



The  
**Ongar**  
Academy

<b>Title</b>	Special Educational Needs Policy
<b>Version</b>	Version 1
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<b>Committee Responsible</b>	Education
<b>Date approved by Committee</b>	27/01/15
<b>Date approved by Full Governing Body</b>	27/01/15
<b>Review Date</b>	9/2017

## Special Educational Needs Policy

**Enquiries & comments**

Any enquiries and comments about this publication may be made to:

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## **AIM**

The Headteacher, Governing Body and staff of The Ongar Academy are committed to providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to meet the needs and fulfil the potential of all students who attend the school. The school actively operates an equal opportunities policy for all students ensuring that students with special educational needs have full access to all areas of the curriculum, provided at a suitable level and differentiated according to need.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)**

Definition of Special Educational Needs Code of Practice August 2014:

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. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

## **DISABILITY**

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’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

- They **must not** directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people.
- They **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.
- Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and when carrying out their functions **must** have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people.
- They **must** publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and **must** prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty. Objectives **must** be specific and measurable. The duties cover discrimination in the provision of services and the provision of education, including admissions and exclusions. All providers **must** make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices and by the provision of auxiliary aids and services.
- Most providers **must** also make reasonable adjustments by making physical alterations. Schools and local authority education functions are not covered by this last duty, but they **must** publish accessibility plans (and local authorities, accessibility strategies) setting out how they plan to increase access for disabled students to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information.
- School governing bodies and proprietors **must** also publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and their accessibility plans.

Where a child or young person is covered by SEN and disability legislation, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements should be considered as part of SEN planning and review. Where school governors are publishing information about their arrangements for disabled children and young people, this should be brought together with the information required under the Children and Families Act 2014.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- The Governing Body and teaching staff will endeavour to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any student who has special educational needs, be this of a permanent or temporary nature, and ensure that students have every opportunity to fulfil their true potential.
- The Headteacher ensures that a student with special educational needs is, once identified, assessed and a relevant programme of provision is developed.
- The Headteacher will ensure that any student with special educational needs will be made known to all relevant staff who are likely to teach and/or support him or her.
- The staff will ensure that students with special educational needs join in the activities of the school together with students who do not have special educational needs, so far as that is reasonably practical and compatible with the student receiving the necessary special educational provision, the efficient education of other children in the school and the efficient use of resources.
- The Headteacher will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported in attending relevant training days.
- The Headteacher will ensure that the appropriately delegated employees receive adequate time allocation and resources to meet the administrative and teaching elements of the role.

## **SENCO RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The SENCO is responsible for co-ordinating the day-to-day provision for students with special educational needs.
- The SENCO is employed as a specialist advisor, to assess the needs of students with special educational needs and to develop relevant programmes of provision.
- The SENCO will make known such educational requirements to teaching staff through the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) or Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). (see Appendix 1).
- The SENCO will ensure that all relevant students have an ILP. ILPs will set out short-term targets and suggested strategies. ILPs will be reviewed once a year at least. Tracking and end of year reports are also used to monitor students' progress.
- Each student under the EHCP protocol will have their EHCP reviewed following the EHCP Review Meeting by the SENCO. Such a review could involve the student, parent and relevant employees. See Appendix 2
- The SENCO will ensure that all teaching staff have access to copies of the student's ILPs/EHCPs.
- The SENCO will ensure that each student and parent/carer has his or her own copy of the current ILP/EHCP.
- The SENCO will be responsible for ensuring that Annual Reviews for students who possess an EHCP are carried out effectively and within time limits set by the Code of Practice.

- The SENCO will ensure that any extra funding or resources that may be available from outside agencies will be fully explored.
- The SENCO will ensure that where outside agencies are involved with a student's education they will be kept fully informed. The SENCO will also ensure that full use is made of resources and personnel available to the school from such agencies.
- The SENCO will be responsible for the timetabling of employees supporting students.
- The SENCO will meet with appropriate employees to discuss individual students, good classroom practices and training needs. These meetings should take place frequently when urgent matters arise.
- The SENCO will liaise with the Governor responsible for special educational needs once a term.
- The SENCO will regularly monitor the work of the employees who work with SEN students.
- The SENCO will be available at all parents' evenings.
- The SENCO will liaise with the pastoral leaders with regards to emotional/behavioural issues of students with special educational needs.

## **1 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT**

- 1.1 A child's parents, young people, schools and colleges have specific rights to request a needs assessment for an EHC plan and children and their parents and young people should feel able to tell their school or college if they believe they have or may have SEN.
- 1.2 The legal test of when a child or young person requires an EHC plan remains the same as that for a statement under the Education Act 1996. Therefore, it is expected that all those who have a statement and who would have continued to have one under the current system, will be transferred to an EHC plan – no-one should lose their statement and not have it replaced with an EHC plan simply because the system is changing. Similarly, local authorities have undertaken LDAs for young people either because they had a statement at school or because, in the opinion of the local authority, they are likely to need additional support as part of their further education or training and would benefit from a LDA to identify their learning needs and the provision required to meet those needs. Therefore, the expectation is that young people who are currently receiving support as a result of a LDA and remain in further education or training during the transition period, who request and need an EHC plan, will be issued with one.
- 1.3 Each student's current skills and levels of attainment are assessed on entry, building on information from previous settings and key stages where appropriate. At the same time, evidence should be considered that a student may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and, if so, what reasonable adjustments may need to be made for them.

- 1.4 Class and subject teachers, supported by the senior leadership team, should make regular assessments of progress for all students. These should seek to identify students making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances. This can be characterised by progress which:
- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
  - fails to match or better the student's previous rate of progress
  - fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
  - widens the attainment gap
- It can include progress in areas other than attainment – for instance where a student needs to make additional progress with wider development or social needs in order to make a successful transition to adult life.
- 1.5 The first response to such progress should be high quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness. Where progress continues to be less than expected the class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should assess whether the child has SEN. While informally gathering evidence (including the views of the student and their parents) schools should not delay in putting in place extra teaching or other rigorous interventions designed to secure better progress, where required. The student's response to such support can help identify their particular needs.
- 1.6 Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of approaches, may be appropriate. In all cases, early identification and intervention is vital.
- 1.7 Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEN and should not automatically lead to a student being recorded as having SEN. However, they may be an indicator of a range of learning difficulties or disabilities. Equally, it should not be assumed that attainment in line with chronological age means that there is no learning difficulty or disability. Some learning difficulties and disabilities occur across the range of cognitive ability and, left unaddressed may lead to frustration, which may manifest itself as disaffection, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Identifying and assessing SEN for children or young people whose first language is not English requires particular care. All aspects of the student's performance should be assessed. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN.
- 1.8 The support provided to an individual should always be based on a full understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seek to address them all using well-evidenced interventions targeted at their areas of difficulty and where necessary specialist equipment or software.

## **2 BROAD AREAS OF NEED**

### **Communication and interaction**

- 2.1 Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.
- 2.2 Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

### **Cognition and learning**

- 2.3 Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.
- 2.4 Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

### **Social, emotional and mental health difficulties**

- 2.5 Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.
- 2.6 Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other students. The Department for

Education publishes guidance on managing students' mental health and behaviour difficulties in schools. This is available on the DFE website.

### **Sensory and/or physical needs**

- 2.7 Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties. Information on how to provide services for deafblind children and young people is available through the Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults guidance published by the Department of Health.
- 2.8 Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers. This is to be assessed by the school as needed.

## **3 PROVISION**

- 3.1 Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class, including where students access support from learning support assistants or specialist staff.
- 3.2 High quality teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. The quality of teaching for all students, including those at risk of underachievement is regularly reviewed.
- 3.3. In deciding whether to make special educational provision, the teacher and SENCO should consider all of the information gathered from within the school about the student's progress, alongside national data and expectations of progress. This should include high quality and accurate formative assessment, using effective tools and early assessment materials.
- 3.4 This information gathering should include an early discussion with the pupil and their parents. These early discussions with parents should be structured in such a way that they develop a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty, the parents' concerns, the agreed outcomes sought for the child and the next steps. A short note of these early discussions should be added to the student's record and given to the parents. The local authority's information, advice and support service should also be signposted.
- 3.5 Consideration of whether special educational provision is required should start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment

and the views and wishes of the student and their parents. This should then help determine the support that is needed and whether it can be provided by adapting the school's core offer or whether something different or additional is required. From Year 9 onwards, the nature of the outcomes will reflect the need to ensure young people are preparing for adulthood.

- 3.6 However support is provided, a clear date for reviewing progress should be agreed and the parent, student and teaching staff should each be clear about how they will close any learning gap. The overriding purpose of this early action is to help the student achieve the identified outcomes and remove any barriers to learning. Where it is decided that a student does have SEN, the decision should be recorded in the school records and the student's parents **must** be formally informed that special educational provision is being made.

## 4 SEN SUPPORT

- 4.1 Where a student is identified as having SEN, action will be taken to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This SEN support should take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the student's needs and of what support the student needs to make good progress and secure good outcomes. This is known as the graduated approach.

### Assess

- 4.2 In identifying a child as needing SEN support the class teacher, working with the SENCO, should carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs. This should draw on the teacher's assessment and experience of the student, their previous progress and attainment. It should also draw on other subject teachers' assessments where relevant, the individual's development in comparison to their peers and national data, the views and experience of parents, the student's own views and, if relevant, advice from external support services. Any concerns raised by a parent should be treated seriously and professionally. These should be recorded and compared to other assessment data and information on how the student is developing.
- 4.3 This assessment should be reviewed regularly. This will help ensure that support and intervention are matched to need, barriers to learning are identified and overcome, and that a clear picture of the interventions put in place and their effect is developed. For some types of SEN, the way in which a student responds to an intervention can be the most reliable method of developing a more accurate picture of need.
- 4.4 In some cases, outside professionals from health or social services may already be involved with the child. Liaison should be in place with these professionals but if not, parental permission must be sought so that liaison can be established.

## **Plan**

- 4.5 Where it is decided to provide a student with SEN support, the parents **must** be formally notified, although parents should have already been involved in forming the assessment of needs as outlined above. The teacher and the SENCO should agree in consultation with the parent and the student the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review.
- 4.6 All teachers and support staff who work with the student should be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. This information should be recorded electronically and made available to all relevant staff.
- 4.7 The support and intervention provided should be selected to meet the outcomes identified for the student.
- 4.8 Parents should be fully aware of the planned support and interventions and, where appropriate, plans should seek parental involvement to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

## **Do**

- 4.9 Where interventions involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the main subject teacher, the teacher still retains responsibility for the student. They should work closely with any learning support assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching. The SENCO will support the subject teacher in the further assessment of the student's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on the effective implementation of support.

## **Review**

- 4.10 The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the student's progress should be reviewed in line with the agreed date.
- 4.11 The impact and quality of the support and interventions should be evaluated, along with the views of the student and their parents. This should feed back into the analysis of the student's needs. The subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should revise the support in light of the student's progress and development, deciding on any changes to the support and outcomes in consultation with the parent and student.
- 4.12 Parents should have clear information about the impact of the support and interventions provided, enabling them to be involved in planning next steps.

- 4.13 Where a student has an EHCP, the local authority **must** review that plan as a minimum every twelve months. Schools **must** co-operate with the local authority in the review process and, as part of the review, the local authority can require schools to convene and hold annual review meetings on its behalf.

## **5 TRANSITION**

- 5.1 SEN support should include planning and preparation for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life. Where a student is remaining at the school for post-16 provision, this planning and preparation should include consideration of how to provide a high quality study programme.

## **6 SPECIALISTS**

- 6.1 Where a student continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence-based support and interventions that are matched to the student's area of need, specialists should be contacted.
- 6.2 A specialist should always be involved where a student continues to make little or no progress or where they continue to work at levels substantially below those expected of students of a similar age despite evidence-based SEN support delivered by appropriately trained staff. The student's parents should always be involved in any decision to involve specialists. The involvement of specialists and what was discussed or agreed should be recorded and shared with the parents and teaching staff supporting the child in the same way as other SEN support.
- 6.3 Where assessment indicates that support from specialist services is required, it is important that students receive it as quickly as possible.
- 6.4 The local authority and other providers should be contacted to agree the range of local services and clear arrangements for making appropriate requests. This might include commissioning specialist services directly. Such specialist services include, but are not limited to:
- educational psychologists
  - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
  - specialist teachers or support services
  - therapists
- 6.5 The SENCO and subject teacher, together with the specialists, and involving the student's parents, should consider a range of evidence-based and effective teaching approaches, appropriate equipment, strategies and interventions in order to support the child's progress. They should agree the outcomes to be achieved through the support, including a date by which progress will be reviewed.

## **7 EHCP ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 SEN support should be adapted or replaced depending on how effective it has been in achieving the agreed outcomes. Where, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress, the school or parents should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment. To inform its' decision the local authority will expect to see evidence of the action taken by the school as part of SEN support.

## **8 WEBSITE INFORMATION**

- 8.1 Named contacts for SEN and a link to local authority information on SEN should be provided on the website. This must be reviewed and kept up to date by the SENCO in conjunction with the network support team.
- 8.2 In setting out details of the broad and balanced curriculum provided in each year, details of how the curriculum is adapted or made accessible for students with SEN should also be present.

## **9 ADMISSION AND INTEGRATION**

- The Ongar Academy will admit students with already identified special educational needs as well as providing for students not previously identified as having SEN.
- Students with special educational needs but without EHCPs will be treated on an equal footing with other applicants for admission, on the basis of the school's published admissions criteria and will not be refused admission on the grounds that they do not have an EHCP or are currently being assessed.
- Students with EHCPs will be admitted to the school on the basis of the school's published admissions criteria and would only be refused in the small minority of cases where the child's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children.
- The Ongar Academy adopts a 'whole-school approach' to special educational needs, which involves all the staff adhering to a model of good practice. The staff of the school are committed to identifying and providing for the needs of all children. Integration is regarded as crucial to this policy, in line with that of the Local Education Authority and the SEND code of practice 2014.
- The school operates an equal opportunities policy for children with special educational needs, who are afforded the same rights as other children. This includes both those children with EHCPs and those others with less significant learning problems.

## **10 RECORD KEEPING**

- Subject and pastoral teachers will be responsible for ensuring that records are kept of the individual achievement of students in their class. It may be necessary to break down attainment targets into smaller steps for children with special educational needs, so that progress can be monitored and recorded. The setting of short-term objectives will assist in this process.
- Detailed records will also be kept of the students receiving extra teaching support by the SENCO. These will include information from primary school, ILPs, ILP reviews, Annual reviews (for students with Statements) and the results of standardised and diagnostic tests, Cognitive Ability Test (administered on entry to school) results, Key Stage 3 and other external exam results.

## **11 ACCESSIBILITY**

- The provision of an exciting learning environment will be a priority, to arouse student's interest and curiosity and to help those who need extra stimulus and encouragement to overcome their learning difficulties.
- A climate of warmth and support will be fostered in which self-confidence and self-esteem can grow and in which all students feel valued and able to risk making mistakes as they learn without fear of criticism.
- Grouping of students will be flexible so that learning needs may be met in individual, small group or whole-class contexts.
- The curriculum will be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. Teaching styles and flexible groups will reflect this approach.
- Schemes of work for students, within classes and year groups will reflect whole-school approaches to teaching and learning and will take account of special educational needs.
- Curriculum tasks and activities will be matched to students' differing paces and styles of learning, interests, capabilities and previous experience.
- Curriculum tasks and activities may be broken down into a series of small and achievable steps for students who have marked learning difficulties.

- Teaching approaches for children with specific learning difficulties will capitalise on their oral strengths and so avoid their difficulties with written communication e.g. through the appropriate use of tape recorders, computers or other specialist equipment. Where a child with specific learning difficulties also has hearing difficulties, teaching approaches will capitalise on visual and written strengths.
- Where a student has specific learning difficulties and/or physical or medical problems, the school will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the student has full access to all school activities – curricular and extra curricular. This school will take into consideration any/all health and safety issues, the needs of the student and the needs and safety of students taking part in such activities.

## 12 EVALUATION

This school policy will be kept under regular review. The success of this policy will be gauged by the achievements of previously agreed targets outlined in the students ILP, progress review and/or annual review. In addition the following will be assessed:

- Staff awareness of individual student needs
- Success of identification process:
- academic progress of students with special educational needs
- improved behaviour of students, where this is appropriate
- Increase in the level of integration achieved within the school setting as a percentage of time
- Student attendance
- Number of exclusions
- Consultation with parents
- Numbers of students with an EHCP
- Number of students moving between these graduated approaches
- Number of students taken off the SEN register.

The Ongar Academy and its Governing Body are committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness, and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.

Appendix 1 – Blank ILP template

Appendix 2 – Blank ILP review document

**I.L.P.**

**Name:**

**Class:**

**Date of ILP:**

**Additional information:**

**Hobbies/Interests:**

**Profile:**

<b>What do I want to get better at?</b>	<b>How do I like to be supported?</b>	<b>How can I help myself?</b>	<b>What will I have achieved?</b>
<b>1.</b>			
<b>2.</b>			
<b>3.</b>			

**How will I help my child:**

**Signed by student:**

**date:**

**Signed by Parent/Carer**

**date:**

**UPN:**

**Review of  
ILP:**

**Name:**

**Date of Review:**

**Those taking part in Review:**

<b><u>What have I achieved?</u></b>	<b><u>How did I achieve it?</u></b>	<b><u>Student:</u> What else have I achieved?</b>
1.		
2.		<b><u>Parent/Carers:</u> What do my parents/carers think about my success?</b>
3.		

**Signed by SENCO:**

**Signed by Parent/Carer:**

**Signed by Student:**

**Next Steps/Decisions made in Review:**