Plymouth CAST Model Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

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Document Control

Changes History

Schools are required to ensure that any new statutory guidance related to SEND , Exclusions and Safeguarding are implemented as required at the time of publication. Changes to this policy will be formally adopted as soon as practically possible.

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Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Board	Chair	CEO	Date Approved	Version	Date for Review
√			19.07.2025	5.0	July 2026

National/Local Policy

☐ This policy must be localised by schools

☐ This policy must not be changed, it is a National Policy (only change logo, contact details and yellow highlighted sections)

Position with the Unions

Does the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, the policy status is:

☐ Consulted and Approved ☐ Consulted and Not Approved ☐ Awaiting Consultation

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Position	Date	Version
All Plymouth CAST HTs	12.09.2025	5.0
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Plymouth CAST Model SEND Policy 2025

Governors' Committee Responsible for local dissemination and monitoring: xxxxxxxxxxx Committee
Governor Lead: xxxxxxxxxxx
Date adopted by local governing body: xxxxxxxxxxx

Plymouth CAST Mission

Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the gospel.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and governors with the framework by which they can ensure that pupils with SEND are fully included in the realisation of our mission, and to inform parents and guardians how we will identify need, establish effective provision and improve outcomes for children and young people who have SEND while they are in our schools.

Terminology

SEND is an acronym for Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

SENCO is an acronym for the Special Educational Needs Coordinator who is the leader within a school responsible for SEND provision. By law, the SENCO must be a qualified teacher.

Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan) details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability and has been awarded a 'statutory assessment'. It is drawn up by the local authority after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.

Early identification of SEND is a key principle of the SEND Code of Practice 2014. Schools should have systems and processes in place, in collaboration with their local area, to ensure that pupils who have SEND are identified as quickly as possible.

Special educational provision is provision that is different from or additional to that normally available to pupils or students of the same age, which is designed to help children and young people with SEN or disabilities to access the National Curriculum at school or to study at college.

Inclusion is the principle that children with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability have the right to be educated alongside other children from their community.

Annual review is the review of an EHC plan which the local authority must make as a minimum every 12 months.

Early years provider is a provider of early education places for children under five years of age. This can include state-funded and private nurseries as well as child minders.

Local Offer. Local authorities in England are required to set out in their Local Offer information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Local authorities must consult locally on what provision the Local Offer should contain.

Local Area is the term used for all the services that make up the local offer within a local authority. Therefore, the local area includes schools, health and care providers, charities and any service that works for the benefit of pupils who have SEND and their families.

Local Authority is a local government body that is officially responsible for all the public services and facilities in a particular area. For example, Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council ,Cornwall County Council, Torbay, Bournemouth Christchurch and Bournemouth

1. Introduction

This policy has been written to meet the expectations within the law and statutory guidance from September 2014 and to reflect the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (July 2014). It sets our vision and principles for children and young people who have SEND.

The policy sets out our expectations for all our schools and those regarding joint working with parents, local authorities and our health and social care partners. These expectations will ensure we are compliant with both the letter and spirit of the SEND reforms and serve to improve outcomes for young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

2. Vision

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children in our academies. We aim to provide outstanding education to all children and young people. We are fully inclusive in our provision in terms of social background, ability, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexuality. We strive to ensure access for all to educational excellence in preparing young people for their futures, seeking to continually improve levels of attainment and progress for all, and secure the highest levels of achievement appropriate to the individual learner.

3. Principles

- We shall ensure that all our schools have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person who has SEND and the child's parents or carers.
- We shall work closely with and support the local authorities in which our schools are located to assist them in fulfilling their obligations under Part 3 of the Children and families Act 2014 and its associated guidance.
- We shall ensure that each of our schools has procedures in place which allow them to fulfil both their statutory duties and support the wider vision and ethos contained in the SEND Code of Practice (July 2014).

All schools will operate within the law, including:

- part 3 of 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.

All schools will follow the statutory guidance in full, including that within:

- the special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- the transition to a new 0-25 special educational needs and disability system.

4. The Plymouth CAST SEND Approach

Plymouth CAST will promote an approach in all our schools of improving outcomes for children and young people who have SEND. Our approach is based on four key priorities. Our priorities are:

- making the best use of resources to close gaps in provision
- improving outcomes by strengthening inclusion
- implementing effective policy, systems and processes relating to the trust and school SEND offers
- building capacity in SEND leadership through effective networking

5. Definition of SEND

- A child or young person has special educational needs 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 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.

6. Working Across Education, Health and Care

We will work jointly with education, health and care bodies, including the local authorities where our schools are located, and professionals to secure effective outcomes for young people in our schools.

Each CAST school will cooperate with the relevant Local Authority in developing and reviewing its Local Offer.

Each CAST 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.

We shall work with our schools, local and national providers to secure the services needed to improve outcomes for children and young people who have SEND. These services could include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, education psychology, mental health services, other health and social care professionals.

7. Accurate and timely identification

Our Early Years and Nursery providers will ensure that screening procedures are in place to identify children with SEND early and to ensure that they receive the support they need.

All CAST schools will undertake an early assessment when pupils enter their schools, reviewing a young person's skills and attainment, while considering any information provided by previous settings.

As part of the screening process, school leaders will consider any evidence that the child or young person may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments for them. The details of how the school plans to meet the needs of any child or young person with a disability should be shared immediately with the CAST central team via the school's School Improvement Officer (SIO).

The senior executive leader for SEND in the trust will support school leaders and SENCOs to secure accurate and early identification of needs. Pupils' needs will be categorised into the four main areas of need, as detailed in the Code of Practice. Once categorised, pupils with identified SEND should be recorded on the school's SEND register.

The 'SEND Code of Practice' (January 2015) identifies four broad categories. These are:

1. **Communication and interaction**, including Speech and Language difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorders
2. **Cognition and learning**, including specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia
3. **Social, emotional and mental health**, including anxiety, depression and ADHD
4. **Sensory or Physical**, including hearing, visual or physical disabilities

Plymouth CAST leaders will ensure that systems and processes associated with the effective identification of learners with SEND are consistently applied according to local area criteria within each school in the trust. School leaders will utilise this to ensure equitable provision across CAST schools.

8. Early Years and Nursery Provision

As an inclusive Trust, our aim is for children with SEND to be educated alongside children who do not have SEND.

Our Early Years or Nursery providers will designate a qualified teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEND provision (the SENCO) who will either be an experienced SENCO or have or be working towards the prescribed qualification.

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

We 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 or early years provider shall prepare a SEND Information report on the implementation of our SEND policy. This will be published on the school website.

9. Primary, Secondary and post-16 provision

Schools will have measures in place to accurately identify children and young people with SEND and will place such pupils on 'SEN Support' in consultation with their parents or carers. When necessary, school leaders will make statutory assessment applications to their local authorities whenever they believe a child requires an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). School leaders must be aware of the criteria for assessment agreed by their local authority. All pupils identified as 'SEN Support', going through a statutory assessment and those with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be recorded on a SEND register. The register will be regularly reviewed by leaders, as well as annually alongside the SIO linked to the school.

CAST schools will do everything they can to meet the needs of children and young people who have SEND, including delivering the education elements of an Education, Health and Care Plan. When appropriate, schools will also support young people to achieve the outcomes set within the health and care elements of their plans. School leaders will regularly assess pupils' progress towards achieving the outcomes set in their EHC plans and inform parents of the progress being made.

School leaders will ensure that children and young people who have SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside those who do not have SEND, unless a particular provision agreed with the parents or carers, the young person and the school's SIO is in place.

CAST Schools will designate a qualified teacher to be responsible for coordinating the SEND provision (the SENCO), who will have the National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination, or will have been awarded, or will be working towards the NPQ-SENCO

School leaders will inform parents or carers when they are planning special educational provision for their child and shall then work in partnership with them to co-produce the support needed to secure best outcomes, taking full account of their views and wishes. Whenever possible, school leaders will also co-produce the support needed alongside the child who needs the support.

CAST Schools will prepare a **SEND Information Report** in accordance with paragraphs 6.79 onwards of the SEN Code of Practice and publish it on their website. The SEN Information Report will set out details regarding the implementation of the Plymouth CAST SEND Policy.

CAST schools will designate a member of the local governing board or interim academy board to take oversight of the school's arrangements for SEND and their implementation of the trust's SEND policy.

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

School leaders will ensure that the quality of teaching for pupils with SEND 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 and attainment for all pupils who have SEND and identify appropriate actions, particularly for those making less than expected progress, given their age and prior attainment.

Schools 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'. Schools will make use of the CAST SEND Pathway and Identification Checklist to support the identification and provision for children with SEND.

For all young people receiving SEN Support, School leaders will make arrangements for a qualified teacher to meet the parents (or carers) at least three times a year to review progress and discuss support.

10. Securing excellent outcomes for pupils who have SEND

Pupils with SEND might face significantly greater challenges in learning than the majority of their peers or have a disability which hinders their access to the teaching and facilities typically found in mainstream educational settings. Nationally there is a very large attainment gap between pupils with SEND and their peers.

At Plymouth CAST, the primary focus when looking to secure positive outcomes for pupils who have SEND is to help them narrow their attainment gap with **other pupils nationally**. The trust recognises that children and young people who have SEND need to secure positive outcomes in all areas of learning, in their own physical and mental health and socially. Therefore, as well as measuring the academic attainment and progress of pupils who have SEND, CAST schools are likely to have specific ways of measuring pupils progress across other measures, including against the targets in their education, health and care plans or individual education plans, where relevant, or by measuring improvements to pupils' behaviour or attendance over time.

11. Supporting our Schools

The trust provides a SEND service to all our schools to advise and support them in the implementation of the Plymouth CAST SEND Policy and in the improvement of outcomes for all children and young people who have SEND. The service offer will include:

- SEND audits and reviews of provision
- Pre-Ofsted preparation
- Legal advice
- Support for identification and intervention
- Staff training and conferences
- SENCO cluster meetings to inform and share best practice
- Specialist assessments
- Fostering of partnership working and the brokering of support services
- Specific support for schools with SENCOs that are new to post

12. 1 Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO plays an essential role in SEND provision and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the SEND Policy. This involves working with the Head Teacher, staff, parents/carers and other agencies to determine the strategic development of this policy. The main responsibilities of the SENCO are:

- Being a champion of and advocate for all pupils with an SEND
- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEND Policy, focusing on high aspirations and improving outcomes
- Delivering an outcomes-focused and co-ordinated plan for SEND students and their families
- Attending and contributing to SENCO cluster meetings at least termly
- Staff development on SEND matters
- Responding to changes in SEND Policy, locally and nationally
- Ensuring annual reviews of children with EHCPs are conducted accurately
- Supporting departments and Year Leaders in understanding SEND issues and assisting with developing effective strategies for improved outcomes and provision
- Line managing Inclusion staff
- Liaising with external agencies, including Health and Social Services
- Liaising with the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children
- Liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Liaising with other providers regarding transitional arrangements
- Liaising with parents/ carers
- Working with senior leaders within the school to ensure compliance with the Equality Act (2010)
- Providing advice on the financial resources required to effectively support SEND pupils
- Arranging assessments for Access Arrangements for Examinations
- Analysing school performance data that impacts on improved outcomes for SEND students
- Ensure that the SEND Register is up to date

- Training teachers to ensure they are able to meet the needs of their students with quality first teaching
- Undertake regular reviews of the overall effectiveness of interventions employed in the academy for SEND students
- Stay aware of latest changes and updates to SEND practice nationally and of the latest approaches to SEND support and intervention
- Quality assure the effectiveness of staff working in the SEND Department, including all TAs
- Updating own professional knowledge and understanding of SEND education by regularly interacting with research and wider reading, and by joining discussion groups, professional networks and associations.
- Ideally, the SENCO will be a member of the school's senior leadership team

12.2 The Role of the Class Teacher

In Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), the class teacher plays a crucial role in identifying, supporting, and collaborating with other professionals to ensure all students, including those with SEN, have access to a quality education. They are the first point of contact for concerns about a student's development and learning. More specifically they:

- are teachers of children with SEND, and share responsibility for their academic, social, mental, emotional and physical development
- are often the first to notice a student struggling with learning or development and may raise concerns about potential SEND.
- regularly assess all students, including those with SEND, to monitor progress and identify areas where support is needed.
- work closely with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to assess whether a child has SEND and to develop appropriate support plans.
- are responsible for adapting their teaching methods and materials to meet the diverse needs of all students, including those with SEND.
- implement the strategies and interventions outlined in the individual support plans (e.g., Education, Health and Care Plans - EHCPs).
- regularly track and monitor the progress of students with SEND, making adjustments to support as needed.
- collaborate with teaching assistants and other support staff to ensure effective delivery of support within the classroom.
- maintain regular communication with parents or carers to discuss their child's progress, address concerns, and collaborate on support strategies.
- work closely with the SENCO to share information, discuss strategies, and ensure a consistent approach to supporting students with SEND.
- may also work with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists or educational psychologists, to provide comprehensive support.
- strive to create a classroom environment where all students feel valued, respected, and included.
- play a role in promoting positive behaviour and helping students with SEND develop social and emotional skills.
- encourage students with SEND to develop independence and confidence in their learning.

12.3 Role of the Headteacher

The head teacher is ultimately responsible for ensuring the school effectively supports students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including the implementation of policies and procedures related to SEND. This includes overseeing the work of the SENDCo ensuring staff are aware of and equipped to support students with SEND and maintaining strong communication with parents and external agencies. Headteachers:

- establish the school's vision, values, and culture around inclusion and support for all learners, including those with SEND.
- ensure the school's SEND policy aligns with current legislation and guidance, like the SEND Code of Practice.
- are responsible for the overall management of SEND provision within the school, ensuring appropriate support is in place for all students who need it.
- manage the SEND budget and resources, ensuring they are used effectively to support students with SEND.
- monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision and make adjustments as needed, ensuring continuous improvement.
- collaborate closely with the SENDCo, providing support and guidance.
- ensure effective communication with parents and carers of students with SEND, involving them in the decision-making process.

- work with external agencies, such as educational psychologists and other specialists, to provide comprehensive support for students with SEND.
- ensure that all staff, particularly teachers, are aware of the needs of students with SEND and are equipped to provide appropriate support.
- encourage and support staff in adopting inclusive teaching practices.
- ensure that staff are held accountable for their responsibilities in supporting students with SEND.
- ensure the school fulfills its statutory duties under the SEND Code of Practice and other relevant legislation.
- ensure that the school makes the necessary special educational provision for students with SEND.
- ensure that parents are notified when special educational provision is being made for their child.

13. Remote Education

Schools will ensure that pupils with SEND have full access to appropriate *remote learning* opportunities for:

- Homework/home learning;
- During periods of extended non-attendance at school due to a medical condition or special need/disability;
- During periods of enforced school closure such as extreme weather, utility failure, local/national lockdown, or local elections etc.

Schools will ensure that pupils with SEND have the necessary computer hardware and software to enable them to access remote learning.

The school SENCo will ensure that pupils with SEND and their parents/carers are supported with accessing the remote learning offer. and with the maintenance of any specialist physical or cognitive programmes during a period of school closure or enforced non-attendance.

14. Careers Education

Good career guidance is critical to support all pupils to have high aspirations and to capitalise on the opportunities available to them; this is particularly important for pupils with SEND. This process should begin in primary schools through engagement with industry, commerce, services and the forces, and education to remove stereotypical or restrictive views of employment, further education, training, or higher education opportunities.

Secondary schools should aim to fully meet the Gatsby Benchmarks, and for pupils with SEND, pay particular attention to *Gatsby Benchmark 3: Addressing the Needs of Each Student*. Schools should ensure that the learning needs of pupils with SEND are taken into account to ensure full access to the programme of career guidance and support, and to raise aspirations.

15. Extra-Curricular Activities

Schools should ensure that pupils with SEND have full access to the programme of extra-curricular activities. Schools should:

- Ensure that extra-curricular activities are fully accessible for all pupils
- Monitor participation levels. These should be at least in-line with the percentage of pupils with SEND in the cohort accessing the activity.
- Discuss extra-curricular opportunities with pupils with SEND and their parents.
- Consider the provision of specific activities for pupils with SEND in addition to full access to the programme for all pupils.
- Ensure that staff and outside providers running extra-curricular activities are fully aware of the SEND needs of individual pupils where this is necessary to ensure their successful participation, safety and welfare.

16. Behaviour Policy and Exclusions

Pupils with SEND are more likely to be excluded from school than pupils without a special educational need or disability. Pupils receiving SEND Support face the highest levels of both Suspension and Permanent Exclusion.

School leaders must ensure that the trust's behaviour policy is effectively implemented, including for pupils with SEND.

The engagement of pupils with SEND with the school's behaviour policy must be carefully monitored, and where necessary, appropriate adaptations made or individual intervention/support provided.

Suspension and exclusion rates must be carefully monitored to ensure that these sanctions are not being used disproportionately for pupils with SEND.

Where behaviour sanctions, including suspension and exclusion, are used for pupils with SEND, schools must ensure that the behaviours that have led to the application of sanctions are not due to the school failing to meet the academic, health, welfare or social needs of the pupils, including any disability Where necessary revisions to learning programmes, relational support plans, the provision of additional support, staff training or work with external agencies should be actioned.

Schools must engage with the Trust; local authority and other relevant agencies as soon as a child with SEND becomes at risk of suspension or exclusion.

Where a pupil with an EHCP is deemed to be at risk of suspension or exclusion, the SENCO should contact the Local Authority and request an emergency review of the EHCP

As with other pupils, where a pupil with an SEND is at risk of being suspended or excluded, other measures such as an off-site direction; use of internal therapeutic alternative provision, and use of professional external Alternative Provision (AP) should be considered

The potential impact of exclusion on a pupil with SEND must be carefully considered before the sanction is used. If it is necessary to exclude a pupil with SEND, the school must liaise with all appropriate support agencies that are connected with the pupil and his/her family to ensure that welfare needs are met during the exclusion.

Before issuing a suspension or permanent exclusion, headteachers must consider the trust Suspension and Exclusion Policy, and the DfE statutory guidance document *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England including pupil movement. September 2023*.

Suspensions and exclusions must always be discussed with the schools SIO before being issued.

Exclusion and Suspension Guidance

Schools should work with the trust, local authority, other agencies, parents and pupils to reduce the rates of suspension and permanent exclusion of pupils with SEND.

The Trust will monitor exclusion rates across its schools, including those of pupils with SEND, and provide challenge and support where required

The Timpson Review of School Exclusion

The Timpson Review of Exclusions in Schools 2019

17. Additional Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safe Touch Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Attendance Policy

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy