

Riverstone Academy

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

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Signed: K Bowe

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Statement of intent

Riverstone Academy is an independent special school for up to 20 pupils aged 5 to 11 with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. All pupils admitted to the school have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan identifying their special educational needs and the provision required to meet those needs.

The school provides formal, transitional and semi-formal curriculum pathways within a structured, nurturing environment. Provision is personalised to pupils' educational, communication, social, emotional, sensory, physical and developmental needs.

Provision is aligned with each pupil's EHC plan outcomes, starting points and One Page Profile so that pupils make meaningful academic and personal progress and develop communication, confidence, independence and resilience.

Riverstone Academy works closely with families, local authorities and external professionals to ensure pupils receive coordinated education, health and care support.

- As a specialist SEND provision, the school is committed to removing barriers to learning and ensuring that every pupil receives high-quality teaching, personalised support and the provision specified in their EHC plan.
- The school focuses on supporting pupils to achieve their EHCP outcomes and preparing them for successful transition to the next stage of education.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Education Act 1996
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3
- Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015, where applicable
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (First-tier Tribunal Recommendations Power) Regulations 2017
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Health and Care Act 2022
- DfE and Department of Health 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years' (2015, updated 2024)
- DfE 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- HM Government 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023, as amended)
- DfE 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'

- DfE 'Independent school standards guidance' (2026)
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Accessibility Plan

2. Objectives

All pupils at Riverstone Academy have identified SEND and an EHC plan. Through this policy, the school will understand each pupil's full and evolving profile of need, deliver the provision specified in their plan and:

- Use its best endeavours and available resources to provide the support pupils need to access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum appropriate to their pathway.
- Ensure pupils participate meaningfully in the full life of the school, with reasonable adjustments and individual support where required.
- Ensure there is high-quality specialist provision for every pupil, with a specific focus on meeting SEND, removing barriers to learning and delivering each EHC plan.

- Fulfil its statutory and contractual duties towards every pupil, recognising that all pupils at Riverstone Academy have SEND and an EHC plan.
- Promote disability equality and equality of opportunity, fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled pupils.
- Make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
- Appoint a suitably experienced teacher as SENCO to coordinate SEND provision and ensure any statutory qualification requirements applying to the post are met.
- Keep parents informed and involved in decisions about their child's provision, progress, outcomes and proposed changes.
- Make clear, accessible information available to parents, placing required information on the school website and reviewing it regularly, including:
 - An Accessibility Plan setting out how the school will improve access to the curriculum, physical environment and information for its SEND pupil population.
 - Information about admission arrangements and the steps taken to prevent disabled pupils from being treated less favourably, including through reasonable adjustments.
 - Information explaining how this policy is implemented, the provision available and how parents can raise concerns or access local support.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The directors will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently across the school.
- Ensuring the school meets its duties in relation to supporting pupils with their SEND.
- Ensuring that a suitably experienced teacher is designated as SENCO and given sufficient authority, time, training and resources.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the school offers every pupil a broad and balanced curriculum, high-quality teaching and a positive, enriching educational experience adapted to their SEND, EHC plan, pathway and starting point.

In enacting this policy, the headteacher will:

- Ensure the school holds ambitious, individualised expectations for every pupil.
- Establish and sustain specialist SEND practice that enables every pupil to access their curriculum pathway and learn effectively.
- Ensure the school works effectively with parents, carers and professionals to understand each pupil's identified and evolving SEND, implement their EHC plan and provide timely support, adaptation and reasonable adjustments.
- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice.
- Work with the directors to ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school.
- Ensure the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions.
- Provide the SENCO with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Regularly and carefully reviewing the quality of teaching for pupils at risk of underachievement, as a core part of the school's performance management arrangements.
- Ensure that day-to-day procedures do not directly or indirectly discriminate against disabled pupils and that reasonable adjustments are embedded throughout the school.

The SENCO will be responsible for:

- Collaborating with the directors and headteacher, as part of the SLT, to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- The day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEND policy.
- Coordinating the specialist and individualised provision made for every pupil.
- Liaising with the relevant designated teacher for LAC with SEND.
- Advising on a graduated approach to providing SEND support.
- Advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively.

- Liaising with the parents and carers of every pupil about SEND provision and progress.
- Liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies, as required.
- Being a key point of contact for external agencies, especially the LA and LA support services.
- Liaising with the potential future providers of education to ensure that pupils and their parents are informed about the options, and a smooth transition is planned.
- Working with the proprietor, directors and headteacher to support compliance with the Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments, accessibility and assessment access arrangements.
- Ensuring that SEND, EHC plan and provision records for every pupil are accurate, current and managed in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues, and working closely with staff, parents and other agencies.
- Being familiar with the provision in the Local Offer and being able to work with professionals who are providing a supporting role to the family.

Teachers will be responsible for:

- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy.
- Planning and reviewing provision for every pupil through the assess, plan, do and review cycle, with parents, the SENCO, relevant professionals and the pupil wherever appropriate.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and aiming to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to a broad and balanced curriculum through the formal, transitional or semi-formal pathway that is ambitious and appropriate to their needs and starting point.
- Being accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.

- Knowing the SEND, EHC plan outcomes, One Page Profile, reasonable adjustments and agreed provision for every pupil they teach or support.
- Understanding and implementing strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils with the support of the SENCO.
- Working closely with teaching assistants and specialist staff to plan, deliver and assess support, and connect interventions with classroom teaching.
- Keeping the relevant figures of authority up-to-date with any changes in behaviour, academic developments and causes of concern. The relevant figures of authority include the headteacher.

4. Identifying SEND

As a specialist independent school, all pupils admitted to Riverstone Academy have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The school understands each pupil's individual and changing profile through their EHC plan, professional reports, information from parents, the pupil's voice, previous settings and direct assessment.

On entry, staff complete a proportionate baseline across cognition and learning, communication and interaction, SEMH, sensory or physical development, functional independence and curriculum starting points. Staff review the EHC plan, One Page Profile, professional reports, safeguarding and medical information, and agree immediate reasonable adjustments and risk-management arrangements.

- Teachers use formative assessment continuously. Formal pupil progress meetings take place every half term; staff review each child's One Page Profile, curriculum and personal-development progress, provision and progress towards EHC plan outcomes, and agree changes to teaching, support and targets.

5. Safeguarding

Because every pupil at Riverstone Academy has SEND, safeguarding practice across the whole school will reflect the increased vulnerability and additional barriers experienced by children with SEND. Staff will understand that pupils:

- Have the potential to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying.

- May face additional risks online, e.g. from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation.
- Are at greater risk of abuse, including child-on-child abuse, neglect, and sexual violence and harassment.

The school recognises that there are additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of pupils. These barriers can include, but are not limited to:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's condition without further exploration.
- These pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
- The potential for pupils with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- A different cognitive understanding and being unable to understand the difference between fact or fiction in online content.

The headteacher and directors will ensure that the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy reflects the fact that these additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse. When using restrictive intervention or reasonable force, staff will follow the Positive Handling and Restrictive Interventions Policy, including prevention, reasonable adjustments, recording, reporting and post-incident review.

All staff will notice and report changes in behaviour, mood, communication or presentation, and any injuries. The DSL will consider concerns with the SENCO without assuming they are explained by SEND.

School staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for pupils with SEND and additional needs.

The directors and headteacher will ensure every pupil is taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. Safeguarding teaching will be adapted to each pupil's communication, cognition, SEMH needs, vulnerabilities and level of understanding.

Any report or concern about abuse will involve close liaison between the DSL and SENCO, reflecting that every pupil has SEND.

6. SEND support

Teachers remain responsible and accountable for each pupil's progress, including where support is delivered by teaching assistants or specialists. High-quality teaching is adapted to individual starting points, communication, regulation, sensory and learning needs.

Provision follows an assess, plan, do and review cycle. Assessment draws on curriculum evidence, EHC plan outcomes, observations, the pupil's voice, parents, professional advice and wellbeing or engagement information. Plans identify provision, reasonable adjustments, responsible staff, intended impact and a review date. Staff implement plans consistently and review impact, refining provision where progress is not sufficient.

Evidence of progress may include small-step curriculum assessment, work samples, observation, communication records, reading, writing and mathematics evidence, engagement and independence measures, reduced reliance on adult support, generalisation of skills, attendance and progress towards EHC plan outcomes. Progress is judged from each pupil's baseline and is not limited to age-related expectations.

Where needs change or provision is not achieving the intended impact, the SENCO will coordinate further assessment, seek specialist advice, adjust provision and, where appropriate, work with parents and the local authority to request an early annual review or reassessment.

English as an additional language is not itself a special educational need. Assessment will consider language exposure, home, culture and performance across contexts so language difference is not mistaken for SEND and additional needs are not overlooked.

7. Admissions

Riverstone Academy is an independent special school for pupils aged 5 to 11 with EHC plans and SEMH needs. Admission is governed by the Admissions Policy, the school's registration and whether it can deliver the required provision.

- The local authority will consult the school before naming it in section I of an EHC plan. If Riverstone Academy is approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the statutory duty to admit applies when it is named. If it is not section 41 approved, placement requires the school's agreement and appropriate commissioning arrangements.
- The school will provide clear evidence about whether it can meet the child's age, needs and specified provision, and identify reasonable adjustments, resources or

commissioning arrangements required. The local authority remains responsible for applying the statutory tests and deciding the EHC plan.

8. Examination access arrangements

Riverstone Academy is a primary provision and pupils do not normally undertake formal external examinations. However, the school recognises that some pupils may require reasonable adjustments to access internal assessments or statutory assessments where applicable.

Where access arrangements are required, the school will make reasonable adjustments based on evidence of need and the pupil's normal way of working, following the current rules for the relevant assessment. An EHC plan does not automatically confer a particular arrangement.

Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- additional time
- rest breaks
- modified materials
- alternative recording methods
- support from a teaching assistant or reader where appropriate

Any adjustments will be carefully considered to ensure pupils are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding without being disadvantaged by their individual needs.

The SENCO will oversee arrangements for assessment access and ensure that appropriate records are maintained.

9. Transition

The school is aware of the importance of planning and preparing for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life.

For transfers between phases, the school will cooperate with the local authority so the EHC plan is reviewed and amended by the statutory deadline, normally 15 February in the calendar year of transfer. Planning will begin early and involve the pupil, parents, receiving setting and relevant professionals.

10. Involving pupils and parents in decision-making

The school is committed to working in partnership with all parents in the best interests of their child and will provide regular updates to parents on their child's progress and development.

The school works closely with parents and carers to review progress towards EHC plan outcomes. Formal pupil progress meetings take place every half term, when staff review each child's One Page Profile, progress, provision and next steps. Parents receive regular updates and are involved in decisions and reviews, including the statutory annual review.

The planning that the school implements will help parents and pupils express their needs, wishes and goals, and will:

- Focus on the pupil as an individual, recognising their strengths as well as their needs.
- Be easy for pupils and their parents to understand by using clear, accessible language and visuals where appropriate.
- Highlight the pupil's strengths, interests and capabilities.
- Enable the pupil, and those who know them best, to share their views, interests and aspirations.
- Tailor support to the needs of the individual pupil.
- Organise assessments and meetings in ways that minimise demands on parents and families.
- Bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree the most appropriate support and provision.

As all pupils have an EHCP, the school will work closely with parents, carers, the local authority and relevant professionals to ensure that the provision specified within the EHCP is implemented effectively and reviewed regularly. The school will involve parents and pupils in discussions about how provision can best support the pupil to achieve their outcomes.

Where necessary, the school will facilitate support from an advocate to ensure that the views of both parents and pupils are heard and fully considered.

11. EHC needs assessments and plans

The school recognises that all pupils admitted to Riverstone Academy have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that identifies their special educational needs and the provision required to meet those needs.

The purpose of an EHCP is to ensure that appropriate special educational provision is in place to meet the pupil's needs and to support positive outcomes across education, health and social care.

Where the local authority is considering naming the school in a pupil's EHCP, the school will be consulted and will review the pupil's needs, the provision specified within the draft EHCP and any supporting professional reports. The school will respond to consultation requests from the local authority within the required timescales.

As part of this consultation process, the school may be required to:

- Provide information about the provision available within the school and how this may meet the pupil's needs.
- Review the pupil's EHCP and supporting professional reports.
- Provide professional views regarding whether the school is able to meet the pupil's needs as described in the EHCP.

Where Riverstone Academy agrees to a placement, or is under a statutory duty to admit because it is section 41 approved and named in the EHC plan, relevant staff will understand the pupil's needs, outcomes, provision and reasonable adjustments before admission.

The school will use placement funding and commissioned resources to secure the provision for which it is responsible. The local authority retains its duty under section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to secure the specified special educational provision.

Where a pupil's needs significantly change, the school may work with parents and the local authority to consider whether an EHCP reassessment is appropriate in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.

12. Reviewing EHC plans

Teachers monitor progress throughout the year. The school will cooperate with the local authority so each EHC plan is reviewed at least every 12 months and will request an early review where needs, risks, placement or provision change significantly.

The school will:

- Invite the parent, pupil, local authority officer and relevant education, health and social-care professionals, giving at least two weeks' notice.
- Seek advice and information from invitees and circulate it at least two weeks before the meeting.
- Support the pupil to contribute in an accessible, developmentally appropriate way.
- Review progress, outcomes, provision and any proposed amendments.
- Send a report, including recommendations and differences of view, to invitees and the local authority within two weeks.
- Remind families that the local authority must notify them within four weeks whether it will maintain, amend or cease the plan and explain relevant appeal rights.
- Coordinate with care-plan and Personal Education Plan reviews for looked-after children where practicable without delaying statutory timescales.

If a pupil's needs change significantly, the school may work with parents and the local authority to request a reassessment of the EHCP in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.

13. Funding for SEND support

The school will use placement funding and separately commissioned resources transparently to deliver agreed provision. Where cost or provision changes, it will provide evidence and engage promptly with the commissioning authority. A funding disagreement will not by itself justify withholding provision the school is responsible for delivering.

14. Supporting successful preparation for adulthood

The school recognises that developing independence, confidence and life skills is central to provision for every pupil. Planning starts early, builds on individual strengths and interests, and prepares pupils at developmentally appropriate levels for secondary education and increasing independence.

The school will:

- Seek to understand the interests, strengths and motivations of pupils and use this as a basis for planning support around them.
 - Support pupils to develop independence, communication and social skills that will support their future learning and development.
 - Support pupils so that they are included in social groups and develop positive friendships.
 - Ensure that pupils engage fully in the life of the school and are encouraged to participate in a range of learning experiences, enrichment activities and community opportunities where appropriate.
 - Work closely with parents, local authorities and receiving secondary schools to plan and support successful transitions at the end of primary education.

15. Managing complaints

The school will publish its Complaints Procedures Policy on its website and provide accessible formats on request.

Concerns should be raised early with the class teacher or SENCO. Formal complaints about the school will follow the Complaints Procedures Policy. Concerns about an EHC plan, a local-authority decision or provision the authority must secure should be raised with the authority and may be subject to disagreement resolution, mediation or appeal.

As all pupils attending the school have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will work collaboratively with parents, carers and the local authority to ensure that the provision specified within the EHCP is implemented effectively.

The school is aware of the formal and informal arrangements for resolving disagreements at a local level and will work with the local authority in responding to requests for information as part of procedures for:

- Disagreement resolution

- Mediation
- Appeals to tribunal

The school will cooperate with the local authority and provide relevant information if a case progresses to the SEND Tribunal and will explain how it has fulfilled its duties in relation to the pupil's EHCP and the SEND Code of Practice.

16. Staff training and improving practice

The school is committed to the learning and development of all its staff members and training opportunities will be provided and delivered in line with the school's CPD and Training Policy.

The SENCO will assess staff competencies and ensure CPD develops the specialist knowledge and practice needed to teach, support and assess a school population in which every pupil has SEND and an EHC plan.

17. Use of data and record keeping

All information about pupils will be kept in accordance with the school's Records Management Policy and Data Protection Policy.

The school's records will:

- Record details of additional or different provision made under SEND support, with accurate information to evidence the SEND support that has been provided over the pupil's time in the school, as well as its impact, e.g. through the use of provision maps.
- Include details of SEND, outcomes, action, agreed support, teaching strategies and the involvement of specialists, as part of its standard management information system to monitor the progress, behaviour and development of all pupils.
- Maintain an accurate, up-to-date record of each pupil's SEND, EHC plan provision, reasonable adjustments, interventions and review outcomes.
- Be kept securely so that unauthorised persons do not have access to it, so far as reasonably practicable.

The school analyses needs, provision, participation, attendance, safeguarding, behaviour and progress to evaluate impact and identify disproportionate outcomes. Information is shared with local authorities, inspectors and other bodies only where lawful and necessary.

Confidentiality

EHC plans and SEND records are confidential but may be shared without parental consent where there is a lawful basis, including safeguarding, statutory education functions, inspection, legal proceedings or transition. Only necessary and proportionate information will be shared under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, including disclosure:

- To a SEND tribunal when parents appeal, and to the Secretary of State under the Education Act 1996.
- On the order of any court for any criminal proceedings.
- For the purposes of investigations of maladministration under the Local Government Act 1974.
- To enable any authority to perform duties arising from the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, or from the Children Act 1989 relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- To Ofsted inspection teams as part of their inspections of schools and LAs.
- To a receiving education setting or relevant professional where lawful and necessary for assessment, transition, safety or continuity of provision.
- To the headteacher (or equivalent position) of the setting at which the pupil is intending to start their next phase of education.

The school will adhere to the Pupil Confidentiality Policy at all times.

18. Publishing information

The school will publish information on the school website about the implementation of this policy.

The information published will be updated annually and any changes to the information occurring during the year will be updated as soon as possible.

The school will publish clear information about SEND provision, admissions, accessibility, complaints and implementation of this policy. Although the statutory SEN Information Report

requirements apply specifically to maintained schools and academies, Riverstone Academy will use the Code's expectations as a good-practice framework where relevant.

19. Joint commissioning, planning and delivery

The school will work closely with local education, health and social care services to ensure pupils get the right support.

The local authority and relevant health bodies hold statutory joint-commissioning duties. Riverstone Academy will cooperate with commissioners, parents and professionals, contribute evidence and deliver the provision for which it is commissioned.

To support service planning and placement discussions, the school may draw on relevant local information, including:

- Population and demographic data.
- Prevalence data for different kinds of SEND among children at the national level.
- Numbers of local children with EHC plans and their main needs.
- The numbers and types of settings locally that work with or educate pupils with SEND.
- An analysis of local challenges or sources of health inequalities.

The school will plan, deliver and monitor services against how well outcomes have been met, including, but not limited to:

- Improved educational and personal-development outcomes for the school's SEND pupil population.
- Improving the quality and timeliness of information about each pupil's identified SEND before admission.

Where a pupil also has a medical condition, medical support will be coordinated with their SEND provision, EHC plan and individual healthcare plan where applicable.

SEND support will be adapted and/or replaced depending on its effectiveness in achieving the agreed outcomes.

20. Local Offer

The school will contribute accurate information about Riverstone Academy to local authority Local Offers where requested and signpost parents to their home authority's Local Offer and SEND information, advice and support service.

21. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the headteacher, SENCO, proprietor and directors, and sooner following a legal or guidance change, inspection learning, significant complaint or evidence that provision is ineffective. Changes will be communicated to staff, parents, pupils and relevant stakeholders in accessible ways.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.