



# MacIntyre Academies Discovery Academy

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Version	Purpose / Change	Responsibility	Date
V8	Throughout – Principal changed to Head of School and/or Executive Principal Page 2 (3) Addition of: “Opportunity for all (White Paper 2022, DfE)” Page 3 (para 1) – addition of “and be ‘Ready for Life’, in line with our ambition as a school.” Page 3 (6) change ‘High Quality’ to “Quality First” Page 5 (7) Addition of short reference to role of the exams officer Page 8 – clarification of ASC to “ASC (also known as Autistic).” To show due regard for preferred terms Page 8 (9) – Addition of “Regular review of the Exclusions policy”	Executive Principal	March 2023
V9	Wording tweaked to emphasise that if the provisions in section F of the EHCP present difficulties, we will be proactive about working with partners to overcome them.	Executive Principal	Nov 2024

**Person Responsible:** Principal  
**Date of first draft:** 2015  
**Date of staff consultation:** 2015  
**Date adopted by the Trust Board:** July 2015  
**Date reviewed by the LAB:** 12 02 19  
**Date of implementation:** July 2015  
**Date reviewed:** Nov 24  
**Date of next review:** Nov 25

## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out the procedures governing the action to be taken in respect of Children and Young People (CYP) at Discovery Academy.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Discovery Academy's employees, including volunteers as well as Local Advisory Board and Trust Board Members.

## 3. Introduction

This policy is written in accordance with:

- Children and Families Act, 2014
- The Equalities Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations for 2014
- SEN Code of Practice from 2014 (last updated 2024)
- Opportunity for all (White Paper 2022, DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan (2023)
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

The policy should be read alongside Discovery Academy's:

- Statement of Provision
- Admissions Guidance
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Disability Access Plan
- Curriculum

### Definition of SEN

CYP have special educational needs (SEN) if they have a difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. This will likely apply to all children in our setting as they have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child or young person's ability to process information and learn. They can impact on children and young people in many ways including, but not limited to:

- Feelings of insecurity, ability to regulate or ability to socialise
- reading and writing
- ability to understand things or comprehension
- concentration levels
- physical ability
- anxiety about academic success or even simply school attendance

## 4. Underlying Principles

We believe that all children and young people should be equally valued and will strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to develop environments where all children and young people can flourish, feel safe and reach their potential. Our belief is that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities that fully consider the individual, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, ability, attainment and background.

We pay attention to the provision for and the achievement of individuals and different groups of CYP. Our aim is to respond to CYP and their family's circumstances in ways which take account of a variety of life experiences and needs. We recognise that for our target group of learners, outcomes at early adulthood are often poor and sometimes critical (lack of economic activity, criminal justice system involvement etc.). We will work with families, community groups, the police and other stakeholders to shift aspirations so that CYP can achieve a better, more productive future and be 'Ready for Life', in line with our ambition as a school.

Our approach is based on the following principles:

- All children and young people, regardless of difficulty or disability, have the same right to maximise their personal potential through access to effective provision that meets their needs.
- Education can and should be a way of maximising equality of opportunity for all children and young people in many facets of their lives and interests.
- All CYP, regardless of severity of their difficulty or disability, are encouraged to be ambitious for themselves and to be aspirational about their future hopes and dreams.
- The learning experience for children will be effective, stimulating, engaging and highly tailored to individual CYP.
- Working with CYP and families as partners, our academy will focus on good, child-centred outcomes to create the best foundation on which to build adult life.

## 5. Aims

Discovery Academy is fully committed to inclusion. We used person centred approaches to ensure that children and young people are fully included in all aspects of school life, to realise their potential and to feel valued. We are fully committed to the following aims:

- CYP receive the provision set out in section F their Education Health and Care Plan, wherever this is reasonable and practicable.
- Where the provisions in section F of the EHCP present difficulties, we will be proactive about working with partners to overcome them.
- CYP have full access to a high quality, education with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
- We identify and respond to the changing needs of CYP.
- There are rigorous procedures for tracking and monitoring CYP' progress.
- We enable provision to evolve to support these changing needs so that CYP can further develop their potential as individuals.
- We inspire CYP to attend school and value their education in the same way that often comes naturally to children in other circumstances.
- We fully involve CYP in their education, taking account of their views and working with them in any planning and decision making which that affects them.
- We improve emotional and educational outcomes and life chances for children and young people.
- We fully involve families at every stage in plans to meet their child's additional needs.
- We raise aspirations of CYP and families, matched by high staff aspirations for CYP.
- We build the self-esteem of our CYP.

- We ensure effective transitions, destinations and opportunities after school.
- We refer to and work co-operatively with a wide range of agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people.
- We ensure that an inclusive environment is created and fostered where all members of the school community respect and care for each other.

## 6. Objectives

Our aims will be achieved through:

- Quality First teaching developed through up to date and relevant information on the needs of CYP.
- Providing staff with regular opportunities to discuss CYP' needs.
- Providing staff with regular professional development opportunities to expand their SEN pedagogy.
- Providing a structure within which information on CYP can be collected, provided and processed systematically.
- Offering learning programmes which take account of individual needs and offers academic and vocational learning pathways, underpinned by a foundation of social and emotional awareness and skills development.
- Embracing the role of parents and carers as integral to the school's culture.
- Working alongside Warwickshire County Council, staff and stakeholders to ensure that each student has access to the support that they need to grow and achieve.

## 7. Responsibilities

### The Trust Board

Through the school's budget, the Trust Board makes available the funds necessary to ensure the appropriate provision is made to meet the identified needs the CYP. The board has strategic responsibility for setting the SEN Policy.

### The Local Advisory Board

The Local Advisory Board monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the policy and provision, in line with the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference. It ensures that the policy for SEND is available to parents, is non-discriminatory and is reviewed annually.

### Head of School in conjunction with the Executive Principal:

The Head of School (in conjunction with the Executive Principal) is responsible for the implementation, management and support of the policy and procedures and will report regularly to the Local Advisory Board.

The Head of School (with the support of the Executive Principal) is responsible for:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy
- advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet CYP' needs effectively
- the timetabling of extra support
- ensuring appropriate individual education plans are in place
- initiating the process of statutory assessment when deemed appropriate
- ensuring annual reviews are organised
- ensuring that the school keeps up to date records on achievement

- co-ordinating day to day provision
- analysing data
- monitoring and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of support programmes and differentiation in the classroom
- liaising with outside agencies such as the educational psychology service, health, social care etc.
- working ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- ensuring that recruitment pays due attention to the needs of our CYP

### **Teaching Staff:**

Must deliver quality education and support by:

- Reflecting personalization in their planning based on sound and effective systems of assessment.
- Identifying how they intend to provide for the student's specific learning needs.
- Work closely with all support staff and other agencies to provide appropriate resources and learning material for their CYP, adjusting and modifying teaching materials within individual lessons to ensure CYP are able to access the learning and meet the lesson objectives and their own.
- Set appropriate targets, keep records, including evidence and monitor progress of their CYP
- Communicate regularly with CYP their families.

### **Teaching Assistants and other frontline staff:**

Teaching Assistants work with individuals and small groups within the classroom to offer consistent learning support. They play an important role in securing the vision of Discovery Academy.

### **Exams Officer:**

In line with exams related policy, is responsible for ensuring that fair access adjustments and arrangements are in place for all SEND pupils who are eligible, in order to ensure they are not disadvantaged in formal assessments.

### **All Staff:**

Every member of staff is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures for supporting CYP with SEND are followed and that they are treated fairly and offered appropriate and consistent support. Through appropriate record keeping and assessment they ensure that evidence is available to judge the success of identification and assessment and the effectiveness of the provision made for CYP in terms of their progress.

## **8. Procedures**

### **Identification and Assessment**

Discovery Academy is a special school which provides around 100 places for children and young people aged 9 – 19 years who have an autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and/or social, emotional and mental health needs. For a child to be admitted, the school must be named, by a local authority, in the child's education health and care plan ('EHCP').

Many of our CYP will have previously found going to school a challenge and may have had difficulties in coping within a mainstream environment and therefore accessing an appropriate curriculum. We support the young person to overcome these difficulties by designing an individualised curriculum based on a good understanding of their needs and preferences. Wherever possible we meet with the young person, their family and previous school placement to complete a needs assessment that is both

educational and holistic. Family Footings facilitators use a range of tools referred to as 'person centred approaches' to explore the things that are most important to a child and their family, often in a fun way. With this information we plan their provision and transition to school life.

Identification and assessment are ongoing, particularly as a student's feelings and engagement may change when entering a new environment. Regular observation and review of CYP by teaching and non-teaching staff will be used to inform the identification of any ongoing additional needs.

### **Provision and Curriculum**

At Discovery Academy we strive to promote the development of our children and young people in a safe and accessible environment; supported by communication and engagement between home, school, other agencies and the wider community.

The school offers the national curriculum which is differentiated to meet the needs of each individual student. Our CYP benefit from a curriculum that focuses on developing academic potential, social, vocational and life skills and learning that is practical and often outside the classroom.

Our balanced and broad curriculum meets the specific needs of the student through:

- Small teaching groups – usually up to 9 CYP
- Individual and small groups (1-4 CYP) to address specific learning or emotional / regulatory needs
- Advice, support and sessions from outside agencies (e.g. SALT, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Curriculum programmes incorporating social skills, co-operation, reflection and confidence building
- Engagement activities focused upon the interests and engagement needs of the learner
- Practical learning that builds on young people's strengths
- Learning in the wider community to help generalize skills and prepare for adulthood
- Personalized sensory profiles and programs (where required) to ensure that CYP are regulated enough to access learning opportunities.

Our Academy aims to support young people to improve their own well-being, focusing on their communication, social, emotional and mental health as central to the delivery of the school curriculum. We include learning to build positive relationships and learning that will help children and young people understand and shape their own emotions. We have a holistic and non-judgemental approach to supporting self-regulation that empowers the child or young person to engage in education. We support children and young people to recognise their challenges and barriers to learning and teach them alternative ways of responding to difficult situations. The school aims to support CYP to become socially responsible, polite and caring young adults, who value the lives of others and the environment in which they live.

Resources are allocated to CYP according to their assessed need. The school has high staffing levels to ensure the safety of CYP and to facilitate the optimum learning environment. Staffing is allocated to classes flexibly with some individual CYP receiving more support than others. Some CYP have individualised equipment that will enable them to access the curriculum and social environment of the school (i.e. weighted jackets, ear defenders portable communication modes).

The school is fully accessible to all children and young people. Specialist facilities include dedicated sensory spaces for regulation, a soft play room and an occupational therapy room. All CYP have access to the relevant communication and therapy devices to best meet their needs (such as augmentative communication devices, weighted jackets, ear defenders, proprioceptive and vestibular equipment.) The school has a fully equipped hygiene room and accessible toilets allowing the CYP full

independence.

### **Progress, Review and Monitoring**

The school has a robust and relevant assessment document that outlines all of the assessments used with the children and young people. Concern about a CYP' progress is identified through classroom observation, and the assessment cycle. Referrals are made by the Head of School (in conjunction with the Executive Principal) for additional support from outside services.

Each student has a personalized plan. The targets are based on individual learning needs, overcoming barriers to learning and improving readiness for learning. Personalised plans are reviewed on a termly basis. Parents are given clear information about the impact of the support and interventions provided through the plan, enabling them to be involved in planning next steps.

The impact and quality of our education, support and interventions are evaluated, along with the views of the student and their families. The leadership team and teachers revise the support in light of the student's progress and development, deciding on any changes to the IEP through consultation with the student and their family.

CYP Educational Health & Care Plans (or statements of special educational needs) are reviewed at least annually. Where there is a concern that our provisions are not fully meeting the changing needs of a child we will inform stakeholders quickly and work with them to make a plan for improvement.

Reports on student achievement are made by the Head of School (in conjunction with the Executive Principal) to the Local Advisory Board on a termly basis.

### **Staff training and induction**

Discovery Academy highly values training and a robust induction and CPD training program is available for all staff. We ensure that all of our staff have a thorough knowledge of autism and how our CYP best learn. This is carried out by a combination of strong in-house training by an experienced and well qualified senior management team and external agencies. We also ensure that all staff have appropriate training and qualifications in their relevant field, be it teaching, curriculum, health and social care or therapy qualifications. These are sought out through the recruitment procedures and all relevant qualifications are checked and copies kept on file.

Staff access to training is through a balance between the needs of the school as expressed in the school training plan and an individual's needs, highlighted in performance management as well as emerging needs related to the changing needs of the CYP.

### **Families and transition**

At Discovery Academy all that we do is about offering the best all round educational, social, communication and emotional development to our children and young people. We believe that this can best be achieved by involving all relevant stakeholders in the planning and delivery of our curriculum, education and therapy. Involvement of parents and carers is crucial in securing best outcomes for our CYP and we work very hard at ensuring parents are involved in their child's progress. We also believe that our CYP should be involved in planning and reviewing their learning and aim that they can be fully included where possible.

We are fully committed to working in partnership with families and they are invited to all multidisciplinary meetings involving their child. We also welcome more informal visits and chats with parents / carers where they can arrange to meet with the class teacher or therapists or chat on the phone. We also offer home visits to parents and carers. Families are invited to review meetings to discuss progress and to be involved in setting targets with appropriate intervention strategies to help their child at home and at school. We offer all families and CYP centered planning reviews where the

child can attend and contribute if they want. If CYP find the attendance at a meeting too stressful they can contribute via written/ symbol or by photo or video.

Transition into the school is facilitated by a focused program involving the child or young person's current placement, parents and other professionals. A transitions plan is drawn up involving the child or young person at their level of understanding, whilst being aware of minimising their stress and anxiety. Transition to adult services is facilitated through annual meetings, transition plans, involvement of relevant agencies and visits to colleges, work experience etc.

## **Internal Expertise**

### **Speech and language therapy**

All CYP who have been identified through their EHCP in need of speech and language therapy will be on the caseload of our school SALT. Speech and language therapy is delivered on an individual basis or in small groups. Sometimes this therapy will not be delivered directly to the student, rather the SALT will work to train staff who will support the student. Speech and Language therapy is monitored and evaluated through the IEP.

### **Positive Behaviour Support**

Social and emotional support is overseen by our Assistant Principal for Pastoral Support with our Strategic Lead for Behaviour, who support CYP and families in developing positive attitudes to learning, strategies for managing feelings and emotions and celebrating success. The Assistant Principal for SEND is a qualified SENCo and as such advises the leadership team and colleagues regarding adjustments and support for improving behaviour and associated mental health challenges. Support is provided in response to incident monitoring, and referral from staff and/or home. Programmes are bespoke to student need, but will be measured against smart targets as part of the IEP.

### **ASC/Autism Support**

All employees are trained to support young people with ASC (also known as Autistic). CYP are supported with whole school teaching strategies, as well as specific resources and programming such to support sensory and social needs.

## **External Expertise**

We are committed to partnership working to best support the needs of our learners and to support our families. The school strives to involve other bodies, as far as is reasonably possible, in meeting the needs of the CYP. From its development the School has forged positive working relationships with health, social services and local authorities. We liaise closely with all agencies and include relevant professionals in meetings about and with CYP.

We support full access to a range of services including:

- Social Care
- Educational and Clinical Psychologists
- Behaviour Analyst
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Speech and Language Service
- Occupational Therapy
- Youth Offending Team
- PCSO's and the Police

## **Complaints**

Complaints about this policy can be made through our complaints procedure, available on our website.

## 9. Monitoring Compliance and Impact

Monitoring of practice against this policy will be carried out by the Trust, Head of School (in conjunction with the Executive Principal) and Local Advisory Board and will include:

- Lesson observations
- Monitoring student progress of SEN CYP against initial assessments
- Seeking feedback from CYP, parents and carers at review meetings
- Reviewing the attendance of CYP
- The SEN policy will be reviewed on an annual basis
- Regular review of the Exclusions policy

## 10. Other Information

The Local Offer for SEND brings together information about education, health and care services for children and young people from 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities.

More information can be found on the Warwickshire County Council website: <http://warwickshire.gov.uk/send>

### Changes at previous reviews:

Version	Purpose / Change	Responsibility	Date
V7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sections changed “behavioural” needs to emotional or self-regulatory to emphasise our approach to relational approaches</li> <li>• Page 5 pupil numbers changed from about 90 to about 100</li> <li>• Page 5 – removed “of both sexes” as we have CYP who are non-binary</li> <li>• Page 8 – title of AP changed to Partnership to reflect one of our 3 core values.</li> </ul>	Principal	July 2021
V8	Throughout – Principal changed to Head of School and/or Executive Principal Page 2 (3) Addition of: “Opportunity for all (White Paper 2022, DfE)” Page 3 (para 1) – addition of “and be ‘Ready for Life’, in line with our ambition as a school.” Page 3 (6) change ‘High Quality’ to “Quality First” Page 5 (7) Addition of short reference to role of the exams officer Page 8 – clarification of ASC to “ASC (also known as Autistic).” To show due regard for preferred terms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 8 (9) – Addition of “Regular review of the Exclusions policy”</li> </ul>	Executive Principal	March 2023