



Special Educational Needs Policy

**Person responsible: Special Educational Needs
Co-ordinator (SENCO)**

Date adopted: February 2023

Review Date: February 2026

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

This policy is written with regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years 2015, the Equality act 2010, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

It will also have regard to the school's Teaching and Learning Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Disability and Equality Policy, Behaviour Policy, Exclusion Policy and Accessibility Plan.

Aims

At Alban City School we aim for all children regardless of gender, race, culture, language, background and learning or physical disability to reach their full potential and enjoy their learning. We understand that many people within our school community (pupils, parents, and staff) will be neurodiverse and this is a good thing. We understand that it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that everyone is included and seen as equally valuable.

Where Alban City School is requested in an Education Health and Care Plan we would admit a child unless the school is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs of the child concerned, or

The attendance of the child would be incompatible with—

- (i) the provision of efficient education for others, or
- (ii) the efficient use of resources.

As set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

We endeavour to provide an environment that is inclusive. By this we mean that everyone is valued equally and has an equal right to have their needs met. We believe that every child benefits from being in an inclusive environment.

We recognise that some children may encounter difficulties or barriers to their learning and it is our aim to quickly identify and put in place appropriate support to remove or reduce those barriers.

We know that some children may also have exceptional talents and aptitudes in academic and/or creative curriculum areas. We aim to identify and support these children to develop these talents and aptitudes.

What is a Special Educational Need?

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2015 defines SEN as follows:

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:

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

Disabled children and young people

Many children and young people who have SEN may 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’.

‘Long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’.

Often when a child starts school it is apparent that they have difficulties which may fall within the definition of SEND even though they have not been assessed for a diagnosis. Depending on the nature of the difficulties it may not be possible to arrange an assessment until a child is of a certain age or there may be a long waiting list.

Alban City School recognises its obligations under the SEND Code of Practice and will not require a diagnosis in order to start the SEND Support process.

How will we meet our aims?

Special Educational needs Co-ordinator

The school will employ an experienced and fully qualified teacher who holds, or is willing to undertake, the National SENCO award (it is now a legal requirement that all SENCOs appointed after 2009 hold this award).

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will be responsible for overseeing the educational provision for any child deemed to have a barrier to learning. In addition they will also work with the Headteacher and other senior leaders to provide additional provision for children who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding or who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) where this is a barrier to learning.

The SENCO will also be the School Lead for Autism.

Specifically the SENCO will:

- work with colleagues ~~and~~, parents and other professionals to identify children with special educational needs or other barriers to learning
- support teachers to identify and deliver appropriate interventions and/or reasonable adjustments where needed
- support teachers through training, coaching and modelling to develop lessons that are inclusive and that as far as possible, enable children to be independent learners.
- monitor the effectiveness of additional or different provision

- when a pupil has received a diagnosis, with parental and the pupil's agreement, teach their peers about that particular diagnosis and how it impacts that pupil. This is to enable peers to support each other and reduce the potential for misunderstanding
- maintain the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities register
- maintain a register of children whose progress is a cause for concern
- monitor progress of children who are on both registers and those receiving Pupil Premium funding, Looked After Children, Post-Looked After Children and children for whom English is an Additional Language (where it presents a barrier to learning)
- provide training and guidance for teachers in using different approaches to support the needs of specific pupils
- keep up to date on developments in special needs education
- research, purchase and train staff to use a range of resources and interventions to support specific pupils
- provide support to parents or where more appropriate refer to other agencies who can help
- Review and update the school's SEND Offer annually
- Work with the Headteacher, governors and, where appropriate, parents to develop the school's SEND strategy

Inclusion

We will ensure that all children are taught about individual differences, including special needs and disabilities, race and culture. Through this teaching we will promote the concept of treating others with kindness, fairness and sensitivity. We will extend this ethos to the wider school community by actively modelling positive values towards difference and through sharing information about inclusion issues.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The governor with responsibility for SEND Mrs Paula Willoughby. The SENCO is Miss Claire Lord and the Assistant SENCO is Mrs Davina Lawton.

The school premises are fully accessible to those with mobility difficulties, except for the theatre in the basement which is only accessed via stairs.

A child has a Special Educational Need or Disability if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision. Special educational provision means teaching that is *additional to or different from* children of the same age.

- We recognise that early identification and implementation of the appropriate support is the key to ensuring children meet their potential.
- We will always involve parents and the child in making decisions
- We recognise that for some parents, finding out your child has a special need can be a shock and can take some time to accept. We will work sensitively with parents during this time whilst ensuring that we are using our best endeavours to support children's emerging needs
- Processes to identify children with SEND are communicated to all teachers and reviewed annually. The school's offer for children with SEND is updated annually and available on the school website for parents. This also tells parents what to do if they think their child has SEND.

- The school follows an Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle. Parents and children are involved at all stages of the process and their views are always taken into account when deciding on a course of action. SEND Support plans will be reviewed three times a year in collaboration with parents and the children. Parents can opt to have a formal face to face meeting, phone or video call. We also recognise that some parents prefer to have ongoing and regular discussions which can be facilitated through our daily soft start. This is also an option.
- Our first strategy for meeting the needs of all pupils will be high quality inclusive teaching. Teachers will identify the barriers to learning within their unique classes and use these when planning their lessons to ensure suitable adaptations are made to enable all children to participate as far as possible.
 - We recognise that a small minority of children will require a more personalised curriculum where their needs are complex and significantly different to their peers.
- Our second strategy will be to make reasonable adjustments that are more bespoke to the child which might include additional equipment, movement/sensory breaks or amendments to the timetable.
- Finally, where it is not possible to teach knowledge or skills within the main lessons, interventions will be used. As far as possible, these will be short and frequent so as not to remove children from main lessons for extended periods.
- Teachers are accountable and responsible for the attainment of pupils in their class with SEND and will regularly liaise with the SENCO and any adult delivering interventions to ensure they are kept informed of progress. Information from these sources may be used as part of a teacher's assessment of a pupil where appropriate.
- We recognise the impact a learning difficulty can have on a child's self-esteem. Therefore the type of support offered will take a range of factors into account.
- Children with SEND will be encouraged to take part in all activities offered by the school and, where appropriate and possible, adjustments will be made to enable this.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

If it is felt that a SEND support plan is not sufficient to meet a child's needs, the school, in partnership with parents/carers, can apply to the Local Education Authority for an assessment to decide if an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is necessary. Whilst this process takes place, existing support will continue. Parents may also apply for an EHCP independently from the school if they prefer. In this instance, the school will then provide any information requested from the Local Authority as part of the process.

Where additional funding is needed to enable the EHCP provision to be made, the school will work with the parents to agree the level of need and which band a child might require. This process will also be carried out within the Local Authority and a final sum agreed. Sometimes, the provision does not require additional funding. Having an EHCP does not guarantee additional funding or a 1:1 adult.

In some circumstances, where needs have escalated or emerged it may be necessary to apply for short term additional funding. This is called Local Higher Needs Funding (LHNF). There is a panel which meets termly to agree which children are eligible for this funding. We will discuss applications

for LHNF with parents before proceeding with an application but the final decision to apply will be made by the school.

Other vulnerabilities

Alban City School recognises that there are a range of factors that might make a child vulnerable to achieving below their potential. Therefore if SEND has been ruled out, children are still offered additional support and carefully monitored if they are not making expected progress.

Training

The SENCO will carry out an annual audit of training needs for inclusion. Training may be delivered in house, through external providers or through partner agencies.

The SENCO will also attend regular cluster meetings and ensure they keep themselves up to date on inclusion matters.

External Support

Sometimes external advice or support may be required to support the needs of a child or group of children. Typical agencies might include:

- Educational Psychologist
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Specialist Teachers
- The Collett School Outreach Teacher
- Children's Services
- School Nurse
- Occupational Therapists
- St Albans Partnership Plus (Including Vista)
- Family Support Workers (Families First Assessment)
- LINKS Outreach

The SENCO will liaise with these agencies with permission from parents/carers.

Behaviour

Whilst a high standard of behaviour is expected from all pupils, it is recognised that sometimes, due to a child's special educational need, behaviours will occur that fall outside that which is normally expected. Examples could include where a child is experiencing sensory overload, heightened anxiety or emotional distress.

Where it is evident that a child is presenting with difficult or dangerous behaviours that directly relate to:

- special educational needs
- a medical diagnosis (including mental health)
- attachment and trauma

The Hertfordshire Therapeutic Thinking approach would be used to support the child. Parents would be notified in these circumstances and invited to a meeting to discuss an Individual Support Plan or a Pastoral Support Plan.

Outside agencies such as LINKS may be requested to offer advice to the school or to directly work with a child.

Suspension

Please also refer to our Behaviour Policy and Exclusion Policy.

Suspensions (previously known as fixed term exclusions) can be used by schools where behaviour falls significantly below the standard which would reasonably be expected in a school and may present a risk to the child, adults or peers if it were to happen again. The purpose of a suspension is to prevent further harm by enabling schools to review existing plans and put in new strategies to support the child.

Permanent exclusions are permitted when behaviours are either persistently challenging or a significant event occurs that warrants exclusion.

Alban City School is aware that nationally children with SEND are suspended more frequently than children without SEND. Consequently, we will endeavour to work with a child and their family, using the Therapeutic Thinking approach to behaviour management to try to prevent situations escalating to a point where suspensions might become necessary.

If a suspension is deemed necessary, we will work within the statutory guidance set out within Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement; *September 2022*.

Complaints

If you have a complaint relating to Special Educational Needs and/or Disability please speak to the SENCO in the first instance. If this does not resolve the matter you should follow the school complaints procedure.