	Vanguard Learning Trust *The Vanguard Learning Trust is a group of local primary and secondary schools in Hillingdon. We strive to be a Trust that serves its local community and is pioneering in its approach to broadening our students' lives. We believe in effective teaching which allows our students to shine both in and out of the classroom and that intellectual curiosity is at the core of every learning experience. Whilst schools in the Trust have their own ethos and values, they share the common aspiration that all students can achieve their potential and life is a journey of discovery.*

Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) policy

Part A: Trust-wide
May 2025

Contents

Part A: Trust-wide **3**

1. Overview of policy 3
    1.1 Aims 3
    1.2 Structure 3
2. Principles 3
    2.1 Vision and values 3
    2.2 Inclusion and equal opportunities 3
3. Trust-wide SEND entitlement offer 4
4. Legislation and guidance 4
5. Definitions 4
    5.1 Special educational needs 4
    5.2 The four areas of need 5
6. Roles and responsibilities 6
    6.1 The special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinator (SENCo) 6
    6.2 The local governing body 6
    6.3 The inclusion link governor 7
    6.4 The headteacher 7
    6.5 Class teachers 7
    6.6 Parents/carers 8
    6.7 Students 8
7. Links to other Trust documents 8
8. Links with external professional agencies 8
9. Raising concerns and resolving disputes 9
    9.1 Informal concerns 9
    9.2 Formal complaints 9
10. Monitoring, evaluation and related policies 9
    10.1 Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy 9
    10.2 Monitoring the policy 9
    10.3 Links with other policies and documents 9

Part A: Trust-wide

1. Overview of policy

1.1 Aims

This special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy aims to:

- make sure that all schools in the Trust fully implement national legislation and guidance regarding students identified with SEND;
- set out how schools will:
    - support and make provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities;
    - provide students identified with SEND access to all aspects of school life so they can engage in the activities of the school alongside students who do not have SEND;
    - help students identified with SEND fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best;
    - help students identified with SEND become confident individuals living fulfilling lives;
    - help students identified with SEND, in secondary schools, make a successful transition into adulthood; and
    - communicate with students identified with SEND and their parents or carers and involve them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the student.
- explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for students identified with SEND;
- communicate with, and involve, students identified with SEND and their parents/carers in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the student; and
- make sure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff.

1.2 Structure

This policy consists of two parts, designed to promote a shared commitment across our Trust to inclusive, aspirational and equitable education for all learners, including those with SEND, while recognising and responding to the distinct contexts of our individual schools. Statutory elements are contained across both Part A and Part B. While Part A sets out the overarching principles, legal framework and Trust-wide expectations, Part B contains essential school-level information required by the SEND Code of Practice. Specifically, Part B outlines each school's arrangements for:

- identifying and assessing students with special educational needs;
- consulting with and involving parents/carers and young people in decisions about SEND support;
- managing key transitions, including between phases of education and into adulthood;
- providing training and professional development for staff to ensure effective SEND provision; and
- overseeing the admission of disabled students and ensuring how reasonable adjustments are made to support access and inclusion.

Readers should refer to Part B for detailed information on how these statutory duties are enacted within each individual school.

2. Principles

2.1 Vision and values

At Vanguard Learning Trust, we are committed to providing an outstanding, inclusive education for all students, ensuring that every learner, regardless of their individual needs, has the opportunity to thrive and meet their full potential. Grounded in our core values of aspiration, community and equity, our SEND policy reflects our dedication to fostering an environment that supports and nurtures the unique abilities and potential of each student while recognising the resources and capacities available to us.

2.2 Inclusion and equal opportunities

All Trust schools strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all students, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all students the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations. We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the school environment to make sure that students identified with SEND are included in all aspects of school life.

3. Trust-wide SEND entitlement offer

The Trust-wide entitlement offer for students with additional needs can best be described as a graduated response following three waves:

- **Wave one: Universal entitlement for all students**

At wave one, all students in the Trust are subject to baseline assessments. These are aimed to achieve early identification of a need. Information gathering at this stage might include observation, parental engagement and whole-cohort testing. Outcomes of this will inform next steps and a graduation to wave two for some students.

- **Wave two: Additional school-based support for some students**

At wave two, it is recognised that students might need support beyond the provision offered at wave one. This might include additional school-based diagnostic assessment and consideration of adding the student to the school's SEND register. Students may access provision at wave two without being placed on the SEND register. Such provision might include language, literacy, numeracy and social skills interventions.

- **Wave three: Additional targeted support for some students**

At wave three, students are generally on the SEND register and have a personalised plan to enable them to access the curriculum. At times this plan will be subject to the input of external professionals including but not limited to: educational psychologist, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, local authority (LA) advisory services and other clinical services.

4. Legislation and guidance

All schools in the Trust will adhere to the statutory guidance set out in Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (click here) as well as the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (click here), which sets out the responsibilities of schools for students identified with SEND;
- the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 (click here), which sets out the responsibilities for local authorities and schools with regards to education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCos) and the special educational needs information report;
- the Equality Act 2010 (section 20) (click here), which sets out the duties of schools to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities;
- the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) (click here), which set out the responsibilities of schools to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes having a disability) as well as those who do not share it;
- the academy trust governance guide, (click here) which sets out the responsibilities of trustees and governors for students identified with SEND; and
- the School Admissions Code (2021, click here), which sets out the obligation of schools to admit all students whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and its duty not to unfairly disadvantage children with a disability or with special educational needs.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

5. Definitions

5.1 Special educational needs

A student has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them. They have a **learning difficulty or disability** if they have:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or
- a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

5.2 The four areas of need

The needs of students identified with SEND are grouped into four broad areas. Students can have needs across more than one area and their needs may change over time. Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the student's particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

- **Communication and interaction**

Students with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or do not understand or use social norms and expectations of communication. Students who are on the autism spectrum often have needs within this category.

- **Cognition and learning**

Students with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including:

  - Specific learning difficulties, which impact one or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia
  - Moderate learning difficulties
  - Severe learning difficulties
  - Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where students are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment

- **Social, emotional and mental health**

These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Students may have:

  - mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder
  - attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder
  - suffered adverse childhood experiences

These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the student becoming withdrawn or isolated.

- **Sensory and/or physical**

Students with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. Students may have:

  - a sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment
  - a physical impairment

These students may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers. Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which they will be taught. Part B outlines the school's arrangements for the identification and assessment of students with possible SEND.

5.3 Disability

Students are considered to have a **disability** if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. defined as '*…a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial and adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities*'. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many people realise: 'long term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. It includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people with those conditions and those with SEN. Part B of this policy contains further information about each school's admission arrangements for disabled students and how reasonable adjustments are made to support access and inclusion. The policy takes account of the School's public sector equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Trust believes that:

- every student has a right to develop their full potential;
- every student has a right to a broad, balanced, relevant and challenging curriculum which is appropriate to their abilities;
- diversity supports the learning of all; and
- every student should be encouraged to play a full and active part in school life.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinator (SENCo)

Each school must have a SENCo. The name and contact details of each school's SENCo can be found in Part B of this policy. They will:

- inform any parents that their child may have SEN and then liaise with them about the student's needs and any provision made. Part B provides further information about the school's arrangements for consulting with and involving parents, carers, and young people in decisions about SEND support;
- work with the headteacher and the phase-lead inclusion governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school;
- have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual students identified with SEND, including those who have EHC plans;
- provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that students identified with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching;
- advise on the graduated approach to providing universal provision including adaptive teaching, targeted provision and specialist provision appropriate for individual students;
- advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet students' needs effectively;
- be a point of contact for external agencies, especially the LA and its support services, and work with external agencies to ensure that appropriate provision is provided;
- liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the student and their parents are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned. Further information about the school's arrangements to manage key transitions, including between phases of education and into adulthood, can be found in Part B;
- ensure that, when a student moves to a different school or institution, all relevant information about a student's SEN and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution in a timely manner;
- work with the headteacher and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- make sure the school keeps its records of all students identified with SEND up to date and accurate;
- advise the LA when a student needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review;
- work with the headteacher to monitor and identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development;
- review regularly with the headteacher and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer;
- prepare and review information for inclusion in the school's SEN information report and any updates to this policy; and
- identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching.

6.2 The local governing body

The local governing board is responsible for making sure the following duties are carried out, though the duties can be delegated to the education and standards committee or an individual:

- co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer;
- have oversight of the inclusion strategy within their respective school and across the Trust;;
- make sure that students identified with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside students who have not been identified with SEND;
- make sure that the school has arrangements in place to support any students with medical conditions;
- provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- ensure that there is a strategic approach to identifying and responding to SEND;

- ensure that all statutory reporting is available on the school's website;
- ensure that the admissions process in each school has information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and the school's accessibility plans;
- make sure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCo for the school and that the key responsibilities of the role are set out, and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out including reviewing the annual SEND report; and
- in secondary schools, make sure that all students from year 8 until year 13 are provided with independent careers advice.

6.3 The inclusion link governor

The name and contact details of each phase-level SEND link governor can be found in Part B of this policy. The inclusion governor will:

- help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings; and
- monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school and update the governing board on this through termly visits which will be structured by the Trust's inclusion lead.

6.4 The headteacher

The name and contact details of the headteacher can be found on the school's website. The headteacher of each school will:

- work with the SENCo and allocated SEND link governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school;
- work with the SENCo and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for students identified with SEND, and their progress;
- have responsibility for monitoring the school's notional high-needs budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual students;
- make sure that the SENCo has enough time to carry out their duties;
- have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of students on the SEND register;
- monitor with the SENCo to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development. Further information about how the school will provide training and professional development for staff to ensure effective SEND provision can be found in Part B;
- review regularly and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer; and
- identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching.

6.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- planning and providing high-quality adaptive teaching to meet the needs of students through a graduated approach;
- monitoring the progress and development of every student in their class;
- working closely with any learning support assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching;
- working with the SENCo to review each student's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision;
- ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the SEN information report; and
- communicating with parents through whole school processes, for example parent consultation evenings and progress reports to:
    - set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
    - discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
    - identify the responsibilities of the parent, the student and the school

- listen to the parents' concerns and agree their aspirations for the student

6.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers should inform the school if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development. Parents/carers of a student on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their child's additional needs and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. They will be:

- asked to provide information about the impact of SEN support outside school and any changes in the student's needs;
- given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with school staff, agree their aspirations for the student; and
- given an annual report on the student's progress.

The school will take into account the views of the parent/carer in any decisions made about the student. Further information about support that schools offer to parents/carers can be found in Part B. For parents/carers of children with EHC plans, they will be asked to attend the annual review as well as any interim meetings.

6.7 Students

Students will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their additional needs and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the student:

- explaining what their strengths and difficulties are;
- contributing to setting targets or outcomes;
- attending review meetings; and/or
- giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions.

The student's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

7. Links to other Trust documents

Alongside this policy, each school publishes a SEN information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school. The information report will be updated annually and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains. Each school also publishes an accessibility policy on its website, which outlines further information about how the school works to remove barriers to learning and participation.

8. Links with external professional agencies

The Trust recognises that it will not be able to meet all the needs of every student. Whenever necessary the school will work with external support services such as:

- speech and language therapists
- specialist teachers or support services
- educational psychologists
- occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- general practitioners or paediatricians
- school nurses
- child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- education welfare officers
- social services

9. Raising concerns and resolving disputes

9.1 Informal concerns

Where parents/carers have concerns about the school's provision for meeting their child's additional needs, they should first raise them informally with the class teacher. School staff will try to resolve concerns and/or issues informally in the first instance. It may include arranging meetings with parents/carers and agreeing

next steps. Whilst the school's SENCo does not have to be involved in all meetings, they will be informed by class teachers and may decide to attend. It is envisaged that most concerns can be resolved at this stage.

9.2 Formal complaints
If this does not resolve their concerns, parents/carers can submit their complaint formally. Complaints will be handled in line with the Trust's complaints policy, which is available on the school's website. Formal complaints are dealt with at Stage 2 of the process and in most cases will be considered by the school's headteacher. Parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting and will receive a written response to their complaint which may include recommendations. Should parents/carers be dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, they can escalate it to Stage 3 of the process which involves a panel hearing with governors and an independent person.

9.3 Dispute resolution
In addition, the SEN Code of Practice outlines suitable avenues for concerns and disputes (click here). For students with an EHC plan, an interim review may be necessary to discuss matters formally with staff. The London Borough of Hillingdon's SENDIASS service may be able to provide support with the resolution of any disagreements and contact details can be found on their website (click here). Hillingdon offers specific mediation when a request to assess for an EHC plan is declined: further details can be found on their website (click here).

10. Monitoring, evaluation and related policies

10.1 Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy
The Trust is constantly looking for ways to improve the SEND policy. The Trust will do this by evaluating whether or not schools are meeting the objectives set out in Section 1. Schools will evaluate how effective their SEND provision is with regards to:

- all staff's awareness of students identified with SEND at the start of the autumn term;
- how early students are identified as having SEND;
- students' progress and attainment once they have been identified as having SEND;
- whether students identified with SEND feel safe, valued and included in the school community; and
- comments and feedback from students and their parents/carers.

This will all contribute to the annual SEND report for governors and an executive Trust-wide summary for trustees. Further information about how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of their SEND provision can be found in Part B.

10.2 Monitoring the policy
This policy will be reviewed **every year**: Part A will be reviewed by the Trust's inclusion lead and approved by the board of trustees, Part B will be reviewed by the SENCo and headteacher, then followed by the local governing body. The policy will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.

10.3 Links with other policies and documents
This policy links to the following documents:

- SEN information report
- The local offer by the London Borough of Hillingdon (click here)
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting students with medical conditions policy
- Attendance policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Complaints policy

Version history

First issue/revision date	Approved by	Summary of changes if not first issue
June 2025	BoT	New version of policy, adopting Part A/Part B structure. Section 3 outlines how Trust schools use a 'waves of support' approach, which is contextualised in each school's part B. Clarity provided in several areas, such as roles and responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation, and the complaints process. New section on disability. Minor language adjustments to reflect best practice.