



Amherst School (Academy) Trust

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Policy Title	SEND Policy and Information Report
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Policy Reference	KCC model - revised
Function	For Information and Guidance
Status	Statutory
Audience	Parents, Governors, Headteacher, Teachers, Support Staff, the Department for Education.
Ownership / Implementation	The Headteacher and the Governing Body have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
Staff member responsible	Lyndsey Billing, SENCO.
Version	Updated January 2024 by Lyndsey Billing and Sue Arnold (SEND Governor)
Review Frequency	Annual
Approved by Staff & Pupil Welfare Committee	25th January 2024
Date Ratified by Governing Body	14th March 2024
Date for Review	January 2025



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Definition of SEND

At Amherst, we define SEND using the 2014 Code of Practice Definition of Special Educational Needs and disability:

A child has SEND if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability, which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of school age has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or*
- (b) 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.*

Definition of disability

Many children and young people who have SEN may also 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'

Our admission arrangements for pupils without an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) do not discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children or those with special educational needs. Decisions on the admission of pupils with an EHCP are made by the Local Authority.

SENCO

The SENCO at Amherst School is Lyndsey Billing, a qualified teacher who holds the National Award for SEN Co-ordination (NASENCO). Mrs Billing is available by phone at school on 01732 452577 (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Friday) or by email at senco@amherst.kent.sch.uk

If a parent has any concerns about their child, the first step should be to speak to the Class Teacher. If they would then like to speak to the SENCO, appointments can be booked via the school office on 01732 452577 or email senco@amherst.kent.sch.uk

The SENCO works with the Headteacher and SEND Governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school. The SENCO has day-to-day



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responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND, including those who have an EHCP. They provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching. They advise on the graduated approach to providing SEND support, on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively and are the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services.

The SENCO liaises with potential next providers of education to ensure pupils and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned. They work with the Headteacher and governing board to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements and ensures the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up to date.

SEND Governor

The Governor with responsibility for SEND is Sue Arnold. The SEND Governor helps to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing body meetings, monitors the quality and effectiveness of SEND and disability provision within the school and updates the governing board on this. They work with the Headteacher and SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school. The SEND Governor meets with the SENCO on a termly basis.

Class Teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for the progress and development of every pupil in their class. They work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching. They work with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision, ensuring they follow the SEND policy. Class Teachers receive regular training, both in house and from external providers, on the most up to date and research based methods of teaching children with additional needs.

Children with SEND needs at Amherst

Special Educational Needs and Disability are generally thought of in the following four broad areas of need:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, Emotional and mental Health Difficulties
- Sensory and/ or Physical Needs.

At Amherst we have experience of teaching children with all frequently occurring special educational needs, including Specific Learning Difficulties (dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia), speech and language needs, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), learning difficulties



and behaviour difficulties. We have experience in meeting the needs of pupils who have an EHCP across all four areas of SEND.

The school SEND register includes all children who have EHC plans. Other children on the register come under the category 'SEND Support'. These children receive extra help with their learning over and above what is available in class, for example, individualised maths tuition or specific targeted support with writing and spelling.

Identifying children with SEND

At Amherst, teachers monitor the progress of all pupils three times a year to review their academic progress in reading, writing and maths. All writing is teacher assessed, based on a range of writing in the children's books. To inform our teacher assessment, we also use a range of assessments with all the children at various points:

- NFER English and maths, Years 3, 4 and 5, autumn, spring and summer terms;
- NFER verbal and non-verbal reasoning (Year 4 in September; Year 5 in September and May);
- Past SATs papers in Year 6;
- Rising Stars SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar), all year groups 6 times a year;
- Moderation of progress in maths, writing and reading.
- Spelling age and reading age used as appropriate depending on the need of the child.

Teachers use all this information, alongside work in class exercise books and knowledge of the child to assess the children against our internal 'Steps' tracking criteria, three times a year.

As a result of ongoing tracking and monitoring, we aim to quickly identify children who are not making adequate progress. At this point a teacher might ask the SENCO to look at the child's books, make a classroom observation, and conduct some assessments (for example Junior Language Link, Sandwell Early Numeracy or Dyslexia Portfolio). This can give us a fuller picture of a child's needs and allows us to put additional targeted support in place.

Outside of more formal assessments, identification may be through a variety of means:

- Teacher observations
- Baseline assessments
- Reports from previous school
- Parent observations
- Transition information
- Targeted assessments such as Dyslexia Screener, Sandwell Assessment (Maths) and Language Link

The school carries out assessments as part of the normal information gathering process and does not require parental permission.



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The majority of a pupil's needs are met within the classroom through the delivery of high quality teaching and additional strategies to overcome barriers to learning. This may include small group work with targeted support, such as pre-teaching vocabulary, extra comprehension support, spelling groups and small group maths work. Each Year group has a Provision Map which details this small group work that is delivered in addition to class teaching. If a pupil is not making expected progress with high quality teaching, the 'Graduated Approach' is used - the Assess, Plan, Do, and Review cycle. At this point we will have identified that the pupil has a special educational need because the school is making special educational provision which is additional and different to what is normally available. Parents will be contacted to discuss the child's needs.

We also have access to the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS), who have more specialised experience with a range of learning difficulties. If we feel their advice would be helpful, we first discuss this with parents and ask for their written consent. The purpose of more detailed support might be to understand what additional resources and different approaches might help a child to make better progress. These recommendations are incorporated into the class Provision Map or a Personalised Provision Plan, which is reviewed three times a year. Some children, including all those with EHC plans, have Personalised Provision Plans, reflecting their needs. If a child is having extra help through an intervention, this is shared with parents/carers at parents' evenings in school.

If the pupil can make good progress using 'additional to and different from' resources (but would not be able to maintain this good progress without it) we will continue to identify the pupil as having a special educational need. If the pupil can maintain good progress without the additional and different resources, he or she will be taken off the SEN register. When any change in identification of SEND is made parents will be notified.

We make sure that all teachers and support staff who work with your child are aware of the support and resources to be provided, have had relevant experience or training and know what resources and approaches work best.

Evaluating the provision

The 2014 SEND Code of Practice states:

'High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.'

At Amherst the quality of teaching is judged to be good (Ofsted 2022). We follow the [Mainstream Core Standards](#) and if necessary provide one-to-one teaching, small group teaching or ICT learning programmes.

The effectiveness of SEND provision is measured using both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data will gather the views of parents, pupils and teaching staff on how successful the provision has been in enabling them to attain their outcomes. Quantitative data will use



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Amherst's internal 'Steps' tracking criteria, as well as standardised assessments. For pupils receiving SEND support with a personalised provision plan, or for those with an Education, Health and Care Plan, there will be the opportunity to review the progress made towards agreed outcomes and the effectiveness of the pupil's provision at least three times per year. For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan there will also be a formal Annual Review held each year, in line with the Code of Practice

The 2014 SEND Code of Practice says that inadequate progress...

- *is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline*
- *fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress*
- *fails to close the attainment gap between rates of progress*
- *widens the attainment gap*

The interventions we provide across the school, shown in the class Provision Map, are reviewed three times a year by the SENCO and teachers. This allows us to make informed judgements about whether or not specific interventions are having a positive impact, and if not, what might be more effective. If results suggest that progress is not as good as expected, the class teacher and SENCO will revise the Provision Map.

The curriculum and learning environment

We follow the advice in the Mainstream Core Standards on how to adapt the curriculum and the learning environment for children with SEND. We also incorporate advice given as a result of specialist assessments, and follow the strategies outlined in EHC Plans. Our school has ramps to all external classroom doors, grab rails alongside slopes and steps, and a lift, so that all children can access the whole school site. There is also a care suite with a hoist in the main school building.

As part of our budget, we receive SEN funding. This allows us to access specialist training for staff along with appropriate resources. Some children need more tailored adult support, in which case the school will apply to the Local Authority for top-up funding to meet that need.

All clubs, trips and activities offered to pupils at Amherst are available to pupils with SEND either with or without an EHC plan. Wherever possible, the school enables the participation of all children in all activities.

Social and Emotional Development

At Amherst we model by example the inclusion of *all* children, with or without SEND. We support pupils to develop emotional resilience and social skills, both through direct teaching: the PSHE curriculum, whole school and class assemblies and small intervention groups; and indirectly through the school's ethos and culture.

For children with the most need for support, we offer:

- Time-out space to use when upset or emotionally dysregulated



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- Friendship/social skills groups
- Anxieties and worries group
- Lunchtime clubs to support with friendships as well as to allow a quiet place to play or read
- Drawing and Talking
- A keyworker
- Referrals to appropriate specialised professionals, e.g., bereavement service
- Access to the Primary Outreach program offered by Two Bridges School
- Access to an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) to deliver a personalised program to support emotional needs
- A qualified children's counsellor in school, allowing us to access help quickly
- Support from Fegan's, a charity that provides counselling in school

Occasionally, we might ask for external specialist support, for example making referrals to Early Help or to CYPMHS, the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service.

Training and Specialist Equipment

All teachers cover working with SEND as part of their training, and where a specific need is identified, they may receive extra training. We meet the training needs of teaching assistants through an in-house rolling programme of TA training, external courses, and by shadowing members of staff experienced in working with children with specific needs. In addition, there is an Induction Handbook for all new staff, and whole school training takes place on Inset days and Twilight sessions.

Where external advisers recommend the use of specific equipment, which the school does not have, we either buy it using SEN funding, or loan it. For specialised communication equipment, we can ask for advice from Kent's Communication and Assistive Technology team.

Parent and Child Involvement

All parents are invited in to discuss the progress of their children. Parents of children in Years 3, 4 and 6 have two parent-teacher consultations per year; parents of children in Year 5 have three per year to allow for Secondary School discussions. Parents are also invited to open afternoons and 'meet the teacher' sessions. There is an opportunity to meet the SENCO at a convenient time for parents. Parents receive a full school report at the end of the summer term.

If a child has a Personalised Provision Plan, parents will have the opportunity to meet with the SENCO in school three times a year to review it. Parents of children with an EHC plan also review their child's provision plan three times a year as well as attending and contributing to the child's annual review. Attendees at annual review may include other agencies involved with the child. Parents receive copies of all paperwork forming the annual review.



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When a child has been identified with SEND, we talk to him or her about the extra help they are receiving and why. In line with the Code of Practice, children with an EHCP are invited to the Annual Review.

Complaints

We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the class teacher and SENCO in the first instance. The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints at Amherst School are used for complaints about the provision made for special educational needs. The Amherst School Complaints Procedure can be found on the website. If the complaint remains unresolved after following the School Complaints Procedure, the complainant could appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if the case referred to disability discrimination, or to the Secretary of State for all other cases.

There are some circumstances, usually for children who have an EHC Plan, where there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints falling within this category cannot be investigated by the school.

The Governing Body

The SEND Governor meets with the SENCO three times a year. As part of these meetings, the SENCO reports on how the school has engaged with the following:

- LIFT (the Local Inclusion Forum Team) to access the specialist teaching and learning service
- The Disabled Children's Service, who provide support to families for some pupils with high needs
- Access to the Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy services
- Any requests for advice made to the Communication and Assistive Technology Team

Support from KCC

If you need advice from KCC, please contact Advice and Support Kent/IASK. They provide free, impartial, confidential, advice, support and options around educational issues for parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities. They empower parents to play an active and informed role in their child's education. They can be contacted as follows:

HELPLINE: 03000 41 3000 (Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm)
Office: 03000 412 412
E-mail: iask@kent.gov.uk
Website: [IASK](#) (click here or go to kent.gov.uk and search IASK)

To find out about KCC's Local Offer, go to kent.gov.uk and search for Local Offer.



Transition

Infant to junior: Because Amherst is a junior school, we recognise that children moving from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 are also moving school, with a change of site, uniform, structure and – importantly – transitioning from being the oldest to the youngest children in school. The Year 3 teachers from Amherst visit Year 2 in July to observe their future class in their current setting. This enables face-to-face meetings with the Year 2 teachers to discuss each child individually.

Amherst has a buddy system, whereby in term 4, children in Year 2 at Riverhead Infants are paired up with children in Year 5 at Amherst. They do various activities together with their buddy, from making Easter Bonnets to a mini-Olympics during the Spring and Summer terms. At the start of the academic year, the new Year 3 children are met at the gate by their Year 6 buddies, and taken to class. The Year 6 buddies also accompany their Year 3 partners to the lunch hall during the first week of term and look out for them on the playground. For children with SEND, in addition to the buddy system, Riverhead hosts transition meetings, which are attended by Amherst's Head Teacher, SENCO, the child's new class teacher and the child's parents. Often, external professionals will attend too – from the Specialist Teaching Service or Health, for example.

All children in Year 2 have organised visits to Amherst before they join us in Year 3; those with SEND have extra visits, when they take photos of their new school, and use them to make their own transition books to look at over the summer holidays. Where children with an EHC Plan or SEND are coming from schools other than Riverhead Infants, the SENCO will observe the child in his or her current setting and have a handover meeting with the class teacher and/or SENCO.

Junior to secondary: A smooth transition between primary and secondary schools has an impact on children's wellbeing and their successful integration into their new settings. Clear records are kept for all children with SEND and passed on to their new schools. For children with an EHCP, Amherst will initiate a transition meeting with the SENCO at the secondary school, attended by parents and, where relevant, external professionals. The Headteacher and the SENCO have a good knowledge of secondary schools, including specialist provision, in the Sevenoaks area. We are happy to support parents by accompanying them on visits to secondary schools. For children receiving SEN Support, there will usually be a transition meeting with the SENCO at the new secondary, or where this is not possible, a telephone conversation. The Specialist Teaching Service, Early Help and the school counsellor also provide invaluable support during transition from Year 6 to Year 7.



Interventions

We run a wide range of interventions at Amherst, across the four areas of need. The range of interventions is in response to the current children's needs. Class teachers and the SENCO identify children who would benefit from the interventions, using assessment and observations. Examples of these interventions are below:

Intervention	Description
Sensory Circuits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable children to be calm and focussed during the input of the lesson Mini circuits are used with some children during lessons Children are better able to focus; mini circuits mid-lesson can be especially useful for children with attention problems
Language Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A programme for children with Speech & Language difficulties, following a structured programme recommended by the STLS Children make good progress and are required to attend a block of sessions before a referral to a Speech & Language Therapist
Daily Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For struggling readers and those who do not read aloud at home This intervention builds confidence and is often supported by parent reading volunteers
Spelling intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing spelling strategies (mnemonics, rainbow writing, pyramids) to support with spelling high frequency words Use of fun games and multi-sensory activities for spelling learning
TTRS (Touch-type Read and Spell)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered by the SENCO, two mornings a week before school To support identified children in keyboard competence and spelling The register of children is compiled by the SENCO and class teachers, with children attending by invitation Child-led, the impact is greatest where there is practice at home
Time2Talk children's counsellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional school counsellor on site one morning per week to provide counselling for up to 3 children, for a block of 8 - 12 weeks Supports children and families through emotional crises and challenges at short notice This is a key part of our provision for children's mental health and wellbeing
Lego therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For children with social communication difficulties This involves working together to assemble a project with an emphasis on verbal and non-verbal communication, joint attention and task focus, collaborative problem-solving, sharing and turn-taking
Drawing and Talking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawing and talking is a safe method of working with children to help with underlying emotional difficulties that may be affecting their learning and behaviour A child draws with a person they feel comfortable with regularly at the same time each week This intervention is completely confidential (unless there is a disclosure)



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Targeted dyscalculia intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the programme set out in <i>The Dyscalculia Solution</i>, by Emerson and Babbie • This targets children identified as making little or no progress in maths and takes them right back to the fundamentals of number
Social Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children with social communication difficulties or anxiety • The children take part in communication and social skills games
BEAM (Balance Education and Movement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An intervention targeted at children with gross motor skill difficulties/dyspraxia • There is a requirement for children to attend a block of sessions before referral to an Occupational Therapist
Clever Fingers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group for children who experience fine motor skills difficulties • Children take part in a range of activities including using play doh, tweezers, threading and sewing to strengthen fine motor skills.

NOTE

This policy/information report has been written in line with the requirements of:-
 Children and Families Act 2014
 SEND Code of Practice 2014

- SI 2014 1530 Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
 - Part 3 Duties on Schools - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
 - Schedule 1 regulation 51- Information to be included in the SEN information report
 - Schedule 2 regulation 53 - Information to be published by a local authority in its local offer

Equality Act 2010

Schools Admissions Code, DfE 1 Feb 2012

SI 2012 1124 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012

SI 2013 758 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Accessibility, Admissions, Behaviour, Child Protection, Medical, Teaching and Learning.

These policies may be viewed either online via the school website, or at the school office.