

# Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

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## 1. Purpose and Scope

**Purpose:** This SEND policy outlines how the Trust supports and makes provision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The purpose of the policy is to create an inclusive learning environment that identifies needs early, provides appropriate support, and removes barriers to learning, so that every student can thrive

and achieve their potential. By implementing this policy, the Trust aims to ensure high aspirations and full participation for all learners, including those with SEND, in line with its vision of outstanding, inclusive education.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all staff and students across the Trust. It covers the identification, support, and management of SEND for all enrolled students, including those with formally identified needs (e.g. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)) as well as those requiring additional support without an EHCP.

**Legislation and Guidance:** The Trust's SEND Policy is governed by the statutory framework for SEND in England. Key legislation and guidance informing this policy include:

- **Education Acts 1996, 2002 and 2006** – set out broader educational duties which underpin SEND provision.
- **Equality Act 2010** – protects individuals from discrimination. The colleges must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students with disabilities are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peers. This includes providing accessible facilities and support to meet diverse needs.
- **Children and Families Act 2014** – Part 3 of this Act sets out colleges' responsibilities for students with SEND. It introduced important reforms focusing on improved cooperation between education, health, and care services and a clearer emphasis on outcomes for young people with SEND.
- **SEND Regulations 2014** – detail specific requirements such as the information that must be included in the SEND policy and the SEND Information Report.
- **SEND Code of Practice 2015** – the 0–25 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice provides statutory guidance on duties, policies, and procedures relating to SEND. This policy meets the requirements set out in the Code, including having a written SEND policy and annual information report.

The policy should be read alongside related Trust policies, such as Safeguarding, Admissions, Equal Opportunities, Accessibility Plan (for facilities and estates), and the Complaints Policy (for handling any concerns).

**Definition of SEND:** For the purposes of this policy, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is defined in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice. A young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Specifically, a student is considered to have a learning difficulty/disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or

- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream education settings (including mainstream post-16 institutions).

This definition encompasses a broad range of conditions and needs. The SEND Code of Practice categorises needs into four broad areas: Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; and Sensory and/or Physical Needs. The Trust supports students across all these areas, understanding that many students' needs may span multiple categories. Some students with disabilities (for example, a health condition or physical disability) may not require additional *learning* support and thus may not be classified as having "SEN" – however, they are fully covered under the Equality Act and will receive appropriate accommodations as needed.

## 2. Key Principles and Commitments

The Trust is dedicated to being a high-quality inclusive education provider, and as such, it upholds the following key principles in its SEND provision:

- **Best Endeavours:** The colleges will use their *best endeavours* to ensure that every student with SEND gets the support they need. This means taking all reasonable steps to meet students' needs effectively, deploying resources to secure the necessary provision for each young person.
- **Inclusive Education:** Students with SEND are educated inclusively alongside their peers whenever possible. They are offered full access to a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum, and are included in all college activities as far as is reasonably practical, with appropriate support or adjustments as needed. The Trust believes that, with the right support, students with SEND can succeed in mainstream academic and enrichment programs.
- **Early Identification:** Early identification and intervention are a priority. All staff are responsible for alerting the Additional Learning Support (ALS) team to any emerging learning difficulties. Teachers and tutors are expected to be vigilant and recognise when a student may have an unidentified need, so that assessment and support can be provided promptly.
- **High Expectations for All:** The Trust maintains high aspirations for students with SEND. It is committed to ensuring that learners with SEND achieve well and prepare for adulthood, including progression to higher education, training, or employment. With high expectations and the right support, the vast majority of young people with SEND can make a successful transition to adult life and lead fulfilling lives. The colleges are ambitious for each student, encouraging them to set goals and work towards meaningful destinations beyond college.

- **Student-Centred Approach:** The Trust embodies a Person Centred Approach for all young people with SEND. Students' own views, wishes and feelings are central to their support. The colleges seek and value the voice of young people with SEND in decisions about their education. Wherever appropriate, students are involved in planning their support and in review meetings about their progress. This empowers students to take ownership of their learning and develop self-advocacy skills.
- **Parental/Carer Partnership:** The Trust recognises that parents and carers are key partners in supporting students with SEND. It ensures that the views of parents/carers are heard and taken into account in all aspects of provision. The colleges provide information, guidance, and reassurance to families, and aim for transparent communication. Parents/carers are supported through transitions and are kept informed about their child's progress and support strategies.
- **Smooth Transitions:** The Trust is committed to facilitating smooth transitions at every stage for students with SEND. This includes the transition from school to college, between courses or year groups within college, and from college to post-college destinations. Additional transition planning and orientation is offered to students with SEND (for example, extra visit days, taster sessions, or liaison with previous schools) to ensure they settle in and are set up for success. Likewise, as students near the end of their college programme, support is given to help them transition to higher education, employment, or other next steps (e.g. work with career advisors, work experience placements, etc.).
- **Partnership with External Agencies:** The Trust works in partnership with a range of external agencies and professionals to meet students' needs. This includes cooperation with local authorities (for EHCP processes and the Local Offer), educational psychologists, specialist teachers, health services (such as speech and language therapists, mental health services), social care, and any other relevant bodies. When needed, the colleges will seek expertise from outside the institution to carry out specialised assessments or interventions, ensuring students receive holistic support.
- **Qualified Staff and Ongoing Training:** High-quality support for SEND is delivered by skilled staff. The Trust ensures that it employs suitably qualified specialists (for example, learning support tutors, mentors, and assessors), and that **all staff receive appropriate training** in inclusive practices <sup>2</sup>. There is a commitment to continuous professional development in areas such as differentiation techniques, assistive technology, mental health awareness, and specific learning difficulties. This whole-college training ethos reinforces that every teacher is confident in meeting diverse needs in their classroom.
- **Differentiated and Inclusive Teaching:** The first strategy to support students with SEND is through high-quality teaching in the classroom. Teachers are

expected to differentiate lessons and materials to accommodate varying needs. By adjusting teaching methods, providing appropriate challenges, and using inclusive strategies (e.g. multisensory approaches, scaffolding, visual aids), the colleges ensure that many needs are met as part of normal classroom practice. This reduces the need for separate withdrawal support and keeps students included with their peers as much as possible.

- **Removal of Barriers & Reasonable Adjustments:** The Trust is proactive in identifying and removing barriers to learning. This includes making reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act – for example, providing accessible materials (modified concrete resources, large print, coloured overlays), physical access adjustments (ramps, lifts, ergonomic furniture), or flexibility in policies where needed to prevent disadvantage. If standard facilities or routines unintentionally exclude a student with a disability, the colleges will seek solutions so that the student can participate fully. No student will be denied access to any aspect of college life on the basis of a SEND or disability, as far as it is within the Trust’s capability to adapt.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** The SEND provision is collaborative – involving students, parents, teachers, support staff, and external partners in a team around the student. Regular communication and information-sharing takes place so that everyone supporting the student is aware of their needs, strategies that help, and progress being made. This coordinated approach ensures consistency of support across different settings (classroom, support sessions, home).
- **Privacy and Dignity:** In supporting students with SEND, the Trust respects privacy and maintains dignity. Personal information about a student’s needs is shared on a need-to-know basis with staff, in line with data protection regulations. Support is provided discreetly and sensitively to avoid singling students out or causing stigma.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Reflecting the Trust’s commitment to be a “beacon” of inclusive education, the SEND policy and provision are subject to continuous improvement. The effectiveness of interventions and support is regularly reviewed (see Monitoring and Review in section 7), and the Trust stays up-to-date with best practices and emerging research in the field of SEND. Feedback from students and parents is used to refine support approaches. The Trust also aligns with national initiatives and improvement plans for SEND – for example, implementing relevant recommendations from government reviews and adhering to Ofsted guidelines on outstanding SEND provision.

These principles guide all the detailed procedures and actions described in the rest of this policy. They ensure that the Trust’s ethos of inclusion is translated into concrete

practice, making the colleges a supportive environment for a wide range of learning support needs.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Successful implementation of the SEND policy relies on clear roles and responsibilities at all levels of the Trust. The following outlines who is responsible for what in relation to SEND provision:

#### Everyone's Responsibility

**All staff contribute to inclusive education.** While specific staff have designated roles (E.g. Additional Learning Support Manager, Advanced Practitioner – Neurodiversity), every member of the trust community are expected to be aware of the SEND policy and play a part in its delivery. Teaching and support staff collaborate to identify needs, implement strategies, and monitor progress of students with SEND to ensure that a student's needs are met both holistically and academically fostering a truly inclusive environment. This enables student development across the four broad areas of need outlined in the SEND Code of Practice promoting skills needed for Preparation for Adulthood

**Trust Board and Governors:** The Trust Board (and the Local Committees of the individual colleges) hold ultimate oversight of SEND provision. A designated SEND Governor or Trustee is appointed to champion SEND at the governance level. Their responsibilities include: keeping SEND provision high on the strategic agenda, ensuring compliance with statutory duties, and monitoring the quality and effectiveness of SEND support across the Trust. The Board approves this SEND policy and ensures that adequate resources are allocated for its implementation. They also review SEND outcomes (such as progress and attainment of students with SEND) as part of their quality assurance role, acting as a “critical friend” to college leadership.

**Executive Principal and Senior Leadership:** The Executive Principal and their senior leadership team is responsible for implementing the SEND policy on a day-to-day basis. They ensure that the policy's commitments are translated into practice. Key duties of senior leaders include:

- Establishing a supportive culture that prioritises inclusion and empowers staff to meet students' needs.
- Ensuring there is a qualified and effective Additional Learning Support Manager in place to lead the SEND provision.
- Providing sufficient staffing and funding for learning support, specialist resources, staff training, and any accommodations required. This includes making decisions about budget allocation for SEND (including the deployment of

any high-needs funding or the college's notional SEND budget) in line with identified needs.

- Monitoring the implementation of SEND support across the college – e.g. through the Reaching Inclusion and Send Excellence (RISE) Committee, reviewing student progress data, and including SEND in internal quality assurance processes (lesson observations, support reviews, etc.).
- Ensuring that all college staff are aware of their responsibilities under this policy. The Executive Principal and senior team should foster collaboration between academic and support staff.
- Championing a “whole-college” approach to SEND, reinforcing that every faculty and department must adhere to inclusive practices.
- Overseeing any relationships with external agencies at a high level (for instance, ensuring the college engages with Local Authority SEND forums or partnership meetings).
- Reporting to the Trust Board/Governors on SEND provision and outcomes, and advising on policy updates or strategic developments.

In summary, college leaders make sure that the SEND policy isn't just a document, but a living practice integrated into teaching and student support every day.

**Additional Learning Support Manager:** The trust has an Additional Learning Support Manager who is responsible for the support for learners in the College's sixth form provisions.

**Head of SEND:** At St Vincent Sixth Form College in the school of Personalised Learning, this responsibility sits with the Head of SEND, who also manages the curriculum for this area of the trust.

Both of these roles perform a similar function to the role of a Special Needs Education Coordinator (SENCo) in a school. Their responsibilities include:

- **Day-to-day operation of the SEND policy:** The Additional Learning Support Manager and the Head of SEND ensure that the processes described in this policy (identification, support, review, etc.) are carried out effectively on a daily basis.
- **Coordination of Provision:** They coordinate the special educational provision for individual learners, meaning they oversee assessment of needs, planning of appropriate support, and monitoring of progress for each student with SEND. They maintain an up-to-date register of students with SEND and track the support being provided.
- **Advising and supporting colleagues:** They provide professional guidance to teachers and support staff. This can involve training staff about specific needs, recommending classroom strategies, or helping to differentiate materials. When

teachers have a concern about a learner, and assist with next steps (further assessment or intervention).

- **Liaison with parents/carers:** They are a key point of contact for the families of students with SEND. They arrange and lead meetings with parents to discuss APDRs and progress. They ensure parents are kept informed and that their insights are included.
- **Liaison with external agencies:** They act as the link to outside support services. They communicate with Local Authority SEND officers (especially regarding EHCP processes), educational psychologists, therapists, medical professionals, and any external specialists involved. For students with EHC Plans, they work with the local authority to ensure annual reviews are conducted and any changes are implemented. They also make referrals to external services as needed (for example, requesting an Autism specialist teacher or a mental health consultation) and ensures the college implements external professionals' recommendations.
- **Transition planning:** They coordinate additional transition support for incoming students and those leaving college. For new students, this will involve the college attending Year 11 annual reviews, liaising with feeder schools regarding applicants that are SEN-K identifying those that need enhanced transition, attending year 11 annual reviews, reviewing documentation from schools, and planning college support in advance. For leavers, they may ensure liaison with receiving universities or training providers happens to smooth the handover of support arrangements. For young people with ongoing Care and Support needs, transitional support will be coordinated with Adult Social care and the ICB via the annual review process at least one year in advance of their educational placement coming to an end to ensure effective planning for young people and their families.
- **Record-keeping:** They hold responsibility to ensure accurate records of all students with SEND, their identified needs, APDRs, and reviews are kept. They also ensure that confidential information is handled appropriately and shared with staff on a need-to-know basis.
- **Strategic development:** Working with senior management, they help shape the strategic direction of SEND provision. They contribute to policy reviews, help identify improvement priorities, and ensure the college is meeting its legal obligations (such as preparing the annual SEND Information Report for the website). They may also advise on the graduated approach for the college, ensuring a structured process for supporting students.
- **Statutory duties:** They also ensure the college complies with relevant statutory duties ,

- verifying that all exam access arrangements are in place according to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines, and that any required reports (e.g., to the Local Authority or Governors) are completed.
- Ensuring that EHCP consults are responded to within the 15 day Local Authority timeframes, providing feedback on whether the college can meet the needs and, if not, why not in line with the legal framework outlined in the SEND Code of Practice).
- Ensuring that we meet our duty in relation to annual review timescales, including sending draft annual review paperwork at least two weeks prior to the review date. Holding the annual review meeting within twelve months of the previous review date and submitting the completed documentation within two weeks of the meeting date.
- Meeting the college's 'duty to respond' when named in an EHCP consultation from a Local Authority.

Overall, the Additional Learning Support Manager and the Head of SEND are the operational leads for SEND – orchestrating support and acting as champions for students with SEND within the Trust.

**Teaching Staff (Lecturers, Classroom Teachers, Personal Tutors):** All teachers and tutors in the colleges are directly responsible for the progress and development of the students in their classes, including those with SEND. In practice, teaching staff are expected to:

- **Deliver high-quality, differentiated teaching:** Teachers plan and deliver lessons that are responsive to the diverse needs of learners. Strategies might include simplifying or chunking instructions, providing visual supports, pre-teaching key vocabulary, or offering extension/enrichment tasks to stretch different learners. Differentiation is a core responsibility, ensuring students with SEND can access the curriculum alongside their peers.
- **Identify and refer concerns:** Because teachers see students most frequently, they are often the first to notice if a student is struggling significantly. Teachers should be familiar with the signs of possible learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, autism spectrum conditions, mental health issues) and raise any concerns to the ALS team promptly for further investigation. Early identification often starts in the classroom.
- **Implement advice and strategies:** When a student has been assessed and support strategies are recommended (for instance, use of a laptop, seating the student in a low-distraction area, or breaking tasks into smaller steps), teachers are responsible for implementing these recommendations in their classes. They work closely with learning support staff to integrate in-class support effectively.

- **Create inclusive classroom environments:** Teachers foster a supportive atmosphere that values diversity and encourages all students to participate. They are mindful of social inclusion – for example, by facilitating group work that includes students with SEND and preventing any bullying or isolation of those who struggle.
- **Track and report progress:** Teachers monitor the academic progress of students with SEND, just as for others, and provide feedback on what is working or where additional support might be needed. If a student with SEND is not making expected progress, teachers contribute to review meetings and help adjust the APDR (the “Do-Review” parts of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle). They maintain open communication with the ALS team about any changes or concerns.
- **Engage with parents:** Especially for personal tutors or subject teachers of students with high needs, there may be direct communication with parents (e.g. at parent evenings or via email/phone) to discuss the student’s progress. Teachers should be prepared to explain how the student is being supported in their subject and to suggest ways the parent can help at home, aligning with the collaborative approach.
- **Know the Policy:** All teaching staff must familiarise themselves with this SEND policy and related procedures. This ensures consistency – for example, teachers should know how to refer a student for a special assessment or whom to contact for advice on differentiation. Induction for new teachers includes briefing on SEND and inclusion policies.

In summary, teachers are the first line of support for students with SEND through quality teaching and vigilance, working hand-in-hand with specialist staff for more targeted interventions.

**Learning Support Staff (Learning Support Assistants, Advanced and Specialist Practitioners, Specialist Tutors):** The Trust employs staff who have specific roles in supporting students with SEND, referred to collectively as the Additional Learning Support team. This may include in-class Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) or Advanced Practitioners, as well as specialist one-to-one tutors or academic coaches. Their responsibilities include:

- **In-class support:** Many students with SEND will have support staff assisting them in some lessons. LSAs work alongside the teacher to support individuals or small groups. For example, they may help a student stay focused, explain tasks in simpler terms, scribe or take notes, or facilitate a group activity ensuring the student with SEND is fully included. Importantly, support staff aim to promote independence, not do the work for the student. They give just enough help to

enable the learner to participate and learn effectively. They also help manage any assistive equipment the student uses in class.

- **1:1 or small group interventions:** Support staff often deliver targeted interventions outside the main classroom. This could be remedial literacy or numeracy sessions, study skills coaching, or mentoring sessions to work on organisation, social skills, etc. They follow plans set by the Additional Learning Support Manager, SEND Team Leaders, Specialist Learning Support Manager or Specialist Learning Support Tutor, using structured programmes when appropriate. For instance, a learning support tutor might run a weekly reading comprehension booster group, or a social communication group for students on the autism spectrum.
- **Monitoring and feedback:** Learning support staff play a key role in observing how students are coping and feeding back to teachers and the ALS team. After supporting a student, they will note what strategies worked or what challenges remain. They will use the Trust's procedures for giving feedback about the student's response to various strategies. This helps in reviewing the effectiveness of support and planning next steps.
- **Introducing strategies and tools:** Often, support staff will help students trial and use assistive technologies or new learning strategies. For example, a mentor might introduce a dyslexic student to text-to-speech software or show a student with ADHD how to use a visual timetable. They encourage students to experiment with such tools and see what aids work best to reduce their learning barriers and increase independence. Over time, this helps students become more self-sufficient.
- **Progress coaching:** Some roles function like a coach, meeting students regularly to set targets, review progress, and build effective habits. They might review grades or feedback with the student, celebrate improvements, and problem-solve around any difficulties (like missed homework or anxiety in presentations).
- **Documentation:** Support staff contribute to maintaining student records. After interventions, they might document outcomes or update an Individual Learning Plan with notes. They ensure that any changes in a student's needs (observations of new difficulties or improvements) are communicated properly.
- **Staying up-to-date:** The ALS department ensures support staff receive training (internal or external) to improve their skills. Support staff are expected to stay informed of the latest methods to assist students – for example, learning about a new app that helps with note-taking, or attending a workshop on supporting learners with autism. Many will develop specialist expertise (such as a particular staff member being the “go-to” person for dyslexia support or mental health first

aid). The Trust encourages this development so that the team’s expertise remains current.

Ultimately, learning support staff are vital in delivering hands-on assistance and bridging the gap between what students can do on their own and the demands of college-level study. They work closely with both the student and teaching staff to implement the strategies that enable success.

**All Staff:** It should be noted that inclusion is everyone’s responsibility. Every member of the college staff, from reception and administrative staff to exam officers and finance staff, should be aware of the importance of accommodating students with SEND. For instance, front-line staff should know how to respond if a student with autism is distressed, or the Exams Officer must ensure approved access arrangements (like extra time or a reader) are in place for assessments. By cultivating an informed and understanding staff culture, the Trust ensures that students with SEND encounter supportiveness at every interaction.

The table below summarises key roles and their responsibilities in brief:

Role	Key Responsibilities
<b>Trust Board / Governors</b>	- Oversight of SEND strategy and compliance.- Appoint a SEND link governor.- Monitor effectiveness of SEND provision and outcomes.- Ensure adequate resources and approve policy.
<b>CEO/ Executive Principal / Senior Leaders</b>	- Implement SEND policy in each college.- Foster inclusive school culture.- Allocate staff and budget for SEND.- Ensure staff training on SEND.- Monitor quality of teaching and support for SEND.
<b>Additional Learning Support Manager / Head of SEND</b>	- Coordinate day-to-day SEND provision.- Identify student needs and plan support.- Advise and train teachers.- Liaise with parents and external agencies.- Oversee records and reviews.
<b>Teachers</b>	- Deliver high-quality, differentiated teaching.- Early identification of needs and referrals.- Implement recommended strategies in class.- Work with support staff; communicate with parents.
<b>Learning Support Staff</b>	- Provide in-class support and targeted interventions.- Perform diagnostic assessment and introduce assistive tech and strategies.- Monitor student progress and feedback to teachers.- Promote student independence and skill development.

## 4. Identification and Assessment of Needs

Early and accurate identification of a student’s needs is crucial to providing effective support. The Trust colleges use a structured process to identify students who have

SEND or may require additional support, in accordance with the “Assess, Plan, Do, Review” model recommended by the SEND Code of Practice. The identification and assessment procedures are as follows:

1. **Pre-admission information gathering:** Before a student arrives at college, the Trust seeks to identify any known Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. This involves collecting information through:
  - The college application and enrolment forms, which invite students and parents to declare any SEND, learning difficulty or disability, or exam access arrangements used previously.
  - Liaison with feeder schools: With permission, the colleges obtain records from the student’s previous school. This may include Individual Education Plans (IEPs), learner profiles, or information on support that was in place for SEN-K registered students. For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the Local Authority will send an EHCP consultation to the college so the college can determine whether we can meet student need and offer a place. The Additional Learning Support Manager and Head of SEND reviews these documents carefully. If feasible, the Additional Learning Support Manager and Head of SEND, or an EHCP Coordinator attends Year 11 annual review meetings at partner schools for students who have an EHCP and are considering joining the college. This early involvement helps comprehensive understanding of the student’s needs and facilitate a smooth transition.
  - The Local Authority’s Local Offer and transition team: In some cases (especially for high-needs students), external transition officers or specialists coordinate with the college to plan support in advance.
  - Admissions interviews or guidance meetings: Most applicants have a one-on-one meeting as part of the admissions process. The college’s admissions or support staff use this opportunity to discuss and identify any support needs. Students and parents can voice concerns or ask for support at this stage.

By the time a student enrolls, the college aims to have a clear picture of any declared SEND need and will have determined the support that might be required. All this information is used to make initial plans (e.g., ensuring the timetable is suitable, allocating a Welfare Officer, ELSA support and scheduling further assessment if needed).

1. **Baseline assessments on entry:** At the start of the academic year, the colleges conduct screening assessments for all incoming students. Literacy and numeracy screening is typically done (for example, Lucid Exact tests, BKSB tests, and dyslexia screening assessments). The purpose is to flag any students

who might have unrecognised difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyscalculia, that weren't identified previously. Students who disclose a learning need will be referred to the Specialist Tutor team and will undergo a diagnostic assessment. In addition, if the college suspects a student might need exam access arrangements (like extra time due to slow processing), it will arrange for appropriate testing by a specialist assessor as early as possible.

Early in the term, teachers are asked to observe and report any significant concerns. A student who struggles noticeably with classwork, despite high-quality teaching, would be referred to the ALS team for closer assessment.

- 1. In-class observation and teacher referral:** Throughout the year, subject teachers and Progress Tutors monitor student performance. If a student is not making expected progress or shows signs of a possible learning difficulty, the teacher will use the college's referral system to alert the ALS team. For example, a teacher might notice a student consistently falls behind in taking notes or has difficulty following instructions, suggesting a potential processing difficulty or attention issue. Teachers provide any evidence (such as work samples, test results, noted behaviours) to support the referral. The student will most likely be booked in for a diagnostic assessment with a member of the specialist learning support team to support understanding cognitive function and draw up recommendations to guide teaching staff. ALS support staff may then also do an observation of that student in class, or meet with the student to discuss the challenges. Further assessments (standardised tests for dyslexia, questionnaires for attention/executive function, etc.) might be administered by the support specialists. This step is part of the "Assess" phase of the cycle – gathering more information about the nature of the student's difficulty. This process also is utilised to highlight EEA needs to the Specialist Support team so that a student is not placed at significant disadvantage to their peers in exams/assessments.
- 2. Formal assessment and diagnosis (if needed):** If initial screenings and observations indicate a significant issue, the student may need to consider talking to their GP to get a formal diagnosis. The Trust's colleges have staff trained to conduct certain assessments (for example, a specialist teacher might conduct a dyslexia screening). In some cases, the college will request the involvement of external professionals for assessment: e.g., refer to an Educational Psychologist for cognitive assessment, or ask for an Autism team consultation for a student showing signs on the autism spectrum. These assessments help clarify the student's areas of need and whether they meet criteria for specific conditions. It's important to note that a medical diagnosis is not required for the college to provide support; support is based on identified

needs. However, having a formal identification can guide more targeted strategies and access to resources.

3. **Identification of SEND:** Based on the information gathered, the Additional Learning Support Manager determines whether the student should be identified as having SEND under the official definition (see Section 1). If yes, the student is identified as SEND on the Trust's MIS system. Their specific needs are categorised (e.g., *Moderate Learning Difficulty*, *Autistic Spectrum Condition*, *Physical Disability*, etc., often with the primary area of need indicated such as Communication & Interaction or Cognition & Learning). This system is used for internal planning and tracking, and summary information may be used for Individualised Learner Record (ILR) returns or funding applications. If a student does not meet the SEND definition but still would benefit from extra help (for instance, short-term support for a temporary difficulty, or minor adjustments), the college notes this in other ways (such as a pastoral note or a monitored list). The approach is needs-led, so support can be given even without the formal label, but identifying SEND formally can help ensure legal protection and inform support planning in a consistent targeted way.
4. **Planning of support:** Once needs are identified, the ALS team, potentially in collaboration with teachers, parents, and the student, will plan appropriate support. (The specifics of support are detailed in the next section.) This involves setting goals for what the support should achieve (e.g., improving ability to work in groups, reducing anxiety in class presentations, etc.), and deciding on the interventions or accommodations to put in place. A document often used at this stage is an APDR. The APDR informs the assess, plan, do, review cycle and outlines the students' strengths and needs, the support strategies to be used, who will provide them, and creates targets for students to work towards. It also notes any exam arrangements they are entitled to, based on assessments (for example, 25% extra time, use of a word processor, rest breaks, etc., which the college will arrange as per regulations).
5. **Review and ongoing assessment:** Identification is not a one-time event. The college continually monitors students' progress. There are regular review meetings (usually three times a year) for each student with an APDR. In these reviews, they evaluate the effectiveness of the support in place and whether outcomes are being achieved. Adjustments are made accordingly – this is the “Review” stage of the cycle. If a student has made good progress, the level of support might be reduced (or in some cases, a student might no longer need to be classified as SEND). If challenges remain, further assessments, new or adjusted targets or new strategies will be implemented (back to “Assess” and “Plan”). For students with an EHCP, there is a statutory Annual Review meeting involving the Local Authority to formally review the EHCP and make any

necessary amendments; the college contributes extensively to these reviews and implements any updated provisions.

Through these steps, the Trust ensures that any student who has or develops special educational needs is identified and has those needs are thoroughly assessed. No student is left behind – whether a need is evident from the start of their college journey or emerges later, the colleges have mechanisms in place to detect and understand the support required.

## 5. SEND Support and Provision

Once a student's needs have been identified and assessed, the Trust's colleges put in place a range of support measures to help the student overcome barriers and succeed in their education. Support for SEND students is highly individualised – based on the principle of “different needs, different provision.” However, support generally falls into several broad categories, which together form the “graduated approach” to meeting needs:

- **Quality First Teaching (Universal Support):** As emphasised, the foundation of support for all students, including those with SEND, is high-quality teaching in the classroom. Many needs can be met by effective differentiation and inclusive practices by the subject teacher. This universal level of support includes strategies like tailored questioning, scaffolded assignments, use of visuals, strategic seating arrangements, and multi-sensory teaching techniques. Teachers at the colleges implement such strategies as standard practice – benefitting not only students with identified SEND but also those who might be struggling unnoticed. The Additional Learning Support Manager, Head of SEND, Specialist Learning Support Manager and Advanced Practitioner - Neurodiversity provide guidelines and training for teachers on these inclusive strategies. By ensuring lessons are accessible, the need for additional support is reduced and any extra help can focus on the truly specialised needs.
- **Targeted SEND Support (Additional Provision):** For students who require help beyond what the classroom teacher can provide in a normal lesson, targeted interventions are arranged. These can occur inside or outside the classroom and are often coordinated by the Additional Learning Support department. Examples of targeted support include:
  - **In-Class Support:** A LSA may be assigned to support the student in certain lessons (particularly in subjects that the student finds challenging). The support might be full-time in class for students with high needs, or on a part-time basis for specific subjects. The support staff works collaboratively with the teacher to assist the student without taking over or isolating the student. This helps the student engage with the

lesson content and stay on task. The focus is always to promote independence and autonomy over their learning journey.

- **Small Group Interventions:** Students with similar presenting needs might be provided focused sessions. For example, a small group literacy intervention to build reading and writing skills, or a social skills group for students with communication difficulties. These groups allow targeted teaching and practice in a supportive, low-pressure setting. They typically run for a few weeks to a term, after which progress is reviewed.
- **One-to-One Tutoring or Mentoring:** Some students benefit from regular one-on-one sessions with a specialist tutor. In these sessions, specific goals are addressed – e.g., practicing spelling strategies, relearning a foundational math concept, coaching in study and organisational skills, revision skills or discussing anxieties and problem-solving solutions. One-to-one support can be particularly effective in addressing individual barriers and can be tailored in real-time to the student’s responses.
- **Assistive Technology Support:** The colleges encourage the use of assistive technologies to help students with SEND become more independent learners. For instance, text-to-speech or speech-to-text software can assist those with reading or writing difficulties; specialist software can help students with visual impairments or those who struggle with note-taking; noise-cancelling headphones or devices can aid concentration for those with sensory sensitivities. The support team introduces and trains students in using such tools. In class, students may use laptops or tablets if writing by hand is a barrier, and the IT departments ensure that accessibility features (like screen readers or magnification) are available on college computers.
- **Skill-Building Workshops:** Periodically, the trust may run workshops open to any student who wants help with particular skills (time management, essay writing techniques, stress management during exam season, etc.). SEND students are encouraged to attend relevant workshops as part of their APDR. These workshops address common areas where students (especially those with learning difficulties or ADHD) might need extra guidance, and they foster independent learning strategies.
- **Mentoring and Pastoral Support:** Some students with SEND (for example, those on the autism spectrum or with mental health challenges) benefit from having a named staff mentor they check in with regularly. The colleges provide this via form Progress Tutors, Autism Specialist Practitioners, ELSA or Learning Support Assistants. The mentor can help the student navigate college life, resolve day-to-day issues, and

liaise with teaching staff on the student's behalf if difficulties arise. This consistent relationship can greatly reduce anxiety and build confidence.

- **Specialist Support (External or Intensive Provision):** For a minority of students with more complex needs, additional specialist support is accessed. This could include:
  - **Therapies:** If a student requires speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, or physiotherapy as part of their educational support (usually detailed in an EHCP if so), the college will work with the local health providers to facilitate these. Sessions might take place on college premises if possible. The Additional Learning Support manager or Head of SEND ensures that physio OT and SALT devised programmes from therapists are incorporated into the student's daily routine at college.
  - **Educational Psychology or Specialist Teacher Input:** The Trust might commission an Educational Psychologist to work with a student (assessing learning needs, advising on strategies for behaviour or learning). Similarly, specialist teachers (for hearing impairment, visual impairment, autism, etc.) from the local authority or special schools network can be invited to observe and give advice. Their recommendations will be implemented, such as acquiring specific equipment (hearing aid adapters, Braille materials) or making timetable adjustments.
  - **Wellbeing and Counselling Support:** Recognising that social and emotional wellbeing is a vital part of educational success, the colleges offer wellbeing support and counselling services. Students with SEND who exhibit anxiety, depression, or social/emotional difficulties can get support from one of the colleges' Wellbeing teams. They will provide ongoing support for students and will monitor their support needs. For students who need more therapeutic intervention, students can access counsellors on site or through referrals to external mental health services. For example, a student with social anxiety might have weekly counselling and gradually be supported to participate more in group activities. The Wellbeing Team can also highlight students for support from the ELSA in the ALS team.
  - **Exceptional Programmes:** In rare cases, if a student's needs cannot be met solely within the curriculum framework, the college may arrange a modified programme. This could involve a reduced course load, work placements or other changes based on the individual student's SEND needs. Such arrangements are made in consultation with the student, parents, and possibly the local authority (especially if funding or placement agreements are needed). The goal remains to keep the

student included in the college community while tailoring the programme to their needs.

The exact mix of support for each student is documented in their APDR. For students with an EHCP, the support provided by the college is aligned with the provision specified in their plan. The Additional Learning Support Manager or Head of SEND ensure that all the educational provisions in an EHCP are delivered. They also ensure help is provided to coordinate any health or social care provisions in the plan by working with the relevant services.

To illustrate the range of support available, the table below provides examples of support types and how they might be implemented, reflecting best practices observed in other institutions as well as within the Trust:

Support Type	Description & Examples
<b>In-Class Support</b>	A Learning Support Assistant works with the student inside the lesson, helping them to access the material. For example, in a history class, the assistant may rephrase the teacher’s questions, scaffold the task or quietly prompt the student to stay focused. The goal is to keep the student engaged in the class’s activities alongside peers.
<b>Differentiated Instruction/Scaffolding</b>	Teachers adapt teaching methods and materials to suit the student’s needs. Examples: Providing printed notes in advance for a student who struggles with writing; allowing a student to demonstrate understanding orally if writing is a barrier; breaking tasks into smaller steps and checking understanding frequently. These practices are part of everyday teaching and ensure the curriculum is accessible to all.
<b>Assistive Technology</b>	The use of software or devices to aid learning. Examples: A dyslexic student using text-to-speech software to listen to written passages; a student with fine motor difficulties using a laptop or tablet to type notes; noise-cancelling headphones to reduce sensory overload in study areas. The support team evaluates and provides appropriate tech tools, training the student in their use.
<b>Focused Interventions</b>	Structured programs outside the classroom to develop specific skills. Examples: A weekly exams anxiety intervention group to prepare students for exams; a social communication group run by the support tutor for students with autism to practice conversational skills; one-on-one organisational coaching sessions where a mentor helps a student plan their weekly assignments. These interventions have set targets and timelines, and progress is measured over time.

<p><b>Exam Access Arrangements</b></p>	<p>Adjustments to examinations and assessments so that students with SEND can demonstrate their knowledge without disadvantage. Examples: extra time in exams, provision of a reader or scribe, use of a word processor, taking exams in a smaller, quieter room, or scheduled rest breaks. The need for such arrangements is determined by assessments and evidence and must meet the JCQ regulations. The Exams Officer and Specialist Learning Support Tutors collaborate to ensure all approved arrangements are in place for both internal tests and formal exams.</p>
<p><b>Internal Specialist Input</b></p>	<p>The Trust has a team of specialist staff within its ALS team. These staff undertake several functions that help to tailor the support for a student around their specific needs. The Specialist Learning Support Tutors perform diagnostic assessments to understand how individual learners learn and identify any strategies that might help the learners themselves, or other staff when working with them. The Advanced Practitioners provide specialist support and guidance to all staff on working with students with different neurodiverse needs and they manage a team of specialist staff who provide interventions.</p>
<p><b>External Specialist Input</b></p>	<p>Collaboration with external experts for assessment or support. Examples: An Educational Psychologist conducting a cognitive assessment and advising on learning strategies; a speech and language therapist providing exercises for a student with speech difficulties; consulting a visual impairment specialist to adapt learning materials (like providing large-print or tactile resources)<sup>1</sup>. The college implements the guidance given, integrating it into the student’s APDR.</p>

Regardless of the type of support, students with SEND are encouraged to be active participants in their support. They are helped to understand their own learning profile (strengths and challenges) and to develop self-advocacy skills – such as communicating what strategies work best for them, or when they need a break or extra help. Over their time at the college, students are guided to increasingly manage their own learning (with support gradually adjusted as appropriate), with the aim of preparing them for the greater independence of adult life or higher education.

### Individual Plans and Record-Keeping

For each student identified with SEND, the colleges maintain an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). This record typically includes: the student’s identified needs, their baseline levels (like literacy and numeracy qualifications), agreed outcomes or targets, the

support strategies in place, and a log of support sessions or significant events. It also records any exam concessions they have been granted (so that all staff know, for instance, that this student can have extra time or needs to use a word processor). These plans ensure continuity of support – all staff working with the student can refer to the ILP to understand how best to help them. ILPs are reviewed and updated regularly (at least termly or whenever there is new assessment info).

Furthermore, the Senior Leadership Team keeps data on the academic progress of SEND students as a group – allowing the Trust to compare their achievement and retention rates to those of non-SEND students, as part of evaluating the effectiveness of support.

For more details about the colleges' graduated response model, please consult the graduated response document.

### The Graduated Approach: Assess, Plan, Do, Review

The provision of support follows the cyclical graduated approach mandated by the SEND Code of Practice, which can be summarised as:

- **Assess:** Continuously gather information on the student's needs and progress. (As detailed in Section 4, identification is ongoing. Teachers and support staff remain observant, and formal re-assessments can be done if new concerns arise.) For example, if a student with SEND is not improving in a certain area, the college might do a fresh assessment to pinpoint why.
- **Plan:** Based on assessment, plan the support and teaching strategies to be used. This planning is done collaboratively and documented in the ILP. Both the student and parents should be aware of and agree to the planned support. Planning also includes setting a timeline for the next review and deciding what success will look like (measurable goals).
- **Do:** Implement the support as planned. During this stage, teachers and support staff carry out their respective roles – delivering lessons with differentiation, providing interventions, etc. The SENDCo oversees this implementation but much of the day-to-day work is by teaching staff and support staff. It's important during this phase that everyone sticks to the plan but also notes any immediate feedback (e.g. if a strategy clearly isn't helping or if the student is exceeding expectations).
- **Review:** At the agreed time, the ALS manager and team, together with teachers, the student, and parents, review the impact of the support. Have the goals been met or is progress being made? Evidence is considered (class grades, test scores, observation reports, student's own feedback). Based on the outcome, the cycle starts again: either the support is adjusted (tweaked, increased, reduced, or phased out) and a new plan is made, or if goals were met, perhaps

new goals are set to continue building the student's skills. For instance, a student might move from needing basic literacy catch-up to focusing on higher-level study skills once foundational goals are achieved.

This graduated response ensures that support for SEND students is not static – it evolves with the student's development. It also embeds accountability: the college systematically checks whether its interventions are effective, rather than assuming support is working. If an intervention is not yielding the expected benefit, the college will seek alternative approaches or consult further expertise.

## Support for Transition to Adulthood

A distinctive aspect of SEND provision in a sixth form college setting is preparing students for life after college (often called Preparation for Adulthood outcomes, aligned with the SEND Code of Practice). The Trust's SEND support includes helping students develop skills for independence. This can involve:

- **Career and Further Education Guidance:** Students with SEND receive tailored career advice. The college's careers team works closely with the SEND team to ensure students explore realistic and aspirational pathways and the trust benefits from two SEND specialist staff sitting within the careers team. For example, a student with learning difficulties may be guided towards supported internships or apprenticeship routes if appropriate, and a student with physical disabilities might get extra help visiting prospective universities to check accessibility. The colleges also host transition events, and as noted, they involve external transition services when available.
- **Life Skills:** Some students might benefit from sessions that go beyond academic support, focusing on life skills (time management, travel training, using public transport, managing money, etc.) especially if those are areas of need linked to their SEND. While not every student will require this from the college, those with higher needs often have such outcomes in their EHCP which the college helps deliver (e.g. working on independent living skills one afternoon a week).
- **Work Experience:** The Trust strives to arrange meaningful work experience placements for students, including those with SEND, as part of their study program. The careers staff may work together with students and their families to find placements with appropriate support. This is particularly beneficial for students who might not continue to higher education; it gives them exposure to workplace environments and helps develop employability skills. The colleges will ensure any placement provider is aware of a student's needs (with consent) and that any necessary adjustments are made for the student to participate fully. Supporting students to find an appropriate work experience or next-step

opportunity is explicitly one of the improvements the Trust has integrated into its offer.

- **Liaison with Next Providers:** When a student with SEND leaves to a university or another training provider, the college – with the student’s consent – provides a thorough handover of information. The Additional Learning Support Manager or Head of ALS will ensure appropriate information is shared with the receiving institution to make the transition as smooth as possible. This continuity helps the next educators prepare for the student (for instance, arranging mentoring at university or ensuring accommodations in the workplace training program). If the student is progressing to university they are also advised on accessing disability support services in higher education (such as the Disabled Students Allowance process).

All these efforts align with the overarching aim: that students with SEND at the Trust’s colleges should not only achieve academically, but also be prepared to lead confident, independent, and fulfilling lives after college, embodying the ethos that with the right support, there is no limit to what they can achieve.

## 6. Partnership with Parents, Carers, and External Agencies

Effective SEND provision is built on partnerships – particularly with the families of students and with external support services. The Trust places great importance on collaborative working to ensure that students with SEND get a consistent network of support.

### Working with Parents and Carers

The Trust values parents and carers as essential partners in the education of students with SEND. Their unique knowledge of their young person’s needs is respected, and their involvement is actively sought. The colleges implement the following to foster strong home-college partnerships:

- **Open Communication:** From the point of admission, parents/carers are given clear information on who to contact regarding SEND matters (typically the Additional Learning Support Manager, Head of SEND or SEND Team Leaders). The early contact is made with parents of students with known high needs and throughout the year, parents are encouraged to reach out with any questions or concerns. The colleges strive to be responsive and approachable – whether via email, phone calls, or meetings. Regular newsletters or bulletins may be sent to parents of SEND students with updates on support programs or relevant events.
- **Involvement in Planning and Reviews:** Parents are invited to participate in the planning of their child’s support. For instance, after the initial assessment phase, the college will share the proposed APDR with the parents and consider their input or preferences. During review meetings the views and wishes of the

family are taken into account when making decisions, while recognising that generally at post 16 students have reached the point where they are able to make their own choices – whether it’s about adjusting support strategies or considering future pathways.

- **Workshops and Information Sessions:** The Trust recognises that navigating the world of SEND (especially at post-16) can be challenging for families. To support them, the colleges may offer informational workshops or events. For example, sessions on understanding the new demands of college for students with SEND, or how to support study skills at home.
- **Reporting Progress:** In addition to the standard academic reports and consultations that all students receive, parents of students with SEND might get additional feedback focused on their child’s APDR goals. For instance, a brief termly report from the learning support department could outline progress in the areas targeted (e.g., “John is now reading 10 words per minute faster than at the start of term, as per our intervention tracking”). If a student is on an EHCP, the Annual Review provides a formal report of progress against each outcome in the plan, which the parents contribute to and receive a copy of.
- **Managing Concerns or Complaints:** The colleges aim to resolve any issues collaboratively and at an early stage. If a parent has a concern about the support their child is receiving, they are encouraged to speak first to the Additional Learning Support Manager, Head of SEND or relevant staff to try to resolve it informally. For example, if a parent feels their child needs more support in a particular class, a meeting can be held with the teacher to adjust the approach. In cases where issues are not resolved, parents can follow the Trust’s formal Complaints Procedure (which is available on the Trust website).

The underlying principle in parent partnerships is mutual respect and shared goals. Research and experience show that positive collaboration between home and college significantly enhances the effectiveness of any intervention. The Trust treats parents and carers as co-educators and key informants, ensuring the student receives consistent messages and support.

## Student Participation

Though this section is about partnerships, it’s worth noting that engaging the *students themselves* in decision-making is equally vital. Students are invited to their review meetings (at least part of them, if appropriate) and encouraged to speak about what’s working or not working for them. Their own aspirations are discussed – for example, a student may express a desire to try classes with less support as they grow more confident, which can then be planned for gradually. By respecting student voice, the colleges abide by the SEND Code of Practice principle of involving children and young people in decisions about their support.

## Collaboration with External Agencies

The Trust's SEND provision does not operate in isolation; it benefits greatly from the expertise and support of external agencies. Below are key external partnerships and how they contribute:

- **Local Authority SEND Services:** The Trust works closely with the Local Authorities (LAs) in whose areas the colleges are located (and often with multiple LAs, since students may come from different boroughs/counties). The LAs provide guidance and resources via their Local Offer, which the colleges reference to connect families with services beyond education (like support groups or leisure activities for young people with SEND). For students with EHCPs, the LA's SEND caseworkers are key contacts – the Additional Learning Support Manager, Head of SEND and EHCP Coordinators correspond with them to schedule Annual Reviews, request any additional funding or support, and ensure compliance with the plan. If the college identifies a student who might need an EHC assessment (due to high level needs not previously assessed), the Additional Learning Support Manager or Head of SEND can advise the family on requesting an assessment, and the college will supply the necessary evidence to the LA. Furthermore, in line with statutory duty, when an LA is considering naming the college in a new EHCP, the college will respond within the required timeframe, indicating whether it can meet the needs and offering any pertinent information. The Trust endeavours to welcome students with EHCPs wherever reasonable; only in exceptional cases (e.g., if the college does not offer the programme the student requires or wishes to study or adjustments would fundamentally compromise education of others) would the college raise concerns as per legal criteria. In such cases, it works with the LA to find a solution, possibly suggesting alternative support that could make the placement feasible.
- **Health Services:** Many students with SEND have associated health needs. The colleges link with various health professionals, such as:
  - **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** or adult mental health services, for students who are receiving clinical support for conditions like anxiety, depression, ADHD, or eating disorders. With consent, college staff might join multi-agency meetings (Team Around the Child/Family meetings) to coordinate ADPRs.
  - **Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT):** If a student has ongoing SaLT input (for example, for a stammer or social communication difficulties), the college accommodates therapy sessions and implements classroom strategies recommended by the therapist.
  - **Occupational Therapists (OT) and Physiotherapists:** For students with physical or motor skill difficulties, therapists may provide exercise

routines or equipment (like special seating). The college ensures these are integrated – e.g., allowing a student to take a short break from class to do hand exercises an OT recommended.

- **Medical Professionals:** Both colleges offer first aiders as the first line of support when a student has an emergency medical need like epilepsy, diabetes, or severe allergies. At St Vincent college which offers programmes for learners with more complex health needs there is a dedicated medical team. This team will draw up Individual Healthcare Plans in collaboration with families and doctors for students with medical needs who require this level of support. Though not exactly “SEND” in terms of learning, these health conditions often require the college to be prepared to support the student’s wellbeing and attendance.
- **Social Care:** If any student is known to social services or has a social worker (for reasons like being a looked-after child with SEND, or having a disability that qualifies them for social care support), the college will engage with social care. For example, attending care plan meetings or ensuring the student’s personal care needs are met while at college. Students who are looked-after or previously looked-after also have Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings which the college contributes to, ensuring that any SEND is taken into account in their care objectives. Although it is worth noting the Southampton Local Authority does not currently conduct PEP meeting for post 16 students. Additionally where students with an EHCP are not open to Children’s Social Care but may need to be supported up by Adult Social Care as they transition into adulthood, this will be considered and the transition supported through the annual review process as the student enters end of their time in education.
- **Specialist Organisations and Charities:** The Trust may draw on resources from charities such as the National Autistic Society, Dyslexia associations, mental health charities, etc. These might provide staff training, resources for students, or direct services. For example, arranging for a local charity to run a study skills workshop for neurodiverse learners, or using mentoring programs offered by organisations for young people with visual impairments. Partnering with such external expertise can greatly enrich the support available. In some instances, a student might have a mentor or advocate from outside (for instance, through disability advocacy services) – the college welcomes such collaboration and will include them in meetings with the student’s consent.
- **Other Educational Institutions:** If a student is dual-registered or transferring, the colleges ensure information sharing. For example, if a student moves to the Trust’s college from another college or training provider, the SEND information is requested to ensure continuity. Conversely, if a student leaves before completion, their information can be forwarded to the new institution’s support

team upon request. Additionally, the two colleges within the Trust share best practices with each other and with nearby schools (some SENDCos form local networks to exchange knowledge).

Through these external partnerships, the Trust ensures a holistic approach – acknowledging that supporting a young person with SEND often extends beyond what the college alone can do. By actively engaging with parents and external services, the college can provide wraparound support that addresses academic, emotional, and social needs in tandem.

Finally, it's worth noting the role of Local SEND Inspection frameworks: The Trust stays aware of the broader community's SEND performance (such as Ofsted/CQC area SEND inspections outcomes) to align its services with any local priorities for improvement. For instance, if an area inspection identifies a weakness in post-16 transitions or therapy provision, the college will be proactive in enhancing those aspects internally. In this way, external oversight indirectly informs the Trust's self-improvement in SEND.

## 7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

To ensure that the Trust's ambition of high-quality inclusive education is being met, the SEND policy and the provision made under it are subject to rigorous monitoring and evaluation. The Trust is committed to continuously improving outcomes for students with SEND, which means regularly asking "How are we doing?" and "What can we do better?".

**Monitoring Student Progress:** The most immediate measure of the effectiveness of SEND support is the progress of students with SEND in their studies. The colleges track academic outcomes (grades in courses, pass rates) as well as other success indicators (like attendance, behaviour, and involvement in enrichment activities) for students identified as SEND. This data is compared against the students' own baseline and targets, as well as against the wider cohort's performance to ensure there isn't an undue gap. For each student:

- Teachers and support staff provide feedback on how well the student is achieving the targets set in their ILP. For example, if one target was improving attendance or completing assignments on time, the evidence for progress is gathered. APDR
- Regular reviews (as described earlier) are conducted where this progress is discussed with the student and parents. These reviews might occur termly. If a student is not progressing as expected, this triggers an adjustment of their support. Conversely, marked improvement might lead to new goals or a phased reduction of support to encourage independence. Each review is documented so there's a clear record of what actions will be taken next.

- The Additional Learning Support team monitors qualitative progress too – such as gains in confidence, improvements in engagement (maybe a student started contributing more in class after support was given). Such observations are often noted in review reports or ILP logs. They may not reflect in grades immediately but are important precursors to academic success.

**Overall SEND Cohort Outcomes:** Senior leadership and governors receive reports on the outcomes of SEND students as a group. Key metrics include: course retention rates (do SEND students drop out at a higher rate, and if so, why?), achievement rates (percentage of SEND students who pass their courses, and the levels of passes), and destinations (the proportion of SEND students moving on to university, apprenticeships, employment, etc.). A successful inclusive college should see SEND students progressing to positive destinations similarly to their non-SEND peers, given comparable starting points. If any gaps or concerning trends are identified, the college investigates and addresses them. For instance, if students with a particular type of need fare less well, that area of support is reviewed in depth.

**Quality Assurance of Provision:** The SEND provision is also monitored through internal quality assurance processes. This can involve:

- **Classroom observations:** When observing lessons as part of teaching quality assessments, the inclusion of SEND students is one of the criteria. Observers (which could be senior staff or peer reviewers) check that teachers are differentiating appropriately and that students with SEND in the class are engaged and learning. Constructive feedback is given to teachers. Outstanding practice (like a creative method that helped SEND learners grasp a concept) is noted and shared across departments.
- **Learning walks and student voice:** Senior leaders and managers might do targeted learning walks focusing on SEND – e.g., dropping into various classes where support is in place, to see how effectively it’s being used. They may also speak with students informally about their experience (“Do you find the help in this class useful?”). Student and parent feedback (via surveys or forums) is valuable; positive feedback confirms what is working, while any criticisms highlight areas to improve.
- **Work scrutiny:** Reviewing samples of work from SEND students to see if they are receiving useful feedback and if their work shows growth. Are teachers marking with awareness of the student’s difficulties (for example, not penalising a dyslexic student’s spelling inappropriately, while still helping them improve it)?
- **Review of support interventions:** The SEND team regularly evaluates the specific interventions it runs. For example, if a reading intervention was provided to 10 students, the team will analyse how many of those improved and by how much. Interventions that do not yield expected gains are modified or replaced.

This might involve trying different programs or seeking additional training for staff delivering them.

**Staff Performance and Training:** Monitoring includes ensuring staff involved in SEND provision are adequately trained and supported. Senior management checks that the all staff are accessing ongoing professional development. If new types of need arise (say an influx of students with hearing impairment one year), management will secure training or specialist input to bolster capability in that area. Performance appraisal for teaching staff also can include goals related to inclusive practice (for instance, a teacher might have a development goal to incorporate specific inclusive strategies, which will be reviewed).

**Governance Oversight:** The Local Committee at each College will receive an annual report on SEND. This might include number of students supported, summary of support provided, progress against the SEND action plan, and resource use. Governors use this to ask questions and provide challenge: Are we seeing improvement? Are there enough resources? The SEND governor, in particular, may visit the college to meet with the Additional Learning Support Manager and Head of SEND and discuss provision in detail. The governors also ensure that the college meets all compliance aspects, like publishing the SEND Information Report on the website and updating this policy regularly.

**Review of Policy:** This SEND policy document itself will be reviewed on a regular cycle. The review process will involve:

- Gathering input from key stakeholders on any sections that may need updating or clarifying.
- Reflecting changes in best practice or law – for example, if a new national SEND Code or guidance is issued, or if the Trust adopts a new approach (like a new assessment tool or a refined procedure).
- Ensuring alignment with other related policies (if, say, the Safeguarding Policy changed in a way that affects SEND students, that needs to be mirrored here).
- Approval from the appropriate level (Trust Policy, Procedure and Document Committee (PPD) and then Trust Board/Governors).

Any updates are communicated to staff (usually via internal briefings or notices that a policy has been updated) and to parents/students as necessary (for instance, posting the new version on the college website). The Trust ensures that at any given time, the policy on the website is the latest version.

#### **Continuous Improvement Initiatives:**

- **Reaching Inclusion and Send Excellence (RISE) Steering Group:** The RISE Steering Group monitors and promotes best practice in SEND and Inclusion,

guiding colleges towards exemplary inclusive standards using an excellence in SEND framework.

Based on monitoring and evaluation, the RISE Steering Group create a development plan each year. For example, the plan might include targets like “Improve assistive technology usage among SEND students – target: 50% of students who could benefit from software X are using it regularly by year-end” or “Provide training to all science teachers on differentiating practical experiments for SEND learners”. Progress on such targets is monitored through the year. This cycle of planning and reviewing ties directly into the Trust’s overall quality improvement system.

- **Quality Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement:** The Trust has clearly documented methods for its quality monitoring, quality assurance and quality improvement processes for all aspects of its work including its inclusive practice and its provision for SEND. These processes ensure that performance in SEND and Inclusion are scrutinised, and the colleges are on a journey of continuous improvement.

**Success Celebrations:** It’s also important to note that monitoring isn’t only about finding problems – it’s about recognising successes. The colleges celebrate achievements of students with SEND, which is a form of positive monitoring. For instance, if a student with significant challenges achieves excellent results or makes huge personal progress, this might be highlighted in college newsletters or at awards events. Such recognition not only motivates the student but also showcases to the community the effectiveness of inclusive education.

**External Inspection and Review:** As part of the further education sector, the colleges are subject to Ofsted inspections. Ofsted evaluates how well learning and support needs are met. A strong SEND policy and its effective implementation contribute to good inspection outcomes. The Trust, therefore, also keeps an eye on external evaluations. If any recommendations come from Ofsted or other external reviews, they are incorporated into practice. For example, if an inspection suggests that “the college could improve the tracking of progress for students receiving additional support,” the college would act on that by perhaps upgrading its monitoring systems or documentation.

**Adaptability:** Monitoring during events such as the COVID-19 pandemic taught institutions the importance of adaptability – for instance, tracking how SEND students engage with remote learning and ensuring their needs are met under unusual

circumstances. The Trust remains prepared to monitor and adjust SEND provision in any contingency, ensuring no student is left unsupported.

In summary, the Trust ensures accountability in its SEND provision through careful monitoring and evaluation at the student level up to the strategic level. By doing so, it maintains a cycle of continuous improvement – reflecting the commitment that inclusive education is an ever-evolving practice, and striving to truly be a “*beacon of high quality inclusive education*” for all its learners.