



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

September 2024
Review September 2025

Statement of intent

Exceptional Ideas Ltd believes that all students 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 school will use in meeting its duties, obligations and principal equality values in providing an appropriate high-quality education for students with SEND.

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

The school will work with the LA, or equivalent, in ensuring that the following principles underpin this policy:

- The involvement of students and their parents in decision-making.
- The early identification of students' 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 students with SEND.
- Greater choice and control for students 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 student 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.

1. Legal framework

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

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 students at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2015) 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled students'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Student Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Careers Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Accessibility Policy

2. Objectives

Every school is required to identify and address the SEND of the students that they support. Through the implementation of this policy, the school will:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that students with SEND get the support they need to access the school's broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensure that students with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside students who do not have SEND.
- Ensure there is high-quality provision to meet the needs of students with SEND, with specific focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning.
- Fulfil its statutory duties towards students 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 students.
- Make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled students are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
- Designate a mentor to be responsible for coordinating SEND provision in each school, i.e. the Operational Senior Student Mentor. This person will report directly to the Headteacher regarding any issues regarding special needs or provision.
- Inform parents when they are making special educational provision for their child.
- Review, prepare and publish important information about the 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 students with SEND.
 - Information about the admission arrangements for students 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 students with SEND.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The directors will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently across the school.
- Ensuring the school meets its duties in relation to supporting students with SEND.
- Ensuring that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school (in this case the Headteacher).

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with high quality teaching and a positive and enriching educational experience of for all students, including students with SEND.

In enacting this policy, the headteacher will:

- Ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all students with SEND.
- Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable students with SEND to access the curriculum and learn effectively.

- Ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs and SEND of students, providing support and adaptation where appropriate.
- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice.
- Ensure the SENCO (Headteacher) has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions.
- Provide the SENCO (Headteacher) 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 review the quality of teaching for students at risk of underachievement, as a core part of the school's performance management arrangements.
- Ensure that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the school do not directly or indirectly discriminate against students with SEND.

The SENCO (headteacher) will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEND policy.
- The coordination of specific provision made to support individual students 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 the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet students' needs effectively.
- Liaising with the parents of students with SEND if school-based staff need further support or if parents have further queries.
- Liaising with 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 Transition Lead to ensure that potential future providers of education ensure that students and their parents are informed about the options, and a smooth transition is planned.
- Working with the relevant directors and the headteacher to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Ensuring that the school keeps the records of all students 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.

Teachers will be responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for students with SEND on a graduated basis, in collaboration with parents, the SENCO and, where appropriate, the students themselves.

- Setting high expectations for every student 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 student achieving.
- Ensuring every student with SEND is able to study the full national curriculum.
- Being accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class.
- Being aware of the needs, outcomes sought and support provided to any students with SEND they are working with.
- Understanding and implementing strategies to identify and support vulnerable students 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.

4. Identifying SEND

The school recognises that early identification and effective provision improves long-term outcomes for students. As part of the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all students, it has a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND as outlined in the school's SEN Information Report.

With the support of the SLT, classroom teachers will conduct regular progress assessments for all students, with the aim of identifying students who are making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

'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 student's previous rate of progress.
- Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers.
- Widens the attainment gap.

The 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.

5. Safeguarding

The school recognises that evidence shows students with SEND are at a greater risk of abuse and maltreatment, so will ensure that staff are aware that students 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.

The school recognises that there are additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of students. These barriers include, but are not limited to:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the student's condition without further exploration.
- These students being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other students.
- The potential for students 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.

The headteacher and directors will ensure that the 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 students with SEND, staff will have due regard for the procedures outlined in the school's Physical Intervention Policy.

Care will be taken by all staff, particularly those who work closely with students 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.

6. SEND support

The school is aware of its statutory duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and recognise that high quality teaching, which is differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEND.

Teachers at the school will:

- Set high expectations for every student.
- Plan stretching work for students whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard.
- Plan lessons for students 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 student achieving.
- Be responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class, including where students access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

Decisions on whether to make special educational provision for students will be based upon:

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

Once a student has been identified with SEND, the school will employ a graduated approach to meeting the student'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 student's needs and of what supports the student in making good progress and securing good outcomes. The process is as follows:

- **Assess:** establishing a clear assessment of the student'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 student's progress in line with the agreed review date.

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

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

EAL

The school is aware that there may be students at the 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 students with EAL make slow progress, it will not be assumed that their language status is the only reason; they may have SEND.

The school will consider the student within the context of their home, culture and community and look carefully at all aspects of a student'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.

7. Admissions

The school will ensure it meets its duties set under the DfE's 'School Admissions Code' by:

- All children referred to Exceptional Ideas are referred with an EHC plan.
- 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 discriminating against or disadvantaging applicants with SEND.
- Ensuring policies relating to school uniform and trips do not discourage parents of students with SEND from applying for a place.

Arrangements for the fair admissions of students with SEND are outlined in the Admissions Policy and will be published on the school website.

8. Transition

The school is aware of the importance of planning and preparing for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life.

Where students have EHC plans, these will be reviewed and amended in sufficient time prior to a student moving between key phases of education, to allow for planning for and, where necessary, commissioning of support and provision at the setting.

9. Involving students and parents in decision-making

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.

Where a student is receiving SEND support, the school will regularly liaise with parents in setting outcomes and reviewing progress. The class teacher, supported by the SENCO, will speak to parents at least half termly to update them on progress and provide 3 plans, including an IEP, annually and an annual report.

The planning that the school implements will help parents and students with SEND express their needs, wishes and goals, and will:

- Focus on the student as an individual, not allowing their SEND to become a label.
- Be easy for students and their parents to understand by using clear, ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon.
- Highlight the student's strengths and capabilities.
- Enable the student, 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.

Where the LA provides a student with an EHC plan, the school will involve the parents and the student in discussions surrounding how the school can best implement the plan's provisions to help the student thrive in their education and will discern the expected impact of the provision on the student's progress.

Where necessary, the school will facilitate support from an advocate to ensure the parent's views are heard and acknowledged.

10. Funding for SEND support

All students at the provision are in receipt of an EHC plan and as such their needs at that point are funded through the fees paid by local authority. However, where additional needs are highlighted the organisation will inform the local authority and additional fees may be levied to meet these additional needs.

11. EHC needs assessments and plans

The school recognises that, despite having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEND of a student, some students may not make expected levels of progress. In these cases, the school will consult with parents, through the annual review process and consider requesting any appropriate amendments to the EHCP to reflect changing need.

The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the SEND of the student, 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 school 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 student'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.

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

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

12. Reviewing EHC plans

The school will ensure that teachers monitor and review the student's progress during the year and conduct a formal review of the EHC plan at least annually.

The school will:

- Cooperate with the LA and relevant individuals to ensure an annual review meeting takes place, including convening the meeting on behalf of the LA if requested.
- Ensure that the appropriate people are given at least two weeks' notice of the date of the meeting, such as representatives from the LA SEN, social care and health services.
- Seek advice and information about the student prior to the annual review meeting from all parties invited, and send any information gathered to all those invited, at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.
- Ensure that sufficient arrangements are put in place at the school to host the annual review meeting.
- Contribute any relevant information and recommendations about the EHC plan to the LA, keeping parents involved at all times.
- Lead the review of the EHC plan to create the greatest confidence amongst students and their parents.
- Prepare and send a report of the meeting to everyone invited within two weeks of the meeting, setting out any recommendations and amendments to the EHC plan.
- Clarify to the parents and student that they have the right to appeal the decisions made regarding the EHC plan.
- Where possible for LAC, combine the annual review with one of the reviews in their care plan, in particular the personal education plan (PEP) element.
- Where necessary, provide support from an advocate to ensure the student's views are heard and acknowledged.

- Where necessary, facilitate support from an advocate to ensure the parent's views are heard and acknowledged.
- Review each student's EHC plan to ensure that it includes the statutory sections outlined in the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', labelled separately from one another.

If a student's needs significantly change, the school will request a re-assessment of an EHC plan at least six months after an initial assessment. Thereafter, the directors or headteacher will request the LA to conduct a re-assessment of a student whenever they feel it is necessary.

13. Supporting successful preparation for adulthood

The school is aware that being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life-transforming for students with SEND. It recognises the importance of starting early, centring on student aspirations, interests and needs, and will ensure that students are supported at developmentally appropriate levels to make a smooth transition to what they will be doing next, e.g. moving on to higher education.

The school will:

- Ensure that the EHC plan review includes a focus on preparing for adulthood, with additional focus on transition and preparing for adulthood from Year 9 onwards.
- Build transition planning into the revised EHC plan to identify appropriate post-16 pathways for higher education and employment, and support preparation for independent living, maintaining good health in adult life and participating in society.
- Seek partnerships with employment services, businesses, housing agencies, disability organisations, and arts and sports groups, to help children understand what is available to them as they get older, and what it is possible for them to achieve.
- Engage with FE providers as necessary to help plan for any transitions.
- Ensure students from Year 8 until Year 13 are provided with independent careers guidance.

The school's Careers Policy details how the school will fulfil its statutory duties under section 42 of the Education Act 1997 and work with students with SEND to ensure they are prepared for the workplace.

14. Managing complaints

The school will publish the Complaints Procedure Policy on the school website.

Following a parent's serious complaint or disagreement about the SEND provision being made for their child, the school will contact the LA immediately to seek disagreement resolution advice, regardless of whether an EHC plan is in place.

The school 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.

The school 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'.

15. Staff training and improving practice

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

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

16. Use of data and record keeping

All information about students will be kept in accordance with the school's Records Management Policy and Data Protection Policy.

The school's records will:

- 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 students.
- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date register of the provision made for students with SEND.
- Be kept securely so that unauthorised persons do not have access to it, so far as reasonably practicable.

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

Confidentiality

The school will not disclose any EHC plan without the consent of the student's parents, except for specified purposes or in the interests of the student, 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 student'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 student is intending to start their next phase of education.

The school will adhere to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at all times.

17. Publishing information

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

18. Joint commissioning, planning and delivery

The school will work closely with local education, health and social care services to ensure students get the right support.

The school 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).

Where students with SEND also have a medical condition, their provision will be planned and delivered in coordination with the EHC plan.

SEND support will be adapted and/or replaced depending on its effectiveness in achieving the agreed outcomes.

19. Local Offer

The school's directors will collaborate with and support the LA in developing and reviewing the Local Offer, where necessary and appropriate, to ensure that it is:

- **Collaborative:** Where appropriate, the school will work with LAs, parents and students in developing and reviewing the Local Offer. The school will also cooperate with those providing services.
- **Accessible:** The school will collaborate with the LA during development and review to ensure that the LA's Local Offer is easy to understand, factual and jargon-free; is structured in a way that relates to students' and parents' needs, e.g. by broad age group or type of special educational provision; and is well-signposted and -publicised.
- **Comprehensive:** The school will help to ensure that parents and students understand what support can be expected to be available across education, health and social care from age 0 to 25 and how to access it. The school will assist the LA in ensuring that the Local Offer includes eligibility criteria for services, where relevant, and makes it clear where to go for information, advice and support, as well as how to make complaints about provision or appeal against decisions.
- **Up to date:** The school will work with the LA to review the Local Offer to ensure that, when parents and students access the Local Offer, the information is up to date.

The school will provide the LA with information about their existing SEND provision and capabilities to support students with SEND to aid in the drafting of the Local Offer, where required.

20. Monitoring and review

The policy is reviewed on an **annual** basis by the headteacher in conjunction with the directors; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff, parents of students with SEND, and relevant stakeholders.

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

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025.