



WHINLESS DOWN  
ACADEMY TRUST

# SEN and Disability Policy

Including SEN Information  
Report

Autumn 2025



ST MARTIN'S  
SCHOOL



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SCHOOL



VALE VIEW  
SCHOOL

# **Whinless Down Academy Trust**

## **SEN & Disability Policy/SEN Information Report**

### **Intent**

Whinless Down Academy Trust 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 the schools will use in meeting their duties, obligations and principle equality values in providing an appropriate high-quality education for pupils with SEND.

This policy document provides a framework for the early identification of children with needs which are additional to the provision made generally for children of that age. It details how provision is made to match needs and allow for full participation. It is written for the benefit of the whole school community and will ensure that the following principles further underpin this policy:

- The Early identification of pupil's needs and early intervention to support them
- The involvement of pupils and their parents in decision- making
- 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.

Through successful implementation of this policy, Whinless Down Academy Trust aims to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

### **Legal Requirements**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including but not limited to

- Children and Families Act 2014
- DfE Special Educational needs and disability code of practice:0-25 years
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
- Schools Admissions Code, DfE 1 Feb 2012
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2015,2024
- The Special Educational Needs (personal budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
- DFE Supporting children with Medical conditions 2015
- The UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Health and Care Act 2022
- DFE Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- DFE Mental Health and Wellbeing provision in schools 2018
- DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 'Reasonable Adjustments for disabled pupils'

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Home learning Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Supporting pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Admissions Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy

### **Definition of SEND**

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. : 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'

For the purposes of this policy, a pupil is defined as having SEND if they have:

- (a) A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age
- (b) 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
- (c) 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

### **Objectives**

Every school is required to identify and address the SEND of the pupils that they support Through the implementation of this policy the Whinless Downs Academy Trust will:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that pupils with SEND get the support they need to access the schools broad and balanced curriculum
- Ensure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside those 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 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 SEND provision ie the SENCo
- Inform parents when they are making SEND provision for their child
- Review, prepare and publish important information about the school and its implementation of relevant SEND policies including Accessibility plans, Admission arrangements for children with SEND and an information report about the implementation of the school's policy for pupils with SEND.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The governing bodies will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- Ensuring the school meets its duties in relation to supporting pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school.

The headteachers are responsible for ensuring the school 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 the school 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 the school 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 the school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice.
- Work with the governing board to ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school.
- Ensure the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions.

- Provide the SENCO with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- 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 SENCOs will be responsible for:

- Collaborating with the governing board and headteacher, as part of 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.
- Liaising with the relevant designated teacher for LAC with SEND.
- Advising on a graduated approach to providing SEND support.
- Advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively.
- Liaising with the parents of pupils with SEND.
- Liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies, as required.
- 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 relevant governors and the headteacher to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Ensuring that the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up-to-date, in line with the school'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.

Teachers will be responsible for:

- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy.
- Planning and reviewing support for pupils with SEND on a graduated basis, in collaboration with parents, the SENCO 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.
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- 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.

### **Identifying SEND**

The school 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 as outlined in the school's SEN Information Report.

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.

The school 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

The school will use a range of indicators to identify a pupil's difficulty and plan provision, including before the child arrives at the school:

Identification of pupils with SEND will be continuous through children's time at the school. Staff will be expected to remain alert to events that can lead to learning difficulties, such as bereavement or bullying.

The school will maintain a list of pupils who have been recognised as having SEND. The records will be held centrally and kept securely. In some circumstances the records may be shared with external agencies, for example, for safeguarding issues or on transition to another school.

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

- Discussions between the teacher and SENCO.
- 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.

Once a pupil has been identified with SEND, the school 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.

## **EAL**

The school 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.

The school 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.

## **Admissions**

The school 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 the school 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.
- Ensuring policies relating to school uniform and trips do not discourage parents of pupils with SEND from applying for a place.
- Adopting fair practices and arrangements in accordance with the 'School Admissions Code' for the admission of children without an EHC plan.
- Ensuring the school'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 school website.

The school may challenge a decision to name the school in an EHC plan if the school considers that such a placement would be unsuitable based on the child's age, ability, aptitude or SEND; or it would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children or the efficient use of resources. The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments can be made to provide a placement.

## **Examination access arrangements**

The school will endeavour to apply for access arrangements in year 6 for PESE tests and SATS's for those children who meet the given criteria. These will be based on what already works in day to day classroom teaching. A pupil requiring an access arrangement will not necessarily be placed on the SEND register, nor will they automatically require a targeted support plan.

## **Transition**

The school 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.

## **Involving pupils and parents in decision-making**

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

Where a pupil is receiving SEND support, the school will regularly liaise with parents in setting outcomes and reviewing progress. The class teacher, supported by the SENCO, will meet with the parents **three** times each year.

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

Where the LA provides a pupil with an EHC plan, the school will involve the parents and the pupil in discussions surrounding how the school can best implement the plan's provisions to help the pupil thrive in their education, and will discern the expected impact of the provision on the pupil's progress.

Where necessary, the school will facilitate support from an advocate to ensure the parent's views are heard and acknowledged.

## **Funding for SEND support**

Where additional pupil needs are identified the school will use its delegated funding allowance to provide early intervention support for the benefit of pupils identified with SEND.

Where pupils with SEND have been receiving early intervention support but are still not making sufficient progress, the school will consider discussing their needs at a Community of Schools Meeting

## **EHC needs assessments and plans**

The school 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, the school will consult with parents 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, the school 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 LA with any school-specific information and evidence about the pupil's profile and educational progress.
- Gathering any advice received from relevant professionals regarding their education, health and care needs, desired outcomes, and any special education, health and care provision that may be required to meet their identified needs and achieve desired outcomes.

If, following the assessment, the LA decides not to issue an EHC plan, the school will be provided with written feedback collected during the EHC needs. It will use this information to contribute to the graduated approach and inform how the outcomes sought for the pupil can be achieved through further special educational provision made by the school and its partners.

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. The school will meet its duty to provide views on a draft EHC plan within 15 days.

### **Reviewing EHC plans**

Whinless Down Academy Trust will ensure that teachers monitor and review the pupil's progress during the year and conduct a formal review of the EHC plan at least annually.

The school will:

- Cooperate with the LA and relevant individuals to ensure an annual review meeting takes place, including convening the meeting on behalf of the LA if requested.
- Ensure that the appropriate people are given at least two weeks' notice of the date of the meeting, such as representatives from the LA SEN, social care and health services.
- 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,
- Ensure that sufficient arrangements are put in place at the school to host the annual review meeting.
- Contribute any relevant information and recommendations about the EHC plan to the LA, keeping parents involved at all times.
- Lead the review of the EHC plan to create the greatest confidence amongst pupils and their parents.
- Prepare and send a report of the meeting to everyone invited within two weeks of the meeting, setting out any recommendations and amendments to the EHC plan.
- Clarify to the parents and pupil that they have the right to appeal the decisions made regarding the EHC plan.

- Where possible for LAC, combine the annual review with one of the reviews in their care plan, in particular the personal education plan (PEP) element.
- Where necessary, provide support from an advocate to ensure the pupil's views are heard and acknowledged.
- Where necessary, facilitate support from an advocate to ensure the parent's views are heard and acknowledged.
- Review each pupil's EHC plan to ensure that it includes the statutory sections outlined in the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', labelled separately from one another.

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

### **Supporting successful preparation for adulthood**

Whinless Down Academy Trust 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,.

The school will:

- Seek to understand the interests, strengths and motivations of pupils and use this as a basis for planning support around them.
- Support pupils so that they are included in social groups and develop friendships.
- Ensure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school together with those who do not have SEND, and are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and in any wider community activity.
- Engage with secondary schools, as necessary, to help plan for any transitions.

### **Managing complaints**

The trust will publish the Complaints Procedure Policy on its website.

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

Whinless Down Academy Trust 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.**

### **Staff training and improving practice**

Whinless Down Academy Trust is committed to the learning and development of all its staff members and training opportunities will be provided and delivered in line with Whinless Down Academy Trusts CPD and Training Policy.

Each school SENCO 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.

### **Use of data and record keeping**

All information about pupils will be kept in accordance with Whinless Down Academy Trust's Records Management Policy and Data Protection Policy.

The school's records will:

- Record details of additional or different provision made under SEND support, with accurate information to evidence the SEND support that has been provided over the pupil's time in the school, as well as its impact, e.g. through the use of provision maps.
- Include details of SEND, outcomes, action, agreed support, teaching strategies and the involvement of specialists, as part of its standard management information system to monitor the progress, behaviour and development of all pupils.
- 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.

Each school in Whinless Down Academy Trust keeps data on the levels and types of need within the school and makes this available to the LA and Ofsted.

### **Confidentiality**

The schools 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.

The schools will adhere to the Pupil Confidentiality Policy at all times.

### **Publishing information**

Whinless Down Academy Trust will publish information on their website about the implementation of this policy and information report.

The information published will be updated [annually](#) and any changes to the information occurring during the year will be updated as soon as possible.

### **Joint commissioning, planning and delivery**

The schools will work closely with local education, health and social care services to ensure pupils get the right support.

Whinless Down Academy Trust will assist the LA 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).

Whinless Down Academy Trust 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 local children with EHC plans and their main needs.
- The numbers and types of settings locally that work with or educate pupils with SEND.
- An analysis of local challenges or sources of health inequalities.

Whinless Down Academy Trust 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.

### **Local offer**

Each school's governing board will collaborate with and support the LA in developing and reviewing the Local Offer, where necessary and appropriate, to ensure that it is:

- **Collaborative:** Where appropriate, the school will work with LAs, parents and pupils in developing and reviewing the Local Offer. The school will also cooperate with those providing services.
- **Accessible:** The school will collaborate with the LA during development and review to ensure that the LA's Local Offer is easy to understand, factual and jargon-free; is structured in a way that relates to pupils' and parents' needs, e.g. by broad age group or type of special educational provision; and is well-signposted and -publicised.
- **Comprehensive:** The school will help to ensure that parents and pupils understand what support can be expected to be available across education, health and social care from age 0 to 25 and how to access it. The school will assist the LA in ensuring that the Local Offer includes eligibility criteria for services, where relevant, and makes it clear where to go for information, advice and support, as well as how to make complaints about provision or appeal against decisions.
- **Up-to-date:** The school will work with the LA to review the Local Offer to ensure that, when parents and pupils access the Local Offer, the information is up-to-date.

The school will provide the LA with information about their existing SEND provision and capabilities to support pupils with SEND to aid in the drafting of the Local Offer, where required.

### **Monitoring and review**

The policy is reviewed on an [annual](#) basis by the executive headteacher in conjunction with the board; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff, parents 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 26](#)

## ***SEND Information Report***

### **The kinds of special educational need for which provision is made at the school**

Within the Whinless Down Academy Trust we can make provision for every kind of frequently occurring special educational need without an Education, Health and Care Plan, for instance dyslexia, developmental coordination disorder, speech and language needs, ASC, ADHD, learning difficulties and behaviour difficulties. There are other kinds of special educational need which do not occur as frequently and with which the school is less familiar, but we can access training and advice so that these kinds of needs can be met.

<b>Area of Need</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Communication and Interaction	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
	Speech and Language difficulties
Cognition and Learning	Specific Learning Difficulties including dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia
	Moderate Learning Difficulties
Social, emotional and mental health	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
	Trauma and attachment
Sensory and/or physical	Hearing impairments
	Visual Impairments
	Physical impairment

For children with an Educational, Health and Care Plan, whose parents request a Whinless Down Academy Trust school for their child, we will endeavour to meet needs within the mainstream provision provided in our schools. Each case is considered on an individual basis, in consultation with parents and outside agencies, to ascertain if the unique needs of each pupil can be best met within our mainstream settings.

The admission arrangements for pupils without an Education, Health and Care Plan do not discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children or those with special educational needs.

## **1. The staff who will support children with SEND at Whinless Downs Academy**

### **The name and contact details of the SEND Coordinators**

The SENCO at St Martin's School is Jacky Cador.

Mrs Cador is available on 01304 206620; please ask a member of the office staff or class teacher to book an appointment.

The SENCO at Vale View School is Samantha Kelly.

Mrs Kelly is available on 01304 202821; please ask a member of the office staff or class teacher to book an appointment.

The SENCOs at Priory Fields School are Alex Hughes and Claudia Marsh.

Miss Hughes and Mrs Marsh are available on 01304 211543; please ask a member of the office staff or class teacher to book an appointment.

The SENCOs across the Whinless Down Academy Trust work collaboratively. They may work with children and teachers across all three schools to ensure good provision for those with SEND.

The Whinless Down Academy Trust ensures that all SENCOs within the trust has or is completing either the National Award for Special Education Needs Co-ordination or the National Professional Qualification for Special Education Needs Co-ordinators, in line with government expectations.

### **Class Teachers**

All of our teachers at Whinless Downs Academy Trust receive SEN Training and are supported by the SENCO's to meet the needs of the pupils who have SEN  
In house training has included attachment and trauma, dyslexia, use of technology to support children with SEN and ADHD. External training has included Autism awareness, Gestalt Language Processing, Fizzy and Sensory Circuits

### **Teaching Assistants**

Each school in Whinless Down Academy Trust has a number of TA's and Higher Level Teaching Assistants who are trained to deliver interventions such as Little Wandle interventions, speech and language, sensory circuits, Fizzy, social skills, social communication groups

## Pastoral Teams

All schools have a pastoral team who are trained in either the Boxall/Nurture group or Thrive support packages. We have practitioners who are able to offer Drawing and Talking, Lego therapy, Social skills, emotional check ins, transition support and social communication as well as working in a trauma informed way.

## External Agencies and Experts

Sometimes we need extra help to offer our pupils the support they need. Whenever necessary we will work with external support services to meet the needs of our pupils with SEN and to support their families. These include:

### Community of Schools Professional Resource Group:

Speech and Language therapists through the Balanced system approach

SENIA – SEN Support and Inclusion Team (HNF officers, SENCO support, transition support, SEND whole school provision - and SEND reviews)

KPAS ( Kent PRU and attendance service) – attendance officers, exclusion advisors and courts team – Emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA support)

Educational psychologists – each school has three school based reviews per year.

Specialist Teaching and Learning Service



## Other

Occupational therapists – by referral

NELFT Well-Being Team (St Martin's only)

GP's or paediatricians – by referral

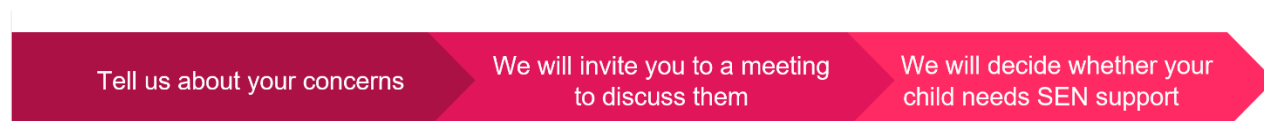
Social services and the local authority by referral

School Nurses – by referral

Voluntary sector organisations

Child and adolescent mental health services (NELFT)

## **2. What Parents Should Do if they have concerns that their child has SEN**



If you think your child might have SEN, the first person you should tell is your child's teacher.

They will pass the message on to the SENCO who will be in touch to discuss your concerns.

You can also contact the SENCO directly- see above for contact details.

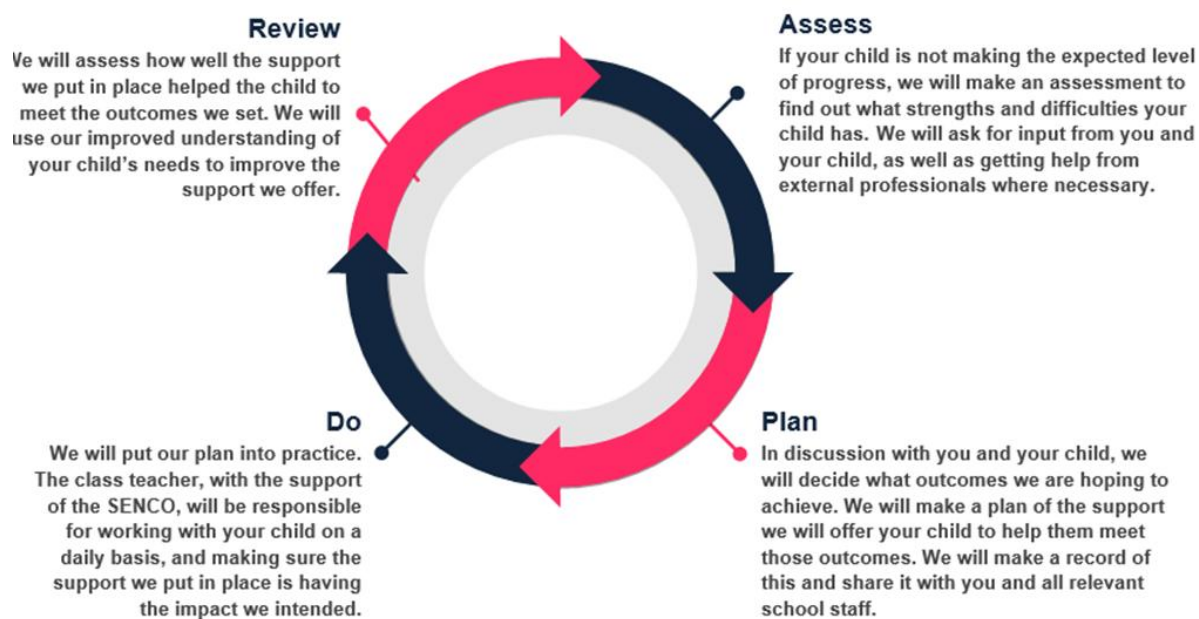
We will meet with you to discuss your concerns and try to get a better understanding of what your child's strengths and difficulties are.

Together, we will decide what outcomes to seek for your child and agree on next steps.

We will make a note of what's been discussed and add this to your child's record.

If we decide that your child needs SEN support, we will formally notify you in writing and your child will be added to the school's SEND register.

## **3. How will the schools know if a child needs SEN Support?**



#### **4. The Assess, Plan, Do, Review Process**

##### **Assess**

At the Whinless Down Academy Trust, we monitor the progress of all pupils at least three times a year to review their academic progress. Where progress is not adequate, even if a special educational need has not been identified, we put in place extra support to enable the pupil to catch up. This extra support may include: maths, writing, reading or Little Wandle phonics boosters, Language through Colour, social groups, extra tuition or any other interventions deemed appropriate.

Some pupils may continue to make inadequate progress, despite quality first teaching and targeted intervention in their areas of weakness. For these pupils, we will use a range of assessment tools to determine the cause of the learning difficulty. At the Whinless Down Academy Trust, we are experienced in using the following assessment tools: Language for Learning screenings, GL Assessment Dyslexia Portfolio, Speech Link, Language Link, Raven's Non-Verbal Assessment, British Picture Vocabulary Scale, Boxall Profile and Thrive profiling.

As schools, we consult with external agencies that use their own assessment strategies that we as a school may take on board when seeking advice on an individual basis. For example, following a Language Link assessment and intervention we may discuss our findings and seek next steps from our link Speech and Language Therapist that we have working with our school as a part of The Balanced System and Community of Schools Professional Resource Group.

##### **Plan**

The purpose of this more-detailed assessment is to understand what additional resources and different approaches are required to enable the pupil to make better progress. Information from assessments or investigation will be shared with parents. At this point we will have identified that the pupil has a special educational need (SEN) because the school is making special educational provision for the pupil which is additional and different to what is normally available. Following the identification of any SEN, we will seek the opinions of parents when putting into place an SEN Support plan that is reviewed regularly, and refined / revised as necessary. We will ensure that all teachers and support staff who work with the pupil are aware of the support to be provided and the teaching approaches to be used.

##### **Do**

If the pupil is able to make good progress using this additional and different resource (but would not be able to maintain this good progress without it) we will continue to identify the pupil as having a special educational need. If the pupil is able to maintain good progress

without the additional and different resources, he or she will not be identified with special educational needs. When any change in identification of SEN is made, parents will be notified.

## **Review**

Each review of the SEN support plan will be informed by assessment information from teachers as well as from provisions and/or interventions which will show whether adequate progress is being made. If these assessments do not show adequate progress is being made, the SEN support plan will be reviewed and adjusted. This will usually be discussed with parents during parent consultations or a separate SEN meeting.

In addition to this, for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan there will be an annual review of the provision made for the child, which will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the special provision. The collation of all annual review evaluations of effectiveness will be reported to the governing body.

## **5. The school's approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs**

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality first teaching. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered

*SEN Code of Practice (2014, 6.37)*

The Whinless Down Academy Trust Teaching and Learning Strategy outlines specific strategies which teachers and support staff use to support the needs of the whole class as well as any child with a special educational need.

Our Teaching and Learning Strategy for supporting pupils with SEND links closely to the advice outlined in the Mainstream Core Standards: [www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/specialeducational-needs/send-documents/the-mainstream-core-standards](http://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/specialeducational-needs/send-documents/the-mainstream-core-standards) - advice developed by Kent County Council to ensure that our teaching conforms to best practice. In meeting the Mainstream Core Standards, the school employs additional provisions, as informed by internal and external assessments. These are delivered by additional staff employed through the funding provided to the school through 'notional SEN funding'.

Within all three schools in Whinless Down Academy Trust, we incorporate the advice provided as a result of assessments, both internal and external, and the strategies described in Education, Health and Care Plans. Extra-curricular activities and out of hours provision are accessible to all children, including those with SEN.

As part of our requirement to keep the appropriateness of our curriculum and learning environment under review, governors and trustees regularly review the school grounds to ensure that we meet the DDA requirements. Through the accessibility plan we ensure, wherever possible, that equipment used is accessible to all children regardless of their needs. Each school's Accessibility Plan is available on their website ([www.prioryfields.kent.sch.uk](http://www.prioryfields.kent.sch.uk) , [www.stmartins.kent.sch.uk](http://www.stmartins.kent.sch.uk), [www.vale-view.kent.sch.uk](http://www.vale-view.kent.sch.uk) ). Where necessary, a Risk Assessment may be required to ensure the safety of individual pupils and those around them. This will be shared and reviewed with parents.

As part of our budget, we receive 'notional SEN funding'. This funding is used to ensure that the quality of teaching is good in the school and that there are sufficient resources to deploy additional and different teaching for pupils requiring SEN support. The amount of support required for each pupil to make good progress will be different in each case and a full list of the interventions we offer are on our provision map, which will be discussed during parent consultations. In very few cases, a very high level of resource is required. The funding arrangements require schools to provide notional SEN funding of up to £6000 per year of resource for pupils with high needs. For some pupils, the resource required to support them will be greater than the notional SEN funding. In this case the schools will present the needs of the child at a Community of Schools Meeting and request extra support or funding.

### **Support for Children with social, emotional and mental health needs**

At all schools within Whinless Down Academy Trust, we understand that an important feature of the school is to enable all pupils to develop emotional resilience and social skills, both through direct teaching (PSHE and class circles) and indirectly through every conversation adults have with pupils throughout the day. Pupils are given learning opportunities, based around Zones of Regulation as well strategies suggested through Thrive and Boxall so that they develop social and emotional understanding and self-regulation skills.

For some pupils with the most need for help in this area, we also can provide the following: time with our Thrive or Boxall Practitioners or Family Liaison Officer (FLO), access to staff within our pastoral teams, external referral to NELFT, time-out space for a pupil to use when dysregulated or in distress, access to our sensory spaces, and/or alternate provision for play and lunch times. At St Martin's a referral can also be made for support from the NELFT Well-Being Team.

Trained Social, Emotional and Mental Health Champions are also available who can offer support through a CBA (Cognitive Behavioural Approach) – individually or part of group work - to support children who have needs in this area.

The SEMH champions are:

Priory Fields- Kate Martin

Vale View- Katrina Biles

St Martin's – Jacky Cador

Pupils in the early stages of emotional and social development because of their special educational needs will be supported to enable them to develop and mature appropriately. All trust schools follow the Thrive or Nurture Approach in supporting our children's social and emotional development. There are trained Thrive or Nurture practitioners in all of our trust schools who offer individual and small group interventions for children identified with this need, as well as supporting whole class approaches. The Thrive Approach and Nurture Approach both teach a set of strategies and tools to help children and adults manage their emotions and build their resilience.

In addition, the Whinless Academy Trust school has two Designated Senior Mental Health Leaders, Jacky Cador and Alex Hughes. Designated Senior Mental Health Leaders advocate for the mental health and well-being of pupils and staff, and promote and signpost to mental health support both in school and through external agencies.

**How the school enables pupils with special educational needs to engage in activities of the school (including physical activities) together with children who do not have special educational needs:**

All clubs, trips and activities at the schools within the Whinless Down Academy Trust are available to all pupils with special educational needs, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan. Where it is necessary, the school will use the resources available to it to provide additional adult support and/or alternate, accessible activities to enable the safe participation of the pupil in the learning.

**Safeguarding children and young people with special educational needs:**

Whinless Down Academy Trust recognises that Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline (KCSIE 2024). At Whinless Down Academy Trust, SENCOs within each school are trained as DSLs and are part of the Safeguarding team. They advise the team when a safeguarding concern pertains to a pupil with SEND and can be advocates for that child, having the greater understanding of how their SEN may impact on their understanding of and ability to deal with any disclosures.

**6. Information about the expertise and training of staff in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and how specialist expertise will be secured:**

It is the SENCO's responsibility to work with teachers to plan support effectively. The school provides training and support to enable all staff to improve the teaching and learning of children, including those with SEN. As a school, we continuously review our training as well as seeking the advice and support from our Community of Schools.

Where a training need is identified beyond this, we will find a provider who is able to deliver it. Training providers we can approach are: from outreach services delivered by local specialist schools, Speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, as well as advice from Educational Psychologists via our school based review meetings. The cost of training is covered by the notional SEN funding.

**7. Information about how equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs will be secured:**

Where external advisors recommend the use of equipment or facilities which the school does not have, we will purchase it using the notional SEN funding, or seek it by loan. For highly specialist communication equipment the school will seek the advice of the Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology team.

**8. The arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education:**

All parents of pupils within Whinless Down Academy Trust schools are invited to discuss the progress of their children on three occasions throughout the year. In addition, we are happy to arrange meetings outside these times. As part of our Quality First Teaching, all pupils will access some additional teaching if the assessment procedures indicate that this is necessary; this will not imply that the pupil has a special educational need. If, however, following this provision, improvements in progress are not seen, we will contact parents to discuss the use of further assessments, interventions, referral for discussion at the community of schools meeting and/or consultation with other outside agencies, which will help us to address the individuals' needs better. From this point onwards the pupil will be identified as having 'SEN Support' because special educational provision is being made and the parents will be involved in the planning and reviewing of this provision. Further to that, specific programmes such as Fizzy, Clever hands, Speech and Language Link or Little Wandle

Phonics boosters may be implemented. All such provision will be recorded, tracked and evaluated.

In addition to this, parents of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be invited to contribute to and attend an annual review, which, wherever possible will also include other agencies involved with the pupil. Information will be made accessible for parents.

**9. The arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education:**

When a pupil has been identified to have special educational needs because special educational provision is being made for him or her, the pupil will be consulted about and involved in the arrangements made for them as part of person-centred planning. Parents are likely to play a more significant role in the childhood years with the young person taking more responsibility and acting with greater independence in later years.

**10. The arrangements made by the governing body relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of pupils with special educational needs concerning the provision made at the school:**

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints at any of Whinless Down Academy Trust schools are used for complaints about provision made for special educational needs. We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the class teacher, a member of the Leadership Team, the SENCO, the Assistant Head Teacher or the Head Teacher as a first point of call. Should this not resolve the issue, parents are encouraged to follow the Whinless Down Academy Trust's Complaints policy, available on the Whinless Down Academy Trust website.

If the complaint is not resolved after this, then a disagreement resolution service or mediation service can be contracted. If it remains unresolved after this, the complainant can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), if the case refers to disability discrimination, or to the Secretary of State for all other cases.

There are some circumstances, usually for children who have an Education Health Care Plan, where there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by the school.

**11. The contact details of support services for the parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and children and young people with SEND up to age 25 (Code of Practice 6.39):**

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provides a free and confidential, information, advice and support service, for parents of a disabled child or child with special educational needs and to children and young people up to age 25 who have a special educational need or disability.

Trained staff can provide impartial legally based information and support on educational matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities, including health and social care. The aim is to empower parents, children and young people to fully participate in discussions, make informed choices and decisions and also to feel confident to express their views and wishes about education and future aspirations.

They can be contacted via:

**HELPLINE:** [03000 41 3000](tel:03000413000) (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

**E-mail:** [iask@kent.gov.uk](mailto:iask@kent.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.iask.org.uk](http://www.iask.org.uk)

**12. The school's arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs in transferring between phases of education:**

At Whinless Down Academy Trust, we work closely with colleagues from the educational settings used by our pupils to ensure transitions between settings are as seamless as possible.

At secondary transition, a meeting with a representative from the receiving school will be arranged so that information concerning the special educational needs of the child can be discussed. Children who are considered most vulnerable may attend additional transition events at their chosen secondary school or may be identified by the school as someone who would benefit from the 'SNAP' programme or additional transition events at their chosen school.

On entry to school in Early Years, a meeting is also held with representatives from the child's nursery and where possible any involved outside agencies.

When moving classes within school, information will be passed on to the new class teacher in advance. Provision maps are shared with the new teacher to ensure continued provision.

**13. Information on where the local authority's local offer is published:**

The local authority's local offer is published on <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-andchildren/special-educational-needs> and parents without internet access should make an appointment with the SENCO for support to gain the information they require.

**14. Monitoring and Review:**

This policy and information report is reviewed on an annual basis by the headteachers in conjunction with the trust 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 Autumn 2026.