



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

ACADEMY TRUST

Special Educational Needs, Disability and Inclusion Policy

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Owner: Bernardine Harrison, SENCO

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1. INTRODUCTION

University Academy Long Sutton is committed to providing an inclusive educational environment in which every pupil is valued, respected and supported to achieve their full potential. The Academy recognises that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have the same entitlement as all pupils to receive a high-quality education, to access a broad and balanced curriculum and to participate fully in all aspects of school life.

The Academy believes that effective inclusion is achieved when barriers to learning and participation are identified early and addressed through a combination of high-quality teaching, appropriate support and strong partnerships between school, families and external agencies. SEND provision is not viewed as a separate system operating alongside mainstream education but as an integral part of the Academy's commitment to ensuring equity of opportunity for all.

University Academy Long Sutton promotes a culture of high expectations and recognises that pupils with SEND can achieve excellent outcomes when given the right support at the right time. The Academy is committed to ensuring that all pupils develop academically, socially and emotionally and leave school well prepared for the next stage of education, employment and adult life.

This policy reflects the principles of the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and should be read alongside the Academy SEND Information Report, which provides information regarding the practical implementation of SEND provision.

2. AIMS

The Academy aims to:

1. Ensure all pupils with SEND have access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.
2. Promote high aspirations and positive outcomes for pupils with SEND.
3. Identify and assess needs at the earliest possible opportunity.
4. Ensure support is proportionate, effective and evidence-informed.
5. Promote inclusion, participation and belonging.
6. Ensure high-quality adaptive teaching remains the foundation of SEND provision.
7. Enable pupils to develop confidence, independence and resilience.
8. Work collaboratively with parents, carers and external agencies.
9. Prepare pupils for adulthood and successful transitions.
10. Fulfil all statutory duties relating to SEND.
11. Continually improve SEND provision through monitoring, evaluation and review.

The Academy seeks not only to improve academic achievement but also to support personal development, wellbeing, social inclusion and long-term aspirations. SEND provision should contribute positively to the overall experience of every pupil and enable them to be successful members of the school community.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based upon:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 Years (2015)
- SEND Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School
- Relevant Local Authority guidance

The Academy recognises its statutory responsibilities under these requirements and seeks to ensure that all SEND provision reflects current legislation, guidance and best practice.

Governors and academy leaders will monitor legislative developments and ensure that policy and practice remain compliant and responsive to emerging national priorities.

4. Definition of SEND

A pupil has Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A learning difficulty or disability exists where a pupil:

- Has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities generally available to others of the same age.

Special educational provision is educational provision that is additional to, or different from, that generally available to pupils of the same age.

The Academy recognises that low attainment does not automatically indicate SEND and that accurate assessment is necessary before decisions regarding SEND support are made. Consideration must also be given to attendance, social circumstances, health needs, English as an Additional Language and other factors which may influence learning.

5. The Four Broad Areas of Need

The SEND Code of Practice identifies four broad areas of need.

Communication and Interaction

Some pupils experience difficulties understanding language, using language effectively, processing information or interacting socially. These difficulties may impact communication, learning and participation in classroom activities.

Cognition and Learning

Pupils may require additional support to develop literacy, numeracy, memory, reasoning or learning skills. Difficulties may be specific or more general in nature and can affect the pace and effectiveness of learning.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Some pupils experience difficulties with emotional regulation, anxiety, self-esteem, social interaction, behaviour or mental health which may create barriers to learning and engagement.

Sensory and/or Physical Needs

Pupils may experience visual, hearing, physical or medical difficulties which require adaptations, reasonable adjustments or specialist support to access education successfully.

The Academy recognises that needs often overlap and that effective provision should be based upon the individual pupil's needs and outcomes rather than diagnosis alone.

Principles of Inclusion

University Academy Long Sutton is committed to creating a fully inclusive learning community.

Inclusion is understood as the active process of identifying and removing barriers to learning, participation and achievement. The Academy seeks to ensure that all pupils feel welcome, valued and able to access the same opportunities as their peers.

The Academy believes that pupils with SEND should experience the same aspirations, expectations and opportunities for success as all other pupils. SEND should never be viewed as a barrier to ambition.

Support should promote increasing independence rather than dependency. Effective SEND provision enables pupils to develop confidence, resilience, self-advocacy and the skills necessary to navigate future challenges successfully.

The Academy values the perspectives of pupils and their families and recognises that meaningful inclusion is only possible when all stakeholders work in partnership.

6. Equality and Accessibility

The Academy is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring fair access for all pupils.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to ensure that disabled pupils are not substantially disadvantaged in accessing education, facilities, activities or information. The Academy seeks to identify barriers proactively and to implement adjustments that support participation and achievement.

Accessibility is viewed as a dynamic process rather than a fixed destination. The Academy maintains an Accessibility Plan which outlines how access to learning, information and the physical environment will continue to improve.

The Academy actively promotes respect, diversity and equal opportunities and seeks to challenge prejudice, discrimination and exclusion in all forms.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Local Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the Academy fulfils its statutory responsibilities regarding SEND. Governors will monitor the effectiveness of provision, review outcomes and ensure that SEND remains a strategic priority.

Governors are responsible for holding academy leaders to account for the quality of SEND provision and the outcomes achieved by pupils.

SEND Governor

The SEND Governor acts as the designated link governor for SEND. The SEND Governor supports and challenges academy leaders, monitors provision and provides assurance to the Governing Body that statutory requirements are being met.

Principal

The Principal retains overall responsibility for SEND provision within the Academy.

The Principal will ensure that sufficient resources, staffing, professional development and strategic oversight are available to support effective provision and promote inclusive practice.

SENDCo

The SENDCo provides strategic leadership and operational oversight of SEND provision.

Responsibilities include:

- Promoting inclusive practice.
- Coordinating SEND provision.
- Advising and supporting staff.
- Monitoring effectiveness of provision.
- Managing statutory processes.
- Working with parents and carers.
- Liaising with external professionals.
- Leading SEND improvement priorities.
- Contributing to staff training and development.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their classes, including where support is provided by teaching assistants or specialist staff.

Teachers should plan and deliver high-quality adaptive teaching and work collaboratively with colleagues to remove barriers to learning.

Support Staff

Support staff contribute positively to learning outcomes through collaborative work with teachers and pupils. Their role is to enhance access, promote independence and support effective participation.

8. Identification and Assessment of SEND

The Academy recognises that the timely identification of SEND is essential in securing positive outcomes for pupils. Early identification allows barriers to learning to be understood and addressed before they have a significant impact upon educational progress, wellbeing or participation.

Identification of SEND is a process rather than a single event and should be viewed as an ongoing cycle of assessment, observation, review and professional dialogue. The Academy understands that pupils' needs may emerge over time and that difficulties may become more apparent as curricular, social or emotional demands increase.

A range of information may be used when considering whether a pupil has SEND. This may include prior attainment information, assessment data, progress measures, teacher observations, attendance information, behaviour patterns, pupil voice, parental concerns and advice from external professionals. No single piece of evidence should be viewed in isolation and decisions regarding SEND identification should be based upon a comprehensive understanding of the pupil.

The Academy is committed to ensuring that support is not delayed whilst seeking a formal diagnosis. Whilst diagnostic information may contribute to understanding need, provision should be determined by the barriers experienced by the pupil rather than solely by the presence or absence of a diagnosis.

The Academy also recognises the importance of distinguishing between SEND and other factors that may influence learning and progress. Consideration will therefore be given to issues such as attendance, English as an Additional Language, social and environmental factors, emotional wellbeing, gaps in prior learning and medical needs when assessing barriers to learning.

Assessment processes should always seek to identify strengths as well as areas of need. Understanding a pupil's interests, abilities, aspirations and preferred ways of learning enables more effective planning and contributes to a positive and strengths-based approach to SEND.

9 The Graduated Approach

The Academy follows the graduated approach outlined within the SEND Code of Practice. This approach provides a structured framework through which support is planned, implemented and reviewed and ensures that decisions regarding provision are informed by evidence, professional judgement and pupil outcomes.

The graduated approach is characterised by the cyclical process of Assess, Plan, Do and Review. It ensures that support remains responsive to individual need and that provision can be adapted as circumstances change.

Assess

The first stage involves developing a clear understanding of the pupil's strengths, needs and barriers to learning. Assessment should draw upon a range of evidence including teacher assessments, progress information, pupil views, parental views and advice from relevant professionals.

Assessment should identify not only what difficulties are being experienced but also the reasons why those difficulties may be occurring. A comprehensive understanding of need is essential if appropriate support is to be implemented successfully.

Plan

Once needs have been identified, planning should focus upon clearly defined outcomes and the support required to achieve them. Planning should identify the adjustments, strategies and approaches that will be implemented and establish how progress will be monitored.

Parents and pupils should be involved wherever appropriate in discussions regarding proposed support and intended outcomes.

Do

The agreed provision should then be implemented. Teachers retain responsibility and accountability for the progress and development of pupils receiving SEND support, even where additional adults or specialist provision are involved.

Support should be delivered consistently and should remain closely linked to classroom learning wherever possible.

Review

The effectiveness of provision should be reviewed regularly. Reviews should consider the extent to which intended outcomes have been achieved and whether changes are required to support future progress.

Where support is successful, provision may be amended, reduced or removed. Where outcomes are not being secured, further assessment, adaptation or specialist involvement may be required.

The graduated approach reflects the Academy's commitment to ensuring that support is tailored, proportionate, evidence-informed and focused on improving outcomes for pupils.

10. High Quality Teaching

The Academy believes that high-quality teaching is the most significant factor in improving outcomes for pupils with SEND.

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their classes, including where support is delivered by teaching assistants or specialist staff. Effective SEND provision therefore begins within the classroom and is rooted in strong teaching practice.

High-quality adaptive teaching involves planning and delivering learning in ways that enable all pupils to access and engage with the curriculum. This may involve adapting explanations, questioning, resources, presentation methods, levels of support or assessment approaches while maintaining ambition and high expectations.

The Academy recognises that pupils learn in different ways and at different rates. Teachers should therefore adopt flexible and responsive approaches which allow pupils to demonstrate understanding and make progress without unnecessary barriers.

High-quality teaching should promote independence, confidence and resilience. Support should not create dependency but should equip pupils with the skills and strategies needed to become increasingly successful learners.

Additional interventions and specialist support should complement, rather than replace, effective classroom practice. The Academy expects all staff to work collaboratively to ensure that SEND provision remains closely connected to curriculum learning and wider educational outcomes.

The Academy is committed to ongoing professional development and recognises that the development of staff expertise is essential in improving outcomes for pupils with SEND. Staff will be supported to develop knowledge, skills and confidence in inclusive practice through training, collaboration and engagement with current research and guidance.

11. Education, Health and Care Plans

The Academy recognises its statutory responsibilities in relation to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and is committed to ensuring that pupils with EHCPs receive appropriate support to achieve positive educational and personal outcomes.

Provision outlined within an EHCP will be implemented as effectively as possible and integrated within the wider educational experience of the pupil. Whilst the Academy is responsible for educational provision, successful outcomes depend upon effective collaboration between education, health and social care professionals alongside pupils and families.

The Academy will ensure that staff are aware of relevant responsibilities arising from EHCPs and understand the importance of implementing agreed provision appropriately and consistently.

Annual Reviews will be conducted in accordance with statutory requirements and will focus upon progress towards agreed outcomes, the effectiveness of support and priorities for future development. Reviews should maintain a strong focus upon the aspirations of the child or young person and the preparation for future adulthood.

The Academy recognises that EHCPs are intended to secure meaningful outcomes rather than simply to describe provision. Consequently, discussions regarding EHCPs should focus upon the difference provision is making rather than solely upon the support being delivered.

The Academy will work collaboratively with the Local Authority, families and professionals to ensure that review processes remain constructive, person-centred and outcome focused.

12. Partnership with Parents and Pupils

The Academy firmly believes that effective SEND provision is built upon positive relationships and meaningful partnership working.

Parents and carers possess valuable knowledge regarding their child's development, strengths, interests and needs. Their views are therefore welcomed and respected throughout assessment, planning, implementation and review processes.

Open communication is central to effective partnership working. The Academy seeks to develop relationships based upon trust, mutual respect and a shared commitment to achieving positive outcomes for pupils.

Pupils should also be encouraged to contribute to decisions affecting their education. Their views, experiences and aspirations provide important insights which help shape effective support. Opportunities should be provided for pupils to express their opinions and participate meaningfully in discussions regarding their learning and development.

The Academy recognises that successful partnership working requires honesty, transparency and collaboration. Whilst professional judgements may occasionally differ, the Academy remains committed to ensuring that discussions remain respectful and focused upon the best interests of the pupil.

Co-production with pupils and families is regarded as a key feature of effective SEND practice and contributes significantly to improved outcomes and greater engagement.

13. Safeguarding and SEND

The Academy recognises that children and young people with SEND may face additional barriers which increase vulnerability and make safeguarding more complex.

Some pupils may experience difficulties communicating concerns, understanding risk or recognising inappropriate behaviour. Others may be more vulnerable to bullying, exploitation, social isolation or online harm. These additional vulnerabilities require careful consideration when developing safeguarding processes and responses.

The SEND Team works closely with safeguarding leaders to ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain effective and accessible. Information is shared appropriately between relevant staff to ensure that support is coordinated and responsive.

Staff should be aware that indicators of abuse or neglect may present differently in children with SEND and should avoid making assumptions that behaviours or difficulties are solely attributable to a disability or learning need.

The Academy is committed to ensuring that all pupils understand how to seek help, remain safe and access support. Safeguarding information and procedures should therefore be presented in ways that are accessible and meaningful to pupils with differing communication and learning needs.

The welfare of the child remains paramount at all times and safeguarding considerations should underpin all aspects of SEND provision.

14. Transition and Preparation for Adulthood

Supporting successful transitions is a key aspect of effective SEND provision.

The Academy recognises that periods of transition can create uncertainty and anxiety for pupils and families. Careful planning and communication are therefore essential to ensure continuity of support and successful adjustment to new environments, routines and expectations.

Transition should be viewed as a process rather than an event. Effective arrangements involve collaboration between settings, pupils, families and relevant professionals to ensure that important information is shared appropriately and that support is planned proactively.

The Academy is committed to preparing pupils for adulthood throughout their educational journey. Preparation for adulthood extends beyond academic achievement and includes the development of independence, confidence, social skills, resilience, self-advocacy and employability.

Pupils should be encouraged to develop aspirations, understand available opportunities and become active participants in planning their futures. The Academy seeks to ensure that young people leave school equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to engage successfully in further education, training, employment and adult life.

Preparation for adulthood will be embedded within the curriculum and wider school experience and will be considered throughout review and planning processes.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation of SEND Provision

The Academy is committed to maintaining high standards of SEND provision through robust monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement. Effective evaluation focuses not only upon whether provision is being delivered but also upon whether it is having a measurable impact upon outcomes. Monitoring activities therefore consider progress, participation, engagement, attendance, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood, alongside academic achievement.

Leaders will use a range of evidence sources when evaluating SEND provision. These may include pupil outcomes, quality assurance activities, pupil voice, parental feedback, staff feedback, statutory review processes and governance scrutiny. Evaluation should identify both strengths and areas requiring improvement. Findings will inform future planning, staff development priorities and wider academy improvement activities.

The Academy is committed to fostering a culture of reflection, professional curiosity and continual improvement. Monitoring arrangements should therefore support learning and development rather than simply providing assurance. Provision should remain responsive to the evolving needs of pupils and the academy community.

16. Complaints

The Academy seeks to develop positive and constructive relationships with pupils and families and recognises that concerns are best addressed through early discussion and collaborative problem-solving.

Where concerns arise regarding SEND provision, parents and carers are encouraged to contact the Academy at the earliest opportunity so that issues can be explored and resolved promptly via the SEND Department.

The Academy is committed to listening carefully to concerns, responding professionally and maintaining a focus upon securing positive outcomes for pupils. Discussions should remain respectful, solution focused and centred upon the needs of the child or young person. Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, parents and carers may access the Academy's formal Complaints Procedure.