

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Policy



Approved by Governors: Summer 2026
Next review: Annual

*Please read in conjunction with our 'SEND Information Report' (School's Local Offer)

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Introduction

Introduction

Our aim at Commonswood School is to value the individuality of all our children so that they learn to the best of their capability. We are committed to giving each child every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards, to foster an attitude of caring for learning and enabling the opportunity for every pupil to shine. This policy has been reviewed to offer guidance to staff and parents/carers about the identification and monitoring of SEND at our school. **At the heart of this policy are our school Aims and Values.**

1. Aims

Our Inclusion Policy aims to:

- Explain how we will support and make provision for pupils with SEND, working within the guidance set out in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (January 2015).
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEND.

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs

The definition of Special Educational Needs, as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice 2015:

Children with special educational needs have learning difficulties that call for special provision to be made. All children may have special needs at some time in their lives. Children fulfil these criteria if they:

- have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities that are provided for children of the same age
- are under or at **statutory** school age and fall within the definitions above or
- have emotional or behavioural difficulties that interfere with their ability to learn

Children must not be regarded as having a SEND solely because:

- they have a disability
- the language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught

- slow progress or low attainment or
- persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours.

We recognise that at different times during a child or young person’s school life, they may have a special need or disability that requires additional provision at that particular time. We also recognise that it is possible to require additional support without being on the school’s SEND list.

3. Compliance

This document was written with reference to the Children and Families Act 2015 and associated regulations, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25, 2014, the Disability Act 2010, the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

All schools are required to publish a school ‘SEND Information Report’ on their website, showing the provision offered for children with SEND in school.

The Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and is responsible for leading provision for children with SEND at Commonswood School.

The SENDCo is: Miss Karen Dean

4. Identifying Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Every school is required to identify and address the SEND of the pupils that they support. Commonswood will:

- aim to identify needs at the earliest point and make effective provision.
- use our best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need – this means making reasonable adjustments to meet children and young people’s SEND.
- ensure that children and young people with SEND engage in the activities of our school alongside pupils who do not have SEND.
- identify the roles and responsibilities of staff including a designated teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating SEND.
- ensure that parents/carers play their part and have a voice in supporting their child’s education.
- inform parents/carers when the school are making special educational provision for a child.
- ensure that our children have a voice in this process.

5. Improving Outcomes

At Commonswood, we believe that all children and young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they:

- achieve their best
- become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
- make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training

6. The Graduated Response to SEND support

We deliver a broad and balanced curriculum through high quality teaching that is differentiated to meet the needs of our pupils. We implement the four-stage graduated 4 response cycle to meet the needs of individual pupils who require something in addition to what is offered to the majority of our pupils.

APDR Provision

Assess - Regular and rigorous assessment of progress and needs by the class teacher, including information discussed with the child’s family about progress, barriers’ to learning or other needs, will enable us to target particular learning needs. Where external professionals are involved, we will work together to assess needs.

Plan - The overall view of the child’s needs from the assessment information will be used to plan what we want to achieve. At Commonswood we write this as a target.

Do - We will explain the intervention or technique that will be used to support the child in order to meet their target. We will highlight who will be involved in supporting this to happen, how it will be implemented, how often and to detail any particular strategies or resources to use.

Review - Teaching teams along with the SENCO (if appropriate), will continually monitor, revise and review this cycle/provision and assess the impact. Next steps will then be considered. Reviews are held as required but at least termly with parents/carers and the child.

7. Education Health Care Plans (EHCP)

The school is committed to ensure the equality of opportunity for all our pupils. We want children with SEND to enjoy the same levels of success, achievement, opportunity and self-esteem as other pupils. The National Curriculum is our starting point for planning that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. When planning, teachers set suitable learning challenges and respond to children's diverse learning needs.

Some children have barriers to learning that require particular action by the school. These may have been identified by, or in consultation with, parent/carers, school staff and or other professionals.

The additional requirements may arise as a consequence of a child having special educational needs. Teachers take account of these requirements and make provision, where necessary, to support individuals or groups of children and thus enable them to participate effectively in curriculum and assessment activities. Such children may need additional or different provision from that given to other children of the same age. We regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the 'SEN support' for pupils.

Reasonable adjustments are made in all classrooms and include the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage. The school also has a wider duty to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

The additional needs of most of the pupils with SEND will be met by quality first teaching, interventions and resources from the school. In a few cases, the pupils with the most significant needs will require a more comprehensive and individualised package of support to help them achieve their potential over and above an Individual Provision Plan. Where this is the case the SENCO, in consultation and agreement with staff, parents/carers and other specialist agencies will make a request to the Local Authority for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Full details of the process for requesting an EHCP can be found on the Hertfordshire SEND offer web site: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer If a child receives an EHCP, it will be reviewed annually.

8. Medical Conditions

The school will make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual Health Care Plans and/or Education, Health and Care Plans will normally specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEND, their provision will be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way with the care plan. Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance '*Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions*'.

In compliance with statutory guidance, arrangements are put in place to ensure that any pupil with a medical condition is able, as far as possible, to participate in all aspects of school life. These arrangements are set out in an individual Health Care Plan. These are produced through collaboration with parents/carers, pupil and if appropriate, health professionals. These are then shared with all relevant staff.

9. Education Inclusion

In our school we aim to offer excellence and choice to all our children, whatever their attainment level or needs. We have high expectations of all our children. We aim to achieve this through the removal of barriers to learning and participation. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. Through appropriate curricular provision, we respect the fact that children:

- have different educational and behavioural needs

- require different strategies for learning
- acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates
- need a range of different teaching approaches and experiences

Teachers respond to children's needs by:

- providing lessons which are differentiated to address the potential areas of difficulty and remove barriers to pupil achievement
- providing supports for children who need help with the four broad areas of need (see Appendix 1) Communication & Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional & Mental Health difficulties and Sensory and/or Physical needs
- planning to develop children's understanding using their senses and varied experiences
- planning for children's full participation in learning, and in physical and practical activities
- planning for children to manage their behaviour and to take part in learning effectively and safely
- planning for individuals to manage their emotions, particularly trauma or stress, and to take part in learning

10. Identifying SEND in school

Many of the children who join us have been in early education. In some cases, children join us with their needs already assessed. Transition meetings between settings are encouraged with professionals who may already be involved.

For some children, a SEN/D can be identified at an early age. However, for other children and young people difficulties become more evident as they develop. We are committed to an early response to concerns that parents/carers or teachers may raise. Working in partnership with parents/carers and the children themselves to identify and acknowledge a SEN/D is an essential part of this process.

When a child has not had a SEN/D identified, but parent(s)/carer(s) and / or teachers have concerns about the progress of a child, (under any of the four broad areas of need) the school will arrange an initial meeting with the SENCo, class teacher and parent(s)/carer(s), to discuss concerns as early as possible.

During this meeting there will be a discussion about:

- What is going well for the child in school?
- The strengths of the child.
- What have we tried to do to support the child?
- What have we learned about the child?
- What are we concerned about?
- What do we need to work out next?
- What can we all do from here?
- Next steps agreed.

Agreements could be

- a period of monitoring the child's progress with specific intervention and assessments in place
- a referral to outside agency support
- a supporting letter from the school to medical practitioners

After a period of monitoring by the school and parents or advice from outside agency support, a child may then require 'SEN Support' in school and an 'Individual Provision Plan'. This may mean that a child is placed on a list which identifies those children across the school who require additional support within the four broad areas of need at school. Parents/ carers will always be informed if their child is placed on a SEN list by the class teacher or SENCo.

In terms of identification of a SEND, professionals should consider other events that can lead to learning difficulties or wider mental health difficulties, such as bullying, bereavement or life events. Such events will not always lead to children having SEND but it can impact on well-being and sometimes this can be severe. The school will ensure that appropriate provision for a child's short-term needs are met in order to prevent problems escalating. Where there are long lasting difficulties the school will consider whether the child might have SEND. Further guidance on dealing

with bullying issues can be found in the school's Behaviour policy. Also, slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEND and will not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having SEND. However, this may be an indicator of a range of learning difficulties which would be discussed with parents/ carers at an initial meeting with the SENCo and class teacher. Equally, it should not be assumed that attainment in line with chronological age, means that there is no learning difficulty or disability. Some learning difficulties and disabilities occur across the range of cognitive ability and left unaddressed may lead to frustration, which may manifest itself as disaffection, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Identifying and assessing SEND for children or young people whose first language is not English requires particular care. The school will look carefully at all aspects of a child or young person's performance in different areas of learning and development or subjects to establish whether lack of progress is due to limitations in their command of English or if it arises from SEN or a disability. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEND.

11. SEND Provision

When a child is identified as having a SEN, information from a wide range of sources, including the information from initial meetings with the pupil, parents/carers, teacher and/or SENCo will be gathered, alongside outside agency advice and reports, to determine the needs and provision for the child. Provision, or 'SEN Support' for the child is captured in an 'Individual Provision Plan' which seeks to outline day-to day support in the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle.

This provision is informed by the '**Hertfordshire County Council Targeted Services Offer to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**' launched in 2019. This document includes: continuums of need, practical advice about how schools implement 'Reasonable Adjustments', a systematic approach to implementing intervention, outside agency and further support and resources.

It also details the targeted support available from *Integrated Services for Learning (ISL)*, such as specialist teachers, helplines, telephone numbers, training and signposting and additional support from other services, including online advice and resources for pupils in each of the following areas:

- Communication and Autism
- Speech, Language and Communication Need
- Specific Learning Difficulty
- Educational Support for children with Medical Absence
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Physical and Neurological Impairment
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health

The 'Individual Provision Plan' is reviewed throughout the year with parent and child and next steps are assessed against the outcomes for a pupil. These plans are formulated with the child, parents / carers and the class teacher. They are monitored by the SENCo as is the progress the child is making towards their outcomes. This is known as the 'graduated approach'. Parents of children with SEND are entitled to *3 meetings per year* with the class teacher.

Our response to pupils who have or may have SEND is Quality First Teaching. The child's teacher may also offer interventions that are different from or additional to those provided as part of the school's usual working practices which are delivered in the classroom alongside peers. The SENCo will support the teacher and if necessary, make further assessments of the child's needs and recommend adjustments and provisions. Additional support is shown through Class Provision Mapping and Individual Provision Plans. The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 states clearly that:

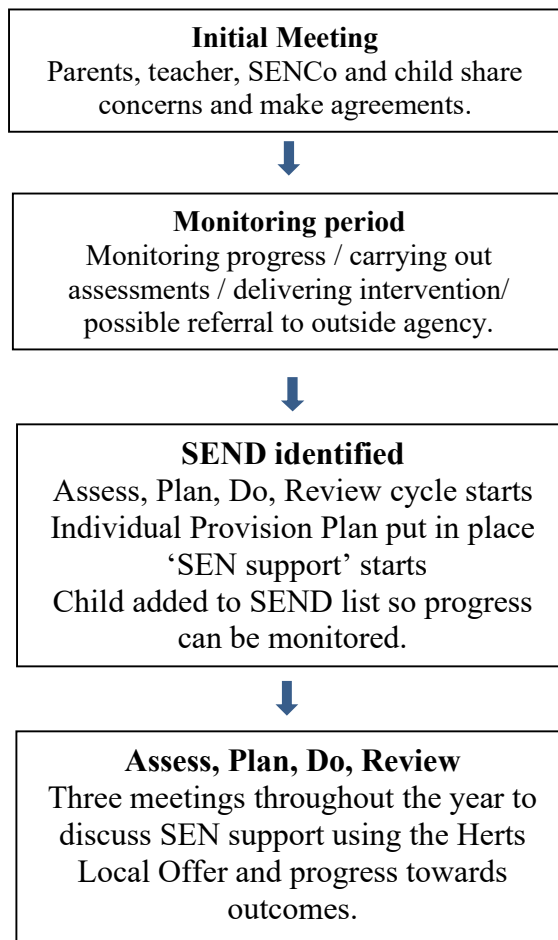
Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

If the child needs support and the school require further advice from an outside agency, then a request can be made by the SENCo detailing the 'assess, plan, do review' cycle which has already taken place in school, and set out why the school needs additional, specialist, recommendations from professionals. Sometimes, the school may refer to several agencies. When multiple agencies are involved with a family, a Families First Assessment may be carried out to decipher

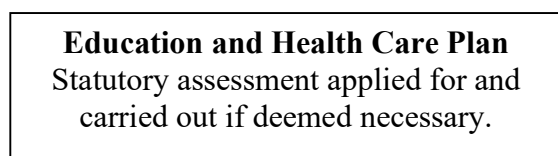
the needs of all family members and child. This is carried out with the Schools Partnership. Following the completion of the Families First Assessment the various agencies involved will set up ‘A Team around the Family’ (TAF) meeting. The parents / carers will select a Lead Professional from the team members. In most cases, meetings will happen every 6 weeks and will be held within the school.

When a child is identified with SEND, the needs of the family is taken into consideration. Sometimes, siblings of pupils with SEND may be identified as Young Carers or young people who require additional help in school.

SEN support will be adapted or replaced depending on how effective it has been in achieving the agreed outcomes set out in an Individual Provision Plan. Where, despite taking relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress, the school or parents / carers may consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment (see Chapter 9 of the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years, May 2015 for further details).



Some children with SEND may be assessed for Educational Health Care Plan following discussions with the SENCO, Class Teacher and Parents.



12. Transition

SEN support will include planning and preparation for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life (see Chapter 6 of the Code of Practice January 2015. Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years). This includes school transitions between year groups. This plan will involve input from the child, parents/carers, the SENCo and teachers.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Governing Body

The governing body ensures that:

- it has due regard to the Code of Practice when carrying out its duties toward all pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability
- it does its best to secure the necessary provision for any pupil identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disability and ensures that all teachers are aware of the importance of providing for these children;
- it consults the LA and other schools, when appropriate, and reports annually to parents/carers on the success of the school's policy for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability
- parents/carers are notified of a decision by the school that SEND provision is being made for their child
- it identifies a governor to have specific oversight of the school's provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs. This governor liaises with the school and reports back to the governing body.
- the SEND governor ensures that all governors are aware of the school's SEND provision, including the deployment of funding, equipment and personnel.

The role of the SENCo

The key responsibilities of the SENCo may include:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy
- co-ordinating provision for children with SEND
- liaising with the relevant Designated Teacher where a looked after pupil has SEND
- advising on the graduated approach to providing SEND support
- advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- liaising with parents/carers of pupils with SEND
- liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies
- being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- liaising with potential next providers of education to ensure a pupil and their parents/carers are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- working with the headteacher and school governors to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- ensuring that the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up to date

The role of the Headteacher

The Head is responsible for:

- informing and liaising with governors on special needs provision
- managing the Special Educational Needs Policy on a day to day basis. Giving and arranging for practical help and training to be given to members of staff on how to deal with special needs issues
- ensuring that complaints regarding SEND provision are dealt with in accordance to the LEA guidance for school-based complaints procedures
- ensuring all staff are trained in SEND where appropriate to provide adequate support for SEND pupils and to allow for personal and professional development

The role of the Class Teacher

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.

This includes:

- identification of children with SEND
- devising and implementing targets and support for individual children
- matching learning to need in every lesson
- reviewing and setting new targets on Individual provision Plans with parents/carers and children
- liaising with the SENCo to ensure the needs of individual pupils are met through the implementation of the identified strategies/interventions
- implement the school Special Educational Needs Policy
- undertake any training suggested or supplied by the school

Definition of the Broad Areas of Need

Communication and interaction

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Children and young people with ASD are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Cognition and learning

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils. The Department for Education publishes guidance on managing pupils' mental health and behaviour difficulties in schools – see the References section under Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Sensory and/or physical needs

Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties.

Information on how to provide services for deaf/blind children and young people is available through the Social Care for Deaf/blind Children and Adults guidance published by the Department of Health and Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015

Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.