

SEND Policy

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Polaris
Multi-Academy Trust

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1. Aims and objectives

Our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy aims to:

- Make sure the schools in our trust fully implement national legislation and guidance regarding pupils with SEND
- Set out how our trust will, across all of our schools:
 - Support and make provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
 - Provide pupils with SEND access to all aspects of school life so they can engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEND
 - Help pupils with SEND fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best
 - Help pupils with SEND become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
 - Help pupils with SEND make a successful transition into adulthood
 - Communicate with pupils with SEND and their parents or carers and involve them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the pupil
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEND
- Make sure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff

2. Vision and values

Being supported towards greater independence and engagement in learning can be life transforming for all children and young people, but particularly those with SEND. This support needs to start early and should centre on the child or young person's own aspirations, interests and needs. All professionals working with children with SEND will share high aspirations and have a good understanding of what support is effective in enabling our pupils to enjoy their learning and achieve their potential.

At all the schools, in our trust, we will provide all pupils with access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

We are committed to making sure all our pupils have the chance to thrive, through supporting them to meet their full potential.

We are focused on creating an inclusive environment, where provision is tailored to the needs and abilities of pupils, no matter how varied.

The trust will make its best endeavours to:

- **Drive and enable inclusivity:**
The trust aims to promote inclusive practices in its schools, ensuring that children with SEND can learn alongside their peers whenever appropriate.
- **Support early Intervention:**
Early identification and support are crucial for maximizing outcomes for children with SEND.
- **Champion parental Involvement:**
The trust emphasizes the importance of involving parents and carers in decision-making and ensuring they have a voice in their child's education.
- **Drive and enable collaboration:**

Trust is committed to effective collaboration between education, health, and care services, understanding that it is essential for providing holistic support for children and young people with SEND.

3. Legislation and guidance

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 co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out schools' duties to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out schools' 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 those with a disability) and those who don't share it
- The [Governance Handbook](#), which sets out governors'/trustees' responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- The [School Admissions Code](#), which sets out schools' obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and their duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special education needs

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

This policy is written in line with the duties under the Equality Act 2010 to take such steps as is reasonable to avoid any substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the school's policies or practices.

4. Inclusion and equal opportunities

In our trust we strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all pupils, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all pupils the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the school environment to make sure that pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life.

5. Definitions

5.1 Special educational needs

A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or

- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of 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 children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

5.2 Disability

Pupils are considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

All schools in our trust will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

5.3 The 4 areas of need

The needs of pupils with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Pupils can have needs that cut across more than 1 area, and their needs may change over time.

Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the pupil's particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

AREA OF NEED	
Communication and interaction	Pupils with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or do not understand or use the social rules of communication. Pupils who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.
Cognition and learning	Pupils with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including: • Specific learning difficulties, which impact 1 or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Moderate learning difficulties • Severe learning difficulties • Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where pupils are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment

AREA OF NEED	
Social, emotional and mental health	These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Pupils may have: • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder • Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder • Suffered adverse childhood experiences These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated.
Sensory and/or physical	Pupils with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. Pupils may have: • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment These pupils may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The SENCO

The SENCO at each school in the Trust will hold or be working towards the mandatory National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCO) within the required statutory timescale. The Trust will ensure compliance with all current regulations relating to SENCO qualifications and professional development. The SENCO will meet all statutory qualification requirements applicable at the time of appointment

The SENCO of each school in the trust will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEN and then liaise with them about the pupil's needs and any provision made.
- Work with the Head of School and SEN Governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plans.
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that pupils with SEN receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching.
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support and differentiated teaching methods appropriate for individual pupils.

- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively.
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA) and its support services, and work with external agencies to ensure that appropriate provision is provided / secured.
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the pupil and their parents are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned.
- When a pupil moves to a different school or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a pupil's SEN and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution, in a timely manner.
- Work with the Head of School and governing board to make sure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Make sure the school keeps its records of all pupils with SEND up to date and accurate.
- The Head of School monitors identifying any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development.
- The Head of School regularly reviews and evaluates the breadth and impact of the SEND supports the school offers or can access and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer.
- Prepare and review information for inclusion in the school's SEN information report and any updates to this policy.
- The Head of School and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison, with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching.

6.2 Board of Directors

The Trust Board is responsible for making sure the following duties are carried out. The Trust Board will appoint a named SEND Director. The duties listed below can be delegated to a committee or an individual (Head of School):

- Co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer.
- Do all it can to make sure that every pupil with SEND gets the support they need.
- Make sure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who don't have SEND.
- Inform parents when their child's school is making special educational provision for the child.
- Make sure that arrangements are in place in schools to support any pupils with medical conditions.
- Provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND.
- Provide an annual report for parents on their child's progress.
- Record accurately and keep up to date records of the provision made for pupils with SEND.

- Publish information on each school's website about how the schools are implementing their SEND policy, in a SEN information report.
- Publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and the schools' accessibility plans.
- Make sure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for each school and that the key responsibilities of the role are set out and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out.
- Determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEND.
- Regarding secondary schools, make sure that all pupils from year 8 until year 13 are provided with independent careers advice.

6.3 The Trust SEND Director

The trust will appoint a SEND Director.

The SEND Director will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at Trust Board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the trust and update the board on this via visit reports published through their LGB meetings, visit to schools and meetings with the CEO.
- Work with the CEO and Director of School Improvement to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in their school.

6.4 The Local Governing Body (LGB)

Each LGB in the trust will appoint a SEND Governor.

The SEN LGB Governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at the LGB meetings.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within their school and update the board on this via visit reports published through their LGB meetings.
- Work with the Head of School and SENCO to be abreast of the strategic development of the SEND Policy and provision in their school.

6.4 The Head of School

The Head of School will:

- Work with the SENCO and SEND Governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school.
- Work with the SENCO and SEND Governor to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for pupils with SEND in their school, and their progress.
- Have responsibility for monitoring the school's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual pupils.
- Make sure that the SENCO has enough time to carry out their duties.

- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of pupils on the SEND register.
- Advise the LA when a pupil needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review.
- With the SENCO, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development.
- With the SENCO, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer.
- With the SENCO and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison, with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching.

6.5 Class teachers and Form Tutors

Each class teacher and Form Tutor is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is differentiated to meet pupil needs through a graduated approach.
- The progress and development of every pupil in their class.
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching.
- Working with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision.
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the SEN information report.
- Communicating with parents regularly to:
 - Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
 - Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
 - Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school
 - Listen to the parents' concerns and agree their aspirations for the pupil

6.6 Parents or carers

Parents or carers should inform the school if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

Parents or carers of a pupil on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the pupil's SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. They will be:

- Invited to termly meetings to review the provision that is in place for their child.
- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEN support outside school and any changes in the pupils' needs.
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with school staff, agree their aspirations for the pupil
- Given an annual report on the pupil's progress.

The school will take into account the views of the parent or carer in any decisions made about the pupil.

6.7 The pupil

Pupils will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the pupil:

- Explaining what their strengths and difficulties are
- Contributing to setting targets or outcomes
- Attending review meetings
- Giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions

The pupils' views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

7. The Annual Review

Annual reviews of EHCPs will be conducted in accordance with statutory requirements, involving parents, pupils, the local authority and relevant professionals

8. SEN information report

Every school in the trust publishes a SEN information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school.

The information report will be updated annually and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains. Each academy website will publish:

- The Trust SEND Policy;
- SEND Information Report;
- Accessibility Plan;
- SENCO contact details;
- Equality Information and Objectives.

9. Our approach to SEND support

9.1 Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs

To ensure that each school in the trust meets the statutory duty, leaders will deliver systems that ensure the Trust and its schools will use their best endeavours to secure the special educational provision called for by a pupil's needs.

The starting point for identification is the delivery of high-quality teaching. This is the key starting point and non-negotiable factor in the support and challenge for all pupils, but particularly those with SEND. Staff will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the school. This will build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. They will also consider any evidence that the pupil may have a disability and if so, what reasonable adjustments the school may need to make.

Class teachers will regularly assess the progress for all pupils and identify those whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better their previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers

- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, wider development or social needs.

When teachers identify an area where a pupil is making slow progress, they will target the pupil's area of weakness with appropriately adapted high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve the teacher will raise the issue with the SENCO to have an initial discussion about whether this lack of progress may be due to a special educational need. Where necessary they will, in consultation with the pupil's parents or carers, consider consulting an external specialist and/or the local authority.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEN.

Potential short-term causes of impact on behaviour or performance will be considered, such as bullying or bereavement. The school will work closely with pupils, parents and external partners in making its best endeavours to apply its behaviour policy in a sensitive, collaborative and fair way.

Staff will also take particular care in identifying and assessing SEN for pupils whose first language is not English.

When deciding whether the pupil needs special educational provision, school staff will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. They will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether the school can provide it by adapting its core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

The school will work in a multi-agency way to make sure it gets relevant information before the pupil starts at the school, so support can be put in place as early as possible, and:

- Their previous setting has already identified that they have SEN
- They are known to external agencies
- They have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

9.2 Consulting and involving pupils and parents

Our schools will put the pupils and their parents at the heart of all decisions made about special educational provision.

When we aim to identify whether a pupil needs special education provision, we will have an early discussion with the pupil and their parents. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty.
- We take into account any concerns the parents have.
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child.
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are.
- We build strong and positive relationships with the family.

Notes of these early discussions will be added to the pupil's record and given to their parents.

We will formally notify parents when it is decided that a pupil will receive special educational provision.

9.3 The graduated approach to SEN support

Once a pupil has been identified as having SEN, we will take action to remove any barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

1. Assess

The pupil's class teacher and the SENCO will carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. The views of the pupil and their parents will be taken into account. The school may also seek advice from external support services.

The assessment will be reviewed regularly to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the pupil's needs. For many pupils, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

2. Plan

In consultation with the parents and the pupil, the teacher and the SENCO will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes, and a clear date for review.

All staff who work with a pupil will be made aware of the pupil's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed. This information will be recorded on our management information system, SIMs, and will be made accessible to staff in an Individual Education Plan.

Parents will be fully aware of the planned support and interventions and may be asked to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

3. Do

The pupil's class or subject teacher retains overall responsibility for their progress.

Where the plan involves group or 1-to-1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the pupil. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.

The SENCO will support the teacher in further assessing the pupil's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on how to implement support effectively.

4. Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on a pupil's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

We will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents and pupils
- The level of progress the pupil has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the pupil

The teacher and the SENCO will revise the outcomes and support in light of the pupil's progress and development, and in consultation with the pupil and their parents.

9.3 Levels of support

School-based SEN support

Pupils receiving SEN support will be placed on the SEND register. These pupils have needs that can be met by the school through the graduated approach. Where a pupil's needs cannot be adequately met with in-house expertise, staff will consider involving an external specialist as soon as possible.

The provision for these pupils is funded through the school's notional SEND budget.

On the census these pupils will be marked with the code K.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan

Pupils who need more support than is available through the school's school-based SEN provision may be entitled to an EHC plan. The plan is a legal document that describes the needs of the pupil, the provision that will be put in place, and the outcomes sought. This plan will be reviewed annually in line with the statutory guidance. The provision for these pupils will be funded from the school's notional SEND budget, and potentially from the LA (from the high-level needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant). On the census these pupils will be marked with the code E.

9.4 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEN by:

- Tracking pupils' progress, including using provision maps
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEN support
- Using pupil questionnaires
- Monitoring by the SENCO
- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from a pupil and their parents
- Getting feedback from teaching staff, including Form Tutors (secondary schools).

Training will regularly be provided to teaching and support staff. The Head of School and the SENCOs will continuously monitor to identify any staff in their school who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development.

10. Links with external professional agencies

The trust recognises that we won't be able to meet all the needs of every pupil. Whenever necessary our schools will work with external support services such as:

- Speech and language therapists
- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- General practitioners or paediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services

The provision for these pupils will be funded from the school's notional SEND budget, and potentially from the LA (from the high-level needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant).

On the census these pupils will be marked with the code E.

11. Admission and accessibility arrangements

The trust is committed to inclusivity and its schools' supporting children and families in their communities, as such meets all the demands set out in the admissions code and other relevant legislation regarding admitting pupils with SEND.

11.1 Admission arrangements

- Where a school is named in an Education, Health and Care Plan, the school must admit the child. Under Section 43 Children and Families Act 2014, the school named in an EHCP must admit the child.
- Each school will comply with all relevant provisions of the statutory codes of practice (the School Admissions Code of Practice and the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice) as they apply at any given time.
- Each school in the trust applies its oversubscription criteria after placing pupils with an EHCP where the school is named in the plan.

11.2 Accessibility arrangements

Our trust aims to treat all its pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind.

Each school's accessibility plan details the following:

- The facilities you provide to help disabled pupils access your schools, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services
- Improves and maintains access to the physical environment
- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability
- Improves the delivery of information to pupils with a disability

Each school's Accessibility Plan is published on its website and reviewed in accordance with statutory requirements.

12. Complaints about SEND provision

Where parents have concerns about our school's SEND provision, they should first raise their concerns informally with the class teacher, who will try to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. The Trust policy is to ensure that information is shared appropriately, so if in the first informal stage a parent / carer requires further information / support, the SENCO should be contacted.

If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the school's response, they can escalate the complaint. In some circumstances, this right also applies to the pupil themselves. The avenues for complaints are as follows:

- The school's Complaints Policy
- SENDIAS
- The Local Authority
- The First-tier SEND Tribunal (where applicable)

It is the Trust's and school ambition to always meet face to face to discuss how working together we can resolve and de-escalate any issues a pupil or parent may have.

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEN Code of Practice](#).

13. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

13.1 Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our SEND policy. We will do this by evaluating whether or not we are meeting our objectives set out in section 1.

We will evaluate how effective our SEND provision is with regards to:

- All staff's awareness of pupils with SEND at the start of the autumn term
- How early pupils are identified as having SEND
- Pupils' progress and attainment once they have been identified as having SEND
- Whether pupils with SEND feel safe, valued and included in the school community
- Comments and feedback from pupils and their parents

13.2 Monitoring the policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board and LGB **every year**. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.

It will be approved by the board of trustees.

14. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents

- SEN information report
- The local offer
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Attendance policy
- Safeguarding / child protection policy
- Complaints policy

