Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

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1. Purpose and context

Aspire's vision is to support young people, whatever their background and circumstances, to: *Build strong foundations, and open new doors.* We are led in everything we do by two 'red thread' questions: *"what is best for the child?"* and *"how can we make that happen?"* And we encourage staff to reflect on these questions at all times, and to always ask themselves: "*how would I feel if this was my child?"* Our approach to SEND is crucial to achieving this vision and ensuring all our young people get the support they need to flourish.

Through this policy, Aspire aims to:

- Provide a high-quality education for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Ensure that all our students with SEND make progress and receive the support they are entitled to
- Outline clear roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in supporting students with SEND

This policy has been written in line with the following legislation:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools DfE 2013
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014
- Schools SEND Information Report Regulations 2014
- Statutory Guidance on supporting students at school with medical conditions 2014
- Accessibility plan and guidance
- Our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

2. Definitions

Special Educational Needs: a learning difficulty or disability which calls for educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for others the same age by mainstream schools.

The SEN Code of Practice says:
A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- *has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*
- *has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions*

For children aged two or more, 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, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers.

Disability: a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The SEN Code of Practice says:
Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is '...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The SEN Code of Practice makes it clear that every teacher is a teacher of SEND, and that all teachers are responsible for the progress of the students that they teach, including students with SEND.

Class teachers and tutors are responsible for:

- Knowing their students: reading information that is sent to them about students' needs, understanding what they have to do in class to support those needs.
- Planning and delivering lessons in which students receive that support.
- Contributing to the assess-plan-do-review (APDR) cycle: assessing students' progress in their subject, planning with colleagues as to how to meet these needs, doing whatever is agreed, and reviewing the impact of the agreed actions.
- Understanding and following this SEND policy.

SENDCos or **Senior Leaders responsible for SEND** are responsible for:

- Implementing systems to identify needs, agree support strategies and interventions, and share these with staff.
- Giving advice to staff and supporting the Head of School to offer appropriate CPD and training to school staff.
- Developing a whole-school provision map of evidence-based intervention options for wave 2 support.
- Leadership and management of any intervention staff.
- Working in co-production with parents, professionals and external providers (e.g. therapists, intervention providers) etc. to meet students' needs.
- Publishing a school SEND report each year.

Heads of School are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all students, including those with SEND, get the support that they need and make progress academically and with regard to their social/emotional development.
- Ensuring that all staff are providing education in line with student's individual education plans/personal learning plans etc.
- Reporting to the Executive Leadership Team as appropriate on the progress of all students, including those with SEND.

The member of the Executive Leadership Team who leads a school or service is responsible for:

- The overall quality of education, including provision for students with SEND.
- Ensuring that staff, in particular the SENDCo and Leadership, have sufficient capacity

(including time, resources and knowledge) to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.
- Reporting on the progress of students with SEND to the CEO and Trustees.

The Trustee with responsibility for SEND is responsible for:
- Providing support and challenge to the Executive Leadership Team as regards the quality of provision and the implementation of this policy.

4. Identifying SEND

The SEND code of practice recognises four broad areas of need: Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory and/or Physical.

Code of Practice needs	**Categories**
Communication and Interaction	Speech and Language needs Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
Cognition and Learning	Moderate Learning Difficulties Specific Learning Difficulties e.g. Dyslexia
Social, Emotional, Mental Health	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
Sensory and/or Physical	Hearing Visual Physical

The aim of identifying SEND is that schools and professionals working with a student are better informed, and better able to support a young person appropriately.

As providers of Alternative Provision, Aspire educates young people with a wide range of SEND. Each school or service work with students at different stages in their SEND journey. For example, students often come to the Alternative Provision Schools without any identified SEND needs. However, only students who already have an EHCP can access Aspire Shortenills/Shortenills Abbey.

Each school or service will therefore have a slightly different approach to identifying SEND needs. This will be laid out in their school SEND report. Identification of SEND in all Aspire schools and services will share these common features:
- We do not identify “behaviour” as a special educational need. Rather, we understand that behaviour communicates something about an unmet need.
- We will collect as much information as we can at admissions so that we can begin work to identify a student’s learning and SEMH needs even where there is no formal diagnosis.
- We will make use of our links with CAMHS services to ensure that students get full neurological assessments when required.
- We will work with the Local Authority to ensure that students are assessed for an EHCP where appropriate as swiftly as possible.

Our criteria for entering students on the SEND register is as follows:

- A student who has an EHCP will be entered as “EHCP”.
- A student who has had intervention or support at mainstream which has not enabled them to be successful there, and who consequently is in Alternative Provision because they need something “additional to or different from” will be entered as “SEN support”

Our SEND register will also track whether

- We are collecting information for students to submit an EHCP Needs Assessment Request
- An EHCP Needs Assessment Request has been submitted, and the date of the submission.

5. Supporting students with SEND: a graduated approach

As providers of Alternative Provision, Aspire provides education for a wide range of different SEND. Different schools and services will be more suited for different types of educational needs.

Each school or service will publish a SEND report which will explain in detail the type of SEND that they are designed to support, how they support those students through the curriculum, pedagogy and interventions, and contact details for their SENDCo or SLT lead for SEND.

Some of the strategies that we use across Aspire as a MAT include:

- **Adaptations to the curriculum**: our curriculum approach is developmental not chronological. This means we start from where students are, not where they are “supposed to be” at their age or year group. You can read more about our curriculum approach in our curriculum policy.
- **Adaptations to learning resources and the environment:** For example, using recommended aids such as ASD-friendly movement chairs.
- **Quality First Teaching:** ensuring that the teaching students receive all day every day in class is of a high quality, and is designed to be responsive to and considerate of their needs. As this policy makes clear above – all teachers are teachers of SEND.
- **A graduated response to SEND support**: All students are set individual targets as part of the APDR cycle, and have individual strategies for supporting them and meeting their needs in class.
- **Intervention**: Students who are not making good progress with our ordinarily available provision receive additional intervention. Each school or service has their own intervention, these differ based on pupil need.
- **Transition support**: Work to support students to positively move into their next destination, whether that is reintegrating back into a mainstream school, moving to specialist provision, or going on to post 16 study or training.
- **Communication with other adults working with each student:** Aspire are committed to building positive and strong relationships with other adults working with a student. This could be their parents, carers and family, or other professionals such as therapists, counsellors, YOS workers etc.
- **Training for staff:** ensuring that staff receive high quality training

6. Monitoring and evaluation of SEND provision

Different schools and services may have different approaches to monitoring the quality of SEND support and provision.

Some of the strategies that we use across Aspire as a MAT include:

- Reviewing individual student's progress towards their targets regularly.
- Reviewing the impact of interventions every term.
- Student and staff voice and parent feedback.
- Learning walks and observations by the SLT and SENDCo.
- Holding annual reviews of EHCPs.
- Analysis of attainment and assessment measured using termly progress data.

7. Complaints procedure in relation to SEND

If a student or their parent/carer/family is unhappy with any matter regarding SEND they should in the first instance raise their concern with their school or service SENDCo.

If they do not feel that the SENDCo is able to resolve the matter, they should then use our formal complaints procedure as outlined in the Aspire Complaints Policy.