

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy



Cottenham Village College

Astrea Academy Trust

Approved by	
Last reviewed	By Judith Chipps
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Updated	
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Adapted from the Astrea Inclusion Policy written by Jenni Machin (Jan 2023)	

1. Introduction and Legislative Compliance

- 1.1. This policy sets out Cottenham Village College's expectations to ensure all pupils in our care receive the best educational experience.
- 1.2. Cottenham Village College ensures that all pupils; including those with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equalities Act 2010, are able to flourish and thrive within the school community.
- 1.3. The protected characteristics in which pupils must not be discriminated against are: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
- 1.4. As a result, inclusion is a term used to describe the process of ensuring equity of learning opportunities for all children and young people. It is a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging. Inclusion is about the quality of their experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school.
- 1.5. In this respect, this policy is concerned specifically for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.6. Inclusion does not mean that all pupils necessarily learn in the same way or together, but that practices are adapted to take account of all learners' needs, and without discrimination against any identified protected characteristics; this is equity in learning.
- 1.7. All pupils, including those identified as having SEND, have the same common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and enables them to be fully included in all aspects of school life.
- 1.8. All schools must operate in accordance with the law as set out in the following:
 - The Education Act 1996
 - The Children and Families Act 2014
 - The Special Educational Needs and Disability regulations 2014
 - The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) regulations 2014
 - The Equality Act 2010
- 1.9. All schools in England must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) as it provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations. Schools must fulfil their statutory duties towards children and young people with SEN or disabilities in light of the guidance set out.
- 1.10. Under the Equality Act (2010), all schools have duties towards individual disabled children and young people. They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services required by disabled children and young people to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.
- 1.11. The Teachers' Standards (2012) makes clear the expectation for all teachers to "adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils". Teachers must "have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; ...those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them." (Standard 5)

2. Equality and Inclusion

- 2.1. All pupils should be equally valued in school. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) states that "avoiding discrimination and promoting equality supports the agenda of improving attainment and progression for all pupils. Good education and skills are crucial for opening up opportunities and increasing the chance of a successful life".
- 2.2. Schools have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality and to foster good relations for "an equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be." (EHRC, 2014)
- 2.3. With this in mind, all schools must ensure that a culture of tolerance is promoted so that all pupils understand, appreciate and respect difference and diversity.
- 2.4. Educational inclusion, therefore, is about equal opportunities, which lead to success, for all pupils, whatever their age, gender or gender identification, relationship preference, ethnicity, impairment, prior attainment, or socio-economic background.

3. Vision

- 3.1. Underpinned by the core values of scholarship, tenacity and curiosity, the Astrea mission, 'Inspiring beyond Measure', reflects the belief that an exceptional education for all is rich and empowering beyond the narrow confines of formal examination success.
- 3.2. The vision across the Trust that 'All Astrea children will learn, thrive and lead successful lives' reiterates the Astrea mission, acknowledging that an exceptional education will provide a rich and empowering experience which produces success through wider and academic outcomes and where 'success' is defined in terms of the individual learner.

4. Pupils with SEND

- 4.1 The January Census (2023) identifies that the percentage of pupils in England with special educational needs is now 18.4% and those with a statement or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan is now 4.8%; both representing increases compared to 2022. ¹The percentage of the total pupil population in England on SEN Support is now 13.6% and this again represents an increase from 2022.
- 4.2 The most common type of need among pupils with an EHC plan is autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). One in three pupils with an EHC plan are identified with a primary need of ASD (132,249 pupils).
- 4.3 The most common type of need among pupils with SEN support are speech, language and communication needs. The primary need identified for 291,742 pupils was speech, language and communication needs.
- 4.4 This is followed by social, emotional and mental health needs (254,202 pupils) and moderate learning difficulty (179,554 pupils). These trends are similar to 2022.

¹ DfE; Special Education Needs in England: June 2023: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>

- 4.5 There is, however, a clear distinction between 'underachievement', often caused by a poor early experience of learning, and 'special educational needs'.
- 4.6 Some pupils may be underachieving but will not necessarily have a special educational need; it is our responsibility to identify this quickly and ensure that appropriate support is put in place to help these pupils 'catch up'.
- 4.7 As recognised in the SEND Code of Practice, "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 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".
- 4.8 For children aged two or more, 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, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.
- 4.9 A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014)." (Code of Practice, updated January 2015)
- 4.10 The Code of Practice (2014, updated January 2015) makes clear the four broad areas of Special Education Need, these are:
- Communication and Interaction
 - Cognition and Learning
 - Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
 - Sensory and/or physical needs
- 4.11 In line with the Code of Practice, all schools follow the graduated approach to a learners' special educational needs. This support should take the form of "a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes."



(The Graduated Approach)

5. Working Together across Education, Health and Care

- 5.1 Cottenham Village College is committed to joint working arrangements with education, health and care bodies and professionals to secure effective outcomes for all pupils.
- 5.2 The SEND Code of Practice confirms that at a strategic level, partners must engage children and young people with SEN and disabilities and their parents in commissioning decisions, so that useful insights can be gained into how to improve services and outcomes.
- 5.3 When commissioning training for professionals, partners should consider whether combined services delivery, training or a common set of key skills would help professionals and providers adapt to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND in a more personalised way.
- 5.4 This could include commissioning 'key working' roles to support children and young people with SEND and their parents, particularly at key points such as diagnosis, EHC plan development and transition.
- 5.5 Cottenham Village College cooperates with the Cambridgeshire Local Authority in developing and reviewing its local offer.
- 5.6 Cottenham Village College will work with the Astrea Central Team, local and national providers to secure the services needed to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. These services could include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, education psychology, mental health services, other health and social care professionals.

6. Expectations of all Schools

- 6.1 At the heart of educational inclusion is provision which meets the needs of all pupils.
- 6.2 Cottenham Village College is committed to providing:
 - Quality First Teaching (QFT) which meets the needs of all pupils and which is appropriately accessible;
 - Effective systems for tracking and monitoring progress, so that early intervention can address gaps in learning; this includes, but is not exclusive to, monitoring and evaluation through learning walks and work scrutiny, across all pupil groups;
 - Opportunities to extend and challenge all pupils, so that they can achieve their potential;
 - Effective lines of communication between home and school, so that through collaboration, a shared understanding of 'what success looks like' is achieved for each pupil and their family.
- 6.3 All schools are required to have the following:
 - SEND Information Report (All schools updated annually);
 - Accessibility Plan for disabled pupils (All schools updated every 3 years);
 - Equality Policy and Equality Objectives; details of how compliance with the public sector equality duty is met (All schools updated every 1 year for the policy and every 4 years for the objectives);

- 6.4 It is best practice, but not a requirement, for all schools to also have the following:
- SEND Action Plan for Improvement;
 - A coordinated provision map, which identifies additional support / strategies by pupils and which can be filtered according to pupil characteristics;
 - Links to SEND attainment / progress / wider outcomes in the whole-school Improvement Plan.

7. Responsibilities of the Trust

7.1 To ensure the expectations of all schools are upheld, the Trust undertakes a variety of Quality Assurance (QA) activities on a minimum of an annual basis, from which strengths and areas of development are identified to inform best practice and priorities for improvement.

7.2 For September 2024, the following activities are offered as part of the core offer for all schools:

- SEND Review;
- SENCO Network meetings to inform and share best practice;
- Access to Astrea Counselling team.

7.3 Additional support is available to all schools, on request, and can include any of the following:

- Staff training, research projects and conferences, as detailed within the Astrea CPD Institute offer;
- External review preparation and guidance;
- Effective Use of Teaching Assistants Review.

7.4 Any reviews undertaken are reported on formally and shared with Transition Board members / Local Governance Committees, as appropriate, for further discussion and challenge.

7.5 Where a school is identified to have significant weaknesses or areas for development, supplementary support is provided by the Central Team, through Trust Performance Reviews (TPR), to ensure accelerated improvements are made, leading to effective and consistently good practice to meet the needs of learners.