



LIONHEART
EDUCATIONAL
TRUST

SEND POLICY - SECONDARY

**This policy applies to all secondary schools within
the Lionheart Educational Trust**

Approved by the Trust

September 2025 – September 2026



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Section 1: Our academy

Contact information:

Mercia Academy, Sunnyside, Newhall DE11 0TL

Acting SENDCo: Mrs Lundman (Assistant Principal)

SEND Governor: TBC

The insert name is part of the Lionheart Educational Trust family of schools and works in partnership with other schools within the trust in developing SEND policy and practice.

Throughout this document the following abbreviations are used:

SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENDCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
LA	Local Authority

Our Academy Setting

The Mercia Academy strives to be a fully inclusive academy.

The aims of the Mercia Academy are based on the values derived from the Statement of Principles adopted by the Derbyshire Education Authority and guided by the New Code of Practice for special Educational needs 2014 from 0 - 25, and a The Children's Act 1989, disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its amendments in 2002, plus implementation in 2005 and the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement.

Section 2: Aims

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all our pupils including those with Special Educational Needs and ensure full curriculum entitlement and access. We are committed to maximum integration commensurate with meeting individual needs, the highest quality of education for all pupils and the efficient use of resources. We want to raise the aspirations of and expectations for all pupils with SEND in a safe and supportive environment where all pupils can reach their full potential. We provide advice and support for students when deciding the next steps when leaving the academy.

Section 3: Identifying special educational needs

Definition of Special Educational Needs

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014 states:

A pupil has SEND where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, that is provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support. Such improvements in whole class provision tend to be more cost effective and sustainable.

Definition of Disability

'A child is disabled if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'



Amendment to Section 17 (11) Children Act 1989

Section 1 (1) Disability Discrimination Act 1995

There are four broad areas of need:

- a) Communication and interaction - a pupil could have speech, language or communication needs; this may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to or they cannot understand what is being said to them, or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. Children with Autism are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction, as well as with communication which can impact on how they relate to others.
- b) Cognition and Learning - pupils may learn at a slower pace than their peers and have learning difficulties in any area of the curriculum, including reading, writing and Maths or have processing difficulties, memory difficulties or executive function difficulties. Some pupils have specific learning difficulties (SpLD); these may affect more than one aspect of learning, for example, dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.
- c) Social, emotional and mental health difficulties – pupils may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways which may include become withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviours. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, self-harming or substance misuse. Other children may have disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or attachment disorder.
- d) Sensory and physical needs – some pupils may require provision because they have a disability which prevents them or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These may include visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI), or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI). Some pupils may have a physical disability (PD) where they require on-going support and equipment to help them access all the opportunities of their peers. Some conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy may be included under the definition of disability, but children with such conditions do not necessarily have SEND.

Other factors that may impact on progress and attainment but are not SEND:

- EAL (English as an additional language)
- Attendance and punctuality
- Health and welfare
- Being a looked after child
- Being in receipt of pupil premium grant
- Being a child of a serviceman/woman

Section 4: A graduated approach to SEND support

Pupils with SEND are identified as early as possible. A clear system of record keeping and communication is established within our academy. A process of identification, assessment and provision, in accordance with the Code of Practice, is established. This approach recognises that there is a continuum of Special Educational Needs, which may change over time.



Provision for pupils with special education needs is a matter for the academy as a whole. The governing body, the academy's Principal, SENDCo and learning support team, and all other members of staff have important operational responsibilities.

Pupils with SEND are identified as early as possible. Children's needs should be identified as early as possible through:

- the analysis of data
- classroom-based assessments, observations and monitoring arrangements
- following up parental concerns
- tracking individual pupil's progress over time
- liaison with feeder schools on transfer
- information from previous schools
- information from other services and outside agencies

At this stage the pupil's views will be gathered and the parent(s)/carers and the teachers directly involved with the child will share information and agree next steps. Additional barriers to progress including attendance, social circumstances, health (e.g. hearing and sight), changes in family circumstances etc, will be considered and appropriately addressed. If SEND difficulties are still suspected then it may be that simple 'reasonable adjustments' need to be made, such as providing additional equipment (specialist writing equipment, coloured overlays etc) or adjusting curriculum teaching, putting in strategies to suit specific learning differences, for example small steps instructions or using visuals.

All teachers are teachers of pupils with SEND

Teaching such pupils is therefore a whole-academy responsibility. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of quality first teaching.

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their care, including those situations in which pupils access support from learning support assistants or specialist staff.

Devising strategies and identifying appropriate methods of access to the curriculum lies within the area of expertise and responsibility of individual subject teachers. Some pupils will receive subject enhancement through targeted initiatives.

Parents are kept informed and are encouraged to contribute their knowledge and understanding of their child and to raise any concerns they may have about their child's needs and the provision which is being made for them.

Pupils should be involved in making decisions where possible. The ways in which pupils are encouraged to participate should reflect the pupil's evolving maturity.

When subject teachers conclude that the strategies they are currently using with the pupil are not resulting in the pupil learning as effectively as possible, they refer the pupil to the SENDCo or Pastoral Team, providing evidence of the strategies used. Evaluation of the strategies may lead to the conclusion that the pupil needs to be placed on the SEND register.

For higher levels of need, the academy seeks specialist advice from professionals to support our pupils, such as Autism Outreach.



The SEND process is based on an assess – plan – do – review. Teaching staff will deliver carefully planned activities to promote learning for all pupils and review progress of learners on a regular basis. Parents and pupils help to review the SEND provision and are informed about changes to the provision.

Managing pupils' needs on the SEND record

There is one single category for SEND provision – SEND support.

When a subject teacher, member of the pastoral team, or the SENDCo identifies a student with Special Education Needs they should provide interventions that are **additional to** or **different from** those provided as part of the academy's usual differentiated curriculum and strategies – SEND support.

The triggers for intervention through SEND support could be the teacher's or others' concern, underpinned by evidence about a pupil who, despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities:

- Makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in the pupil's identified area of weakness.
- Shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or numeracy skills that result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas
- Has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment
- Has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum.
- Presents persistent emotional social and/or behavioural difficulties, which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the academy. Such pupils will be provided with a Pastoral Support Plan by the Pastoral Team, and monitored by them. Liaison will occur with the SENDCo.

Pupils on the SEND record have a pupil passport drawn up by the SEND Team and each pupil's progress is tracked at least every term. These passports will be reviewed at meetings with parents.

For some pupils who are still struggling to make progress the use of relevant external agencies may be sought.

The Mercia Academy values highly and responds positively to parents' views. Parents are informed about their child's learning and encouraged to participate fully in their child's education at all stages.

The Mercia Academy makes every effort to achieve maximum integration of pupils with SEND and their peers, whilst meeting individual needs. The structure and systems in place include:

- differentiated provision within a classroom setting
- classroom support to increase curriculum access and pupil achievement
- individual tuition to raise attainment in literacy/numeracy skills
- mentoring
- small group support lessons in English
- counselling as part of our pastoral responsibilities
- peer tutoring
- a range of clubs including Homework club and leisure activities for all pupils
- educational visits for curricular enhancement



Statutory Assessment/ Educational Health Care Plans

For a very few pupils, the help given by the academy through SEND support may not be sufficient to enable the pupil to make adequate progress. It will then be necessary for the academy, in consultation with the parents and any external agencies already involved, to consider whether to ask the LA to initiate a statutory assessment or EHCP, providing that this adheres to the LA criteria.

All EHCPs are reviewed annually. This annual review ensures that once a year the parents, the pupil, the LA, the academy and all the professional involved, consider both the progress the pupil has made over the previous 12 months and whether any amendments need to be made to the description of the pupil's needs or to the special educational provision specified in the EHCP. It should involve the agencies that may play a major role in the young person's life both within and beyond academy.

Section 5: Criteria for exiting the SEND register/record

The SEND team review the reading and spelling ages of all pupils on the record on an annual basis. Those pupils that have made significant gains in terms of their reading and spelling age are highlighted and a comparison is made with other relevant data. If we feel that the pupil no longer needs a passport, we remove them from the record. Parents are notified by letter and if they have any concerns they contact the SENDCO to discuss them.

Section 6: Supporting pupils and families

The SENDCO has created a local offer for our academy and which is accessed on the academy's website. Parents are invited into the academy on a regular basis if they have any concerns over their child's educational needs and this may involve the use of external agencies. On our website parents are able to access information regarding admission arrangements, the Code of Practice and transition.

As a SEND department we use the reading and spelling ages and information from previous academies to provide the relevant exam concessions for pupils such as a reader or amanuensis.

The school website contains details of our policy for special educational needs and the Special Educational Needs Information Report. There is also a link to the local offer to enable parents to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. Parents can also contact SENDIASS (**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice, and Support Service**) for information, advice and guidance on SEND.

Section 7: Supporting pupils academy with medical needs

The academy recognises that pupils at the academy with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including academy trips and physical education. Some pupils with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the academy will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Pupils with medical conditions may be subject to a statement or EHCP which brings together health and social care needs.

All pupils with physical disabilities are supported in practical lessons as appropriate.



Section 8: Monitoring and evaluation of SEND

Pupils on the SEND record are closely monitored through the regular cycle of data collections. These are used to guide the SEND provision for individual pupils. At parents' evenings there are also opportunities to speak to the SENDCO and give written feedback on SEND provision.

Section 9: Training and resources

Staff training needs are identified and met through an ongoing programme of continual professional development which may mean liaising with outside agencies involved with the pupils at the academy.

All teachers and support staff undertake induction on taking up a post and this includes a meeting with the SENDCO to explain the systems and structures in place around the academy's SEND provision and practice and to discuss the needs of individual pupils.

The academy's SENDCO regularly attends networking meetings with other SENDCOs.

Section 10: Roles and responsibilities

The Mercia Academy has a SENDCO whose roles and responsibilities include:

- a) To co-ordinate the curriculum, staff timetabling, staff development, resource use, external relations, pupil development and development plan with respect to the special needs provision of the academy.
- b) to liaise with tutors, subject teachers and other staff for the provision of:
 - literacy/numeracy
 - alternative curriculum for SEND pupils
 - individual student programmes
- c) liaising with the Educational Psychology Service, County and City, other external agencies and parents as appropriate, with regard to progress and diagnostic testing.
- d) liaising with Year Heads, tutors and other staff to provide support for individual students.
- e) advising departments on the production and delivery of differentiated pupil resources
- f) being responsible for diagnostic testing of selected SEND pupils.
- g) representing special needs at staff meetings, Heads of Department meetings, and as necessary at other meetings including Governors' meetings.
- h) maintaining accurate records and the academy's SEND Record.
- i) co-ordinating and chair the review of statements of Special Educational Needs.
- j) contributing to in-service training to individuals and groups of staff including teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) as their needs are identified
- k) being the named person to manage behaviour of statemented pupils and liaise and advise the pastoral team in relation to other pupils on the SEND record.

All staff are made aware of their responsibilities towards pupils with SEND whether or not pupils have an EHCP – and clear communication lines between them and the Specialist Staff are established. A programme of staff development included in the academy's and department's Development Plan is implemented as far as is practicable.

The SENDCO is also a designated teacher with responsibility for safeguarding (DSL).



The Local Governing Body

The local governing body will use its best efforts to ensure the best possible provision for Special Educational Needs in the academy. All governors are aware of their responsibilities for Special Educational needs and discuss the issues regularly. There is a nominated governor for SEND.

The governing body monitors the provision for pupils with SEND and works to ensure the highest standards in attainment and progress for all pupils. The governing body works with the senior leadership team to ensure the academy operates an inclusive approach wherever possible, and prepares students with SEND for the next steps and for a positive independent adult life.

The local governing body evaluates the success of the education academy provides for pupils with SEND through monitoring:

- attainment and progress reports
- the number of review meetings held each year for pupils
- the attendance by parents at review meetings
- parental requests for Mercia Academy to be the named academy at Part 4 on the pupil's Statement of Special Educational Needs
- number of pupils remaining on the SEND Record
- networking with Special Schools, trust schools and other SENDCos
- external reviews of provision, including those led by the trust
- inclusion of SEND issues in development planning
- feedback from staff, parents and pupils.
- the number of complaints received from parents of pupils with special educational needs concerning provision made at the academy
- monitoring of procedures and practice by designated SEND Governor
- evidence from monitoring classroom practice by academy, senior management and SENDCo

Section 11: Storing and managing information

All SEND information is stored securely in line with the academy's policy on Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy. Information is shared with relevant staff and confidentiality is upheld with sensitive information.

Section 12: Dealing with complaints

Parents are encouraged to discuss any problems or concerns with school. These should be raised initially with the pupil's tutor or the SENDCo. Most problems can be solved in this way. But if this does not happen, parents may wish to take their concerns to the Assistant Principal for Inclusion (Kelly Lundman), then the Principal. If necessary, parents may complain to the Chair of Governors (see the complaints policy). Please see the Complaints Policy on our website.

Section 13: Bullying

Please see the academy's Anti-bullying Policy on our website.



Section 14: Admissions

Admission All children with SEND are afforded the same rights as other children in terms of their admission to school. However, children who have undergone a statutory Assessment and are having their needs met through the provision of an Education Health Care plan, are given priority as part of the authority's school admissions procedures. Please see the school's admission policy on our website.