



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

2026-27

Policy name	Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
Version	2.1
Status	Live
Author	Gareth Kyle, Academy Business Leader
Policy owner	Co-headteachers
Approval body	Curriculum & Pupils Committee
Date approved	07/10/2026
Review cycle	Annual
Next review due	Autumn 2027
Published on	Both (Trust website and National College)
Applies to	Trust-wide

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out how The Cedars Academy Trust (the Trust) meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at Cedars Academy: Low Fell (Reception to Year 11) and Cedars Academy: High Heworth (Years 7 to 13). It applies to all staff, trustees and volunteers. "Parents" includes carers.
- 1.2 Cedars Academy is a special academy for pupils aged 3 to 19 with learning, communication, sensory, physical and medical needs, including autism and associated social, emotional and mental health needs. Every pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP), and all provision is planned around it. This policy sets out the Trust's duties and how provision is organised; the annual SEND Information Report describes the provision at each site in detail.

2. Legal and statutory framework

- 2.1 This policy rests on Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (the 2014 Act), the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 (the SEND Regulations), the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015) and the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 The School Admissions Code and the duty to have a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) apply only to mainstream schools (section 67 of the 2014 Act).

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 **Trust Board:** makes sure the Trust meets its SEND duties and approves the SEND Information Report. It designates the Curriculum & Pupils Committee to oversee inclusion, including SEND (Academy Trust Handbook 2026). The Committee approves this policy.
- 3.2 **The three co-headteachers, jointly:** make sure the academy has the staff, training and resources to deliver pupils' EHCP provision, and report to trustees.
- 3.3 **Director of Inclusion:** leads SEND and the Family Liaison team, and owns this policy and the SEND Information Report. Also the Designated Safeguarding Lead and designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- 3.4 **Site Headteachers:** responsible for SEND provision at their site, and decide the response to local authority consultations about places.
- 3.5 **Family Liaison team** (Family Liaison Leads at each site): coordinates annual reviews, sends review paperwork to the local authority, asks for early reviews when needs change, and is a contact point for families and professionals.
- 3.6 **Academy Business Leader:** publishes this policy and the SEND Information Report.
- 3.7 **Teachers:** responsible for every pupil's progress in their class; write annual review reports. **Teaching assistants** support learning; some lead specific programmes.
- 3.8 **All staff:** must know the needs of the pupils they work with and follow their plans.

4. Admission, transition and moving on

- 4.1 Places are arranged through the local authority's EHCP process. The site Headteacher decides the academy's response to a local authority consultation, having

taken the Director of Inclusion's view on whether the academy can meet the pupil's needs. If a local authority names Cedars in a pupil's EHCP, the academy must admit the pupil (section 43 of the 2014 Act). The Admissions Policy sets out the process.

- 4.2** A pupil's start is planned with their family and may include a home visit, an 'All about me' document, visits and a phased start.
- 4.3** Moves between classes, phases or sites are planned around each pupil; moving to Cedars Academy: High Heworth is not automatic for Low Fell pupils. When a pupil moves site, the sending site should share an assessment summary, examples of work and the approaches that help the pupil show what they can do; staff should meet again once the pupil has settled.
- 4.4** From Year 9, every annual review must consider preparation for adulthood: further learning and work, independent living, friendships and community, and good health (SEND Regulations, regulation 20(6)). Reviews before a move to a new phase or setting are held in good time.
- 4.5** From the end of the school year in which a young person turns 16, decisions about their EHCP pass from their parents to the young person, if they have the mental capacity to make them (Mental Capacity Act 2005). They can ask a parent to act for them, and families stay involved where the young person wants this.

5. Assessing, planning and reviewing

- 5.1** Support is planned from each pupil's EHCP using a cycle of assess, plan, do and review. EHCP outcomes are broken down into shorter-term targets that are planned, assessed and reviewed each term.
- 5.2** New pupils are assessed when they join, usually within the first six weeks. A senior leader prepares a pen picture from the pupil's previous records, assessment reports and EHCP, and shares it with staff.
- 5.3** Staff can raise a concern about a pupil at any time, and incident records on CPOMS help them spot patterns. Changes to pupils' plans and risk assessments are shared at weekly briefings.
- 5.4** Staff use the assessment approach that suits each pupil's stage of learning:
 - ongoing curriculum assessment for pupils working at Year 1 of the national curriculum or above;
 - the pre-key stage standards for pupils working below that level but engaged in subject-specific study. They are for summative judgements at the end of a key stage, not for tracking small steps;
 - the engagement model for pupils not yet engaged in subject-specific study;
 - Birth to 5 Matters to inform understanding of early development, with teaching kept appropriate to the pupil's age.
- 5.5** Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 is statutory. Judgements are moderated within and across both sites, and during 2026-27 leaders are aligning assessment and tracking so that both sites describe pupils' starting points and progress in the same way.
- 5.6** Each class has a teacher and a qualified teaching assistant. At Cedars Academy: Low Fell, learning follows developmental pathways. At Cedars Academy: High Heworth,

Key Stage 3 pupils study the national curriculum subjects, RSE and PSHE, and all Key Stage 4 courses lead to accreditation.

- 5.7** The Trust makes reasonable adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, so that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage, including on trips and visits (Equality Act 2010). The Accessibility Plan sets out planned improvements. Access arrangements for external qualifications follow Joint Council for Qualifications rules.
- 5.8** Every EHCP is reviewed at least every 12 months. The Family Liaison team coordinates each review meeting. The academy must give at least two weeks' notice of the meeting, send out the advice gathered at least two weeks before it, and send a report with any recommended changes to the local authority and everyone invited within two weeks after it (SEND Regulations, regulation 20). For a looked-after pupil, the review is combined with the personal education plan review where possible.
- 5.9** If a pupil's needs change significantly, the Family Liaison team asks the local authority for an early review or a reassessment, at any point in the year.

6. Working with pupils and families

- 6.1** Families are central to planning and reviewing support. Parents are invited to annual reviews and parents' evenings, give their views on the Parent/Carer Review Form, and can ask for a meeting at any time. Staff keep in touch through the Cedars Academy app, by phone and, where appropriate, home-school diaries.
- 6.2** Parents receive a written progress report at least once a year.
- 6.3** Pupils share their views in ways that suit them, such as speech, signing, symbols or communication technology, and staff notice what pupils communicate through their actions. Pupils' views are recorded for every review.
- 6.4** The Family Liaison team helps families find advice and services. Families can get involved through "Friends of Cedars" group.

7. Safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and health

- 7.1** Pupils with SEND can be at greater risk of abuse and find it harder to tell someone (Keeping children safe in education 2026). Staff must not assume that a change in behaviour or mood, or an injury, is explained by a pupil's condition; they must report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 7.2** The Behaviour Policy covers positive behaviour support, Emotional Support Plans and restrictive interventions, which must be kept to a minimum, recorded and reported to parents (DfE guidance on restrictive interventions, April 2026). The Attendance Policy sets out how barriers to attendance are tackled with families and local authorities.
- 7.3** Medical needs are met under the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and the Allergy Safety Policy. Intimate and personal care protects each pupil's dignity and privacy, under the Intimate and Personal Care Policy.

8. Staff expertise and working with other services

- 8.1** All staff receive induction and ongoing training planned around pupils' needs. Relevant staff follow a rolling programme that includes moving and handling, feeding, including

gastrostomy feeding, Team Teach, health and safety, and administering medication such as midazolam.

- 8.2** The academy works with therapists, psychologists, mental health, medical and nursing services, social care, careers specialists and local authority SEND teams. The Trust co-operates with the local authorities that place pupils at Cedars on local SEND provision and the Local Offer (section 28 of the 2014 Act).

9. Funding, resources and records

- 9.1** The Department for Education funds each commissioned place. The local authority that names Cedars in a pupil's EHCP pays top-up funding for the pupil's provision.
- 9.2** SEND records are kept securely under the Data Protection Policy and shared only where there is a lawful reason, such as with the local authority, other professionals, a new setting or for safeguarding.

10. Concerns and complaints

- 10.1** Parents with a concern should speak to their child's class teacher, the site office or the Family Liaison team. The Complaints Policy sets out the formal procedure.
- 10.2** Disagreements about what an EHCP says, or about a local authority decision, are for the local authority, which must offer mediation. Some decisions can be appealed to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), which also hears disability discrimination claims against schools. Gateshead SENDIASS (gatesheadsendiass.org.uk, 0115 959 7771) gives free, impartial advice.

11. Monitoring, evaluation and review

- 11.1** The Director of Inclusion and the co-headteachers check how well this policy works using progress towards EHCP outcomes, reviews of teaching, attendance and behaviour records, feedback from pupils, parents and staff, School Improvement Partner and Ofsted reports, and each site's Development Plan. They report on SEND to trustees each term.
- 11.2** The Curriculum & Pupils Committee reviews this policy every year, or sooner if the law changes. Staff must read it at induction and when it changes; it is assigned through National College.

12. Linked policies and documents

- 12.1** SEND Information Report; Admissions Policy; Accessibility Plan; Equality Statement and Objectives; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Behaviour Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Attendance Policy; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy; Allergy Safety Policy; Intimate and Personal Care Policy; Careers Policy and Provider Access Statement; Complaints Policy; Data Protection Policy; Gateshead SEND Local Offer (www.gateshead.gov.uk/localoffer).