Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

This document applies to all schools and operations of the Vale Academy Trust. www.vale-academy.org

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Contents

In this document, 'parent' means a parent, carer or other adult with parental responsibility for a child.

1. 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's 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)

2. Definition

A child 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 child 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 institutions.

3. Aims

This policy applies to all schools within the Vale Academy Trust (the 'Trust').

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

The Trust encourages each school to:

- Ensure that their 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;
- encourage parents to be involved in planning and supporting at all stages of their child's development;
- make effective use of support services.

4. 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 support with ensuring quality and effective provision for SEND pupils.

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 children 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 SENCO during self-review, when considering the provision for pupils with special needs and implementation of the SEND policy 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
- 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, SENCO's and inclusion teams within the schools with regard to SEND pupils

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the management of provision for SEND pupils in their school and keeps the governing body fully informed. The Headteacher also works closely with the SENCO/Inclusion Lead 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 SEND pupils

SENCO/Inclusion Lead

Each school setting has a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) who works closely with all staff, the Headteacher, parents and outside agencies ensuring the best possible provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy
- 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, 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 potential 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 the development of the school's SEND policy and implement the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with SEND, including differentiation in their planning. 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 SENCO 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 school's SEND policy and the 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 the SEND pupils where possible. Support staff are also required to support SEND pupils on a 1:1 or small group basis on pre-learning, additional learning and relevant intervention programmes.

5. Coordinating and managing provision

The Headteacher and SENCO/Inclusion Lead within each school will meet frequently to discuss SEND issues.

The SENCO/Inclusion Lead will meet with staff, as and when necessary, to give support and advice. SEND policy and provision are discussed regularly at both staff and departmental meetings in order to raise the achievement of pupils with SEND. Special needs provision is an integral part of each School Development Plan. The SENCO/Inclusion Lead 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 SENCO/Inclusion Lead also liaises with parents and pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans to have an Annual review with the SENCO. 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.

6. Admissions

Schools within the Trust strive to be fully inclusive. They 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 child with an Education, Health and Care Plan subject to the wishes of their parent unless this is incompatible with the efficient education of other pupils, and there are no reasonable steps that can be taken to prevent the incompatibility

7. 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 SEN and disability

These guidance and policies are also used to moderate whether the SEND provision is at an appropriate level, e.g., SEND register or Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP). When seeking to obtain an EHCP an application needs to be made to panel at Oxfordshire County Council. The DfE's Keeping children safe in education should also be referred to when identifying and working with SEND pupils.

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 SENCOs/inclusion leads.

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

8. Categories of SEND

Children's 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

9. 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 Education Health Care plan. Schools have regard to the school policy for supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and the associated guidance from the DfE: Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

10. Funding

The Headteachers, Deputy Heads, Assistant Heads, SENCOs/Inclusion Leads, plus the governors of each school monitor the needs of SEND pupils. Resources within each Trust school are allocated according to need and will be dependent on the individual school's budget. Resources available include training for staff, teachers time, Teaching Assistant (TA) support, 1:1 adult support, additional materials e.g., learning resources, resources to support emotional well-being, educational games

11. 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 for all pupils, systems for early identification of barriers to learning and participation, and 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.

Personalised provision

In addition to this, pupils with SEND may have a personalised and individualised programme which will meet their individual needs. 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 SENCO. This may involve one or more of the following initiatives:

Skills-based courses

Where appropriate, a range of specialised courses will be delivered to SEND pupils. These courses will develop long term skills to encourage independent learning. Teaching Assistants will 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 will support SEND pupils 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, SEND pupils will be supported with developing life skills, structured within an appropriate life-skills programme.

12. 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 children 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 SENCO and/or class teacher, at a mutually agreed time.

13. 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.

14. 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 SEND pupils to ensure a smooth transfer. Where possible the appropriate member of secondary staff will attend the final annual review of Year 6 pupils with Statements/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.

15. Staff development

As a Trust we acknowledge the need for additional training for school staff when working with SEND pupils. 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 pupils support, training sessions for Teaching Assistants and lunchtime supervisors, SENCO and Teacher Assistant group meetings, Individual staff development provided by various higher education institutions, Staff meetings etc.

16. 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 e.g., lesson observations, learning walks
- Analysis of pupil tracking data and test results – for individual pupils and for cohorts
- Value-added data for pupils on the SEND register
- Monitoring of procedures and practice by the SEND governor
- School Self-Evaluation
- Monitoring the quality of Pupil Profiles and review meetings
- The School Improvement Plan
- SEND peer review

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