Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

This policy has been adopted by all schools within The Golden Thread Alliance.

Date Approved	Autumn 2026
Next Review Date	Autumn 2027

This policy document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies to ensure the effective and efficient provision for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) across The Golden Thread Alliance.

This 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 pupils with SEND
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out Local authorities' and schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report
- The Equality Act 2010 (section 20), which sets out the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out the school's responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes having a disability) and those who don't share it
- The Academy Trust Governance Guide and Academy Trust Handbook, which set out trustees' and local governors' responsibilities in relation to pupils with SEND
- The School Admissions Code, which sets out the school's obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and its duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special educational needs

The Trust will keep this policy under review in light of any future statutory changes arising from national SEND reform, including any updates to the SEND Code of Practice, national inclusion standards or requirements relating to Individual Support Plans.
Differing terminology is used within the guidance documents above. For the purposes of this policy, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) refer to those with additional needs and disabilities within our schools. Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCOs) and Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion refer to the person with responsibility for co-ordinating the support within school for children with SEND.

This policy was developed with engagement and participation that involved parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities and will be reviewed annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies particularly:

- Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Policy,
- Equality and Community Cohesion Policy,
- Behaviour Policy and Statement of Behaviour Principles,
- Anti-Bullying Strategy,

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy,
- Children Missing Education and Attendance Policy,
- Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The admissions arrangements for pupils without an Education, Health and Care Plan do not in any way discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children or those with special educational needs. Decisions on the admission of pupils with Education, Health and Care plans are made by the Local Authority.

Definition of SEND

A child or young person has SEND 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 if he or she:

a. *Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or*
b. *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. SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015, p.15)*

Definition of disability

Pupils are considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

SEND across The Golden Thread Alliance

Across The Golden Thread Alliance we aim to:

- identify, at the earliest possible opportunity, barriers to learning and participation for pupils with SEND.
- ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and achieves to the highest possible standard.
- enable all pupils to participate in lessons fully and effectively.
- value and encourage the contribution of all pupils to the life of the school.
- work in partnership with parents.
- work with all levels of governance (Trustees and Local Governors) to enable them to fulfil their statutory monitoring role.
- work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the need of individual pupils.
- ensure that all colleagues have access to training and advice to support quality teaching and learning for all pupils.

The types of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) for which provision is made across The Golden Thread Alliance

The needs of pupils with SEND are grouped into four broad areas. Pupils can have needs that cut across more than one area, and their needs may change over time.

Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the pupil's particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

AREA OF NEED	
Communication and interaction	Pupils with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or do not understand or use the social rules of communication. Pupils who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.
Cognition and learning	Pupils with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including: • Specific learning difficulties, which impact one or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Moderate learning difficulties • Severe learning difficulties • Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where pupils are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment
Social, emotional and mental health	These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Pupils may have: • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder • Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder • Suffered adverse childhood experiences or attachment disorder These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated.
Sensory and/or physical	Pupils with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. Pupils may have: • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment These pupils may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

Specialist provision

The Golden Thread Alliance has three Specialist Resourced Provisions (SRP), one catering to children with speech and language difficulties, the second one designated to cater for children with ASD as their priority need with the third one selected to cater for children with profound Hearing Impairments. All SRPs have their own admission criteria according to their

Service Level Agreement (SLA); children must have an EHCP and be admitted by the Local Authority (Kent County Council).

Identifying children at SEND support

Formative assessment is embedded in daily practice across The Golden Thread Alliance. We monitor the summative progress of all pupils in reading, writing and maths three times per year, at Pupil Progress Meetings. We review academic progress and the impact of teaching, including interventions. We also use a range of assessments with all pupils at various stages, including "Speech and Language Link" assessments, phonics screening in Years One and Two, regular phonics assessments and Year Six SATs plus ongoing teacher assessments in writing, reading, SPAG and maths.

Where progress is not sufficient, even if a special educational need has not yet been identified, we put in place extra support to enable the pupil to catch up. Examples of extra support include, but are not limited to: targeted group support focusing on reading, writing, maths or social skills, together with other reasonable adjustments such as the use of social stories, emotional check-ins and in-class visual supports. Some pupils may continue to make inadequate progress, despite high-quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness. For these pupils, and in consultation with parents and carers, we will use a range of assessment tools to determine the barrier to learning.

Across The Golden Thread Alliance, colleagues are experienced in using a range of assessment tools including Speech and Language Link, Dyslexia screening programmes and The Boxall Profile. We also have access to Specialist Teachers and other external advisers who are able to use additional assessment tools.

The purpose of this more detailed assessment is to understand what additional resources and different approaches are required to enable the pupil to make better progress. This information will be shared with parents and carers and the pupil's class teacher. Agreed outcomes and targets will be recorded on a Provision Map, Personalised Plan or other such record for monitoring in-year support. These will be reviewed regularly. At this point we will have identified that the pupil has a special educational need because the school is providing special educational provision which is additional and different to what is normally available.

If the pupil is able to make good progress using this additional and different resource (but would not be able to maintain this good progress without it) we will continue to identify the pupil as having a special educational need. If the pupil is able to maintain good progress without the additional and different resources, he or she will not be identified with special educational needs. When any change in identification of SEND is recorded, parents and carers will be notified. We will ensure that all teachers and support colleagues who work with the pupil are aware of the support to be provided and the teaching approaches to be used.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and disability whether or not they have an EHCP

How the school evaluates the effectiveness of its provision for such pupils

Each review of a pupil's SEND provision will be informed by the views of the pupil, parents/carers and class teachers and assessment information which will show whether adequate progress is being made. For pupils receiving SEND support or for those with an Education, Health and Care Plan, there will be the opportunity to review the progress made towards agreed outcomes and the effectiveness of the pupil's provision at least three times per year. For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan there will be a formal Annual Review held each year, in line with the Code of Practice.

The *SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015, 6.17)* describes inadequate progress as:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- widens the attainment gap

The school's arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs.

Every pupil in the school has their progress tracked throughout the year. In addition to this, pupils with special educational needs may have more frequent informal assessments. Using these, it will be possible to see if pupils are increasing their level of skills in key areas. If these assessments do not show adequate progress is being made, the pupil's SEND provision will be reviewed and adjusted following the Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle in the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

The Trust's approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs.

High quality teaching, adapted for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. The Trust's School Improvement Team regularly and carefully reviews the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and knowledge of special educational needs and disability most frequently encountered.

We follow the Mainstream Core Standards advice developed by Kent County Council to ensure that our teaching conforms to best practice.
https://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/news/primary/special-educational-needs-mainstream-core-standards

In meeting the Mainstream Core Standards, we employ some additional teaching approaches, as advised by internal and external assessments e.g. precision teaching, small group teaching, and use of ICT software learning packages. These are delivered by additional colleagues employed through the funding provided to the school as 'notional SEND funding'.

How the school adapts the curriculum and learning environment for pupils with special educational needs.

All of our classrooms are inclusion-friendly: we aim to teach in a way that will support pupils with the most frequently occurring types of SEND. All of our pupils access the full National

Curriculum, and we recognise achievement and expertise in all curricular areas. As part of normal classroom differentiation, curriculum content and ideas can be simplified and made more accessible by using visual, tactile and concrete resources. Other adaptations to the physical environment will be made, as appropriate, to accommodate children with disabilities and any types of SEND.

Additional support for learning that is available to pupils with special educational needs.

As part of our budget, we receive 'notional SEND funding'. This funding is used to ensure that the quality of teaching is good in the school and that there are sufficient resources to deploy additional and different teaching for pupils requiring SEND support. The amount of support required for each pupil to make good progress will be different in each case and a full list of the additional support offered is on our class provision maps. In very few cases a very high level of resource is required. The funding arrangements require schools to provide up to £6000 per year of resource for pupils with high needs, and above that amount the Local Authority should provide top-up to the school.

Being inclusive schools, we recognise that 1:1 long term support can be detrimental, often affecting the pupil's independence, self-help skills and ability to learn to their potential. There may be some occasions where 1:1 support may be necessary in some exceptional circumstances. In these cases, it will be used for short term and for intervention purposes only.

The Golden Thread Alliance will endeavour to meet the needs of all pupils, however when all appropriate resources and support have been implemented and there is still no evidence of progress, it may be necessary to make an application for statutory assessment with the view to obtain an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This process can be initiated by the school or by parents.

How the school enables pupils with special educational needs to engage in activities of the school (including physical activities) together with children who do not have special educational needs.

All clubs, trips and activities offered to pupils across The Golden Thread Alliance, are available to pupils with special educational needs either with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan. Where it is necessary, the school will use the resources available to it, to provide additional adult support to enable the safe participation of the pupil in the activity.

Support that is available for improving the emotional and social development of pupils with special educational needs.

Across The Golden Thread Alliance, we understand that an important feature of the school is to enable all pupils to develop emotional resilience and social skills, both through direct teaching and indirectly with every conversation adults have with pupils throughout the day.

Pupils in the early stages of emotional and social development because of their special educational needs will be supported to enable them to develop and mature appropriately.

This will usually require additional and different resources, beyond that required by pupils who do not need this support.

The name and contact details of the SEND Co-ordinator.

Culverstone Green Primary School:

Charlotte Casey is the Headteacher at Culverstone Green Primary Academy. She is a qualified teacher and SENCO and holds the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Charlotte can be contacted on 01732 822568 or at charlotte.casey@golden-thread.org

Fleetdown Primary Academy:

The Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion at Fleetdown Primary Academy is **Nicola King,** who is a qualified teacher, and has completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Nicola is available on 01322 226891 or at Nicola.King@golden-thread.org

The Lead of our Specialist Resourced Provision (Pirate Ship) and the school's SENCO is **Michaela Wright**, Teacher of the Deaf. She can be contacted at michaela.wright@golden-thread.org.

Meopham Community Academy:

The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion at Meopham Community Academy is **Dan Taylor**. He is a qualified, experienced teacher and holds the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Dan Taylor is available on 01474 812259, or at daniel.taylor@golden-thread.org.

Oakfield Primary Academy:

The Deputy Head with responsibility for Inclusion at Oakfield Primary Academy is **Julia McCloskey,** she is a qualified teacher and has completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Oakfield has previously achieved The Quality Inclusion Mark with Flagship status.

The SENCo for Year N and R is Nicola Dixon, contactable on nicola.dixon@golden-thread.org .
The SENCo for Years 1-4 is Julia McCloskey, contactable on julia.mccloskey@golden-thread.org
The SENCo for Year 5, 6 and the SRP is Nicola Catlow, who is a qualified teacher and has completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination, is contactable on nicola.catlow@golden-thread.org.

Riverview Primary Academy

The Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion at Riverview Primary Academy is **Felicity Walsh,** who is a qualified teacher and has completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Felicity Walsh is available on 01474 566484 or felicity.walsh@golden-thread.org

Temple Hill Primary Academy:

The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion is **Rebecca Crouch**. Rebecca is a qualified teacher and has completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Rebecca is available on 01322 224600 or at rebecca.crouch@golden-thread.org

The Alternative Provision (NEST) Lead is Keeleigh Jackson. Keeleigh is a qualified teacher and has many years experience working with children with SEND and running specialist

provisions. Keeleigh is available on 01322 224600 or at keeleigh.jackson@golden-thread.org. Within this is our Nurture provision that is led Carol Bowerman (carol.bowerman@golden-thread.org), a Higher-Level Associate Teacher, who is also a trained ELSA and is supported by Rebecca Crouch.

West Hill Primary Academy:

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Inclusion at West Hill Primary Academy is **Danielle Davenport**. Danielle is a qualified teacher and experienced SENDCo.

West Hill has achieved The Quality Inclusion Mark with Centre of Excellence status. Danielle is available on 01322 226019 or at danielle.davenport@golden-thread.org

Wrotham Road Primary School:

The SENCO and Inclusion lead at Wrotham Road Primary School is **Emma-Jane Gent**. She is a qualified, experienced teacher and holds the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. Emma-Jane can be contacted at wrps-senco@golden-thread.org

Emma-Jane Gent is currently on maternity leave. In her absence, please contact Nicole Galinis at WRPS-Office@golden-thread.org

Information about the expertise and training of colleagues in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and how specialist expertise will be secured.

Colleagues at The Golden Thread Alliance have access to a wide range of CPD opportunities including a range of statutory and SEND specific online training available on-demand, training provided internally by those with specialist knowledge and skills, and access to external training providers including local specialist SEND schools, the Educational Psychology services and speech and language services. The cost of training is covered by the notional SEND funding. Where a training need is identified beyond this, we will find a provider who is able to deliver it.

Information about how equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational need will be secured.

Where external advisers recommend the use of equipment or facilities which we do not have, we will purchase it using the notional SEND funding, or seek it by loan. For highly specialist communication equipment, the school will seek the advice of the KCC Communication and Assistive Technology team.

The arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education.

Parents and carers of all children within The Golden Thread Alliance are invited to discuss their child's progress at least twice a year and will receive a written report at least once a year. As part of our normal teaching arrangements, all pupils will access some additional teaching to help them catch- up if the progress monitoring indicates that this is necessary; this will not imply that the pupil has a special educational need. If, following this normal provision, improvements in progress are not seen, we will contact parents to discuss the use

of internal or external assessments which will help us to address these needs better. Parents will be actively supported to contribute to assessment, planning and review. In addition to this, parents of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be invited to contribute to and attend an annual review, which, wherever possible, will also include other agencies involved with the pupil. All relevant information will be made accessible for parents and carers at this time.

The arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in their education.

When a pupil has been identified to have special educational needs and disabilities, the pupil will be consulted about and involved in the arrangements made for them as part of person-centred planning. Parents and carers are likely to play a more significant role in the early school years with the young person taking more responsibility and acting with greater independence in later years.

The arrangements made by the Board of Trustees relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities concerning the provision made at the school.

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints across The Golden Thread Alliance are used for complaints about provision made for pupils with special educational needs. We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the class teacher, SENDCo, Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Head or Headteacher to resolve the issue before making the complaint formal. Please refer to The Golden Thread Alliance Complaints Policy for further information.

There are some circumstances, usually for children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan where there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by the school.

How the Board of Trustees involves other bodies, including Health and Social Services bodies, Local Authority support services and voluntary organisations, in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and in supporting the families of such pupils.

The Board of Trustees have engaged with the following bodies:-

- Free membership of LIFT for access to specialist teaching and learning service
- Input from the Educational Psychology service, as required.
- Link to Disabled Children's Service for support to families for some pupils with high needs
- Access to local authority's service level agreement with Speech and Language Therapy Services/ Occupational Therapy Services/ Physiotherapy Services for pupil with requirement for direct therapy or advice
- Ability to make ad hoc requests for advice from Communication and Assistive Technology Team, etc.
- Membership of professional networks for SENDCO e.g. National Autistic Society, SENDCO forum, National Association for Special Educational Needs (nasen) etc.
- Local children's charities such as We Are Beams.

The contact details of support services for the parents of pupils with special educational needs, including those for arrangements made in accordance with clause 32 (Parent Partnership Services)

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provides free, impartial and confidential advice, support and options around educational issues for parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (0–25). They empower parents and carers to play an active and informed role in their child's education. They can be contacted on:

HELPLINE: 03000 413000
Office: 03000 412412
E-mail: iask@kent.gov.uk
www.kent.gov.uk/iask

Kent Parents and Carers Together (PACT) is a forum for parents and carers of children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) within Kent local authority. Kent PACT is a way to empower parents and carers and enable them to have their say.

Email: info@kentpact.org.uk
https://kentpactnew2022.co.uk/

The school's arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in transferring between phases of education or in preparing for adulthood and independent living.

The Golden Thread Alliance works closely with the educational settings used by the pupils before they transfer to us in order to seek the information that will make the transfer as seamless as possible.

We are aware that, for some pupils, transition within the school can also be challenging. For these children, support will be offered to ensure a smooth transition.
We also contribute information to pupils' onward destinations by providing information to the next setting. The SENDCo will meet with a representative from the destination school where necessary. Vulnerable pupils will be given the opportunity to carry out additional visits to their new school where it is deemed necessary. A representative from the destination school will be invited to the transition review held for any Year Six pupil with an Education, Health and Care Plan where the placement for Year 7 is known.

Information on where the local authority's local offer is published.

The local authority's local offer is published on https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs and parents without internet access should make an appointment with the SENDCo or Assistant Headteacher for support to gain the information they require.