THE EDUCATION VILLAGE ACADEMY TRUST

Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Policy

EVAT Version Control Document

Version:	Date:	Policy Owner:	Amendments made by:	Details of amendments made:	Reviewed by:	Approved by:
V1.0	March 2023	Kathryn White	Kathryn White	New Trust Policy	BoT (approval via email)	March 2023
V1.1	March 2024	Kathryn White	Kathryn White	Review completed and no changes required	BoT	08.02.24
V1.2	January 2025	Kathryn White	Kathryn White	Annual Review	BoT	BoT 11.02.2025
V1.3	February 2026	Kathryn White	Kathryn White	Annual Review		BoT 05.02.2026

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed **annually** by the Policy Owner: **Kathryn White**
The scheduled review date for this policy is **February 2027**

Values and Ethos

Our values and ethos are inclusive and child centred. Our Trust is founded on the principles of inclusivity, diversity and fairness, and they are fundamental to our delivery of exceptional learning experiences.

EVAT stands for:

- **Excellence** and high standards
  - a can-do culture and no-excuses ethos
- **Values driven** with a deep sense of moral purpose
  - putting children and young people first
  - behaving ethically
- **Ambition** and aspiration for all
  - irrespective of background or barriers – being truly inclusive
- **Teamwork**
  - we do more, better and faster, together

We are a village. We collaborate, with our learners, their families and our communities, to provide exceptional education so that all the children and young people we serve achieve the best possible outcomes.

Our Ethos is to:

- Create a nurturing and friendly atmosphere and provide an environment where everyone feels valued for who they are
- Bring out the best in every child and young person and meet the full range of their individual needs
- Provide different and unique experiences, challenges and activities
- Show tolerance and respect for each other
- Prepare our children and young people for lifelong learning
- Improve the life chances of every child and young person we serve.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, are based on these key principles.

Contents

Introduction....5
Legislative Compliance....5
Definition of SEN and disability within this policy....6
Aims and objectives....7
Roles and Responsibilities....7
Role of Trustees....7
Role of the Education Standards Committee (ESC)....8
Role of the Principal and Senior Leadership team....8
Role of the SENDCo....8
Role of Teachers....8
Role of Teaching Assistants....9
Identifying special educational needs....9
Staff training and improving practice....11
Supporting pupils and families....11
Supporting pupils with medical conditions....11
Storing and managing information....12
Reviewing the policy....12
Accessibility....12
Dealing with complaints....13
Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)....13
Appendix A: Academy-specific statutory documentation....13

Where the word 'Trust' is used in this policy, it refers to The Education Village Academy Trust.

Where reference is made to an 'Academy' or a 'School', the intention is that the policy is universal and applies to both.

The term 'Executive Leadership Team' (ELT) is comprised of the Chief Executive, the Executive Principal, Principals of all schools, and the Chief Operating Officer.

Where the phrase 'Senior Leader' is used, this refers to the Executive Principal, Principals, Head of School and Academy Senior Leadership Team members.

Where the term 'SENDCo' is used, this refers to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator.

Introduction

This policy sets out our vision and principles for children and young people with SEND, and our expectations and responsibilities for all of our academies across the Trust.

All academies within the Trust share the same core values and an ethos that adheres to inclusive principles to ensure that all learners can reach their full potential.

Through successful implementation of this policy, the Trust aims to eliminate discrimination, raise aspirations, and promote equal opportunities by providing a high-quality education for pupils with SEND.

The specific implementation of this policy, our provision framework and detail regarding our support offer within each of the schools can be found in the SEND Information Reports. These statutory documents are individual to each of our settings and are published on our academy websites.

Legislative Compliance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Local Government Act 1974
- Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986
- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Health and Care Act 2022.

This policy has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2015) 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils'.

All of our Trust policies are interlinked and should be read and informed by all other policies.

This policy therefore operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies but again, not limited to the following:

- Admissions Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Careers Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Accessibility Policy

Definition of SEN and disability within this policy

The Education Village Academy Trust recognises and applies the following definitions.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, a child/young person will have SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child or young person will have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- A disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities that are generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.
- For children aged 2 or more, special educational provision is education or training that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children/young people of the same age by mainstream schools and early years settings.

Many children and young people with SEN may also have a disability.

- A disability is described in law (the Equality Act 2010) as 'a physical or mental impairment, which has a long-term (a year or more) and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This includes, for example, sensory

impairments such as those that affect sight and hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy.

EVAT strictly adheres to the requirements as outlined in The Equality Act to ensure:

- Not to directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people;
- Make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of extra aid services (for example, tactile signage or induction loops), so that disabled children and young people are not disadvantaged. This duty is known as 'anticipatory'.

Aims and objectives

Through the implementation of this policy, The Education Village Academy Trust will:

- Work within the Code of Practice to assess, identify and plan an educational programme that meets the needs of each child in each of our unique settings.
- Ensure there is high-quality provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, with specific focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning.
- Work in close partnership with parents/carers of children with SEND.
- Involve children and young people in their intervention, support, target setting and reviews as appropriate.
- Secure the involvement of multidisciplinary professionals and apply and review recommendations.
- Comply with statutory responsibilities to review plans and plan for transitions effectively whilst working closely with the Local Authority.
- Ensure that all of our staff are trained appropriately and supported in their continuing professional development in special educational needs and disability.
- Work closely with local education, health and social care services to ensure pupils get the right support through joint commissioning, planning and delivery. The Trust will assist the LA in carrying out their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, by ensuring that services work together where this promotes children and young people's wellbeing or improves the quality of special educational provision (Section 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014).

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Trustees

It is the statutory duty of Trust Board members to ensure that the Trust follows its responsibilities to meet the needs of children with SEND following the requirements of the Code of Practice 2014.

- To have regard to the SEND Code of Practice and oversee the implementation of the reform and provide strategic support to the Principals.
- To ensure information on the schools' websites is published about the implementation of the Trust's policy for pupils with SEN.
- To ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENDCo.
- To ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Appoint a member of the team as SEND lead for each academy.

- Consider their strategic approach to meeting SEND in the context of the total resources available, including any resources targeted at particular groups, such as the pupil premium.
- Must ensure that information is published 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 their accessibility plans.

Role of the Education Standards Committee (ESC)

- To ensure the expectations of all schools are upheld, ESC members undertake a variety of monitoring activities throughout each school year. This includes review of pupil progress for those children with SEND.
- Each academy will review their SEND provision and progress formally every term and these reports will be shared with ESC members and Trustees as appropriate, for further discussion and challenge.

Role of the Principal and Senior Leadership team

- To take overall responsibility for implementing the SEND reforms.
- To ensure that the SENDCo has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions.
- To ensure the wider school community understands the implications of the reforms for whole school improvement (from ESC members to classroom teachers and teaching assistants).
- To cooperate with the local authority in relation to the school being named in an EHC plan.
- To put in place arrangements to ensure parents are regularly engaged in discussions about the progress of their child (at least three times a year) and ensure a process is in place for involving parents and young people in planning and reviewing provision.

Role of the SENDCo

- To oversee day-to-day operation of the Trust's SEND policy and coordinate provision for children with SEND, ensuring that all SEND records are up to date.
- To work with class/subject teachers to ensure that all children have the appropriate personalised support as outlined in EHCPs and SEND Support Plans.
- To co-ordinate and implement the access arrangements for SEND students
- To advise on graduated approaches to SEND Support including the use of delegated budget/ other resources.
- To liaise with parents, other agencies and link with other education settings to work with senior leadership and ESC members to review policies including SEND and conformance with the Equality Act.

Role of Teachers

- To focus on outcomes for the child, ensuring high aspirations.
- To provide Quality First Teaching; assessing, planning, doing and reviewing.
- To secure the involvement of parents, pupils and other agencies in planning and reviewing progress.

- To be fully aware of each child's needs and how they can be met.
- To keep up to date with legislation and policy and undertake relevant CPD.

Role of Teaching Assistants

- Teachers will work closely with teaching assistants to plan, assess the impact of support and ensure that there are clear links to classroom teaching.
- TAs will focus their support on the achievement of specific outcomes within the graduated approach to SEN support.
- Teaching assistants will be aware of pupils' needs, their planned outcomes, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required.

Identifying special educational needs

For the purposes of clarity, the following categories may have an impact on progress and attainment, but do not constitute SEN:

- Disability
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Health and Welfare
- EAL
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant
- Being a Looked After Child/Previous Looked After Child
- Being a child of Serviceman/woman

The four categories of Special Educational Need are:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Physical and sensory.

However, individual children often have needs which cross all these areas and their needs may change over time. The special educational provision made for a child attending EVAT is based on an understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seeks to address them all.

The Trust recognises that early identification and effective provision improves long-term outcomes for pupils. As part of the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils, it has a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND as outlined in the each of the academies' SEND Information Reports which can be found on the school's websites.

Pupils identified as having a SEND fall into one of two categories:

1. SEND Support

This means that the child requires support and intervention that is **additional to or different from** the support generally given to other children of the same age in a mainstream school. SEND support is to help children and young people to reach their outcomes or learning goals. These outcomes and goals are set for them by their educational setting, in collaboration with both child and parent.

The Trust recognises that, despite having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEND of a pupil, some pupils may not make expected levels of progress. In these cases, the school will consult with parents and consider requesting an EHC needs assessment.

2. Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs)

An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the SEND of the pupil, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and prepare them for adulthood.

As part of the EHC needs assessment, the Trust will meet its duty by:

- Responding to any request for information as part of the EHC needs assessment process within six weeks from the date of the request, unless special exemptions apply as outlined in the SEND code of practice.
- Providing the LA with any school-specific information and evidence about the pupil's profile and educational progress.
- Gathering any advice received from relevant professionals regarding their education, health and care needs, desired outcomes, and any special education, health and care provision that may be required to meet their identified needs and achieve desired outcomes.

If, following the assessment, the LA decides not to issue an EHC plan, the school will be provided with written feedback collected during the EHC needs. It will use this information to contribute to the graduated approach and inform how the outcomes sought for the pupil can be achieved through further special educational provision made by the school and its partners.

Where the LA decides to issue an EHC plan, it must consult the prospective academy by sending a copy of the draft plan and consider their comments before deciding whether to name it in the pupil's EHC plan. The school will meet its duty to provide views on a draft EHC plan within 15 days.

The Trust will strive to admit any pupil that names an EVAT academy in an EHC plan and will ensure that all those teaching or working with a pupil named in an EHC plan are aware of the pupil's needs and that arrangements are in place to meet them.

The EHCP is a legal document and the school must follow its guidance. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are legal documents. The school recognises its duty under section 66 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to use its **best endeavours** to implement the special educational provision specified in Section F of an EHCP. This will involve working flexibly and creatively to meet pupil's needs within the resources available.

Within each of the SEN Information Reports, further detail can be found regarding the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of EHC plans.

Within each of the SEND Information Reports, further detail can be found regarding the implementation of the graduated response to SEN and how the cyclical model of assess, plan, do, review is actioned in each academy.

The Teachers' Standards 2012 make it clear that it is every teacher's responsibility to '*adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils';* this is reinforced by the SEND Code of Practice. Class teachers are at the heart of these four stages of action approach; they are supported, guided and led by the SENDCo, and where appropriate, other specialist staff.

Staff training and improving practice

The Trust is committed to the learning and development of all its staff members and cross-Trust training opportunities will be ~~provided~~ identified and delivered in line with ~~the~~ each school's CPD ~~and Training Policy.~~ requirements.

The school SENDCo and senior leaders will assess staff competencies and ensure that CPD provision allows staff to develop their awareness, skills, and practices in identifying, educating, and assessing pupils with SEND.

Supporting pupils and families

There are several information sites for parents which document the range of services in regard to SEND within The Education Village Academy Trust and within the wider Local Authority.

The Local Offer describes what is available within the authority to support children with special educational needs. The Trust will provide the LA with information about their existing SEND provision and capabilities to support pupils with SEND to aid in the drafting of the Local Offer, where required. It can be found at https://livingwell.darlington.gov.uk/Categories/528

- The Local Offer description of the provision at each academy is identified in and can be found on the web site: www.educationvillage.org.uk
- The Local offers also describes links with other agencies to support the family and pupil
- Admission arrangements for each academy are identified in our Admissions Policies which can be found on the web page: www.educationvillage.org.uk
- SEND Information Reports for each setting can be found on the web page: www.educationvillage.org.uk
- Access arrangements are those plans which are put into place to ensure that our students are able to access exams and other assessments. Details can be found on each of the academy's websites: www.educationvillage.org.uk

Supporting pupils with medical conditions

The Trust recognises that students at school with medical conditions should be effectively supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education.

Some children with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Pupils who also have special educational needs (SEN) and have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their special educational provision.

The Trust's arrangements to support students with medical conditions can be found in our policy 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions' on the website: www.educationvillage.org.uk.

Storing and managing information

Please see the Trust's policy on records management: www.educationvillage.org.uk

Documents are stored in line with a school policy on Records Management (this includes information on how long to store documents, when they should be destroyed, what should be kept, where, etc.) and our Confidentiality Policy.

Furthermore, the Trust will not disclose any EHC plan without the consent of the pupil's parents, except for specified purposes or in the interests of the pupil, such as disclosure:

- To a SEND tribunal when parents appeal, and to the Secretary of State under the Education Act 1996.
- On the order of any court for any criminal proceedings.
- For the purposes of investigations of maladministration under the Local Government Act 1974.
- To enable any authority to perform duties arising from the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, or from the Children Act 1989 relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- To Ofsted inspection teams as part of their inspections of schools and LAs.
- To any person in connection with the pupil's application for students with disabilities allowance in advance of taking up a place in HE.
- To the headteacher (or equivalent position) of the setting at which the pupil is intending to start their next phase of education.

EVAT academies will adhere to the Confidentiality Policy at all times.

Reviewing the policy

The policy is reviewed by the ELT and SENDCos and in conjunction with the Trust board; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff, parents of pupils with SEND, and relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme and ongoing employment with EVAT.

Given the climate of reform as we move into the new requirements for SEND for school effectiveness, we will review the SEND policy annually.

Accessibility

The Trust Accessibility Policy documents the statutory responsibilities that the Trust must meet in relation to equality and accessibility and can be found on the website: www.educationvillage.org.uk

The policy outlines the principles that the Trust is committed to following throughout all accessibility planning activities to ensure that all disabled pupils are able to enjoy and access all aspects of educational life.

The ways in which the Trust fosters inclusion and equality for pupils who share other protected characteristics are outlined in the Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and the ways in which the school ensures its practices and environments are accessible and inclusive for staff are outlined in the Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which can also be found on the website.

Dealing with complaints

The aim of our complaints policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint by a parent/carer is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote parents' and students' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of resolving the issue in a transparent manner.

The school expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and guarantees to treat seriously and confidentially all concerns whether raised informally or formally. An outline of the complaints procedure can be found on the Trust website: www.educationvillage.org.uk

Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In preparing or amending this policy, the author has given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; that is, they have considered any potential impact on people who share certain protected characteristics. These protected characteristics are defined as: race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

Appendix A: Academy-specific statutory documentation

The Trust will publish information on the school website about the implementation of this policy.

The information published will be updated **annually** and any changes to the information occurring during the year will be updated as soon as possible.

The SEND Information Reports will be prepared by academy SENDCos and principals and overseen by the Trustees and will be published on the academy websites.

These statutory reports will include all the information outlined in paragraphs 6.79 and 6.83 of the 'Special educational needs and disabilities code of practice: 0 to 25 years'.