



**UNLOCKING POTENTIAL
LEVELLING THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ARENA**

SEND POLICY

Mission Statement

The Levels School exists to provide a nurturing environment in which students with specific learning difficulties and co-occurring diagnoses can develop their self-esteem and aspire to be independent young adults who value the rights, responsibilities and rules that exist to promote and support their future welfare. Our approach toward establishing this ideology is predicated on trauma-informed practice and an obligation to develop the social skills required to build their future aspirational communities. We exist to help them find their level.

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Policy owner	Victoria Billany
Published policy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
List of connected policies	Safeguarding Policy, Curriculum Policy, Digital Use Policy, Behaviour Policy, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Children with medical needs that cannot attend school policy, Supporting children with medical conditions policy, Children looked after policy, Accessibility Plan Speech and Language Therapy Policy Occupational Therapy Policy, Equality and Dignity at work policy
Approved / Date	Governors

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Introduction

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, supported by the Teaching and Learning Team to implement this policy. It is monitored throughout the school by a process of departmental and pastoral self-review and quality assurance by the Governance team.

This policy is in line with the Independent School Standards (Revised January 2015)

Children and Families Act (2014)

SEND Code of Practice, 0-25 years (2015)

Statement and vision

The Levels School is an Independent Specialist School, specialising in teaching learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and Co-occurring differences or similar learning profiles, offering a personalised and supportive environment, where the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every student and student matter. We recognise that students have different educational needs and abilities and learn and acquire knowledge in different ways and at varying rates. Accordingly, teaching provision is adapted to the individual's needs, taking into consideration the specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) and the special educational needs (SEN) of each child. The School also recognises that progress relates to the wider personal and social development of all students and students which is a key consideration.

All schools must have a Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy; also known as a SEND Policy. This is a duty set out in the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (Jan 2015)*.

The Levels School wants all our students to feel welcome, valued and included in the school community. We have high aspirations for all of our students, regardless of SpLD or SEND. We will provide them with high quality, personalised learning opportunities to ensure that they achieve their potential.

We also want to help our students to develop a positive view of themselves so that they can become confident individuals and go on to live fulfilling lives by making a successful transition into adulthood. We will endeavour to fully involve our students in all decisions that affect them, so that they can help us to identify what works for them and reflect on what doesn't.

The views of our students and their parents are especially important to us and we will take these into account when consulting on, implementing and reviewing this policy.

To achieve this we will:

- Create an atmosphere of encouragement and acceptance in which all students can thrive.
- Be sensitive to individual students' needs and celebrate achievements and effort equally.
- Enable each student to take part and contribute fully to school life.
- Provide access to and progression within the curriculum.

- Involve students in planning to support their SEN or disability.
- Work in partnership with parents to support children's learning and health needs.
- Provide quality training for staff that enables them to support students with SEN and disabilities.
- Work in cooperative and productive partnership with Local Authorities and other outside agencies, as appropriate, to ensure there is a multi-professional approach to meeting the needs of all vulnerable learners.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

The *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (Jan 2015)* explains that a student has special educational needs (SEN) if:

- They have a learning difficulty or disability which makes it much harder for them to learn than other students of the same age; and
- They require special educational provision to be made for them.

There are four main areas of SEN:

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

A disability is described in law (the Equality Act 2010) as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

Roles and Responsibilities

At The Levels School, the named Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) is Victoria Billany and the named Governor responsible for SEND is Geraldine Horage. Along with the Head teacher, they ensure that this SEND policy works within the guidelines of the SEND Code of Practice (2014), also linking with other policies within the school. The School Governors and Senior Leadership Team, in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), will ultimately ensure that the School takes into account the needs of the ages and aptitudes of all enrolled students, including those with SEND, and that any requirements of an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan (formerly known as a Statement of Special Needs) where The Levels School is the agreed named provision are complied with. When considering 0-25 EHC plans sent to The Levels for consultation by a local authority, we will clarify what the school can provide from existing resources and what will be needed in terms of extra support – financial or specialist input – from the local authority in order to make the provision necessary to meet the needs. We will make sure the EHC plan is clear about who has to do what, when and how often. Day to day responsibility will be delegated to the SENCo who will liaise with class teachers to ensure that the necessary provision is in place.

The School Governors and Senior Leadership Team are committed to ensuring that the School meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010). The School will not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics including race, colour, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social origin, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability or special educational need. The School has an Equal Opportunities policy in place for students.

Our Head Teacher, Caroline Cook, has overall responsibility for SEN and disability at our school. Her duties towards students with SEN and disability ensure that the School will not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics including race, colour, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social origin, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability or special educational need.

The role of the SENCo focuses on the coordination, rather than the teaching, of special educational needs. The main responsibilities of this post are:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of The School's SEND policy.
- To maintain and update students' IEPs and SEND records.
- Contributing towards baseline / tracking assessments for students with special attention paid to reading, spelling and numeracy baselines.
- Coordinating the provision for students with SEND.
- Overseeing and managing the Accelerated Learning Centre. The ALC is a resource base within the school which support students who may require intensive work on their literacy or numeracy skills, or benefit from pre-teaching or additional timetabled support that is not available within the classroom.
- Liaising with and advising teachers.
- Working with teaching staff to inform and liaise effectively with parents.
- Contributing to the training of staff.
- Working with staff to identify More Able and Talented students, recording this onto their IEPs and working with staff to develop suitable provision for extending these students.
- Liaising with external agencies.
- Liaising with the governing body, in particular, the Governor with responsibility for SEND.
- Meeting regularly with the Head teacher to develop the strategic direction of SEND within the school.
- Attending the Therapy meeting to discuss the needs of the students with the therapy team to ensure holistic provision is made and regularly liaising with the Head of Therapy about whole school provision.

Objectives

The Levels School will endeavour to ensure that the right provision is made for each student. We are committed to discovering and providing the best learning conditions for each student.

In implementing this policy, our goals are to:

- Ensure an inclusive environment that values and celebrates difference.
- Provide opportunities for all students to meet their full potential by removing barriers to learning.
- Providing a broad and balanced curriculum with appropriate modifications where needed.
- Manage The School's resources to ensure all students' needs are met.
- Gain a baseline of skills at an early stage to track and monitor progress.
- Provide personalised learning that takes the individual needs of each child into account.
- Work in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (Jan 2015).
- Provide support and advice to all staff regarding SEND.
- Operate a whole school approach to meeting SEN and disabilities, in which all members of the school community have an understanding of their role and work together to provide the best possible education for our students.
- Adopt a 'person centred approach' to supporting students with SEN and disabilities, ensuring that students and their parents are fully involved in decisions which affect them.
- Ensure there is effective partnership working with outside agencies when appropriate.

Identifying Special Educational Needs

Although the children that come to The Levels School already have certain SEND identified, we will ensure that assessments are carried out, as appropriate, to identify any further SpLDs or barriers to learning. Subject to consent being granted, all students will be assessed by a Speech and Language Therapist and an Occupational Therapist within their first term of entry, please see Therapy Policy for further details of assessment procedure. Where appropriate and with consent, evidence-based interventions will be put in place to support learners, according to their individual needs. Progress will be reviewed regularly and alterations to provision will be made as necessary.

We monitor progress to identify SEN by:

- Providing teaching that is of a high quality where progress is monitored against learning objectives.
- Assessment of executive function skills to determine strengths and weaknesses.
- Gaining baseline assessments to track literacy and numeracy progress from.
- Engaging the therapy department to assess for further difficulties.
- Regularly assessing our students' progress and targeting areas of difficulty.
- Adjusting work for students who need this.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of any interventions that are in place.

All students will be baselined at the start of the academic year or on entry for Reading (single word and comprehension), Spelling and Maths ability using the Academic Achievement Battery.

The results of these assessments will be detailed on each child's Individual Education Plan (IEP), students will then be tested again prior to half term of the summer term and progress will be noted. If it is suspected that a student of not making progress in regard to these skills, earlier evidence may be sought so that additional intervention can be planned and implemented.

Students may be identified as having a significant deficit in their reading skills and where this is the case, they may be referred for additional intervention within the Accelerated Learning Centre. This will take the form of an intensive programme designed to improve reading skills.

EHC Plans are issued by the Local Authority following an education, health and care (EHC) needs assessment. The Levels School will work with parents and other services to request an EHC needs assessment where it is felt this will be beneficial and will work in conjunction with these services where EHC plans are already in place. This includes organising Annual Review meetings and ensuring parents are supported in this process.

Sometimes other factors can affect a student's progress but are not considered to be a special educational need, for example: attendance and punctuality, ill health, English as an additional language, looked after children, service children, behaviour (where there is no underlying SEN) and bereavement. These needs will be addressed appropriately using other processes or strategies.

Setting and Reviewing Targets

Each student will have an Individual Education Plan. The front page will act as a Pupil Passport and will be child centred, providing information about the child, including their strengths, preferred learning styles and information about their family, hobbies and interests. More detailed information about their needs and background will be provided on a separate page and will include strategies known to support the student. This will be a working document and staff will update as they gather more information about the student. The third section will have targets for that student. If they have an ECH Plan then these targets will be linked to the outcomes on this document and presented as SMART targets. If a student does not have an EHCP then targets will set according to the relevant categories from the ECH Plan. These are:

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

All teaching and therapy staff will be able to access the IEP and specific staff may have responsibility for working with the student towards one or more targets. Staff will be made aware of this and supported by the SENCo. IEP targets will be shared with students and reviewed termly and new ones set accordingly. Where a student is not making progress toward one or more of their targets then further support will be given using the Assess, Plan, Do Review approach as set out below. Targets on the IEP will be separate to curriculum targets, which will be set by each subject teacher and shared with students.

Supporting Students with SEN and Disabilities

Our SEND policy is centred around the key principle that all teachers at The Levels School have a certain level of expertise in the realm of special educational needs (Level 4 Dyslexia Action Qualification: Perspectives in Dyslexia). Where this is not the case in-house training will be delivered as part of the induction process and appropriate further training sought at the right level. All members of staff undertake training in different forms of SpLD and build up a CPD portfolio to represent this.

Teachers ensure excellent provision for students by:

- Planning individualised lessons that are specifically designed to cater for the students in their classes.
- Creating friendly, supportive environments within their classrooms where children feel empowered to do their best and are not afraid to make mistakes.
- Maintaining up to date records for each child in their classes, feeding this into each child's IEP when appropriate.
- Contributing to staff IEP meetings.
- Undertaking relevant training / reading relevant materials associated with the SEND presented in their classes.

The SENCo liaises on an on-going basis with teaching and therapy staff regarding individual children. SEND provision is discussed and each child's IEP is updated accordingly.

Where possible, children will be catered for within the normal classroom context as part of a universal response with high quality teaching through differentiated activities as part of everyday good practice. This will:

- Promote inclusion.
- Give access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Allow the class teacher to oversee all teaching and learning.
- Allow access to the social elements of a classroom environment that are key to development.

At The Levels School we recognise that it may not always be possible to meet the needs of a student within a whole class environment and alternative provision may be provided in different forms. This may be having a timetabled session in the Accelerated Learning Centre. These will be pre-planned and timetabled where a student may be identified as needing additional support in a curriculum area or needing to be further extended than may be practical, for additional literacy intervention, or because they have been identified as benefiting from a different balance of curriculum subjects. Equally, a student may be offered a reduced timetable with some work at home being administered in an online format (see Digital Use Policy). Each case will be discussed on an individual basis.

At The Levels School we use an "Assess, Plan, Do, Review" approach to support our students. This is also known as the graduated response. It helps us to learn more about the student and what helps them to make good progress. The four parts of this approach are as follows:

1. Assess – as already outlined above, we assess the student's needs; listening to the views of the student and their parents, and other professionals as we do so.
2. Plan - the teacher, therapist(s) and our SENCo will plan the support needed, involving the student and their parents. A review date will be agreed.
3. Do – our SENCo will help the class teacher to support the student. They will think about the student's strengths and weaknesses and how best to help them.
4. Review – everyone, including the student and their parents, will decide how effective the support has been. We will then adapt the support in light of the student's progress. This will take place formally, once a year, at the child's Annual Review, but more regularly at informal parent meetings or at other times as requested by parents or staff.

Students with EHC Plans have Annual Review meetings, held at the school, that invite other relevant professionals including the Local Education Authority to attend, and include the child and their parents. All Annual Reviews at The Levels School are person centred and focus on the student's progress. They also:

- Consider whether the outcomes in the EHC Plan are still appropriate.
- Review the special educational provision in place.
- Review any health or social care provision currently in place.
- Consider new targets that are appropriate to ensure that the child continues to make progress.

Students without EHC Plans will also be invited to an Annual Review meeting, where relevant professionals, and the child and their parents will attend to discuss their progress and support. These will be person centred and focus on the student's progress and will also:

- Review the special educational provision in place.
- Consider new targets for their Individual Education Plan that are appropriate to ensure that the child continues to make progress.

If needed, during this process, we may ask for advice from specialist support services, either from our in-house therapy team or externally, such as Educational Psychology, Specialist Teaching & Advice, Behaviour Support and Children's Therapy. Parental permission will always be sought prior to this.

For students in Year 9 and above, there is a specific focus on preparing for adulthood. This includes thinking about:

- Further or higher education (e.g. college, an apprenticeship or university).
- Employment.
- Independent living.
- Participating in society.
- Being as healthy as possible in adult life.

A report of the meeting is sent to the Local Authority.

Specialist Provision and Facilities

At the Levels School, we will provide:

- Specialist teachers, qualified in teaching strategies that are proven to support individuals with slow processing, low working memory, poor executive functioning skills, fine and gross motor difficulties, poor visual and spatial awareness, and auditory processing difficulties.
- Short daily reading sessions across the school, in addition to daily English lessons.
- On-site Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists.
- Small class sizes, no more than 10, to ensure each child's needs are met.
- Teaching geared to the children's individual needs and linked carefully to their own targets.
- Teaching that is matched closely to learning styles and strengths.
- Cumulative episodes of multi-sensory teaching with opportunities for repetition as required.
- All subject-specific vocabulary to be presented in context, with visual reminders wherever possible and with explicit explanation.
- Classrooms that are designed to be low distraction, low arousal environments.
- The Levels School uniform will be loose and comfortable, no blazers or ties are planned. Students will be able to wear their sports kits every day if this is comfortable for them.
- Access to regular movement breaks for all students identified as needing them.
- Children have a peer group with similar needs so that they do not feel different and find it easier to socialise.
- Zones of Regulation will be used consistently throughout the school in all classes and break/lunch times and by all staff.
- Weekly social skills groups run by Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists.
- Access to a fine motor skills group, run by Occupational therapists, if a need is identified after standardised testing (see Social and Fine Motor Skills Policy).
- Provision that encourages independence and celebrates equally effort and achievement.
- Access to a quiet sensory zone for students who are struggling to regulate their behaviour within the classroom.
- Access to resources within the class geared to helping students maintain attention and focus on their work such as ear defenders, move and sit cushions, gym balls, busy feet, finger fidgets, reading rulers, colour overlays, writing slopes.

More Able and Talented Students

It is important for the self-esteem of our students, especially as many of them may have felt negatively defined by their SEND, that we acknowledge their strengths and talents. We recognise that some of our students may require a greater breadth and depth of learning activities than is normally provided for our usual cohort of learners. We use the term More Able and Talented to acknowledge those students who are More Able and Talented in

relation to our cohort of students, not in relation to any Nationally recognised definitions of these terms. Pupils may be More Able and /or Talented in diverse fields (academic, creative or sporting).

More Able students would demonstrate a significantly higher ability than average for the class (a target grade that is 2 numeric scores higher than the class average) and would often require differentiated tasks and opportunities to learn through challenges. It may be appropriate for them to access the Accelerated Learning Centre (ALC) for some lessons in order to provide an additional or different provision. This would be timetabled and work set by the subject teacher in liaison with the ALC Mentor, or the SENCo.

Talented students would be those who demonstrate an innate talent or skill in creative or sporting fields. These talents could be in one or more areas, such as:

- Core subjects.
- Specific curriculum subjects.
- Organisational abilities.
- Leadership skills.
- Creativity.
- Thinking skills.
- Social skills.

These students may be identified by subject teachers, tutors or parents depending on the area of strength. Opportunities for nurturing and extending these students will be identified and recorded in their Individual Learning Plans and monitored by the SENCo in liaison with appropriate subject teachers. This may involve liaison with outside agencies or professionals in order to provide suitable opportunities for development of these areas of strength.

Transition Arrangements

The Levels School is committed to ensuring that parents have confidence in the arrangements for students entering the school, progressing through year groups and when transferring to their next school/college. This will be done with a range of the following:

- Information gathering from previous settings (school reports, communication with teachers, SEND paperwork etc.).
- Trial period prior to admission where practical, advance visits prior to start date, meeting the tutor etc.
- Part-time timetables for those that need a gentler transition.
- Online learning opportunities for those that struggle to attend school full time.
- Meetings with parents to gain as much information about the child as possible.
- Communication and transition activities for a child's next setting.

Training and Resources

The Levels School aims to keep all staff up to date with relevant training, in relation to the needs of students with SEN and disabilities. Funding is set aside to support continued professional development.

All staff will have a CPD portfolio and identify a CPD pathway with their line-manager and in discussion with the SENCo to target areas for CDP that are relevant and of interest to the individual staff member. This will include specific targets for SEN related CPD.

Training needs are identified through analysis of need with the SENCo and senior leadership team ensuring that training opportunities match school priorities. The SENCo and Head of Therapy will also provide information on specific special educational needs for new staff.

Additional training may also be arranged to support students with specific medical needs and will be arranged with relevant medical professionals.

Accessibility Plan

In line with the Equality Act 2010, an Accessibility Plan exists which sets out how we will:

- a) Increase access to the curriculum for our disabled students.
- b) Improve the physical environment of the school to increase access for our disabled students.
- c) Make written information more accessible to our disabled students by providing information in a range of different ways.

Supporting students with medical conditions

In line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the associated guidance, *Supporting students at school with medical conditions* (Dec 2015), The Levels School makes suitable arrangements to support all students with medical conditions, so that they have full access to the same opportunities as their peers, including school trips and physical education.

Local Offer

Further information about the support available to all children and young people in Somerset with SEN and disabilities, and their families can be found on [Somerset's Local Offer](#).

Evaluation of Provision

Provision is regularly monitored, tracked and evaluated by the Head teacher, SENCo teaching and therapy staff. The effectiveness of the provision will be monitored by comparing baseline scores with assessment scores taken throughout the year.

An annual report will be published on the website and annually updated. This will provide an annual account of the implementation of this policy, detailing how we have supported the students with regard to SEN at The Levels School. The Governors regularly scrutinise data within this report, relating to progress, to ensure that good progress is made by all.

Parent and student feedback regarding SEND provision will be requested annually via feedback questionnaires, and informally via our open door policy. The SLT and Governors will analyse this information and will use it to review policy and improve provision as necessary. If a parent has concerns about the provision for their child, they should initially

discuss this with the class teacher. This can then be followed by a discussion with the Head teacher or SENCo if necessary.

We will evaluate the success of our policy through:

- Our Self Evaluation Form (SEF).
- Feedback from our students, parents and professionals working with the school.
- Analysis of lesson planning to take account of differentiation.
- Progress data, including use of the school's tracking system and comparative national data to monitor the level and rate of progress for our students with SEN and disabilities.
- Success towards outcomes included on SEN Support and EHC Plans.
- External evaluations or inspections.

Complaints

It is hoped that all situations of concern can be resolved quickly through discussion and early action. If at any point a parent has concerns about how their child's needs are being met, they should contact the child's tutor as a first port of call. However, if a parent feels that their concern or complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, an appointment can be made to speak with the SENCo or Head teacher.

Further details can be found within our Complaints Policy which will be made available on our website.

Agreed by the [Governing body/Board] Date:

Signature:

(Chair of Governors/Board)

Some useful guidance around SEND, Education and Health Care Plans and provision in local areas for parents can be found at the following sites:

- Department of Education SEND Code of Practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-support-easy-read-guide-for-parents>
- Somerset Local Offer: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/somersets-local-offer/http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/localoffer>
- Dorset Local Offer: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/dorsets-local-offer.aspx>
- Bristol Local Offer: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/bristol-local-offer>
- North Somerset Local Offer: <https://nsod.n-somerset.gov.uk/kb5/northsomerset/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>
- Devon Local Offer: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-local-offer#:~:text=Devon%E2%80%99s%20SEND%20Local%20Offer%20and%20strategyhas>

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