



# Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

## Damers First School

**Adopted By:** Board of Trustees

**Date:** June 2025

**Review Date:** June 2026

### Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Date of Issue:	June 2025
Policy applies to:	<b>All staff employed by the Wessex Multi-Academy Trust.</b>
Policy Version Number:	6
Purpose of the document:	This policy outlines the framework the Trust and its schools will use in meeting their duties, obligations and principal equality values in providing an appropriate high-education for pupils with SEND.
Summary of the main points:	The document provides: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aims and Objectives</li> <li>2. Roles and Responsibilities</li> <li>3. Admission Arrangements</li> <li>4. Identifying Special Educational Needs</li> <li>5. Managing SEND in our Schools</li> </ol>
Approved by:	This policy has been approved by the Wessex MAT Board of Trustees
Reviewer:	Rachel Munro
Summary of amendments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students changed to Pupils throughout</li> <li>2. Amendment to paragraphs:</li> <li>3. 8.6, 8.10, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5, 11.2, 12.2, 18.1</li> </ol>
Next review due:	June 2026

1. This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 (July 2014), and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- 1.1. Equality Act 2010: Advice for schools – (*DfE May 2014*)

- 1.2. SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 (July 2014)

- 1.3. Schools SEN Information Report Regulations (2014)

2. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) – SCHOOL INFORMATION**

- 2.1. The Head of school, Louise Greenham has overall responsibility for SEND at Damers First School.

- 2.2. The person responsible for coordinating SEND provision for children/pupils is: Tom Bracey, 01305 264924, [office@damers.wessex.ac](mailto:office@damers.wessex.ac)

- 2.3. The Governor with oversight of the arrangements for SEN and disability is: Jackie Sonner. They can be contacted via the school office on 01305 264924, [office@damers.wessex.ac](mailto:office@damers.wessex.ac).

- 2.4. This policy was developed in conjunction with parents and carers, students, governors, teachers, teaching assistants and the leadership team.

- 2.5. The terms “**pupils**” and “**pupil**” refer to anyone under the age of 18.

3. **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1. SEND support is used to enable and empower our pupils so that they develop confidence and growing independence. We consider this culture of inclusion to be everyone’s responsibility and it exists throughout the school. It is driven by the high aspiration we have for all pupils in our school to make successful transitions throughout their education/a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training, leading to a happy, fulfilled and productive life.

### 3.2. AIMS:

- To create an atmosphere of encouragement, acceptance, respect of achievements and sensitivity to individual needs, in which all pupils can thrive;
- To identify individuals who need extra help and support;
- To enable each pupil to take part and contribute fully to school life;
- To develop each individual's self-esteem and positive view of him or herself as a learner;
- To provide access to and progression within the curriculum;
- To involve pupils in planning to address and monitor their special educational needs and / or disability;
- To work in partnership with parents to support their pupil's learning and health needs;
- To provide quality training for staff in special educational needs and disability.

### 3.3. OBJECTIVES:

- To identify and provide for pupils who have special educational needs and additional needs;
- To work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice, 2014;
- To operate a person-centred, whole school approach in the management and provision of support for pupils with special educational needs or disability;
- To employ a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator(SENDCO) who will work within the bounds of the SEND Policy;
- To provide support and advice about SEND to all staff

## 4. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1. The School Governance Committee will exercise their duty and have regard to the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010. This will include ensuring that our school's arrangements supporting disability and medical conditions, equality, school and SEND information pertinent to the SEND Policy are published on the school website.

4.2. The SENDCo is a qualified and experienced teacher who has completed the National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENDCo) and now serves as Assistant Headteacher responsible for inclusion. The school maintains regular liaison with a wide range of external services, including Dorset Council's SEND Team, which includes Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers and other SEN Specialist Services, Hearing and Vision Support Service, the School Nursing team, and other health professionals such

as Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Physiotherapists. We also work closely with other agencies, including children's Social Care, to ensure a holistic approach to supporting pupils with additional needs.

- 4.3. The SENDCo works closely with key staff, including the Head of School, Deputy and Assistant Headteachers, and the lead adult responsible for Looked After Children and Safeguarding, to ensure pupils with SEND are effectively supported and given a high profile at Damers First School. Collaboration also extends to Year Leaders and Subject Leaders, providing advice and guidance on strategies to help pupils reach their potential and adapt provision to meet individual needs. In addition, the SENDCo leads a team of Senior Teaching Assistants with specialist responsibilities in areas such as behaviour, speech and language, and SEND, alongside a wider team of Teaching Assistants who play a vital role in supporting pupils with additional needs as part of their everyday practice.

## 5. **ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

- 5.1. Our school uses the local authority arrangement for School Admissions. The agreement is mindful of national requirements supporting all pupils including those who are disabled, in a fair and non-discriminatory way, when securing admission to school.
- 5.2. In addition to this the school makes appropriate reasonable adjustments to accommodate those who are disabled. Where adaptations are required to support physical or medical needs, we liaise with the local authority education services, health services and parents / carers to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to meet individual medical conditions. More information can be found in the Local Offer information held on the local authority's website at [www.dorsetforyou.com/local-offer](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/local-offer).

## 6. **FACILITIES FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS / DISABILITY**

- 6.1. The school has an Accessibility Plan that is monitored, reviewed and reported upon annually to the School Governance Committee in compliance with legal requirements. We are mindful of the duties under the Equality Act 2010 as amended in September 2012 to provide Auxiliary Aids and Services where appropriate as detailed in 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools – (May 2014)'. We comply with the requirement to support pupils with disability as defined by the Act.
- 6.2. At Damers First School, we use a range of strategies and resources to support children with SEND, which may include:
  - **Complex Communication Needs Base** – a dedicated space for pupils requiring

- specialist communication support.
- **Adapted physical environment** – including appropriate lighting, wheelchair access, accessible toilets, and intimate care facilities.
  - **Assistive technology** – to enhance learning and communication where required.
  - **Sensory Room** – providing a calming environment for regulation and sensory needs.
  - **Sensory Circuit Room** – supporting sensory integration and readiness for learning.
  - **Sensory Garden** – supporting sensory integration and readiness for learning.
  - **Purpose designed outdoor space** – including forest school and garden areas, outdoor classrooms, animal enclosure and play equipment to offer a range of alternative spaces that may be utilised by pupils with SEND.
  - **Communication-friendly visuals** – such as the use of the Widgeit app for consistent displays, timetables and signage across the school.
  - **Specialist classroom aids** – for example, workstations, wobble stools, wobble cushions, body socks, sensory chews and other small sensory items or other resources to support access and engagement.
  - **Explore Room** – a classroom designed to meet the needs of pupils not working at a National Curriculum level or who may need a calmer and more hands-on space at times.
  - **Adapted curriculum access** – tailored to meet individual pupil needs.

## 7. SEN INFORMATION AND LOCAL OFFER

- 7.1. The school website holds information about SEND and specific information about how pupils with SEND are supported in the curriculum and around the school. Please see our page on the school website <https://www.damers.wessex.ac/key-information/key-information/special-educational-needs>
- 7.2. We comply with the statutory requirement to publish SEND information as specified in paragraphs 6.79 to 6.83 of the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25. This information is kept under review and updated regularly in liaison with parents / carers, governors and staff.
- 7.3. We publish further information about our arrangements for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with SEND on the local authority's website. This can be found at [www.dorsetforyou.com/local-offer](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/local-offer) using the search engine to find our school or other Dorset schools. The local offer website holds a directory of facilities and resources available from many services within Dorset.

## 8. IDENTIFYING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

8.1. The SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 (*July 2014*) identifies SEND under four broad areas of need (sections 6.28 to 6.35):

- Communication and Interaction.
- Cognition and learning.
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

8.2. Pupils may have needs in more than one category, and we aim to ensure that individual plans match personal learning requirements.

8.3. Teachers work closely with the SENDCO to identify and assess need. External agencies are called upon where required to support identification.

8.4. Our school uses a wide range of tools to assess the level of SEN support required. At the earliest stage, there is close liaison between the Damers First School Early Years and SEN teams and staff at local nursery schools, enabling early identification of pupils' specific needs when they start at Damers. Many pupils with additional needs are identified by their class teacher or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) during their learning journey through our cause-for-concern system, regular assessments, and professional dialogue between teachers and the SENDCo/Assessment Lead. Our teaching team is highly experienced and skilled in the early identification of need. The SENDCo can advise or draw on support from internal and external colleagues for a range of learning needs, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, and dyscalculia, speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions, and moderate learning difficulties. We also have a large team of Teaching Assistants, including staff with expertise in supporting pupils with ASC, ADHD, and other learning challenges. In addition, within the SEND team at Damers First School is a pastoral lead responsible for supporting pupils to develop their emotional literacy.

8.5. The Complex Communication Needs (CCN) base, known as the 'Copper Base,' supports pupils with significant communication challenges to access the curriculum effectively. Many of these pupils have Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), difficulties with social interaction, and high levels of anxiety. Some also present with additional needs such as dyslexia and ADHD. Accessing a place within the CCN base enables us to provide tailored support for these complex needs alongside their learning, with input from external professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists.

- 8.6. In addition, all staff strive to listen to concerns of parents and carers and appreciate that they have a unique insight into their child. The views of parents/carers will be taken into consideration for any decisions respecting their child. However, the final decision on provision for all pupils must lie with the school, whose representatives will use their professional judgement to take into account the needs of all pupils, the specific needs of those with SEND and any other additional requirements, and the resources available to meet those needs.
- 8.7. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2, pupils are assessed against nationally set criteria to monitor progress across all areas of learning. Through this process—and via our Cause for Concern system—pupils who are not making expected progress are identified. Teachers and support staff also play a vital role in raising concerns about other barriers to learning, such as behavioural, social, and emotional needs. A rigorous assessment procedure is in place to track pupil progress. If a pupil fails to make expected progress, the next step is to implement targeted school interventions and/or seek involvement from external agencies to identify, assess, and record specific barriers to learning or learning difficulties. These procedures are embedded in our everyday practice. Following assessment and staff consultation, a pupil’s special educational needs are formally identified and recorded on the SEND Register.
- 8.8. Learning needs are managed either by using additional support or by having an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). The majority of pupils with special education needs or disability will have their needs met through a whole school approach and be placed on the SEN Register at the level ‘SEN Support’ in compliance with the SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 (July 2014).
- 8.9. Our teachers are responsible and accountable for the development and progress of the pupils in their class, including where they access support from Teaching Assistants or specialist staff.
- 8.10. High quality adaptive teaching, is the first step in responding to those who have or may have learning needs. This is known as a ‘graduated response’. We regularly review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. Where it is clear that additional intervention is not resulting in progress, it is possible that a pupil may have special educational needs. If a pupil has been identified as having special educational needs, personalised learning profiles will be created and the school will keep careful records in order to monitor progress.

- 8.11. Where it is decided that a pupil does have SEND, the decision should be recorded in the school records and the parents / carers will be informed in writing that special educational provision is being made.
- 8.12. The SENDCO will use in-school tracking and comparative national data and expectations to monitor the level and rate of progress for pupils identified with SEND.
- 8.13. Staff monitor the progress of all pupils to identify those at risk of underachievement. We recognise that needs are sometimes affected by other factors which are not educational but nevertheless impact on learning. These are identified as far as possible and addressed appropriately using additional processes and other strategies.
- 8.14. Examples of other influences upon progress may include:
- Attendance and punctuality
  - Health and welfare
  - English as an Additional Language
  - Families on a low income
  - Looked After Children
  - Service children
  - Disability where there is no impact on progress and attainment.
  - Behaviour where there is no underlying SEND
  - Bereavement and family issues.

## **9. MANAGING SEND CHILDREN IN OUR SCHOOL**

- 9.1. Where a young person is identified as having SEND and or a disability, our school adopts a process of "Assess, Plan, Do, Review". This method is detailed in the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 (July 2014) sections 6.45 to 6.56. The principle is firmly embedded in working in partnership with parents / carers and pupils. School staff will take parent / carer and pupil's views into account, plan appropriate action and monitor individual progress over time so that special educational needs for all pupils are addressed appropriately, effectively and with good outcomes.
- 9.2. In addition to the normal reporting arrangements, parents/carers are informed about progress if their child/ young person is following additional programmes or interventions. For pupils with Statements or EHC Plans, Person Centred Planning and Review meetings take place so that families and pupils are involved in deciding next steps and parents / carers are advised on how to help support learning outside of the

school.

- 9.3. Contact with parents and carers is achieved through a graduated approach. The first point of contact is the pupil's Class Teacher or Year Leader. Where necessary, the SENDCo will liaise directly with parents and carers via email, telephone, or meetings to ensure regular and appropriate communication, alongside scheduled parents' evenings.
- 9.4. In addition, we offer parent and carer training sessions, SEND support sessions, and learning events such as our "Stay and..." sessions each half-term. These are well advertised on the school website and through personal invitations.
- 9.5. For pupils on the SEND Register, the Class Teacher remains the primary contact unless an enhanced communication plan is agreed with the SENDCo. Each term, the SENDCo audits and reviews every pupil on the SEND Register with Class Teachers as part of Pupil Progress Reviews. Where a pupil is not making expected progress, the SEND team identifies further strategies, implements additional adaptations and support, or seeks external input, such as Specialist Teacher or Speech and Language assessments. In many instances, a pupil with SEND may be placed on a Learning Plan. Each Learning Plan highlights the specific targets for the pupil to focus on, along with the additional adaptations and interventions put in place to help achieve these targets. These plans are reviewed and updated at set points throughout the year and are shared with parents and carers by class teachers to support follow-up and reinforcement at home.
- 9.6. If the SENDCO identifies that the school is unable to fully meet the needs of a pupil through our own provision arrangements, external advice is gained through our colleagues in education, health or social care. A joint framework for working or Common Assessment Framework process will be used and this will always be in collaboration with parents and carers and the pupil's wishes and views will be actively sought.

**[SEE sections 6.36 to 6.56 and 6.58 to 6.78 of SEND CoP]**

## **10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY**

- 10.1. Provision for pupils is monitored and evaluated through gathering views of individual pupils, parent / carers feedback, views of staff and by using school data to ascertain effectiveness and value for money. An effort is made to measure qualitative outcomes as well as academic process (such as how prepared a pupil feels to move onto the next stage of education, or how motivated they are in school).

- 10.2. Sometimes a pupil fails to make expected progress in spite of our best endeavours and where this is the case the SENDCO, in collaboration with the pupil and family, other staff and / or external services, will look at the case in detail to gain an understanding of what the barrier to learning is so that additional provision can be put in place.

## **11. COMING OFF THE SEND RECORD**

- 11.1. A pupil will be removed from the SEND Record if it is deemed that they have made sufficient progress over a period of time and are able to access the curriculum successfully. It is possible that some pupils may require support for particular aspects of their learning which may be due to their underlying learning issues. All pupils will be monitored and their progress tracked so that staff will be alerted to potential learning issues. For some pupils it is possible that they will dip in and out of additional support throughout their school experience; parents/carers will be informed at each stage if support is provided or when it will cease.
- 11.2. Some pupils with particular needs, usually which are long-lasting, may develop skills and strategies which help to minimise the impact of their difficulty to a level at which the need can be met through quality first teaching. An example of this might be a child/young person with dyslexia, who has had support to work around barriers in order to be a confident and independent learner and as a result, is making good progress. In this case, additional support may no longer be necessary, even though the pupil requires Examination Access Arrangements and a decision on their place on the SEND Record will be made by Senior school staff in partnership with parents and carers.
- 11.3. EHC Plans are reviewed annually. A pupil with an EHC Plan will follow the statutory guidance for ceasing an EHC Plan as set out in the Code of Practice. The ceasing of an EHC Plan is determined by the local authority where a pupil no longer requires the special education provision as specified in the EHC Plan. However, his or her progress will continue to be monitored by using the school's tracking systems.

## **12. STORING AND MANAGING INFORMATION**

- 12.1. All data including data stored electronically is subject to Data Protection law.
- 12.2. All paper records will be held in line with the Trust's policy/protocol on security of information. All people working with a particular pupil, directly or indirectly, will have access to any records or reports required to support the pupil or perform their role.

Hard copies of originals will be kept securely and confidentiality will be maintained.

### **13. SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

13.1. Our school will work within the statutory guidance, Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions – (DfE April 2014). We will comply with the duties specified under the Equality Act 2010. We recognise that provisions relating to disability must be treated favourably and that our school is expected to make reasonable adjustments in order to accommodate pupils who are disabled or have medical conditions. (See the school's policy on "Supporting children at school with medical conditions".)

### **14. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS**

14.1. Our school is committed to ensuring transition is highly effective for our pupils with SEN.

14.2. Prior to starting school, there is close liaison between the SEND and Early Years teams at Damers and our feeder preschools and nurseries. The SENDCo and Early Years Leader attend transition reviews at these settings, ensuring pupils have opportunities for extra visits to Damers and participation in additional activities, such as a welcome picnic, to support a smooth start. Where appropriate, additional parent meetings and individual consultations with the SEND team are arranged.

14.3. We have a clear transition plan for pupils with SEND at each stage of school change. This includes additional sessions with ELSA-trained staff, social stories, and increased contact time with new staff. For pupils identified as requiring further support—either by staff or parents—bespoke transition arrangements are developed.

14.4. At the end of Year 4, when pupils move on from Damers First School, Year Leaders, Class Teachers, and the SENDCo work closely with local Middle Schools to ensure a seamless transition. This process includes social stories, enhanced ELSA support for targeted groups, timely information sharing, SEND-specific meetings, and additional transition sessions tailored to individual needs.

14.5. During their time with us, pupils with EHC Plans are supported to think about their long-term goals and they will have annual Person Centred Reviews with their parents / carers. These help school staff and people at home to think about the 'whole person' and what we need to do to help them get to the next stage in their lives. This process is usually an empowering experience as it gives a degree of control that can sometimes be missing in the life of a pupil with additional needs.

## **15. TRAINING AND RESOURCES**

- 15.1. Training needs are identified through a process of analysis of need of both staff and pupils as and when required. The SENDCo and Senior Teaching Assistants meet each term to audit training needs and plan the delivery of professional development, ensuring TAs can provide high-quality support for pupils with SEND. The SENDCo also works closely with the Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning to plan training for teachers and wider staff on SEND-related matters.
- 15.2. The SENDCo provides information and guidance on specific needs for new staff, including trainee teachers and those newly appointed to Damers. To maintain up-to-date knowledge, the SENDCo engages in regular training and networking with other schools across Dorset through the Inclusion Briefing Network, regular meetings with MAT colleagues and membership of relevant national bodies.
- 15.3. Additional training is arranged as required to support specific medical or learning needs, in collaboration with medical professionals or other external specialists.

## **16. SEN INFORMATION**

- 16.1. Our school presents SEN information in three ways:
- by information placed on the school website which can be found on the main school website;
  - by following the link to the local authority's Local Offer website;
  - through information contained in this policy which is also published on the school website.
- 16.2. All information can be provided in hard copy and in other formats upon request.

## **17. ACCESSIBILITY**

- 17.1. Our school publishes its Accessibility Plan on the school website. Further information about our school's accessibility can be found on the local authority's Local Offer website; this can be found at [www.dorsetforyou.com/local-offer](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/local-offer).

## **18. COMPLAINTS**

- 18.1. It is hoped that all situations of concern can be resolved quickly through discussion

and early action. However, if a parent / carer feel that their concern or complaint regarding the care or welfare of their child/ young person has not been dealt with satisfactorily, an appointment can be made by them to speak and explain the issues. Parents/ carers are encouraged to contact their child young person's class teacher or tutor in the first instance to arrange this.

18.2. Wessex Multi-Academy Trust, of which our school is a member, publishes its Complaints Policy on the school website.

## **19. REVIEWING THE SEND POLICY**

19.1. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually. Our school appreciates parents and carers views on all aspects of this policy and will ask for volunteers to help with the review process (please contact the SENDCO if you are a parent or carer, or any other stakeholder and wish to make suggestions or comments at any time).

## **20. LINKS TO OTHER RELATED POLICIES**

- Supporting children at school with medical conditions
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality / equality information and objectives
- Child Protection
- Anti-bullying
- Data protection

