



# Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Policy

## Cathedral Schools Trust

September 2025

**It is the responsibility of all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the contents of all Trust policies and any amendments hereafter.**

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### 1. Introduction

Cathedral Schools Trust (CST) is committed to the principle that every pupil has individual needs, has an entitlement to access the full curriculum offer and be fully included in all aspects of the life of the academy/free school, irrespective of ability, race, gender, need or any other of the protected characteristics, and should be respected and valued as individuals.

CST will address the needs of different groups of learners and deliver high quality learning and teaching practices which will allow every learner to achieve their potential. Where required, CST will adapt the environment, curriculum and equipment, as much as is practicably possible, as well as seeking specialist advice from outside the organisation to enhance its ability to support all learners. CST will seek to remove all barriers to learning and achievement.

### 2. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- an inclusive approach to education which meets the needs of pupils with SEND is communicated to and promoted by all stakeholders
- Every academy/free school is committed to inclusion, removing barriers to learning and preparing their pupils with SEND for successful transition to

adulthood

- high quality learning and teaching is promoted for all learners
- learners with special educational needs join in the activities of the academy/free school together with those who do not have special educational needs, so far as it is compatible with the efficient education of other learners
- CST meets its legal obligation to provide access to the curriculum for all learners whilst recognising their individual needs
- where the head teacher or the appropriate governor has been informed by a local authority that a learner has special educational needs, those needs will be made known to staff
- all CST staff are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for learners who have special educational needs
- the head teacher, staff and governors report annually to parents on the effectiveness of this policy and provision for learners with special educational needs
- all staff are clear regarding roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the policy.

CST recognises that it has a responsibility to meet the needs of all learners in the Trust and as such believes in early identification, clear assessment processes and appropriate provision for all learners.

### 3. Legal Framework

This policy has been prepared to meet CST's responsibilities under:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, September 2021)
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017/353
- Children and Families Act 2014

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years* (DfE and Department of Health, January 2015) – statutory guidance (**pending update to align with national standards**)
- **SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan (DfE, 2023) – sets out national standards, early intervention, AP reform, co-production with families, preparation for adulthood, workforce development, and aligned accountability**

- **Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted, updated 2022–23) – with emphasis on inclusion, quality of education for pupils with SEND, and leadership responsibilities**
- **Area SEND inspections framework and handbook (Ofsted & CQC, 2023) – evaluating local area SEND arrangements and outcomes**
- *Mental health and behaviour in schools* (DfE, November 2018; **updated guidance 2023**)
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, June 2025)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2025)**
- *Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school* (DfE, December 2015)
- *What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools* (EHRC, April 2014)
- *Technical guidance for schools in England* (EHRC, July 2014)
- *The Equality Act 2010 and schools* (DfE, May 2014)
- *Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils* (EHRC, April 2015)
- *Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England* (EHRC, July 2014)
- *Advice and Guidance: How can we stop prejudice-based bullying in schools?* (EHRC)

## **SEND and alternative provision improvement plan**

CST ensures inclusion practices relating to special educational needs are met according to the legislation outlined in the Children and Families Act (2014), the new SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0 - 25 and The Equality Act, 2010.

CST will update its practices in response to the DfE's 2022 green paper.

## **4. Definitions**

"Special educational needs" and "learning difficulty"

A child or young person has Special Educational Needs (SEN) if they have a Learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age in mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools and mainstream post 16 institutions or by relevant early years providers.

Pupils' needs will fall into at least one of these four broad areas. Communication and interaction, Cognition and learning, Social Emotional and mental health difficulties, Sensory and/or physical needs. Many students will have interrelated and complex needs.

Pupils must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. However, children for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support.

A child who finds a particular subject difficult does not necessarily have a "learning difficulty" in the legal sense of that expression; there will often be disparities in the speed with which children learn, in their skill at solving problems and in aptitude generally.

The expression "learning difficulty" covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as dyslexia, dyscalculia, 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 or who have an autistic spectrum disorder.

"Reasonable adjustments"

References to a reasonable adjustment are references to the anticipatory duty to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the substantial disadvantage to a disabled person caused by a provision, criterion or practice, or applied by or on behalf of the school, or by the absence of an auxiliary aid or service. Further information on the statutory duty to make

reasonable adjustments is found in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance on reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils

## **5. Disability**

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantially adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

As part of this definition, 'substantial' is defined as more than minor or trivial in its effect on a person. 'Long term' means that the impairment is likely to last or recur for twelve months or more. For pupils, 'normal day to day activities' in a school context are those activities that a pupil would normally be able to carry out having reached the expected stage of development and education for their chronological age. There is no requirement for a formal diagnosis of a disability to meet this definition, but there are some diagnosed conditions that will automatically meet the definition under the Equality Act 2010 (for example cancer, HIV or multiple sclerosis).

This definition includes:

- Sensory impairments affecting sight or hearing
- Long term health conditions (eg asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer)
- Pupils with these conditions may not have special educational needs (SEN) but there is an overlap between disabled pupils and those with SEN.
- Pupils with sensory impairment should be supported by appropriate technology and differentiated classroom provision and support, following the advice of the Sensory Support Service.

## **Physical Access for the disabled**

With the exception of parts of CST schools that are housed in historic buildings, where possible CST will ensure the provision of ramps and lifts to facilitate access for physically disabled pupils.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Trust Board**

The Trust board will ensure that:

- Each academy/free school has a clear framework for identifying and supporting the special educational needs of learners;
- there are procedures for identifying and providing for learners' special educational needs;
- they have regard for all applicable legislations and regulations, including the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice 2015 0-25;
- they are fully informed about SEND issues, so that they can play a major part in

- any academy/free school self-review process;
- they set up appropriate staffing and funding arrangements;
- they are involved in the development and monitoring of this policy;
- there is a nominated Local Governor in each academy/free school with responsibility for special educational needs;
- SEND provision is an integral part of each academy/free school development plan;
- The quality of SEND provision is regularly monitored.

### **The Head Teacher**

The head teacher must ensure that:

- the policies and procedure adopted by CST are fully implemented;
- learners with special educational needs join in all activities alongside other pupils, as far as is reasonable practical and compatible with their needs and the efficient education of other pupils;
- parents are notified if the academy/free school decides to make special educational provision for their child;
- sufficient resources are allocated to the management of all aspects of the inclusion agenda, including provision for pupils with SEND;
- the Governing Body is informed about SEND issues;
- the implementation of this policy is monitored and reported to Governors.

### **Designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO)**

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of this policy;
- coordinating the provision for individual needs of pupils;
- ensuring that an agreed, consistent approach is adopted;
- liaising with external agencies and teachers to identify and support pupils with additional educational needs;
- arranging detailed assessments, observations and support of learners with special educational needs;
- overseeing the work of staff with responsibility for supporting pupils in/out of class, in devising strategies, drawing up student profiles, setting targets appropriate to individual needs of the learners, and advising on appropriate resources and materials for use with learners and on their effective use of materials;
- liaising closely with parents of learners with special educational needs so that they are aware of the strategies that are being used and are involved as partners in the process;
- liaising with outside agencies, arranging meetings, and providing a link between these agencies, class teachers and parents;
- maintaining the academy/free school special educational needs register and records;
- assisting in the monitoring and evaluation of progress of learners with SEND
- contributing to the in-service training of staff in working with learners with specific needs;
- ensuring that all staff are given any necessary information in relation to behaviour management and other issues for particular learners;

- liaise with the SENDCos in feeder and secondary schools to ensure smooth transition;
- be responsible for the administrative processes surrounding pupils with SEND;
- Working with the Head Teacher and Trust Board to ensure that the Academy meets its responsibilities under the Act in respect of reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- Undertake any other appropriate duties as set out in the SEND Code of Practice.

## **Teachers**

All teachers in CST are teachers of learners with special educational needs and as such every academy/free school adopts a whole school approach involving all staff adhering to a model of good practice. Teachers must ensure that they:

- are fully aware of this policy and the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for learners with SEND;
- are aware of the individual needs, including any SEN, of all learners they teach;
- include all learners in lessons, providing an appropriately differentiated curriculum;
- draw on the SENDCo for advice on assessment and strategies to support inclusion, including that of the EEF 5-a-day;
- give appropriate feedback to enable progress to be monitored and effective reviews to take place.

## **Learning Support Assistants (LSA) and Teaching Assistants (TA)**

LSAs will work with small groups or individual pupils and must ensure that they:

- make themselves aware of CST's policy for special educational needs and procedures for identification, monitoring and supporting learners with specific needs;
- are fully conversant with the individual needs of all of their mentee;
- contribute as required to any review process;
- raise any concerns with their line manager as they arise.

## **7. Admission and Inclusion**

Inclusion is regarded as crucial to this policy. CST operates an equal opportunities policy for children with special educational needs, who are afforded the same rights as other children. This includes both those children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and others who have been identified as needing SEND support. CST subscribes to fully including all children and young people who have additional educational needs.

CST will ensure that pupils with SEND are admitted on an equal basis with others in accordance with each academy/free school admissions policy. Where a local authority proposes to name an academy/free school in an Education, Health & Care Plan made in accordance with section 324 of the Education Act 1996, it must give the academy/free school written notice that it proposes. Within 15 working days of receipt of the LA's notice that it proposes to name the academy/free school in an EHCP, the academy/free school must consent to being named, except where admitting the learners would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other learners; and where no reasonable steps may be made to secure compatibility. Pupils with an EHCP, where the academy/free school is named, will be offered a place prior to the allocation of places for other pupils.

In deciding whether a learner's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children, the academy/free school must have regard to the relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State to maintained schools.

If the academy/free school determines that admitting the child would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education, it must, within working 15 days of receipt of the LA's notice, notify the LA in writing that it does not agree that the academy/free school should be named in the learner's EHCP. Such notice must set out all the facts and matters the academy/free school relies upon in support of its contention that: (a) admitting the learner would be incompatible with efficiently educating other learners; and (b) the academy/free school cannot take reasonable steps to secure this compatibility.

Where a student with a EHCP is admitted and the placement breaks down, the academy/free school should hold an emergency annual review of the EHCP and invite the SEN officer from Bristol/South Gloucestershire/North Somerset/BANES. The academy/free school should do all it can, working in partnership with the relevant LA to secure an alternative placement, if this is the outcome of the annual review.

Parents of prospective pupils with SEN should be invited to explore the Local Offer and consult the academy/free school's SENDCO, prior to their application for a place at the academy/free school, to discuss the SEN provision available within the academy/free school's existing resources.

## **8. Allocation of Resources**

CST will ensure:

That appropriate support is sought to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and the outcomes outlined in the Education, Health and Care Plan allocated to named pupils with SEND.

The SENDCO will apply for Targeted support funding and Outreach Support as appropriate and where possible.

Provision mapping is used to indicate how the money brought into the academy/free school due to additional funding is spent.

There is an allocation in the academy/free school budget to purchase SEND resources for all pupils on their SEND register, including all those with an EHCP and those with identified SEND.

## **9. Curriculum Access**

Each academy/free school curriculum will be made available for all pupils. Other than exceptional cases, they will make full use of classroom and academy/free school resources before drawing on external support. The curriculum will be differentiated to meet the needs of individual pupils.

Where appropriate, emerging digital tools and assistive technologies, including AI-based learning supports, may be used to enhance access to the curriculum, provided they are applied safely, ethically, and in line with safeguarding guidance.

Teaching styles and flexible groups will reflect this approach including the use of individual, small group or whole class contexts.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs will match the nature of their individual needs; teachers, tutors and the SENDCO will keep regular records of the learners' special educational needs, the action taken and the outcomes.

Schemes of work will reflect whole school approaches to teaching and learning and will take account of special educational needs. Curriculum tasks and activities may be broken down into a series of small and achievable steps for learners who have marked learning difficulties. All supervisory staff involved in student support during break, lunchtime and enrichment will be made fully aware of the individual needs of learners and trained appropriately.

## **10. Intervention – Graduated Response**

1. Pupils will usually be supported, according to their individual needs, by the teacher within the classroom setting. All pupils with additional needs will be supported universally through quality first teaching by the classroom teacher. Pupils may receive the additional support of a learning support assistant (LSA) in the classroom setting or through limited withdrawal for targeted individual or small group work on a specified task under the direction of the teacher.

2. If a pupil is experiencing difficulties, it is initially the responsibility of the teacher to make necessary changes to the organisation of the classroom; teaching materials; teaching style; differentiated learning materials.
3. If this intervention does not lead to acceptable progress being made, the pupil is referred to the SENDCo who, if the pupil continues to need additional support with their learning, the classroom teacher is responsible for requesting further support from the SENDCo who, in consultation with the pupil, parents, teachers and other relevant staff, decides what type of intervention and support are appropriate.
4. The SENDCO will coordinate the access to the support of external agencies for individual pupils where appropriate.

## **11. Examinations**

The SENDCO will work with the appropriate member of staff to ensure that suitable access arrangements for examinations are put in place for pupils with SEND.

## **12. Monitoring and Evaluating Learner Progress**

All pupils who are not achieving age related expectations and those who require some form of SEN special provision outside the normal classroom range of differentiation should be recorded on the academy/free school SEN register.

- Pupils are grouped in 3 categories, E (EHCP) K (School Support pupils) M (Monitoring pupils).
- Pupils with an EHCP should have an annual review as required by legislation which will involve pupils, parents and appropriate representation from the academy/free school and other agencies. In line with the Code of practice parents will be invited into the academy/free school on a further two occasions during the school year to discuss progress.
- School Support pupils should have at least one formal review during the academic year which will include the SENDCO or another appropriate member of the academy/free school.
- If the pupil identified as School Support (K) responds well to a graduated response provision and achieves age related expectations they will be removed from the register and monitored separately.

### **13. Partnership Liaison and Other Support Services**

- Partnership with parents plays an essential role in enabling pupils with SEN to make acceptable progress and become successful learners. CST recognises that parents hold key information, knowledge and experience about their child. Each academy/free school values the partnership with all parents and is keen to support them in playing an active and valued role in their children's education.
- As far as practically possible the SENDCO or member of the SEND team will liaise with primary schools, feeder schools or secondary schools to ensure transition is as smooth as possible for pupils with SEND.
- When parents of a pupil with an EHCP have expressed an interest in applying for a place at an academy/free school, the SENDCO or Assistant SENDCO will where possible attend annual review meetings at the pupil's primary school.
- The following outside agencies are available, (this list is not exhaustive) Local Authority SEN team, Educational Psychology Service, Sensory Support Service, Bristol Autism Team, Social Care, Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Education Welfare Service
- The academy/free school SENDCO where possible should attend SENDCO cluster meetings.

### **14. Staff Training and Development**

- The SENDCO and members of the SEN team provide advice and ongoing training for colleagues on all aspects of effective teaching for pupils with SEN.
- The SENDCO contributes to relevant sessions for the whole staff on Training Days.
- LSAs are given appropriate training to ensure they have the necessary skills and expertise to fulfil their roles effectively.
- ECTs and all new teaching staff are informed of SEND policy and practice as part of the induction programme.
- Teaching staff and LSAs are able to attend appropriate external courses to increase their knowledge of and expertise in specific areas of SEND. Information is shared and evaluated through informal arrangements and at staff training days.

### **15. Pupil Participation**

Pupils will be encouraged to participate fully in decisions made regarding

their education. Where possible/appropriate pupils, regardless of their particular circumstance, will be invited to meetings where their needs, potential provision and any arrangements are being discussed.

## 16. Managing Complaints

- Where a parent or pupil has a concern about the SEND provision that is being made, this should first be addressed to the SENDCO.
- Every effort will be made to ensure a response is received within 5 working days.
- If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the Trust complaints procedure should be followed.

## 17. SEND Policy Update Note – September 2025

Cathedral Schools Trust recognises the ongoing reforms to the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) system. In line with these, CST commits to:

**National Standards:** Preparing to align practice with forthcoming national SEND standards, including use of the new EHCP template and digitised plans.

**Early Intervention & AP:** Using alternative provision proactively, focusing on early intervention, reintegration, and preparation for adulthood. CST will ensure that all alternative provision is registered or approved, and will adhere to DfE guidance regarding time limits on placements at unregistered sites.

**Pupil & Parent Voice:** Strengthening co-production with parents and carers, ensuring pupils with SEND actively participate in decisions about their education and future pathways.

**Outcomes Focus:** Monitoring progress beyond academic attainment, including employability, independent living, community participation, and wellbeing, in line with Ofsted/CQC expectations.

**SEMH & Mental Health:** Embedding support for social, emotional, and mental health needs within SEND provision and safeguarding, with clear pathways to support services.

**Workforce Development:** Committing to the national SEND workforce strategy, ensuring staff receive ongoing professional development, including SENCO and specialist qualifications.

**This policy will be reviewed annually and updated further once the new SEND Code of Practice and national standards are published. All CST schools are expected to reflect these principles in their local SEND Information Reports.**

## 18. Version Control

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1	11 Sep 2018	CST Education Committee	Members of CST, every Trustee, each Local Governor, all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers and others at the discretion of the Chairman of the Trustees of CST. CST Website updated.	Annual Review - no changes
2	12 Dec 2019	CST Trustees		Annual Review - removed reference to Statement of Educational Needs and reviewed in line with changes to legislation
3	11 Nov 2020	CST Education Committee		Annual Review - reviewed in line with changes to legislation
4	22 Sep 2021	CST Education Committee		Annual Review - minor amendments proposed by Committee
5	19 Oct 2022	CST Education Committee		Annual Review
6	28 Sep 2023	CST SEND Inclusion Leader		Annual Review
7	26 Sep 2024	CST SEND Inclusion Leader		Annual Review
8	16 Sep 2025	CST SEND Inclusion Leader		Annual Review
9	20 October 2025	CST SEND Inclusion Leader		Annual Review; Sections 3 and 9 updated to reflect new legislation

## 18. Alterations

This Scheme may be altered, added to or repealed by a majority resolution of the Trustees of CST in a general meeting.

**Approvals (Annually)**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
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1

1	4 December 2018	CST Trustees
2	12 December 2019	CST Trustees
3	10 December 2020	CST Trustees
4	30 September 2021	CST Trustees
5	3 November 2022	CST Trustees
6	28 September 2023	CST Trustees
7	26 September 2024	CST Trustees
8	20 October 2025	CST Trustees