BRIDGWATER AND TAUNTON COLLEGE TRUST

SEND POLICY 2026-2027

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Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust (BTCT) SEND Policy

This policy outlines Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust's aims and expectations for the provision of special educational needs and disability across our Trust. It is a statutory requirement that each academy outlines their personalised Special Education Needs and Disability procedure in their SEN Information Report and Accessibility Plan which will accompany this policy.

Trust Vision for SEND:

Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust (BTCT) has high aspirations for every child, recognising individual differences in ability, aptitude and skills. We endeavour to meet all individual need, providing opportunities for all children to reach their full potential.

All academies provide an inclusive learning ethos and curriculum for all its students, promoting a fundamental belief in the equality of opportunity for all. Every child will be encouraged and nurtured to be fully included into the life and curriculum of their chosen academy.

Through successful implementation of this policy, BTCT aims to:

- Promote equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination
- Provide choice and opportunity for all children/young people and parents/carers over their provision and curriculum
- Provide successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment

Contents

1. Aims…… 3
2. Legislation and guidance…… 3
3. Definitions…….. 4
4. Roles and Responsibilities…….. 5
5. The SEN Information Report…….. 7
6. The Graduated Response and Identification and monitoring of SEND……. 8
7. External Support and Further Guidance……..... 13

1. Aims

Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust aims to provide opportunities for all children to access an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum, recognising and nurturing the potential of all. As an inclusive Trust, we celebrate diversity and difference.

This SEND policy and individual academy SEN Information Reports and Accessibility Plans aim to:

- Explain how our academies identify children with SEN and/or disability and how they provide and monitor provision
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in meeting the needs for children with SEND
- Explain how students and parents are involved in improving personal attainment and progression for students with SEND.

1.2 All Academies across the Trust will:

- Support staff in their commitment to ensuring that all students with Special Educational Needs and Disability achieve their full academic and personal potential. Every student has the right to equal access to learning and curriculum.
- Encourage a collaborative and positive partnership between all those involved in the care and provision of students with SEND, involving students, parents, governors and staff in the planning, delivery and review of SEND policy, strategy and provision.
- Work in line with the Local Authority SEND team systems and processes, and the SEND 2015 Code of Practice and updates.
- Embed an atmosphere of high expectations, encouragement, acceptance, respect and sensitivity to all individual needs.
- Access appropriate resources for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability, including support from external agencies.

All Academies undertake its duty to deliver equality of access to education, provision and support by ensuring that the Accessibility Plan and Special Educational Needs and Disability policy is applied equally and with due regard for process, individual needs and circumstances.

2. Legislation and Guidance

2.1 This policy is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015 and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for students with SEN and disabilities

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN coordinators (SENCos) and the SEN Information Report.

Equality Act 2010
This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- DfE (2021) 'School admissions code'
- DfE (2023) 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of Health Needs'

3. Definitions

3.1 A child/young person has SEND if they have a difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child 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
- 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.

(Code of Practice 2015)
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.

The 2015 SEN Code of Practice identifies two categories of support for students identified with SEND. These are:

1 SEND Support
The identification of SEND Support is built into the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all students. SEND support will be triggered when, despite receiving high quality teaching and early intervention, the child:

- Continues to make little or no progress in specific subject areas, particularly in english and maths, despite having received intervention from core curriculum teams.
- Continues working at substantially below age related expectations of children of a similar age.
- Has emotional or social difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the student's own learning and progress.
- Has sensory or physical needs and requires additional specialist equipment or

regular advice or visits by a specialist service.

- Has an ongoing communication or interaction difficulty that impedes the development of social relationships and causes substantial barriers to learning.

All students recognised as SEN Support have their provision and progress monitored. This enables staff to have a clear understanding of the level of need and support required.

2 EHC Needs Assessment and Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs):

In a very small number of cases, where a student has more severe or complex need(s) that do not respond to support offered at SEND Support, a request for an Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) is put forward to the Local Authority SEND team, who, following the completion of various appendices from parents, education, care and health services, subsequently consider whether or not to issue an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan).

An EHCP is a legal document and requires an annual review to be held by the child's academy. Decisions on the admission of students with an Education, Health and Care Plan are made by the Local Authority, following consultation with individual schools/academies.

3.2 The four Code of Practice categories of special educational needs and disability:

Most students identified with SEND will fall into one of the following broad categories of SEND, but some have more than one area of need. There are four areas of SEND recognised in the 2015 Code of Practice.

1. **Communication and Interaction** - this includes speech and language and communication needs and students with autism.

2. **Cognition and Learning** - this includes moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, and specific learning needs (dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia).

3. **Physical and/or Sensory Impairment** - this includes visual or hearing impairment, multi-sensory impairment or physical disability.

4. **Social, Emotional and Mental Health** - these difficulties manifest in different ways including being withdrawn, challenging behaviours, disruptive or disturbing behaviours and diagnosed mental health disorders.

Students placed on the SEND register will have their need recognised under one or more of these four categories.

4. Roles and responsibilities - see each individual academy SEN Information Report for full details:

4.1 The SENCo

The Trust expects SENCos to:

- Work with their Headteacher, Trust Director of Inclusion and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the

Academy

- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual students with SEND, including those who have EHC Plans

- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that students with SEND receive appropriate support and high quality teaching

- Advise on the graduated approach and Assess, Plan, Do, Review process to providing SEND support

- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet students' needs

- Be the point of contact for internal and external specialist/agencies, especially the local authority and its support services

- Liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure students and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned

- Work with the Headteacher/Director of Inclusion and governing board to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements

- Ensure the school keeps accurate records for all students with SEND

4.2 The Trust expects SEND Governors to:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings

- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEN and disability provision within the academy and update the governing board on this

- Work with the Headteacher, Director of Inclusion and SENCo to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.

4.3 The Trust expects the Director of Inclusion to:

- Work with the Headteacher/individual SENCos/Trust SENCos to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the Academy

- Liaise with other providers and external agencies to be fully aware of national and regional SEND developments to share with SENCos across the Trust.

- Provide professional guidance to SENCos, colleagues and parents to support the development of SEND across the Trust.

4.4 The Trust expects Headteacher(s) to:

- Work with the SENCo, Director of Inclusion and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school

- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEN and/or a disability

4.5 The Trust expects each class teacher to be responsible for:

- The progress and development of every student in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants/HLTAs or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Work with the SENCo to review each student's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow the SEND policy

4.6 The Trust expects parents and carers to:

- Be fully involved in the identification, planning and evaluation process of their child's needs
- Communicate regularly with the child's teacher(s), identified member of staff
- Fulfil their obligations under home-academy agreements which sets out expectations of all parties;
- Take heed of their child's Academy's SEN Information Report which outlines the support available in the Academy.

5. The SEN Information Report

Each of the Academies across the Trust provides additional and/or different provision for a range of needs for the four areas of SEND of the Code of Practice:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties
- Sensory and/or Physical needs

Each individual Academy has their SEN Information Report on their website. This will differ for each Academy, as provision reflects the needs of the students and locality. The SEN Information Report runs alongside the Trust SEND policy in detailing provision and support parents can expect their child to receive.

The SEN Information Report details each Academy's approach to teaching students with SEN, available provision, training and staffing expertise and contact details of staff and agencies, including the link to the SEN Local Offer at Somerset County Council and the Somerset Graduated Response Tool.

6. Identifying students with SEND and assessing and monitoring their needs:

6.1 A Graduated Approach

The SEND (0-25 years) Code of Practice (2015) sets out that schools/academies/ colleges should develop a 'Graduated Approach' - a cycle of assessment, planning and reviewing their actions in detail and with increasing frequency to identify the best way of obtaining adequate progress for children/young people. Adequate progress can include progress which:

- Is similar to peers starting from the same place
- Matches or betters the child/young person's previous rate of progress
- Closes the attainment gap between the children/young people and their peers
- Prevents the attainment gap growing wider

Each Academy systematically assesses a child/young person's current skills and levels of attainment, which will build on previous settings and key stage assessment, where appropriate. Class teachers will continue to make regular assessments of progress for all children/young people and identify those whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better the child/young person's previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between the child/young person and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

Further discussion with the SEND team could then be prompted by:

- Students making little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in an identified area of weakness;
- Shows signs of difficulty in developing english or mathematics skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas;
- Has sensory or physical problems and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment;
- Has communication and /or interaction difficulties and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of an appropriate scaffolded curriculum;
- Has social, emotional or mental health difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the student's own learning or that of the class groups,
- Has a communication and/or an interaction difficulty that impedes the development of social relationships and causes a substantial barrier to learning.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a student is recorded as having SEND – further assessment of need will inform this decision.

6.2 Meeting SEND needs in the classroom

When deciding whether special educational provision is required, staff will assess attainment and expected progress and evaluate implementation and impact of **quality teaching approaches** in meeting the needs of all learners within the classroom.

The Trust's first approach in maximising potential for all students is quality teaching and being ambitious for learners with SEND;

'High quality teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEND. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all students, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable students and their knowledge of the SEND most frequently encountered SEN Code of Practice (2015, p99 6.37)'.

Early intervention:

Early intervention involves all students, including learners with SEND, receiving scaffolded quality teaching, including where appropriate, small group intervention within the classroom. Some vulnerable learners will also have access to activities and approaches directly related to the school curriculum, making learning accessible to those learning at different rates.

6.3 Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycle:

The Code of Practice highlights the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle as a strategy used to both identify and further support students with SEND. The four-part cycle of 'Assess, Plan, Do and Review' provides a thorough understanding of student's needs and subsequent intervention (group or individual) to support the student to make good progress and achieve best possible outcomes.

This approach follows the following format:

Assess (the needs of the individual child)

Teachers and the SENCo collectively carry out a clear analysis of a student's need when concerns are raised. This assessment will be reviewed regularly and professionals involved where appropriate. Information can be gathered through:

- A range of assessments used with all the students at various points of the academic year e.g. Lucid Exact online test, Boxall Profiles, spelling and reading age assessments.

- Information provided by parents and carers, other educational settings or outside agencies.

- Observations carried out by the SENCo /classroom teacher /outside agencies
- The students' voice to ascertain their views on their difficulties experienced in the classroom.
- The student's class books.
- Views from all members of academy staff who are involved with the student.
- Previous/transition assessment data/liaison with other feeder schools or colleges.
- Information/advice from other outside agencies/services.

All of these strategies will provide an overall picture of the 'whole' child, i.e., their strengths as well as areas to develop. This will ensure assessment of need and provision is accurate and effective from the very start.

Plan (for provision)

Strategies/additional provisions are planned for students that are not making expected progress to address the areas of difficulty, even if a special educational need has not been identified. Despite increased personalised intervention, some students may continue to make inadequate progress. For these students, and in consultation with parents, a further range of assessment tools will assess individual need to determine the cause of the learning difficulty. If necessary, external advisors or a member of the Trust Inclusion Team will be invited to complete more specific and detailed assessments. The purpose of additional external assessments will be to understand what additional resources and different approaches are next required to remove barriers to learning.

Do - (Implement the planned provision)

The SENCo will work closely with staff to ensure all planned provision takes place and any external specialist advice relevant to the student’s need is followed. A range of different teaching approaches, appropriate equipment, including the use of information technology, will be considered. All teachers and support staff who work with the student will be aware of the support to be provided and the teaching approaches to be used.

Review (the effectiveness of provision)

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on student progress will be reviewed to:

- Measure impact and quality of support
- Gain views of students and parents
- Provide feedback into the analysis of needs
- Enable the SENCo to revise the intervention and support as necessary

6.4 Identification of SEND needs and being placed on the register:

If a special educational need is subsequently identified following an APDR cycle, the class teacher(s) and SENCo will provide additional interventions or resources that are 'different from or additional to' those provided as part of the Academy's usual 'provision for all' curriculum.

A student will be identified as having SEND if they do not make adequate progress following all initial interventions and adjustments to their classroom curriculum and high-quality teaching. The student will subsequently be placed on the individual academy's SEND Register and parents notified. Every student on the SEND register will have an intervention or approach that is, 'additional to' the quality first teaching approaches, and have a recognised SEND need within either of the four areas of the Code of Practice (evident from assessment).

Following on-going provision and APDR cycle, if progress is made and gaps narrowed, students may be removed from the register and parents again informed. This will depend on the severity of SEND need and on-going need to monitor and provide additional provision.

If a SEND need had already been identified and the provision didn't impact on progress and attainment, a further Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle will be put into place.

<u>Assessing impact at whole school level:</u>

The SENCos monitor the implementation of SEND provision, providing feedback to staff. Monitoring and evaluation of effective provision is carried out through various means across each Academy and is detailed in Academy SEN Information Reports, which may include:

- Classroom observations by the SENCos/Trust Inclusion Team and SLT
- Work sampling
- On-going assessments of intervention progress
- Whole Academy Student Progress Meetings
- Monitoring impact of Pupil Passports and SSP target progression
- Attendance /exclusion records and liaison with attendance officer and behaviour lead
- Engagement and assessment with alternative, offsite provisions

At individual level

In addition to whole school student assessment points, students recognised as having special educational needs may have more frequent assessments of reading age, spelling age etc. The additional assessment data will enable SENCos to ascertain if students are increasing their level of skills in key identified areas.

If adequate progress is not being made, SEND support for existing SEND students will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly, or a student will be newly identified as SEND and placed

on the SEND register.

Students with EAL (English as an Additional Language) are not placed on the SEND register. Their progress rates are also monitored to ascertain if there is also a SEND need impacting on progress and the APDR process started if concerns raised.

All students with SEND will have individualised support detailed either on a Pupil Passport, Student Support Plan or Arbor. These documents will also be informed by the views of students, parents, class teachers, the SENCo and assessment information.

For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan, there will also be an Annual Review of the provision made for the student, which will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision.

6.5 Annual Review of an EHCP:

All EHCPs must be reviewed at least annually. The SENCo(s) will invite parents/carers and other professionals involved, where they will consider possible amendments needing to be made to the description of the child's needs or to their special educational provision specified on the EHCP.

If at any time the Academy/SEND team believes the needs of a student cannot be met within a Trust Academy (as a result of long term provision not impacting on progress), evidence will be collated and a request for either increased Banding or specialist provision/change of named placement will be put forward to the SEND Panel at the Local Authority.

6.6 Band funding

Students with an EHCP receive funding through the Banding system. In certain cases, a costed plan may be submitted to the LA SEND team requesting additional funding to the EHCP banding.

6.7 Adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment

Every Academy across the Trust has a personalised Accessibility Plan, available on individual Academy websites. The Accessibility Plans will be monitored yearly and updated if required. A full review takes place every three years.

The Trust will make the following adaptations to ensure all students' needs are met within the classroom and physical sites, including:

- Scaffolding the curriculum to ensure all students are able to access it, for example, by grouping, 1:1 work, teaching style, content of the lesson.
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc.
- Scaffolding delivery, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.
- All extra-curricular activities and school visits made available to all students, including before-and after-school clubs.
- All students encouraged to go on our residential trip(s) across each academy.

- All students encouraged to take part in sports day/school plays/workshops, etc.
- No student ever excluded from taking part in activities because of their SEN or disability.

6.8 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

All academies evaluate the effectiveness of provision for students with SEND by:

- Reviewing students' individual progress towards their goals each term
- Reviewing the impact of interventions
- Using student, parent and staff questionnaires and act on feedback
- Monitoring by the SENCo/Director of Inclusion/Trust SENCo through the SEND Development plan (or ADP) and Self Evaluation (SEF)
- Using provision maps to measure progress
- Holding annual reviews for students with EHC plans

7. Internal/External Support and Further Guidance:

7.1 Working with other agencies

As a Trust, we recognise the importance of working with a range of agencies who can offer additional support and advice concerning students. Considerable time is therefore allocated to meet with, receive advice from and work alongside staff from numerous agencies.

The key services include:

- Educational Psychology
- Education Relationship Managers/Inclusion Advice Line
- Children and Young People Specialist Service
- Children and Young People's Therapy Service (CYPTS)
- Children's Social Care (CSC)
- Family Intervention Service
- Children with Disabilities Team
- CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Team around the School (TAS)
- School Nurse Service

- Mental Health Support team
- Young Somerset
- Education Engagement Service

All academies across the Trust are also supported by the BTCT Inclusion Team, including a Trust Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Lead Counsellor and counselling team, Trust SENCos and Trust Assessor. The Trust also has three off site provisions which offer bespoke support outside of the classroom setting.

In addition, other links are made to services who are involved in supporting a smaller number of students or individuals. Meetings and programs of visits from each service take place as required, where professional advice can be sought relating to individuals, or support given to develop new initiatives.

Parents wishing to access external support services are advised to share their concerns with their child's SENCo, although details of services are included in the SEN Information Report(s).

Parental consent is always sought before an academy requests involvement of any internal/outside agency.

The SENCo is the central member of staff to coordinate the access to SEND agencies.

7.2 Supporting students moving between phases and preparing for adulthood

Each academy will share information with the new school, college, or other setting about individual need, unless requested not to by parents and student.

Each academy will also endeavour to visit and speak directly with staff if receiving a new student with SEND prior to starting their new placement.

Some students will have additional transition visits and arrangements put in place according to their SEND need(s). This will be fully discussed with parents, student and staff and vary according to need.

7.3 Consulting and involving parents

Staff within each Academy will have an early discussion with the student and their parents when identifying whether they need special educational provision. These conversations will make sure that:

- Parents feel their child's views and opinions are listened to
- Everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty
- Parents feel their concerns are listened to
- Everyone understands agreed outcomes and are clear on what the next steps are

All Academies complete an annual questionnaire on parental opinions and views of SEND

provision for their child.

If improvements in progress are not seen, Academy SEND staff will contact parents to discuss the use of internal or external assessments which will help to address these needs better. Parents will be notified when a student will receive SEND support and if placed/removed from the SEND register.

Parents will receive updates through either Pupil Passports, Parent evenings or Arbor and be offered the opportunity to come into their child's Academy to discuss progress and concerns with the SEND team/SLT.

Parents of students with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be invited to contribute to and attend an Annual Review which, wherever possible, will also include other agencies involved with the student. Information will be made accessible for parents.

Parents will also be encouraged to share their views about the accessibility of the SEN Information Report and how this could be reviewed or improved to support parents with children with SEN.

Pupil Voice:

One of the key principles of the 2015 Code of Practice is putting children, young people and their families at the heart of the legislation.

At Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust, opinions and aspirations of both parents and students will be taken seriously and listened to.

The SEND teams across all Academies collect students' opinions and views. All students with SEND are also given opportunities to express their opinions at their Annual Reviews and/or My SEN Support Review.

7.4 Complaints about SEND provision

Complaints about SEND provision at any of our BTCT Academies should be made to the SENCo and/or head teacher in the first instance. They will then be referred to the Academy's complaints policy. Full details are included on the individual SEN Information Report.
The parents of students with disabilities have the right to make disability discrimination claims to the first-tier SEND tribunal if they believe that their child's Academy has discriminated against their children. They can make a claim about alleged discrimination regarding:

- Exclusions
- Provision of education and associated services
- Making reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services

7.5 Access Arrangements for National Tests and Examinations:

Where students are required to sit formal examinations and have potential needs which require special arrangements, these will be assessed and put into place. Staff identify potential students to the SEND team using the Lucid Assessment as a baseline tool.

The students highlighted through the Lucid test are then assessed by the Trust 's Access Arrangements assessor, who tests and discusses the outcomes with the SENCo. The SENCo recommends the access arrangement e.g. reader, and this becomes the students' 'normal way of working' in the classroom environment and examinations.

Applications are made to the necessary examination boards to agree they meet the criteria. When students are awarded access arrangements, staff continue to collect evidence throughout the year in support of these arrangements.

Parents and staff will be notified of any specialist access assessments and outcomes. The SENCo has oversight of all access arrangements, alongside the Exams Officer.