



MacIntyre Academies

Discovery Academy

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Version	Purpose / Change	Responsibility	Date
V10	Changes made throughout: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CYP/Students replaced with learners, where appropriate- School replaced with Academy, where appropriate- Principal replacing Executive Principal/Head of School Wording changed to reflect current practice. Page 5 Updated Teacher Responsibilities Page 5 Updated Teaching Assistant Responsibilities Page 6 Updated Terminology including Alternative Provision Page 6 'Adapted' replacing 'Differentiated' Page 7 Updated to reflect updates to Progress, Review and Monitoring Page 7 Updated to reflect changes to staff induction and Training Page 8 Updates to the transition process Page 8 Deputy Principal replacing Assistant Principal Page 9 Updates to 'External Expertise'	Principal	Nov 2025

Person Responsible:	Principal
Date of first draft:	2015
Date of staff consultation:	2015
Date adopted by the Trust Board:	July 2015
Date reviewed by the LAB:	12 02 19
Date of implementation:	July 2015
Date reviewed:	Nov 25
Date of next review:	Nov 26

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the procedures governing the action to be taken in respect of learners at Discovery Academy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Discovery Academy's employees, including volunteers as well as Local Advisory Board and Trust Board Members.

3. Introduction

This policy is written in accordance with:

- Children and Families Act, 2014
- The Equalities Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations for 2014
- SEN Code of Practice from 2014 (last updated 2024)
- Opportunity for all (White Paper 2022, DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan (2023)
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

The policy should be read alongside Discovery Academy's:

- Statement of Provision
- Admissions Guidance
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Disability Access Plan
- Curriculum

Definition of SEN

Learners have special educational needs (SEN) if they have a difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. This will likely apply to all learners in our setting as they have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child or young person's ability to process information and learn. They can impact on learners in many ways including, but not limited to:

- feelings of insecurity, ability to regulate or ability to socialise
- reading and writing
- ability to understand things or comprehension
- concentration levels
- physical ability
- anxiety about academic success or even simply school attendance

4. Underlying Principles

We believe that all learners should be equally valued and will strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to develop environments where all learners can flourish, feel safe and reach their potential. Our belief is that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities that fully consider the individual, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, ability, attainment and background.

We pay attention to the provision for and the achievement of individuals and different groups of learners. Our aim is to respond to learners and their family's circumstances in ways which take account of a variety of life experiences and needs. We recognise that for our target group of learners, outcomes at early adulthood are often poor and sometimes critical (lack of economic activity, criminal justice system involvement etc.). We will work with families, community groups, the police and other stakeholders to shift aspirations so that learners can achieve a better, more productive future and be 'Ready for Life', in line with our ambition as an academy.

Our approach is based on the following principles:

- All learners, regardless of difficulty or disability, have the same right to maximise their personal potential through access to effective provision that meets their needs.
- Education can and should be a way of maximising equality of opportunity for all learners in many facets of their lives and interests.
- All learners, regardless of severity of their difficulty or disability, are encouraged to be ambitious for themselves and to be aspirational about their future hopes and dreams.
- The learning experience for all will be effective, stimulating, engaging and highly tailored to individual learners.
- Working with learners and families as partners, our Academy will focus on good, learner-centred outcomes to create the best foundation on which to build adult life.

5. Aims

Discovery Academy is fully committed to inclusion. We used person-centred approaches to ensure that learners are fully included in all aspects of academy life, to realise their potential and to feel valued. We are fully committed to the following aims:

- Learners receive the provision set out in section F of their Education Health and Care Plan, wherever this is reasonable and practicable.
- Where the provisions in section F of the EHCP present difficulties, we will be proactive about working with partners to overcome them.
- Learners have full access to a high quality, education with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
- We identify and respond to the changing needs of learners.
- There are rigorous procedures for tracking and monitoring learners' progress.
- We enable provision to evolve to support these changing needs so that learners can further develop their potential as individuals.
- We inspire learners to attend the Academy and value their education.
- We fully involve learners in their education, taking account of their views and working with them in any planning and decision making that affects them.
- We improve emotional and educational outcomes and life chances for learners.
- We fully involve families at every stage in plans to meet their child's additional needs.
- We raise aspirations of learners and families, matched by high staff aspirations.
- We build the self-esteem of our learners.
- We ensure effective transitions, destinations and opportunities after school.
- We refer to and work co-operatively with a wide range of agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for learners.

- We ensure that an inclusive environment is created and fostered where all members of the Academy community respect and care for each other.

6. Objectives

Our aims will be achieved through:

- Quality First teaching developed through up to date and relevant information on the needs of learners.
- Providing staff with regular opportunities to discuss learners' needs.
- Providing staff with regular professional development opportunities to expand their SEN pedagogy.
- Providing a structure within which information on learners can be collected, provided and processed systematically.
- Offering learning programmes which take account of individual needs and offers academic and vocational learning pathways, underpinned by a foundation of social and emotional awareness and skills development.
- Embracing the role of parents and carers as integral to the Academy's culture.
- Working alongside Warwickshire County Council, staff and stakeholders to ensure that each learner has access to the support that they need to grow and achieve.

7. Responsibilities

The Trust Board:

Through the Academy's budget, the Trust Board makes available the funds necessary to ensure the appropriate provision is made to meet the learner's identified needs. The Board has strategic responsibility for setting the SEN Policy.

The Local Advisory Board:

The Local Advisory Board monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the policy and provision, in line with the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference. It ensures that the policy for SEND is available to parents, is non-discriminatory and is reviewed annually.

The Principal:

The Principal is responsible for the implementation, management and support of the policy and procedures and will report regularly to the Local Advisory Board.

The Principal is responsible for:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Academy's SEND policy
- advising on the deployment of the Academy's delegated budget and other resources to meet learners needs effectively
- the timetabling of extra support
- ensuring appropriate individual education plans are in place
- requesting a reassessment of Education, Health and Care needs assessment
- ensuring annual reviews are organised
- ensuring that the Academy keeps up to date records on achievement
- co-ordinating day to day provision
- analysing data
- monitoring and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of support programmes and adaptive teaching and learning approaches/provisions in the classroom

- liaising with outside agencies such as the local authority, Early Support, educational psychology service, health, social care etc.
- working to ensure that the Academy meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- ensuring that recruitment pays due attention to the needs of our learners.

Teaching Staff:

Must deliver quality education and support by:

- Reflecting personalisation in their planning based on sound and effective systems of assessment.
- Identifying how they intend to provide for the learner's specific learning needs.
- Work closely with all support staff and other agencies to provide appropriate resources and learning material for their learners, adjusting and modifying teaching materials within individual lessons to ensure they are able to access the learning and meet the lesson objectives and their own.
- Set appropriate targets, keep records, including evidence and monitor progress of their learners
- EHCP targets of learners to be monitored alongside curriculum targets
- Recommendations from reports from Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist (but not limited to) to be implemented in class
- Communicate regularly with learners and their families.

Teaching Assistants and other frontline staff:

Teaching Assistants work with individuals and small groups within the classroom to offer consistent learning support. The role of the teaching assistant is to support the teacher's instruction, for example providing pre-teaching of vocabulary, targeted support, bridging the gap between recommendations of specialists and the day to day practice of the classroom, updating records and maintaining professional standards. Teaching Assistants play an important role in securing the vision of Discovery Academy.

Exams Officer:

In line with exams related policy, is responsible for ensuring that fair access adjustments and arrangements are in place for all SEND pupils who are eligible, in order to ensure they are not disadvantaged in formal assessments. Ensuring all evidence for access arrangements including normal way of working evidence and records of approved arrangements are securely kept. All paperwork to meet the requirements of Joint Council for Qualifications and maintain secure and up-to-date record of all arrangements and related evidence comes under the remit of the Exams Officer.

All Staff:

Every member of staff is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures for supporting learners with SEND are followed, and that they are treated fairly and offered appropriate and consistent support. Through appropriate record keeping and assessment they ensure that evidence is available to judge the success of identification and assessment and the effectiveness of the provision made for learners in terms of their progress.

8. Procedures

Identification and Assessment

Discovery Academy is a special school which provides around 100 places for children and young people aged 9 – 19 years who have an autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and/or social, emotional and mental health needs. For a child to be admitted, the Academy must be named, by a local authority, in their Education and Health and Care Plan ('EHCP').

Many of our learners will have previously found going to school a challenge and may have had difficulties in coping within a mainstream environment, and therefore accessing an appropriate curriculum. We support them to overcome these difficulties by providing differentiated instruction, which involves adapting lessons, and tasks to meet the needs of different learners in a class. Wherever possible we meet with them, their family, and liaise with the previous school placement or alternate provision, to complete a needs assessment that is both educational and holistic. Family Footings facilitators use a range of tools referred to as 'person-centred approaches' to explore the things that are most important to a child and their family. With this information, we carefully plan their transition to AcademyLife with the family and young person.

Identification and assessment are ongoing, particularly as a learner's feelings and engagement may change when entering a new environment. Regular observation and review of learners by teaching and non-teaching staff will be used to inform the identification of any ongoing additional needs.

Provision and Curriculum

At Discovery Academy we strive to promote the development of our learners in a safe and accessible environment; supported by communication and engagement between home, the Academy, other agencies, and the wider community.

The Academy offers the national curriculum which is adapted to meet the needs of each learner. Our learners benefit from a curriculum that focuses on developing academic potential, social, vocational and life skills and learning that is practical and often outside the classroom.

Our balanced and broad curriculum meets the specific needs of the learner through:

- Small teaching groups – usually around 9 learners
- Individual and small groups (1-4 learners) to address specific learning or emotional / regulatory needs
- Advice, support and sessions from outside agencies (e.g. SALT, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Curriculum programmes incorporating social skills, co-operation, reflection and confidence building
- Engagement activities focused upon the interests and engagement needs of the learner
- Practical learning that builds on learner's strengths
- Learning in the wider community to help generalise skills and prepare for adulthood
- Personalised sensory profiles and programs (where required) to ensure that learners are regulated enough to access learning opportunities.

Our Academy aims to support learners to improve their own well-being, focusing on their communication, social, emotional and mental health as central to the delivery of the Academy curriculum. We include learning to build positive relationships and learning that will help individuals to understand and shape their own emotions. We have a holistic and non-judgemental approach to supporting self-regulation that empowers learners to engage in education. We support them to recognise their challenges and barriers to learning and teach them alternative ways of responding to difficult situations and handling difficult emotions. The Academy aims to support learners to become socially responsible, polite and caring young adults, who value the lives of others and the environment in which they live.

Resources are allocated to learners according to their assessed need. The Academy has high staffing levels to ensure the safety of learners and to facilitate the optimum learning environment. Staffing is allocated to classes flexibly with some individual learners receiving more support than others at certain points in their journey. Some have individualised equipment that will enable them to access

the curriculum and social environment of the Academy (i.e. weighted jackets, ear defenders, sensory items).

The Academy is fully accessible to all learners. Specialist facilities include dedicated sensory spaces for regulation, a soft play room and an occupational therapy room. All learners have access to the relevant communication and therapy devices to best meet their needs (such as weighted jackets, ear defenders, proprioceptive and vestibular equipment). The Academy has a fully equipped hygiene room and accessible toilets allowing the learners full independence.

Progress, Review and Monitoring

The Academy has a robust and relevant assessment document that outlines all of the assessments used with learners. Concern about a learner's progress is identified through classroom observation, and the assessment cycle. Referrals are made by the SENCO for additional support from outside services.

We follow each learner's personalised learning plan as identified in their EHCP. The targets are based on individual learning needs. EHCP targets are reviewed on an ongoing basis and are formally reviewed as part of our data gathering, on a termly basis. Parents are given clear information about the impact of the support and interventions provided through the plan, enabling them to be involved in planning next steps.

The impact and quality of our education, support and interventions are evaluated, along with the views of the learner and their families. The leadership team and teachers revise the support in light of the learner's progress and development. Any changes to targets in an EHCP are done through consultation with the learner and their family, and can be done throughout the year and specially, at Annual Review of the EHCP.

Learners' Educational Health & Care Plans (or statements of special educational needs) are reviewed at least annually. Where there is a concern that our provisions are not fully meeting the changing needs of a learner, we will inform stakeholders quickly and work with them to make a plan for improvement.

Reports on learner achievement are made by the Principal to the Local Advisory Board on a termly basis.

Staff training and induction

Discovery Academy highly values training and a robust induction and CPD training program is available for all staff. We ensure that all of our staff have a thorough knowledge of autism and how our learners best learn. This is carried out by a combination of strong in-house training by an experienced and well qualified senior management team and external agencies. We also use an online professional development platform that provides resources and webinars that ensures we meet mandatory training requirements as well as meeting the individual needs of staff. We also ensure that all staff have appropriate training and qualifications in their relevant field, be it teaching, curriculum, health and social care or therapy qualifications. These are sought out through the recruitment procedures and all relevant qualifications are checked and copies kept on file.

Staff access to training is through a balance between the needs of the Academy as expressed in the Academy training plan and an individual's needs, highlighted in performance management and staff surveys as well as emerging needs related to the changing needs of the learners.

Families and transition

At Discovery Academy all that we do is about offering the best all round educational, social, communication and emotional development to our learners. We believe that this can best be achieved by involving all relevant stakeholders in the planning and delivery of our curriculum, education and

therapy. Involvement of parents and carers is crucial in securing best outcomes for our learners and we work very hard at ensuring parents are involved in their child's progress. We also believe that our learners should be involved in planning and reviewing their learning and aim that they can be fully included where possible.

We are fully committed to working in partnership with families and they are invited to all multidisciplinary meetings involving their child. We also welcome more informal visits and chats with parents / carers where they can arrange to meet with the class teacher or therapists or chat on the phone. We also offer home visits to parents and carers. Families are invited to review meetings to discuss progress and to be involved in setting targets with appropriate intervention strategies to help their child at home and at the Academy. We offer all families and learners person centred planning reviews where the child can attend and contribute if they wish. If learners find the attendance at a meeting too stressful, they can contribute their views via a preferred adult.

Transition into the Academy is facilitated by a 6-week programme focussing on building relationships with the new class team and becoming familiar with the school environment and their new peers.

Transition to adult services is facilitated through annual meetings, transition plans, involvement of relevant agencies and visits to colleges and work experience.

Internal Expertise

Speech and language therapy

All learners who have been identified, through their EHCP, in need of speech and language therapy will be on the caseload of our Academy SALT. Speech and language therapy may be delivered on an individual basis or in small groups. However, it is more likely that this therapy will not be delivered directly to the learner, rather the SALT will work to train staff who will support the learner.

Positive Behaviour Support

Social and emotional support is overseen by our Deputy Principal with our Positive Behaviour Support Leads. They support learners and families in developing positive attitudes to learning, strategies for managing feelings and emotions and celebrating success. The Assistant Principal for SEND is a qualified SENCo and as such advises the leadership team and colleagues regarding adjustments and support for improving behaviour and associated mental health challenges. Support is provided in response to incident monitoring, and referral from staff and/or home.

ASC/Autism Support

All employees are trained to support learners with ASC (also known as Autistic). Learners are supported with whole school teaching strategies, as well as specific resources and programming such to support sensory and social needs.

External Expertise

We are committed to partnership working to best support the needs of our learners and to support our families. The Academy strives to involve other bodies, as far as is reasonably possible, in meeting the needs of learners. From its development, the Academy has forged positive working relationships with health, social services and local authorities. We liaise closely with all agencies and include relevant professionals in meetings about and with learners.

We support full access to a range of services including:

- Social Care

- Educational and Clinical Psychologists
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Speech and Language Service
- Occupational Therapy
- Early Support

Complaints

Complaints about this policy can be made through our complaints procedure, available on our website.

9. Monitoring Compliance and Impact

Monitoring of practice against this policy will be carried out by the Trust, Principal and Local Advisory Board and will include:

- Lesson observations
- Monitoring learner progress of SEN learners against initial assessments
- Seeking feedback from learners, parents and carers at review meetings
- Reviewing the attendance of learners
- The SEN Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis
- Regular review of the Exclusions Policy

10. Other Information

The Local Offer for SEND brings together information about education, health and care services for children and young people from 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities.

More information can be found on the Warwickshire County Council website:

<http://warwickshire.gov.uk/send>

Changes at previous reviews:

Version	Purpose / Change	Responsibility	Date
V7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sections changed "behavioural" needs to emotional or self-regulatory to emphasise our approach to relational approaches • Page 5 pupil numbers changed from about 90 to about 100 • Page 5 – removed "of both sexes" as we have CYP who are non-binary • Page 8 – title of AP changed to Partnership to reflect one of our 3 core values. 	Principal	July 2021
V8	Throughout – Principal changed to Head of School and/or Executive Principal Page 2 (3) Addition of: "Opportunity for all (White Paper 2022, DfE)" Page 3 (para 1) – addition of "and be 'Ready for Life', in line with our ambition as a school." Page 3 (6) change 'High Quality' to "Quality First" Page 5 (7) Addition of short reference to role of the exams officer Page 8 – clarification of ASC to "ASC (also known as Autistic)." To show due regard for preferred terms Page 8 (9) – Addition of "Regular review of the Exclusions policy"	Executive Principal	March 2023
V9	Wording tweaked to emphasise that if the provisions in section F of the EHCP present difficulties, we will be proactive about working with partners to overcome them.	Executive Principal	Nov 2024