Thorntree Academy

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

Date: December 2025
Review Date: December 2026

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Aims

As outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, 2014

All children and young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they:

- Achieve their best
- Become confident individuals living fulfilling lives

The 2014 Code of practice says that;

A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. At compulsory school age this means he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others the same age, or, has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of the facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Taken from 2014 SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 Years

Our aim is to provide a secure, caring and supportive environment in which all children are valued individually and given equal opportunity to develop their full potential. We believe that by identifying individual needs and taking proactive steps alongside parents/carers and other statutory professionals or agencies, all children should be able to play a full, active and equal part in the school's activities. Children with special needs are most likely to have their needs met where all staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of every child in their care. Our staff work together with parents, external agencies within the Local Authority where required to organise the environment and plan activities to ensure all children take part at a level appropriate to their needs.

At Thorntree Academy our objectives are:

- To identify and provide support for pupils who have SEN and additional needs
- To work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice 2014
- To provide an environment whereby a child has the opportunity to make progress academically, socially and physically as part of a mainstream school
- To create a support structure to enable individuals to achieve.
- To work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the needs of individual pupils
- To ensure that all staff have access to training and advice to support quality First teaching and learning for all pupils.

The SEND team at Thorntree Academy

At Thorntree Academy the needs of our pupils are monitored by a team of people including:

- Mrs Emma McDonagh – SENDCO
- Christian Parks – SEND Governor
- Miss Kath Cottle – PSA
- Mr Paul Watson – Head teacher
- Mr Mike Foster – Deputy Head teacher

The role of the SEN co-coordinator

The Special Educational Needs Co-coordinator for Thorntree Academy is Mrs E McDonagh (NASENDCO Award) who is also a member of the Senior Leadership team.

The SENDCO will:

- Work in conjunction with staff to identify and monitor children who have SEN
- Oversee the SEN records of all children on the SEN register
- Arrange for assessment, where appropriate and ensure parents are informed
- Liaise with external agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist, Health and Social Services
- Work with Head teacher, SLT and SEN Governor evaluating information and informing them of any issues.

Identification, assessment and provision for pupils with SEN

In the continuous cycle of planning teaching and assessment, teachers and support staff make regular judgements about children's performance in relation to national expectation. These judgements will be discussed at our termly 'Learner Dialogues' with parents and carers and termly pupil progress meetings.

We also identify SEN needs through;

- Information given directly by parents
- Data gathered from in school assessments
- Recommendations from other professionals; Health and Social care etc.

There should not be an assumption that all children progress at the same rate, a judgement has to be made in each case as to what is reasonable for each child to achieve. Where progress is not adequate it will be necessary to take some additional or different action to enable the pupil to learn more effectively.

Identifying children at the SEN Support stage

Children with SEN are identified by one of three assessment routes all of which are part of the overall approach to monitoring progress of all pupils:

The progress of every child is monitored at termly pupil progress meetings where children are identified as not making progress in spite of Quality First Teaching they are discussed with the SENDCo and a plan of action agreed.

Class teachers are constantly monitoring pupil's progress. If they observe that a child, as recommended by the 2014 Code of Practice, is making less than expected progress, given their age and individual circumstances, they will seek to identify a cause. This can be characterised by progress which

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

Parents sometimes ask us to look more closely at their child's learning. We take all parental requests seriously and investigate them fully. A cause for concern form will be completed to document concerns and a period of monitoring will take place. Frequently, the concern can be addressed by Quality First Teaching or some parental support. Otherwise, the child will be placed at SEN Support on our SEN register.

Identifying children with Special Educational Needs

Level	Trigger	Process
Cause for concern	If a child has been identified by the class teacher and year group team as failing to make progress they will monitor the child. Discussions will be held at termly 'Learner Dialogues' with parents and carers	Areas of difficulty will be identified. Discussions with parents Some strategies and differentiation of the curriculum will be initiated.
SEN support	After a period of monitoring, if a child: Continues to make little or no progress over a longer period of time Is working at curriculum levels substantially below the expected of a child at a similar age Has sensory or physical needs and requires specialist equipment or regular advice or visits a specialist service Has on-going communication and interaction difficulties which cause substantial barriers to learning. Even when teaching approaches are particularly targeted, in discussion with parents, they may be placed on the SEN Register.	Specific targeted support will be initiated. Further assessments may be arranged Referral to outside agency e.g. Educational Psychologist
EHC assessment	If a child; Continues to make little or no progress in relation to specific targets Continues to work at curriculum levels substantially below that expected Requires specialist equipment or regular specialist support It may be decided in, discussion with parents and multi-agency meetings that there is a need to apply for an EHC assessment	See EHCP Pathway Appendix 1

Each term, Pupil Progress meetings are held with SLT and teachers to discuss the progress of children within each year group. Individuals and groups of children will be targeted for specific interventions to help raise levels of attainment. Discussions are shared on progress and any continuing concerns. Where appropriate, the SENDCO will offer support and advice. Discussions are also held with parents and carers during our termly 'Learner Dialogues' where interventions are discussed.

Assessments are carried out throughout the year which inform these meetings and targets are put in place for individuals.

SEND assessment

We have developed our SEND assessment tool that we use within our trust as a means of monitoring the progress of children whose attainment is significantly below age related expectations (more than two years below ARE) . This allows us to measure the progress of these individuals in small steps at an appropriate stage for the children.

SEND Support Plans

SEND Support Plans are put in place for children with specific additional needs. The child's SEND Support Plan is reviewed at termly 'Learner Dialogues' with parents and carers. This plan records specific and challenging targets for the children to achieve within that term, together with personalised provision (1:1 or small group etc) that has been put in place to enable the child to achieve these targets.

Targets are reviewed, evaluated and progress monitored. If a child is seen to be making progress in line with their peers they will continue to receive support, where needed, but discussions will take place with the class teacher and parents, as to whether the child needs to remain on the SEND register.

Children with Education Health Care plans

Where the SENDCO makes a referral for an EHC assessment to the Local Authority, the children will have demonstrated significant cause for concern. Parents will have been consulted as part of an ongoing dialogue. The EHC assessment pathway will be followed and the schools will carry out the recommendations agreed. (See EHCP Pathway Appendix 1)

Monitoring

The SENDCO regularly reviews data for each Year group to highlight those children who are not making adequate progress. This forms the basis for discussion with staff as to which children are to be targeted for additional support.

Classroom observations, 'Discovery days', book looks, pupil voice and intervention observations will also from part of the monitoring process to ensure that children are being supported effectively and reviewed regularly.

Intervention strategies to support children with SEND

Interventions are reviewed termly and discussions around interventions take place within termly pupil progress meetings to ensure that the most appropriate children are being targeted.

There are numerous interventions that are used throughout school. There is also flexibility to provide support across year groups if it would benefit an individual child or group.

Daily in class support with TA Small group maths and English
Sounds-Write – small group intervention BLAST Third Space Learning Maths Precision Teaching Thrive
Educational Psychologist Education Mental Health Practitioner Outreach and Inclusion Team STARS service (Hearing and Visual Impairments) Occupational therapy CAHMS The Treehouse Speech and Language therapy CATS – Child and Adolescent Therapy Solutions - Treetops

External Support Services

When children require additional support the SENDCO may also seek advice from other professionals. These include

- Educational Psychologist
- Educational Mental Health Practitioner
- LA SEND team
- Speech and Language team
- Outreach support from other schools
- Outreach and Inclusion Team
- Counselling services
- School nurse
- STARS - Hearing and Visual Impairments
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy

These external services should advise teachers about targets, provide specialist assessments and advice on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials. They may also work support with individuals or groups to support their learning and development. Parents and carers will be kept informed of the support that is being provided.

Higher Needs Funding

Schools receive funding for all children including those with Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities and their individual needs are provided for through this funding; including resources, support staff etc. We have the opportunity to apply for 'Higher Needs Funding' if we feel that a child's individual needs cannot be met effectively through the usual allocated budget.

In school SEND provision

School continues to face challenges due to the national shortage of specialist places for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This makes it increasingly important for us to provide high-quality support within our own setting, ensuring that pupils with complex needs can access appropriate learning opportunities and make progress despite limited external provision. It also highlights the ongoing need for careful planning, resource allocation, and collaboration with local authorities to meet the needs of our community.

The development of our in-house Seedlings SEND provision within school reflects our clear response to the growing level and complexity of pupil needs. The Seedlings is a calm, welcoming space where pupils with additional needs receive personalised support to help them thrive both academically and emotionally. It provides a safe environment for focused interventions, emotional regulation, and one-to-one or small group learning. Staff work closely

with pupils to build confidence, develop independence, and promote positive attitudes toward learning. The room is well-equipped with sensory tools and adaptive resources, creating an inclusive atmosphere where every child feels valued and supported.

Supporting children with medical conditions

Thorntree Academy recognises that pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported and have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. Some children with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case schools will comply with its duties under the equality Act 2010.

Supporting children with disabilities.

Not all children with disabilities have Special Educational Needs, many pupils will learn alongside their peers with little need for extra resources beyond that of a hearing aid, equipment to aid vision or a wheel chair. Teachers must take action in their planning however to ensure that these pupils are enabled to participate as fully as possible with the curriculum and assessment arrangements.

Facilities currently in school are disabled toilets (KS1and KS2) disabled shower and ramp access to all buildings.

Children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Behaviour is not classified as a Special Educational Need under the revised 2014 Code of Practise. If the child is felt to have long term social, emotional or mental health needs that are impacting on their behaviour in school, the child may be referred to our 'The Treehouse'. Mrs Dawson – a fully trained HLTA with a background in Behaviour Support, supports the children within The Treehouse three mornings each week. She develops trusting relationships with the children and will support them with their individual needs. A referral to The Treehouse will be discussed with parents prior to their child accessing this service.

In addition – we also have access to a CATS therapist (Child and Adolescent Therapy Solutions) supporting children with specific Social, Emotional or Mental Health Needs. This will again follow a referral made by school which will be discussed with parents. All children's behaviour is responded to consistently in line with our Behaviour policy.

We have an Education Mental Health Practitioner who works in school each week. She is able to provide support at whole school level, with classes, individuals and/or parents and carers. We have regular drop-ins throughout the academic year to provide support for parents and carers where appropriate.

English as an Additional language

Children with limited English do not necessarily have a Special Educational Need. If a child is experiencing difficulties which appear to be more than language based then the school will monitor their progress to establish whether or not they have learning difficulties. We also have access to outreach support for these children.

Transition arrangements

Transition into and within school

We understand how difficult it is for children as they move into a new class or a new school and will do what we can, according to the individual needs of the child, to make transitions between classes as smooth as possible. This may include;

- Additional meetings for parents and children with their new teacher.
- Additional visits to the classroom environment in order to identify where the toilets are. Coat pegs etc.
- Enhanced transition arrangements are tailored to meet individual needs

Transition to Secondary school

In year 6;

The SENDCO and /or class teachers will meet with staff from the receiving secondary schools to discuss the needs of each individual child.

We will make sure that all records about your child are passed on as soon as possible.

Children will have access to a number of transition days at their secondary school in the second half of the summer term. In some cases, staff from the secondary schools may visit children here in school.

Training

All of our staff are trained to work with children with SEND. All have access to advice, training, information and resources to enable them to teach all children effectively. We offer training through in-house or Local Authority courses.

Partnership with parents and carers

The school will endeavour to

- Provide clear and accurate information about the child's SEND and purpose of assessments, targets and interventions.
- Ensure that parents have the opportunity to talk with the SENDCO and other professionals so that they understand the agreed outcomes of any intervention and how they can be a partner in working towards their child's targets.
- Outline provision in the local offer (see appendix 2)
- Inform parents before involving outside agencies for additional advice or assessments.

Arrangements for considering complaints about SEN provision within school

Initially, complaints should be discussed with the class teacher

Depending on the outcome of this meeting the SENDCO should be informed or Head teacher

If no agreement can be arrived at the parent can then approach the schools named governor with responsibility for the monitoring of the schools SEND policy. They would also be given the name of the LA identified/nominated person who has been trained to help them deal with the problem, or the parent partnership service.

It is hoped, however, that matters can be dealt with within the school domain.

Governors.

It is the statutory duty of the governors to ensure that the school follows its responsibilities to meet the needs of children with SEND following the requirements of the Code of Practice. Our school governor with particular responsibility for SEND is ???????.

Middlesbrough's Local Offer

The purpose of the local offer is to enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. It includes provision from birth to 25 across education, health and social care. It is available from:

http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/middlesbrough/fsd/home.page

Equal opportunities

The school is committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race, gender, faith or capability in all aspects of school. We promote self and mutual respect and a caring and non-judgemental attitude throughout school.

Review framework

This policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of changes to legislation or guidance)

_____ Head teacher Date _____

_____Chair of Governors Date _____

Review Date – **December 2026**

Appendix 1

Education, Health and Care [EHC] Needs Assessment Pathway

Referral Planning Meeting (RPM)

Where a school setting or professional wishes to initiate statutory assessment for a child or young person, an RPM will be held with all professionals who are currently working with the child invited to take part.

The RPM will include discussing whether a child / young person's needs can be met through a SEN Support Plan or whether professionals feel the child / young person would benefit from an EHC needs assessment.

Professionals will need to discuss and document the graduated response which has already been implemented in order to meet the child's needs prior to the request for an EHC needs assessment.

Week 0 **Referral for request for EHC needs assessment received by the LA**

- The EHC Assessment Team will date stamp the referral the day it is received by the team. The 20 week process begins on this date.
- The Resource Officer for the EHC Assessment Team will process the referral and add to the agenda for the Multi-agency EHC Panel where a decision is made to initiate an EHC needs assessment.
- Parents/carers will receive a letter confirming that the referral has been received. The letter will state a date and time for a Welcome to Assessment Meeting to be held with the allocated SEND Case Officer, once an EHC needs assessment has been agreed.

Week 4 EHC Panel **Decision is made to initiate an EHC needs assessment at Multi-agency**

- The child / young person will be allocated a SEND Case Officer who will be the family's point of contact throughout the EHC needs assessment.
- The LA will request all statutory advice from all relevant agencies / professionals.

Week 7 **Welcome to Assessment Meeting with SEND Case Officer to take place**

- The SEND Case Officer will telephone parent/carer to discuss their views, explain the EHC process and answer any questions parent/carer may have.

Weeks 10-12 Decision is made to issue an EHC Plan

- The child/young person's case will be discussed at Multi-agency EHC Panel where a decision to issue an EHC Plan will be made.
- Following the panel, parents will receive a letter stating the outcome of the panel confirming an EHC Plan will be issued.

Weeks 13-16 Draft EHC Plan is written and issued

- The child/young person's EHC Plan is drafted by an officer within the SEND Assessment Team. It is then issued as a Draft EHC Plan.
- Alongside receiving a copy of the Draft EHCP, parents / carers will also receive a copy of all of the advice received from professionals as part of the EHC needs assessment.
- Parents/carers have 15 days from the date of the Draft EHC Plan to request any amendments to the EHC Plan and to preference their choice of school setting.
- If a parental preference of school choice is received, the SEND Case Officer will formally consult with that school setting and any other appropriate provisions within the local area (if applicable) to determine whether a school placement can be offered.
- If a school placement is offered, the SEND Case Officer will arrange for the offer of the school placement to be considered at the LA's to Resource Panel.

Week 20 Final EHC Plan is issued

- A Final EHC Plan will be issued with a school placement named in Section I of the EHC Plan.
- In some circumstances where an appropriate school placement hasn't be confirmed, the SEND Case Officer will name the child's current school setting. This would then be updated in amended Final EHC Plan if an appropriate school setting has been confirmed and agreed.

Appendix 2

School SEN

Information Report



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - Local Offer

The Local Offer will provide information about:	Our setting will:
Identification of needs How does the school/college identify children with special educational needs? How do we involve parents in planning for those needs?	Thorntree Academy is committed to early identification of Special Educational Need and /or Disability. A range of evidence is collected through the usual assessment and monitoring arrangements: if this evidence suggests that a child is not making the expected progress, the teachers will decide whether additional and / or different provision is necessary. Typically, a child with Special Educational Needs and /or disabilities will have a SEND Support Plan which sets out targets that are currently being worked on and what addition provision is put in place for each individual child. The content of the SEND Support Plan is negotiated, as appropriate, with the child and the child's family. This is why it is so important that parent/carers attend our Learner Dialogues each term.
Support Who in the school/college will support my child and how will this be monitored and evaluated? How are the decisions made about the type and amount of provision a young person will need? How will the curriculum be matched to the needs of the young person?	Every term, the leadership team meets with class teachers to discuss pupil progress. If there is a need for some extra support this will be agreed and the most appropriate support put in place. The school offers many different forms of additional provision. This can include additional in-class or out-of-class support, one to one support, flexible groupings; access to specific resources; mentoring, counselling and access to a wide range of outside agencies. Additional provision is overseen by the school's fully qualified SENDCO and is designed and implemented by class teachers and teaching assistants. It is important to note that this additional provision very much depends on the need of the child.

	Interventions that we currently provide include: Precision Teaching Thrive BLAST Sounds-Write Third Space Learning Maths Class teachers plan lessons according to the specific needs of all groups of children in their classes; and will ensure that learning tasks are adjusted to enable your child to access learning as independently as possible. Specially trained support staff can implement the teachers modified/ adapted planning to meet the needs of your child where necessary. Specific resources and strategies will be used to support your child individually and in groups. Planning and teaching will be adapted on a daily basis if needed to meet your child's learning needs.
Accessibility How accessible is the school/college environment?	Our building is fully wheelchair accessible. We have disabled toilets in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 as well as shower facilities.
Parental Involvement How will both the school/college and the parent know how the young person is doing and how will the school support the young person's learning?	Your child's progress is continually monitored by their class teacher. Termly progress meetings take place with Senior Leaders to discuss attainment and additional factors impacting on that child's progress such as attendance, engagement in learning, behaviour etc. Our SEND assessment document enables staff to evidence smaller but significant steps in progress. Our termly Learner Dialogues are an opportunity to share your child's SEN Support Plan and discuss their progress. If your child has been identified as needing more specialist support, referrals will be made, with parents' consent, to

	outside agencies to advise and support the school in enabling your child to make progress. This will help both school and yourself to understand your child's particular needs better.
Overall Well Being What support will there be for the young person's well-being?	'The Treehouse' in school is run by a trained HLTA with a background in supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural issues. This provides a valuable opportunity for many children to access 1:1 support for social and emotional behaviour difficulties. In addition, children may benefit from the opportunity to work with our CATs, Child Psychotherapist or our Education Mental Health Practitioner.
Specialist Services What specialist services and expertise are available at or are accessed by the school/college?	There are many specialist services available to children at Thorntree Academy including; Child and Adult Therapy Solutions, Educational Psychology, and Speech and Language Therapy and our school nurse, through whom we can make any necessary referrals to services such as Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy etc.
Staff Training What training are the staff supporting children and young people with SEND had or are having?	Our SENDCO has achieved the Masters Level National Accredited SENDCO Award and takes part in a number of Local Authority run training events for SENDCOs throughout the year. Our SEND governor has also achieved the National Accredited SENDCO award. All staff receive regular training and updates from a number of services including Hearing Impaired Service, CATS (Child and Adult Therapy Solutions) therapist and additional services approached where necessary for staff meetings and individual staff support.
Activities outside of school How will the young person be included in activities outside of the classroom including school/college trips?	We make every effort to include all pupils in school trips. If an individual risk assessment is required we will complete this in order to ensure that everyone is fully included.

Transition How will the school/college prepare and support the young person to join that particular school/college and how will it support the transition to the next stage of education and life? What preparation will there be before my son/daughter joins the school? How will he or she be prepared to move onto the next stage? How will you support any new setting to receive my child?	We recognise that 'moving on' can be difficult for a child with SEN and /or Disabilities and take steps to ensure that any transition is as smooth as possible. If your child is moving to another school; • We will contact the schools SENDCO where necessary and ensure that they know about any special arrangements that need to be made for your child. • We will make sure that all records about your child are passed on as soon as possible. When moving classes within school; • Information will be passed on to the new class teacher in advance and if necessary a planning meeting held with your child's new class teacher. • All targets will be shared with the new teacher. • If any specific arrangements need to be made for example, extra opportunities to meet their new teacher prior to transition then this will be made available. In year 6; • The SENDCO and /or class teachers will meet with staff from the receiving secondary schools to discuss the needs of each individual child. • We will make sure that all records about your child are passed on as soon as possible. • Children will have access to a number of transition days at their secondary school in the second half of the summer term. In some cases, staff from the secondary schools may visit children here in school. We will first invite you to visit the school with your child to have a look around and speak to staff. Our Parent Support Advisor may visit you at home to ensure that we are fully aware of your child's needs and ensure provision is put in place before your child starts.

SEND Resources How are the school/college's resources allocated and matched to the young person's special educational needs? How is the SEND budget allocated?	Schools receive funding for all children including those with Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities and their individual needs are provided for through this funding; including resources, support staff etc. We have the opportunity to apply for 'Higher Needs Funding' if we feel that a child's individual needs cannot be met effectively through the usual allocated budget.
Further information Who would be my first point of contact if I want to discuss something about my child? Who else has a role in my child's education? Who can I talk to if I am worried? Who is the SEND Coordinator and how can I contact them?	If you have concerns about your child's progress you should speak to your child's class teacher initially. You could also arrange to speak to the SENDCo, Mrs McDonagh, via your child's class teacher or by making an appointment at the school office.