



Acorn Digital Learning

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

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Signed by:

Stephen Phipps

_____ Headteacher

20th November 2024

Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors

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Statement of intent

ADL believes that all pupils are entitled to an education that enables them to achieve their best, become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and make a successful transition into adulthood.

This policy outlines the framework ADL will use in meeting its duties, obligations and principal equality values in providing an appropriate high-quality education for pupils with SEND.

Through successful implementation of this policy, ADL aims to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

ADL will work with clients in ensuring that the following principles underpin this policy:

- The involvement of pupils and their parents in decision-making.
- The early identification of pupils' needs and early intervention to support them.
- A focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning.
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support.
- High-quality provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Greater choice and control for pupils and their parents over their support.
- Successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.

Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For the purposes of this policy, a pupil is defined as having SEND if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age.
- A disability or health condition that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities used by peers of the same age in mainstream settings.
- Special educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream settings.

1. work

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Local Government Act 1974
- Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986
- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Health and Care Act 2022
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2024

This policy has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2015) 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Pupil Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Careers Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

- Accessibility Policy

2. Objectives

Every school is required to identify and address the SEND of the pupils that they support. Through the implementation of this policy, the school will:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that pupils with SEND get the support they need to access the school's broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEND.
- Ensure there is high-quality provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, with specific focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning.
- Fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with SEND in light of the SEND code of practice.
- Promote disability equality and equality of opportunity, fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled pupils.
- Make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
- Designate a teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEND provision, i.e. the SENCO.
- Inform parents when they are making special educational provision for their child.
- Review, prepare and publish important information about the school and its implementation of relevant SEND policies, including:
 - Accessibility plans setting out how they plan to increase access to the curriculum and the physical environment for pupils with SEND.
 - Information about the admission arrangements for pupils with SEND and the steps taken to prevent them being treated less favourably than others.
 - A SEN information report about the implementation of the school's policy for pupils with SEND.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently across ADL.
- Ensuring ADL meets its duties in relation to supporting pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring that there is a qualified teacher designated as Key Teacher for ADL students.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring ADL offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with high quality teaching and a positive and enriching educational experience of for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

In enacting this policy, the headteacher will:

- Ensure ADL holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with SEND.
- Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and learn effectively.

- Ensure ADL works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs and SEND of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate.
- Ensure ADL fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice.
- Work with the governing board to ensure that there is a qualified teachers designated as key teachers for ADL students.
- Ensure key teachers have sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions.
- Provide the key teachers with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Ensure a member of staff has or is completing either the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination or the National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators.
- Regularly and carefully reviewing the quality of teaching for pupils at risk of underachievement, as a core part of the school's performance management arrangements.
- Ensure that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the school do not directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with SEND.

The Key teachers will be responsible for:

- Collaborating with the SLT, to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- The day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEND policy.
- The coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND.
- Advising on a graduated approach to providing SEND support.
- Liaising with the parents of pupils with SEND.
- Being a key point of contact for external agencies, especially the LA and LA support services.
- Liaising with the potential future providers of education to ensure that pupils and their parents are informed about the options, and a smooth transition is planned.
- Working with the SLT to ensure that ADL meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Ensuring that ADL keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up-to-date, in line with ADL's Data Protection Policy.
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues, and working closely with staff, parents and other agencies.
- Being familiar with the provision in the Local Offer and being able to work with professionals who are providing a supporting role to the family.

Class teachers will be responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for pupils with SEND on a graduated basis, in collaboration with parents, the key teacher and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and aiming to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

- Ensuring every pupil with SEND is able to study the full national curriculum.
- Being accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.
- Being aware of the needs, outcomes sought, and support provided to any pupils with SEND they are working with.
- Understanding and implementing strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils with the support of the SENCO.
- Keeping the relevant figures of authority up-to-date with any changes in behaviour, academic developments and causes of concern. The relevant figures of authority include the headteacher.

4. Identifying SEND

ADL recognises that early identification and effective provision improves long-term outcomes for pupils. As part of the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils, it has a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND needs.

With the support of the SLT, classroom teachers will conduct regular progress assessments for all pupils, with the aim of identifying pupils who are making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

'Less than expected progress' will be characterised by progress which:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.
- Does not match or better the pupil's previous rate of progress.
- Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers.
- Widens the attainment gap.

ADL plans, manages and reviews SEND provision across the following four broad areas of need:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs

5. Safeguarding

ADL recognises that evidence shows pupils with SEND are at a greater risk of abuse and maltreatment, so will ensure that staff are aware that pupils with SEND:

- Have the potential to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying.
- May face additional risks online, e.g. from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation.
- Are at greater risk of abuse, including child-on-child abuse, neglect, and sexual violence and harassment.

ADL recognises that there are additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of pupils. These barriers can include, but are not limited to:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's condition without further exploration.

- These pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
- The potential for pupils with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- A different cognitive understanding and being unable to understand the difference between fact or fiction in online content.

The headteacher and SLT will ensure that ADL's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy reflects the fact that these additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse.

Care will be taken by all staff, particularly those who work closely with pupils with SEND, to notice any changes behaviour or mood, or any injuries, and these indicators will be investigated by the DSL in collaboration with the key teacher.

School staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for pupils with SEND and additional needs.

The governing board and headteacher will ensure that pupils with SEND are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe including online. ADL will ensure that teaching of safeguarding is tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND.

Any reports of abuse involving pupils with SEND will involve close liaison between the DSL and the Key Teacher.

6. SEND support

ADL is aware of its statutory duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and recognise that high quality teaching, which is differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND.

Teachers at the school will:

- Set high expectations for every pupil.
- Plan stretching work for pupils whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard.
- Plan lessons for pupils who have low levels of prior attainment or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious.
- Plan lessons to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.
- Be responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class

Decisions on whether to make special educational provision for pupils will be based upon:

- Discussions between the teacher and key teacher.
- Analysis of the pupil's progress – using internal formative and summative assessments, alongside national data and expectations of progress.
- Discussion with the pupil and their parent/carer/client.

Once a pupil has been identified with SEND, ADL will employ a graduated approach to meeting the pupil's needs. This will be through the adoption of a four-part cycle – **assess, plan, do, review** – whereby 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 process is as follows:

- **Assess:** establishing a clear assessment of the pupil's needs
- **Plan:** agreeing the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review
- **Do:** implementing the agreed interventions and support
- **Review:** analysing the effectiveness of the interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress in line with the agreed review date

Where higher levels of need are identified, ADL will refer back to home school/client to suggest they access specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.

Where, despite ADL having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of a pupil, they have not made expected progress, ADL, in consultation with parents, carers and clients will consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

ADL will consider whether additional pastoral support and attention for pupils with SEND is required, alongside ensuring that any appropriate support for communication is in place.

EAL

ADL is aware that there may be pupils at the school for whom English is not their first language and appreciates that having EAL is not equated to having learning difficulties. At the same time, when pupils with EAL make slow progress, it will not be assumed that their language status is the only reason; they may have SEND.

ADL will consider the pupil within the context of their home, culture and community and look carefully at all aspects of a pupil's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of English or arise from SEND.

7. Admissions

ADL will ensure it meets its duties set under the DfE's 'School Admissions Code' by:

- Not refusing admission for a child thought to be potentially disruptive, or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour, on the grounds that the child is first to be assessed for SEND.
- Not refusing admission for a child that has named ADL in their EHC plan.
- Considering applications from parents of children who have SEND but do not have an EHC plan.
- Not refusing admission for a child who has SEND but does not have an EHC plan because the school does not feel able to cater for those needs.
- Not refusing admission for a child who does not have an EHC plan.
- Not discriminating against or disadvantaging applicants with SEND.

- Adopting fair practices and arrangements in accordance with the 'School Admissions Code' for the admission of children without an EHC plan.
- Ensuring ADL's oversubscription arrangements will not disadvantage children with SEND.
- Ensuring that tests for selection are accessible to children with SEND, with reasonable adjustments made where necessary.

Arrangements for the fair admissions of pupils with SEND are outlined in the Admissions Policy and will be published on the ADL website.

8. Transition

ADL is aware of the importance of planning and preparing for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life.

Where pupils have EHC plans, these will be reviewed and amended in sufficient time prior to a pupil moving between key phases of education, to allow for planning for and, where necessary, commissioning of support and provision at the new setting.

9. Involving pupils and parents in decision-making

ADL is committed to working in partnership with all parents in the best interests of their child and will provide an weekly report for all parents on their child's progress.

The planning that ADL implements will help parents and pupils with SEND express their needs, wishes and goals, and will:

- Focus on the pupil as an individual, not allowing their SEND to become a label.
- Be easy for pupils and their parents to understand by using clear, ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon.
- Highlight the pupil's strengths and capabilities.
- Enable the pupil, and those who know them best, to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future.
- Tailor support to the needs of the individual.
- Organise assessments to minimise demands on parents.
- Attend (where possible) meetings of relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach.

10. EHC needs assessments and plans

ADL recognises that, despite having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEND of a pupil, some pupils may not make expected levels of progress. In these cases, ADL will consult with clients and consider requesting an EHC needs assessment.

The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the SEND of the pupil, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and prepare them for adulthood.

As part of the EHC needs assessment, ADL will meet its duty by:

- Responding to any request for information as part of the EHC needs assessment process within six weeks from the date of the request, unless special exemptions apply as outlined in the SEND code of practice.
- Providing the client with any school-specific information and evidence about the pupil's profile and educational progress.

Where the LA decides to issue an EHC plan, it must consult the prospective school by sending a copy of the draft plan and consider their comments before deciding whether to name it in the pupil's EHC plan. ADL will meet its duty to provide views on a draft EHC plan within 15 days.

11. Reviewing EHC plans

ADL will ensure that teachers monitor and review the pupil's progress during the year and assist our clients with a formal review of the EHC plan at least annually.

ADL will:

- Cooperate with the client and relevant individuals to ensure an annual review meeting takes place.
- Request that the appropriate people are given at least two weeks' notice of the date of the meeting, such as key teachers.
- Seek advice and information about the pupil prior to the annual review meeting from all parties invited, and send any information gathered to all those invited, at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

If a pupil's needs significantly change, ADL will request clients seek a re-assessment of an EHC plan at least six months after an initial assessment. Thereafter, the governing board or headteacher will request the client to seek a re-assessment of a pupil whenever they feel it is necessary.

12. Supporting successful preparation for adulthood

ADL is aware that being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life-transforming for pupils with SEND. It recognises the importance of starting early, centring on pupil aspirations, interests and needs, and will ensure that pupils are supported at developmentally appropriate levels to make a smooth transition to what they will be doing next, e.g. moving on to higher education.

ADL will:

- Check that the EHC plan review includes a focus on preparing for adulthood, with additional focus on transition and preparing for adulthood from Year 9 onwards.
- Assist with transition planning into the revised EHC plan to identify appropriate post-16 pathways for higher education and employment, and support preparation for independent living, maintaining good health in adult life and participating in society.

- Ensure pupils from Year 8 until Year 13 are provided with independent careers guidance.

ADL's Careers Policy details how ADL will fulfil its statutory duties under section 42 of the Education Act 1997 and work with pupils with SEND to ensure they are prepared for the workplace.

13. Managing complaints

ADL will publish the Complaints Procedure Policy on the ADL website.

Following a parent's serious complaint or disagreement about the SEND provision being made for their child, ADL will contact the client immediately to seek disagreement resolution advice, regardless of whether an EHC plan is in place.

ADL is aware of the formal and informal arrangements for resolving disagreements at a local level and will work with the LA in responding to requests for information as part of procedures for:

- Disagreement resolution.
- Mediation.
- Appeals to the SEND Tribunal.

14. Staff training and improving practice

ADL is committed to the learning and development of all its staff members and training opportunities will be provided and delivered in line with ADL's CPD and Training Policy.

ADL's Head of Pastoral will assess staff competencies and ensure that CPD provision allows staff to develop their awareness, skills, and practices in identifying, educating, and assessing pupils with SEND.

15. Use of data and record keeping

All information about pupils will be kept in accordance with ADL's Records Management Policy and Data Protection Policy.

ADL's records will:

- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date register of the provision made for pupils with SEND.
- Be kept securely so that unauthorised persons do not have access to it, so far as reasonably practicable.

ADL keeps data on the levels and types of need within the school and makes this available to clients.

Confidentiality

ADL will not disclose any EHC plan without the consent of the pupil's parents, except for specified purposes or in the interests of the pupil, such as disclosure:

- To a SEND tribunal when parents appeal, and to the Secretary of State under the Education Act 1996.
- On the order of any court for any criminal proceedings.
- For the purposes of investigations of maladministration under the Local Government Act 1974.
- To enable any authority to perform duties arising from the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, or from the Children Act 1989 relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- To Ofsted inspection teams as part of their inspections of schools and LAs.
- To any person in connection with the pupil's application for students with disabilities allowance in advance of taking up a place in HE.
- To the headteacher (or equivalent position) of the setting at which the pupil is intending to start their next phase of education.

ADL will adhere to the Pupil Confidentiality Policy at all times.

16. Publishing information

ADL will publish information on the ADL website about the implementation of this policy.

The information published will be updated **annually** and any changes to the information occurring during the year will be updated as soon as possible.

The SEN Information Report will be prepared by the governing board and will be published on the ADL website. It will include all the information outlined in paragraphs 6.79 and 6.83 of the 'Special educational needs and disabilities code of practice: 0 to 25 years'.

17. Joint commissioning, planning and delivery

ADL will work closely with clients to ensure pupils get the right support.

ADL will assist the clients in carrying out their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, by ensuring that services work together where this promotes children and young people's wellbeing or improves the quality of special educational provision (Section 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014).

ADL will draw on the wide range of local data sets about the likely educational needs of pupils with SEND to forecast future needs, including:

- Population and demographic data.
- Prevalence data for different kinds of SEND among children at the national level.
- Numbers of national children with EHC plans and their main needs.
- The numbers and types of settings that work with or educate pupils with SEND.
- An analysis of challenges or sources of health inequalities.

ADL will plan, deliver and monitor services against how well outcomes have been met, including, but not limited to:

- Improved educational progress and outcomes for pupils with SEND.
- Increasing the identification of pupils with SEND prior to school entry.

Where pupils with SEND also have a medical condition, their provision will be planned and delivered in coordination with the EHC plan.

SEND support will be adapted and/or replaced depending on its effectiveness in achieving the agreed outcomes.

18. Monitoring and review

The policy is reviewed on an [annual](#) basis by the headteacher in conjunction with the governing board; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff, parents of pupils with SEND, and relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is [October 2025](#)