Staffordshire University Academy		Academy Policy Document			
Approved by:	**LAC**	**Issue date:**	**Sept 2026**	**Review date:**	**Sept 2027**
Policy Title:	**SEN Policy**				
Policy Owner:	**SENCO**	**Page 1 of 9**			
Audience:	**Staff ✓ Students ✓ LAC ✓ Parents ✓**				

1. The aims of the SEND Policy

This is the SEND Policy of Staffordshire University Academy (SUA).

Our SEND Policy is designed to:

1.1. To promote inclusive education by ensuring all students, regardless of ability or need, have equal access to a high-quality education and fostering an environment where differences are valued.
1.2. To identify and respond to SEND early by monitoring student progress, identifying needs promptly and providing timely interventions to prevent gaps in learning.
1.3. To provide high-quality support by tailoring interventions to individual needs and using a range of strategies, resources and staff expertise to enable students to access the curriculum.
1.4. To collaborate with families and professionals by maintaining open communication with parents, carers and external agencies and involving them in decision-making about their child's provision.
1.5. To monitor and evaluate provision by regularly reviewing the effectiveness of interventions and support and using outcomes and feedback to inform improvements.
1.6. To prepare students for life beyond academy by developing independence, social skills and emotional wellbeing and ensuring transitions within academy and to post-academy settings are well-planned and supported.
1.7. To meet legal requirements by complying with statutory duties under the SEND Code of Practice and clearly outlining the academy's responsibilities and the process for accessing support.

2. Scope and application

2.1. This policy applies to the whole academy (including, where relevant, the Sixth Form).

3. Regulatory Framework

3.1. This SEND Policy is based on the statutory SEND Code of Practice and relevant legislation. It explains how the academy meets its responsibilities to support children with special educational needs and disabilities. The law that underpins this policy includes:

Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3) – sets out the duties of academies to support students with SEND.
SEND Regulations 2014 – cover Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, the role of SENCOs and the requirement to publish a SEND information report.

Equality Act 2010 (section 20) – requires the academy to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.
Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) – ensures the academy eliminates discrimination, promotes equality of opportunity and fosters good relations for students with protected characteristics, including disability.
School Admissions Code – ensures the academy admits all students named in an EHC plan and does not unfairly disadvantage children with SEND during the admissions process.

3.2. This policy ensures that all students with SEND receive the support they need to access a high-quality education and have equal opportunities to thrive.

4. Inclusion and equal opportunities

At our academy, we are committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where all students, regardless of their needs or abilities, can access a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We aim to ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive and achieve their aspirations. We achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to our teaching, curriculum and the academy environment, ensuring that students with SEND are fully included in all aspects of academy life.

5. Definitions

5.1. A child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

5.2. According to the *SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years*, a child or young person has a learning difficulty if they:

- Have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- Have a disability that prevents or hinders them from using facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream settings or mainstream post 16 institutions.
- A student who struggles with a particular subject does not automatically have a "learning difficulty" in the legal or educational sense. Differences in how quickly students learn, their problem-solving abilities, or their general aptitude are normal variations within any group of learners. A "learning difficulty", legally speaking, refers to a specific and significant obstacle to learning that is not merely a result of ordinary differences in ability or effort.
- We recognise that differences in learning and behaviour are a normal part of child development. Children and young people progress through developmental stages at different rates and variations in attention, social interaction, emotional regulation and behaviour are often part of typical growth.
- Not all behavioral difficulties indicate that a student has a "learning difficulty". A child who displays challenging or inappropriate behaviour does not automatically have SEND. Behaviour can be influenced by normal developmental factors, environmental circumstances, or personal experiences.
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that "persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN." However, where behaviour causes concern, the academy will explore whether there are any underlying needs—such as communication difficulties, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues, or unmet learning needs—that may be contributing factors.
- If an underlying special educational need is identified, appropriate support will be provided in line with the academy's SEND policy. Where behaviour reflects normal developmental variation

or other non-SEND factors, the academy will use its behaviour policy and pastoral systems to support positive development.

- It is also important to note that having SEND does not necessarily affect a student's academic ability. Some students with SEND are highly able academically but may experience difficulties in other areas, such as communication, organisation, social interaction or emotional regulation. The academy values every student's strengths and aims to ensure that support focuses on their individual needs and potential.

5.3. A student is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities. The academy will make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to ensure they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

6. Support and Provision

6.1 At Staffordshire University Academy, we are an inclusive mainstream academy committed to giving all students the best possible opportunities to succeed. We maintain high expectations for every learner and provide support to help each child achieve their full potential. Our approach combines challenge with care, helping students develop the skills, confidence and resilience they need to thrive within a mainstream environment.

6.2 While we are not a specialist SEND academy, we are committed to inclusivity and provide support to students with a range of needs. A child might have special provision made for them (for example, specific adaptations or adjustments different from the standard offer) but may not have access to small-group interventions or SSO support at any one time, due to capacity.

6.3 Access to targeted interventions also depends on how well a student is progressing in the curriculum and the academy's ability to manage a high volume of need. Where demand exceeds capacity, students may be placed on a waiting list for interventions. Support is prioritised based on level of need and available capacity.

6.4 We provide:

- Quality first teaching: all teachers use strategies to help students access the curriculum, such as chunking instructions and providing writing frames.
- Wave 1 classroom support: everyday strategies that benefit all learners, including adult modelling, extra processing time and regular check-ins with a trusted adult.
- Wave 2 targeted small-group interventions: time-limited small-group support for specific skills, delivered where staffing and capacity allow, usually by SSOs or members of the Inclusion Team.
- Wave 3 specialist and individualised support, implemented where appropriate and feasible within current staffing capacity.
- Pastoral support and parental communication: close collaboration with families to support students' wellbeing and progress.
- Behaviour support: the academy has a behaviour policy that applies to all students, with reasonable adjustments made for students with SEND to ensure fair and supportive management of behaviour.

6.5 We cannot provide:

- One-to-one SSO support or small-group teaching: students remain in the classroom with their subject teachers, receiving support and adaptations within lessons. Support staff (SSOs) may provide targeted interventions outside of the classroom which focus upon specific skills, but

they do not deliver subject teaching outside the classroom in small groups, in order to maintain access to the full curriculum and avoid separating students from subject specialists and their peers.

- An EHCP for every student on the SEND register – legal thresholds and evidence are required.
- Immediate access to external services (e.g., CAMHS, Educational Psychology, SALT), which are managed externally.
- Personalised or alternative curricular.
- Guaranteed places in intervention groups – support is prioritised based on need and staff availability.
- As a mainstream academy, there are limits to the specialist support we can provide. Our focus is on inclusive classroom practice, supplemented by targeted interventions where possible. Specialist provision is reserved for students with the highest levels of need.

6.6 Disability Access:

- Our academy is committed to ensuring that all students can access the site safely and comfortably.
- Our facilities include lifts and accessible routes throughout the academy.
- Where necessary and appropriate, students may be issued with an early exit pass to support their needs.
- We aim to remove barriers to learning and participation or all students with disabilities.

7. Early Identification of SEND

7.1. At SUA, we place a strong emphasis on the early identification of students' additional needs. Concerns can be raised by parents, carers or academy staff at any time.

7.2. Once a concern reaches a set threshold, the student's progress and potential barriers to learning are closely observed and feedback is gathered from teachers and support staff. If appropriate, the student may then be offered targeted interventions—where capacity is limited, a waiting list may be in place. This process takes time, as the academy carefully monitors progress, gathers evidence and adjusts support as needed.

7.3. As part of the Assess-Plan-Do-Review Model, the SEND team work closely with the parents and carers of students who have or may have learning difficulties to assess and review a student's needs and support.

7.4. A range of formal assessments are used to help identify individual needs. These typically include Year 6 SATs results, baseline assessments completed on entry from primary academy and access arrangements tests. In addition, the academy uses an in-house screening tool to help identify any potential areas of need. Where assessments or observations raise concerns, these will be discussed with parents and carers and appropriate next steps will be agreed in line with the academy's graduated response.

7.5. For new Year 7s, we rely on comprehensive and detailed information from primary settings to help us identify needs and put appropriate support in place.

7.6. The academy does not carry out medical diagnoses but will use its assessments to inform teaching strategies and, where appropriate, referrals for further specialist advice.

7.7. We value the input of all parents and carers and their views play a central role in the assessment and support we provide.

8. Procedures for Monitoring and Reviewing

8.1. The academy takes a graduated approach to monitoring and reviewing the progress of students with SEND, following the Assess–Plan–Do–Review (APDR) cycle. This ensures that support is responsive, evidence-based and effective.

1. Assess:

- Teachers and the SEND team regularly gather information about each student's learning, progress and engagement.
- Assessments include formal testing, teacher observation, work scrutiny and input from SSOs or external professionals.
- Evidence from interventions, attendance, behaviour records and wellbeing checks are also considered.

2. Plan:

- Based on assessment data, individualised support plans or interventions are developed.
- Plans state desired outcomes, strategies to be used and responsibilities of staff involved.

3. Do:

- Interventions are delivered consistently by teachers, SSOs and where appropriate, external professionals.
- Teachers maintain responsibility for ensuring access to the curriculum and high-quality teaching.

4. Review:

- The effectiveness of interventions and support is evaluated at regular intervals, usually every term or more frequently if needed.
- The review process considers:
  - Progress against set targets
  - Behavioural and social/emotional development
  - Feedback from teachers, SSOs and external agencies
  - Views of students and parents
- Outcomes of reviews inform whether current provision is continued, adjusted or escalated.

5. Recording and Reporting:

- All APDR cycles are logged on the academy's management systems (Provision Map).
- Progress is communicated to parents and carers.
- The SEND team oversees consistency and quality of monitoring across the academy and reports to the leadership team and governors on SEND outcomes.

8.2. Evaluating whole-academy SEND provision

- The academy monitors trends across all students with SEND to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Data is used to inform staff training, allocation of resources and adjustments to whole-academy policy or interventions.

9. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the Graduated Response

9.1. For some students, despite high-quality teaching and targeted SEN Support, additional provision may be needed. In these cases, the academy may consider requesting an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA – an EHCP request).

9.2. An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is a legal document for children and young people with the most complex special educational needs or disabilities. It sets out the support a child requires to achieve their learning and development goals and can provide additional funding where needs cannot be met through the academy's usual resources.

9.3. It is important to understand that a child's need alone is not sufficient for an EHCP. The academy must first provide evidence that additional support has been delivered through the graduated response, a structured approach to identifying and meeting needs. This involves:

- Assessing the student's needs using information from teachers, parents and external professionals.
- Planning targeted support and interventions tailored to the student's needs.
- Doing – implementing the support and monitoring its impact.
- Reviewing regularly – evaluating effectiveness and adjusting as necessary.

9.4. The local authority will typically expect the academy to evidence significant spending before the academy can request top-up (additional) funding. This ensures that any EHCP reflects clear evidence of need and provision beyond what the academy can normally provide.

9.5. Where a decision is made to request an EHCP, parents and carers are fully involved in the process, contributing information, sharing their views and helping to identify the outcomes that matter most for their child.

9.6. Parents and carers may also apply for an EHCP themselves (section 36 (1) of the Children and Families Act of 2014) and the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) can provide guidance and support throughout the application process.

9.7. As a guide, it usually takes around two terms to a year to build the sustained APDR evidence needed for an EHCP request, depending on the child, demand and the level of need.

9.8. We understand that families may feel worried or eager for support, but completing this process thoroughly is essential to ensure that any EHCP request is accurate, robust and in the child's best interests.

9.9. A number of students may require assessment for an EHCP at any given time. As an academy, we must balance and manage multiple cases, meaning that the process and timelines can differ depending on need, urgency and external-agency availability. We will always ensure that the highest-need students are prioritised and that each child receives thorough and fair consideration.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 The SENCo is Lauren White, supported by Senior Assistant SENCo Amelia Hollies and Assistant SENCo Mrs. Burkitt. As a team, they are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the SEND policy and for coordinating provision for individual students with SEND, including those with EHC plans.

The SEND team provides professional guidance to colleagues and works with staff, parents, and external agencies to ensure students receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching. They advise on the graduated approach to SEND support, oversee the use of the academy's resources to meet students' needs effectively and act as the main point of contact for external agencies, particularly the local authority.

Additionally, the SENCo works with the Senior Leadership Team and SEND link governor to determine the strategic development of SEND policy and provision across the academy.

10.2 The SEND link governor helps raise awareness of SEND issues within the governing board, monitors the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision and provides updates to the board. They work with the Principal and SENCo to support the strategic development of SEND policy and provision.

10.3 The Principal has overall responsibility for the leadership and management of the academy's provision for students with SEND. They ensure that the academy has an effective SEND policy in place, in line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice and set the vision and priorities for inclusive education.

The Principal oversees the allocation of resources, including staff, funding and training, to ensure that students with SEND receive the support they need. They work closely with the SENCO to plan interventions, deploy staff effectively and monitor the impact of provision.

They monitor the progress of students with SEND, support professional development for staff and ensure that provision is both equitable and effective. The Principal also maintains strong communication with parents, carers, governors and external agencies to support students' needs, including during transitions between settings or key stages.

In all aspects of their role, the Principal ensures that decisions regarding interventions, support and EHCP requests are evidence-based, targeted and in the best interests of the students within the academy.

11. Class teachers are responsible for supporting students with SEND. The academy uses a "form tutor first" approach, meaning that concerns about a student's learning or development should initially be raised with the form tutor.

If additional support is needed, issues are escalated to the SEND team, ensuring students receive timely help while managing the team's workload effectively. Evidence suggests that students with SEND make the most progress when their learning is led by their classroom teachers, with Student Support Officer's (SSO) or external professionals providing targeted support rather than replacing the teacher's role.

Teachers are responsible for planning and delivering high-quality teaching tailored to meet the needs of all students, monitoring their progress and working closely with the SEND team and external professionals. They collaborate with the SEND team to review and update each student's progress and communicate with parents to discuss support plans.

SSOs provide SEND students with tailored learning opportunities, either within the classroom or through small group interventions.

Parents and Carers are encouraged to contact the academy via info@suacademy.co.uk if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

Emails will be triaged and directed to form tutors in the first instance, with queries passed to the SEND team where appropriate. Please allow up to 48 hours for a response.
For children on the SEND register, parents and carers are invited to share information and express their views on the support in place, as we recognise that they know their child best. The academy carefully considers these views when making decisions about a student's provision.

Students are encouraged to express their views about their learning needs and the support they receive. They are invited to participate in discussions and decisions, for example by explaining their strengths and difficulties, contributing to target-setting or providing feedback on the effectiveness of interventions. Wherever possible, students' views are considered in decisions that affect them.

12. Transition arrangements

As soon as we know which students will be joining us, our SEND team visits primary settings to meet with the SENCo and staff who know the students best. This allows us to discuss individual needs, review existing support, and observe students in their classroom environment.

For students with an EHCP, we also arrange meetings with parents and carers to talk through what support looks like in a mainstream secondary setting, including how provision may differ from primary school.

We offer additional transition visits for students who may require extra support, helping them familiarise themselves with the academy environment, routines and key staff before September.

For Year 11 students, we work closely with students, families and post-16 providers to ensure a smooth and well-supported transition into college, sixth form, apprenticeships or other pathways.

For students with an EHCP, the Year 11 annual review specifically focuses on preparing for adulthood and confirming appropriate post-16 provision. We ensure that students understand the choices available to them and are supported to develop independence, confidence and self-advocacy as they move into the next stage of education or training.

13. Examinations

- We consider the needs of students with identified SEND when planning and supporting internal and public examinations.
- Support may include things like extra time, readers or rest breaks.
- Arrangements are made based one evidence and reviewed as needed.
- Arrangements must reflect a student's normal way of working.
- Arrangements cannot give the candidate an unfair advantage; they must remove a barrier but not change the nature of the assessment.

14. Training and CPD for staff development

Staff receive ongoing SEND training to support students with identified SEND.

Training is delivered in various ways:

- In-house sessions led by the SEND team.

- External experts of visitors sharing specialist knowledge (where appropriate).
- Weekly SEND bulletin highlighting strategies, research and updates.
- Optional “drop-in” sessions for advice and guidance.
- The creation and dissemination of ‘one-page profiles’ for students.

CPD content is informed by evidence and research, particularly from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

Staff development focuses on practical strategies to support students with SEND in the classroom.

Support services and further information for parents and carers

SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership (https://www.staffs-iass.org/home.aspx) provide free, impartial support to children, young people and their families regarding SEND.

The Local Offer is a resource provided by every local authority in England that explains what support, services and opportunities are available for children and young people with SEND and their families www.staffordshireconnects

Link guidance

This policy should be read alongside the following statutory and non-statutory guidance

Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3)
SEND Regulations 2014
Equality Act 2010 (section 20)
Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010)
School Admissions Code
SEND code of practice