# Tove Learning Trust

# TLT 5.1.04

# Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

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**Scope of Policy:** This policy applies to all schools within the Tove Learning Trust. This policy should be read in conjunction with each school's SEND Information Report.

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# 1. Our Vision For Pupils With SEND

At Tove Learning Trust, we believe that inspiring education that leads to outstanding outcomes can only be achieved for all through a continuously developing culture of inclusion. We endeavour to strengthen this culture over time, refining our approaches to ensure we remain focused on what's best for our children and young people. This means maintaining ambitious and uncompromising expectations for all. SEND provision is a cornerstone of our trust, and a source of collective pride. Our schools are inclusive by design, holding this as a fundamental principle of the provision we offer. We focus on understanding our children and young people, building positive relationships, seeking to know their strengths, and championing these alongside their families. Our pupils achieve outstanding outcomes because the adults around them work tirelessly to instil the unwavering belief that they can, and will, succeed.

# 2. Aims And Objectives

## 2.1. Aims

The overarching aim of this policy is to establish a unified, trust-wide approach that guarantees equity of opportunity, removes systemic barriers, and facilitates inspiring education that leads to outstanding outcomes for all pupils with SEND. Specifically, we aim to:

- Ensure all pupils with SEND are celebrated for their strengths and unique identities, guarding against a deficit approach and focussing on what pupils are capable of, rather than what they are not.
- Protect pupils from low expectations, segregation and stigma, enabling them to learn and grow as individuals.
- Secure an uncompromising standard of high-quality inclusive teaching across all trust schools, so that SEND provision is woven into the fabric of daily practice.
- Foster authentic and compassionate partnerships with parents, carers, and external agencies to secure holistic support around every child.

## 2.2. Objectives

- **Preventative Measures:** To ensure a high standard of safeguarding, teaching and learning, pastoral care and personal development, from the earliest opportunity, to prevent emerging barriers to learning becoming long-standing needs.
- **Early and Precise Identification:** To maintain proactive systems across all trust settings that gather information from families, early years providers, and feeder schools prior to entry, ensuring needs are identified swiftly and barriers minimised at the earliest opportunity.
- **Accurate Assessment:** To implement robust systems for screening and assessment, so that emerging needs are identified early, allowing pupils to focus on keeping up, rather than catching up.
- **High Quality Provision:** To hold all staff to a high standard of practice when implementing provision for pupils with SEND, ensuring that those who work with our most vulnerable pupils are skilled and knowledgeable.

- **Robust Monitoring: T**o implement a clear, consistent graduated approach across all trust schools, tracking a wide array of meaningful outcomes.
- **A Focus on Impact:** To ensure that we continue to understand what works for pupils with SEND through rigorous review and evaluation.
- **Empowered Workforce:** To deliver continuous, high-quality professional development that equips every teacher with the skills and knowledge to confidently deliver high-quality provision.
- **An Inclusive Culture:** To demonstrate that an inclusive culture is one of continuous reflection, learning and refinement. Where we assess our success on the experiences of our most vulnerable pupils.

## 3. Legislative Compliance

This policy is built upon a statutory foundation. It conforms to, is informed by, and reads in conjunction with national legislation and guidance:

### 3.1. Statutory Codes and Guidance

- **The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015),** which details the requirements for supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

### 3.2. Primary Legislation

- **Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014,** which sets out the explicit legal responsibilities of schools and trust settings for pupils with SEN and disabilities.
- **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014,** which define the structural responsibilities regarding Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, the role and qualifications of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), and the publication of individual school SEND Information Reports.
- **The Equality Act 2010,** ensuring that all admission arrangements, physical spaces, and academic provisions prevent discrimination and proactively incorporate reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities.

### 3.3. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All documentation and sensitive information relating to pupils with SEND (including EHCPs, professional assessments, and provision maps) are classified as Special Category Data. This information is processed, securely stored, and shared in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Trust schools will only share SEND data with external agencies, local authorities, or transition settings where there is a clear lawful basis to do so, in full alignment with the Tove Learning Trust Data Protection Policy.

## 4. Definitions

These definitions are taken directly from the statutory guidance that informs this policy. Whilst all schools within Tove Learning Trust adhere to these definitions, each school's SEND Information Report may seek to clarify these definitions with regard to their specific school or local context. These definitions do not

constitute the criteria for adding or removing pupils from a school's SEND Register. For information about this, please refer to the individual schools SEND Information Report.

### 4.1. Definition of Special Educational Needs

In this policy, 'special educational needs' refers to a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made. As set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, a child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or 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 of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

A child or young person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which they are or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home.

A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if they are likely to fall into the categories above when of compulsory school age, or would be likely to do so if no special educational provision were made.

### 4.2. Definition of Special Educational Provision

For children aged two years or older, special educational provision is defined as educational or training provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in mainstream schools and settings maintained by the Local Authority (other than special schools) in the area.

### 4.3. Definition of Disability

An individual is considered disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**What 'substantial' and 'long-term' mean**

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, for example it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, for example a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection

### 4.4. Broad Areas of Need

Provisions across all schools is organised around the four broad areas of need as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015):

1. Communication and Interaction
2. Cognition and Learning
3. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
4. Sensory and/or Physical Needs

Schools within the Tove Learning Trust outline how needs within the four broad areas are assessed and provided for in their individual SEND information reports.

## 5. The Trust's Guiding Principles For SEND

Tove Learning Trust relies on five principles that drive the development of provision for pupils with SEND.

- **High-Quality Inclusive Teaching as the First Response:** We explicitly reject the notion that SEND provision is the responsibility of an expert few. The primary vehicle for success is high quality adapted teaching occurring in every classroom. Our first response to any student experiencing a barrier to learning is to evaluate and refine the universal teaching and learning offer.
- **Inclusion by Design:** At the centre of this approach is rejecting the assumption that a deficit or need always exists within the child. Instead we endeavour to establish and remove barriers that may exist within our own organisation, policies and systems. We explicitly avoid approaches that may inadvertently segregate or isolate pupils with SEND.
- **High Expectations:** We hold universally high expectations for everyone in our trust. This means challenging our pupils to achieve their absolute best, both academically and personally. Crucially, it also means holding high expectations for ourselves as professionals to deliver exceptional support, and for our families to partner ambitiously with us to unlock their child's potential.
- **A Strength-Based Approach:** We refuse to define any child by their diagnosis, disability, or what they find difficult. While we recognise and plan for specific needs, our schools focus on what our children can do.
- **Unconditional Positive Regard:** We extend unwavering, non-judgemental acceptance to every pupil and their family, seeking to see through observable behaviours and assume the best in children and young people.

## 6. The Trust's Commitments To Pupils With SEND

Tove Learning Trust guarantees the following rights and structural commitments to every child with SEND enrolled across our schools:

- **Full Curriculum Access and True Inclusion:** Integration is the default, every child has the right to be fully included within the full breadth and richness of their school's curriculum, extra-curricular life, and wider community activities. We commit to removing pedagogical and physical barriers to ensure this access is never compromised.
- **Cultivating Competent and Confident Leaders of Inclusion:** We commit to a culture of continuous, high-quality professional development. We don't just train our staff to accommodate SEND; we actively invest in developing every teacher and support professional to become a highly competent, confident leader of inclusion within their own classroom.

- **Systemic Fidelity to the Graduated Approach:** We commit to embedding the graduated approach systematically across all trust settings. Following the four part cycle, Assess, Plan, Do and Review. Ensuring that no pupil's needs are left to chance and that intervention strategies are consistently tracked for efficacy and impact.
- **Psychological Safety & Well-being:** We acknowledge that social, emotional, and mental health security are necessary precursors to learning. Our schools commit to robust pastoral, emotional literacy, and therapeutic support, recognising that behavior management and emotional regulation are central themes within SEND provision.
- **Dignified Transitions and Futures:** From early childhood into adulthood, we commit to scaffolded, robust transition programs. We ensure explicit, high-quality preparation for independent living, higher education, and careers for our vulnerable learners.

## 7. Key Responsibilities Across The Trust

To keep these commitments, responsibilities are distinct yet collaborative across all layers of our MAT governance structure:

### 7.1. The Trust Board of Trustees & MAT Leaders

- Set the strategic trajectory for inclusion and SEND across the entire trust, ensuring that resource distribution remains equitable and sufficient.
- Appoint a designated Trust Board SEND Representative to maintain robust oversight of policy execution, legal compliance, and outcomes across all schools.
- Facilitate trust-wide SENCO networks to maximise shared knowledge, resources, and cross-school support.

### 7.2. Headteachers

- Drivers of an Inclusive Culture: While SEND provision requires specialised management, our Headteachers are the primary drivers of an inclusive culture within their schools. They set the tone, establish high expectations, and are ultimately accountable for ensuring that inclusion is woven into the identity, values, and daily reality of their school.
- Maintain ultimate operational accountability for the provision, safety, and progress of learners with SEND within their specific school.
- Ensure the school budget and human resources are effectively deployed to meet the needs of the school's unique SEND demographic.

### 7.3. Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs)

- Strategic and Operational Leaders of SEND: SENCOs serve as the specialised, strategic, and operational leaders of SEND provision. They provide the technical expertise, insight, and coordination required to implement this policy and guide staff practice.
- Coordinate the day-to-day operation of this policy and the localised implementation of the graduated approach.

- Maintain the school's formal SEND register, keeping student profiles, targets, and individual support plans up to date and readily accessible to all relevant staff.
- Act as the vital link between the school, families, and external support services (e.g., Educational Psychologists, speech and language therapists, and social care).

### 7.4. Class and Subject Teachers

- Retain direct accountability for the progress, well-being, and daily development of every pupil with SEND in their classrooms.
- Fully familiarise themselves with, and actively implement, the individual support plans, targets, and specific adjustments detailed for their pupils.
- Provide high-quality, adapted teaching, collaborating directly with teaching assistants and specialist staff to plan and continuously evaluate the impact of classroom support.
- Cultivate warm, constructive, and highly communicative relationships with parents and carers.

## 8. SEND Information Reports

- In accordance with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice (2015), each school within the Tove Learning Trust publishes a SEND Information Report. These reports are specific to each school and provide more detail about the SEND provision available and how this is implemented.
- Each School's SEND Information Report outlines admissions arrangements for pupils with SEND. Including how all schools within the Trust will admit any pupil whose Education, Health and Care Plan explicitly names the school.
- Each school's SEND information report is published on their respective websites and is updated annually.
- All school SEND information reports are quality assured for compliance and accuracy.

## 9. Complaints

Tove Learning Trust values open communication and aims to resolve any concerns regarding SEND provision swiftly and collaboratively. If a parent or carer has a complaint, the following framework applies:

- The trust firmly expects all complainants to make reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution by initially contacting the relevant class teacher, form tutor, or school SENCO to discuss concerns through open dialogue.
- If an informal meeting does not resolve the issue to satisfaction, the concern should be escalated directly to the Headteacher for internal investigation.
- Where a complaint remains unresolved through informal means, complainants must formally follow the standard TLT Complaints Procedure, which outlines official escalation stages, timelines, and protocols.
- A complete written record of all formal complaints, including their resolution stages and subsequent actions taken, will be securely maintained by the school and monitored by the Trust Board.

### 9.1. Statutory Appeals

Complaints relating to statutory assessments or decisions regarding Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans cannot be resolved via the trust's internal procedures and must be appealed directly to the relevant Local Authority's SEND First-tier Tribunal.