

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

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Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

Table of Contents

Section

- 1 **Supporting Documents**
- 2 **Introduction**
- 3 **Aim & Scope**
- 4 **Abbreviations/Definitions**
- 5 **Policy Content**
- 6 **Responsibilities**
- 7 **Training Requirements**
- 8 **Equality Impact Statement**
- 9 **Sources of Information / References**
- 10 **Version Control (where else is this policy located, ie. Circle, Nourish, Radar)**
- 11 **Appendices**

1. Supporting Documents

- This policy connects to the Accessibility Plan, the EAL policy (EDU.POL.046), the More Able Pupils policy (EDU.POL.041), the Curriculum, SMSC and Fundamental British Values policy (EDU.POL.008), the Behaviour policy (EDU.POL.027), the Positive Handling and Restrictive Interventions policies, the Safeguarding and Mental Health and Wellbeing policies (EDU.POL.037), and the Complaints policy (EDU.POL.034).

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Sunny Hill School, we are a specialist setting and the great majority of our pupils have special educational needs or disabilities. Many arrive having found earlier settings hard to manage, often with social, emotional and mental health needs alongside other difficulties. We provide a safe, nurturing and therapeutic environment built around each pupil, so they can settle, learn and make progress from their own starting point.

Keys

This policy sets out how we identify, assess, plan for and support pupils with SEND, how we work with parents, carers and other professionals, and how we make sure every pupil can access a broad and ambitious curriculum.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers, and visitors at Sunny Hill School. It aims to:

- ensure the early and accurate identification, assessment and review of pupils' special educational needs
- set out how we plan and deliver high-quality, personalised provision through the graduated approach
- explain how we meet our duties to pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan
- make clear how we work in partnership with pupils, families and other agencies
- show how we remove barriers to learning and make reasonable adjustments so every pupil can take part fully

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

- Special educational needs. A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision, meaning provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.
- Disability. Under the Equality Act 2010, a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Education, Health and Care plan. A legal document, maintained by the local authority, that sets out a child or young person's needs and the provision required to meet them.
- Graduated approach. The four-part cycle of assess, plan, do and review, through which we match support to need and refine it over time.
- SENCo. The special educational needs coordinator, the member of staff responsible for the day-to-day operation of SEND provision.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

Our approach rests on the following principles. High expectations for all. SEND is never a reason to lower ambition. We expect every pupil to progress. Adapted, not narrowed. We adapt teaching and support so pupils can access learning, rather than removing learning from them. Relational and trauma-informed. We understand behaviour as communication and build provision on safe, trusting relationships, in line with the Keys Connect model. The pupil at the centre. We seek and act on pupil voice at every stage of planning and review. Partnership. We work openly with parents, carers, the local authority, health and care professionals. Preparation for adulthood. Our provision is pointed at independence, communication, life skills and successful transitions.

5.2 SEND Provision in Practice

Identifying special educational needs

We identify needs as early as possible, drawing on information from previous settings, the EHC plan, assessment on entry, staff observations, and the views of the pupil and their family. We recognise the four broad areas of need set out in the SEND Code of Practice. These are communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health, and sensory or physical needs. Many of our pupils have needs across more than one area.

The graduated approach

We use the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review. We assess each pupil's needs, plan the right support with the pupil and family, put that support in place, and review its impact, refining provision over time. This cycle runs alongside the statutory processes for pupils with an EHC plan.

Education, Health and Care plans and annual reviews

For pupils with an EHC plan, we deliver the provision set out in the plan and review progress against its outcomes. We hold a statutory annual review at least once every twelve months, or more often for younger children or where needs change, and we work with the local authority on any amendments. Pupils and families are central to the review.

The Team Around a Child

At Sunny Hill School we use a Team Around a Child approach. This multi-agency team, chaired by the SENCo, may include teaching and support staff, parents and carers, the pupil where appropriate, social workers, health professionals and the local authority. It reviews progress, agrees targets and shapes provision.

Meeting frequency and review expectations are determined by need and risk

Curriculum access and adaptation

Every pupil receives a broad and balanced curriculum, adapted to their needs through differentiation, in-class support, small-group and individual work. For pupils with the most complex needs, the curriculum is personalised to develop communication, independence and life skills, using assistive technology, sensory resources and alternative communication where appropriate.

Working with parents and carers

We keep open and regular communication with parents and carers through meetings, reports and informal contact, and we support them to take part in planning and decisions. Concerns about SEND provision are handled through the school's complaints policy, and we signpost families to the local authority SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.

Transitions

Keys

We plan carefully for transitions, including entry to the school, moves between key stages, and the move to post-16 education, training or employment. Transition planning is built into annual reviews and prepares pupils and families for the next step.

SEND, behaviour and restrictive interventions

We recognise that pupils with SEND can be over-represented in behaviour incidents and in the use of restrictive interventions, and we work to understand and reduce this. Behaviour is supported through relational and trauma-informed practice and through each pupil's plan. Where a physical intervention is used, it is recorded in line with our Positive Handling and Restrictive Interventions arrangements, and a pupil's SEND status is captured as part of that recording. This policy should be read alongside the Behaviour, Positive Handling and Restrictive Interventions policies.

SEND and safeguarding

Pupils with SEND can face additional safeguarding risks, and communication or other barriers can make those risks harder to spot. Staff are alert to this, do not assume that signs of abuse relate only to a pupil's SEND, and act on any concern through the safeguarding procedures. We pay particular attention to mental health, to early help, and to sharing the right information when a pupil joins or moves on. This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Mental Health and Wellbeing policies (EDU.POL.037).

English as an additional language and more able pupils

Having English as an additional language is not a special educational need. We assess language need separately from SEND so that pupils are not wrongly identified as having SEN, and we support pupils with EAL through the EAL policy (EDU.POL.046). We also hold high expectations for pupils who are more able, including those whose ability sits alongside SEND, and stretch them through the More Able Pupils policy (EDU.POL.041). This policy should be read alongside both.

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

SEND records, including EHC plans, individual plans and review notes, are held securely on Arbor and kept up to date. Leaders monitor the impact of provision through progress data, wellbeing indicators and review outcomes, and report to the Proprietor and Governors at least termly.

5.4 Equality, Inclusion and Accessibility

At Sunny Hill School this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We make reasonable adjustments so pupils with SEND can take part fully, and we monitor outcomes for different groups and act to remove disadvantage. This policy is aligned with our three-year accessibility plan, which sets out how we improve access to the curriculum, the physical environment and information over time.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Pupils take part in setting and reviewing their own targets, and share their views about what helps them learn.

6.2 Staff

Staff teach pupils with SEND well, adapt their teaching, and follow each pupil's plan. Staff contribute to assessment, planning and review, and keep accurate records of progress.

6.3 The SENCo

The SENCo leads the day-to-day operation of SEND provision and the statutory processes for pupils with an EHC plan. The SENCo coordinates assessment, planning and annual reviews, liaises with the local authority and other agencies, and supports and develops colleagues in their work with pupils with SEND.

While independent schools are not legally required to appoint a qualified SENCo, at Sunny Hill School we ensure SEND provision is led by a suitably experienced SENCo or equivalent specialist.

6.4 Leadership

Leadership at Sunny Hill School makes sure this policy is implemented effectively, that staff are trained and resourced, and that SEND provision is monitored and improved. Leaders monitor attendance, suspensions, exclusions, restrictive interventions and safeguarding concerns affecting pupils with SEND alongside educational outcomes.

6.5 Governance

The Proprietor and Governors at Sunny Hill School hold the school to account for the quality and impact of SEND provision and for compliance with the relevant duties, monitoring through reports, visits and scrutiny of evidence.

6.6 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are active partners in planning and review, are kept informed, and are supported to contribute their knowledge of their child.

6.7 Named leads

The SENCo at Sunny Hill School is Rebekkha Weaver

7. Training Requirements

SEND, including the graduated approach and supporting pupils with SEMH needs, is covered in staff induction at Sunny Hill School and refreshed regularly. The

SENCo and staff receive ongoing development covering current SEND practice, trauma-informed approaches and legislative updates.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- The Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3, which sets out duties towards children and young people with SEND
- The SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, 2015), the statutory guidance we follow
- The Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments and the duty to have a written, three-year accessibility plan
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the standards on the welfare, health and safety of pupils and on information provided
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025, and 2026 from 1 September 2026), under which pupils with SEND may need additional support and are recognised as potentially more vulnerable
- The schools we work with sit across different inspectorates. This policy is grounded in the underlying duties, which are common across them. Where the inspecting body needs to be named, our school is inspected by Ofsted.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in the following locations and should be amended in the following (ie. Circle, Nourish, Radar): RADAR

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at Sunny Hill School is the headteacher.



Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

- This annex outlines the local arrangements that support the implementation of the SEND Policy at Sunny Hill School. It reflects the school's specialist provision for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), communication differences and complex additional needs.
- **Our SEND Vision**
- At Sunny Hill School, we believe every pupil has the right to an ambitious, personalised education that recognises their individual strengths, interests and aspirations.
- We are committed to:
 - Removing barriers to learning.
 - Promoting independence and self-advocacy.
 - Developing communication and interaction skills.
 - Preparing pupils for adulthood.
 - Supporting emotional wellbeing and belonging.
 - Celebrating individuality and achievement.
 - Ensuring all pupils are safe, valued and respected.
- Our approach is relational, trauma-informed and centred on the belief that every pupil can learn, progress and succeed.

Specialist Cohort

- Sunny Hill School provides specialist education for pupils aged 5-18 years with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Primary areas of need include:
 - Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
 - Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
 - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
 - Autistic
 - Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Many pupils may also present with:

- Sensory processing differences

Keys

- Physical disabilities
- Complex medical needs
- Emotional regulation needs
- Social communication difficulties
- Mental health needs

The My Learning, My Life Curriculum

- All pupils access the **My Learning, My Life Curriculum**, which provides personalised pathways designed to meet differing developmental needs and aspirations.
- Curriculum pathways are adapted according to:
 - Learner strengths
 - EHCP outcomes
 - Communication needs
 - Cognition and learning profiles
 - Sensory and physical needs
 - Preparation for Adulthood aspirations
- Learning is personalised whilst maintaining high expectations for all pupils.

➤ **Communication and Interaction**

- Communication is central to all aspects of school life.
- Sunny Hill School adopts a **Total Communication Approach**, recognising and valuing all forms of communication.
- Support may include:
 - Makaton
 - Communication boards
 - Visual supports
 - Objects of reference
 - AAC systems
 - Communication passports
 - Intensive Interaction
 - Social communication interventions
 - Speech and language strategies

Keys

- We believe that every pupil has a voice and every form of communication matters.

- **Personalised Learning**

- All pupils receive:
- Individual baseline assessment
- Personalised Learning Plan (PLP)
- EHCP outcome-linked provision
- Differentiated learning experiences
- Personalised support strategies
- Regular progress reviews
- Provision is designed around individual need rather than diagnosis alone.

The SHINE Assessment Framework

- Sunny Hill School assesses progress through the SHINE Assessment Framework.

SHINE stands for:

- **S – Strengths**

Assessment identifies and celebrates what learners can do and builds upon their strengths, interests and motivators.

- **H – Holistic**

Assessment considers the whole child, including communication, cognition, physical development, emotional wellbeing, social development, independence and engagement.

- **I – Impact**

Assessment focuses on the difference learning makes to a pupil's life and how skills are applied and generalised across contexts.

➤ N – Next Steps

Assessment informs ambitious, personalised next steps linked to EHCP outcomes, curriculum progression and Preparation for Adulthood.

➤ E – Evidence

Assessment is evidence-informed through observations, photographs, videos, learner voice, AAC interactions, therapy input, work samples and family contributions.

The Engagement Model is used where appropriate to support assessment of learners working at the earliest developmental levels.

Therapeutic and Multi-Disciplinary Working

- We recognise that learning, wellbeing and development are interconnected.
- Pupils may access support from:
 - Speech and Language Therapists
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Physiotherapists
 - Educational Psychologists
 - Mental Health Professionals
 - Local Authority SEND Teams
 - Social Care Professionals
 - Medical Practitioners
- Therapeutic recommendations are integrated into everyday teaching, learning and care practices.

Emotional Wellbeing and Regulation

- Many learners require support to develop emotional regulation and self-management skills.
- Support may include:
 - Predictable routines
 - Regulation strategies
 - Sensory support
- Emotional wellbeing interventions

Keys

- Restorative approaches
- Individual behaviour support plans
- Trusted adult relationships
- Staff use the Keys Connect approach and recognise behaviour as communication.
-

Preparation for Adulthood

- Preparation for Adulthood is embedded throughout the curriculum and wider life of the school.
- The four Preparing for Adulthood themes underpin planning:

Employment

- Careers education
- Work-related learning
- Enterprise activities
- Employability skills

Independent Living

- Personal care
- Household skills
- Money management
- Travel awareness
- Decision-making skills

Community Inclusion

- Community access
- Leisure opportunities
- Social participation
- Volunteering experiences

Health and Wellbeing

- Healthy lifestyles
- Emotional wellbeing
- Relationships education

Keys

- Self-advocacy



Partnership with Families

- Parents and carers are essential partners in their child's education.
- Sunny Hill School works collaboratively with families through:
 - Annual Reviews
 - EHCP meetings
 - Parent consultation meetings
 - Evidence for Learning
 - Home-school communication
 - Transition planning meetings
- Families are encouraged to contribute to assessments, target setting and future planning.

Pupil Voice

- We actively promote pupil participation and self-advocacy.
- Pupils contribute through:
 - School Council
 - Annual Reviews
 - EHCP discussions
 - Learner voice activities
 - Wellbeing conversations
 - Preparing for Adulthood planning
- Communication supports are adapted to ensure all pupils can express their views.

Inclusion, Equality and Belonging

- At Sunny Hill School, inclusion is at the heart of everything we do.
- Through our BRITE Values, we actively promote:
 - **Belonging**
 - **Respect**
 - **Independence**

Keys

- **Teamwork**
- **Excellence**
- These values help create a culture where every pupil feels valued, included and able to thrive.

Team Around the Child (TAC)

- Where appropriate, pupils and families may access support through a Team Around the Child (TAC) approach.
- The local TAC process includes:
 - Identification of need and discussion with parents/carers.
 - Early Help Assessment completed where appropriate.
 - Initial TAC meeting and identification of the Lead Professional.
 - Multi-agency action plan agreed.
 - Review meetings held approximately every 6-8 weeks.
- Support stepped up, stepped down or closed when outcomes have been successfully achieved.
- This process supports effective partnership working and coordinated multi-agency intervention.

➤ **Local SEND Contacts**

SENCo

- **Rebekkha Weaver**
Rebekkha.Weaver@keyseducation.ac.uk

Headteacher

- **Jessica Hocknull**
- Responsible for strategic leadership of SEND provision, curriculum implementation, EHCP oversight, quality assurance and multi-agency working.

➤ Local Authority SEND Team

➤ Dudley Borough Council SEND Team

senteam@dudley.gov.uk

01384 814360

➤ Dudley SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

dudley.sendiass@dudley.gov.uk

07900 161363

➤ Further Information

- Additional information regarding accessibility and reasonable adjustments can be found within the school's **Accessibility Plan**.

➤ Roles and Responsibilities

SENCO

Responsible for:

- Coordinating SEND provision.
- Supporting staff with SEND strategies.
- Monitoring pupil progress.
- Liaising with families and external agencies.
- Supporting Annual Reviews and EHCP provision.

Teachers

- Responsible for:
- Delivering high-quality adapted teaching.
- Implementing EHCP provision.
- Monitoring progress.
- Communicating with families.

Teaching Assistants

- Responsible for:
- Delivering targeted interventions.

Keys

- Supporting communication and regulation strategies.
- Gathering evidence of progress.
- Supporting pupils to access learning.

Therapists and Specialists

- Responsible for:
- Assessing specialist needs.
- Contributing to EHCP outcomes.
- Providing recommendations and programmes.
- Supporting multidisciplinary assessment and planning.

Governors and Proprietor

- Responsible for:
- Monitoring the effectiveness of SEND provision.
- Ensuring statutory compliance.
- Holding leaders to account for outcomes for pupils with SEND.

Sunny Hill School Commitment

- At Sunny Hill School, we recognise that every learner is unique. Through personalised learning, specialist support, therapeutic collaboration, effective communication systems and a strong focus on Preparation for Adulthood, we ensure every pupil is supported to achieve their fullest potential.
- We are committed to developing confident, independent young people who have the skills, knowledge, resilience and self-belief needed to participate successfully in their communities and adult lives.