



# **SANDWELL ACADEMY**



## **SEND Information Report**

September 2024

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### **Note for parents and carers:**

The aim of this information report is to explain how we implement our SEND policy. In other words, we want to show you how SEND support works in our school.

If you want to know more about our arrangements for SEND, read our SEND policy.

You can find it on our SEND page on our website.

**Note:** If there are any terms we’ve used in this information report that you’re unsure of, you can look them up in the Glossary at the end of the report.

## 1. What types of SEN does the school provide for?

Sandwell Academy is a fully inclusive secondary school, and as such, we provide support for students with needs in all four categories of SEN, as outlined in the Code of Practice:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical

The following is a non-exhaustive list of needs which can be supported within the Academy:

AREA OF NEED	CONDITION
<b>Communication and interaction</b>	Autism spectrum disorder
	Speech and language difficulties
<b>Cognition and learning</b>	Specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia
	Moderate learning difficulties
	Severe learning difficulties
<b>Social, emotional and mental health</b>	Attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD)
	Attention deficit disorder (ADD)
<b>Sensory and/or physical</b>	Hearing impairments
	Visual impairment
	Multi-sensory impairment
	Physical impairment

## 2. Which staff will support my child, and what training have they had?

The Academy boasts a large group of staff members who are passionate about supporting students with additional needs to ensure that they achieve to the best of their potential. The 'Meet the Staff' page on our Academy website contains full details of the Inclusion Team, with contact details.

### Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator, or SENDCo

Our SENDCo is Ms Laura Millard ([sen@sandwellacademy.com](mailto:sen@sandwellacademy.com))

Ms Millard is a qualified teacher, and holds the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-Ordination (NASENCo) from the University of Birmingham. She will soon be commencing the Postgraduate Award for Proficiency in Assessing for Access Arrangements (PAPAA).

Ms Millard has had extensive training in a wide range of additional needs, including ASD.

## Assistant SENDCo

Our Assistant SENDCo is Mr Bernard Hamill ([sen@sandwellacademy.com](mailto:sen@sandwellacademy.com))

Mr Hamill leads our strategy for learning interventions and supports the SENDCo.

Mr Hamill has completed training in a wide range of learning interventions.

## Assistant Head for Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equality

Our Assistant Head for Welfare Support is Mr Tom Byrne ([sen@sandwellacademy.com](mailto:sen@sandwellacademy.com))

Mr Byrne is a qualified teacher, and holds the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-Ordination (NASENCo) from the University of Birmingham. He holds further qualifications in Psychology (BSc), Learning Disability (MSc) and assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA).

## Specialists, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and Mentors

We have a broad team of staff members with specialisms in different areas, including SEMH needs, ASD and learning needs. All staff within the Inclusion Team receive extensive training related to their roles to enable them to support students.

The Inclusion Team is comprised of the following:

- Learning Support Assistants (LSAs)
- Mentors and Mentoring Specialist
- SEMH intervention specialist
- Learning intervention specialist
- Counsellor
- Place2Be
- School nurse

## Class teachers/

All of our teachers receive in-house SEN training, and are supported by the SENDCo to meet the needs of pupils who have SEND.

Additional training is sourced where appropriate, and recent training includes the use of Emotion Coaching and Restorative Practice.

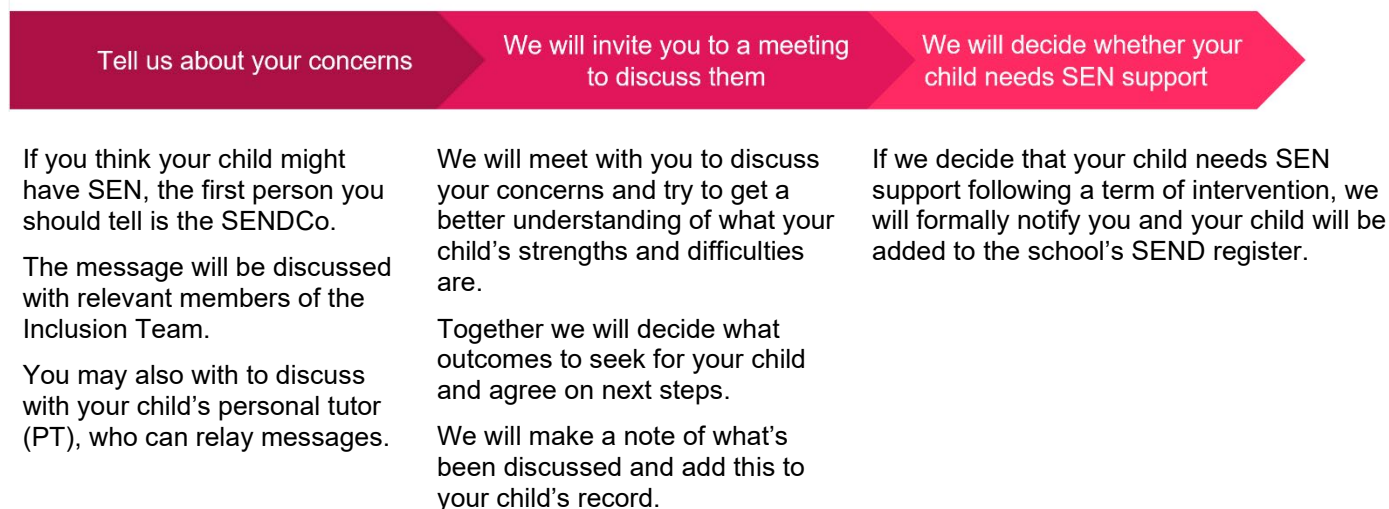
## External agencies and experts

Sometimes we need extra help to offer our pupils the support that they need. Whenever necessary we will work with external support services to meet the needs of our pupils with SEN and to support their families. These include:

- Inclusion Support, including the SEMH Team, Learning Team and Complex Communication and Autism Team (CCAT)
- Speech and language therapists
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists
- GPs or paediatricians
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Social services and other LA-provided support services

### 3. What should I do if I think my child has SEN?

If you believe that your child may need support from the SEN team, you should contact the SEN team by emailing [sen@sandwellacademy.com](mailto:sen@sandwellacademy.com) in the first instance. If necessary, a meeting can be held to discuss concerns in order to plan next steps.



### 4. How will the school know if my child needs SEN support?

All our class teachers are aware of SEN and are vigilant for any pupils who aren't making the expected level of progress in their schoolwork or in their wider social development. This might include, for example, difficulties in reading, writing or interacting with peers.

If the teacher notices that a pupil is falling behind, they try to find out if the pupil has any gaps in their learning. If they can find a gap, they will give the pupil extra support to try to fill it. Pupils who don't have SEN usually make progress quickly once the gap in their learning has been filled. This support may be additional scaffolding within lesson, or attendance at Session 3s.

If the pupil is still struggling to make the expected progress, the teacher will make a referral to the Inclusion Team.

The SENDCo will assess the child to see what their strengths and difficulties are. This may include conversations with key stakeholders, including parents/carers, standardised assessments and observations. They will have discussions with your child's teacher/s, to see if there have been any issues with, or changes in, their progress, attainment or presenting behaviour. They will also compare your child's progress and development with their peers and available national data.

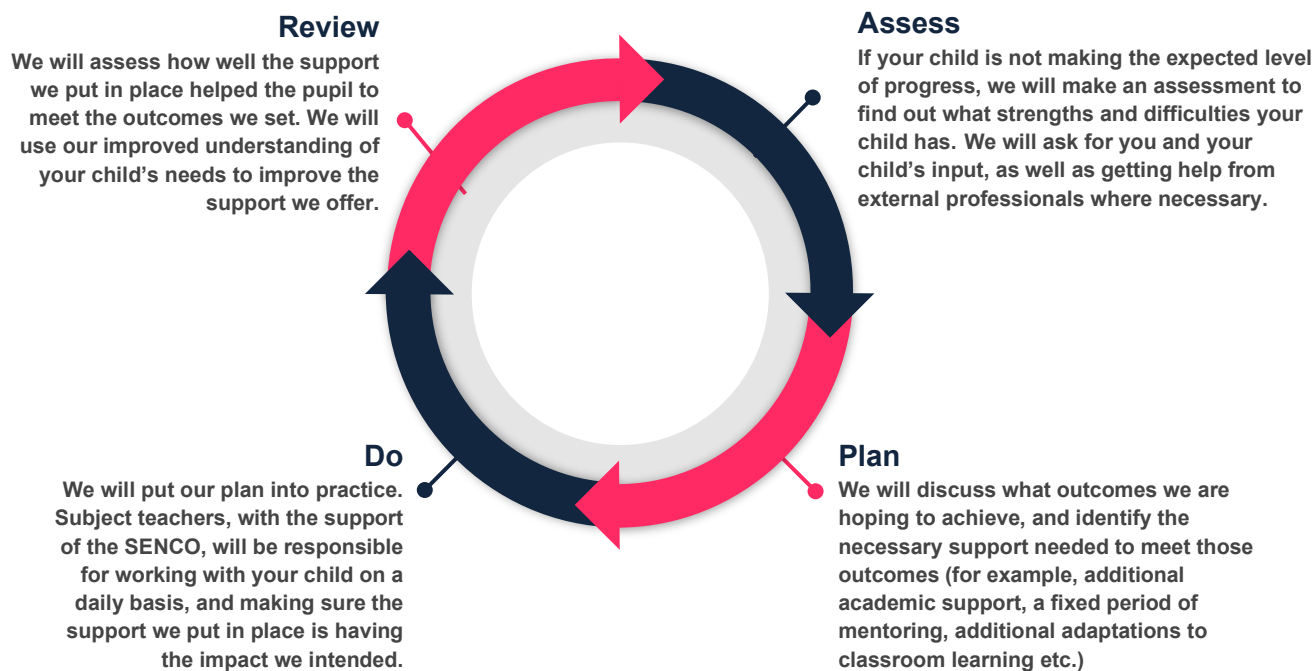
Based on all of this information, the SENDCo will decide whether your child needs additional support. You will be informed if this is the case. If, after a term of additional support, it is noted that continued support is still required, you child will be added to the SEND register, and their progress will be closely monitored using the graduated approach (regular assessment, planning of intervention, delivering intervention and reviewing progress).

If your child does need SEND support, their name will be added to the school's SEND register, and you will be notified of this.

## 5. How will the school measure my child's progress?

We will follow the 'graduated approach' to meeting your child's SEN needs, which will be completed termly.

The graduated approach is a 4-part cycle of **assess, plan, do, review**.



As a part of the planning stage of the graduated approach, we will set outcomes that we want to see your child achieve.

Whenever we run an intervention with your child, we will assess them before the intervention begins. This is known as a 'baseline assessment'. We do this so we can see how much impact the intervention has on your child's progress.

We will track your child's progress towards the outcomes we set over time and improve our offer as we learn what your child responds to best.

This process will be continual. If the review shows a pupil has made progress, they may no longer need the additional provision made through SEN support. For others, the cycle will continue and the school's targets, strategies and provisions will be revisited and refined.

## 6. How will I be involved in decisions made about my child's education?

We will provide reports on your child's progress through our module report system. You will also meet with subject teachers at parents evening, and there will be opportunities to meet with the SEND team at various points throughout the year, for example during our Coffee Mornings.

We know that you're the expert when it comes to your child's needs and aspirations, so we want to make sure you have a full understanding of how we're trying to meet your child's needs, so that you can provide insight into what you think would work best for your child.

We also want to hear from you as much as possible so that we can build a better picture of how the SEN support we are providing is impacting your child outside of school.

If your child's needs or aspirations change at any time, please let us know right away so we can keep our provision as relevant as possible.

## 7. How will my child be involved in decisions made about their education?

Student voice is central to the work that we do, and we make it a regular part of our practice to ask students how they feel they are progressing and what additional support they may need. With our 'termly check-in' process with a trusted adult, this takes place at least once a term to supplement the ongoing information we gather throughout our work.

We may seek your child's views by asking them to:

- Attend meetings to discuss their progress and outcomes
- Discuss their views with a member of staff who can act as a representative during the meeting
- Complete a survey

## 8. How will the school adapt its teaching for my child?

Your child's teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the pupils in their class.

High-quality teaching is our first step in responding to your child's needs. We will make sure that your child has access to a broad and balanced curriculum in every year they are at our school.

We will adapt how we teach to suit the way the pupil works best. There is no '1 size fits all' approach to adapting the curriculum, and so we work on a case-by case basis to make sure the adaptations we make are meaningful to your child. Staff are supported with this by our Pupil Profile system, whereby each child with additional need has a document which gives advice for staff on how to adapt their teaching. Students are involved in the creation of these to ensure that they reflect the student's voice.

These adaptations include:

- Adapting our curriculum to make sure all pupils are able to access it, for example, by grouping, 1-to-1 work, adapting the teaching style or content of the lesson, etc.
- Adapting features of our teaching, for example, by giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.
- Adapting our resources and staffing
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, visual timetables, larger font, etc.
- Elements of class-based support for students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for whom this is outlined in their provision

We may also make use of the following provision, where necessary:

- Booster classes
- Small-group interventions (e.g., for literacy or numeracy)
- Reciprocal Reading
- Fresh Start Phonics
- Precision teaching
- LEGO therapy
- Lunch Club
- Counselling
- Bespoke mentoring

These interventions are part of our contribution Sandwell's local offer. The local offers for each of our surrounding Local Authorities can be found on the SEN page on the Academy's website, or by clicking the links found in Section 18 of this information report.

## 9. How will the school evaluate whether the support in place is helping my child?

We will evaluate the effectiveness of provision for your child by:

- Reviewing their progress towards their targets each term
- Reviewing the impact of interventions after a fixed amount of time (which varies depending on the nature of the intervention, but will take place at least termly)
- Using pupil questionnaires/SDQs
- Monitoring by the SENDCo
- Using the Academy's provision map to measure progress
- Holding an annual review (if they have an education, health and care (EHC) plan)

## 10. How will the school resources be secured for my child?

It may be that your child's needs mean we need to secure:

- Extra equipment or facilities
- Further training for our staff
- External specialist expertise

If that's the case, we will consult with external agencies to get recommendations on what will best help your child access their learning.

If funding is needed beyond the Academy's existing budget, we will seek it from our local authority.

## 11. How will the school make sure my child is included in activities alongside pupils who don't have SEND?

All of our extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all our pupils, including our before and after-school clubs.

All pupils are encouraged to go on our school trips, including our residential trips.

All pupils are encouraged to take part in wider curriculum events, including Sports Day and Academy productions.

No pupil is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEN or disability and we will make whatever reasonable adjustments are needed to make sure that they can be included. Full details can be found in the Academy's Accessibility Plan, which can be found on the Academy website.

## 12. How does the school make sure the admissions process is fair for pupils with SEN or a disability?

Sandwell Academy welcomes students with additional needs, and we are a fully inclusive school. As outlined in our Admissions Policy, students with an Education, Health and Care Plan are admitted to the Academy as per the procedure detailed in the Code of Practice:

- Following parental communication, the relevant Local Authority will consult with the Academy
- The SEN team will review the plan and provide a response within 15 calendar days. The response will thoughtfully consider the extent to which the provision outlined in Section F can be provided, including with the securing of additional funding
- If directed by the Local Authority or named on an EHCP, the Academy will welcome the child or young person into the Academy, and make best endeavours to meet their needs

The Academy ensures that in our appeals process, students with additional needs are not viewed less favourable than their peers. Details of our appeals process can be found in our Admissions Policy, which is published on the Academy's website.



### 13. How does the school support pupils with disabilities?

At Sandwell Academy, we take seriously our obligations under the Equality Act (2010), and we ensure that students with disabilities are not at an inherent disadvantage. This includes both physical and cognitive/intellectual disabilities. The academy will secure the necessary provision/auxiliary aids to ensure full access to all areas of Academy life.

We also make necessary reasonable adjustments to our policies and practices to promote full inclusivity. This includes, for example, adaptations to the Behaviour Regulation and Relationships Policy, to ensure that students with disabilities are not treated less favourable than their peers.

Our Accessibility Plan outlines in further detail the adaptations made to the Academy to ensure inclusivity, including changes to the physical environment and measures taken to ensure full access to the Academy's curriculum.

### 14. How will the school support my child's mental health and emotional and social development?

We provide support for pupils to progress in their emotional and social development in the following ways:

- Pupils with SEN all have a trusted adult within the Welfare Team who they can access for support and guidance
- Pupils with SEN are part of our 'termly check-in' procedure, whereby they meet at least termly to discuss their thoughts and feelings about school
- Access, where appropriate, to our Oaklands Intervention Centre
- Access to Lunch Club to support students during unstructured times
- A wide range of interventions, including LEGO therapy, friendship groups and emotional wellbeing groups
- Access to Sixth Form peer mentors
- Access, where appropriate, to mentoring or wider social, emotional and mental health work
- On-site counselling, including from our school counsellor and Place2Be/Place2Talk
- Extensive work with external agencies, including Inclusion Support, CAMHS and Reach Psychology
- Thorough CPD and training for staff on supporting SEMH needs, linked to staff progression and development targets
- Pupil Profiles available to staff to ensure that students with complex SEMH needs have their needs understood by class teachers
- A commitment to Emotion Coaching and Restorative Practice as a way to promote relationships and work collaboratively to overcome emotional challenges
- Additional support during particularly stressful periods, such as transitions (as outlined below) and exams

### 15. What support will be available for my child as they transition between settings or in preparing for adulthood?

At Sandwell Academy, we work hard to ensure that students transitioning into new year groups/Key Stages have the necessary support to manage this transition effectively and confidently.

#### **Between years**

To help pupils with SEND be prepared for a new school year we:

- Ensure that Heads of Year are consistent (where possible), and that pastoral managers remain constant
- Make use of the Pupil Profile system to ensure that new staff are fully informed of student needs

- Use whole-staff briefings to ensure that students with complex needs are well supported, and that staff understand the most effective ways of communicating with, or supporting them

## Between schools

When your child is moving on from our school, we will ask you and your child what information you want us to share with the new setting.

## Between phases

The SENDCo of the primary school meets with our SENDCo to discuss the needs of the incoming pupils near the end of the summer term.

Each pupil with additional needs is visited by a member of the Inclusion Team during the Summer term prior to their arrival at the Academy. Students identified by staff as needing a higher level of transition support are allocated a mentor at this stage.

We arrange a coffee morning to meet parents of incoming students with SEND to discuss pupil needs, methods of support and devise Pupil Profiles. Where required, additional meetings are organised to discuss pupils' needs in greater depth.

During transition days, members of the Inclusion Team support in each class to ensure that needs are monitored, and students have a trusted adult present. Student needs are shared with staff prior to their arrival to ensure a settled start.

We ensure that Year 7s have an early parents evening to discuss how well they have settled. The SENDCo/Assistant SENDCo is available during this time to meet with each parent/carer of a young person with additional needs.

## Onto adulthood

We provide all our pupils with appropriate advice on paths into work or further education. Our dedicated careers team work tirelessly to ensure that all students have identified/secured their next venture.

We work with the pupil to help them achieve their ambitions, which can include goals in higher education, employment, independent living and participation in society.

For students with EHCPs, 'preparing for adulthood' targets are set from Year 9 onwards. Students with complex needs will take part in additional interventions during Key Stage 4 to develop the necessary skills to thrive. For example, they may have additional sessions with the careers team and/or attend college Open Days to explore Post-16 Vocational Course options.

Students with SEND will be heavily supported in securing appropriate work experience in Year 10 and 12, and will be visited by a member of the Inclusion team whilst there (if required).

## 16. What support is in place for looked-after and previously looked-after children with SEN?

At Sandwell Academy, we have three members of staff who are Designated Teachers for Looked-After Children (LAC): Jade Deakin, Alexander Jones and Tracey Dockery. All work with Laura Millard, our SENDCo, to make sure that all teachers understand how a looked-after or previously looked-after pupil's circumstances and their SEN might interact, and what the implications are for teaching and learning.

Children who are looked-after or previously looked-after will be supported much in the same way as any other child who has SEND. However, looked-after pupils will also have a personal education plan (PEP). We will make sure that the PEP and any SEN support plans or EHC plans are consistent and complement one another. A dedicated member of staff within the Inclusion team supports with mentoring students who have SEN and are also LAC.

## 17. What should I do if I have a complaint about my child's SEN support?

Complaints about SEN provision in our school should be made to the SEN team in the first instance. If the complaint is not resolved, you will be referred to the Academy's complaints procedure, which can be found on the Academy website.

If you are not satisfied with the school's response, you can escalate the complaint. In some circumstances, this right also applies to the pupil themselves.

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEN Code of Practice](#).

## 18. What support is available for me and my family?

If you have questions about SEND, or are struggling to cope, please get in touch to let us know. We want to support you, your child and your family.

To see what support is available to you locally, have a look at the local offer for the relevant Local Authority:

LOCAL AUTHORITY	LOCAL OFFER
<b>Sandwell</b>	<a href="#">Family Information Service Hub   Sandwell Local Offer</a>
<b>Birmingham</b>	<a href="#">Home - Local Offer Birmingham</a>
<b>Walsall</b>	<a href="#">The SEND Local Offer   Walsall Council</a>
<b>Dudley</b>	<a href="#">Dudley's Local Offer   Dudley Council</a>
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	<a href="#">Wolverhampton Local Offer   Wolverhampton Information Network</a>

Our local special educational needs and disabilities information advice and support services (SENDIASS) can be accessed at the following website:

[www.sandwellsendiass.co.uk](http://www.sandwellsendiass.co.uk)

National charities that offer information and support to families of children with SEND are:

- [IPSEA](#)
- [SEND family support](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Family Action](#)
- [Special Needs Jungle](#)

## 19. Glossary

- › **Access arrangements** – special arrangements to allow pupils with SEND to access assessments or exams
- › **Annual review** – an annual meeting to review the provision in a pupil's EHC plan
- › **Area of need** – the 4 areas of need describe different types of needs a pupil with SEND can have. The 4 areas are communication and interaction; cognition and learning; physical and/or sensory; and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- › **CAMHS** – child and adolescent mental health services
- › **Differentiation** – When teachers adapt how they teach in response to a pupil's needs
- › **EHC needs assessment** – the needs assessment is the first step on the way to securing an EHC plan. The local authority will do an assessment to decide whether a child needs an EHC plan.
- › **EHC plan** – an education, health and care plan is a legally-binding document that sets out a child's needs and the provision that will be put in place to meet their needs.
- › **First-tier tribunal/SEND tribunal** – a court where you can appeal against the local authority's decisions about EHC needs assessments or plans and against discrimination by a school or local authority due to SEND
- › **Graduated approach** – an approach to providing SEN support in which the school provides support in successive cycles of assessing the pupil's needs, planning the provision, implementing the plan, and reviewing the impact of the action on the pupil
- › **Intervention** – a short-term, targeted approach to teaching a pupil with a specific outcome in mind
- › **Local offer** – information provided by the local authority which explains what services and support are on offer for pupils with SEN in the local area
- › **Outcome** – target for improvement for pupils with SEND. These targets don't necessarily have to be related to academic attainment
- › **Reasonable adjustments** – changes that the school must make to remove or reduce any disadvantages caused by a child's disability
- › **SENDCo/SENCo** – the special educational needs (and disabilities) co-ordinator
- › **SEN** – special educational needs
- › **SEND** – special educational needs and disabilities
- › **SEND Code of Practice** – the statutory guidance that schools must follow to support children with SEND
- › **SEN information report** – a report that schools must publish on their website, that explains how the school supports pupils with SEN
- › **SEN support** – special educational provision which meets the needs of pupils with SEN
- › **Transition** – when a pupil moves between years, phases, schools or institutions or life stages