Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the student and the school
 - Listen to the parents' concerns and agree their aspirations for the student

6.8 Parents

Parents should inform the school if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

Parents of a student on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the student's SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. They will be:

- Invited to termly meetings (3 per year) to review the provision that is in place for their child
- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEND support outside school and any changes in the student's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with school staff, agree their aspirations for the student
- Given an annual report on the student's progress in school
- Informed when students are placed on to or removed from the SEND register

The school will take in to account the views of the parent in any decisions made about the student.

6.9 The Student

Student voice is highly regarded within the Trust. Students will be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the student:

- Explaining what their strengths and difficulties are
- Contributing to setting targets or outcomes
- Attending review meetings
- Giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions

The student's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible and appropriate.

7. SEND information report

The school publishes a SEND information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school.

The information report will be updated annually and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains.

8. Our approach to SEND support

8.1 Identifying students with SEND and assessing their needs

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) provides clear guidance on the processes for identifying students with potential SEND and the criteria for entry to the SEND register:

[OCC Guidance and policies about SEND](#)

This guidance and policies are also used to moderate whether the SEND provision is at an appropriate level, e.g. SEND register or EHCP.

When seeking to obtain an EHCP an application for an Education, Health Needs Assessment (EHCNA) needs to be made to Oxfordshire County Council, it will then be decided at panel if an EHCP is to be in place. This can be done by parents as well as any education, health or care professional working with the child.

The DfE's [Keeping Children safe in education](#) should also be referred to when identifying and working with students with SEND.

The [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) code of practice](#) supports an identification of need through a diagnostic approach. It is important to know what is working and what is not working for students. Class teachers will work alongside SENDCo's during this identification process.

Schools will assess each student's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the school. This will build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. Schools will also consider any evidence that the student may have a disability and, if so, what reasonable adjustments the school may need to make.

Class teachers will regularly assess the progress of all students and identify any whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better their previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example wider development or social needs.

When teachers identify an area where a student is making slow progress, they will target the student's area of weakness with differentiated, high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve, the teacher will raise the issue with the SENDCo to have an initial discussion about whether this lack of progress may be due to a Special Educational Need. Where necessary, in consultation with the student's parents or carers, they will consider consulting an external specialist.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a student is recorded as having SEND.

Potential short-term causes of impact on behaviour or performance will be considered, such as bullying or bereavement. School staff will also take particular care in identifying and assessing SEND for students whose first language is not English.

When deciding whether the student needs Special Educational provision, schools will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the student and their parents. Schools will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether they can provide this by adapting their core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

If a student is joining a school, and:

- The previous setting has already identified the need for SEND provision
- Is known to external agencies
- An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is already in place then the school will work in a multi-agency way to ensure that relevant information is obtained before the student starts, and support can be put in place as early as possible.

8.2 Consulting and involving students and parents

Trust schools will put the student and their parents at the heart of all discussions and decisions made about special educational provision.

When we are aiming to identify whether a student needs special education provision, we will have an early discussion with the student and the parents. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty
- Schools take in to account any concerns the parents have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the student
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

Notes of these early discussions will be added to the student's record and given to the parents.

Parents will be formally notified if it is decided that a student will receive special educational provision. Tools such as Pastoral Support plans and Inclusion Profiles could be used to support the co-ordination of student support. Parents will be included during this, and throughout many stages of the process.

8.3 The graduated approach to SEND support

Once a student has been identified as having SEND, schools will take action to remove any barriers to learning, and put effective special educational provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

1. Assess

The student's class teacher and the SENDCo will carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs using OCC guidelines. The views of the student and the parents will be taken in to account. The school may also seek advice from external support services.

The assessment will be reviewed regularly to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the student's need. For many students, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

2. Plan

In consultation with the parents and the student, the teacher and the SENDCo will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes and a clear date for review.

All staff who work with the student will be made aware of the student's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed. This information will be recorded using the school's electronic systems e.g, MS Teams and will be made accessible to staff in a student profile.

Parents will be fully aware of the planned support and interventions, and may be asked to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

3. Do

The student's class or subject teacher retains overall responsibility for progress.

Where the plan involves group or 1-to-1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the student. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.

The SENDCo will support the teacher in further assessing the student's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on how to implement support effectively.

4. Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the student's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

The impact and quality of support and interventions will be evaluated, based on:

- The views of the parents and the student
- The level of progress the student has made towards identified outcomes
- The views of teaching and support staff who work with the student

The teacher and the SENDCo will revise the outcomes and support in light of the student's progress and development, and in consultation with the student and the parents.

8.4 Levels of support

School-based SEND provision

Students who have an area of need, but who are managing in mainstream provision, will be put on the Inclusion register so teachers have information to support adjustments in the classroom.

Students receiving SEND provision will be placed on the school's SEND register. These students have needs that can be met by the school through the graduated approach. Where the student's needs cannot be adequately met with in-house expertise, staff will consider involving an external specialist as soon as possible.

The provision for these students is funded through the school's notional SEND budget.

On the census these students will be marked with the code K.

Education, health and care (EHC) plan

Students who need more support than is available through the school's school-based SEN provision may be entitled to an EHC plan. The plan is a legal document that describes the needs of the student, the provision that will be put in place, and the outcomes sought.

The provision for these students will be funded from the school's notional SEND budget, and potentially from the LA (from the high-level needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant).

On the census these students will be marked with the code E.

8.5 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

Trust schools evaluate the effectiveness of provision for students with SEND by:

- Tracking students' progress, including by using provision maps
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEND support
- Using student questionnaires to establish student voice

- Monitoring by the SENDCo
- Holding annual reviews for students with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from the student and the parents

9. Expertise and training of staff

As a Trust we acknowledge the need for additional training for school staff when working with students with SEND. Each Trust school is committed to gaining further expertise in the area of SEND. The Headteacher and the SENDCo will continuously monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development.

10. Links with external professional agencies

Trust schools recognise that they may not be able to meet all the needs of every student. Whenever necessary the school will work with external support services such as:

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

11. Admissions and accessibility

Trust schools have an admissions policy that details information on admissions for students with an EHC plan.

Trust schools also have an accessibility plan in place which details the steps the school has taken to:

- Prevent disabled students from being treated less favourably than other students.
- Provide facilities to help disabled students access the school, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services

The accessibility plan should also cover how schools will:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum and wider community of the school
- Improve the physical environment to enable disabled students to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

12. Complaints about SEND provision

Where parents have concerns about a Trust school's SEND provision, they should first raise their concerns informally with the SEND Team, steps may then be taken to raise further concerns with the Assistant Head, Deputy Head or Headteacher.

Schools will endeavour to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve concerns, parents will be referred to the Trust Complaints Policy which can be found on school websites.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Director for Pupil Inclusion & Wellbeing. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.

It will be approved by the Trust Board.

14. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents:

- SEND information report
- The Local Offer
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy