



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Approved by:	Pupil Outcomes and Wellbeing Committee	Date: October 2025
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Ratified by:	Full Governing Board	Date: 3 rd December 2025
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Last reviewed by:	Mr C Runeckles, Deputy Headteacher October 2025
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Next review due by:	October 2026
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This Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Accessibility Plan; Admissions Criteria; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy; Complaints Procedure and Discipline and Student Behaviour Policies

also the SEND Information Report

This policy explains how the school makes provision for pupils with SEND, in line with the school's ethos, mainstream status and with current legislative requirements.

The SEND Coordinator for the school is Mrs Vicky Cornish

The Assistant SEND Coordinator & ASC Lead Teacher is Mr Zac Shinebourne

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for SEND is Mr Chris Runeckles

The SEND member of the Governing Board is Mrs Clare Brittain

It sets out how the school will communicate with, and involve, pupils with SEND and their parents or carers in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the pupil.

1. Vision and Aims

Our vision is to create an inclusive community for all; where pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can confidently gain independence after guided support. Our aims are to ensure that our school fully implements national legislation and guidance regarding pupils with SEND.

Our intention is to achieve this by:

- Creating a sense of belonging and identity in a safe environment that promotes positive wellbeing
- Providing an accessible pathway to participate fully in all school activities and beyond to Post 16
- Reducing barriers and promoting a love of learning at pupils own pace whilst having high expectations of their achievement
- Promoting kindness, self-belief, collaboration, through challenge and adaptation
- Developing pupil and parent voice in maximising life choices
- Our whole community being inspired and empowered by celebrating difference and the awareness of its value.

2. Legislation and Guidance

The school's statutory obligations for SEND are referenced in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#) and the following legislation:

- [Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out local authorities' and schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEND co-ordinators (SENDCOs) and the special educational needs (SEND) information report
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which sets out the school's responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes having a disability) and those who don't share it
- The [Governance Handbook](#), which sets out governors' responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- The [School Admissions Code](#), which sets out the school's obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and its duty

not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special educational needs

3. Inclusion and equal opportunities

At our school we strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all pupils, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all pupils the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the school environment to make sure that pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life.

4. Definitions

4.1 Special Educational Needs

A pupil has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a **learning difficulty or disability** if they have:

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

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

4.2 Disability

Pupils are considered to have a **disability** if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

4.3 The 4 Areas of Need

The needs of pupils with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Pupils can have needs that cut across more than 1 area, and their needs may change over time.

Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the pupil's particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

AREA OF NEED	
Communication and interaction	Pupils with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or do not understand or use the social rules of communication. Pupils who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.
Cognition and learning	Pupils with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including: • Specific learning difficulties, which impact 1 or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Moderate learning difficulties • Severe learning difficulties • Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where pupils are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment
Social, emotional and mental health	These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Pupils may have: • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder • Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder • Suffered adverse childhood experiences These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated.
Sensory and/or physical	Pupils with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. Pupils may have: • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment These pupils may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The SENDCO

The SENDCO at our school is Mrs Vicky Cornish

She will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEND and then liaise with them about the pupil's needs and any provision made
- Work with the headteacher, line manager and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND, including those who have EHC plans
- Advise the LA when a pupil needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEND support and adapted teaching methods appropriate for individual pupils
- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- Be a point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA) and its support services, and work with external agencies to ensure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of post 16 education to make sure that the pupil and their parents are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned
- When a pupil moves to a different school or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a pupil's SEND and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution in a timely manner
- Work with the headteacher and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Make sure the school keeps its records of all pupils with SEND up to date and accurate
- With the headteacher & line manager monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development
- With the headteacher & line manager, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- Prepare and review information for inclusion in the school's SEND information report and any updates to this policy
- With the headteacher, line manager and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEND, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

5.2 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for making sure **the school** carries out the following duties. This is done through delegated committees and link governor visits.

- Co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer
- Make sure that all pupils are provided with independent careers information
- Do all it can to make sure that every pupil with SEND gets the support they need
- Make sure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who don't have SEND
- Inform parents when the school is making special educational provision for their child
- Make sure that the school has arrangements in place to support any pupils with medical conditions
- Provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND
- Provide an annual report for parents on their child's progress
- Record accurately and keep up to date the provision made for pupils with SEND
- Publish information on the school website about how the school is implementing its SEND policy, in a SEND information report
- Publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and the school's accessibility plans
- Make sure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENDCO for the school and that the key responsibilities of the role are set out, and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out
- Determine the schools approach to using the available resources to support the progress of pupils with SEND

5.3 The SEND Link Governor

The SEND link governor is Mrs Clare Brittain who can be contacted via the clerk to governors on ctog@downlands.org

The SEND governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school and update the governing board on this
- Work with the headteacher and SENDCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school

5.4 The Headteacher

The headteacher with the SEND line manager Mr Chris Runeckles will:

- Work with the SENDCO and SEND link governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school
- Work with the SENDCO and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for pupils with SEND,

and their progress

- Have responsibility for monitoring the school's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual pupils
- Make sure that the SENDCO has enough time to carry out their duties
- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of pupils on the SEND register
- With the SENDCO, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development
- With the SENDCO, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- With the SENDCO and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEND, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

5.5 Class Teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality adaptive teaching to meet pupil needs through a graduated approach. Recognising that every child is unique and that learning is an individual process, sometimes requiring different strategies or methods within the classroom we have a focus on an Adaptive Teaching approach. This involves knowing what works for the students in our classes and using a variety of instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of individuals. All students benefit from lessons with Adaptive Teaching practices, ideally promoting active engagement and removing barriers to learning. We have an Adaptive Teaching checklist for use by teachers with a variety of suggested strategies, and it forms a key part of our wider Teaching and Learning Policy. The aim of Adaptive Teaching is to make learning accessible for all, regardless of need or ability; to have high expectations for our students; and to have appropriate challenge and support in place to make sure pupils can succeed.
- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENDCO to review each pupil's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the SEND information report
- Communicating with parents to:
 - Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
 - Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
 - Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school
 - Listen to the parents' concerns and agree their aspirations for the pupil

5.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers should inform the school if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

Parents/carers of a pupil on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the pupil's SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support.

This will include the following:

- Invited to meetings to review the provision that is in place for their child, if appropriate

- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEND support outside school and any changes in the pupil's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with school staff, agree their aspirations for the pupil at parent consultation evening or other parental forums
- Given a school report on the pupil's progress

The school will take into account the views of the parent/carer in any decisions made about the pupil.

5.7 The Pupil

Pupils will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support.

This might involve the pupil:

- Explaining what their strengths and difficulties are
- Contributing to setting targets or outcomes
- Attending review meetings
- Giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions

The pupil's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

6. SEND Information Report

The school publishes a SEND information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school.

The information report will be updated annually in September and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains.

7. Our approach to SEND support

7.1 Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs

We will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the school. This will build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. We will also consider any evidence that the pupil may have a disability and if so, what reasonable adjustments the school may need to make.

Class teachers will regularly assess the progress of all pupils and identify any whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better their previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, wider development or social needs.

When teachers identify an area where a pupil is making slow progress, they will target the pupil's area of weakness through high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve, the teacher will raise the issue with the SENDCO to have an initial discussion about whether this lack of progress may be due to a special educational need. Where necessary they will, in consultation with the pupil's parents or carers, consider consulting an external specialist.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEND.

When deciding whether the pupil needs special educational provision, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

If a pupil is joining the school, and:

- Their previous setting has already identified that they have SEND
- They are known to external agencies
- They have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

then the school will work in a multi-agency way to make sure we get relevant information before the pupil starts at school, so support can be put in place as early as possible.

7.2 Consulting and involving Pupils and Parents

Parents and pupils will be involved in all discussions leading to decisions that are made about SEND provision.

When we are aiming to identify whether a pupil needs special education provision, we will have an early discussion with the pupil and their parents. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty
- We take into account any concerns the parents have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

We will formally notify parents if it is decided that a pupil will receive special educational provision.

7.3 The graduated approach to SEND support

Once a pupil has been identified as having SEND, we will take action to address any barriers to learning, and put effective special educational provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

1. Assess

The pupil's subject staff and the SENDCO will carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. The views of the pupil and their parents will be taken into account. The school may also seek advice from external support services.

The assessment will be reviewed regularly to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the pupil's need. For many pupils, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

2. Plan

In consultation with the parents and the pupil, the teacher and the SENDCO will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes, and a clear date for review.

All staff who work with the pupil will be made aware of the pupil's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed. This information will be recorded on our management information system, and will be made accessible to staff in a pupil passport or individual learning plan.

Parents will be fully aware of the planned support and interventions, and may be asked to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

3. Do

The pupil's subject teacher retains overall responsibility for their progress.

Where the plan involves group or 1-to-1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the pupil. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.

The SENDCO will support the teacher in further assessing the pupil's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on how to implement support effectively.

4. Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

We will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents and pupils
- The level of progress the pupil has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the pupil

The teacher and the SENDCO will revise the outcomes and support in light of the pupil's progress and development, and in consultation with the pupil and their parents.

7.4 Levels of Support

School-based SEND provision

Pupils receiving SEND provision will be placed on the school's SEND register. These pupils have needs that can be met by the school through the graduated approach. Where the pupil's needs cannot be adequately met with in-house expertise, staff will consider involving an external specialist as soon as possible.

The provision for these pupils is funded through the school's notional SEND budget. On the census these pupils will be marked with the code K.

Education, health and care (EHC) plan

Pupils who need more support than is available through the school's school-based SEND provision may be entitled to an EHC plan. The plan is a legal document that describes the needs of the pupil, the provision that will be put in place, and the outcomes sought.

The provision for these pupils will be funded from the school's notional SEND budget, and potentially from the LA (from the high-level needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant).

On the census these pupils will be marked with the Code E.

7.5 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND Provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEND by:

- Tracking pupils' progress, including by using provision maps
- Reviewing SEND support and progress towards agreed targets for pupils on pupil passports or Independent Learning Plans
- Using pupil questionnaires
- Monitoring by the SENDCO
- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from the pupil and their parents

8. Expertise and Training of Staff

Training will regularly be provided to teaching and support staff. The headteacher and the SENDCO identify specific training needs and will incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development. All teaching assistants at Downlands receive an induction-training programme from the SENDCO and Lead Teaching Assistant in addition to whole department training programme from external professionals about specific individual needs. Teaching assistants are also part of the school's performance management programme and work towards annual personal and school targets. Within this they are encouraged to pursue their own professional development either within aspects of special needs or curriculum areas. They are observed twice a year by the SENCO and Assistant SENCO and encouraged to take on department responsibilities.

9. Links with External Professional Agencies

The school recognises that it won't be able to meet all the needs of every pupil. Whenever necessary the school will work with external support services such as:

- Speech and language therapists
- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- YMCA Counselling Service
- Burgess Hill and Hassocks SEND Alliance
- Think Family Alternative Placement Centre
- Child and Young Persons Planning Forum (CYPPF)
- West Sussex Sensory Needs Service
- Barnardo's
- Woodlands Meads SEND School Burgess Hill
- Young Carers Association
- Multi Agency Services Integrated Front Door

- Youth Intervention Support
- YES Service
- Area D Pupil Placement Panel, Area D Safeguarding Panel
- Occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- General practitioners or paediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services
- LA specific services –SEND information and advice support service (SENDIAS), Autism and Social Communication Team ASCT

10. Admission and Accessibility Arrangements

For the school's admission procedures and accessibility arrangements please see the respective policies on the school's website

11. Complaints about SEND provision

Where parents have concerns about our school's SEND provision, they should first raise their concerns informally with the subject teacher, Head of Year or SENDCO whichever is more appropriate. We will try to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve their concerns, parents are welcome to submit their complaint formally. Parents/Carers of children with SEND who feel that they wish to make a formal complaint about the School's support for their child should use the School Complaints Procedure. A copy of which can be found on the Downlands School website. Parents who may have complaints about the Education Health and Care Plan procedures or the content of the Plan should refer them to the Local Authority (West Sussex), in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

12. Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

12.1 Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy

The effectiveness of the SEND policy will be based on whether or not we are meeting our objectives set out in section 1. Vision & Aims

We will evaluate how effective our SEND provision is with regards to:

- All staff's awareness of pupils with SEND
- How pupils are identified as having SEND
- Pupils' progress and attainment once they have been identified as having SEND
- Whether pupils with SEND feel safe, valued and included in the school community
- Comments and feedback from pupils and their parents

12.2 Monitoring the policy

This policy will be reviewed **every year**. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.

It will be approved by the full governing board.