Unified Academy

SEND POLICY AND INFORMATION REPORT

2026/2027

Written by:	Annabelle Thomas
Agreed by Governors:	March 2023
Date of last review:	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2027

Aims

As a specialist provider, teaching students with SEND is the core business of Unified Academy. We structure our approach to the individual needs as set out in the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) through a pathway model in school.

All students at Unified Academy. will have an EHCP with identified needs, provision stated and goals/outcomes outlined. Any changes to this will be identified by the classroom teacher and then conveyed to the SENDCo/LA as appropriate. Annual reviews will action statutory changes.

We will aim to:

- Ensure that all students at the school receive appropriate teaching and support which takes into account their SEND.
- Ensure that tasks and activity are well-matched and differentiated where necessary and that teaching methods and practice are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate and relevant to the needs of the individual.
- Involve students and families in decisions regarding education and the meeting of the students' needs, to support them to promote learning and development and planning for their future.
- Ensure that resources available to the school (including financial, staffing, technical and advisory) are deployed appropriately and effectively to meet students' needs.
- Liaise effectively with individuals and organisations who have an interest in, or are able to make a positive contribution towards, students' lives.
- Work with OHC&AT to ensure that staff are able to access a programme of specialised continuing professional development (CPD) appropriate to their role and career pathway, and ensure that staff participate in such training and development in order to enhance and update their skills in meeting the needs of students with SEND.
- Ensure that the obligations of the school are met in respect of the Children and Families Act 2014 in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.
- Work collaboratively with the multidisciplinary team such as therapists and medical professionals and agencies to support the development and wellbeing of the whole person.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for students with SEN and disabilities
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the SEN information report

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Definitions

A student has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of the others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

Roles and responsibilities

Unified Academy is a special school. Every teacher is considered to be a teacher of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), whose role is to plan and develop the curriculum to take account of individual differences and secure good progress.

Similarly, while we operate a portfolio governance system, every governor on our Local Governing Body (LGB) is considered to be a governor of SEND and is therefore expected to work with the school leadership to ensure that every student is supported to achieve their maximum potential. Responsibility for oversight of SEND within Unified Academy sits within the Teaching and Learning portfolio. More information about our governors can be found on the Governance page of the school website.

Specific responsibilities are listed below.

The SENDCO

The SENDCO is Matt Bell/Anna French (working with the school through an SLA)

They will:

- Work with the Principal and Teaching and Learning governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual students with SEND, including those who have EHC plans.
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that students with SEN receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching.
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support.
- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet students' needs effectively.
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services.
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.

- Ensure the school keeps the records of all students with SEND up to date.

The Local Governing Body

Governors will:

- Collectively ensure a continued focus on SEND at LGB meetings and within their respective portfolio activities, in order to provide assurance that students are receiving a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, well-matched and appropriately differentiated to their individual needs and underpinned by specialist approaches and strategies to address those needs.

The Teaching and Learning governor will:

- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school and update the LGB on this.
- Work with the Principal and SENDCO to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school.

The Principal

The Principal will:

- Work with the SENDCO/Senior Leadership Team and Teaching and Learning governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school.
- Have overall responsibility for ensuring that students are receiving a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, well-matched and appropriately differentiated to their individual needs and underpinned by specialist approaches and strategies to address those needs.

Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- The progress and development of every student in their class.
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.
- Working with the SENDCO and Senior Leadership Team to review each student's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision.
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy.

SEN information report

The kinds of SEN that are provided for

Our school is a social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) special school providing for a range of needs, including:

- Social, emotional and mental health needs, for example, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attachment disorder.
- Communication and interaction, for example, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Asperger's Syndrome, mild speech and language difficulties.
- Cognition and learning, for example, mild literacy and numeracy needs.
- Sensory and/or physical needs, for example, processing difficulties.
- Moderate and multiple learning difficulties.

Consulting and involving students and parents/carers

Local Authorities send the relevant documentation to all of the schools they feel would meet the needs of the young person. Once our admissions team receive the referral via the email address on the website they forward it to the Principal who reviews the documents. When considering a potential placement for a student, the Principal looks closely at the needs of the student. This will take into account that the student:

- Is within the age range for the school
- Has been assessed as being academically within the chronological ability range of the majority of students found in a mainstream secondary school
- May be significantly under-achieving in the key areas of numeracy and/or literacy and could have specific learning difficulties
- Will benefit from working in small groups and individually to improve their learning
- Shows indications that they are likely to respond to individual programmes of behaviour intervention that can be provided within the school's resources

If it is felt that more information is needed, the Principal will go back to the referring borough and request clarification. If it is felt that Unified Academy is able to meet the needs of the young person, an offer is made in writing to the Local Authority who will make a decision based on the feedback received from each of the schools they have consulted. They may decide to name another school and they will be named on the EHCP.

If Unified Academy feel that they cannot meet the needs of the young person, they will respond to the Local Authority following the requirements outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Once Unified Academy is named on your child's EHCP, a member of staff will contact you to schedule a meeting to complete the admissions paperwork. This will include medical information, permission to administer medication (if needed), permission to attend off site activities, eligibility for free school meals etc. We will also discuss your child's start date and class groups.

Assessing and reviewing students' progress towards outcomes

At Unified Academy we will use a highly personalised approach that caters to the different needs and abilities of our students in order to secure the best possible outcomes for them. Our aim is that they develop high aspirations for the future with the skills and knowledge to achieve them so they are able to positively contribute to the wider community.

Unified Academy follows a nurture-based reflective and restorative approach with all students. Together, we have established a fun, safe and caring school that promotes the joy of learning, high personal achievement, respect for individual differences, dignity for all and equal opportunities by eliminating discrimination.

We will follow the graduated approach and the four-part cycle of **assess, plan, do, review**.

The class or subject teacher will work with the SENDCO to carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs. This will draw on:

- The teacher's assessment and experience of the student
- Their previous progress and attainment or behaviour
- Other teachers' assessments, where relevant
- The individual's development in comparison to their peers and national data
- The views and experience of parents
- The student's own views
- Advice from external support services, if relevant

The assessment will be reviewed regularly.

All teachers and support staff who work with the student will be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided, and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. We will regularly review the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the student's progress.

Supporting students moving between phases and preparing for adulthood

We will share information with the school, college, or other setting the student is moving to. We will agree with parents/carers and students which information will be shared as part of this.

KS2/3 transition

Staff work closely with our feeder school(s) to provide a successful transition.

KS4/5 transition

Year 11 college applications are made in the December and students' Annual EHCP Reviews are held in the December/January to ensure that a smooth transition is made to their college placement. Our Safeguarding, Careers and Transitions Coordinator works closely with the students, families and colleges to ensure a successful sustainable transition.

Our approach to teaching students with SEND

We will aim to:

- Ensure that all students at the Academy receive appropriate teaching and support which takes into account their SEND.
- Ensure that tasks and activities are well-matched and differentiated where necessary and that teaching methods and practice are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate and relevant to the needs of the individual.
- Involve students and families in decisions regarding education and the meeting of the students' needs, to support them to promote learning and development and planning for their future.
- Ensure that resources available to the Academy (including financial, staffing, technical and advisory) are deployed appropriately and effectively to meet students' needs.
- Liaise effectively with individuals and organisations who have an interest in, or are able to make a positive contribution towards, students' lives.
- Work with OHC&AT to ensure that staff are able to access a programme of specialised continuing professional development (CPD) appropriate to their role and career pathway, and ensure that staff participate in such training and development in order to enhance and update their skills in meeting the needs of students with SEND.
- Ensure that the obligations of the Academy are met in respect of the Children and Families Act 2014 in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.
- Work collaboratively with the multidisciplinary team such as therapists and medical professionals and agencies to support the development and wellbeing of the whole person.

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the students in their class.
High-quality teaching is our first step in responding to students who have SEND. This will be differentiated for individual students.

Therapeutic Offer

A range of therapies is a central and integrated aspect of our offer and is provided on an individual, group and sometimes whole-class basis. Therapy is an essential driver of students' progress and is organised mainly in accordance with students' Education, Health & Care Plans or if there is an obvious presenting need.
Our facilitators are fully qualified and experienced professionals who work collaboratively and seamlessly with teaching & support colleagues to maximise impact on improving students' social, emotional & mental health.

Our therapeutic offer includes:

- Speech & language therapy (SaLT)
- Canine assisted learning therapy (CAL)
- Emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA)
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Healing Together
- Drum/Music intervention
- Therapeutic Art intervention

Adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment

For further information about amendments to our learning environment, please see the Accessibility Plan on our website:

https://www.unifiedacademy.org/key-information/accessibility-plan/

We make the following adaptations to ensure all students' needs are met:

- Access to National Qualifications and Awards (GCSEs, Functional Skills, Entry Level, AQA Unit Awards, Duke of Edinburgh)
- Access to awards and recognition of progress at the point of contact, through our EPraise reward system and in whole school reward assemblies
- Identifying the specific learning and behavioural needs of individual students
- Delivering consistent approaches to the management of behaviour to enable students to develop effective social, communication and independence skills.
- Differentiating our curriculum to ensure all students are able to access it, for example, by grouping, 1:1 work, teaching style, content of the lesson, etc.
- Adapting our resources and staffing
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc.
- Differentiating our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, preteaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.

Additional support for learning

Teaching assistants will support students on a 1:1 basis when their needs require it or when it is identified in their EHCP.

Teaching assistants will support students in small groups when directed by the class teacher or as the students require.

We work with the following external bodies/agencies to provide support for students with SEND:

- Canine Assisted Learning
- Local Authorities
- CSPA
- CAMHS
- Targeted Youth Support
- Youth Offending Services
- Catch-22
- Jigsaw
- ACT

Expertise and training of staff

Unified Academy operates a dedicated staff training programme with CPD linked to identified individual and organisational priorities, including SEND-specific training. Additionally, staff benefit from OHC&AT's whole organisational CPD and development offer which includes:

- In-house training focused on specific areas of SEND, developed and delivered by experienced senior staff;
- Access to bespoke in-house training, delivered by qualified and experienced OHC&AT staff, around specific areas of SEND as well as other relevant areas e.g. Team Teach, Positive Behaviour Support, First Aid for Mental Health.
- Access to professional and specialist staff networks, enabling peer support and the sharing of best practice around effectively supporting students with SEND;
- For staff wishing to become qualified teachers, the SEND-specific Diploma in Education & Training pathway, delivered in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University.

Securing equipment and facilities

The PRIDE Academy works closely with OHCAT as well as external agencies to ensure that if a student requires additional resources, support or access to additional facilities, they are implemented.

Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

Unified Academy is a special school, therefore all students will have an EHCP.

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for students with SEND by:

- Reviewing students' individual progress towards their academic goals each term
- Reviewing the impact of interventions half termly
- Using student questionnaires
- Monitoring by the SENDCO
- Half termly monitoring by the LGB and the Academy Trust team
- Half termly monitoring by the Local Authority
- Using provision maps to measure progress
- Holding annual reviews for students with EHC plans

Removing barriers to participation

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

All students are encouraged to take part in all of the activities arranged by the school such as:

- Personal Development
- Rewards
- Work experience
- Academic off site trips

No student is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEND or disability.

Unified Academy is fully committed to the ideal of maximising the potential of our students by meeting their individual needs. We adhere to the following principles:

- Students are entitled to have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The curriculum is well-matched and appropriately differentiated to the student's individual needs and underpinned by specialist approaches and strategies to address those needs.
- Students must have free access to the school buildings and facilities so that they can be treated equitably irrespective of their disabilities. Further information on this can be found in our Accessibility Plan on our website: https://www.unifiedacademy.org/key-information/accessibility-plan/
- Students within the Academy are regarded and treated as unique individuals who must be given the opportunity to excel and experience achievement, which will be recognised and celebrated.
- Students benefit most when their individual needs and starting points are clearly identified in a proactive manner, so that programmes of intervention can be effectively planned implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- The personal development and academic areas of the curriculum are managed in such a way as to ensure that the participation of students in their own learning is maximised and to enable them to fully achieve their potential.
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and families is key to supporting the needs of students.
- A multi-disciplinary and inter-agency approach involving the expertise and resources of outside partners is essential when working with students whose individual needs are additional and complex.

Support for improving emotional and social development

We provide support for students to improve their emotional and social development in the following ways:

- Students are encouraged to be part of the school council
- Students are encouraged to take active roles in supporting each other, with guidance from staff. They are encouraged to report any concerns to a member of staff or via our Worries and Concerns facility on our website: https://www.unifiedacademy.org/students/worries-and-concerns/
- Students are shown how to use the Zones of Regulation in order to identify and name their feelings. They are then shown effective methods to manage these feelings.
- Students have access to trained Mental Health First Aiders among the staff team
- Students have access to external interventions as well as targeted therapeutic interventions such as ELSA.
- If necessary, referrals are made to CAMHS to request more intensive support

For further information, please refer to our Safeguarding and Wellbeing offer, on our website: https://www.unifiedacademy.org/about_us/safeguarding/

Bullying in any form is unacceptable at Unified Academy. We work proactively with students, staff and families to educate our young people about bullying, to address and rectify bullying or concerns about bullying wherever we find them, and to support all members

of the school community to feel safe, valued and respected. Please see our AntiBullying Policy for more details: https://www.unifiedacademy.org/key-information/policies/

Complaints about SEND provision

Unified Academy is committed to dealing with complaints promptly, fairly and carefully. We encourage parents, carers and other members of the school community to raise (on an informal basis) any concerns they have at the earliest opportunity. In most instances, this will involve speaking directly with the member of staff concerned, who will try to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

Where resolution is not possible, the school has a formal Complaints Policy which sets out a structure under which complaints will be heard. This is available from the school website or a hard copy can be obtained from the school office.

The parents/carers of students with disabilities have the right to make disability discrimination claims to the first-tier SEND tribunal if they believe that our school has discriminated against their children. They can make a claim about alleged discrimination regarding:

- Suspensions
- Provision of education and associated services
- Making reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services

Contact details of support services for parents/carers of students with SEND

We actively encourage a strong partnership between home and school and involve parents and carers as much as we possibly can. Class teams negotiate the level of desired contact with families, which can be as frequent as daily.

School leaders operate an 'open door' policy and offer both informal 'drop-in' sessions with therapists and family workers as well as more formal bespoke therapy for parents & carers who would benefit.

Accessible, simple progress reports are provided every term to parents and carers. Our admissions process is centred around the family and the child, as is our termly review process via target setting days and, of course, the annual review of the Education, Health & Care Plan.

For further support or local agencies please refer to the list of contact details on our website: https://www.unifiedacademy.org/parents/useful-links-information/

Contact details for raising concerns

Students

At Unified Academy we have an open door policy and hope that you will come and talk to us if you have any concerns.

You will not get into trouble for telling us about your complaint, concern or worry but we cannot keep secrets if we think you or someone else is at risk.

What do I do if I feel a member of staff or student has treated me unfairly?

If you feel you have been unfairly treated by a member of staff or student you can speak to any of the people below:

- Your Tutor
- Any member of staff you feel comfortable with
- Reece, Steve and the Pastoral Support Team
- Josie and Cat the Home School Link Workers
- Bev and Nicole the ELSAs
- Any member of SLT
- Your family

You can also write your complaint down and post in any of the student worry boxes (located in Belle's Office, Student Support, ELSA, and Safeguarding office)

Parents/Carers

Unified Academy wishes to communicate effectively with our parents, students and wider community. However, we accept that we can on occasion make mistakes or fail to communicate as well as we would wish.

We are committed to dealing with complaints promptly, fairly and carefully. We encourage parents, carers and other members of the school community to raise (on an informal basis) any concerns they have at the earliest opportunity. In most instances, this will involve speaking directly with the member of staff concerned, who will try to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

You can get in touch with us in the following ways:

- By letter – Unified Academy, Chart Lane South, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 4DB
- By email – info@unifiedacademy.org
- By telephone – 01737 215488
- Or in person, after making an appointment

When you get in touch, please remember that we need to know what has happened, when it took place, who was involved and what you would like us to do to resolve the issue.

If you remain dissatisfied, the school has a formal Complaints Policy which sets out a structure under which your complaint can be heard. You can access the policy on the website; alternatively a hard copy can be obtained from the school office.

In the first instance all complaints should be brought to the attention of the Principal, Annabelle Thomas Tel: 01737 215 488 or email AThomas@unifiedacademy.org

The local authority local offer

Our local authority's local offer is published here: https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/

Monitoring arrangements

This policy and information report will be reviewed by the Principal **every year**. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the Local Governing Body (LGB) at least annually or whenever the policy is updated.