Orion Education

POLICY

SEND

Approval Date	**2026/27 – AUTUMN TERM**
Review Date	**2027/28 – AUTUMN TERM**
Owner	Trust Lead for SEND

Policy Type

	Trust Policy to be adopted in full
■	Trust Policy adapted by the School
	School Policy

Approval Body

	Executive
■	Trust Board
	Local Advisory Body (LAB)

Orion Education

Our Four Critical Questions

Why do we exist?

To improve outcomes, transform lives and enable social mobility.

How do we behave?

Trust • Kindness • Endeavour

What do we do?

We create a strong network of schools which transform the lives of students by enabling them to achieve high educational and personal goals, regardless of their background.

How do we succeed?

Through a clear backbone, strong culture, academic rigour and smart systems.

Key Contacts

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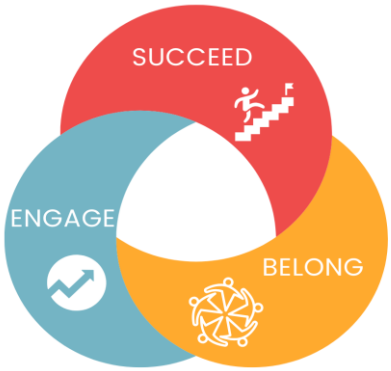
Our Vision, Values, and Scope

1.1 Scope and Purpose of this Policy:

At Orion Education, we are committed to delivering a truly inclusive education that empowers every learner with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) to thrive.

Our mission at Orion Education is 'improving outcomes, transforming lives'. Our support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is part of this mission. At Orion Education, we want everyone to understand the principles behind our commitment to SEND. We recognise that parents of children with SEND are parent-carers and partners with us in their child's learning.

Our 3 strategic objectives are:



Belong: Embedding Inclusive Culture & Community

Foster a trust-wide culture of belonging where every learner with SEND is valued, included, and supported through proactive, adaptive teaching and whole school inclusive practices.

Engage: Strengthening Engagement, Access and Wellbeing

Improve attendance, reduce suspensions, and enhance engagement and wellbeing for SEND pupils through early identification, personalised support, and equitable access to learning.

Succeed: Driving Outcomes through Personalised and High-Quality Provision

Ensure all learners with SEND make strong academic and developmental progress through high quality outcomes and experiences.

This policy document sets out the principles which all our schools adopt in making provision for pupils with SEND and the ways in which they are held accountable. Each of our schools publishes its own SEND Information Report, updated on the website annually, as required by the Children & Families Act 2014. This report contains detailed information about the practices and provision within each school.

This policy applies to all employees, officers, governors, Trustees, and volunteers who work face-to-face with our pupils.

- To demonstrate our Trust's commitment to procedures relating to SEND and inclusion.
- To ensure all stakeholders, including staff understand their role and responsibilities in relation to SEND and inclusion.
- To outline and ensure all pupils receive their entitlement to a high-quality education, appropriate to their individual needs, that enables them to achieve their potential
- To promote an inclusive ethos throughout the schools that enables pupils with SEND to have their needs met
- To ensure children are safe (following guidelines from 'Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024)

1.2 **This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Orion Education Trust and school policies:**

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions and Attendance
- Behaviour/Behaviour for Learning/Exclusions
- Anti-Bullying
- Careers
- Medical Conditions
- Data Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing

1.3 Relevant guidance

This policy is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2015, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2021, and the following legislation. Through these documents, Orion Education ensures that our schools act in accordance with the relevant laws and guidance, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children & Families Act 2014
- SEND Regulations 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015)

2. What do we mean by special educational needs and disability?

2.1 SEN is defined in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015) as follows:

- *A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.*
- *A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.*
- *For children aged two or more, 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, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers.*

Needs of different types may co-exist and one may give rise to another. Some needs are immediately apparent, others emerge only gradually. Sharing information about these changes is an important aspect of our partnership with parent-carers and is guided by the Code of Practice and will be managed through the school's assess, plan, do and review cycles.

2.2 Identification of SEN

Paragraphs 6.28-6.35 of the Code describe 4 broad categories of need – Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Difficulties, and Sensory and/or Physical needs. These four broad areas give an overview of the range of needs that should be planned for. The purpose of identification is to work out what action

the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. At Orion Education we identify the needs of pupils by considering the needs of the whole child not just their SEN.

2.3 Disability is defined in the same Code as follows:

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is '…a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their 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'…

At Orion Education, many types of support and pastoral care are offered ordinarily which are not special educational provision, but simply part of our inclusive and transformative mission. Only when a pupil requires provision which is additional to or different from what an Orion Education school normally offers do we say that a pupil has special educational needs.

2.4 Special Educational Needs Coordinator

In line with statutory and non-statutory guidance the acronym 'SENCO', to represent the Special Educational Needs Coordinator role, will be used throughout this document. This is a statutory role in schools and all Orion Education schools have a person designated as such.

Every school is required to have a SEN Co-ordinator and each SENCO must undertake the national training award within three years. At Orion Education, our SENCOs report to their leadership team on the development of our provision for SEN and Disability, reflected in an annual SEN Information Report.

The name and contact details of our SENCO can be found in the key contacts list on page 34 of this document.

3. What are the aims of our SEND policy and practices?

Our aims are simple:

- To ensure that our mission to improve outcomes and transform lives fully includes our pupils who have special educational needs or a disability, offering the range of benefits of a mainstream education within a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum
- To build knowledge, skills, and confidence which prepare our pupils for the next stage of their journey and increase their opportunities to enjoy a fulfilling and independent life
- To work with accurate and up-to-date information about our pupils' needs, drawing

on parent-carers' knowledge and the specialist expertise of other agencies, so that the teaching and support we offer is relevant, targeted, and highly effective

- To provide support and advice for all staff working with SEN pupils
- To work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015)
- To provide a SENCO who will work with the SEND Policy
- To ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils living with disability to give them access to the quality education we offer and include them at every stage

4. Where does our SEND policy begin?

4.1 Admissions

The Policy covers each stage of our involvement with a pupil, starting with admission. We monitor our admissions closely to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are not refused admission or discriminated against because of their needs. For those who have SEND but do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) from their Local Authority, our Schools consider applications on the basis of their published admissions criteria as part of normal admission arrangements.

For pupils who have an EHCP, their Local Authority must consult a school before naming it in an EHCP. if the Local Authority name an Orion Education School, that School has a duty to admit the pupil where the parent makes the necessary arrangements for the pupil to attend". The admission of pupils with an EHCP is outside the normal admissions process and such pupils are admitted under- S43 Children and Families Act 2014.

4.2 Key Stages 3 -5

From admission, we follow the SEND Code of Practice (6.17-6.19) in ensuring that class teachers (in primary schools) and subject teachers (in secondary schools) regularly assess all pupils and seek to identify those whose progress is significantly slower than their peers or than their previous rate of progress. This includes progress in non-academic areas such as their wider participation or their social development.

We believe high-quality teaching is the most important element to improve pupils' outcomes and this can include appropriate interventions to support pupils who may have SEND.

5. How do we track and support pupils with SEND?

It is a statutory requirement for each School to publish a SEND Information Report on their website annually.

The Report includes detailed information on how the school tracks and supports pupils with SEND consistent with this Policy and with the guidance in the Code of Practice (section 6). The support will follow these graduated steps for pupils who do not have an EHCP:

- Regular and careful review of teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of SEND
- Clear written advice to parent-carers whether the support they need can be provided from the setting's 'core' (standard) offer or whether something different or additional is required
- If it is decided that a pupil does have SEN, this should be recorded, and the pupil's parents must be formally informed that special educational provision is being made
- Assessment of the pupil's needs, planning of appropriate support, doing what has been planned, and reviewing the pupil's progress in response to support with a clear date for review (known as the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle)
- Early discussion with the pupil and parent-carer, recording and sharing the outcomes which were agreed together with the next steps to help achieve these outcomes
- A clear date for reviewing progress with the pupil, parent-carer, and teaching staff being clear about their role
- Information to parents and young people on where to find the local authority's SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)
- For higher levels of need, specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals may be discussed with parent-carers; referrals can only be made with their consent and will explore the use of the appropriate local offer.

5.1 Role of the Local Authority

For pupils with an EHCP, Orion Education Schools have a duty to use their best endeavours to make the provision described in section F of the Plan within the resources available.

However, the pupil's Local Authority is ultimately responsible for these resources: the Children & Families Act, s42(2) states that *"The local authority must secure the specified special educational provision for the child or young person."*

If we are unable to deliver provision despite best endeavours, we will inform the pupil's parent-carer through our Annual Review of the pupil's EHCP or by holding an Interim Emergency Review if waiting for the Annual Review would create an unreasonable delay. Parents should then seek a resolution in relation to provision with their Local Authority, with assistance from their local SEND Information, Advice, and Support Service as necessary.

5.2 Access Arrangements

The SENCO, along with the SEND governor, senior leadership team, and teachers, have additional responsibilities in relation to externally marked examinations as detailed in JCQ's Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments annual publication.

These are adjustments for statutory tests and examinations. The SENCO in each School is responsible for identifying pupils who may require these arrangements, alongside requesting detailed feedback from teachers on the pupil's normal way of working.

Regulations concerning eligibility and the adjustments which can be made for pupils with SEND are updated annually as follows:

- Key Stage 2 SATs: *access arrangements* are set out by the Standards & Testing Agency each Autumn Term
- Key Stage 4 GCSEs: *access arrangements* are set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications in August each year

The implementation of Access Arrangements is monitored and inspected by these bodies.

Entitlement to Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) will be determined through a combination of relevant assessments administered by a qualified assessor, evidence provided by outside agency professionals (such as the educational psychologist), evidence collected from education (such as teacher feedback, and evidence of 'normal way of working) and, where there is one in place, a student's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), in accordance with JCQ guidance for each type of access arrangement available the school has responsibility for allocating adequate resources to ensure the furtherment of the Accessibility Plan.

6. Who is responsible for ensuring the Policy is followed and monitoring the progress that pupils with SEND make?

Orion Education places high value on the part governance plays in school improvement. Each of our Schools has a Local Advisory Board (LAB) to support and challenge leadership to ensure the pupils' well-being and continually drive standards forward. One member of each LAB is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of this SEND policy and the schools' individual SEND support systems at the Board.

Concerns or complaints about SEND matters should initially be raised with an appropriate member of staff; this may be the Class Teacher / Tutor, the SENCO, or, if appropriate, the Principal / Headteacher / Head of School. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint through our Complaints Procedure which is available from Reception and on our website.

6.1 The roles at each School which underpin this policy can be summarised:

The SEND reviewer on each LAB will:

- review for the Board the impact of SEND provision within their school
- work with the school leadership team and SENCO to continually improve SEND provision

The school leadership team will:

- work with the SENCO and SEND governor to sustain quality in the SEND provision of their School
- have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of pupils with SEND

The SENCO will:

- work with the leadership team and SEND governor to support the design of SEND provision
- be responsible for the identification of student's special educational needs through the school's own assessments and through referral to specialist services where the student's presenting needs indicate
- co-ordinate the provision made to support individual pupils with SEND and EHCPs
- maintain all SEND documentation and always follow School policy on data protection
- provide professional guidance to colleagues and identify training needs, reporting to the leadership team
- work with staff, parents, and other agencies to deliver the graduated approach to providing SEND Support set out in the Code of Practice to national standards where applicable
- work with leadership to ensure efficient deployment of their School's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- be the point of contact for external agencies including the Local Authority and its support services
- liaise with other education providers to ensure successful transitions for pupils with SEND joining or leaving the school
- meet the requirements and responsibilities for SENCOs set out in the statutory SEND Regulations 2014 and subsequent instruments
- work with the leadership team and LAB to ensure that their School meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements

Class teachers / subject teachers will be responsible for:

- the progress and development of all their pupils
- working closely with the SENCO and colleagues to implement and review reasonable adjustments and SEND support within their teaching

Teaching assistants and specialist staff will be responsible for:

- working closely with the class teacher(s) to plan, deliver and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to the curriculum
- undertaking and sharing training or awareness activities in support of pupils' identified needs under direction from the SENCO to promote the continuous development of the school's provision

7. Where can I find out more about SEND at each Orion Education school and what will they tell me?

Each School publishes an annual SEN Information Report on its website. This Report provides details of local arrangements for SEND including:

- The kinds of special educational needs for which provision is made
- details about the school's information-gathering process to identify pupils' SEND
- how the school evaluates the effectiveness of its provision for such pupils
- arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of pupils with SEND
- the name and contact details of the SEN co-ordinator
- arrangements for supporting pupils with SEND through the transition from their previous school and on to the next phase of education or in preparation for adulthood and independent living including information about the local authority's local offer.