



# Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

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This document applies to all schools and operations of the Vale Academy Trust. [www.vale-academy.org](http://www.vale-academy.org)

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## Contents

1. Legislation and guidance .....	3
2. Definition .....	3
3. Vision.....	3
4. Aims.....	3
5. Roles and responsibilities .....	4
6. Coordinating and managing provision .....	6
7. Admissions.....	6
8. Identification.....	6
9. Categories of SEND.....	7
10. Supporting pupils with medical conditions .....	7
11. Funding .....	7
12. Curriculum access and inclusion .....	7
13. Partnership with parents .....	8
14. Links with agencies .....	8
15. Transition .....	8
16. Staff development .....	9
17. Evaluating success .....	9

## In this document:

'parent' means a parent, carer or other adult with parental responsibility for a pupil.

'the Trust', 'we' and 'our' means the Vale Academy Trust.

## 1. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the statutory [Special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) code of practice](#) and the following legislation and guidance:

- [Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#) which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEND and disabilities
- The [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Regulations 2014](#), which set out schools' responsibilities for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and SEND coordinators (SENCOs)
- [Oxfordshire Guidance for Special Educational Needs Support](#). *This guidance supports Oxfordshire schools and settings to implement the SEND Code of Practice but does not replace the statutory guidance.*

## 2. Definition

A pupil has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A pupil of compulsory school age has 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 which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is, additional to, or different from, that made generally for other pupils of the same age by mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 settings.

## 3. Vision

Our vision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all pupils within in our trust schools. The Vale Academy Trust is a family of schools recognised for providing exceptional, stimulating, inclusive learning opportunities in a safe, happy environment where all can flourish. As a trust, we inspire the highest standards of achievement and personal growth for all children within our schools. Through working together and sharing excellent practice, Vale Academy Trust schools will support the learning needs of all within our local communities, preparing pupils for the future - seeking to continually improve levels of attainment and progress, and secure the highest levels of achievement appropriate to the needs of the individual.

## 4. Aims

The Trust recognises that all pupils have the right to access a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum. Trust schools aim to create a safe, secure, educationally exciting and positive environment in which all pupils can develop to their full potential and become confident and independent learners.

The Trust encourages and supports each school to:

- have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of pupils with SEND;
- have regard to the views and wishes of the pupil's parents, encouraging parents to be involved in planning and supporting at all stages of their child's development;
- ensure that the school's curriculum is responsive to all pupils whatever their individual need;
- promote positive attitudes and individual confidence, ensuring all pupils experience success;
- identify, assess, record and regularly review pupils' special educational needs;
- make effective use of support services.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Provision for pupils with SEND is a matter viewed at Trust level. The Lead for Pupil Support has a strategic overview of SEND within the individual schools and will support and challenge at a leadership level to enhance quality and effective provision for pupils with SEND.

### ***Board of Trustees***

The Trust's Board of Trustees holds ultimate legal accountability for all outcomes for pupils, including matters concerning SEND. The Board sets overall policy for SEND through this policy document and delegates, through a Scheme of Delegated Authority, operational and procedural SEND responsibilities to the following groups and individuals.

### ***Local Governing Body***

The local governing body of each school, together with the Headteacher, have a responsibility for overseeing all aspects of the school's work, including provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are also required to do their best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has special educational needs. They should determine the school's general approach to provision for pupils with special educational needs and establish the appropriate staffing and funding arrangements.

An appointed representative from a school's local governing body should be actively involved with the Headteacher and SEND Coordinator (SENDCo) during self-review, when considering the provision for pupils with special needs and implementation of SEND procedures within the school. SEND should also be an integral part of the School Development Plan (SDP).

### ***Lead for pupil support***

The lead for pupil support has a Trust-wide responsibility for:

- Working with stakeholders to maintain the Trust SEND policy to ensure it is in accordance with current legislation and guidance and good practice
- Maintaining a strategic overview of SEND within Trust schools, this may be through SEND audits and reviews of provision
- Sharing SEND information with Trustees and Governors, as and when required
- Supporting the effectiveness of SEND provision within the schools on a needs basis
- Supporting and challenging the work of the Headteachers, SENDCo's and inclusion teams within the schools with regard to pupils with SEND
- Leading of SENDCo forum meetings to inform and share best practice

### ***Headteacher***

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the management of provision for pupils with SEND in their school and keeps the governing body fully informed. The Headteacher also works closely with the SENDCo to ensure provision and deployment of resources. The Headteacher is responsible for overseeing the:

- Designated teacher for looked after pupils with SEND
- Designated Member of Staff for Safeguarding pupils
- Teaching Staff and Teaching Assistants working alongside pupils with SEND

### ***SENDCo***

Each school setting has a SENDCo who works closely with all staff, the Headteacher, parents and outside agencies, ensuring the best possible provision for pupils with special educational needs. The SENDCo is responsible for:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND procedures
- coordinating provision for pupils with SEND
- ensuring the involvement of parents from an early stage and liaising with parents of pupils with SEND
- advising on a graduated approach to providing SEND support, liaising with and advising other members of staff
- helping to identify pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, assessing and planning for progress
- maintaining the school's special needs register
- advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies
- being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the local authority and its support agencies
- liaising with previous and next providers of education to ensure a pupil and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- managing teaching assistants, in liaison with Key Stage staff
- supporting the professional development of teaching assistants
- regularly liaising with the governors' representative

### ***Teaching staff***

Class teachers are involved in implementing the School SEND procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with SEND, including differentiation in their planning and classroom environment. The identification of SEND is built into the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of pupils. Class teachers are responsible for working with pupils on a daily basis and closely monitor pupils involved in interventions away from the classroom. Teachers work closely with the SENDCo and teaching assistants to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.

### ***Support Staff (Pastoral workers, Teaching Assistants, Learning Mentors, inclusion teams)***

Support staff should be fully aware of the Trust SEND policy and the school procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with SEND. They should support the work of the class teacher and support the inclusion of pupils with SEND where possible.

Support staff may also be required to support pupils with SEND on a 1:1 or small group basis on pre-learning, additional learning and relevant intervention programmes.

## 6. Coordinating and managing provision

The Headteacher and SENDCo within each school will meet frequently to discuss SEND issues.

The SENDCo will meet with staff, as and when necessary, to give support and advice. SEND procedures and provision are discussed regularly at both staff and departmental meetings in order to support the progress of pupils with SEND. Special needs provision is an integral part of each School Development Plan. The SENDCo oversees the provision. There is also opportunity for informal daily contact between staff to discuss concerns.

Parents are kept informed by school staff and are encouraged to be involved in the support of their child whenever possible. The SENDCo also liaises with parents and pupils with regard to Education Health Needs Assessments (EHNAs) and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in order to ensure quality SEND provision and to complete Annual Reviews. Where there is a concern that parents may require extra support, an EHA/TAF process may be necessary. This would be used to identify areas for change and engage support from other professionals.

## 7. Admissions

Schools within the Trust strive to be fully inclusive in their provision in terms of social background, ability, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexuality. Trust schools acknowledge the range of issues to be taken account of in the process of development. All pupils are welcome, including those with special educational needs, in accordance with the Schools Admissions Policy. According to the [Education Act 1996, \(Section 316\)](#), the school will admit a pupil with an Education, Health and Care Plan subject to the wishes of their parent unless this is incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other pupils, and there are no reasonable steps that can be taken to prevent the incompatibility

## 8. Identification

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) provides clear guidance on the processes for identifying pupils with potential SEND and the criteria for entry to the SEND register:

### [OCC Guidance and policies about SEND](#)

This guidance and policies are also used to moderate whether the SEND provision is at an appropriate level, e.g. SEND register or EHCP. When seeking to obtain an EHCP an application for an Education, Health Needs Assessment (EHNA) needs to be made to Oxfordshire County Council and it will then be decided at panel if an EHCP is to be in place. The DfE's [Keeping Children safe in education](#) should also be referred to when identifying and working with pupils with SEND.

The [Special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) code of practice](#) supports an identification of need through a diagnostic approach. It is important to know the pupils, what is working and what is not working. During the identification process, class teachers will work alongside SENDCos.

Tools such as Early Help Assessment, Pastoral Support plans and Pupil Profiles could be used to support the co-ordination of pupil support. Parents will be included during this, and throughout many stages of the process.

## 9. Categories of SEND

Pupils needs and requirements fall into four broad areas, but individual pupils may well have needs which span two or more areas. For example, a pupil with general learning difficulties may also have communication difficulties or a sensory impairment.

- **Communication and interaction:** Speech, Language and Communication needs  
Autistic Spectrum Conditions including Asperger's and Autism
- **Cognition and Learning:** Learning difficulties, Specific Learning Difficulties e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH):** Behaviour reflecting underlying health difficulties: mental health difficulties (e.g. anxiety, depression).  
Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, attachment disorder, trauma.
- **Sensory and/or physical Needs:** Hearing impairment, Visual impairment, Physical disability, Multi-sensory impairment

## 10. Supporting pupils with medical conditions

Where pupils with SEND also have medical needs, their provision is planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way within their EHCP. Schools have regard to the policy and procedures for supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and the associated guidance from the DfE: [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#).

## 11. Funding

The Headteachers, Deputy Heads, Assistant Heads, SENDCos, plus the governors of each school monitor the needs of pupils with SEND. Resources within each Trust school are allocated according to need and will be dependent on the individual school's budget. Resources available may include training for staff, allocated teacher time, teaching assistant (TA) small group support, one-to-one teaching assistant support, additional materials, e.g. learning resources, resources to support emotional well-being, educational games.

## 12. Curriculum access and inclusion

All Trust schools strive to be inclusive schools, showing a sense of community and belonging through their inclusive ethos, broad and balanced curriculum, systems for early identification of barriers to learning and participation, high expectations and suitable targets for all pupils, including those with SEND.

### ***Mainstream provision***

Pupils are grouped in classes according to age and/or ability depending on subject and key stage. In mixed ability classes where there is a wide range of ability, all staff provide a differentiated curriculum suitable for all pupils, to ensure access at all levels. Any pupil with specific needs is fully included into the normal classroom environment and, where appropriate, the curriculum is adjusted accordingly.

### ***Personalised provision***

In addition to this, pupils with SEND may have a personalised and individualised programme and work towards targets which will meet their individual needs – shown in their pupil profile document. Where necessary, pupils may be removed from one or more curriculum subjects to enable them scope within their timetable to work individually or in a small group with

teaching assistants and other professionals. This work is overseen by class teachers and the SENDCo. This may involve one or more of the following initiatives:

### ***Skills-based courses***

Where appropriate, a range of specialised courses will be delivered to pupils with SEND. These courses will develop long term skills to encourage independent learning. Teaching Assistants may deliver a range of courses such as Literacy, Numeracy, Dyslexia Skills, Speech and Communication, Fine Motor Skills (including handwriting) and Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

### ***Academic support***

Teaching Assistants support pupils with SEND with their studies and life in school. 'Overlearning' sessions will check the pupil's understanding of key ideas, concepts and vocabulary. 'Pre-Learning' sessions will introduce new topics.

Support is also given with understanding homework, exam revision and understanding the events and activities that take place.

### ***Life-skills***

Where appropriate, pupils with SEND will be supported with developing life skills, structured within an appropriate life-skills programme.

## **13. Partnership with parents**

Trust schools believe that good communication between parents and school staff is essential, so that parents can share their knowledge and expertise about their child. This is important in enabling pupils with special educational needs to achieve their potential. The Trust encourages each school to forge close partnerships with parents in the education process. Parents are encouraged to visit the individual school to discuss any concerns about their child with the SENDCo and/or class teacher, at a mutually agreed time.

## **14. Links with agencies**

The Trust and its schools access a wide range of Education, Health and Social Services professionals available in Oxfordshire. This includes outreach teachers from Language Resource Bases, the Service for Autism, Service for Pupils with Physical Disabilities, Sensory Support Service, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists and others. It also includes the Educational Psychology Service and the Advisory Team for Inclusion (SEND). We are committed to using the expertise and advice provided by other professionals.

## **15. Transition**

Trust schools have a Transition Programme in place for all pupils. Those with SEND are given additional support within the Transition Programme.

Foundation staff will visit pupils with SEND in a preschool setting, prior to them starting mainstream education. Additional visits can also be made for those pupils with SEND to familiarise them with staff and their classroom.

A transition programme is in place to support pupils transferring into a new class or new key stage. In term 6, all pupils visit their new classroom and new teacher(s). Additionally, staff will

share information about pupils with SEND to ensure a smooth transition at the start of the new school year.

Information is shared between primary and secondary staff for all pupils with SEND to ensure a smooth transfer. Where possible the appropriate member of secondary staff will attend the final annual review of Year 6 pupils with EHCPs due to join the secondary stage. Secondary representatives visit feeder primary schools to meet parents and pupils before transfer.

Pupils with SEND are given additional visits, if required, so that they will become more confident in the new situation.

## 16. Staff development

As a Trust we acknowledge the need for additional training for school staff when working with pupils with SEND. Each Trust school is committed to gaining further expertise in the area of SEND. Training could include the following; school-based whole school INSET (in-service training), in-house training provided by Lead for Pupil Support, training sessions for teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors, SENDCo and teacher/teaching assistant group meetings, individual staff development provided by outside agency/provider, staff meetings etc.

## 19. Evaluating success

The success of each school's SEND Policy and provision should be evaluated through:

- Monitoring of classroom practice by the Senior Leadership Team, SENDCo e.g., lesson observations, learning walks
- Analysis of pupil profile documents to ensure suitable targets, quality provision and steps of progress
- Monitoring of procedures and practice by the SEND governor
- School Self-Evaluation
- SEND peer review

If a parent is concerned about SEND provision for their child, initial contact should be made with the class teacher/SENDCo. A meeting may be arranged, which could include the Headteacher and/or Deputy Head and/or SENCO to discuss the concern.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Support Service ([SENDIASS](#)), formally Parent Partnership Service, is available to support parents in meetings concerning their child's progress and welfare.

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