



# **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy**

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## **1. Rationale**

The Laurus Trust is committed to ensuring that the necessary provision is made for all student/pupils with SEND. The SEND code of practice (2015) states that all children and young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they;

- ✓ Achieve their best
- ✓ Become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
- ✓ Make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training

The Laurus Trust believes that every student/pupil, regardless of background or circumstance, should be given an equal opportunity to become the best that they can possibly be. We are committed to ensuring that all students/pupils have full entitlement and access to rich and diverse learning opportunities, which will open the doors to the future of their choice.

## **2. Policy development**

This policy has been developed by Ms Emma Warrington and Dr Mark Sackville-Ford (Trust Directors of Inclusion) along with the school SENCOs/SEND Leaders. Parental consultation was also carried out via our Parent SEND Champions group. It has been approved by the Trustees of the Laurus Trust.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Local Offer (SEND Information Report), that is published on the website for each Laurus Trust school. The Local Offer provides a detailed insight into the specific mechanisms to support young people with SEND within each Trust school.

This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and has been written with reference to the following documents and legislative frameworks:

- ✓ Equality Act 2010: advice for schools DfE (2013)
- ✓ SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)
- ✓ The Children and Families Act (2014)
- ✓ The SEND Regulations (2014)
- ✓ Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)
- ✓ Safeguarding Policy
- ✓ Accessibility Plan
- ✓ Teachers' Standards (2012)

The Equality Act 2010 brought together a range of previous acts into a single act, aiming to harmonise and strengthen discrimination law and support progress on equality.

Schools have a *legal* responsibility:

- To make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage
- To not treat disabled pupils 'less favourably'

Disability discrimination is less favourable treatment than that received by someone else for a reason related to the pupil's disability *when it cannot be justified*

### **3. Aims**

Within the Laurus Trust, we aim to;

- ✓ Ensure that the needs of student/pupils with SEND are identified as early as possible
- ✓ Maximise academic progress and personal development for all student/pupils
- ✓ Reduce and, where possible, close achievement and progress gaps between different groups of student/pupils
- ✓ Maintain a standard whereby all staff within our school are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for those pupils who have special educational needs and or disability.
- ✓ Provide a safe environment in which all student/pupils can thrive and develop into independent and resilient learners
- ✓ Prepare our student/pupils for life beyond school to enable them to become confident and responsible citizens
- ✓ Provide a differentiated curriculum that provides appropriate, challenging learning opportunities for all student/pupils in line with fully inclusive classroom practice
- ✓ Ensure that vulnerable or disadvantaged student/pupils are given the support they need to remove the barriers to their learning and personal development
- ✓ Encourage an open and continual dialogue amongst staff, parents and other relevant professionals in order to achieve the best possible outcome for individual pupils.
- ✓ Ensure that student/pupils with SEND are fully included within all areas of school life to ensure that they make progress both socially and emotionally as well as academically

## **4. Identifying Special Educational Needs and Disability**

### **Defining special educational needs**

The SEND code of practice (2015) states that;

‘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
- 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’

*(SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years, 2015)*

### **Identification before joining a Laurus Trust Primary School**

We are committed to the early identification of student/pupils with SEND in order to support future progression for the child through school. Prior to joining a Laurus Trust Primary School, staff work closely with families to make an early assessment of need. We recognise that parents or carers know their child best, and where possible we use an informal home visit to meet the child in their own context. We are fully committed to co-production as a key feature of our SEND processes.

Where the child is already known to an outside agency, such as health or social care, we work in a multi-agency way to ensure that we have the right information so that the best possible provision, intervention and support can be put in place as early as possible. Where a child already has an EHCP prior to starting school, we will work to have a School Focused Plan (SFP) in place before entry.

### **Identification once within a Laurus Trust Primary School**

Teachers and support staff are skilled at identifying the needs of student/pupils in our primary schools and understanding how their development should progress. On entry to school a ‘baseline assessment’ is carried out to identify current levels of attainment. With the support of senior leaders, we regularly monitor the progress of our student/pupils, which allows the early identification of a concern. Where a teacher identifies a difficulty or a concern about a pupil’s progress this will be discussed with the parents and SENCO, and the graduated process will be followed. Where appropriate we also take advice and support from external professionals. Teachers collate the information into the School Focused Plan to ensure that detailed provision is outlined and clear targets are in place for the pupil.

### **Identification before joining a Laurus Trust secondary school**

We are committed to the early identification of student/pupils with SEND. Prior to joining a Laurus Trust school, our pastoral team work with feeder primary schools to collate information on the specific needs of student/pupils with SEND. We collaborate with all of the relevant outside agencies and with parents, to ensure that a full picture of need is established. We work closely with the EHCP and admissions team within each Local Authority to allow a strategic approach to admission for students with SEND. All this ensures that we have the right information so that the best possible provision, intervention and support can be put in place as early as possible.

### **Identification once within a Laurus Trust secondary school**

Teaching and pastoral staff, supported by the senior leadership team, regularly assess the progress of all student/pupils, to identify those student/pupils that are not making the required level of progress in line with their ability. This can be academic progress which is quantifiable, or social and emotional progress which is measured qualitatively, primarily via the pastoral team.

### **Our Graduated Response**

The first response to student/pupils who are not making expected levels of progress, should be the teacher adapting their approach to target the student/pupil's specific weakness. This is known as 'Quality First Teaching'. If student/pupils continue to struggle to make expected progress, the school SEND Leader within each school should assess whether the student/pupil meets the definition of Special Educational Needs or Disability.

We then follow a cycle of Assess, Plan, Do and Review:

- **Assess** - In line with school procedures, school staff will carry out or request additional assessments of a student/pupil to identify an area of need.
- **Plan** - Once the assessment part of the process has been completed, the pupil's needs are determined in a consultation meeting with staff and parents. Actions will be agreed and, if appropriate, a School Focused Plan (SFP) will be created and the pupil will be placed on the school's SEND register.
- **Do** – The School Focused Plan is then followed for an agreed period of time. This is shared with all members of staff, with teaching staff taking responsibility for its implementation. The SEND Leader supports all staff and are responsible for the quality assurance of SFPs and ensuring that statutory requirements are met.

- **Review** – The effectiveness of support and intervention is reviewed regularly with staff and parents. This is an opportunity to assess the impact of any intervention and this the cycle begins again. Following a review a new plan is implemented if one is needed and the SEND register is updated appropriately.

The SEND Leads/Primary SENCOs will respond to concerns raised by parents, student/pupils or any member of our staff, to ensure that student/pupils who may have SEND are identified as early as possible. The SEND Leader will signpost outside agency or medical support for parents to pursue diagnosis for different learning needs and/or disability, or where appropriate, instigate formal diagnostic testing themselves.

## 5. Categorising Special Educational Needs

Student/pupils with special educational needs and or disability are categorised under one of the four following areas of need as set out in the SEND code of practice (2015);

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

Whilst the primary area of need above is usually identified, students/pupils can have needs which are included across multiple broad areas of need.

The level of the support that student/pupils with SEND require is denoted by the following categories;

- ✓ **Monitor** – These student/pupils do not have a special educational need and/or disability. These student/pupils have an additional need that requires a level of understanding from staff so that their needs are met through effective quality first differentiated teaching strategies. This is a **universal offer**, available to all student/pupils. These student/pupils do not necessarily have any direct input from Learning Support. Should a student/pupil in this category fail to make adequate progress, the decision might be made to escalate their level of support up to SEND support.
- ✓ **SEND Support** – These are student/pupils are classified as having special educational needs and/or disability. These student/pupils receive provision

which goes above and beyond the mainstream provision and is classified a **'targeted approach'**. Student/pupils on SEND support do not have a specific funding stream designated specifically to support their needs, but a proportion of the schools SEND budget is allocated to support these student/pupils to make progress.

- ✓ **EHCP (Education and Health Care Plans)** – Student/pupils with an EHCP have complex special educational needs and/or disability. Their provision is bespoke to the child and is classified as an **'individualised'** model of support. These student/pupils receive a designated funding allocation to support them in school and to provide additional educational provision which goes above and beyond mainstream provision.

As our schools follow a needs-led model we do not rely on a specific diagnosis of need or require an EHCP before appropriate support is in place. We encourage parents/cares to discuss provision with their school SENCO prior to making a parental application for an EHCP

## **6. The link between special educational needs and disability**

Many children and young people who have special educational needs may also have a disability. The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as '...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'. In this context, 'long term' means over a year and 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, cancer and sensory impairments. Many children and young people who have these medical/health conditions will not have special educational needs and their safe and full access to learning and progress will be covered by the duties set out in The Equality Act, including the requirement on all public bodies to make reasonable adjustments.

This means that, where a child or young person has a disability, the way in which their needs are met will depend on the impact the disability has on their access to education. If, with the appropriate non-discriminatory practices and reasonable adjustments, they can access education and make progress commensurate with their peers by accessing the resources 'normally available' to their educational setting, there will not be a need for them to be protected by an Education, Health and Care plan. Some of these children and young people with long term health conditions should have a Health Care Plan which addresses their safety, health and wellbeing whilst in the early years, school or college setting. This policy has been



developed in line with the Department of Education (DfE) published guidance “Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

## **7. The School Focused Plan**

Where a Special Educational Need is identified, the SEND Leader will communicate the needs of the student/pupil to all of the relevant school staff via a School Focused Plan (SFP). This comprehensive paperwork allows effective communication of needs and the ways that they will be met. The School Focused Plan will include the following;

- ✓ The student/pupil’s specific strengths and difficulties
- ✓ Bespoke strategies to support the student/pupil
- ✓ The intervention that is in place to support their difficulties
- ✓ The views of the parent
- ✓ The views of the student/pupil
- ✓ Feedback from staff
- ✓ A section to review the student/pupils’ progress against agreed outcomes

All students on the SEND register will have an SFP in place including those with an EHCP. The SFP allows students/pupils with an EHCP to have shorter-term targets that will link with the EHCP outcomes.

## **8. Provision**

The law says:

*“If a registered pupil or a student/pupil at a school or other institution has special educational needs, the appropriate authority must, in exercising its functions in relation to the school or other institution, use its best endeavours to secure that the special educational provision called for by the pupil’s or student/pupil’s special educational needs is made.”*

(Section 66 of the Children and Families Act 2014)

Using best endeavours means doing everything they can to meet the child or young person’s SEND. When Laurus Trust schools have exhausted our best endeavours to meet the needs of a young person, further guidance and support will be sought from the school’s Local Authority, who retain statutory responsibilities for the appropriate education for children or young people with SEND.

Provision for student/pupils with SEND is additional to or different from the mainstream curriculum in a variety of ways and may be implemented by providing;

- ✓ Differentiated learning materials or specialist equipment
- ✓ Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) within classes
- ✓ PP&R (Home learning) support sessions
- ✓ Support from staff with specialist roles
- ✓ Specialist teaching/support from outside agencies
- ✓ Individual/small group intervention delivered by our specialist SEND staff
- ✓ Detailed School Focused Plans

Across our schools we employ a range of specialist staff to support the SEND of our student/pupils. These will vary from school to school, as indicated in the local school offer, but may include:

- ✓ Literacy Specialists
- ✓ Numeracy Specialists
- ✓ Social, Emotional and/or Mental Health Specialists
- ✓ Intervention & Inclusion Specialists
- ✓ Psychometric Testing and Intervention
- ✓ School Counsellor
- ✓ Pastoral Manager
- ✓ Welfare Assistants

In order to ensure that student/pupils with SEND are appropriately supported by their teachers in lessons, we provide the following training opportunities for staff to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills required to differentiate appropriately;

- ✓ New staff SEND training on induction to the school
- ✓ Bespoke training from outside agencies, specific to the student/pupils that they support
- ✓ Further professional learning sessions on SEND at least twice per year

## **9. Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Trust Directors of Inclusion** have a strategic overview of SEND across the Laurus Trust. Their role includes;

- ✓ Working as part of the Trust's leadership team to determine the strategic development of SEND policy and provision
- ✓ Responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the SEND Policy across each school in the Trust, to ensure that it is embedded
- ✓ Being accountable for raising levels of achievement and rates of progress for student/pupils with SEND across all schools within the Trust

- ✓ Leading on strategic projects to develop the quality provision for students/pupils with SEND
- ✓ Working with relevant local authorities, external agencies and services to ensure that appropriate advice and provision is sought and provided to student/pupils with SEND across the Trust
- ✓ Responsibility for the quality assurance of each Learning Support Team within each school in the Trust
- ✓ Ensuring that appropriate training is in place to support all staff to develop their professional learning, skills and expertise in relation to SEND across the Trust
- ✓ Recruitment of SEND staffing in consultation with school senior leaders and SENCOs.
- ✓ Trust Directors of Inclusion will be qualified teachers and where they have not previously been a SENCO, will hold the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination.

#### **SENCOs/SEND Leads;**

- ✓ Works with the school leadership team and Trust Directors of Inclusion to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision
- ✓ Takes overall responsibility for managing SEND provision within their school
- ✓ Contributes to the effective management of the SEND budgets in each school
- ✓ Is accountable for raising levels of achievement and rates of progress for student/pupils with SEND
- ✓ Maintains an accurate and up-to-date register of provision made for student/pupils with SEND
- ✓ Is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the SEND policy across the school to ensure that it is embedded
- ✓ Works with relevant external agencies and services to ensure that appropriate advice and provision is sought and provided to student/pupils with SEND
- ✓ Co-ordinates the support timetable for staff with Specialist SEND roles
- ✓ Is responsible for the quality assurance of the Learning Support team

#### **The Learning Support team;**

- ✓ Acts under the guidance of the SENCO/SEND Lead to deliver support to student/pupils with SEND, so that they make progress socially, emotionally and academically

**All teachers and staff;**

- ✓ Are responsible for delivering high quality learning and support which takes into account the specific needs of student/pupils with SEND

**Trustees/Governors;**

- ✓ The SEND Link Trustee of The Laurus Trust has specific oversight of the schools' arrangements for SEND, fulfilling the statutory duties of the SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- ✓ Each School Academy Committee also has a Governor with a link to SEND who liaises with the SENCO to support the development of SEND
- ✓ All governors have an understanding of the provision and leadership of SEND across the Trust

**10. Monitoring arrangements**

The SENCOs/ SEND Leads within each school will work alongside the Trust Directors of Inclusion, to quality assure SEND provision and the successful implementation of the SEND policy. This will be done using a number of mechanisms such as;

- Learning Walks and lesson observations to look at the standard of SEND provision in the classroom
- Audits of staff knowledge and skills in relation to SEND, in order to inform future training needs
- Analysis of the progress of each student/pupil with SEND following KASH reports (Secondary) and Pupil Progress Reviews (Primary)
- Working closely with Curriculum Trust Directors to ensure that SEND has distributed leadership across the schools.

The Trust Directors of Inclusion will work the SEND link Trustee/Academy Committees to ensure that they are kept abreast of any developments made in relation to SEND provision and practice across all the Trust schools.

This policy will be reviewed by Trust Directors of Inclusion in consultation with SEND colleagues on a regular basis. If any significant changes are made during the year, the SEND policy will be updated accordingly. It will be reviewed and approved by the Laurus Board of Trustees.