

COGNITA



Duncombe
School

An Independent Preparatory
School and Nursery

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

September 2025

Date Policy Reviewed	Policy Reviewed By	Reason/Outcome	Next Review Due
8 th August 2023	Leanne Judd	Review	Autumn 2024
1 st September 2024	Leanne Judd	Review	Autumn 2025
4 th September 2025	Matthew Girvan	Review	Autumn 2026

1 Introduction

The School is committed to the equal treatment of all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities (SEND). We recognise that a formal diagnosis is not always in place at the point support is needed, and we are guided by the needs a pupil presents rather than the presence of a diagnosis. This policy aims to eliminate disadvantage for pupils with SEND by::

- using best endeavours to ensure that all pupils (including those with medical conditions) get the support needed in order to access the School's educational provision;
- not treating disabled pupils less favourably than their peers;
- making reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage in matters of admission and education;
- ensuring that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities engage as fully as practicable in the activities of school alongside pupils who do not have SEN and/or disabilities; and
- ensuring parents are informed when special educational provision is made for their child and are kept up to date as to their child's progress and development.

1.1 This policy has regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010;
- The Children and Families Act 2014;
- SEND Code of Practice, 0-25 years 2015
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Applications and Admissions Policy, Accessibility Plan, Equality and Diversity Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Curriculum Policy

1.3 This policy is available on the school website and on request from the school office and can be made available in large print or another accessible format, if required.

2 Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

2.1 'A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.' (Code of Practice, 2015)

2.2 In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, a child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age;
- have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or early years providers;
- are under five years old and would be likely to have such difficulties if special educational provision were not made for them.

The expression 'learning difficulty' covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as an autistic spectrum condition, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The expression may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing.

Children will not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

- 2.3 Children and young people who have SEND may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, a person is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 2.4 Substantial is defined as more than minor or trivial
- 2.5 Long-term is defined as having lasted or likely to last for at least 12 months

This definition includes individuals with sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight or hearing) and those with long-term conditions, including but not limited to diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer.

- 2.6 'Children and young people with disabilities do not necessarily have special educational needs, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEND definition.' (Code of Practice, 2015)

3 Principles underlying Practice

- 3.1 The Code of Practice describes the principles that should be observed by all professionals working with children who have SEN and/or disabilities. The school aims to:
 - Focus on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning;
 - Identify early the special educational needs of children;
 - Make high quality provision to meet the needs of children and to ensure equality of opportunity;
 - Take into account the views of children and their families;
 - Enable children and their parents to participate in decision-making;
 - Collaborate with partners in education, health and social care where appropriate;
 - Ensure that appropriate resources are available for pupils with temporary or long-term special needs; and
 - Provide support for teachers to meet the learning needs of all pupils, making reasonable adjustment to provision to meet such needs.
- 3.2 The School takes a positive and professional whole-school approach to pupils with SEND.
- 3.3 Pupils with SEND are the shared responsibility of all staff. All staff are expected to have an understanding and awareness of the impact of specific learning profiles on teaching and learning.
- 3.4 To ensure the needs of pupils with SEND are addressed, the SENDCO will:
 - Identify and assess pupils with SEND or pupils suspected of having SEND, and where necessary, refer for further assessment by other professionals such as educational psychologists, specialist teachers and therapists;
 - Develop and monitor support measures where a need is identified;
 - Develop and update the SEND register and ensure that these are circulated amongst teaching staff;
 - Work in collaboration with teaching staff and support staff to ensure confidential communication on learning needs and progress of pupils;
 - Ensure teaching is in accordance to pupils specific needs, recognising their particular strengths and learning needs to promote achievement of their academic potential;

- Communicate effectively with parents/guardians on the learning needs of pupils and provide a support plan for those pupils on the SEND Register and ensure that these are circulated to the staff of specific pupils; and
- Collate evidence to support applications for additional funding and access arrangements in examinations.
- Work with staff to implement and review inclusive teaching and learning strategies and ensure high-quality first teaching, adaptation, and inclusive classroom environments are all in place.
- Monitor the progress of pupils on the SEND register and ensure appropriate interventions are in place for pupils who require it.

4 Identifying Special Educational Needs

- 4.1 Early identification of pupils' needs is the key to unlocking the potential of pupils who may have special educational needs. We adopt a graduated approach to ensure that pupils who do not develop age-appropriate knowledge and skills, or who fall behind their peers, are identified as early as possible.

When identifying needs, the school will consider contextual factors such as attendance, wellbeing, family circumstances or previous educational experiences which may impact learning but do not necessarily indicate that there is a special educational need.

Identification is not a one-off event, but an ongoing process that includes input from teachers, parents, the pupil and where necessary external professionals.

- 4.2 In attempts to understand the learning needs of pupils, we apply the four broad categories of need as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2015). These categories help schools plan and deliver appropriate provision, but it is recognised that individual pupils may have co-occurring needs that span across more than one area.

Communication and interaction needs	Cognition and learning needs	Social, emotional and mental health needs	Sensory and/or physical needs
Pupils may experience challenges with speech and language development, understanding verbal and non-verbal communication, or forming appropriate social relationships. This category includes children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), and those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), who may also experience	Pupils may struggle with reasoning (verbal, non-verbal, spatial), memory, processing speed, or acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. This category includes moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), as well as specific learning difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and	Pupils may experience a range of social, emotional and mental health needs that affect their wellbeing, relationships, and ability to learn. This category encompasses needs arising from difficulties in emotional regulation, social interaction, or mental health. Pupils may experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, or attachment difficulties. They may	Pupils may have physical disabilities, chronic health conditions, or sensory impairments (visual, hearing, or multi-sensory), which may impact access to learning and participation. Pupils may require assistive devices, modified learning resources, or adapted physical environments.

sensory sensitivities and difficulty with social imagination.	dyspraxia. Pupils may require targeted teaching approaches, curriculum adaptation, or specialist intervention.	also present with behaviours that challenge, including difficulties with impulse control, attention, or hyperactivity, such as in the case of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).	
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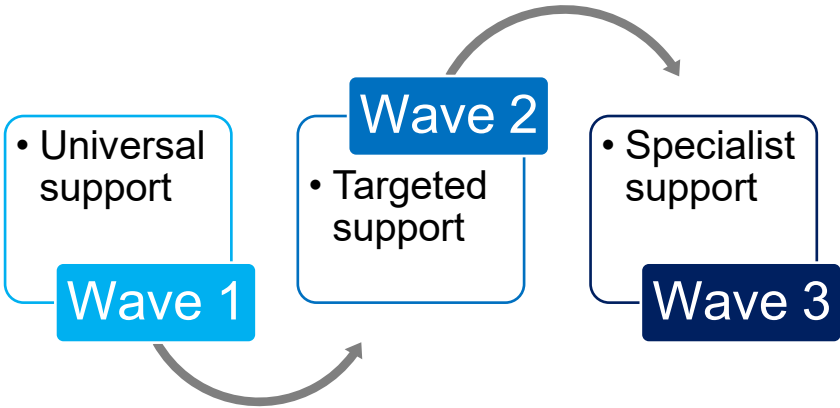
5 Early Years

- 5.1 This policy applies to children in the early years. The person with responsibility for SEND in the early years is Matthew Girvan.

The EYFS statutory framework should be used alongside early identification tools. The SENDCo should collaborate with the child’s key person, parents and relevant external professionals to plan necessary support and interventions.

6 Categorisation of Students

- 6.1 We use a simple categorisation of pupils which helps provide a consistent and understood language. This tiered approach aligns with the graduated approach, ensuring that support is matched to the levels of need and adjusted over time:



Wave 1 Universal Support	Wave 2 Targeted Support	Wave 3 Specialist Support
It is our firm belief that pupils' needs are best met in the classroom and that, therefore, every teacher is responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils they teach, including those with SEND. At this universal level, we train teachers to deliver high quality-first teaching underpinned by adaptive teaching approaches that respond to individual needs as well as the use of continuous formative assessment to inform planning. This includes the use of inclusive strategies such as scaffolding, visual prompts, assistive technology, clear routines, adapted resources and a classroom environment that enables pupils to access learning and thrive. We review the progress of all pupils at least three times per year and make rapid adjustments to support strategies and, where necessary, teachers' understanding of the needs of individual pupils they teach. In addition, we talk to students and their parents to gain as full an understanding of their learning needs as possible.	Where pupils require additional input beyond the universal offer, we provide targeted support that addresses specific barriers to learning and supports their ongoing progress. This may be in response to emerging needs, observed challenges, or patterns identified through regular teacher assessments and pupil discussions. Targeted provision is time-limited and tailored to the pupil's profile, and may take place individually or in small groups, either within or outside the classroom. Interventions are designed with clear, measurable outcomes and are reviewed regularly to monitor effectiveness and inform next steps. Examples include pre-teaching of vocabulary or number concepts, precision teaching, targeted phonics, or social communication groups.	Specialist support is sought in consultation with parents when it is determined that a pupil requires input from external professionals or highly individualised provision that goes beyond the school's universal and targeted offer. This may include assessment and/or support from: an Educational Psychologist, an Assistant Educational Psychologist, a Speech and Language Therapist, Specialist Dyslexia Teacher, Specialist Sensory Advisory Teachers (for students with hearing or visual impairments); an Occupational Therapist; a Physiotherapist; a Therapeutic Learning Mentor; an Arts Psychotherapist; a Psychotherapist or a Counsellor. This is not an exhaustive list. Specialist input is used to inform an ongoing Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycle, and strategies are shared with all relevant staff to ensure they are embedded into everyday classroom practice. Where appropriate, the school may consider requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment in consultation with the pupil, their family, and involved professionals.

7 The Graduated Approach

- 7.1 The School's approach to identifying and supporting SEND is informed by the SEND Code of Practice (2015), which recommends a graduated approach for pupils who may be underachieving. The graduated approach follows an Assess – Plan – Do – Review model, which is embedded in the school's approach to inclusive provision. The school will make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning or to increase access to all aspects of school life, including academic and extra-curricular activities.
- 7.2 The first response to existing SEND or possible SEND is High Quality-First teaching in lessons, using adaptation to target specific difficulties pupils may have when accessing teaching and learning. Teachers use data that has been collected by the school and any available information regarding existing SEND to gain a full understanding of progress and individual needs. Sources of information might include:
- Standardised tests (e.g. GL Assessment, NFER, CAT4);
 - Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher reports;
 - Information from previous schools for new pupils;
 - Discussions with parents;
 - Observations in lessons;
 - In-class assessments; and
 - Discussions with the SENDCo.
 - Pupil voice
- 7.3 Teachers will implement strategies in response to the picture of need and then review outcomes within a reasonable time frame. Where pupils have not made progress despite this approach the cycle will begin again but may incorporate further specific interventions such as:
- Additional assessment by the SENDCo;
 - Targeted one-to-one or small group support to help with the specific areas of needs impacting progress.
 - The SENDCo may observe lessons and offer advice regarding additional strategies in lessons.
- 7.4 The pupil's progress will be reviewed again following the intervention or support implemented. If desired progress has not been made, the level of support may increase, and a referral to external agencies may be considered where appropriate, such as:
- Education or Clinical Psychologist, or Psychiatric Assessment;
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Speech and Language Therapist
 - Specialist Teacher assessment;
 - CAMHS involvement;
 - EHCP request; and/or
 - GP review.
- 7.5 Using all the information gathered at this stage, the process of applying new strategies and reviewing progress will continue.

8 Working with Parents

- 8.1 We are committed to fostering strong, transparent, and collaborative partnerships with families. Parental insights are vital in understanding a pupil's needs, and we value them as active contributors to the support planning process. To ensure that parents and pupils can be given the most appropriate advice and support, it is important that all relevant information and documentation about any possible special educational need and any history of learning support is shared with the School. Parents must provide the SENDCo with copies of any reports or recommendations concerning the pupil's special educational needs or disability from previous schools or elsewhere. Parents agree to do this when completing the registration form and accepting the terms and conditions of the parent contract. We expect parents to communicate proactively and transparently about their child's needs and work collaboratively with the School to help ensure the School can best support their child as far as reasonably possible.
- 8.2 We aim to ensure that parents feel heard, respected and supported. This includes:
- Providing clear and accessible information about SEND processes and support available within school;
 - Offering regular opportunities for discussion, including review meetings, parent consultations and informal check-ins;
 - Involving parents in the development of their child's support plan or EHCP, ensuring their views are recorded and reflected in any planning;
 - Sharing updates on progress, including successes as well as areas of concern, and working together to adapt support as needed;

9 Managing Learning for Pupils on the SEND Register

- 9.1 Each teacher holds responsibility for managing the needs and progress of pupils in their class of on the SEND register. The SENDCo monitors and evaluates the provision provided to these pupils and will provide support/training to individual teachers or the school where necessary.
- 9.2 When a child is identified as having a special educational need, a support plan will be created by the class teacher, with support and contributions made from parents and the SENDCo.
- 9.3 A support plan is reviewed **termly**. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for a review to take place more frequently.
- 9.4 A support plan is a co-produced and co-reviewed document involving the contributions of the pupil, parents, teachers and the SENDCo.

10 Education Health Care Plans (EHC Plan)

- 10.1 The needs of the majority of pupils with SEN will be met effectively through the School's SEND support system. However, where the child or young person has not made expected progress despite the support in place, parents and the school have the right to ask the Local Authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC Plan for their child. Parents are asked to consult with the school before exercising this right. The school will always consult with parents before exercising this right.
- 10.2 Where a child has an EHC Plan it should be reviewed annually, working with the local authority as appropriate.
- 10.3 Schools must also make sure that particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans is made available to parents, parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, Secretary of State or independent inspectorate.
- 10.4 Where a prospective pupil has an EHC Plan, the school will consult with the parents and the Local Authority (where appropriate) to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC Plan can be delivered by the school. For further information see the school's Applications and Admissions Policy.

11 Recording SEND

- 11.1 We are required by law to keep a record of those pupils who have been identified as having SEND, and the provision we make for such pupils. For each pupil with SEND, the SENDCo will record on the school data management system their broad area/s of need as listed above, as well as a description of any specific areas of need. This will make up the school SEND Register. Where a pupil no longer requires the additional provision or support, the entry will be deleted from the SEND Register. Decisions to remove a pupil from the SEND register will be made following a review, ensuring progress is sustained and support is no longer required.

12 External Agencies

- 12.1 We always seek to work proactively and collaboratively with external agencies.

13 Exam Concessions and Extra Time

- 13.1 Exam boards set out the regulations that all schools are required to follow when considering exam concessions. Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments while ensuring that no pupil is given an unfair advantage. The SEND Department/Learning Support Team will assess needs and update the evidence.
- 13.2 In order to qualify for extra time in an examination, the School will adhere to exam board regulations. Alongside specific assessment test outcomes stipulated by exam boards, it is usual practice to demonstrate that any access arrangements are part of a pupil's normal way of working in school.
- 13.3 Parents should speak with the SENDCo with regard to any application for additional support as soon as reasonably practicable. They will process applications for appropriate examination access in conjunction with other staff, as appropriate.

14 Use of Assistive Technology

- 14.1 The use of assistive technology may be provided where there is evidence that it will improve access to learning and support a pupil's individual needs, or if this is a specific recommendation from a report by an Educational Psychologist or other professional, such as an Occupational Therapist. If a laptop is part of a normal way of working in lessons, then it will normally be available for use in examinations but will be subject to the specific requirements of the relevant examination board.

15 Transition

- 15.1 Transition to a new school or educational setting can be challenging for many children, but in particular for those pupils with SEND. The following key steps are adhered to in order to support successful transitions for children with SEND:
- An exchange of effective and meaningful documentation in order to understand learning needs and support in place;
 - The SENDCO will contact the previous school;
 - Transition arrangements are made for pupils needing support with SEND matters in collaboration with the family, the receiving school and any outside agencies involved; and
 - Where children with SEND leave the school, the SENDCo will work cooperatively with the receiving school to provide appropriate information about the pupil to assist transition.
 - Transition planning to support key transition points such as between phases, such as EYFS to KS1, KS2 to KS3 and post-16.

16 Management and Roles

- 16.1 All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010, not only to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils already attending the school, but also to consider what might be needed to ensure that any future pupils with a disability are not disadvantaged.
- 16.2 The Code of Practice states that 'Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff'. All subject staff are required to be aware of a pupil's specific needs and be prepared to differentiate work appropriately with particular regard to the advice included in a pupils support plan and One Page Profile.
- 16.3 The SENDCo and class teachers work closely with pupils and parents when reviewing targets and assessing effectiveness of strategies/interventions. In cases where there is a complex need (including pupils who have an EHC Plan), reviews may need to include outside agencies/specialists.
- 16.4 The Senior Management Team, led by the Head, should regularly review how expertise and resources used to address SEND can be used to build the quality of whole-school provision as part of their approach to school improvement. The SENDCo for the School is Matthew Girvan. To ensure best practice, the SENDCo is an experienced, qualified teacher and holds the following qualifications: BED (Hons) and NASENCO.

16.5 Class and subject teachers

Class and subject teachers are responsible for the progress of pupils with SEND.

16.6 The SENDCo

- The SENDCo has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEND Policy and coordinating provision made for pupils with SEND.
- The SENDCo provides professional guidance to colleagues with the aim of securing high quality-first teaching for pupils with SEND, and works closely with pupils, parents and other professionals to ensure pupils with SEND receive appropriate support.
- The SENDCo plays an important role with the Head and proprietor in determining the strategic development of the SEND Policy and provision within the school in order to raise the achievements of pupils with SEND.

16.7 In compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, the SENDCo is also responsible for the following:

- In relation to each of the registered pupils who the SENDCo considers may have special educational needs, informing a parent/carer of the pupil that this may be the case as soon as is reasonably practicable;
- In relation to each of the registered pupils who have special educational needs:
 - Identifying the pupil's special educational needs, and co-ordinating the making of special educational provision which meet those needs;
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of any special educational provision made;
 - Securing relevant services for the pupil where necessary;
 - Ensuring the records of the pupil's special educational needs and the special educational provision made are maintained and kept up to date;
 - Liaising with and providing information to a parent/carer of the pupil on a regular basis about that pupil's special educational needs and the special educational provision made;
 - Ensuring that, where the pupil transfers to another school or educational institution, educational provisions made are conveyed to the appropriate authority or the proprietor of that school or institution;
 - Promoting the pupil's inclusion in the school community and access to the school's curriculum, facilities and extra-curricular activities;
 - Selecting, supervising and training learning support assistants who work with pupils with special educational needs;
 - Advising teachers at the school about adaptive teaching methods appropriate for individual pupils with special educational needs;
 - Contributing to in-service training for teachers at the school to assist them to carry out necessary tasks to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs; and
 - Preparing and reviewing the information required by law to be published in relation to special educational needs provision.

16.8 The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the strategic planning and day-to-day delivery of SEND provision.

17 Three Year Accessibility Plan

17.1 In line with its duty under the Equality Act 2010 the School's three-year Accessibility Plan sets out how the School will:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and

- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

A copy of the School's Accessibility Plan is published on the school website and a copy can be made available upon request from the school.

18 Document Retention

- 18.1 We are required to keep SEND documents for specified amounts of time in accordance with legislation, please ask us about our Data Retention Policy for specific guidelines.

19 Complaints

- 19.1 The school encourages early communication of concerns and will listen to any concerns expressed by parents about their child's development and any concerns raised by children themselves. Where concerns are related to SEND provision, the SENDCo should be consulted. Parents should also notify the SENDCo or a teacher if their child's progress or behaviour gives cause for concern.
- 19.2 We hope that any difficulty or concern can be sensitively and efficiently handled and resolved informally before it reaches the formal complaints stage.
- 19.3 The school's Complaints Procedure (which apply equally in the EYFS setting) is on our website and sets out how current parents can raise a formal complaint and how the school will handle it.

20 Inability to Meet Need

- 20.1
In some cases, a pupil may not be offered a place at the school, or an existing place may be withdrawn. This will only occur where, in the professional judgement of the Headteacher, and following consultation with parents and the pupil (where appropriate), the school is unable to adequately meet the pupil's needs despite reasonable adjustments. Any such decision will be made as a last resort and in accordance with the Admissions Policy and the terms of the parent contract.

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