

Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust

Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) Policy

Version number	V2
Last approval date	January 2024
Current date approved	July 2025
Next review date	July 2026
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Policy Owner	Mark Inskip
Policy Location	Trust website
Target Audience	All schools
Document History	
Version 2 – Date of Review	April 26
Version 2 – Revision summary	

Context

The Bath & Wells Diocesan Academies Trust (the Trust) is a dynamic learning community. In order to ensure that the Trust is a safe, supportive environment where pupils and staff can learn and thrive, there needs to be clear procedures, structures, and expectations in place. Trust policies are a formal way of documenting the procedures and values of the Trust and are designed to provide an instant picture of the principles of the Trust. They form an important framework that will ensure consistency in applying the agreed values and principles across all elements the Trust.

The SEND Policy is a statutory policy required by the DfE so the Board of Trustees expects all schools in the Trust to have clear procedures in place to identifying and responding to SEND. The Trust uses the definition of SEND as identified in the *Children and Families Act 2014*.

- *A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.*
- *A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:*
 - *Have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age.*
 - *Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or post-16 institutions.*
- *A child under compulsory school age has SEN if they fall within the definition at (a) or (b) or would do so if special educational provision was made for them.*

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

The Trust will base any identification of need on the broad areas as set out in the SEN Code of Practice:

- Cognition and Learning needs
- Communication and Interaction needs
- Social, emotional and mental health needs
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

Purpose

The key aim of the Trust is to ensure that all pupils achieve their very best. The Trust's Education Strategy is a key driver for improvement and there is a golden thread of inclusion running through our seven characteristics of excellence. We are committed to a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down any barriers to participation and belonging.

All our children, including those identified as having SEND, have the same entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and enables them to be fully included in all aspects of school life. We want all our children to have a strong sense of belonging, to

thrive, flourish and to develop skills for their next stage of learning and development and into adulthood.

The Trust's vision for inclusion is based upon being the best version of ourselves and applies to everyone who works and learns within the Trust family. Trustees want everyone to feel the freedom to be themselves, valuing each other with kindness and respect and enabling children to grow and develop in confidence.

Trustees accept, unconditionally, all children and families into the life of the Trust's schools and the Trust takes every opportunity to celebrate learning together and holding our doors open to people from all backgrounds and traditions.

We unlock opportunities for children to flourish in a wide variety of disciplines, not simply those that are measured. We patiently nurture development and growth, knowing that character is at the heart of educational achievement.

The Trust believes that inclusion is about engendering a belief that our pupils can do 'anything and everything' and this is not limited by a label they may carry. The Trust believe in equity of learning opportunities for all pupils across all schools and this is achieved by listening and responding to children and their families in order to build an ongoing, holistic understanding of pupils and their needs.

The *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years* (DfE) requires all schools to identify and address the SEND of the pupils that they support. Schools are required to:

- use their best endeavours to make sure that SEND pupils get the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet pupils' needs
- ensure that SEND pupils engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEN
- designate a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision – the SEND co-ordinator, or SENDCO
- inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child and ensure that the child and parents/carers are actively involved in decision-making
- prepare an SEND information report and their arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to enable access to the school for disabled children and their accessibility plan showing how they plan to improve access progressively over time.

Trustees believe that high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND. Schools are expected to regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEND most frequently encountered.

We are committed as a Trust to 'quality first' teaching for all our pupils. 'Quality first' teaching will accommodate different types of learning needs in its universal provision, and recognise that if our universal provision is strong, it is likely to result in fewer pupils needing provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.

Trustees believe that all leaders in our schools are leaders of SEND and through our three SEND Hubs (linked to Local Authorities), led by a Headteacher and Lead SENDCo/s and through collaboration with schools, we build capacity and expertise to ensure our Trust is at the forefront of SEND practice.

Trustees are happy to endorse the following principles that have been agreed by our Trust family:

- We will work with parents and children to agree how they wish conditions or protected characteristics to be referred to or described;
- We will not use language that is judgemental or devaluing to a learner;
- When we discuss children with colleagues, we will focus on what provision a child needs rather than what a child can't do;
- We will always use 'child-first' language, putting the child first before any need;
- We will focus on a child's strengths and abilities and be specific when talking about their needs;
- When working with parents and carers we will believe and respect the knowledge they have about their children and will ensure that we are respectful in the language we use;
- We will respect that parents and carers are entitled to have different views as to the provision appropriate for their child, and the views of parents and carers will always be carefully considered;
- As teachers and leaders, we will teach and model inclusive language to parents, carers and pupils, and challenge stereotypes.

In line with the SEN Code of Practice, schools follow the graduated approach to a learners' special educational needs. This support takes the form of "a four-part cycle – Assess, Plan, Do, Review - through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes."

Scope

This policy relates to all staff, pupils, parents, carers and the Central Team. It sets out the principles and expectations of how Trustees wish pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to be supported in each of the Trust's schools, including (where applicable) their nursery provision.

Trust Alignment

This policy is linked to Pledge 1 of the Trust's Strategic Plan and the strategic priority: *High quality and inclusive education that ensures excellent outcomes for all children.*

As a Trust family, we have co-produced the following non negotiables as part of our Education Strategy - Key Characteristic 5: Diversity and Inclusion Celebrated

- The school accepts unconditionally, all children into the life of the school, with all staff championing high quality inclusion.
- Identity and uniqueness are championed and celebrated.

- The Trust core Christian values are integrated into our inclusion culture; there is mutual understanding, across the whole community, that we are doing the best for everyone.
- Relationships and trust are central to all we do in celebrating diversity within our community.
- We see high quality teaching which reduces barriers to learning for all pupils meeting every child's needs in our curriculum, teaching and learning approach.
- There is a shared language and definition for inclusion and diversity and consistency in how we work as a Trust.
- We transfer the benefits of our privilege to those who lack it. We amplify voices of the oppressed before our own.
- Leaders have visible commitment, cultural intelligence and effective collaboration in championing inclusion and diversity. They acknowledge when something is not working and seek advice and support.
- Staff show empathy and humility in their daily work, and they are consciously aware of their own bias.

Other Related Policies

This policy is consistent with BWMAT's funding arrangements with the Secretary of State for Education which requires that the Trust makes provision for pupils with SEND, and has been developed in accordance with the Special Educational Needs (SEND) Code of Practice 2015 and in line with the following:

- The Children and Families Act 2014
Children and Families Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)
- The Equality Act 2010
Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- BWMAT Equality and Diversity Policy
- BWMAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Schools' Behaviour Policies (See individual school websites)
- BWMAT Admissions Policy
- BWMAT Education Strategy

Monitoring

This policy is owned by the Lead ADE for SEND and will be subject to annual review and approval by the Board of Trustees. As part of this annual review, the Lead ADE for SEND will provide a report to Trustees on the impact of the policy over the previous twelve month