



SEN and Disability Policy

Including SEN Information Report

Autumn 2024



Priory Fields School
Everyone Achieving Together



**St Martin's
School**

Vale View
Primary School

Whinless Down Academy Trust

SEN & Disability Policy/SEN Information Report

Intent

Whinless Down Academy Trust strives to be fully inclusive. We aim to provide an environment where all pupils can fully access a broad and balanced curriculum and fully participate in all the activities of the school, irrespective of ability, disability, race, gender, ethnicity and social origin.

This policy document provides a framework for the early identification of children with needs which are additional to the provision made generally for children of that age. It details how provision is made to match needs and allow for full participation. It is written for the benefit of the whole school community and will ensure that the following principles further underpin this policy:

- The involvement of pupils and their parents in decision- making
- A focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support.
- High quality provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEND
- Greater choice and control for pupils and their parents over their support.

Through successful implementation of this policy, the trust aims to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

Legal Requirements

This policy is written in line with the requirements of:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2014
- SI 2014 1530 Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
 - Part 3 Duties on Schools – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
 - Schedule 1 regulation 51– Information to be included in the SEND information report

- Schedule 2 regulation 53 – Information to be published by a local authority in its local offer
- Equality Act 2010
- Schools Admissions Code, DfE 1 Feb 2012
- SI 2012 1124 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- SI 2013 758 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- DFE Supporting children with Medical conditions 2015
- The UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- DFE Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- DFE Mental Health and Wellbeing provision in schools 2018
- DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Home learning Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Supporting pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Admissions Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy

This policy was developed with parents/carers, representatives from the governing body and teachers and will be reviewed annually.

Definition of SEN

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 him or her.

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

- (a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or has Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties; or
- (b) 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

SEN Code of Practice (2014)

Definition of disability

Many children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is’...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’

SEN Code of Practice (2014)

1. The kinds of special educational need for which provision is made at the school

Within the Whinless Down Academy Trust we can make provision for every kind of frequently occurring special educational need without an Education, Health and Care Plan, for instance dyslexia, developmental coordination disorder, speech and language needs, ASC, ADHD, learning difficulties and behaviour difficulties. There are other kinds of special educational need which do not occur as frequently and with which the school is less familiar, but we can access training and advice so that these kinds of needs can be met.

For children with an Educational, Health and Care Plan, whose parents request a Whinless Down Academy Trust school for their child, we will endeavour to meet needs within the mainstream provision provided in our schools. Each case is considered on an individual basis, in consultation with parents and outside agencies, to ascertain if the unique needs of each pupil can be best met within our mainstream settings.

The admission arrangements for pupils without an Education, Health and Care Plan do not discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children or those with special educational needs.

2. Information about the policy for identification and assessment of pupils with SEN

At Whinless Down Academy Trust we monitor the progress of all pupils at least three times a year to review their academic progress. Where progress is not adequate, even if a special educational need has not been identified, we put in place extra support to enable the pupil to catch up. This extra support may include: maths, writing, reading or Little Wandle phonics boosters, Language through Colour, social groups, extra tuition or any other interventions deemed appropriate.

Some pupils may continue to make inadequate progress, despite quality first teaching and targeted intervention in their areas of weakness. For these pupils, we will use a range of assessment tools to determine the cause of the learning difficulty. At Whinless Down Academy Trust, we are experienced in using the following assessment tools: Language for Learning screenings, GL Assessment Dyslexia Portfolio, Speech Link, Language Link, Raven's Non-Verbal Assessment, British Picture Vocabulary Scale, Boxall Profile and Thrive profiling. As schools, and in agreement with parents, we consult with external agencies that use their own assessment strategies that we as a school may take on board when seeking advice on an individual basis. For example, following a Language Link assessment and intervention we may discuss our findings and seek next steps from our link Speech and Language Therapist that we have working with our school as a part of The Balanced System employed by the NHS in Dover, Deal and Sandwich.

The purpose of this more-detailed assessment is to understand what additional resources and different approaches are required to enable the pupil to make better progress. Information from assessments or investigation will be shared with parents. At this point we will have identified that the pupil has a special educational need (SEN) because the school is making special educational provision for the pupil which is additional and different to what is normally available. Following the identification of any SEN, we will seek the opinions of parents when putting into place an SEN Support plan that is reviewed regularly, and refined / revised as necessary. We will ensure that all teachers and support staff who work with the pupil are aware of the support to be provided and the teaching approaches to be used.

If the pupil is able to make good progress using this additional and different resource (but would not be able to maintain this good progress without it) we will continue to identify the pupil as having a special educational need. If the pupil is able to maintain good progress without the additional and different resources he or she will not be identified with special educational needs. When any change in identification of SEN is made, parents will be notified.

3. Information about the school's policies for making provision for pupils with special educational needs whether or not they have EHC Plans, including:

- **How the school evaluates the effectiveness of its provision for such pupils**

Each review of the SEN support plan will be informed by assessment information from teachers as well as from provisions and/or interventions which will show whether adequate progress is being made.

The *SEN Code of Practice (2014, 6.17)* describes inadequate progress thus:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline

- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
 - Fails to close the attainment gap between rate of progress
 - Widens the attainment gap
- **The school's arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs**

Every pupil in the school has their progress tracked at least three times per year. In addition to this, pupils with special educational needs may have more frequent assessments, for example reading or spelling age, as well as within specialised programmes, such as Speech and Language Link, Thrive or Boxall profiling. The assessments we use within the trust are referred to in section 2.

If these assessments do not show adequate progress is being made, the SEN support plan will be reviewed and adjusted. This will usually be discussed with parents during parent consultations or a separate SEN meeting.

In addition to this, for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan there will be an annual review of the provision made for the child, which will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the special provision. The collation of all annual review evaluations of effectiveness will be reported to the governing body.

- **The school's approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs**

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality first teaching. Schools should 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 SEN most frequently encountered

SEN Code of Practice (2014, 6.37)

The Whinless Down Academy Trust Teaching and Learning Strategy outlines specific strategies which teachers and support staff use to support the needs of the whole class as well as any child with a special educational need.

Our Teaching and Learning Strategy for supporting pupils with SEND is based upon the Mainstream Core Standards: www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/special-

[educational-needs/send-documents/the-mainstream-core-standards](#) - advice developed by Kent County Council to ensure that our teaching conforms to best practice. In meeting the Mainstream Core Standards, the school employs additional provisions, as informed by internal and external assessments. These are delivered by additional staff employed through the funding provided to the school through 'notional SEN funding'.

- **How the school adapts the curriculum and learning environment for pupils with special educational needs**

Within all three schools in the trust, we follow the advice in the Mainstream Core Standards on how to adapt the curriculum and the learning environment for pupils with special educational needs. Details for which are outlined within the Whinless Down Academy Trust Teaching and Learning Strategy. We also incorporate the advice provided as a result of assessments, both internal and external, and the strategies described in Education, Health and Care Plans. Extra-curricular activities and out of hours provision are accessible to all children, including those with SEN.

As part of our requirement to keep the appropriateness of our curriculum and learning environment under review, governors and trustees regularly review the school grounds to ensure that we meet the DDA requirements. Through the accessibility plan we ensure, wherever possible, that equipment used is accessible to all children regardless of their needs. Each school's Accessibility Plan is available on their website (www.prioryfields.kent.sch.uk, www.stmartins.kent.sch.uk, www.vale-view.kent.sch.uk). Where necessary, a Risk Assessment may be required to ensure the safety of individual pupils and those around them. This will be shared and reviewed with parents.

- **Additional support for learning that is available to pupils with special educational needs**

As part of our budget, we receive 'notional SEN funding'. This funding is used to ensure that the quality of teaching is good in the school and that there are sufficient resources to deploy additional and different teaching for pupils requiring SEN support. The amount of support required for each pupil to make good progress will be different in each case and a full list of the interventions we offer are on our provision map, which will be discussed during parent consultations. In very few cases, a very high level of resource is required. The funding arrangements require schools to provide notional SEN funding of up to £6000 per year of resource for pupils with high needs. For some pupils, the resource required to support them will be greater than the notional SEN funding. In this case the schools will apply for High Needs Funding from the Local Authority.

- **How the school enables pupils with special educational needs to engage in activities of the school (including physical activities) together with children who do not have special educational needs**

All clubs, trips and activities at the schools within the Whinless Down Academy Trust are available to all pupils with special educational needs, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan. Where it is necessary, the school will use the resources available to it to provide additional adult support and/or alternate, accessible activities to enable the safe participation of the pupil in the learning.

- **Support that is available for improving the emotional and social development of pupils with special educational needs**

At all schools within the trust, we understand that an important feature of the school is to enable all pupils to develop emotional resilience and social skills, both through direct teaching (PSHE and class circles) and indirectly through every conversation adults have with pupils throughout the day. Pupils are given learning opportunities, based around Zones of Regulation as well strategies suggested through Thrive and Boxall so that they develop social and emotional understanding and self-regulation skills.

For some pupils with the most need for help in this area, we also can provide the following: time with our Thrive or Boxall Practitioners or Family Liaison Officer (FLO), access to staff within our pastoral teams, external referral to CYPMHs, time-out space for a pupil to use when dysregulated or in distress, access to our sensory spaces, and/or alternate provision for play and lunch times. At St Martin's a referral can also be made for support from the NELFT Well-Being Team.

Trained Social, Emotional and Mental Health Champions are also available who can offer support through a CBA (Cognitive Behavioural Approach) – individually or part of group work - to support children who have needs in this area.

The SEMH champions are:

Priory Fields- Kate Martin

Vale View- Katrina Biles

St Martin's – Jacky Cador

Pupils in the early stages of emotional and social development because of their special educational needs will be supported to enable them to develop and mature appropriately.

All trust schools follow the Thrive or Nurture Approach in supporting our children's social and emotional development. There are trained Thrive or Nurture practitioners in all of our trust schools who offer individual and small group interventions for children identified with this need, as well as supporting whole class approaches. The Thrive Approach and Nurture Approach both teach a set of strategies and tools to help children and adults manage their emotions and build their resilience.

In addition, the Whinless Academy Trust school has two Designated Senior Mental Health Leaders, Jacky Cador and Alex Hughes. Designated Senior Mental Health Leaders advocate for the mental health and well-being of pupils and staff, and promote and signpost to mental health support both in school and through external agencies.

- **Safeguarding children and young people with special educational needs**

The trust recognises that Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline (KCSIE 2024). At Whinless Down Academy Trust, SENCOs within each school are trained as DSLs and are part of the Safeguarding team. They advise the team when a safeguarding concern pertains to a pupil with SEND and can be advocates for that child, having the greater understanding of how their SEN may impact on their understanding of and ability to deal with any disclosures.

4. The name and contact details of the SEND Co-ordinators

The SENCO at St Martin's School is Jacky Cador.

Mrs Cador is available on 01304 206620; please ask a member of the office staff or class teacher to book an appointment.

The SENCO at Vale View School is Samantha Kelly.

Mrs Kelly is available on 01304 202821; please ask a member of the office staff or class teacher to book an appointment.

The SENCOs at Priory Fields School are Alex Hughes and Claudia Marsh.

Miss Hughes and Mrs Marsh are available on 01304 211543; please ask a member of the office staff or class teacher to book an appointment.

The SENCOs across the Whinless Down Academy Trust work collaboratively. They may work with children and teachers across all three schools to ensure good provision for those with SEND.

The Whinless Down Academy Trust ensures that all SENCOs within the trust has or is completing either the National Award for Special Education Needs Co-ordination or the National Professional Qualification for Special Education Needs Co-ordinators, in line with government expectations.

5. Information about the expertise and training of staff in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and how specialist expertise will be secured

It is the SENCO's responsibility to work with teachers to plan support effectively. The school provides training and support to enable all staff to improve the teaching and learning of children, including those with SEN. As a school, we continuously review our training as well as seeking the advice and support from the Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT).

Where a training need is identified beyond this, we will find a provider who is able to deliver it. Training providers we can approach are: from outreach services delivered by local specialist schools, Speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, as well as advice from Educational Psychologists via LIFT meetings. The cost of training is covered by the notional SEN funding.

6. Information about how equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs will be secured

Where external advisors recommend the use of equipment or facilities which the school does not have, we will purchase it using the notional SEN funding, or seek it by loan. For highly specialist communication equipment the school will seek the advice of the Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology team.

7. The arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education

All parents of pupils within the trust schools are invited to discuss the progress of their children on three occasions throughout the year. In addition, we are happy to arrange meetings outside these times. As part of our Quality First Teaching, all pupils will access some additional teaching if the assessment procedures indicate that this is necessary; this will not imply that the pupil has a special educational need. If, however, following this

provision, improvements in progress are not seen, we will contact parents to discuss the use of further assessments, interventions, referral to the LIFT and/or consultation with other outside agencies, which will help us to address the individuals' needs better. From this point onwards the pupil will be identified as having 'SEN Support' because special educational provision is being made and the parents will be involved in the planning and reviewing of this provision. Further to that, specific programmes such as Fizzy, Clever hands, Speech and Language Link or Little Wandle Phonics boosters may be implemented. All such provision will be recorded, tracked and evaluated.

In addition to this, parents of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be invited to contribute to and attend an annual review, which, wherever possible will also include other agencies involved with the pupil. Information will be made accessible for parents.

8. The arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education

When a pupil has been identified to have special educational needs because special educational provision is being made for him or her, the pupil will be consulted about and involved in the arrangements made for them as part of person-centred planning. Parents are likely to play a more significant role in the childhood years with the young person taking more responsibility and acting with greater independence in later years.

9. The arrangements made by the governing body relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of pupils with special educational needs concerning the provision made at the school

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints at any of the trust schools are used for complaints about provision made for special educational needs. We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the class teacher, a member of the Leadership Team, the SENCO, the Assistant Head Teacher or the Head Teacher as a first point of call. Should this not resolve the issue, parents are encouraged to follow the Whinless Down Academy Trust's Complaints policy, available on the Whinless Down Academy Trust website.

If the complaint is not resolved after this, then a disagreement resolution service or mediation service can be contracted. If it remains unresolved after this, the complainant can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), if the case refers to disability discrimination, or to the Secretary of State for all other cases.

There are some circumstances, usually for children who have an Education Health Care Plan, where there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by the school.

10. How the governing body involves other bodies, including health and social services, local authority support services and voluntary organisations, in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and in supporting the families of such pupils

The governing body have engaged with the following bodies:

- Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) membership for access to the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS)
- Access to the local authority's service level agreement with Speech and Language Therapy Services / Occupational Therapy Services / Physiotherapy Services / School Health Team / Children and Young People's Mental Health Services.
- Membership of professional networks for SENCOs e.g. the Countywide SENCO forum and the local SENCO forums

11. The contact details of support services for the parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and children and young people with SEND up to age 25 (Code of Practice 6.39)

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provides a free and confidential, information, advice and support service, for parents of a disabled child or child with special educational needs and to children and young people up to age 25 who have a special educational need or disability.

Trained staff can provide impartial legally based information and support on educational matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities, including health and social care. The aim is to empower parents, children and young people to fully participate in discussions, make informed choices and decisions and also to feel confident to express their views and wishes about education and future aspirations.

They can be contacted via:

HELPLINE: [03000 41 3000](tel:03000413000) (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

E-mail: iask@kent.gov.uk

Website: www.iask.org.uk

12. The school's arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs in transferring between phases of education

At the Whinless Down Academy Trust, we work closely with colleagues from the educational settings used by our pupils to ensure transitions between settings are as seamless as possible.

At secondary transition, a meeting with a representative from the receiving school will be arranged so that information concerning the special educational needs of the child can be discussed. Children who are considered most vulnerable may attend additional transition events at their chosen secondary school or may be identified by the school as someone who would benefit from the 'SNAP' programme or additional transition events at their chosen school.

On entry to school in Early Years, a meeting is also held with representatives from the child's nursery and where possible any involved outside agencies.

When moving classes within school, information will be passed on to the new class teacher in advance. Provision maps are shared with the new teacher to ensure continued provision.

13. Information on where the local authority's local offer is published.

The local authority's local offer is published on <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs> and parents without internet access should make an appointment with the SENCO for support to gain the information they require.

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the headteachers in conjunction with the trust board; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff, parents of pupils with SEND, and relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2025.