GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Special Education Needs and Disability Policy

Version: 6.0 Approval Status: Approved

Document Owner:	Chief Education Officers
Reviewed	July 2026

Table of contents

1 **Policy overview and purpose** **2**

2 **Key definitions, legislation and guidance** **3**

3 **Roles and responsibilities** **5**

4 **SEND information report** **6**

5 **Medical needs** **7**

6 **Accessibility** **7**

7 **Admissions** **7**

8 **Transitions and school transfers** **7**

1. Policy Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how academies in Greenwood Academies Trust (GAT) identify and address the needs of all pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

The **policy,** alongside the academy level **SEND Information Report,** aims to:

- ensure that all stakeholders, including academy staff, pupils, parents and commissioners have a clear understanding of the academy approach to provision for children with SEND
- ensure the duties set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equality Act (2010) are fully met
- ensure there is a culture of high aspiration for all pupils and effective provision that meets individual need

At GAT, our underlying principle is that 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is Everyone's Business'. Our strategy for supporting academies to deliver high quality inclusive provision is detailed in our phase specific Improvement Frameworks that are reviewed and updated at least annually.

The Frameworks detail how practitioners are supported in their work with SEND pupils; our professional development opportunities, professional learning networks and resources. They also describe how we quality assure practice in academies and support the continual improvement of provision for pupils with SEND.

The guiding principles of our SEND work are based on building dignified and successful futures for all where pupils can participate as active members in their chosen communities.

GAT places an emphasis on high quality inclusive teaching, based on evidence-informed practice, which builds equitable learning environments, supported by early and professional communication and collaboration at every level.

2. Key Definitions, legislation and guidance

Special Educational Needs (SEN) – Definition

Under the Children & Families Act 2014, a child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a Learning Difficulty or Disability (LDD) which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a *learning difficulty or disability* if he or she;

i. has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of a similar age; or
ii. has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

For children aged two or more, 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, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition (i or ii) above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).

The term SEN includes Learning Difficulties & Disabilities.

Disability – Definition

Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as:

"a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on (a person's) ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

Activities are defined as: mobility; manual dexterity; physical coordination; continence; ability to lift; speech, hearing, eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; understanding of risk of physical danger.

For the purpose of this Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than trivial or minor
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve (12) months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions).

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 disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

Progressive conditions; people with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. The extension of the Disability definition to include issues of mental health and facial disfigurements highlights the importance of recognising that 'impairment' can only be viewed within the context of its impact.

Taken from the SEN and Disability Code of Practice - January 2015

The broad areas of need (as outlined in the Code of Practice)

Communication and interaction

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Cognition and learning

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where 98 children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils. The Department for Education publishes guidance on managing pupils' mental health and behaviour difficulties in schools – see the References section under Chapter 6 for a link.

Sensory and/or physical needs

Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties. Information on how to provide services for deafblind children and young people is available through the Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults guidance published by the Department of Health (see the References section under Chapter 6 for a link).

Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

This policy 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 pupils with SEND

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out local authorities' and schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN coordinators (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 pupils with disabilities
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set 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 Academy Trust Governance Guide, which sets out trustees' responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- The School Admissions Code, which sets out the school's obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and its duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special educational needs.

This policy also complies with key documents such as our funding agreement and articles of association. It should be read in conjunction with other policies such as Safeguarding, Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs, Behaviour and Complaints.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The **Trust Board** has the overall responsibility of ensuring there are systems to effectively discharge its statutory responsibilities in relation to SEND, as outlined in the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2015. The Trust Board is responsible for approving the SEND policy. This responsibility cannot be delegated to any other committee or officer. The Trust Board will appoint a SEND Link Trustee who will lead on the board's monitoring of support for pupils with SEND. However, the board itself retains collective responsibility.

The **Education Directorate** is responsible for reviewing and updating the policy, and ensuring it is disseminated and understood by academies. The Education Directorate is also responsible for ensuring appropriate support and guidance is given to academies so that provision is of high quality, as detailed in our SEND Strategy. The Education Directorate is also responsible for quality assurance and providing information to the Trust Board.

The **Principal** has overall responsibility for the quality of SEND provision in an academy plus the delivery of statutory requirement and GAT expectations in this area.

The Principal or a designated senior leader will line manage the SENDCo, keeping themselves fully up-to-date with statutory requirements, GAT expectations and best practice.

In mainstream GAT academies, the **SENDCo**, who must be a qualified teacher, will co-ordinate the academy's approach to SEND provision and will undertake those duties set out in Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice. Specifically, the academy SENDCo will be responsible for:

- the day-to-day operation of this policy, as detailed in the academy's SEND Information Report
- ensuring that the published SEND Information Report is accurate and accessible, along with links to the Local Offer and Accessibility Plan on the academy website
- developing and delivering an effective academy SEND strategy that results in high quality, inclusive teaching and an overall educational experience at the academy that means all pupils thrive
- coordinating and providing related professional advice, guidance, coaching, support and training to academy colleagues
- collaborating with other leads (such as those responsible for curriculum, attendance, behaviour, achievement (including vulnerable groups e.g. Pupil

Premium, Looked After Children etc)) to ensure that wider strategies are effectively delivering for the needs of pupils with SEND

- maintaining an accurate, and regularly reviewed, SEND Register, aligned to GAT guidance, and use it to inform provision mapping and the academy's strategic development of SEND
- ensuring accurate and effective SEND documentation and records are kept
- ensuring requests for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments are made in a timely manner with collated appropriate evidence and information
- (The Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is the responsibility of the Local Authority and the academy will contribute to this process in accordance with the statutory framework. Details of the process and maintenance of an EHCP can be found on each Local Authority website.)
- ensuring academy provision is in place for pupils with EHCPs, and requests are made to secure relevant resources from the local authority, as per Section 42(2) of the Children and Families Act
- ensuring EHCPs are formally reviewed with relevant stakeholders (including pupils, families and external agencies) at least annually and hold interim or emergency reviews when identified needs change significantly
- ensuring effective communication with parent/ carers in respect to their child's provision and progress
- ensuring their professional knowledge Is kept up to date through effective CPD that includes engagement in GAT's support in this area
- securing and effectively deploying funding and resources to meet identified needs
- coordinating all of the support for pupils with SEND, including external agencies and support staff
- reporting to, and liaising with, the Senior Leadership Team about all aspects of SEND provision.

In GAT Special Academies, the above list of responsibilities will be delegated by the Principal to appropriate leaders in the academy.

Class teachers are responsible for the progress, development and outcomes of every pupil in their class and liaising with the SENDCo, and relevant support staff, to ensure high quality provision for pupils with SEND where appropriate.

GAT believes that it is important to work closely and effectively with parents/carers of pupils with SEND. The SEND landscape is complex, and we expect academies to do their best to support families navigate this. The academy will take into account the views of the parent or carer in decisions made in relation to the pupil's provision.

We encourage parent/carers to maintain good communication with the academy. They should contact the class teacher or SENDCo in the first instance if they have concerns over their child's provision or progress. If the matter is not resolved and the parent wishes to make a formal complaint, then the parent should follow the process set out in the Trust's Complaints Policy.

4. SEND Information Report

Each academy must publish their academy SEND Information Report on their website.

The Information Report provides the important details of how SEND needs are assessed, provided for and reviewed in consultation with parents/ carers and other appropriate agencies. The Information Report needs to be reviewed at least annually.

The information required to be in the report is detailed in Chapter 6.79 (Publishing information; SEN Information Report) in the Code of Practice (2015) and academies are expected to use

the GAT template. It is expected that academies make the document clear, meaningful and helpful.

5. Medical Needs

We recognise that some pupils with medical conditions need support to access to the curriculum. Pupils with medical conditions may also have special educational needs and/or a disability. For pupils with medical needs, this policy is applied in conjunction with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy.

6. Accessibility

Each academy will publish their Accessibility Plan on their website which will detail the academy's intent to improve the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services and improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Each academy also publishes on its website information about its curriculum and how this is made accessible to pupils with disabilities.

In addition, an annual statement is published in regard to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) which is also on the academy website.

The Local Authority is responsible for making suitable arrangements for transport to and from the academy for eligible disabled children.

7. Admissions

Each academy aims to meet the needs of any children whose parent(s) wish to register a pupil at the academy where a place is available, and the admissions criteria fulfilled. No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that he or she has SEN or a Disability.

Where it is proposed that the academy is named in an EHCP, the academy may, where relevant, make representations to the local authority that placement at the academy is incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources, and no reasonable steps may be made to secure compatibility.

8. Transitions and school transfers

Smooth transitions between key stages are important for all children. For children with SEND this process may be more disruptive. Advanced planning for the transfer of pupils with SEND between phases is essential.

Academies are expected to consider carefully the support pupils with SEND need at key transition points.

In the case of pupils with SEND joining an academy, the SENDCo or their representative will coordinate the transition. This will include gathering information from the previous setting (where appropriate) and any relevant external agencies, communicating with parents/ carers and arranging appropriate transition activities.

When a pupil transfers to another academy or school, the academy will forward all relevant information regarding the child's needs within fifteen (15) days of the pupil ceasing to be registered with the academy, in line with data protection policies.

Where a parent / carer expresses a desire for a pupil with SEND to be home educated the academy must ensure the local authority's procedures are followed. For pupils with EHCPs, the local authority must agree to the request before the pupil can be removed from roll.