

Hartlepool Aspire Trust

(Catcote Academy & Catcote Futures)

**Special Educational Needs &
Disabilities (SEND) Policy**

January 2022



Originator: Emma Straker

Date: January 2022

Approver: Finance & Audit Committee

Date: March 2022

Contents:

Introduction

1. Legal framework
2. Responsibilities
3. Policy
4. Joint Commissioning, planning and delivery
5. Local Offer
6. EHC plans
7. Reviewing EHC plans
8. Monitoring and review
9. Definitions/abbreviations
10. Records
11. Appendices

Introduction

We aim to ensure that Catcote Academy is a friendly and secure place, with a stimulating and rewarding environment. We want every student to make as much progress as possible and aim to offer enriching experiences alongside a broad, balanced and personalised curriculum, using a range of strategies and approaches appropriate to individual needs and learning styles. The Academy adopts a proactive approach to disability equality, incorporating it into all decisions and activities.

Policies are in place to ensure the wellbeing of the whole trust community, and that the aims set out above are supported.

1 Legal framework

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

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Children Act 1989
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
- Local Government Act 1974
- Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

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 (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following trust policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Ready to Learn Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Accessibility Policy

2 Responsibilities

The following people have responsibilities under this policy:

2.1 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is responsible for the strategic direction of the Trust's SEND Policy and ensuring that statutory requirements are met. The CEO has discharged the day to day operational responsibility for implementing the policy to the SENCo for the Trust.

2.2 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

The SENCo is responsible for the operational implementation of the policy across the settings overseen by the Trust. The SENCo ensures that the Trust fulfils its statutory duties in relation to Education, Health and Care Plans and monitoring progress towards identified outcomes.

2.3 EHC Co-ordinator

The EHC Co-ordinator is overseen by the SENCo and is responsible for ensuring that an EHC review for each student is completed annually. The EHC Co-ordinator will fulfil the Trust's operational duties in relation to EHC meetings, including organising and chairing review meetings and ensuring that the information provided to the Local Authority is of a high quality.

2.4 Teaching staff

Teaching staff are responsible for the implementation of the policy within the classroom. Teachers will identify individual long and short-term outcomes for each student and contribute to Annual Review meetings.

2.5 Support staff

Support staff are responsible for ensuring that they implement the policy in all of their interactions with students.

3 Policy

3.1 Our approaches

We are committed to providing a friendly atmosphere where students can fulfil their potential, grow in confidence and above all, be happy. We achieve this by employing excellent teachers and support staff who help students to develop both academically and socially. We encourage students to develop and express their opinions in a constructive and positive manner.

Our ultimate aim is to prepare all our students for smooth transition into their adult life, increasing their understanding of their environment and ultimately the wider world. This focus begins during the early phases of their learning experiences and continues to develop with greater emphasis through the 14-19 curriculum.

Classes are organised primarily according to need, followed by students' ability and age. Some classes follow a curriculum specifically designed to meet their needs e.g. SCERTS for HAT/POL/EDU/02

autism. We personalise every student's curriculum according to their individual needs and, as students get older, provide opportunities to develop independent living and work-related learning skills.

3.1.1 Identifying Special Educational Needs

All Catcote Academy students have an Education, Health and Care Plan, produced as a result of statutory assessment in the years prior to their admission. The statutory assessment will identify any special educational needs requiring specialist provision and the Academy will implement provision to meet these needs.

The Academy takes a proactive approach to identifying additional special educational needs whilst students are on roll, having a dedicated SENCo and skilled and experienced teaching staff, as well as support from a range of external agencies. The need for further assessment or support is discussed on an ongoing basis to address any issues that arise, and during Annual Review meetings.

3.1.2 Meeting Special Educational Needs

Catcote students are given access to a broad and balanced curriculum, adapted for their needs. A 14-19 programme of personalised learning stretches and challenges the students including programmes of accreditation whenever appropriate. All students also work on Personal, Health and Social Education. We have the appropriate expertise, as well as the facilities, to help those children and young people who need to follow a semi-formal, developmental curriculum and have trained staff to implement programmes for students who are on the autism spectrum. The needs of individual students are detailed through their EHC Plan, Outcomes Plan and, where appropriate, individual behaviour (CASS) plans and individual curriculum planning.

Our students can benefit from up to three years of extended education through our 6th Form Programme. Our KS4 and 5 classes offer a range of vocational training and work experience (in and out of trust), courses leading to accreditation and continuing basic skills support. We also offer a Supported Internship programme which focuses on securing paid employment.

3.1.3 Supporting families and students

We provide a range of opportunities for parents to be involved in decision-making and have their voice heard in the running of the Academy. We value the opinions of parents and carers and operate an 'open door' policy for contact with the trust, as well as sending out questionnaires regularly. Some classes use the 'Class Dojo' platform to further engage with parents, particularly where students have limited communication skills.

We encourage all parents to have a close working relationship with the trust, particularly with their child's pastoral teacher, our SENCo and our Student and Family Support Officer. We use home-school books and the Class Dojo app to foster good communication and invite parents in to school for special events e.g. Fairtrade Tea Party, Summer Fun Day, Sports Day. Our staff are available to listen to any concerns that parents have and work with them to make sure their child gets the most from their time at the Academy.

Parents are invited to their child's Annual Review meeting, as well as other meetings that are held for individual students. We ask parents to complete a written views form as part of this process, or they can provide their views verbally during the meeting.

Our Parents and Friends group is a registered charity which raises funds to contribute towards enrichment activities for students. All parents are invited to join and the group meets regularly. Funds raised have supported class trips, discos and the purchase of specialist equipment.

We have a student council for the Academy which meets every term. There are representatives from each pathway, who are elected by their peers. The student council considers whole trust issues and ideas from each class. Items discussed and acted on include the purchase of equipment for the playground and trust buses arriving late.

We use a student review booklet or student views sheet to ensure that students' views are included in their Annual Review meeting. This is particularly useful for students who do not want to attend the meeting as well as those who aren't able to express themselves fully. The information contained in these booklets is used to form part of their EHC Plan and makes sure that students' voice is heard, including about their hopes and dreams for the future.

3.1.4 Dealing with complaints

Complaints usually arise when a parent or carer is unhappy with the way a young person has been treated, or with the way they have been treated by the trust. Our Complaints Procedure ensures that every complaint is dealt with fairly and consistently.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the trust can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. All staff need to know the procedures that follow, and the part that they may play in them.

3.1.5 Training and resources

We place a great emphasis on staff development at Catcote Academy and have a well-established programme of professional development and progression for staff. There is a high proportion of teaching staff who have completed their training whilst employed by the Academy, giving them a huge depth of experience in meeting students' special educational needs. This also ensures that our students are taught and supported by staff who know them very well and understand how to help them make progress in the curriculum.

Our staff have completed training in a range of special educational needs, teaching strategies and subject-specific skills.

3.1.6 Storing and managing information

All SEND information is stored securely, whether in paper or electronic format. Each student has a SEND File which is stored in a locked cupboard within the admin office at the Academy. Electronic files are stored securely on Sharepoint.

3.2 Reviewing provision

We have several mechanisms to ensure that the effectiveness of all provision within the Academy is continuously reviewed and evaluated, including through individual students' Annual Reviews, monitoring of teaching and learning and priorities identified in the trust's Development Plan.

3.3 Links with external support agencies

We draw on the expertise and knowledge of a range of external partners in order to support students' learning and progress. We use their advice and recommendations to problem solve and support students more effectively.

4 Joint commissioning, planning and delivery

The 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).

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

- Population and demographic data.
- Prevalence data for different kinds of SEND among children and young people 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 students with SEND.
- An analysis of local challenges or sources of health inequalities.
- The trust's Data Protection Policy will be adhered to at all times.

The trust will plan, deliver and monitor services against how well outcomes have been met, including, improved educational progress and outcomes.

5 Local Offer

The trust's board of trustees 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 trust will work with LAs, parents and students in developing and reviewing the Local Offer. The trust will also cooperate with those providing services.
- **Accessible:** The trust 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 students' and parents' needs, e.g. by broad age group or type of special educational provision; and is well signposted and publicised.
- **Comprehensive:** The trust will help to ensure that parents and students 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 trust will work with the LA to review the Local Offer to ensure that, when parents and students access the Local Offer, the information is up-to-date.

The trust will provide the LA with information about their existing SEND provision and capabilities to support students with SEND to aid in the drafting of the Local Offer.

6 EHC plans

The trust will review each student'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 student's needs significantly change, the trust will request a re-assessment of an EHC plan at least six months after an initial assessment. Thereafter, the CEO will request the LA to conduct a re-assessment of a student whenever they feel it is necessary.

The trust will ensure that any EHC plan information is kept confidential and disclosed on a need-to-know basis. Information regarding a student's EHC plan will only be shared with other educational settings if the student is transferring there, for the setting to develop an individual learning plan. The trust will take steps to ensure that students and parents are actively supported in developing and reviewing EHC plans.

7 Reviewing EHC plans

The trust will:

- Cooperate with the 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.
- Contribute any relevant information and recommendations about the EHC plan to the LA, keeping parents involved at all times.
- Ensure that sufficient arrangements are put in place at the trust to host the annual review meeting. This may involve some people attending in person and some virtually, through an online meeting platform.
- Cooperate with the LA during annual reviews.
- Lead the review of the EHC plan in order to create the greatest confidence amongst students and their parents.
- Seek advice and information about the student 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.
- Prepare and send a report of the meeting to everyone invited within **four** weeks of the meeting, which sets out any recommendations and amendments to the EHC plan.
- Provide the LA and parents with any evidence to support the proposed changes and giving those involved at least 15 days to comment and make representations.
- Clarify to the parents and student that they have the right to appeal the decisions made in regard to the EHC plan.

8 Monitoring and review

This policy shall be reviewed annually and revised if necessary. The document will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

9 Definitions / Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DfE	Department for Education
EHC	Education, Health and Care
EFA	Education Funding Agency
HAT	Hartlepool Aspire Trust
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

10 Records

The following records are produced as a result of implementation of this Policy:

HAT/POL/EDU/02

Description	Form Number	Retention Period	Storage Location
Reports for EHC meetings	EHC1	Up to age 25	SEN file; admin office Catcote – Reports group; Sharepoint

Appendix A – Additional Information

Definition of Special Educational Needs:

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream trusts or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Special educational provision means 'educational or training provision which is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age.