

Special Educational Needs Policy	
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Purpose	
Committees	Trust Achievement, Improvement and People Strategy Committee
Other linked policies	
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Statement of intent

Victorious Academies Trust believes that all pupils are entitled to an education that enables them to achieve their best, become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and make a successful transition into adulthood.

This policy outlines the framework the Trust and our schools will use in meeting their duties, obligations and principal equality values in providing an appropriate high-quality education for pupils with SEND.

Through successful implementation of this policy, the school aims to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

The schools within the Trust will work with the Trust within their LA, or equivalent, ensuring that the following principles underpin this policy:

- The involvement of pupils and their parents in decision-making.
- The early identification of pupils' needs and early intervention to support them.
- A focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning.
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support.
- High quality provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Greater choice and control for pupils and their parents over their support.
- Successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.

Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For the purposes of this policy, a pupil is defined as having SEND if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age.
- A disability or health condition that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities used by peers of the same age in mainstream settings.
- Special educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream settings.

Individual schools across the Trust will develop their own policies and procedures taking account the principles included within this policy.

Legal framework

1. 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
 - The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2024
2. 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 (2017) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
 - DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'
 - DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children'
 - DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
 - DfE (2021) 'School admissions code'
 - Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2015) 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils'
3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust and school policies and procedures where appropriate
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| • Admissions Policy | • Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy |
| • Equal Opportunities Policy: Pupils | • Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy |
| • Pupil Confidentiality Policy | • Careers Policy |
| • Data Protection Policy | • Exclusion Policy |
| • Records Management Policy | • Behavioural Policy |
| • Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy | • Complaints Procedures Policy |
| • One-to-one Tuition Policy | • Accessibility Plan |

Identifying SEND

4. School across our Trust recognise 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, schools have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND as outlined in each school's SEN Information Report.
5. With the support of the SLT, class teachers will conduct regular progress assessments for all pupils, with the aim of identifying pupils who are making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.
6. 'Less than expected progress' will be characterised by progress which:
- Progress is significantly slower than the class average, from the same baseline
 - Progress does not match or better the pupil's previous rate of progress
 - Progress fails to close the attainment gap within the class
 - The attainment gap is widened by the plateauing of progress
7. Each school plans, manages and reviews SEND provision across the following four broad areas of need:
- Communication and interaction
 - Cognition and learning
 - Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
 - Sensory and/or physical needs

Identifying SEND

8. Trust schools 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 school's SEN Information Report.
9. With the support of the SLT, classroom teachers will conduct regular progress assessments for all pupils, with the aim of identifying pupils who are making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.
10. 'Less than expected progress' will be characterised by progress which:
 - Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.
 - Does not match or better the pupil's previous rate of progress.
 - Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers.
 - Widens the attainment gap.
11. Trust schools plans, manage and review SEND provision across the following four broad areas of need:
 - Communication and interaction
 - Cognition and learning
 - Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
 - Sensory and/or physical needs

Objectives

12. Every school is required to identify and address the SEND of the pupils that they support. Through the implementation of this policy, each school will:
 - Use their best endeavours to make sure that pupils with SEND get the support they need to access their school's broad and balanced curriculum.
 - Ensure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of their school alongside pupils who do not have SEND.
 - 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.
 - Fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with SEND in light of the SEND code of practice.
 - Promote disability equality and equality of opportunity, fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled pupils.
 - Make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
 - Designate a teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEND provision, i.e. the SENCO.
 - Inform parents when they are making special educational provision for their child.
 - Review, prepare and publish important information about their school and its implementation of relevant SEND policies, including:
 - Accessibility plans setting out how they plan to increase access to the curriculum and the physical environment for pupils with SEND.
 - Information about the admission arrangements for pupils with SEND and the steps taken to prevent them being treated less favourably than others.
 - A SEN information report about the implementation of the school's policy for pupils with SEND.

Roles and responsibilities

13. The **Trustees** will be responsible for:
 - Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently across the Trust.
 - Ensuring schools meet their duties in relation to supporting pupils with SEND.
14. Each **local governing board** will be responsible for:
 - Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently across their school.

- Ensuring their school meets its duties in relation to supporting pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for their school.

15. Each Headteacher/Principal is responsible for ensuring their school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with high quality teaching and a positive and enriching educational experience of for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

16. In enacting this policy, the **Headteacher/Principal** will:

- Ensure their school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with SEND.
- Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and learn effectively.
- Ensure their school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs and SEND of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate.
- Ensure their school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice.
- Work with their local governing board to ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for their school.
- Ensure their SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions.
- Provide their SENCO with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Ensure the SENCO has or is completing either the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination or the National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators.
- Regularly and carefully reviewing the quality of teaching for pupils at risk of underachievement, as a core part of their school's performance management arrangements.
- Ensure that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of their school do not directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with SEND.

17. The **SENCO** will be responsible for:

- Collaborating with the local governing board and Headteacher/Principal, as part of the SLT, to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in their school.
- The day-to-day responsibility for the operation of their SEND policy.
- The coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND.
- Liaising with the relevant designated teacher for LAC with SEND.
- Advising on a graduated approach to providing SEND support.
- Advising on the deployment of their school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively.
- Liaising with the parents of pupils with SEND.
- Liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies, as required.
- Being a key point of contact for external agencies, especially the LA and LA support services.
- Liaising with the potential future providers of education to ensure that pupils and their parents are informed about the options, and a smooth transition is planned.
- Working with the relevant governors and their Headteacher/Principal to ensure that their school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Ensuring that their school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up-to-date, in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues, and working closely with staff, parents and other agencies.

- Being familiar with the provision in the Local Offer and being able to work with professionals who are providing a supporting role to the family.

18. **Teachers** will be responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for pupils with SEND on a graduated basis, in collaboration with parents, the **SENCO** and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and aiming to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.
- Ensuring every pupil with SEND is able to study the full national curriculum.
- Being accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.
- Being aware of the needs, outcomes sought, and support provided to any pupils with SEND they are working with.
- Understanding and implementing strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils with the support of the **SENCO**.
- Keeping the relevant figures of authority up-to-date with any changes in behaviour, academic developments and causes of concern. The relevant figures of authority include the **Headteacher/Principal**.

Safeguarding

19. Trust schools recognise that evidence shows pupils with SEND are at a greater risk of abuse and maltreatment, so will ensure that staff are aware that pupils with SEND:
- Have the potential to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying.
 - May face additional risks online, e.g. from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation.
 - Are at greater risk of abuse, including child-on-child abuse, neglect, and sexual violence and harassment.
20. Trust schools recognise that there are additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of pupils. These barriers include, but are not limited to:
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's condition without further exploration.
 - These pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
 - The potential for pupils with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
 - Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
21. Each Headteacher/Principal and local governing board will ensure that their school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy reflects the fact that these additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse. When using physical intervention and reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving pupils with SEND, staff will have due regard for the procedures outlined in their school's Physical Intervention Policy.
22. Care will be taken by all staff, at Trust schools, particularly those who work closely with pupils with SEND, to notice any changes behaviour or mood, or any injuries, and these indicators will be investigated by the DSL in collaboration with the SENCO.

SEND support

23. Trust school's are aware of their statutory duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and recognise that high quality teaching, which is differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND.
24. Teachers at each school will:



- Set high expectations for every pupil.
- Plan stretching work for pupils whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard.
- Plan lessons for pupils who have low levels of prior attainment or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious.
- Plan lessons to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.
- Be responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

25. Decisions on whether to make special educational provision for pupils will be based upon:

- Discussions between the teacher and SENCO.
- Analysis of the pupil's progress – using internal formative and summative assessments, alongside national data and expectations of progress.
- Discussion with the pupil and their parent.

26. Once a pupil has been identified with SEND, a school will employ a graduated approach to meeting the pupil's needs. This will be through the adoption of a four-part cycle – assess, plan, do, review – whereby earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. The process is as follows:

- Assess: establishing a clear assessment of the pupil's needs
- Plan: agreeing the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review
- Do: implementing the agreed interventions and support
- Review: analysing the effectiveness of the interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress in line with the agreed review date

27. Where higher levels of need are identified, each school will access specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.

28. Where, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of a pupil, they have not made expected progress, the school, in consultation with parents, will consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

29. Trust schools are aware that there may be pupils at their school for whom English is not their first language and appreciates that having EAL is not equated to having learning difficulties. At the same time, when pupils with EAL make slow progress, it will not be assumed that their language status is the only reason; they may have SEND.

30. Schools will consider the pupil within the context of their home, culture and community and look carefully at all aspects of a pupil's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of English or arise from SEND.

Early years pupils with SEND

31. All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEND and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care. These requirements are set out in the EYFS framework.

32. Trust schools will ensure all staff who work with young children are alert to emerging difficulties and respond early.

33. Trust schools will ensure staff listen and understand when parent's express concerns about their child's development.
34. Trust schools will listen to any concerns raised by children themselves.
35. Trust schools will monitor and review the progress and development of all children throughout the early years.
36. Trust schools will ensure that:
 - Use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need.
 - Ensure that children with SEND engage in the activities of their school alongside children who do not have SEND.
 - Designate a teacher to be the SENCO.
 - Provide information for parents on how it supports children with SEND.
 - Prepare a report on the:
 - - Implementation of SEND policy and procedures.
 - - Arrangements for the admission of children with SEND.
 - - Steps being taken to prevent children with SEND from being treated less favourably than others.
 - - Facilities provided to enable access to their school for children with SEND.
 - - Accessibility plan showing how it plans to improve access over time.
 - Inform parents when their school makes special educational provision for their child.
 - Follow a graduated approach to assessing, planning, implementing, and reviewing provision and progress – the 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle.

Admissions

37. Trust schools will ensure they meet their duties set under the DfE's 'School Admissions Code' by:
 - Not refusing admission for a child thought to be potentially disruptive, or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour, on the grounds that the child is first to be assessed for SEND.
 - Not refusing admission for a child that has named the school in their EHC plan.
 - Considering applications from parents of children who have SEND but do not have an EHC plan.
 - Not refusing admission for a child who has SEND but does not have an EHC plan because the school does not feel able to cater for those needs.
 - Not refusing admission for a child who does not have an EHC plan.
 - Not discriminating against or disadvantaging applicants with SEND.
 - Ensuring policies relating to school uniform and trips do not discourage parents of pupils with SEND from applying for a place.
 - Adopting fair practices and arrangements in accordance with the 'School Admissions Code' for the admission of children without an EHC plan.
 - Ensuring the school's oversubscription arrangements will not disadvantage children with SEND.
 - Ensuring that tests for selection are accessible to children with SEND, with reasonable adjustments made where necessary.
38. Arrangements for the fair admissions of pupils with SEND are outlined in the Trust **Admissions Policy** and are published on the Trust website.

Transition

39. Trust schools are aware of the importance of planning and preparing for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life.
40. Where pupils have EHC plans, these will be reviewed and amended in sufficient time prior to a pupil moving between key phases of education, to allow for planning for and, where necessary, commissioning of support and provision at the new setting.

Involving pupils and parents in decision-making

41. The school is committed to working in partnership with all parents in the best interests of their child and will provide an annual report for all parents on their child's progress.
42. Where a pupil is receiving SEND support, a school will regularly liaise with parents in setting outcomes and reviewing progress. The class teacher, supported by the SENCO, will meet with the parents a number of times each year, identified in each schools SEND Policy.
43. The planning that the Trust schools implement will help parents and pupils with SEND express their needs, wishes and goals, and will:
 - Focus on the pupil as an individual, not allowing their SEND to become a label.
 - Be easy for pupils and their parents to understand by using clear, ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon.
 - Highlight the pupil's strengths and capabilities.
 - Enable the pupil, and those who know them best, to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future.
 - Tailor support to the needs of the individual.
 - Organise assessments to minimise demands on parents.
 - Bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach.
44. Where the LA provides a pupil with an EHC plan, the school will involve the parents and the pupil in discussions surrounding how the school can best implement the plan's provisions to help the pupil thrive in their education, and will discern the expected impact of the provision on the pupil's progress.
45. Where necessary, the school will facilitate support from an advocate to ensure the parent's views are heard and acknowledged.

Joint commissioning, planning and delivery

46. Trust schools are committed to ensuring that pupils with SEND can achieve their ambitions and the best possible educational outcomes, as well as other opportunities, such as securing employment and living as independently as possible.
47. Trust schools will work closely with local education, health and social care services to ensure pupils get the right support.
48. Trust schools will assist their 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).
49. Trust schools will draw on the wide range of local data sets about the likely educational needs of pupils with SEND to forecast future needs, including:
 - Population and demographic data.
 - Prevalence data for different kinds of SEND among children and young people at the national level.
 - Numbers of local children with EHC plans and their main needs.
 - The numbers and types of settings locally that work with or educate pupils with SEND.
 - An analysis of local challenges or sources of health inequalities.
50. The Trust's **Data Protection Policy** will be adhered to at all times.

51. Trust schools will plan, deliver and monitor services against how well outcomes have been met, including, but not limited to:
 - Improved educational progress and outcomes for pupils with SEND.
 - Increasing the identification of pupils with SEND prior to school entry.
52. Where pupils with SEND also have a medical condition, their provision will be planned and delivered in coordination with the EHC plan.
53. SEND support will be adapted and/or replaced depending on its effectiveness in achieving the agreed outcomes.

Funding for SEND Support

54. Where additional pupil needs are identified the school will use its delegated funding allowance to provide early intervention support for the benefit of pupils identified with SEND.
55. Where pupils with SEND have been receiving early intervention support but are still not making sufficient progress, the school will consider accessing high needs top-up funding from the LA to provide additional specialist support.

Schools SEND Policies

56. Each school will develop an SEND policy which will cover:
 - EHC needs assessments and plans
 - Reviewing ENC plans
 - Supporting successful preparation for adulthood
 - Staff training and improving practices
 - Publishing information
 - Joint commissioning, planning and delivery
 - Local offer

Managing complaints

57. The Trust will publish the Complaints Procedure Policy on the Trust website, and links to this will be provided from each school's website.
58. Following a parent's serious complaint or disagreement about the SEND provision being made for their child, the Trust and school will contact the LA immediately to seek disagreement resolution advice, regardless of whether an EHC plan is in place.
59. The Trust is aware of the formal and informal arrangements for resolving disagreements at a local level and will work with the LA in responding to requests for information as part of procedures for:
 - Disagreement resolution.
 - Mediation.
 - Appeals to the SEND Tribunal.
60. The Trust and school's will meet any request to attend a SEND tribunal and explain any departure from its duties and obligations under the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'.

Use of data and record keeping

61. All information about pupils will be kept in accordance with the Trust's Records Management Policy and Data Protection Policy.
62. Each school's records will:



- Record details of additional or different provision made under SEND support, with accurate information to evidence the SEND support that has been provided over the pupil's time in the school, as well as its impact, e.g. through the use of provision maps.
- Include details of SEND, outcomes, action, agreed support, teaching strategies and the involvement of specialists, as part of its standard management information system to monitor the progress, behaviour and development of all pupils.
- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date register of the provision made for pupils with SEND.
- Be kept securely so that unauthorised persons do not have access to it, so far as reasonably practicable.

63. Each school keeps data on the levels and types of need within the school and makes this available to the LA and Ofsted.

Confidentiality

64. Each school 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.

65. Each school will adhere to the Trust Pupil Privacy Policy at all times.

Monitoring and review

66. The policy is reviewed on an **annual basis** by the **Chief Executive Officer** 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.

67. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

End