



Whitefield
Academy Trust

**Policy
Document**

S.E.N.D Policy

Category: Leadership

Key Elements

This policy sets out how Whitefield Academy Trust meets the needs of children and young people with SEND.

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1. Aims and values

1.1. The Trust's beliefs and values

All members of the school communities work within the Whitefield Academy Trust's mission statement:

Enjoyment, achievement and wellbeing for all

This guides the schools' practice and underpins all that we do.

We aspire to the highest quality of life for our children and young people.

The Whitefield Academy Trust is working to create outstanding learning communities in which:

- children and young people feel safe, secure and valued
- children and young people are able to be themselves and feel accepted for who they are
- children and young people achieve their full potential
- children and young people develop confidence and the ability to express themselves
- professionals and parents work together in strong and effective partnerships to gain the best possible outcomes for the children and young people in their care

The Trust is also working to support children and young people to find their place in the wider community and to help members of the wider community to develop a better understanding of people with SEND.

1.2. What the Trust wants for the children and young people in its schools

The Trust has high aspirations for all children and young people and seeks to provide a curriculum and an ethos which helps them to progress in terms of academic skills, social confidence, independence and the ability to make and express choices and to manage their lives now and after they leave school.

Members of the Trust community do all they can to ensure that children and young people:

- experience success and have their achievements celebrated
- make progress from their own starting points and achieve the best that they are capable of
- enjoy their time in school, take part in activities which are exciting and interesting to them and get the most out of life in school, at home and in the wider community



- have their individual academic, social, emotional, medical and care needs fully met with dignity, respect and empathy
- experience positive mental health and have a sense of wellbeing
- gain formal qualifications or complete accredited courses as appropriate
- build good relationships and positive interactions with adults and other children
- develop self-respect and respect for others so they can be part of the community
- become as independent and self-reliant as possible
- develop a 'voice', with the self-confidence to express themselves and make positive choices
- develop hopes and plans for the future including plans for employment if appropriate and are well equipped to make a successful transition to the next stage of their lives

2. Identifying individual needs

The Whitefield Academy Trust caters for children and young people aged between 3 and 19 with a range of Special Educational Needs.

Whitefield Schools provides a specialist education for children and young people with autism, speech language and communication difficulties, severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some have a hearing or vision impairment alongside learning difficulties.

Joseph Clarke School provides a specialist education for children and young people who have vision impairment or who have complex needs.

Most children and young people who join one of the schools already have an Education, Health and Care Plan which describes Special Educational Needs in one of the areas in which the school specialises. A few children and young people join one of the schools for a short period so that their needs can be assessed.

The school will make its own detailed assessment of what the child or young person can do and the areas where they need support. This assessment will be discussed with parents at a meeting in the first term. Class teachers assess achievement and progress in all lessons and complete detailed records which are used to identify any further needs and to identify the next steps for learning. Parents are invited to two meetings each year to discuss their child's progress. Education, Health and Care Plans are reviewed every year, taking account of the assessment made throughout the year.

Parents who think that Whitefield Schools or Joseph Clarke School may be the right place for their child are welcome to make an informal visit. If they then decide that they would like their child to attend one of the schools, they need to ask their local authority to make an official referral. There is a link to the Admissions Process on the school websites for further information.



3. Core provision

The Whitefield Academy Trust is committed to making outstanding provision for all children and young people placed in its schools. In doing so it takes account of the learning environment, the curriculum and teaching approaches, staffing and partnership working as set out below.

3.1. The learning environment

Both schools within the Whitefield Academy Trust work to create an environment where children and young people can be themselves and enjoy learning. Achievement is consistently celebrated through positive comments, rewards and certificates. Displays in classrooms and around the schools recognise achievement and progress.

All adults seek to build strong relationships with the children and young people in their care and to create a safe and nurturing ethos.

Children and young people are supported to recognise and celebrate diversity.

Within this environment children and young people are supported to build confidence and self-esteem and to make progress in every aspect of learning from their individual starting points.

The Trust uses its funding efficiently to provide outstanding facilities in terms of buildings and resources to deliver the curriculum through specialist teaching areas, developing provision for ICT and classroom equipment. Whitefield schools has benefitted from improvements to its hydrotherapy pool, playgrounds and soft play area and the installation of new sensory rooms and the creation of 'safe spaces' for children and young people who feel anxious or overwhelmed.

Joseph Clarke School has benefitted from a major building project which has created state of the art facilities throughout the building with significantly improved access for all. The external spaces are now being upgraded.

3.2. Curriculum

Both schools are committed to a curriculum which can be adapted for individuals, which develops the whole person and equips children and young people to take their place in the community.

The curriculum in both schools is supported by research and practice in the fields of vision impairment, hearing impairment, learning difficulties, autism and complex needs. It is designed to provide experiences which are fun, engaging and challenging and structured so that all children and young people, whatever their needs, can make progress from their individual starting points.



As part of the current School Improvement Plan, senior leaders are reviewing the curriculum in order to ensure it continues to prepare children and young people for the next stage in their lives in a changing world.

There are four curriculum pathways at within the Trust:

Reaching Out

Children and young people at very early levels of development follow a sensory curriculum which helps them to become more aware of themselves and the world around them and to build positive relationships with other people.

Stepping On

Children and young people learn through play, exploration, practical activities and community involvement. This curriculum pathway helps them to develop communication skills, key skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT, to live and work as part of a community and to practise the skills which will help them be more independent in adult life. Young people in Key Stage 3 and 4 work towards accredited awards from ASDAN.

Climbing Up

Children and young people follow a modified version of the National Curriculum with additional areas as appropriate to their SEND. They may complete qualifications at GCSE or Entry Level and/or follow accredited vocational courses.

Taking Off

Children and young people aged 16 and above follow a curriculum designed to give them future choices in work, college and independent or supported living. They develop their skills within five key areas of learning: Communication, The World of Work, Wellbeing, Everyday Living and Creativity and Spirituality.

At Joseph Clarke School most children and young people follow a modified version of the National Curriculum adapted for visually impaired learners. Accreditation opportunities are offered throughout Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. These include BTEC, A Levels, GCSEs, Entry Levels and ASDAN awards and qualifications. Some of these qualifications are offered in conjunction with Highams Park School. Students are also encouraged to achieve English Speaking Board examinations, Arts Awards and to follow the Sports Leadership course. Some children and young people follow a curriculum for those at earlier stages of development.

Key areas of the curriculum at both schools are:

- the development of effective communication with other people in school, home and community through a range of systems - speech, sign, gestures, symbols, objects, pictures and photos, the use of technology and direct communication
- the development of functional skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT



- the use of Braille and other specialist approaches for visually impaired children
- the use of sign language, auditory training and other specialist approaches for hearing impaired children
- the development of strategies for social behaviour and working alongside other people
- the development of strategies to support mental health and emotional wellbeing eg self-expression, sensory regulation, understanding emotions
- the development of physical skills for functional movement, life skills and sport
- the development of independence skills including mobility for children and young people with visual impairment
- the development of life skills on site and in the community
- experiences and provision in the area of expressive arts of a rich variety which can be enjoyed at all levels
- opportunities for inclusion within and beyond the Trust schools
- enriched extracurricular activities with access to a range of experiences including clubs before or after school and befriending in the community

The Trust schools work to prepare young people for the future through the above curriculum and through:

- Project Search, an employment based route available to some young people at the end of their time in school, teaching job skills and providing career opportunities then supporting students in the workplace
- vocational courses in local colleges, work experience in the community, with charitable organisations and within the Trust
- mini-enterprise projects
- identifying appropriate routes to examinations and accreditation
- supporting children and young people to be as independent and self-reliant as possible and to take responsibility within school
- working with young people and their parents to identify the activities which they will enjoy once they have left school and to find placements which will provide the right care and occupation

Teachers and members of the Family Support Teams work with young people and their parents and with professionals from the local authority to plan for adulthood.

3.3. Teaching approaches and strategies

Within the Whitefield Academy Trust class groups are small (typically between 6 and 12 children or young people depending on their needs). Each class teacher works with one or more support assistants. Teachers and support assistants are trained to use a range of teaching approaches. Key approaches are:



- Total Communication, where children and young people are supported to develop effective communication through speech, sign, gestures, symbols, objects, pictures, braille and photos, the use of technology and direct communication
- precision teaching, which involves specific, targeted teaching of key skills. Learning objectives are broken into small steps and each small step is celebrated.
- the sensory curriculum, where children and young people learn to use their senses and to explore the world through direct experience
- functional learning, where key skills including mobility and habitation are taught in the context of activities on site or in the community which are meaningful to the children and young people concerned
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) where behaviour is seen as a form of communication. Adults are expected to work out what the child or young pupil's behaviour is telling them and to do their best to avoid reaching a situation where the child or young person feels anxious, angry or distressed. Children and young people are helped to understand boundaries and to express their needs. The Trust uses 'Team Teach' where physical intervention is needed
- learning through play and practical activities, where children and young people are supported to learn 'hands on' in contexts which are interesting and meaningful to them
- intensive interaction, where children and young people learn fundamental communication skills with individual support
- small group and individual work which enables children and young people to focus on new learning with close support from an adult and in a way that is highly tailored to individual needs. This may take place within the classroom as part of a class lesson or may involve working away from the classroom.

The Trust's view of quality teaching is set out at Appendix 3

3.4. Staffing

The Whitefield Academy Trust is committed to recruiting the highest quality staff with the values, attitudes and skills which will enable them to provide an outstanding education. It funds professional development so that staff are well equipped for their roles.

The Trust maintains positive staff: pupil ratios to meet the needs of children and young people. Every effort is made to provide consistency and continuity of staffing so that the children and young people can establish strong and positive relationships.

Staff in the Trust schools:

- are committed to their role
- have high expectations of all children and young people within the schools
- listen to what children and young people are saying, however they express themselves, act as their advocates and support those who can to advocate for themselves



- provide a high level of care
- undertake training and other types of professional development to improve skills and expertise
- work together to share expertise and ideas
- work in partnership with parents and other professionals

3.5. Partnership working

The Whitefield Academy Trust recognises the benefits of a team approach. As well as the crucial partnership with parents (see section 6), the Trust schools make every effort to build strong partnerships with other professionals.

Speech and Language Therapists and physiotherapists employed by the local Healthcare Trust come into the schools to assess children and young people, advise staff and design programmes which are carried out in class.

The Trust employs its own music therapists and 'buys in' additional speech and language therapy, peripatetic music teachers and occupational therapy as appropriate. Where specialist assessment is needed, the Trust will purchase this from external providers.

The Trust schools work with other mainstream and special schools and colleges to provide inclusion programmes and to enhance the curriculum as necessary.

The Trust schools also work with other groups such as artists and sporting organisations to provide a rich experience beyond the classroom.

4. Supporting individual learners

Teachers within the Whitefield Academy Trust personalise the curriculum to meet individual needs so that all children and young people are able to take part in activities which challenge them and ensure that they make progress.

In planning the curriculum, teachers take account of each child or young person's developmental level, sensory and physical needs, the nature of their communication and the kind of activities to which they respond.

Personal targets are identified for all children and young people so that they can work on the knowledge, skills and activities which are most relevant or important for them. Children and young people who are able to do so will identify their own personal targets.

Children and young people with significant medical needs are supported to gain full access to the curriculum and take part in activities with the rest of their class (see section 5)

Staff build a detailed knowledge of the children and young people with whom they work and adapt activities for them and record key information in comprehensive assessment and progress files.



Children and young people benefit from activities beyond the classroom including after school clubs, befriending, work experience, sport and the expressive arts. These are chosen to meet individual needs.

The schools arrange inclusion programmes into other schools and colleges which provide access to different subjects, broaden experience and give opportunities to work and play alongside other children and young people.

5. Supporting children and young people with medical conditions

Both schools in the Whitefield Academy Trust are able to admit children and young people with medical conditions.

Whitefield School has full time nursing support with two or more nurses on site at all times. Joseph Clarke School has nursing support on 1 day per month and staff are able to seek advice from a member of the Special School Nursing Team at other times. Nursing staff are responsible for case management, setting up clinics and providing healthcare advice. Specific school staff are trained to administer and record medication during the school days. All schools have first aiders.

When a child or young person with medical needs is offered a place at one of the Trust schools, their needs are discussed with the Special School Nursing Team who may carry out a nursing assessment. The Nursing Team and school staff will work together to put a plan in place so that the medical needs are met.

School staff may undertake training relating to individual medical conditions (e.g. how to respond to seizures or how to support children and young people with asthma). A small number of pupils require 1:1 support from people other than school staff in respect of significant medical needs. Teachers plan to include children and young people with medical conditions in all aspects of the curriculum, adapting lessons as necessary as part of individual planning.

See the Trust policy on Access to Education for Pupils with Medical Needs for further details.

6. Working with parents

The Whitefield Academy Trust believes strongly that children and young people are happiest and make the best progress when parents and school work together and maintain strong channels of communication. To this end the Trust employs specialist staff within the Family Support Team; however, it is the responsibility of all staff to work in partnership with parents.

The school seeks to work with parents in order to:



- establish communication between home and school
- identify shared priorities and educational goals for school and home
- work with parents in planning for the future
- share key information about individual needs and strengths
- enable them to meet the professionals working with their children
- provide specialist training (e.g. Early Bird courses and Healthy Minds)
- provide practical and emotional support for parents on an individual basis
- assist parents to build networks and support one another
- encourage parents to join in class activities and special events
- meet the cultural and religious needs of all children and young people

Where necessary, the school will arrange an interpreter so that parents can take a full part in meetings and workshops.

7. Staff Training and Professional Development

The Whitefield Academy Trust has high aspirations for all its staff and therefore seeks to provide the highest quality of specialist professional development so that all staff, whether classroom based, school leaders or members of the admin, site and finance teams, can develop their knowledge and expertise within individual areas of specialism. This increases job satisfaction for staff and contributes to outstanding provision for children and young people.

The range of opportunities for professional development is matched to staff roles and career stages.

- Staff new to the Trust follow an induction programme which includes training in curriculum, Positive Behaviour Support, moving and handling, safeguarding and communication, strategies and source of support
- Learning support and teaching assistants and Midday Assistants follow a Progression Scheme which supports and records their developing expertise and provides evidence for promotion
- The Trust offers initial teacher training through School Direct or apprenticeship
- All teachers undertake an Advanced Diploma in SEND, adapted to the area most relevant to their posts i.e. autism, visual impairment, complex needs
- Teachers have further opportunities to complete Masters courses and to gain qualifications in school leadership as their career progresses
- Supply staff receive training in PBS, communication, moving and handling and safeguarding
- Learning Support and Teaching Assistants have the opportunity to complete NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3 and Foundation degrees in Early Years and Special Educational Needs



- Continuing professional development includes refresher training in key areas, information on teaching strategies and the curriculum, support to learn sign language and Braille and opportunities to share good practice.
- All staff who work directly with children and young people have regular accredited training in PBS. Class based staff are trained in Team Teach.
- Teachers have annual appraisal meetings and other staff agree targets for their professional development annually
- The quality of teaching and learning is monitored through a regular programme of lesson observation followed by developmental feedback.
- Staff who are not class based also attend training which is relevant to their roles

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Class teams monitor the progress and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care on a daily basis. A home-school book is used to share information unless parents are in contact with the school team in other ways. Achievement and progress is recorded in detailed files and reported to parents in an annual report and at two review meetings per year.

The Senior Leadership Teams evaluate achievement and progress across the school by reviewing the records of individual children and young people and by monitoring the outcomes of assessment. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored through lesson observation and informal visits to classes and through reviewing records.

Other data which is used to monitor the wellbeing of children and young people within the Academy Trust includes safeguarding notes, attendance levels, records of challenging behaviour and accident reports.

Class teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Teams will also follow up any information from parents which suggests that a child or young person is not making sufficient progress or is not happy in school.

Every year parents, children and young people are asked to complete surveys to show whether they are satisfied with what the school has to offer. The information given is followed up by the Senior Leadership Teams.

Staff have the opportunity to share their views through the staff appraisal process, through staff meetings and focus groups and through the 'Every Child Matters' teams which discuss key issues for the schools including the School Improvement Plans.

Summaries of all the above information are shared with Governors and Directors to support them in evaluating the schools.



9. Roles and responsibilities

The **Directors** of the Academy Trust take overall responsibility for making sure that all policies are followed and that the schools meet their legal duties by providing the right education for children and young people with special educational needs. The **Advisory Council** for each school works with the Directors and the Senior Leadership Teams to monitor the quality of education in a number of ways including reviewing achievement and progress, reviewing the School Improvement Plans and discussing the curriculum offered within the Academy Trust.

The **CEO** is responsible for the development of the Whitefield Academy Trust, for supporting its leaders and for 'quality assuring' the services offered to children and young people. The Principal (Whitefield Schools) and Headteacher (Joseph Clarke School) supported by their **Senior Leadership Teams** are responsible for monitoring a high standard of teaching and learning, monitoring practice and making sure that individual needs are met.

Teachers are responsible for planning to meet the needs of the children and young people whom they teach, for assessing progress and liaising with other professionals to ensure that all children and young people in the class make as much progress as they can.

Learning Support and Teaching Assistants and Nursery Nurses work as part of teams to help the children and young people enjoy learning, achieve outstanding progress and develop self-confidence and a sense of wellbeing. All members of the team are expected to act as advocates for children and young people so that their voices are heard clearly.

All members of the school communities are expected to work in the best interests of the children and young people in their schools, using resources wisely and providing the highest quality support for children, young people and families. They are expected to take advantage of opportunities for professional development and to use their growing skills within their roles in school.

10. Storing and managing information

Whitefield Academy Trust collects and uses personal information about children and young people in order to provide a high standard of education and care which is matched to individual needs. Every effort is made to ensure that information is stored safely and only shared with people who need to know it. Where information is stored electronically it is protected by passwords. Staff are expected to maintain confidentiality. See the Academy Trust's GDPR policy for further information.



11. Responding to complaints

If parents have any concerns about the quality of teaching, learning and progress or any other aspect of their children's experience within the Whitefield Academy Trust they should approach the class teacher or Head of School at Whitefield or the appropriate Deputy Headteacher of Joseph Clarke School in the first instance. The Family Support Team will help them to arrange a meeting if needed. Most concerns and complaints can be dealt with at this level.

If parents feel that the issue has not been fully dealt with they should write to the Principal or Head Teacher or ask for a meeting with her. She will make every effort to find a way forward.

If parents continue to have concerns and wish to take the matter further they should make a written complaint to the CEO or Chair of Directors at the Whitefield Schools address. They will investigate the issue and meet parents to share her findings and work towards a resolution.

For full information on how to make a formal complaint and the process that the Academy follows, please see the Complaints policy document, available on our Web site at www.whitefield.org.uk/policies



Appendix 1 - Early Help Offer

This may be achieved at one of four levels.

Level 1

As Keeping Children Safe in Education reminds us, all school staff have a duty to identify and support children and young people in need of early help. It is the responsibility of all staff to work in partnership with parents to support children's progress and wellbeing. To this end, classroom staff may, for example;

- share any concerns with parents regarding eating, medical issues, mood etc.
- work with families to provide a healthy diet, teach self-care, skills or encourage self-occupation
- put a programme in place to help with any difficulties at home e.g. where families find it difficult to take their child into the community
- share strategies to encourage learning in the community
- share strategies to develop effective communication
- use Pupil Premium to buy resources with which to teach self-occupation
- liaise with healthcare staff – occupation therapists, speech and language therapists, nurses, physio therapists

The school also provides After School Clubs, Holiday clubs and a befriending service as part of its early help offer.

Level 2

The Family Support Team may offer additional support to families who face particular issues but do not meet thresholds for social care. This may be offered on an - 1:1 basis or as part of training and may include:

- support to liaise with school staff
- advice and support around housing/social benefits
- signposting to other agencies e.g. Housing and helping them to engage – advocacy – 'middle man'
- encouraging families to engage positively with social care
- helping families to understand their children's special needs and support them
- understanding of children's needs e.g. Healthy Minds training
- providing a listening ear
- guiding/supporting parents through difficult situations and key decisions
- advice on supporting behaviour
- liaising with the short break service
- advice on accessing CAMHS and support to work with them and follow their recommendation
- liaising with healthcare staff – OT, SALT, nurses, physio
- providing opportunities for parents to meet, discuss their children's needs and support one another
- encouraging and supporting parents in the challenges of raising a child with SEND



- sharing and celebrating achievements of children, young people and families
- increasing parents' self-confidence and self-esteem so that families can build resilience

Level 3

Where the school feels that a family needs support above and beyond what the school can provide we will seek advice from the Early Help Coordinator before making a MASH referral for help and support if appropriate.

The FST will also work in partnership with the local authority Early Help service to access services available through the local offer.

Level 4

Where there is evidence that a child or young person is at risk of serious harm the school must make a MASH referral for care and protection. We will inform the family (unless there is reason to think this may put the child at further risk) and support the family through the process.



Appendix 2 – Positive Behaviour Support manifesto

- We are here to improve the quality of children and young people's lives – to help them enjoy life, learn things which are useful to them and feel good about themselves
- We see behaviour as a form of communication. It is our responsibility to work out what it is telling us
- We talk calmly and positively to children and young people
- We use what we know about children and young people to think ahead and avoid reaching a place where they feel anxious, angry or distressed
- We celebrate success and help children and young people to do the same
- We offer activities which children and young people enjoy and where they will want to learn
- We give children and young people real choices which matter to them
- We help children and young people to make a contribution to the school and the community
- We respect and value all members of the school community equally
- We make decisions based on the evidence, not on our feelings or opinions
- After a difficult incident we move on and help the child or young person to do the same
- We work as a team to support one another and help the children and young people in our care
- We are willing to ask for help and to help other people



Appendix 3-Quality teaching and learning in the Whitefield Academy Trust

In high quality teaching, every child and young person is enabled to make exceptional progress because:

1. They are safe, and feel safe, both physically and emotionally.
2. Their communication is enabled, understood and respected.
3. They are fully included in activities personalised to their needs and their level of development.
4. They enjoy the activities, focus on the tasks and are motivated to do what is asked of them.
5. They experience success and are aware of their achievements.
6. They become more independent.
7. They work towards challenging curriculum goals.
8. They practise and consolidate the skills they have learnt.

In order to support children and young people, adults use the following strategies:

1. Teachers identify clear objectives and challenging curriculum goals, built on sound assessment, knowledge of prior learning and knowledge of the curriculum. They share them with other adults, children and young people.
2. Teachers plan a mixture of group and individual activities, paced appropriately, to meet individual targets, deliver an appropriate curriculum and promote inclusion.
3. Teachers structure activities so that children and young people are aware of what is expected and have opportunities for full engagement.
4. Teachers identify every opportunity to promote learning, using resources that children and young people find interesting and are suited to their needs.
5. Teachers plan their use of staff to maximise opportunities for children and young people to learn.
6. Resources and strategies reflect and value the diversity of children and young people's experience. Adults support them to understand and interact with people and communities beyond their experience. Adults are quick to challenge any stereotypes and use of derogatory language.
7. Adults interact and communicate positively and effectively with children, young people, their families and each other according to their individual needs
8. Adults understand individual needs (cognitive, communicative, physical, sensory, medical and mental health) and use this understanding to personalise learning
9. Adults' practice is underpinned by positive behaviour support (PBS).
10. Adults ensure the environment is safe and set up to maximise pupil engagement and progress.



11. Adults engage in professional dialogue with their teams and with development. opportunities to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and understanding to support the needs of the children and young people.
12. They continually assess progress towards their understanding and achievement of the outcomes.



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the school website:
www.whitefield.org.uk/policies**