

**Policy Reference G09**  
**Special Educational Needs Policy**

Every school within Cumbria Futures Federation aims to provide a safe and hardworking environment where every child can be successful, whatever their abilities.

**Our Values**

- Courage and Compassion
- Inclusion and Equality
- Respect and Courtesy
- Optimism and Perseverance
- Forgiveness and Tolerance
- Ambition and Achievement

<b>Version No</b>	<b>Author/Owner</b>	<b>Date Written</b>	<b>Note of amendments made</b>
2014-01	JR	Feb 2014	Approved by Full Governors 04/02/2014
2014-02	JR	July 2014	Approved by Governors July 2014
2016-01	GW	Nov 2015	Approved by Governors Nov 2015
2018-01	GW	Nov 2017	Minor amendments including reflecting SENCO responsibilities & removal of references to 'statements'
2019-01	GW	Oct 2019	Minor amendments and sense checking
2020-01	GW	Oct 2020	Amendments to Section 2
2021-01	GW	Aug 2021	Updates and amendments
2022-01	JR	Aug 2022	Updates to staffing
2024-01	JR	Oct 24	Reviewed

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## Special Educational Needs Policy

This policy is a statement of the arrangements for inclusion and SEN at Cumbria Futures Federation. It has been written in response to the legal framework and guidance which is driving greater inclusion - in particular, the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)*, the *Special Educational Needs-Code of Practice (2001)* and *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2014)*.

### SECTION 1

#### 1. Introduction – Principles

All the schools in our Federation are committed to providing an appropriate and quality education to all the children living in our local area. We believe that all children, including those identified as having special educational needs (SEN) have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and to be fully included in all aspects of school life.

We believe that all children should be equally valued in school. We will strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to develop an environment where all children can flourish and feel safe.

We are committed to inclusion. Part of our Federation's strategic planning for improvement is to develop cultures, policies and practices that include all learners. We aim to engender a sense of community and belonging, and to offer new opportunities to learners who may have experienced previous difficulties.

This does not mean that we will treat all learners in the same way, but that we will respond to learners in ways which take account of their varied life experiences and needs.

We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background. We pay particular attention to the provision for and the achievement of different groups of learners:

- girls and boys, men and women
- minority ethnic and faith groups, Travellers, asylum seekers and refugees
- learners who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL)
- learners with special educational needs
- learners who are disabled
- those who are gifted and talented
- those who are looked after by the local authority
- others such as those who are sick; those who are young carers; those who are in families under stress; pregnant school girls and teenage mothers
- any learners who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion
- any learners whose socio-economic situation may be of disadvantage

Young people may have Special Educational Needs at any time during their school career. This policy ensures that curriculum planning and assessment takes account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the student.

We recognise that students learn at different rates and that there are many factors affecting achievement, including ability, emotional state, age and maturity. We aim to identify these needs

as they arise and provide teaching and learning contexts which enable every child to achieve to his or her full potential.

Teachers take into account, in their planning, a student's special educational needs and the provision made therefore enables them to participate effectively in all curriculum and assessment activities, in addition to the broader aspects of school life.

We have regard to the definition of SEN stated in the 'SEN Code of Practice', Introduction xiv to xvii. 'Students have SEN if they have a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special education provision* to be made for them.'

Students have a *learning difficulty* if they:

- a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of the same age; or
- b) have a disability which prevents or hinders the student from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for students of the same age in schools within the area of the LA.

Students must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

*Special educational provision* means:

- a) for student of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for student of their age in schools maintained by the LA, other than special schools, in the area

## **2. Aims and Objectives of the Policy are:**

- to identify students with special educational needs as soon as possible
- to create an environment that meets the special needs of each student
- to ensure all students have equal access to a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum.
- to encourage students to develop confidence and self-esteem and to recognise the value of their own contribution to learning.
- to encourage students to be fully involved in their learning.
- to make clear the expectations of all partners in the process and provision of special needs.
- to ensure parents are kept fully informed and are engaged in effective communication about their child's special educational need.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities.**

In our schools the provision for all students is the responsibility of all staff, as is the provision for students with special educational needs.

Anna Firth holds the role of Lead SENCO across both of our schools.

The main duties of the SENCO as outlined in Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Code of Practice) section 6.90 are:

- Overseeing the day to day operation of the Federation SEN Policy.
- Co-ordinating provision for children with SEN
- Liaising with the relevant Designated Teacher where a looked after student has SEN.
- Advising on the graduated approach to providing SEN support.
- Advising on the deployment of our delegated budget and other resources to meet students' needs effectively.
- Liaising with parents of students with SEN.
- Liaising with other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals and independent and voluntary bodies.
- Being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the Local Authority and its support services.
- Liaising with potential next providers of education to ensure a students and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned.
- Working with the Head Teacher and school governors to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Ensuring that the school keeps the records of all students with SEN up to date.

The governing body should:

- Ensure that provision is made for students who have SEN
- Ensure that the needs of students with SEN are made known to all who are likely to teach them.
- Ensure that teachers are aware of the importance of identifying, and providing for, those students with SEN
- Consult the LA and the governing bodies of other schools, when necessary or desirable in the interests of co-ordinated special educational provision in the area as a whole
- Ensure that a student with SEN joins with all students in the activities of the school together, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the student receiving the SEN provision their learning needs call for and the efficient education of the students with whom they are educated and the efficient use of resources
- Report to parents on the implementation of the school's policy for students with SEN
- Have regard to the Code of Practice when carrying out its duties to students with SEN
- Ensure that parents are notified of the decision of any extra provision being made for their students

The Governing Body has agreed admission criteria which do not discriminate against students with special educational needs. The admission policy has due regard for the guidance in the Code of Practice Section 1:27.

“All schools should admit students with already identified special educational needs, as well as identifying and providing for students not previously identified as having SEN.

“Where a child or young person has SEN but does not have an EHC plan they must be educated in a mainstream setting except in specific circumstances (see below)

The School Admissions Code of Practice requires children and young people with SEN to be treated fairly. Admissions authorities:

- **must** consider applications from parents of children who have SEN but do not have an EHC plan on the basis of the school’s published admissions criteria as part of normal admissions procedures
- **must not** refuse to admit a child who has SEN but does not have an EHC plan because they do not feel able to cater for those needs
- **must not** refuse to admit a child on the grounds that they do not have an EHC plan

Our schools work closely with partner primary schools to manage transfer from Year 6 to Year 7, and also with pastoral teams, Inspira Service, other teams from within Children’s Services including Social Care, Post 16 establishments and other agencies to manage transfer from our schools.

#### **4. Educational Inclusion**

At Cumbria Futures Federation we respect the fact that students:

- have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations
- learn at different rates
- require a range of different teaching strategies and experiences
- are all equally respected members of the community at our schools

All staff at our schools respond to student needs by:

- providing support in all curriculum areas
- planning to develop student’s understanding
- planning for students full participation in learning, and in physical and practical activities
- planning for students to manage their behaviour, enabling them to participate effectively and safely in learning

This policy ensures that teaching arrangements are fully inclusive. The majority of students will have their needs met through normal classroom arrangements and appropriate differentiation, which may include specific teaching programmes.

#### **5. Specialist Provision**

Our SENCO staff have qualifications in the teaching of literacy, specific learning difficulties and students with autistic spectrum disorders. With the support of our pastoral teams, we provide support for social, emotional and mental health issues. Students can self-refer to meet with our support staff or be encouraged to do so through parents or staff.

Our schools also have access to a wide range of specialist teachers through SEND Specialist Teaching Service, including sensory impairment, physical/medical difficulties, autistic spectrum, behaviour and speech and language, and for health needs through the Children’s Physical Health and Development Team.

All of our schools have teams of Teaching Assistants who support students in class to access and progress in their learning. The teams run interventions as needed with students and groups of students in literacy, numeracy and other specific programmes for example social language skills. When needed, we also run a Keyworker scheme for students with EHC plans and other students with a need for 1:1 support.

As such our schools should be able to meet the needs of any student who attends a mainstream school. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss the special educational needs of their child with the SENCO, prior to transition. This discussion is best started in Year 5 for students transferring from primary school. This process of transition is of utmost importance for students with more complex and / or less common needs.

## SECTION 2

### **6. Information about the school's Policy for Identification, Assessment and Review for all students with SEN**

The SENCO will work with all staff and parents to ensure students who may need additional or different support to that normally found within the classroom, are identified as soon as possible. Parents are encouraged to contact the SENCO, Head Teacher, Head of House or Tutor, at any time, with any concern over the needs of their child or the provision put in place for them. Students are similarly encouraged to act as their own expert and self-refer for assessment or request different or additional provision. Students often use support staff as a starting point for expressing their concerns. The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and/or SENCO attend all parents' evenings and students are expected also to attend, these offer an opportunity to review progress as well as discuss future needs and provision.

The progress made by all students at our schools is regularly monitored and reviewed. We do not identify students as having special educational needs unless they are in receipt of provision that is additional or different from that which goes on in the classroom as part of our differentiated approach. This provision includes being taught in small groups, being withdrawn for a specific teaching programme, students in Key Stage 4 following specific Entry Level programmes, special arrangements for examinations, specific foci for in-class support, longer term pastoral or mentoring programmes and adaptations to the curriculum.

Students who are not making adequate progress are identified as having additional or special educational needs. Progress of students is regularly monitored through levels and attitude to learning, transition discussions with partner primary schools, formal and informal assessments, discussions with subject teachers, tutors, support staff and parents. Progress of individual and groups of students are regularly reviewed against targets set by departments. The groups are: all students, girls, boys, low, middle and higher prior attainment, children looked after, children in receipt of student premium, those with special educational needs.

Staff consult with the SENCO when the evidence gathered through the usual assessment and mentoring arrangements gives concern about a student's progress.

Additional support may be set out in an group or individual passports, or through an individual Provision Plan for students with more complex needs.

The SENCO will consult with parents, students, carers, teachers and support staff about student's plan or passport, and provision made to ensure all interested parties are aware of the learning targets and their contribution to its implementation.

All plans or passports will be reviewed after an appropriate period of time to enable a judgement to be made about its effectiveness. All review outcomes will be recorded and if appropriate new targets will be set. Parents and students will be invited to take part in the review and target setting process. Times for review will be set when a plan is put in place, these will usually be tied to the school assessment calendar, but parents, students or staff can request that a plan be reviewed at any time as circumstances can change.

If we have evidence that a student is making insufficient progress despite support in place, the SENCO may seek further advice, through an Early Help Assessment, from an external specialist



within Children's Services or Health Services. This could include referral to other professionals, including specialist teachers, educational psychologist, inclusion officers and Health Service professionals. The SENCO will keep parents and student fully involved and informed about any proposed interventions.

The range of support for students following the involvement of other agencies will be similar to that prior to that involvement but may be necessarily more intensive.

Education, Health and Care Plan - Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan will, in addition to the ongoing review of their progress and specific support through their plan or passport, be reviewed annually. A report containing recommendations will be provided for the LA which will consider whether to maintain, amend or cease the Education, Health and Care Plan. The LA must send a copy its decision to the Headteacher, parents and anyone else they deem appropriate. This must take place within four weeks of the review meeting.

The annual review in Year 9 and any subsequent annual reviews until the young person leaves school must include a focus on preparing for adulthood and transition planning should be included in any Education, Health and Care Plan. The transition planning should draw together information from a range of individuals within and beyond school in order to plan coherently for the young person's transition to adult life. It is important that students with special needs have the opportunity to experience post-16 provision, and where ever possible we, with support from Inspira, arrange for students to visit providers for taster sessions.

Our schools will, in collaboration with students and parents; liaise with the receiving organisation when a student with special needs is due to transfer, and will, if appropriate, forward to them all relevant information to enable an effective transfer.

We collaborate closely with external bodies, for example Inspira, to oversee the delivery of the Transition Plan and the Inspira Personal Adviser (PA) should co-ordinate the delivery.

The SENCO will attend Annual Reviews of students in Year 5 onwards who will be attending our schools in Year 7. They will also gather information form Year 6 teachers and Head Teachers about all students joining our schools. This information includes, not only academic data, but also information on social skills and needs, successful strategies, pastoral and medical information. The SENCO will attend any review prior to joining that parents and primary school feel is appropriate. Parents are encouraged to speak to the SENCO at parents' evenings, or at any other time as necessary. Although students from partner primary schools visit our schools a large number of times prior to joining, they can often still be apprehensive and additional early visits are arranged where deemed necessary, these can range from visits around the site, staying for lunch and break time to attending lessons.

Students, who are capable of forming views, have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. The views of the students in our schools are given due weight according to their age, maturity and capability. The rights of young people to make decisions subject to their capacity is set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The aim of the act is for young people to be able to make as many decisions for themselves and that decisions made for them are in their best interests. Young people may lack capacity to make decisions in one area but be able to in another area of their life.

Students participate where possible, in all the decision making processes, including setting targets and contributing to their IEPs / Passports, discussing their choices, assessment of needs and in the review procedures.

We encourage all students to participate in their learning by:

- inviting them to talk about and reflect on their experiences as learners
- adopting teaching strategies which encourage initiative and independent learning
- providing them with opportunities to evaluate their progress and aptitudes and contribute their own learning plans and personal targets

## **7. Allocation of Resources**

The SENCO is responsible for the operational management of the specified and agreed resourcing for special needs provision within our schools, including provision for students with Education, Health and Care Plans.

The Headteacher informs the governing body of how the funding allocated to support special educational needs has been deployed.

Funding for special educational needs provision comes from two main sources. A notional special needs budget based on 5% of the average weighted student unit, 50% of deprivation funding and 100% of Low cost high incidence funding, based on performance at Key Stage 2 SATs (non-statutory funding) and funding directly related to “topping up” Education, Health and Care Plans (statutory funding), the school is expected to provide the first 11 hours of provision for students with statements or Education, Health and Care Plans. The significant proportion of the notional special needs budget that is allocated on a per capita basis can be a limiting factor in terms of provision that can be made for students. Both of these sources of funding are spent predominantly on SEN staffing with additional resources being made available.

The Head Teacher, SENCO and Finance Manager meet at least annually to agree how to use funds, including those directly related to statements.

The greatest majority of resources being human resources, resources are predominantly allocated through the SEN Timetable. The definition of the timetable is needs led, flexible and open to adaptation dependent on changing need.

The general principles in definition of the SEN timetable are:

- a) to meet the needs of students with Education, Health and Care Plans as defined in their plan and at their last Annual Review.
- b) to meet commitments made to the curriculum, for example provision of Key Stage 4 Entry Level groups.
- c) to meet the specific needs of students, for example small group literacy teaching, specific forms of in-class support or delivery of sensory curriculum.
- d) to meet the general needs of students.

In following these principles consideration is given to parent, student, departmental and individual staff requests, preferences and skills.

The SEN timetable is continually audited and the correlation between resources and their allocation is monitored on an individual and year group basis.

The effectiveness of the resources for special needs will be monitored as part of the on-going self evaluation of our schools.

## **8. Access to the Curriculum**

All students have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is differentiated to enable students to:

- understand the relevance and purpose of learning activities
- experience levels of understanding and rates of progress that bring feelings of success and achievement.

All students will receive a broad and balanced curriculum, relevant to the needs of the individual. Access to the curriculum is therefore facilitated by whatever means necessary to ensure that success is achieved. All teachers take account of the inclusion statement in The 2014 Secondary National Curriculum in England:

- Setting suitable challenges
- Responding to student's needs and overcoming potential barriers for individuals and groups of students.

We aim to recognise strengths as well as weaknesses and try to involve all students in the all activities of our schools.

Early identification assessment and intervention are recognised as the key to meeting the needs of the individual students.

Teachers use a range of strategies to meet students' special educational needs. Lessons have clear learning objectives; work is differentiated and assessment used to inform the next stage of learning.

Education Plans contain specific targets and are designed to inform teaching and learning and therefore enable students to progress. All students identified as having additional needs or with a EHC plan have their additional or different provision recorded and their progress planned for and monitored.

Provision of support in our schools is needs led. Wherever possible students are supported and maintained within the subject classroom, reflecting the entitlement of students to share the same learning experiences of their peers. There are times, however, when, to maximise learning, the students work in small groups or in a one to one situation outside the classroom.

The Head Teacher and the SENCO will meet regularly and discuss special needs issues and provision. The Headteacher, SENCO and the Named Governor with responsibility for special needs hold termly meetings.

## **9. Complaints Procedures**

Our Federation Complaint Procedure is available on the school website or from the school office.

Under the SEN and Disability Act 2001, parents can request the services of an independent disagreement resolution. The SENCO will provide more information about this on request.

## **SECTION 3**

### **10. Staffing and Partnership**

Our schools undertake an annual audit of staff training needs related to special educational needs issues and meets these where possible, in conjunction with Federation priorities. All staff take part in the School Annual Professional Review. Particular support is given to Newly Qualified Teachers and to new members of staff as part of their induction.

The SENCO, in conjunction with the staff development officer will provide training through the INSET programme to ensure all staff are fully informed of relevant SEN issues and procedures in our schools.

### **11. Partnership with Parents**

Form tutors, in conjunction with subject teachers work closely with parents throughout their child's education. Parents should in the first instance contact the form tutor in case of any concern or difficulty.

Our schools provides information about the Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS) which is available, on request, from the SENCO to all students with special educational needs.

At all stages of the Special Educational Needs process our Schools keep parents fully informed and involved. We recognise parents have expert knowledge of their son or daughter and take into account the wishes, feelings and knowledge of both parents and students and encourage them to make an active contribution to the students' education.

The SENCO, Headteacher or Deputy Headteachers are available, as necessary, at all parents' evenings to discuss specific issues in relation to students. The SENCO can be contacted either by student planner, letter or telephone message at any time regarding an issue relating to Special Educational Needs. Our Schools encourage parents to do this in recognition that parents often will identify difficulties students are having at an early stage and early intervention is always more effective.

The SENCO will arrange as necessary tours of our schools for Parents of prospective students with additional needs.

### **12. Links with Other Schools**

The SENCO will liaise with the staff at feeder primary schools to ensure effective arrangements are in place to support students at the time of transfer. These arrangements are usually made during the Summer term for Year 6 students or sooner if necessary.

The SENCO will attend as many annual review meetings of Year 5 and 6 students transferring as possible.

When students move to another school their records are transferred within 15 days of ceasing to be registered at any of our schools.

Our Schools will make arrangements for students to follow specific programmes or courses at other

schools or schools as appropriate.

### **13. Links with Other Agencies**

Our schools work closely with all the LA's Students and School Support staff (referred to in Section 6) when identifying, assessing and making provision for special needs students.

Our schools also work closely with a wide range of other services to meet the needs of students, for example Health Services, (e.g. speech therapy and physiotherapy), Social Services, and Inspira.

#### **Success Criteria**

The success of this policy is judged against the aims set out above. The policy is reviewed annually and the Governing Body's Annual Report will comment on its implementation.

Additionally, our schools will set specific targets against which the progress can be measured on an annual basis. These are set out in the Departmental Development Plan and the School Development Plan.