

Birches Head Academy



SEND Policy

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Approved by Head of School:

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Approved by Chair of Governors:

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SEND Policy Contents

Objectives.....	5
Responsibility for Special Educational Needs	5
Arrangements for Co-coordinating Special Needs Provision	6
Admission and Accessibility Arrangements	6
Provision.....	6
Allocation of Resources	6
Arrangements for Identification, Assessment and Review of Pupils with Special Educational Needs	6
Curriculum Access, Exams and Inclusion	7
Evaluating Success	7
Staff Development	8
External Support Services	8
Partnership with home	8
Transition Arrangements	8
Links with Outside Agencies	8
Arrangements for Complaints	9
Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Policy.....	9

Our Vision

At Birches Head Academy we seek to build a community where our pupils have the cultural capital to follow unlimited ideas and dreams. Above all else, we want our pupils to experience the fullness of life, where the sort of person they become is of paramount importance.

To **BE MORE** is to be a community which aspires to act justly in all situations and to be kind towards those inside and outside the Academy.

Introduction

This is a statement of The Special Educational Needs and Disability policy for Birches Head Academy. It provides guidelines for the procedures adopted by the Academy and its governors which support the removal of barriers to learning of all pupils with additional needs. This policy attempts to ensure that all consideration and implementation of the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is consistent with the Academy's Vision Statement "To believe social justice can be achieved for our communities by providing excellence in education" and our Trust motto "Aspire not to have more but to be more".

We are dedicated to ensuring that our Academy environment supports the learning and the well-being of all pupils and staff through a strong sense of community cohesion. Courage, justice, honesty, compassion, gratitude, humility, integrity and respect are the Values Charter within our community and we work hard to provide a safe Academy where all pupils, whatever their needs, feel included in every aspect of Academy life and comfortable to voice their opinions.

This policy outlines our intent and offer in support of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to ensure that the 'Be more' experience is inclusive and equitable.

Values Charter

We believe that all pupils should be aware of the standards of behaviour expected at our Academy. These standards are underpinned by our Values Charter within our school context and we expect all members of our Academy community to take responsibility for living these out on a daily basis. Positive relationships throughout The Academy are built on a set of shared values:

Justice

Definition: *Our Academy rules are fair and reasonable.*

Example: *Showing that you know when you need to stand up for what is correct and appropriate with the context of our Values Charter and Consistency Across the Academy.*

Humility

Definition: *we aim to ensure that everyone in our community has a place and a voice that will be heard.*

Example: *To celebrate all our achievements in a respectful manner.*

Respect

Definition: *treat others how you would wish to be treated yourself.*

Example: *Holding the door open for any member of our community.*

Courage

Definition: *the quality of having strength in the face of difficulty.*

Example: *Being confident to express opinions and ideas within the Academy.*

Integrity

Definition: *the quality of having strong moral values.*

Example: *Knowing that we should all try and do the right thing when faced with adversity.*

Compassion

Definition: *the quality of having concern for others.*

Example: *Showing kindness and care for others within the Academy and our community.*

Honesty

Definition: *the quality of being truthful.*

Example: *Telling the truth in all situations even when it is hard to do so.*

Gratitude

Definition: *the quality of being thankful and showing appreciation.*

Example: *Saying please and thank you wherever possible.*

“A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her” (SEND Code of Practice 2014, updated 2024).

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,
- 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”

This policy will set out how the Academy fulfils, working intrinsically within our ethos, the statutory requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, 2014, updated 2024, and The Equality Act 2010.

Objectives

The objectives of The Birches Head Academy SEND policy are:

- To establish a compassionate environment where removing barriers to learning is at the heart of our school and ethos
- To ensure that the needs of each individual pupil are justly identified, assessed and provided for with integrity and care.
- To ensure that all children are welcomed and treated with dignity and respect as people.
- To maximise access to the National Curriculum by providing a broad and balanced, knowledge rich curriculum which meets the needs and abilities of all pupils, both in content and delivery, so maximising their access to social, intellectual and cultural capital.
- To maximise opportunities for the integration and inclusion of all pupils ensuring they play a full and active role in school life, socially, culturally and intellectually
- To establish procedures which allow for the effective assessment, monitoring and review of the progress of all pupils requiring something “additional to or different from” the “ordinary differentiated curriculum” (SEND Code of Practice 2014, updated 2024)
- To promote effective, honest, co-operation with all stakeholders including parents, carers and outside agencies.
- To prepare pupils to make a successful and aspirational transition to the next phase in their education in order to access the fulness of life and “Be more”.
- To prepare pupils with SEND for adulthood, including employment, independent living, participation in society and good health.

Responsibility for Special Educational Needs

The Governing Board, in conjunction with the Principal, should determine the school policy and approach to provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, SEND Responsibility for the management of the Academy’s provision for pupils with SEND lies with the Principal.

Responsibility for the day to day operation of the Academy’s Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy lies with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo), details of which are included throughout this policy.

All teachers are teachers of pupils with additional needs. It is the responsibility of classroom

teachers, working justly and with integrity, to monitor and support SEND pupils' progress: it is the responsibility of the SENDCo to ensure that information and strategies specific to SEND needs are shared with teachers and that appropriate training is offered to enhance expertise.

Arrangements for Co-coordinating Special Needs Provision

Co-ordinating provision for SEND pupils is the responsibility of the SENDCo in consultation with the wider Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Such arrangements may include identification, assessment, provision for, monitoring and review of pupils' needs alongside liaison with parents and outside agencies.

However, the implementation and monitoring of the strategies and interventions to support pupils is the responsibility of whole school community.

Admission and Accessibility Arrangements

The Birches Head Academy strives to be a fully inclusive mainstream school. We promote a culture of aspiring to be the best you can be. All pupils are welcome and the Academy follows the procedures set down at national and local level for pupil admissions.

The Academy is a building with many steps and stairs. There is, however, disabled access at the front of the building and there is a lift. There are disabled toilets on the ground floor. The Academy has regard to the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Code of Practice 2014: 0 to 25 years in terms of admitting pupils with disabilities.

Pupils will gain admission through the standard local authority (LA) procedures. The Academy is fully accessible to all pupils. It has a lift which enables pupils to access their lessons on all floors. The building is fully wheelchair accessible and there are disabled toilets on each floor, alongside changing and shower facilities.

Provision

All pupils are taught within mainstream classes: this reflects our commitment to act justly and with inclusivity, acknowledging that all pupils have an entitlement to share the same learning experiences and aspirational journey as their peers.

Subject teachers must ensure that they are aware of the additional needs of pupils in their classes, referring to the school's Special Educational Needs Care and Action Register (SEND CAR) provided by the SENDCo and updated termly. They must also ensure that they work compassionately to support strategies shared, including reasonable modifications, to remove barriers to learning.

Use of Restrictive Interventions, Seclusion and Reasonable Force

The Academy is committed to acting justly, compassionately and with integrity when supporting pupils whose additional needs may, at times, result in behaviours that present challenges. We follow the Department for Education guidance *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* (updated December 2025) and *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (effective from 1 April 2026). Any restrictive intervention—including reasonable force or seclusion—must only be used when it is necessary, proportionate, lawful, and applied for the shortest possible time to maintain safety. For pupils with SEND, the Academy recognises that difficulties with communication,

sensory processing, emotional regulation, or cognitive understanding may influence behaviour. Staff are expected to use strategies rooted in compassion and knowledge of each individual pupil's needs, as set out in the SENDCAR, EHCPs and personalised plans. Restrictive interventions will never be used as punishment or to enforce compliance, and will always prioritise dignity, safeguarding and relationship preservation.

Our focus is always on early intervention, prevention and de-escalation. Staff work to remove barriers to learning by using regulated routines, sensory adjustments, modelling, restorative practice, and trauma-informed approaches. Staff working with SEND pupils receive training in de-escalation, safe handling, and SEND-specific behaviour support. Seclusion may be used only as a safety measure, never as a sanction, and must occur in a supervised, non-threatening, time-limited environment.

From April 2026, the Academy has a legal duty to record and report every significant incident involving restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, non-force restraint and any use of seclusion. Records must include the reason for the intervention, the type and degree of force used, the duration, any injuries, and relevant SEND considerations. Parents/carers must be informed as soon as practicable, ideally the same day. Senior leaders and governors will review these records regularly to monitor patterns, ensure proportionality, and improve preventative practice for pupils with SEND.

Allocation of Resources

Funding for SEND is allocated to the Academy through the system currently employed by the LA. For most pupils, their SEND needs will be met through quality first teaching, underpinned by thoughtful and informed scaffolding. Some pupils receive individual funding to support their needs specifically which will be directed in line with the statutory outcomes detailed in their education and health care plans or individual funding agreements. Provision is reviewed regularly to ensure resources are deployed effectively and that interventions demonstrate positive impact on academic achievement, attendance, engagement, independence and wellbeing.

Arrangements for Identification, Assessment and Review of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The Academy's procedures for the identification, assessment and review of pupils follows the guidance given in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014, updated 2024. The Academy adopts the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycle described within the SEND Code of Practice. This graduated approach ensures provision is regularly reviewed and adapted in response to individual need and progress. A SENDCAR for pupils with learning difficulties is maintained and updated termly by the SENDCo. Areas of special educational need will be categorised as follows:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical

The Birches Head Academy adopts a graduated response to needs. For most SEND pupils, our intent is that needs will be met in the mainstream classroom supported by access to the same, knowledge-rich curriculum as their peers.

However, if school-based resources have been fully exhausted and a pupil is failing to flourish, then outside agency support may be sought, including the request for additional funding from the Local Authority if needed. For some pupils this may mean that a request for a statutory assessment of

needs will be requested. This request will be made for only our most complex pupils, working alongside pupil and parent/carer collaboratively to ensure all voices are considered.

Progress of all pupils with additional needs at the Academy is closely scrutinized via the Monitoring for Assessment Cycle, which includes Guidance and Support, GAS meetings and Additional Intervention Meetings (AIM) to discuss provision and suggest intervention appropriate to need, both academic and pastoral.

Curriculum Access, Exams and Inclusion

The Birches Head Academy is an inclusive school improving pupils' outcomes through encouraging a sense of community and belonging through its:

- Consistency Across the Academy rules & expectations
- Broad and balanced, knowledge rich curriculum for all pupils in terms of courses, content and delivery;
- Identification of barriers to learning and participation
- High expectations of, and aspirational targets set for, all pupils;
- Commitment to integrate all pupils into every aspect of Academy life in its fullness

In terms of the above, pupils with SEND may need special arrangements to ensure equitable access to public examinations. Pupils may need to be assessed and their needs identified as follows:

- Pupils who may need access arrangements will be identified at the start of each academic year via the SENDCAR,
- Appropriate investigations and assessments will be utilised to inform support before outside assessment is sought in Year 9/10
- The SENDCo will liaise with the exams officer to ensure that necessary applications are made and access arrangements are agreed
- Access arrangements agreed will become the normal way of working for pupils in class

Evaluating Success

The success of the Academy's policies and provision for special educational needs and disability is evaluated through:

- Review meetings with parents/ carers and pupils
- Monitoring of progress, academic and social/emotional via GAS and AIM meetings
- Learning Programmes of study and assessments
- Parental feedback from Review Days and Parental "drop ins"

Staff Development

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2014, updated 2024, the SENDCo holds or is working towards the National Professional Qualification for SENCOs in accordance with national requirements.

The SENDCo is responsible, in consultation with the wider SLT, for whole staff development relating to SEND. This may include in house training and also wider outside agency support as required.

External Support Services

These will be sought according to need, following a graduated response to needs.

The Academy works collaboratively and productively with all external agencies and values their support in ensuring additional needs are met in the best way possible at BHA.

Partnership with home

The Academy aims to work collaboratively with the parents and carers of SEND pupils to ensure a mutually respectful working relationship, based upon trust and humility.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to be fully involved in their child's education. Open and honest communication is encouraged and the Academy is committed to ensuring parent and carer voice informs our practice.

The Academy provides opportunities for parents and carers to access advice, information and support through review meetings, SEND drop-ins, external professionals and signposting to local SEND services.

Transition Arrangements

The Academy works closely with its primary, secondary and further education partners to ensure the smooth transfer of all pupils but especially those with special educational needs who may need enhanced transition arrangements.

The SENDCo works closely with primary colleagues and specialist services to gather information prior to secondary school transition. This includes meeting with all parents/carers of pupils with complex needs and those with an EHCP to ensure:

- Transition is as positive and anxiety as possible for pupils/parents and carers
- Detailed information regarding need is provided for teaching staff
- Necessary support and/or modifications are in place

Furthermore, for pupils with an EHCP, Annual Reviews in Y9 and Y11 will inform their Transition Plans to ensure an appropriate and aspirational programme for KS4 and 5. All agencies involved with each pupil will be included in this review which will be evaluated as the pupil moves through the key stages.

Links with Outside Agencies

The SENDCo and wider pastoral team are the key links with these agencies and services. We will work diligently to ensure the best practice and support for all SEND pupils is informed by these collaborative partnerships

Arrangements for Complaints

Any complaint specific to SEND should, in the first instance, be referred to the SENDCo. Failure to resolve complaints would lead to the matter being referred by incremental escalation to:

- the Principal;
- the Governing Board
- the Trust Board
- Independent Parental Supporters, IASS

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Policy

The Governing Board will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy in line with our ethos and values in supporting our children to aspire to be more.

Linked Documents

The Academy publishes an annual SEND Information Report which should be read alongside this policy. The report provides detailed information regarding identification, provision, support available, staffing, external agencies and arrangements for pupils with SEND.