Special Educational Needs Policy

September 2026

Approved by:	[Principal and Governing Body]	**Date:** [23/09/26]
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This policy is grounded in current SEND legislation, including the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equality Act 2010. It also reflects the direction of national reform as outlined in recent government publications, while recognising that statutory duties remain unchanged unless and until legislation is amended.

1. Aims and objectives

The Trust recognises that all students have the right to access a broad, balanced, relevant and adapted curriculum. We aim to provide a high-quality education and ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. We aim to be an exceptional Trust that provides an outstanding education for local children, ensuring they have the opportunities to develop into well-rounded global citizens.

Sunnyside Spencer Academy Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy aims to:

- Ensure we fully implement national legislation and guidance regarding students with SEND
- Set out how we will:
  - Support and make provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities
  - Provide students with SEND access to all aspects of academy life
  - Support students with SEND to fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best
  - Support students with SEND to become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
  - Support students with SEND to 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
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for students with SEND
- Ensure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff at *** Spencer Academy Trust

We are committed to inclusive practice, where most students' needs are met through high-quality classroom teaching and ordinarily available provision. We will support all students with SEND to achieve positive long-term outcomes, including independence, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood.

2. Vision and values

At Sunnyside Spencer Academy we provide all students, regardless of need, access to a broad and balanced curriculum, we are committed to ensuring that all students have the chance to thrive and support them to achieve their full potential. Our commitment to working together and sharing excellent practice, both within our academy and across the Trust, ensures that all students' needs are met, whilst also developing our staff to be inclusive and expert practitioners.

We are committed to creating/embedding an inclusive environment, where provision is tailored to the needs and abilities of all students, ensuring access to the curriculum and students being fully integrated into our academy life.

We aim to ensure that all students, regardless of need, can attain their best possible outcomes, inspiring the highest standards of achievement, whilst in an inclusive, safe and happy learning environment.

Our commitment to inclusion includes delivering high-quality adaptive teaching and ensuring that appropriate provision is in place to meet the needs of all learners within a graduated response.

3. Legislation and guidance

At Sunnyside Spencer Academy we ensure we follow and uphold the legislation and guidance available to us, this is based on the statutory guidance Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, Keeping Children Safe in Education and working together to improve academy attendance.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out academies' responsibilities for students with SEND
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out local authorities' and academies' responsibilities for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) information report
- The Equality Act 2010 (section 20), which sets out the academy'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 academy'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 Academy Admissions Code, which sets out the academy's obligation to admit all students whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the academy, and its duty not to disadvantage unfairly 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

At Sunnyside Spencer Academy we strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all students, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all students the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the academy environment to make sure that students with SEND are included in all aspects of academy life.

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

5.3 The four areas of need

The needs of students with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Students can have needs that cut across more than one area, and their needs may change 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	*THESE EXAMPLES ARE NOT EXHAUSTIVE
Communication and interaction	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 not understand or use the social rules of communication. Students who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.
Cognition and learning	Students with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including: • Specific learning difficulties, which impact one or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Moderate learning difficulties • Severe learning difficulties • 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.

AREA OF NEED	*THESE EXAMPLES ARE NOT EXHAUSTIVE
Social, emotional and mental health	These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Students may have: • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder • Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder • Suffered adverse childhood experiences These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the student becoming withdrawn or isolated.
Sensory and/or physical	Students with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. Students may have: • A sensory impairment such as visual impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment These students may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The SENCO

The SENCO at our academy is Sophie Bayliss

Contact: sbayliss@sunnysidespencer.org.uk

They will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEND and then liaise with them about their child's needs and any provision made
- Work with the Principal and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the academy
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual students with SEND, including those who have EHCPs
- 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 adaptive teaching methods appropriate for individual students
- Advise on the deployment of the academy's delegated budget and other resources to meet student's 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 make sure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the student and their parents/carers 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 are sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution in a timely manner
- Work with the Principal and academy governors to make sure the academy meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Make sure the academy keeps its records of all students with SEND up to date and accurate
- Along with the Principal, monitor teaching and learning to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development
- Along with the Principal, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the academy 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 academy's SEND information report and any updates to this policy
- Along with the Principal and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the academy's identification of SEND, both within the academy and in comparison, with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.2 The Trust and local body governing board

The trust and governing board are responsible for making sure the following duties are carried out:

- Co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer
- Use reasonable endeavors to make sure that every student with SEND gets the support they need
- Ensure that students with SEND engage in the activities of the academy alongside students who don't have SEND
- Make sure that the academy has arrangements in place to support any students with medical conditions
- Provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND
- Provide an annual report for parents/carers on their child's progress
- Record accurately and keep up to date the provision made for students with SEND
- Publish information on the academy website about how the academy is implementing its SEND policy, in an SEND information report

- Publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and the academy's accessibility plans
- Make sure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the academy and that the key responsibilities of the role are set out, and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out
- Determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of students with SEND

6.3 The SEND link governor

The SEND link governor is Emma Youd

The SEND governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the academy and update the governing board on this
- Work with the Principal and SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the academy

6.4 The Principal

The Principal will:

- Work with the SENCO and SEND link governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the academy
- Work with the SENCO and academy governors to make sure the academy 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 academy's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual students
- Make sure that the SENCO has enough time to carry out their duties
- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of students on the SEND register
- Advise the LA when a student needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHCP needs an early review
- With the SENCO, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development
- With the SENCO, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the academy 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 SENCO and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the academy's identification of SEND, both within the academy and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.5 Teachers

Each teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and delivering high-quality adaptive teaching (Quality First Teaching), which is the first response to meeting the needs of all learners
- SEND support will be implemented alongside, and not instead of high-quality teaching.
- 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 SENCO to review 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/carers 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 academy
    - Listen to the parents'/carers' concerns and agree their aspirations for the student

6.6 Parents/carers

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

Parents or carers 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 to review the provision that is in place for their child
- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEND support outside the academy and any changes in the student's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with academy staff, agree their aspirations for the student
- Given an annual report on the student's progress

The academy will take into account the views of the parents or carers in any decisions made about the student.

6.7 The student

Students will always 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.

7. SEND information report

Sunnyside Spencer Academy publishes a SEND information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the academy.

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

The SEND information report is our academies local offer.

8. Our approach to SEND support

8.1 Identifying students with SEND and assessing their needs

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

The academy delivers a graduated approach, including ordinarily available provision as part of universal and targeted support. This ensures that many students' needs can be met effectively without the need for additional statutory assessment, while recognising that this does not replace the legal right to request an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

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 adapted, high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve, the teacher will follow the referral process to the SENCO to have an initial discussion about whether this lack of progress may be due to a special educational need. Where necessary they will, in consultation with the student's parents or carers, 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. 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, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the student and their parents/carers. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it

through high-quality teaching and ordinarily available provision, or whether something different or additional is needed.

If a student is joining the academy, and:

- Their previous setting has already identified that they have SEND
- They are known to external agencies
- They have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

then the academy will work in a multi-agency way to make sure we get relevant information before the student starts at the academy, so support can be put in place as early as possible.

8.2 Consulting and involving students and parents/carers

The academy will put the student and their parents/carers at the heart of all 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 their parents/carers. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty
- We take into account any concerns the parents/carers have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child
- 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 their parents/carers.

We will formally notify parents/carers if it is decided that a student will receive special educational provision.

8.3 The graduated approach to SEN support

Once a student has been identified as having SEND, we 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 four-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

1. **Assess**

The student's class teacher/s and the SENCO will carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs. The views of the student and their parents/carers will be taken into account. The academy 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/carers and the student, the teacher and the SENCO will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes, and a clear date for review.

Support may include a combination of adaptive teaching strategies, reasonable adjustments and targeted interventions, depending on individual need.

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 on our management information system, Arbor, and will be made accessible to staff in a [student passport / individual education plan / academy-based support plan].

Parents/carers 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 their 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 SENCO 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.

We will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents/carers and students
- The level of progress the student has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the student

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

8.4 Levels of support

Academy-based SEND provision

Students receiving SEN provision will be placed on the academy's SEND register. These students have needs that can be met by the academy 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 academy's notional SEND budget.

In Arbor and on the census these students will be marked with the code K.

Within our local authority (LA) some K students may be eligible for Top Up Funding/High Needs funding which will be applied for when deemed appropriate by the SENCO.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Students who need more support than is available through academy-based SEN provision may be entitled to an EHCP. 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 academy recognises the legal right of parents/carers and young people to request an EHC needs assessment. Decisions to request or support such requests will be evidence-informed and based on the graduated response already in place.

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

Section F provision outlined in an EHCP is the legal duty of the LA to ensure this provision is delivered, Sunnyside Spencer Academy will endeavour to ensure the LA uphold this legal duty.

In Arbor and on the census these students will be marked with the code E.

8.5 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for students with SEND by:

- Tracking student progress, including through provision mapping
- Reviewing progress towards individual outcomes
- Monitoring student engagement, wellbeing and attendance
- Evaluating the development of independence and life skills
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEND support
- Gathering feedback from students and their parents/carers
- Monitoring provision through SENCO and leadership oversight
- Holding annual reviews for students with EHCPs

Evaluation will consider both academic progress and wider outcomes, including preparation for adulthood.

9. Attendance

Students with SEND may face complex barriers to attendance. Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students is the same as it is for any other student. However, they may need additional support.

Our approach to supporting students who are absent from academy due to their SEND is set out in our attendance policy. The academy will fulfil its statutory duties regarding attendance while making reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, for students whose absence is linked to SEND, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

10. Safeguarding

We recognise that students with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers, and additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group.

For more details of the pastoral support, we offer students with SEND, and the support we provide to help students overcome any communication barriers they face, see our safeguarding and child protection policy.

Staff recognise that students with SEND may experience additional barriers to communication and may be more vulnerable to safeguarding risks. These factors are considered in all safeguarding practices and procedures

11. Expertise and training of staff

Training will regularly be provided to teaching and support staff. The Principal and the SENCO will continuously monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the academy's plan for continuous professional development. Training will prioritise inclusive classroom practice, adaptive teaching and meeting a wide range of needs within mainstream settings.

12. Links with external professional agencies

The academy recognises that it won't be able to meet all the needs of every student. Whenever necessary, the academy will work with external support services to support the student, services such as:

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

13. Admission and accessibility arrangements

13.1 Admission arrangements

At Sunnyside Spencer Academy our approach to admitting students with or without SEND can be found in our admissions policy.

13.2 Accessibility arrangements

At Sunnyside Spencer Academy we have an Accessibility Plan in place which details the steps the school has taken to:

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

Our Accessibility Plan also covers how we will:

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

14. Complaints about SEND provision

Under the Trust complaints policy, complaints should be received 'as close as possible to the point of origin.' This means that a complaint should be received by someone who understands your concern and is in a position to help resolve it.

Where parents/carers have concerns about our academy's SEND provision, they should first raise their concerns informally with the [class teacher/SENCO/Principal]. We will try to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve their concerns, parents are welcome to submit their complaint formally.

Formal complaints about SEND provision in our academy should be made following the academy's complaints policy.

This process does not affect the right of parents/carers or young people to appeal decisions relating to Education, Health and Care plans through the SEND Tribunal.

15. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

15.1 Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our SEND policy. We will do this by evaluating whether or not we are meeting our objectives set out in section 1.

We will evaluate how effective our SEND provision is with regard to:

- Implementing and utilising the SEND IEF, a Trust process to evaluate SEND provision and implementation within Sunnyside Spencer Academy.
- The SEND IEF covers the following areas to evaluate:
- Leadership
- Policies
- CPD
- Systems for meeting need
- Quality First Teaching
- Provision for SEND
- Assessment and Target Setting
- Whether students with SEND feel safe, valued and included in the academy community
- Comments and feedback from students and their parents/carers

The governing body will receive regular updates on SEND provision and outcomes to ensure effective oversight and accountability.

15.2 Monitoring the policy

This policy will be reviewed by [Sophie Bayliss SENCO] every year. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.

It will be approved by the full governing board.

16. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents

- SEN information report
- The local authority local offer
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting students with medical conditions policy
- Attendance policy
- Admissions policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Complaints policy