



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS and DISABILITY (SEND) POLICY

2025-26

Responsibility	SENDCo
Date of last review	October 2025
Date of next review	October 2026

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Date: 25.10.2025

Signed:

Head Teacher

Date: 25.10.2025

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS and DISABILITY (SEND) POLICY

Responsibility: Mrs Beata Payne (SENDCo)

Compliance:

This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 (January 2015, updated April 2020) and has been written with reference to the following guidance documents:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations and applies to England
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
- The Children and Families Act 2014 (Transitional and Saving Provisions) (No 2) Order 2014
- Articles 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Equality Act 2010

1. Aims of the Policy

This policy sets out the principles and procedures for the education of pupils with special educational needs at The Aspire Academy. The Aspire Academy, part of ESTEEM Multi-Academy Trust, aims to engender a sense of community and belonging, and to offer new opportunities to learners who may have experienced previous difficulties. The Aspire Academy is committed to inclusion and responding to all the needs of its pupils by providing an appropriate and high-quality education for all the young people it serves. Accordingly, provision for pupils with special educational needs will be based on the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years January 2015 and will involve all members of staff.

We believe that all young people, including those identified as having special educational needs, have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, helping to equip them for adult life with their wellbeing being at the forefront of the provision provided. The Aspire Academy will:

- Work within the guidance provided within the SEND Code of Practice, January 2015;
- Make appropriate adjustments for those with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) by taking action to ensure access to all areas of the learning experience thereby allowing them to achieve to their full potential and enjoy their learning;
- Ensure that children and young people with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEND enabling them to be fully included in all aspects of school life;
- Raise the aspirations of, and expectations for, all pupils including those with SEND;
- Request, monitor and respond to the views of parents/carers and pupils in order to evidence high levels of confidence and partnership;
- Operate a 'whole pupil, whole school' approach to the management and provision of support for special educational needs;
- Provide a Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo) who will work in accordance with the SEND Policy;

- Work with ESTEEM MAT to provide support and advice for all staff working with special educational needs pupils, thereby ensuring a high level of staff expertise to meet pupils' needs through well targeted continuing professional development;
- Support pupils with medical conditions to achieve full inclusion in all school activities by ensuring consultation with health and social care professionals to meet the medical needs of pupils;
- Work productively with other outside agencies to ensure there is a multi-professional approach to meeting the needs of all vulnerable learners;
- Ensure that the wellbeing needs of the pupils are met by developing strong, supportive relationships in school and providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for pupils to engage in their learning.

The Aspire Academy recognises that pupils' health and wellbeing is dynamic and changeable and at times pupils will need more support and guidance.

If parents/carers require further information about the provision for SEND in the school, please talk to the class tutor or contact the Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCo), Mrs. Beata Payne or Assistant SENDCOs: Mrs Jodi Conyers/ Megann McStay.

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The Aspire Academy uses the definition for SEN and Disability from the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015). This document states:

Special Educational Needs (SEN):

'A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has:

- *a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her;*
- *has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age;*
- *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.*

Disability:

'Many children and young people who have SEND may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer'. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between children and young people with disabilities and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEN definition.'

3. Identifying Special Educational Needs

The SEND Code of Practice January 2015 suggests that pupils are only identified as having a special educational need (SEND) when their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision different from, or additional to, that normally available to pupils of the same age.

The Aspire Academy recognises that early identification of a pupil's SEND together with appropriate multi-agency support is essential if a young person is to access the opportunities available at the Academy.

Upon arrival at Aspire, all pupils will participate in a two-day induction programme to help identify educational needs and areas for support and intervention. The process takes the form of online testing to establish English and Maths levels, phonics screening as well as to see if intervention is required.

In addition to baseline academic assessments in key subjects, opportunities will also be provided to explore pupils' social and emotional needs and to discuss wellbeing concerns. Thrive Practitioners—including the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead, SENDCO, and Assistant SENDCOs—carry out Thrive screenings and sensory audits through informal, supportive conversations with pupils. The insights gained from these discussions are then shared with relevant staff, and each pupil is carefully assigned to an appropriate tutor group to ensure ongoing support and inclusion.

The SEND Code of Practice January 2015 clearly states that special educational provision should be matched to the child's identified SEN. The Aspire Academy will try to secure special educational provision for pupils for whom this is required; that is 'additional to and different from' the provision provided within the differentiated curriculum, to better respond to the four broad areas of need:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional, mental health
- Sensory/physical

The Aspire Academy will know a pupil needs extra help by:

- Reflecting on the results of the baseline assessments – principally around English and Maths testing - on arrival at the school, and conversation with parents/carers, and the pupil
- Working closely with colleagues from commissioning schools on transition and during placement to ensure that all relevant information and data is effectively shared and informs the provision;
- Ensuring clear referral routes for staff wishing to bring to the notice of the SENDCO a pupil who may have SEN;
- Listening to concerns raised by pupils, parents/carers, external agencies, teachers, teaching assistants or the pupil's commissioning school regarding a pupil's level of progress or inclusion;
- Regular screening of data, such as that completed on entry or as a result of a concern being raised by any member of staff;
- Undertaking whole school tracking of attainment, identifying areas of concern;
- Identifying through observation that a pupil needs extra support in one or more of the four broad areas of need.

4. What should a parent/carers do if they think their child may have special educational needs?

If parents/carers have concerns relating to their child's learning, then these should be raised with their child's tutor or The Aspire Academy's SENDCo, Mrs. Beata Payne, who can be contacted on 01905 455422 or via email on bpayne@theaspireacademy.org.uk. Weekly SEND Surgeries are available to parents.

All parents/carers will be listened to. Their views and their aspirations for their child will be central to the assessment and provision that is provided by The Aspire Academy.

5. A Graduated Approach to SEND Support

The Aspire Academy follows the guidance as set out in Worcestershire County Council's Graduated Response which states that:

'Where a child or young person is identified as having Special Educational Needs, educational establishments should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This is called SEN support. Support should take the form of a four-part cycle involving the parent/carers and the child/young person. By taking this approach, earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the child/young person needs and of what support will help to secure good progress and good outcomes. This approach is known as the Graduated Response'.

More detailed information about the Graduated Response can be found on the following link http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20613/send_school_provision_and_education_health_care_plans_ehcp/1798/send_education_provision/3

The needs of the majority of pupils will be met in the classroom. Teachers and teaching assistants are expected to make every effort to ensure that pupils with SEND are fully involved in the life of the class. For some pupils, it will be necessary for them to be withdrawn from the classroom at specific times for activities related to the needs identified. This will complement the classroom work so that skills, knowledge and understanding will be transferred back into the classroom or vocational placement setting.

On referral to The Aspire Academy, pupils are assessed using the GL Assessment Programme, currently comprising of: New Group Reading Test (NGRT), New Group Spelling Test (NGST), Progress Test in Maths (PTM) as well as the Ruth Miskin Phonics assessment. Additionally Thrive and sensory audits are completed. The data obtained from the assessments informs the baseline data for each pupil and highlights areas of need which may require support.

Reports received from external agencies are carefully reviewed by the SENDCo and then communicated to relevant staff members. Teachers and teaching assistants implement the recommended strategies and interventions accordingly. Pupil progress is regularly monitored, documented, and submitted back to the SENDCo for ongoing evaluation. All interventions are systematically recorded using the school's Provision Map software, which compiles individual pupil intervention records into a comprehensive whole-school provision map, enabling clear tracking of the impact and effectiveness of all support provided.

Teaching staff are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from learning leads or specialist staff. High quality teaching, adapted for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have, or may have, special educational needs.

The Aspire Academy will ensure that:

- All pupils will be provided with quality first teaching which is adapted to meet the diverse needs of all learners;
- Pupils with a disability will be provided with reasonable adjustments (such as auxiliary aids and services) to overcome any disadvantage experienced in school and increase their access to the taught curriculum;
- Access arrangements for examinations will be applied for, in line with the individual pupil's usual way of working and JCQ guidelines;
- The Aspire Academy regularly and carefully reviews the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This process includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving teachers' knowledge of the SEND most frequently encountered;
- The quality of classroom teaching provided to pupils with SEND is monitored through a number of process which include:
 - Classroom observations by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and external verifiers;
 - Ongoing data assessment of the progress made by all pupils;
 - Work sampling and scrutiny of planning to ensure effective matching of work to pupil need;
 - Teacher meetings with the SENDCo to provide advice and guidance on meeting the needs of pupils with SEND;
 - Internal SEN referrals;
 - Pupil and parent/carers feedback on the quality and effectiveness of interventions provided;
 - Teacher mark book scrutiny;
 - Attendance and behaviour records.
- All pupils have individual targets;
- Pupil attainments are tracked using the whole school tracking system and those failing to make expected levels of progress are identified quickly, support and intervention is then discussed and implemented;
- Where special educational provision is required to support a pupil's attainment, parents/carers will be informed that the school considers their child may require SEND support and their partnership is sought to implement this decision. The pupil's referring school will also be informed of this and support from their SENDCo will be sought;
- Action relating to SEND support will follow an 'assess, plan, do and review' model. As outlined in the SEND Code of Practice January 2015, parents/carers will be involved in planning support and, where appropriate, in reinforcing the provision or contributing to progress at home:
 - **Assess:** Data on the pupil held by the school will be collated by the teacher or teaching assistants in order to make an accurate assessment of the pupil's needs. Parents/carers will always be invited to this early discussion to support the identification of action to improve outcomes.
 - **Plan:** if review of the action taken indicates that 'additional to and different from' support will be required, then the views of all involved including the parents/carers and the pupil will be obtained and appropriate evidence-based interventions

identified, recorded and implemented by the class/subject teacher with advice from the SENDCo.

- **Do:** SEND support will be recorded on a plan that will identify a clear set of expected outcomes, which will include relevant academic and developmental targets (this may include targets around preparing for adulthood) that consider parents'/carers' aspirations for their child. Parents/carers and the pupil will also be consulted on the actions they can take to support attainment of the desired outcomes. This will be recorded and a date made for reviewing attainment.
- **Review:** progress towards these outcomes will be tracked and reviewed termly with the parents and the pupil.

If progress rates are still judged to be inadequate despite the delivery of high-quality interventions, advice will always be sought from outside agencies regarding strategies to best meet the specific needs of a pupil. The Aspire Academy will seek support from the pupil's referring school with regards to this. Such intervention will only be undertaken after parent/carer permission has been obtained and may include referral to:

- Special Educational Needs Support Service
- Complex Communication Needs Team
- Learning Support Service
- Worcestershire Dyslexia Pathway
- Umbrella Pathway Team Worcester, including the Integrated Specialist Support Service (ISSS)
- Hearing Impairment Team
- Visual Impairment Team
- Community Paediatrics
- Educational Psychologist Service
- Educational Welfare Officer
- Physical and Disability Support Service
- Social Services
- School Nurse or GP
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Worcestershire's Children's Service for Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT)

For pupils whose needs are significant/complex, and the SEND Support required to meet their needs cannot reasonably be provided from within the school's own resources, a request will be made to the local authority to conduct an assessment of education, health and care needs. This will be discussed with the commissioning school. This may result in an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) being provided.

Any pupil identified as having a SEND will be placed on The Aspire Academy's SEND register.

6. How will the curriculum be matched to each child's needs?

Teaching staff will plan sessions using pupils' achievement levels, adapting tasks to ensure progress for every pupil in the session. When a pupil has been identified as having special educational needs, the delivery and the learning environment will be further adapted by the session leader to reduce barriers to learning and enable the pupil to access the learning more easily. These adaptations may include strategies suggested by the SENDCo and/or external specialists, involve a bespoke timetable or outreach support. In addition, if it is considered appropriate, pupils may be provided with

specialised equipment or resources such as ICT and/or additional adult help. All actions taken by the session leader will be recorded and shared with parents/carers. Teaching staff will make a record of the pupil's usual way of working in the classroom such as the use of any resources, a scribe, a reader or specialised equipment for support which enables the pupil to access the learning as this evidence will be required when applying for access arrangements for examinations.

7. Continuing Professional Development

Through the monitoring and evaluation of our provision, the SENDCo with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will identify any professional development needs of the staff. This will, where appropriate, be closely linked to the academy's performance management objectives and school development plan. Staff who attend training will feedback on courses through staff meetings.

8. How will parents/carers know how their child is doing?

Attainment towards the identified outcomes will be shared with parents through SEND support reviews, but also through weekly tutor contact meetings/telephone conversations with parents/carers. Parents/carers are encouraged to arrange an appointment to discuss their child's progress with the individual session leaders or a member of the senior leadership team/SENDCo at any time when they feel concerned or have information they feel they would like to share that could impact on their child's success. The contact number is 01905 455422.

9. How will parents/carers be helped to support their child's learning?

Parents/carers are important partners in the effective working relationship with The Aspire Academy in raising their child's attainment. We recognise that families have valuable knowledge about their child and they are encouraged to be fully involved in the identification, assessment and decision-making process connected to their child's SEND needs. Various advice/support is available for parents/carers to help them with this:

- Please look at the school website www.theaspireacademy.org.uk and Aspire Facebook Page which links to websites and resources that we have found useful in supporting parents/carers to help their child learn at home - this information can be found under the SEND tab;
- The session leader or SENDCo may also suggest additional ways of supporting a child's learning;

10. What support will be available for children's overall wellbeing?

The Aspire Academy offers a wide variety of pastoral support for pupils. These may include:

- Key adults assigned to pupils;
- Wellbeing mentor sessions
- Parent/carer liaison;
- A Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum that aims to provide pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to enhance their emotional and social knowledge and wellbeing;
- Small group evidence-led interventions to support pupils' wellbeing are delivered to targeted pupils and groups. These interventions aim to support improved interaction skills, emotional resilience and wellbeing;

- Pupils who find times outside classroom difficult are provided with alternative small group opportunities within the school and action is taken to develop their social interaction skills via bespoke timetables or Twilight sessions;
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is reviewed annually by external agencies;
- We are a trauma informed and nurturing school for pupils who require additional social and emotional support as well as targeted academic learning opportunities
- There is the opportunity for pupils to receive CAMHS targeted intervention support, through the school Mental Health Lead.

11. Pupils with medical needs

Pupils with medical needs will be provided with a detailed Health Care Plan, compiled in partnership with recommendations received from the commissioning school's nurse and parents/carers and, if appropriate, the pupils themselves. Staff who administer medication will complete formal training in first aid.

All medicine administration procedures adhere to the Local Authority Policy and Department of Education (DfE) Guidelines included within Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions (DfE) 2015.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of school personnel regarding Special Educational Needs are given below. They are in accordance with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (January 2015) guidelines and school job descriptions:

Governing Board:

- In partnership with the Head Teacher, the Governors have responsibility for deciding the school's general policy and approach to meet the needs of pupils with SEND;
- Ensuring, through the appraisal process, that the Senior Leadership Team led by the Head Teacher sets objectives and priorities in the school development plan, which includes provision for SEND;
- Monitoring the policy through the school's self-review procedures;
- All Governors are informed of the school's provision, including funding, equipment and staffing;
- Reporting annually to parents on the school's policy through the website.

The Head Teacher:

- Sets objectives and priorities in the school development plan, which includes SEND;
- Has an overview of the day-to-day provision for pupils with SEND, including setting a budget for supporting pupils within the school's overall financial resources;
- Informs the Governing body of SEND provision.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator:

- Disseminates information and raises awareness of SEND issues throughout the school;
- Is responsible for the management of SEND provision and the day-to-day operation of the policy;

- Manages and develops the roles of SENDCO Assistants and Teaching Assistants, through identified training;
- Is actively involved in screening and identifying pupils' needs;
- Co-ordinates provision for pupils with SEND;
- Supports the teaching and learning of pupils with SEND;
- Maintains accurate records of all pupils with SEND;
- Monitors the implementation of the SEND Policy throughout the school;
- Annually reviews and amends the SEND policy to ensure it is kept up to date with ESTEEM Trust and Government policies and procedures;
- Deploys support, which includes Teaching Assistants;
- Liaises with and advises staff, giving clear guidelines for procedures when needs are identified;
- Maintains the Academy's SEND register and overseeing records of all young people with SEND;
- Liaises with the parents/carers of young people with SEND;
- Contributes to in-service training of staff;
- Provides support and advice to colleagues;
- Liaises with external agencies employed by referring schools;
- Consults with the SENDCOs from other schools to exchange data and information for referred pupils;
- Works with the SEND Team at ESTEEM MAT
- Attends SENDCO Network Meetings;
- Works alongside SENDCOs from referring school to write Education, Health and Care Plans for identified pupils;
- Works alongside the Exams Officer to apply for necessary access arrangements for examinations for pupils;
- Manages resources;
- Manages individual plans linked to pupils with SEND;
- Monitors and evaluates special needs provision and reports to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and governing body on the progress of SEND.
- Disseminates information and raises awareness of SEND issues throughout the school;
- Develops the School's annual SEND Information report;
- Undertakes reviews connected to Education, Health and Care Plans.
- Is the Teacher responsible for Looked After Children.

13. Supporting Pupils and Families

Local Offer: Worcestershire County Council, with partners, has developed a 'local offer' which allows families to easily find in one place services available in the local area for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities. This 'local offer' consists of a website that pulls in information about relevant organisations, services, schools and settings. It allows you to search for what is close by or for services that support a particular need. This 'Local Offer' Website can be found at <http://worcestershirelocaloffer.org.uk/>

The local offer links to the other Worcestershire County Council information sites which contain details about a range of services for children and young people www.worcestershire.gov.uk.

The 'local offer' website www.worcestershirelocaloffer.org.uk pulls in information about services, groups and providers including information from their Facebook and Yelp accounts. This means that all of the information is independent and allows organisations and services to update their own details.

All links to the above websites can be found on The Aspire Academy's website <http://www.theaspireacademy.org.uk/> under the SEND area.

Support Services for parents/carers of pupils with SEND include: Parent Partnership Services (PPS) offer independent advice and support to parents and carers of all children and young people with SEND. The nearest PPS can be located at <https://www.hwsendiass.co.uk/>. The PPS will also provide information on how to access an Independent Supporter for those parents whose children are being assessed for an EHCP. Independent Supporters aim to provide guidance to parents regarding the EHCP process. A FAQ factsheet on Independent Supporters is located here https://issuu.com/councilfordisabledchildren/docs/guidance_to_parents_on_is

Complaints Procedure: If parents/carers have a complaint concerning the provision for their child they should discuss this with the class tutor. If this proves unsuccessful, the matter should be referred to the SENDCo and/or Head Teacher. Should the matter still be unresolved, the parents/carers should contact the 'responsible person' on the governing body. If the complaint remains unresolved, the Chair of Governors should be involved. Final recourse is to take the complaint to the Secretary of State.

For parents/carers who are unhappy with the school responses to their child's SEND, parents may seek mediation from the regional mediation services. Parents and carers can also appeal to the Government's SEND tribunal if you disagree with the school's decisions about your child's special educational needs. You can also appeal to the tribunal if the school has discriminated against your disabled child. Follow the following link for information on mediation http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20616/mediation_send_local_offer.