



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>SEND Policy</b>
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<b>Policy Reference</b>	<b>KCC model - revised</b>
<b>Function</b>	For Information and Guidance
<b>Status</b>	Statutory
<b>Audience</b>	Parents, Governors, Headteacher, Teachers, Support Staff, the Department for Education.
<b>Ownership / Implementation</b>	The Headteacher and the Governing Body have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
<b>Staff member responsible</b>	Becky Watson, Inclusion Manager
<b>Version</b>	Updated January 2026 by Becky Watson and Xanthippi Kapos (SEND Governor)
<b>Review Frequency</b>	Annual
<b>Approved by Staff &amp; Pupil Welfare Committee</b>	29 January 2026
<b>Date Approved by Governing Body</b>	10 March 2026
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# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



### Contents

Amherst School.....	3
SEND Policy .....	3
Legislation and Guidance.....	4
Definition of SEND .....	5
Definition of disability.....	6
Inclusion and Equal Opportunity .....	7
Inclusion Manager (SENCO).....	7
SEND Governor .....	8
Class Teachers.....	8
Children with SEND needs at Amherst.....	8
Identifying children with SEND .....	9
Evaluating the provision .....	10
The curriculum and learning environment .....	11
Social and Emotional Development.....	11
Parent and Child Involvement .....	12
SEN Information Report.....	12
Complaints .....	13
The Governing Body.....	13
Support from KCC .....	13
Transition .....	13
NOTE .....	14



### Amherst School SEND Policy

#### **Aims:**

Amherst School's Policy for Inclusion and Special Educational Needs aims to:

- Ensure our school fully implements national legislation and Kent Local Authority's guidance and expectations.

#### **Sets out how our school will:**

- Support pupils with SEND ensuring our best endeavours to provide the appropriate provision to enable positive outcomes.
- Provide an inclusive environment that enables pupils to access all aspects of school life alongside their peers.
- Provide pupils with the skills and attributes that enable them to become confident individuals who can successfully live fulfilling lives.
- Support pupils with SEND to realise their aspirations and achieve their best.
- Communicate with pupils with SEND and their parents or carers ensuring co-production and seek pupil and parent or carer voices to fully involve them in decision making and discussions to support their child's provision.
- Communicate and explain the roles and responsibilities of key school and external professionals who are supporting the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Ensure the SEND Policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff and is monitored by Governors.

At Amherst School all pupils irrespective of need access a broad and balanced curriculum which is delivered through high quality inclusive teaching to enable every pupil to make progress and reach their full potential socially, emotionally and academically. When required to do so, the school will make reasonable adjustments to support pupils with SEND. The school set high expectations and aspirations for each individual pupil, working together with them and their parents/carers to ensure that pupils with SEND become confident and independent children and young people who are able to successfully transition to the next phase of their education or adult life.



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



### Legislation and Guidance

This policy is written in line with:

The regulation associated with:

- Children and Families Act 2014 – Part 3: [Children And Families Act 2014 Part 3](#)
- Special Educational needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015:
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014: [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#)
- Equality Act 2010: [Equality Act 2010](#)
- School Admission Code 2021 [School Admission Code 2021](#)
- The School Information Regulations: Updated 24/10/24  
Academies: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>
- Governance in Academy Trusts 2024: [Governance in Academy Trusts](#)

### **Kent Local Authority:**

#### **The Local Authority's local offer**

The Local Authority's Offer can be found in the SEND Information Report

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs>

#### **Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education (CATIE)**

[A Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education \(kelsi.org.uk\)](#)

#### **What does inclusion mean in Kent?**

'As the champion of families, children, and young people our collective priorities are to be certain that all children and young people are engaged with and included in the provision of high-quality inclusive education. Ensuring that, whatever their circumstance or ability, our children have a sense of belonging, feel respected, are valued for who they are and develop the knowledge and skills required for adult life. In doing so, we strive to achieve a continuous improvement in standards, a significant narrowing of achievement gaps for vulnerable groups of learners and a wholly inclusive education system which ensures:

- **Equitable access for all.** Sufficient, appropriate, quality education provision is available for all children and young people in Kent.
- **No child is left behind.** All children and young people are supported to be engaged fully in their education.
- **Effective collaboration.** There is collaboration and multi-agency working providing a self-informing, sustainable system which supports the education of all.' (KCC: CATIE p 2-3)

**Special Educational Needs Mainstream Core Standards (ordinarily available provision) :** [Special Educational Needs Mainstream Core Standards](#)



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



### The Mainstream Core Standards:

- Sets out the provision that the Local Area has agreed should be ordinarily available for Children and Young People with SEND
- Provides guidance and advice to support schools to meet the needs of and include Children Young People with SEND
- Provides clear guidance to schools on the statutory duties regarding the inclusion of Children and Young People with SEND
- Provides information to all stakeholders on the work of schools in relation to the inclusion of Children and Young People with SEND.

The school are all working towards the ultimate goal of growing independent young people as they prepare for adulthood. All provision and support at Amherst works towards achieving the Kent Children and Young People Outcomes Framework



Our Inclusion and SEND policy should be read in conjunction with our school’s policies published on our website : <https://www.amherst.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=12>

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Policy
- Accessibility Policy

### 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 compulsory school age or a young person 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*



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



*(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 to mainstream post-16 institutions'*

*(DFE/DOH 2015: 15-16)*

*(c) .*

### **Definition of 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 is a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This definition provides a 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 sufficient overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires a special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition' (DfE/DOH 2015: 16)

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.

### **Special Educational Needs Register:**

At Amherst School the SENCO will regularly review the SEN register as part of the Graduated Approach. The SENCO will work in co-production with parents/carers and if required key external professionals to ensure high quality SEN provision is in place, informing parents/carers of any changes that have been agreed. School staff will also be informed, and records updated accordingly on the appropriate school system. A diagnosis does not necessarily mean that a pupil will be placed on the SEN register if the universal and targeted provision the pupil is accessing is enabling them to make good progress.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN) support**

'SEN support means support that is additional to, or different from, the support generally made for other children of the same age in a school. It is provided for pupils who are identified as having a learning difficulty or a disability that requires extra or different help to that normally provided as part of the school's usual curriculum offer. A pupil on SEN support will not have an education, health and care plan.'

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>

### **Education, health and care (EHC) plans**

A local authority may issue an EHC plan for a pupil who needs more support than is available through SEN support. This will follow a statutory assessment process whereby the local authority considers the pupil's special educational needs and any relevant health and social care needs; sets out long term outcomes; and specifies provision which will deliver additional support to meet those needs.

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



### Inclusion and Equal Opportunity

The school endeavours to provide, review and develop high quality inclusive opportunities through our 'graduated approach' to meeting your child's SEND needs. The graduated approach is a 4-part cycle of **assess, plan, do, review**. Please see our School Information report for more details.

<https://www.amherst.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Inclusion+%28SEND%29&pid=882>

### Inclusion Manager (SENCO)

All maintained schools and academies are required by law to have a named SENCO who is a qualified teacher and has been awarded the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (prior to September 2024) or The National Professional Qualification for SEND (from September 2024). SENCOs must complete the qualification within three years of taking up the post.

At Amherst School our Inclusion Manager is Becky Watson. You can contact Becky by calling the school office or alternatively emailing [senco@amherst.kent.sch.uk](mailto:senco@amherst.kent.sch.uk).

Becky is working towards achieving the National Professional Qualification for SEND from September 2025.

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 Inclusion Manager, appointments can be booked via the school office on 01732 452577 or email [senco@amherst.kent.sch.uk](mailto:senco@amherst.kent.sch.uk)

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



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



### SEND Governor

The Governor with responsibility for SEND is Xanthippi Kapos. 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 Inclusion Manager to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school. The SEND Governor meets with the Inclusion Manager three times a year.

### Class Teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for the progress and development of every pupil in their class. All teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs. Our Inclusion Manager provides a vital strategic role and provides significant advice and support to teachers, but the responsibility for the learning and progress of all children lies with the teacher.

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

We regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils, and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered.'(DfE/DoH SEND Code of Practice 2015: 25)

Our Class Teachers 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 Inclusion Manager 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 condition (ASC), learning difficulties and behaviour difficulties. We have experience in meeting the needs of pupils who have an EHCP across all four areas of SEND.



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



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, specific targeted support with writing and spelling, Social, Emotional and mental Health interventions and sensory support.

### Identifying children with SEND

At Amherst, teachers monitor the academic 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. Tracking may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, social, emotional and mental health needs.

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 Inclusion Manager 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.

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



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



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 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



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



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. This will include the pupil's own views, advice from external professionals and services and parents/carers. This will ensure pupils are prepared for their next steps and onward pathways.

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 Inclusion Manager 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 Inclusion Manager 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
- Friendship/social skills groups
- Anxieties and worries group



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



- 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 Olive Academy.
- 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 Spurgeons, a charity that provides counselling in school
- Sessions with out School Counsellor from Time 2 Talk.
- Mentoring from KICK London
- Support from the NHS Mental Health and Wellbeing team.

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.

### 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 Inclusion Manager 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 Inclusion Manager 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.

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.

### SEN Information Report

Our SEN policy works in conjunction with our SEN Information Report <https://www.amherst.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Inclusion+%28SEND%29&pid=882> which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school.

The SEN Information Report is updated annually or if necessary, when changes to the information may be required during the academic year.



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



### Complaints

We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the class teacher and Inclusion Manager 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 Inclusion Manager three times a year. As part of these meetings, the Inclusion Manager 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](mailto:iask@kent.gov.uk)

*Website:* [IASK](#) (click here or go to [kent.gov.uk](http://kent.gov.uk) and search IASK)

To find out about KCC's Local Offer, go to [kent.gov.uk](http://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



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



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 Inclusion Manager 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 Inclusion Manager 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.

### 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



# Amherst School (Academy) Trust

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy



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.