

[illegible]

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Version: 2.0

Policy Owner: Head of Inclusion

Approved by: Proprietor

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: August 2027

Applies to: All First Steps Together Schools.

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Vision and Values**
- 3. Legislative Framework**
- 4. Leadership, Governance and Accountability**
- 5. Aims and Objectives**
- 6. Early Identification, Assessment and Understanding Need**
- 7. The Graduated Approach**
- 8. Quality First Teaching and Adaptive Practice**
- 9. Universal, Targeted and Specialist Provision**
- 10. Person-Centred Planning**
- 11. Working in Partnership with Families and Professionals**
- 12. Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions**
- 13. Attendance, Inclusion and Belonging**
- 14. Preparing for Adulthood**
- 15. Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance**
- 16. Professional Development**
- 17. Complaints**
- 18. Accessibility**
- 19. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
- 20. Glossary**
- 21. Appendices**

1. Introduction

First Steps Together is committed to providing an ambitious, inclusive and personalised education that enables every child and young person to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

This policy outlines the Group's approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It provides a consistent framework across all First Steps Together schools, ensuring statutory compliance while allowing schools to respond to the needs of their individual communities.

We believe that inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Every member of staff plays a vital role in creating safe, nurturing and ambitious learning environments where pupils feel valued, experience belonging and are supported to achieve their potential.

Our Commitment

Across the First Steps Together Group, we are committed to:

- delivering high-quality adaptive teaching as the foundation of inclusive practice;
- identifying and responding to need at the earliest opportunity;
- maintaining high expectations for every learner;
- working in partnership with pupils, families and external professionals;
- providing evidence-informed, personalised support where required;
- promoting independence, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood; and
- ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.

We recognise that effective SEND provision is not solely about additional interventions. It begins with excellent teaching, positive relationships and a culture where differences are understood, respected and celebrated.

2. Vision and Values

Our Vision

At First Steps Together, we are committed to creating schools where every child and young person feels safe, valued, respected and able to achieve their potential. We believe that inclusive education is built on strong relationships, high expectations and a culture where every learner belongs.

As a specialist education group, we recognise that every pupil brings unique strengths, experiences and aspirations. Our role is to remove barriers to learning, celebrate individuality and provide the support each child needs to succeed academically, socially and emotionally.

Inclusion is not an additional responsibility; it is embedded within every aspect of teaching, leadership and school life.

Our Values

Our approach is shaped by the First Steps Together **ACTIVE** values, which guide our relationships, decision-making and daily practice.

Authentic – We build trusting relationships through honesty, integrity and respect, creating environments where children feel safe to be themselves.

Creative – We respond flexibly to individual needs, using evidence-informed and innovative approaches to remove barriers to learning.

Together – We believe the best outcomes are achieved through collaboration between pupils, families, staff and external professionals.

Inclusive – We celebrate diversity, champion equity and ensure every learner has access to ambitious opportunities and meaningful participation in school life.

Vocal – We value pupil and family voice, ensuring children and young people are actively involved in decisions about their learning and future.

Empowering – We develop confident, resilient and independent learners who are prepared for the next stage of education, employment and adult life.

Relational Practice

Positive relationships are at the heart of our approach. We recognise that children learn best when they feel safe, understood and connected to the adults who support them.

Our practice is underpinned by the belief that behaviour communicates need. Staff are encouraged to approach behaviour with curiosity, consistency and compassion, seeking to understand the reasons behind a pupil's presentation before determining the most appropriate support.

By prioritising connection, emotional safety and trust, we create learning environments where pupils can engage, develop resilience and achieve success.

An Inclusive Culture

We believe that inclusion is measured by the quality of a pupil's experience rather than the setting in which they learn. Every child should have equitable access to an ambitious curriculum, meaningful relationships and opportunities to participate fully in school life.

Across First Steps Together, we maintain high expectations for all learners while recognising that different pupils may require different levels of support to achieve success. Through adaptive teaching, reasonable adjustments and personalised provision, we enable every pupil to thrive within an inclusive school community.

We aspire to create schools where every child feels safe, valued, included and empowered to achieve their potential.

3. Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Effective SEND provision relies on strong leadership, clear accountability and a shared commitment to inclusion. At First Steps Together, responsibility for supporting pupils with SEND sits across every level of the organisation. While specific roles have defined responsibilities, every member of staff contributes to creating inclusive environments where children and young people can thrive.

Executive Leadership

The Executive Leadership Team provides strategic oversight of SEND across the First Steps Together Group. Led by the Head of Inclusion, the team ensures that inclusion remains central to school improvement, curriculum development and organisational strategy.

The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for:

- ensuring compliance with SEND legislation and statutory guidance;
- setting the strategic direction for inclusion across the Group;
- monitoring the quality and impact of SEND provision;
- ensuring appropriate deployment of resources;
- promoting consistency across all schools; and
- holding school leaders accountable for improving outcomes for pupils with SEND.

Head of Inclusion

The Head of Inclusion provides strategic leadership for SEND and inclusion across the Group, working in partnership with Heads of School, SENDCos, Governors and external agencies.

Key responsibilities include:

- leading the Group's SEND strategy and quality assurance;
- supporting school improvement and inclusive practice;
- monitoring outcomes and statutory compliance;
- developing staff expertise through professional development;
- promoting consistency across schools; and
- strengthening partnerships with Local Authorities and external services.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that inclusive practice is embedded throughout their school. They provide strategic and operational leadership by:

- promoting a culture of inclusion and high expectations;
- ensuring statutory duties are fulfilled;
- monitoring the quality of teaching and provision for pupils with SEND;
- deploying staffing and resources effectively; and
- supporting staff, pupils and families to achieve positive outcomes.

SENDCo

First Steps Together will have an appropriately qualified SENDCo, or a member of staff working towards the National Award for SEN Coordination where appropriate.

The SENDCo leads the day-to-day coordination of SEND provision by:

- coordinating the graduated approach;
- supporting the identification and assessment of need;
- maintaining accurate SEND records;
- advising and supporting staff;
- working in partnership with families and external professionals; and
- monitoring the effectiveness of provision and interventions.

Teachers

In line with the SEND Code of Practice, every teacher is a teacher of pupils with SEND.

Teachers are responsible for delivering high-quality adaptive teaching, implementing agreed strategies and reasonable adjustments, monitoring progress and working collaboratively with pupils, families and colleagues to ensure every learner can access an ambitious curriculum.

Support Staff

Teaching Assistants, Intervention Assistants, Behaviour Mentors and other support staff make a valuable contribution to inclusive practice.

Working under the direction of teachers and school leaders, they promote independence, deliver agreed interventions, support emotional wellbeing and provide feedback that informs assessment and future planning.

Pupils and Families

Children, young people and their families are central to decision-making. We value their views, experiences and aspirations and work in partnership to plan, review and evaluate support.

Pupils are encouraged to contribute to decisions about their learning and to develop the confidence and independence to advocate for themselves wherever appropriate.

Governors and Proprietors

The Proprietors and Governing Board provide strategic oversight and challenge to ensure the Group meets its statutory responsibilities.

They monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision, review outcomes for pupils with SEND and hold leaders to account for delivering high-quality, inclusive education across all First Steps Together schools.

Shared Responsibility

Creating an inclusive culture is the responsibility of every member of the First Steps Together community. Through collaborative leadership, high-quality teaching and strong partnerships with pupils and families, we are committed to ensuring every child feels safe, valued, included and supported to achieve their full potential.

4. Aims and Objectives

The First Steps Together Group is committed to providing an inclusive, ambitious and high-quality education that enables every child and young person to achieve their potential. We aim to remove barriers to learning, promote belonging and ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need to succeed academically, socially and emotionally.

Our Aims

Across all First Steps Together schools, we aim to:

- provide an inclusive learning environment where every pupil feels safe, valued and respected;
- deliver high-quality adaptive teaching as the foundation of effective SEND provision;
- identify and respond to additional needs at the earliest opportunity;
- ensure pupils with SEND have equitable access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum;
- promote positive relationships, wellbeing and a strong sense of belonging;
- work in partnership with pupils, families and external professionals to achieve the best possible outcomes;
- prepare children and young people for the next stage of education, employment and adult life; and
- fulfil all statutory responsibilities under the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equality Act 2010.

Our Objectives

To achieve these aims, First Steps Together will:

- implement a consistent graduated approach to identifying, assessing and meeting SEND;
- ensure teachers remain responsible and accountable for the progress of every learner through high-quality adaptive teaching;
- provide personalised support and reasonable adjustments based on identified need;
- monitor the impact of SEND provision through regular review and quality assurance;
- invest in ongoing professional development to strengthen inclusive practice;
- promote collaborative working across schools and with external agencies; and
- continually evaluate and improve SEND provision to ensure positive outcomes for pupils.

Measuring Success

The impact of this policy will be monitored through the group's quality assurance processes described in section 15.

5. Early Identification, Assessment and Understanding Need

First Steps Together is committed to identifying and responding to pupils' needs as early as possible. Early identification enables timely support, reduces barriers to learning and improves outcomes for children and young people.

We recognise that every pupil is unique. Effective identification is based on understanding the whole child, recognising both strengths and areas of need, and working collaboratively with pupils, families and professionals to provide the right support at the right time.

Our Principles

Early identification across the First Steps Together Group is underpinned by the following principles:

- every child is known, valued and understood as an individual;
- identification is an ongoing process, not a single event;
- pupils and families are active partners in understanding need;
- strengths, interests and aspirations are considered alongside areas of difficulty;
- support is informed by evidence, professional judgement and regular review; and
- early intervention is key to improving outcomes.

Identifying Need

A pupil's needs may be identified at any stage of their education. Concerns may be raised by school staff, parents or carers, the pupil themselves or external professionals.

Identification is informed by a range of evidence, including:

- teacher assessment and classroom observation;
- progress, attainment and engagement;
- attendance and wellbeing;
- pupil and family voice;
- previous educational information;
- screening and assessment tools, where appropriate; and
- advice from external professionals.

Schools will consider the whole child and any factors that may be affecting learning before determining whether SEND Support is required.

Understanding SEND

In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (2015), a pupil has Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

When identifying SEND, schools will consider the four broad areas of need described within the SEND Code of Practice:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs

These categories are used to support planning and provision. Many pupils will present with needs across more than one area.

A Holistic Approach

When assessing need, schools will consider the wider context of a pupil's development, including their communication, emotional wellbeing, relationships, physical or sensory needs, attendance, previous experiences and family circumstances.

The Group recognises that factors such as English as an Additional Language (EAL), disadvantage, attendance, medical needs or interrupted education may affect learning but do not, in themselves, indicate SEND. Decisions will always be based on a holistic assessment of the individual pupil.

Working in Partnership

Parents and carers know their children best and are essential partners throughout the identification and assessment process. Pupils are encouraged to share their views and contribute to decisions about the support they receive, using approaches appropriate to their age and communication needs.

Where additional expertise is required, schools will work collaboratively with external professionals to ensure assessments are informed, proportionate and centred on the needs of the child.

Review and Next Steps

Where assessment identifies that a pupil requires additional support, the school will implement the Graduated Approach in partnership with the pupil, their family and relevant professionals.

Assessment is reviewed regularly to ensure provision remains responsive to the pupil's changing needs and continues to promote progress, participation and wellbeing.

6. The Graduated Approach

At First Steps Together, we adopt a graduated approach to identifying, planning and reviewing support for pupils with SEND, in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2015). This ensures that provision is responsive, evidence-informed and tailored to the individual needs of each pupil.

The graduated approach is a continuous process of assessment, planning, implementation and review, enabling support to evolve as a pupil's needs, strengths and aspirations develop.

Principles

Our graduated approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- high-quality adaptive teaching is the foundation of SEND provision;
- support is centred on the strengths, needs and aspirations of the individual pupil;
- pupils and families are active partners in decision-making;
- provision is proportionate, evidence-informed and regularly reviewed;
- teachers remain responsible and accountable for the progress of every pupil in their class; and
- the aim of all support is to promote independence, participation and positive outcomes.

Assess – Plan – Do – Review

Assess

Where a pupil is identified as requiring additional support, the school will build a clear understanding of their strengths, needs and barriers to learning. Assessment draws upon teacher observations, progress data, pupil and family voice, previous records and, where appropriate, advice from external professionals.

Plan

Where SEND Support is required, the school will work collaboratively with the pupil and their family to agree appropriate outcomes, reasonable adjustments, teaching strategies, interventions and review arrangements.

Support will be recorded within relevant planning documents, such as One Page Profiles, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), Provision Maps or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), where applicable.

Do

The agreed provision will be implemented through high-quality adaptive teaching, reasonable adjustments and targeted support.

Review

Provision will be reviewed regularly to evaluate its impact and determine whether outcomes have been achieved.

Reviews will consider academic progress, wellbeing, attendance, engagement, pupil and family voice, and the effectiveness of agreed strategies. Where necessary, provision will be adapted, increased or reduced to ensure support remains appropriate.

Levels of Provision

Support is delivered through a graduated model consisting of three levels:

Universal Provision – High-quality adaptive teaching, inclusive classroom practice and reasonable adjustments available to all pupils.

Targeted Provision – Additional evidence-informed interventions and personalised strategies for pupils requiring support beyond universal provision.

Specialist Provision – Highly personalised support informed by specialist professionals and, where appropriate, delivered through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Movement between these levels is flexible and based on ongoing assessment and review.

Monitoring Impact

The effectiveness of SEND provision is monitored through the Group's quality assurance processes, including progress reviews, provision monitoring, learning walks, pupil voice, family feedback and regular evaluation of outcomes.

This ensures that support remains responsive, proportionate and focused on enabling every pupil to achieve their potential.

7. Quality First Teaching and Adaptive Practice

At First Steps Together, we believe that high-quality teaching is the foundation of effective SEND provision. Every pupil is entitled to ambitious, inclusive teaching that enables them to access the curriculum, participate fully in school life and achieve their potential.

Quality First Teaching is the first response to meeting the needs of all learners. Additional interventions and specialist support are intended to enhance, not replace, excellent classroom practice.

Our Principles

Across the First Steps Together Group, Quality First Teaching is underpinned by the following principles:

- every teacher is responsible for the progress and inclusion of every pupil in their class;
- teaching is adapted to meet the needs of learners without lowering expectations;
- relationships are central to engagement, wellbeing and learning;
- assessment informs teaching and supports responsive practice; and
- inclusive classrooms promote participation, independence and success for all pupils.

Adaptive Teaching

Teachers will use assessment, professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to adapt teaching and remove barriers to learning.

Adaptive practice may include:

- clear explanations and explicit modelling;
- scaffolding and appropriate levels of challenge;

- adapted resources and methods of recording;
- effective questioning and regular checks for understanding;
- visual supports and pre-teaching of key vocabulary;
- additional processing time;
- flexible grouping and seating arrangements;
- assistive technology and reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Adaptations are designed to provide equitable access to learning while maintaining ambitious expectations for every pupil.

Inclusive Classroom Practice

Every classroom across the Group should provide:

- a safe, calm and predictable learning environment;
- clear routines and consistent expectations;
- positive, respectful relationships between staff and pupils;
- opportunities for active participation and independence;
- effective behaviour support through relational practice; and
- an environment where diversity is valued and every pupil experiences a sense of belonging.

The Role of Teachers and Support Staff

Teachers retain overall responsibility for the learning, progress and wellbeing of every pupil in their class, including those receiving additional SEND support.

Teaching Assistants, Intervention Assistants and other support staff work alongside teachers to reinforce learning, promote independence, implement agreed strategies and provide feedback that informs future planning.

Evidence-Informed Practice

Teaching and learning across First Steps Together are informed by current educational research, the SEND Code of Practice (2015), Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance and evidence-informed approaches to adaptive teaching, cognitive science and relational practice.

Professional development ensures staff continue to develop the knowledge and skills required to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Monitoring Quality

The quality of teaching for pupils with SEND is monitored through the Group's quality assurance processes, including learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil voice, progress reviews and professional dialogue.

This information is used to celebrate effective practice, identify areas for development and ensure consistency across all First Steps Together schools.

8. Universal Inclusive Provision

Universal Inclusive Provision is the entitlement of every pupil attending a First Steps Together school. It represents the high-quality education, pastoral support and inclusive practice that enable all pupils to participate, achieve and develop a sense of belonging, regardless of whether they have an identified Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND).

Our universal offer is the foundation of the Graduated Approach and aims to remove barriers to learning through consistent, inclusive practice across all areas of school life.

Our Universal Offer

Every pupil can expect:

- a safe, welcoming and inclusive school environment;
- high-quality adaptive teaching;
- access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum;
- positive relationships with trusted adults;
- clear routines and consistent expectations;
- support for their wellbeing and personal development;
- opportunities to participate fully in school life; and
- high aspirations for achievement, attendance and future success.

Inclusive Practice

Inclusive practice is embedded across the Group and includes:

- learning environments that are accessible, calm and well organised;
- reasonable adjustments to support participation and learning;
- effective communication strategies appropriate to individual need;
- opportunities to develop independence, confidence and resilience;
- recognition and celebration of diversity, achievement and pupil voice; and
- a relational approach that promotes emotional safety, belonging and positive behaviour.

Promoting Participation

We believe inclusion extends beyond the classroom. Pupils will be supported to access the full life of the school, including educational visits, enrichment activities, leadership opportunities, clubs, performances and wider school events.

Where barriers to participation exist, reasonable adjustments will be made to enable pupils to engage as fully as possible alongside their peers.

Monitoring Universal Provision

Leaders monitor the quality and consistency of Universal Inclusive Provision through the Group's quality assurance processes, including learning walks, lesson observations, pupil voice, attendance and wellbeing information, work scrutiny and feedback from families. This ensures inclusive practice remains consistent across all First Steps Together schools and continues to meet the needs of our pupils.

9. Targeted, Specialist Provision and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Whilst many pupils' needs can be met through high-quality universal provision, some require additional or specialist support to overcome barriers to learning, participation and wellbeing. At First Steps Together, targeted and specialist provision is delivered through a graduated, person-centred approach that builds on Quality First Teaching. Support is informed by robust assessment, delivered in partnership with pupils and families, and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective.

Targeted Provision

Targeted provision may be implemented where a pupil requires support beyond Universal Inclusive Provision.

Support is personalised to meet identified needs and may include:

- evidence-informed interventions;
- additional adult support;
- communication and interaction programmes;
- literacy and numeracy interventions;
- emotional wellbeing and self-regulation support;
- sensory or physical adaptations;
- assistive technology; and
- personalised strategies to improve engagement, attendance and participation.

Targeted support is designed to complement classroom teaching, promote independence and improve long-term outcomes.

Specialist Provision

Some pupils require highly personalised provision informed by specialist assessment or external professional advice.

This may include support from services such as Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, CAMHS, Physiotherapy, Specialist Teachers, Health Services or Social Care.

Recommendations from external professionals are incorporated into everyday teaching and reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet the pupil's needs.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is a statutory plan for children and young people whose needs require provision beyond that which is ordinarily available through SEND Support.

First Steps Together is committed to delivering the educational provision specified within every EHCP and ensuring statutory responsibilities are fully met.

Provision outlined within an EHCP will be embedded into daily practice through adaptive teaching, reasonable adjustments, personalised support and collaborative working between staff, families and external professionals.

Annual Reviews

EHCPs will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner where there is a significant change in need or circumstances.

Annual Reviews are person-centred and consider:

- progress towards agreed outcomes;
- the effectiveness of current provision;
- the views of the pupil and their family;
- advice from relevant professionals; and
- future aspirations, including preparation for adulthood where appropriate.

Where necessary, recommendations will be made to the Local Authority to amend the EHCP so that it continues to reflect the pupil's needs.

All targeted and specialist provision will be reviewed through the Graduated Approach to ensure it remains effective and responsive to individual need.

10. Person-Centred Planning and Partnership

At First Steps Together, we believe that effective SEND provision is built around the individual child or young person. Person-centred planning ensures that support is tailored to each pupil's strengths, needs, aspirations and outcomes, enabling them to participate fully in school life and achieve their potential.

Planning is a collaborative process involving pupils, families, school staff and, where appropriate, external professionals. It is reviewed regularly to ensure provision remains relevant, effective and responsive to changing needs.

Our Approach

Person-centred planning is guided by the following principles:

- every child is known, valued and understood as an individual;
- planning begins with strengths and aspirations as well as identified needs;
- pupils and families are active partners in decision-making;
- outcomes are ambitious, meaningful and regularly reviewed;

- support promotes independence, participation and preparation for adulthood; and
- all staff share responsibility for implementing agreed strategies.

Individual Planning

Where appropriate, personalised planning documents will be used to ensure consistent and effective support across the school.

Examples include One Page Profiles, Individual Learning Plans, Provision Maps, Behaviour Support Plans, and other personalised documents appropriate to the pupils needs.

The documentation used will reflect the individual needs of the pupil and should provide clear guidance to staff on agreed strategies, reasonable adjustments and intended outcomes.

Pupil and Family Voice

Children, young people and their families are central to all planning and review processes.

Schools will ensure that pupils are supported to express their views in ways that are appropriate to their age, stage of development and communication needs. Parents and carers will be involved throughout the graduated approach, contributing their knowledge, aspirations and priorities to help shape provision and future planning.

Reviewing Provision

Person-centred planning is an ongoing process. Support will be reviewed regularly through the Graduated Approach to ensure that provision continues to meet the pupil's needs, remove barriers to learning and promote positive outcomes.

11. Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

First Steps Together is committed to ensuring that pupils with medical conditions can access a full and inclusive education. We will make appropriate arrangements so that medical needs do not unnecessarily prevent pupils from attending school, participating in learning or taking part in wider school life.

Where a medical condition also results in Special Educational Needs or a disability, support will be planned in line with this policy, the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice.

Supporting Pupils

Schools will work in partnership with pupils, parents, carers and healthcare professionals to ensure appropriate support is in place. This may include:

- Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs), where appropriate;
- staff training to meet identified medical needs;
- administration of medication in line with the Group's Medicines Policy;
- reasonable adjustments to support access to learning;
- emergency procedures where required; and

- appropriate arrangements for educational visits, enrichment activities and examinations.

Support will be reviewed regularly and updated whenever a pupil's medical needs change.

Individual Healthcare Plans

Where required, an Individual Healthcare Plan will outline:

- the pupil's medical needs;
- daily management arrangements;
- medication and treatment requirements;
- emergency procedures;
- staff responsibilities; and
- any reasonable adjustments needed to support full participation in school life.

Healthcare Plans will be developed in partnership with parents, carers and relevant healthcare professionals.

12. Attendance, Inclusion and Belonging

At First Steps Together, we believe that attendance is built on belonging. Pupils are more likely to attend, engage and succeed when they feel safe, valued and understood. We are committed to creating inclusive school communities where every child experiences positive relationships, high expectations and the support they need to thrive.

Whilst we expect all pupils to attend school regularly, we recognise that some children and young people with SEND may experience barriers to attendance. Our approach is proactive, relational and child-centred, focusing on understanding and removing barriers rather than simply responding to absence.

Promoting Attendance

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. Schools across the Group will promote good attendance through:

- inclusive, high-quality teaching;
- strong relationships with pupils and families;
- emotionally safe and predictable learning environments;
- early identification of attendance concerns;
- effective communication with parents and carers; and
- recognition of positive attendance, engagement and progress.

We recognise that positive attendance is strengthened when pupils experience success, belonging and meaningful participation in school life.

Removing Barriers

Where attendance becomes a concern, schools will work with pupils, families and relevant professionals to identify the underlying reasons and agree appropriate support.

Support may include:

- personalised attendance plans;
- reasonable adjustments;
- phased or supported reintegration;
- pastoral or therapeutic support;
- adaptations to provision through the Graduated Approach; and
- multi-agency working where appropriate.

For pupils experiencing emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), anxiety or other SEND-related barriers, schools will seek to understand the underlying needs and implement supportive, evidence-informed strategies while maintaining high aspirations for attendance and participation.

Monitoring and Review

Attendance will be monitored regularly to identify emerging concerns and evaluate the effectiveness of support. Where barriers persist, provision will be reviewed and adapted in partnership with pupils, families and external agencies to promote sustained engagement.

13. Preparing for Adulthood

At First Steps Together, we believe that preparing for adulthood begins from the earliest stages of education. We are committed to developing the knowledge, skills and confidence that enable every pupil to progress successfully into the next stage of education, employment and adult life.

Preparation for adulthood is embedded across the curriculum and wider school experience, ensuring pupils develop academically, socially and emotionally whilst becoming increasingly independent and resilient.

Our Approach

Preparation for adulthood is personalised and reflects each pupil's strengths, aspirations and individual needs. Schools will support pupils to develop:

- independence and self-advocacy;
- communication and social skills;
- emotional regulation and resilience;
- problem-solving and decision-making;
- aspirations for education, employment and training;
- life skills and community participation; and
- confidence to make informed choices about their future.

Where appropriate, these outcomes will be reflected within Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), transition planning and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Transition Planning

Effective transition planning supports pupils through key stages of their education and into adulthood. Schools will work collaboratively with pupils, families, receiving settings and external professionals to ensure transitions are well planned and personalised.

Support may include enhanced visits, transition resources, information sharing, phased transitions and additional preparation where required to promote confidence and continuity.

For pupils with an EHCP, preparation for adulthood will become an explicit focus from Year 9 onwards, in line with the SEND Code of Practice.

14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

First Steps Together is committed to continually improving the quality of SEND provision across all schools. Through robust monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance, we ensure that provision remains inclusive, effective and responsive to the needs of our pupils, whilst meeting statutory requirements and driving continuous improvement.

Monitoring Provision

The quality and impact of SEND provision will be monitored through a range of activities, including:

- pupil progress and attainment data;
- attendance, behaviour and wellbeing information;
- learning walks and lesson observations;
- work scrutiny;
- provision reviews;
- pupil, parent and staff voice;
- intervention evaluations; and
- statutory review processes, including Annual Reviews for pupils with EHCPs.

Monitoring will focus on the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of support and the outcomes achieved by pupils with SEND.

Using Evidence to Improve Practice

Information gathered through monitoring is used to:

- evaluate the impact of provision;
- identify strengths and areas for development;
- inform school improvement planning;
- guide professional development;
- improve outcomes for pupils; and

- ensure consistency across all First Steps Together schools.

Quality assurance is intended to support improvement through collaboration, reflection and evidence-informed practice.

15. Professional Development

First Steps Together recognises that high-quality SEND provision depends on knowledgeable, skilled and confident staff. We are committed to providing ongoing professional development to ensure all colleagues can meet the diverse needs of pupils and deliver inclusive practice.

Our Approach

Professional development will support staff to:

- understand their responsibilities under the SEND Code of Practice;
- deliver high-quality adaptive teaching;
- identify and respond to emerging SEND needs;
- implement the Graduated Approach effectively;
- promote inclusive, relational and trauma-informed practice; and
- work confidently with families and external professionals.

Training may be delivered through induction, whole-school training, coaching, professional networks, external specialists and regular updates on national guidance and evidence-informed practice.

Leadership Development

SEND leadership will be developed across the Group through support for SENDCos, middle leaders and senior leaders, promoting consistency, collaboration and the sharing of effective practice across all First Steps Together schools.

16. Funding and Resources

First Steps Together is committed to ensuring that resources are deployed effectively to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Funding is used strategically to provide high-quality teaching, appropriate support and reasonable adjustments that enable pupils to access an ambitious and inclusive education.

Use of Resources

Resources are allocated according to identified need and may be used to support:

- high-quality adaptive teaching
- targeted interventions
- specialist equipment and assistive technology

- staffing and specialist support
- professional development
- reasonable adjustments
- specialist advice from external agencies
- provision specified within an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Funding decisions are informed by assessment, provision reviews and the graduated approach to ensure support is proportionate, effective and responsive.

Education, Health and Care Plans

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the school will use allocated funding to deliver the educational provision specified within the plan. The SENDCo and school leaders will monitor provision to ensure resources are used effectively and statutory duties are met.

Monitoring Impact

Leaders review the impact of SEND funding through pupil outcomes, provision reviews and quality assurance activities to ensure resources are used effectively.

17. Complaints

First Steps Together is committed to working in partnership with pupils, parents and carers to resolve concerns promptly, fairly and respectfully. We encourage open communication and seek to address issues at the earliest opportunity to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people.

Where concerns relate to SEND provision, we aim to resolve these collaboratively through discussion and review before formal procedures are considered.

Raising a Concern

Parents and carers who have concerns about their child's SEND provision are encouraged to:

- speak with the class teacher or key member of staff in the first instance;
- contact the school's SENDCo where concerns relate to SEND provision;
- discuss unresolved concerns with the Head of School.

Many concerns can be resolved quickly through open dialogue, collaborative planning and review of the support being provided.

Formal Complaints

Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, parents and carers may make a formal complaint in accordance with the First Steps Together Complaints Policy.

Complaints will be managed fairly, confidentially and within published timescales. The Group will ensure that all complaints are investigated thoroughly and that outcomes are communicated clearly.

Statutory Rights

This policy does not affect the statutory rights of parents and carers.

Where concerns relate to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), parents and carers may also access disagreement resolution, mediation or appeal processes in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice.

Information about these processes can be obtained from the relevant Local Authority or the local SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

18. Accessibility

First Steps Together is committed to ensuring that all pupils can access education, participate fully in school life and achieve their potential. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled pupils and promote equality of opportunity.

Our Approach

We will:

- provide an accessible learning environment through appropriate reasonable adjustments;
- ensure pupils can access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum;
- use adaptive teaching, specialist resources and assistive technology where appropriate;
- provide information in accessible formats to meet individual communication needs; and
- work in partnership with pupils, families and external professionals to identify and remove barriers to participation.

Accessibility Planning

Each school maintains an Accessibility Plan, which sets out how it will:

- improve access to the physical environment;
- increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils; and
- improve the accessibility of information and communication including ensuring digital resources and online learning platforms are accessible wherever reasonably practicable.

Accessibility Plans are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective and responsive to the needs of the school community.

19. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

At First Steps Together, inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to creating schools where every child and young person is welcomed, respected and supported to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background, identity, ability or individual circumstances.

We celebrate diversity, promote equity and actively work to remove barriers that may prevent pupils from participating fully in school life.

Our Commitment

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we are committed to ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of a protected characteristic.

We will:

- promote equality of opportunity for all pupils;
- foster an inclusive culture where diversity is valued and respected;
- make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning and participation;
- challenge discrimination, harassment and prejudice;
- promote positive relationships, respect and belonging across our school communities.

Inclusive Practice

Inclusive practice is embedded throughout teaching, pastoral support, enrichment opportunities and wider school life. Where barriers exist, reasonable adjustments will be made to enable full participation

Promoting Belonging

We recognise that children achieve their best when they feel safe, valued and connected. Through our ACTIVE values, relational approach and commitment to high expectations, we strive to create environments where every pupil experiences dignity, belonging and success.

19. Glossary

The following terms are used throughout this policy.

Term	Definition
Adaptive Teaching	Teaching that is responsive to the strengths, needs and learning profiles of pupils whilst maintaining high expectations.
APDR	Assess – Plan – Do – Review; the graduated approach to SEND Support outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan; a legal document describing a child or young person's special educational needs, outcomes and required provision.

Graduated Approach	A cyclical process of identifying, planning, delivering and reviewing support to meet individual needs.
Inclusion	Ensuring every pupil feels valued, belongs and can fully participate in school life through equitable opportunities and appropriate support.
Individual Learning Plan (ILP)	A personalised plan outlining agreed outcomes, strategies and support for a pupil.
One Page Profile (OPP)	A concise summary of what is important to a pupil, their strengths and the strategies that support them to succeed.
Quality First Teaching (QFT)	High-quality teaching that is inclusive, ambitious and adapted to meet the needs of all learners.
Reasonable Adjustments	Changes made to remove barriers for disabled pupils in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
SENDCo	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator.
SEND Support	Additional support provided through the graduated approach for pupils with identified SEND who do not have an EHCP.

20. Appendices

Appendix A – Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside the following First Steps Together policies and procedures:

- Relational behaviour policy
- Attendance policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

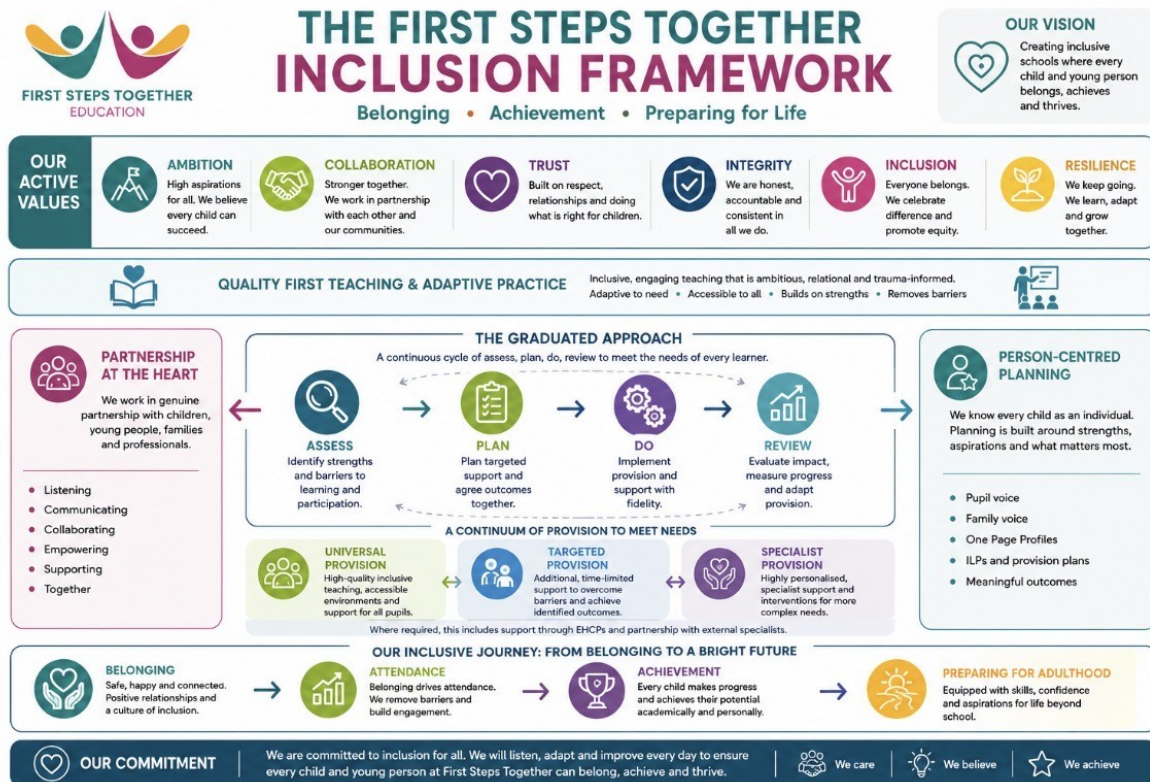
Statutory Guidance

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015)
- Equality Act 2010

- Working together to safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014

Appendix B – First Steps together Inclusion Framework



Appendix C – Person-Centered Planning Documents

Documents that may be used:

- One page profile
- Pupil passport
- Individual Learning plan
- Provision map
- Risk Assessment
- EHCP
- Positive handling plan

Appendix D – EHCP Review Process

Annual EHCP Review Process

Working together to review, plan and achieve the best outcomes for every child

