

Athena Learning Trust Trust-wide SEND Policy 2025-26

Review

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1. Introduction

This policy has been updated following changes to the law and statutory guidance of September 2015 and to reflect the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 years* (July 2015). It sets our vision and principles for children and young people with SEND.

It sets out the expectations the Board of Trustees places on all the schools in the Trust and on joint working with parents, local authorities and health and social care partners of the Trust and its schools. These expectations will ensure that the Trust and its schools are compliant with both the letter and spirit of the SEND reforms and serve to improve outcomes for young people. It also outlines the Trust's improvement model and the support available to all Trust schools.

1.1 Responsibilities, approval and review

This Policy is the responsibility of the Athena Learning Trust Chief Executive Officer. This Policy was agreed by the Board of Trustees on: 19th July 2024. This Policy is due for review by: 20th July 2026.

1.2 Terminology

The Trust means the Athena Learning Trust (Athena Learning Trust).

- School means a school within the Athena Learning Trust.
- Principal means the Principal or principal of the school.
- CEO means the Chief Executive Officer of the Athena Learning Trust.
- Governing Body means the committee of the Board of Trustees to which Trustees have delegated appropriate powers and functions relating to the governance of the school.

In this Policy all references to the Athena Learning Trust will be read as including the Athena Learning Trust shared service and all schools in the Athena Learning Trust.

1.3 Application

This Athena Learning Trust SEND Policy applies to the Athena Learning Trust as a whole and to all the schools and service units in the Trust. The Athena Learning Trust, including all the schools and services within the Trust, their Trustees, governors and staff, must abide by this Athena Learning Trust SEND Policy.

In implementing this policy and associated policies and procedures the Governing Body, Principal and school staff, and Trust shared service staff, must take account of any advice or instruction given to them by the Director of Education or the Trust School Improvement lead for SEND, the Athena Learning Trust CEO or Board of Trustees. If there is any question about the interpretation or implementation of this

policy, the Athena Learning Trust Director of Education or Athena Learning Trust CEO should be consulted.

1.4 Associated Policies and Procedures

The following Trust policies and their associated procedures are an integral part of this Athena Learning Trust SEND Policy:

- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension Procedure
- School Behaviour Policy
- Trust Behaviour Procedure
- Graduated Response Procedure
- KCSIE 2024
- School Safeguarding Policy

2. Vision

The Trust's vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children in the Trust's schools. The Trust is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment, giving every young person the opportunity to fulfill their potential now and in the future. We are ambitious for our schools and their students. We believe that there is no ceiling on what can be achieved by anyone, regardless of their circumstances or background.

3. Policy statement

The Trust shall:

- o Ensure that all Athena Learning Trust schools have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person with SEND and the child's parents/carers.
- o Work closely with and support the local authorities in which each Athena Learning Trust school is located to assist them in fulfilling their obligations under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and its associated guidance.
- o Ensure that each Athena Learning Trust School has procedures in place which allow them to fulfill both their statutory duties and support the wider vision and ethos contained in the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015).

Legislation and guidance:

This policy is based on the statutory [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, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report

The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out schools' duties to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out schools' 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 those with a disability) and those who don't share it

The [School Admissions Code](#), which sets out schools' obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and their duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special education needs

4. Principles

The Trust will operate a model in all Athena Learning Trust schools for improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The model is based on six principles:

1. Prioritising **leadership** of SEND (intent).
2. Ensuring all pupils with SEND receive **high quality teaching** (implementation).
3. Supporting accurate **identification** and provision mapping (implementation) through the Trust Graduated Approach Procedure.
4. Successfully impacting on progress through effective and evidenced-based **interventions** (implementation).
5. Maximising the impact of **teaching assistants** (implementation).
6. Excellent **outcomes** for those with SEND (impact).

5. Definition of SEND

A child or young person has SEND 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:

- o has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- o 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.

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.

The needs of pupils with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; sensory and/or physical. Pupils can have needs that cut across more than 1 area, and their needs may change over time.

6. Working across Education, Health and Care

The Trust and its schools will work jointly with education, health and care bodies and professionals to secure effective outcomes for young people in our academies.

Each Athena Learning Trust school will cooperate with the relevant local authority(ies) in developing and reviewing its local offer.

Each Athena Learning Trust school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled young people (including the provision of auxiliary aids and services) and will make arrangements to support those with medical conditions.

The Trust and its schools will work with, local and national providers to secure the services needed to improve outcomes for 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.

7: Procedures: Early Years and Nursery provision

The Trust will ensure that in its Early Years and Nursery provision, screening procedures are in place to identify children with SEN to ensure early identification and to ensure that they receive the support they need.

In the Trust's mainstream provision, children with SEN will be educated alongside children who do not have SEN.

The Trust's Early Years and Nursery provision will designate a qualified teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEN provision (the "SENCo") who will either be an experienced SENCo or have or be working towards the prescribed qualification.

We shall inform parents/carers when we are considering making special provision for a child and shall then work in partnership with them to establish the support needed and secure best outcomes, taking full account of their views and wishes.

The Trust's Early Years and Nursery provision shall adopt a graduated approach with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review as set out in the SEND Code of Practice 5.36-5.46.

Each Nursery provider shall prepare an annual report on the implementation of this SEN Policy including:

- o arrangements for the admission of disabled children
- o steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others
- o the accessibility plan and how it will be improved over time.

8. Procedures: Mainstream and Specialist provision

Athena Learning Trust schools will screen on entry by assessing a young person's skills and attainment and build on information from previous settings if available.

As part of the screening process the school will consider any evidence that the young person may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments for them. This includes adhering to The Joint Council for Qualifications Community Interest Company and the Standards and Testing Agency annually updated regulations and guidance regarding Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. Each provision has a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses of study, submit applications for reasonable adjustments to the relevant organisations and make reasonable adjustments to the services and education provided to SEND children and young people.

All Athena Learning Trust schools will have measures in place to accurately identify young people with SEN and will place such pupils on 'SEN Support' in consultation with their parents/carers.

Athena Learning Trust schools will do everything they can to meet the needs of young people with SEN including delivering the education elements of an Education, Health and Care Plan.

In mainstream settings Athena Learning Trust schools will ensure that young people with SEN engage in the activities of the school alongside those who do not have SEN, unless a particular provision agreed with the parents/carers and the young person is in place.

Each Athena Learning Trust school will designate a qualified teacher to be responsible for coordinating the SEN provision (the "SENCo"), who will have or be working towards attaining the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination.

Athena Learning Trust schools will inform parents/carers when they are making special educational provision for their child and shall then work in partnership with them to establish the support needed and secure best outcomes, taking full account of their views and wishes.

Each Athena Learning Trust school SENCo will have a SEND Policy and information report for their school using the 'Athena Learning Trust Model SEND Policy' as approved by the Board of Trustees and in accordance with paragraphs 6.79 onwards of the SEN Code of Practice, that will set out details regarding the implementation of SEND Policy in the school. The SEND Policy and Information Report will be approved by the school's Governing Body and published on the school website.

Each Athena Learning Trust school Governing Body will designate a link governor to take oversight of the school's arrangements for SEN and disability.

The Principal will ensure that all staff in their school accept that SEN is their responsibility and, in particular, that class and subject teachers take full responsibility for the progress of children with SEN whom they teach.

The Principal will ensure that the quality of teaching for pupils with SEN and the progress made by those pupils are a core part of performance management arrangements.

Class and subject teachers, supported by the SENCo and senior leadership team, will make regular assessments of the progress for all pupils and identify appropriate actions, particularly for those making less than expected progress given their age and prior attainment.

The Principal will ensure that a Graduated Approach as set out in paragraphs 6.44-6.56 of the Code of Practice is in place for all young people on 'SEN Support'. *See the Trust Graduated Approach Model Procedure.*

After consultation with the parent and young person, the Principal and SENCo shall request the relevant local authority initiate an education, health and care needs assessment for any child or young person for whom we believe this is necessary.

9. Supporting our schools

The Trust Shared Service will provide advice and support to Athena Learning Trust schools in the implementation of the Trust and school SEND Policy and to help improve outcomes for all children and young people with SEND. This will include:

1. Due Diligence SEND Auditing.
2. Athena Learning Trust SEND Policy and SEN Information Report.
3. SEND Review.
4. 1 to 1 SENCO Meetings - half termly.
5. SEND working group - half termly.
6. Learning walks and book comparisons.
7. Data analysis including provision map support.
8. Support with meetings.
9. Training in SEN Responsibilities, Autism, Specific Learning Difficulties, Working Memory and Maximising the impact of teaching assistants.