



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

Office Use only:

Policy/Procedure No. 21	Board/Date of Approval: 16 November 2016	Implementation Date: 23 October 2014	Review Dates: November 2017
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Rationale / Background

Merrill Academy is committed to providing an appropriate and high quality education to all the students living in our local area. We believe that all students, including those identified as having “disabilities and special educational needs” have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and to be fully included in all aspects of Academy life. We aim to model inclusion on the removal of barriers to learning.

We believe that all students should be equally valued at Merrill Academy. We strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to develop an environment where all students can flourish and feel safe. To this end, Merrill Academy is committed to developing a social model approach to inclusion.

An integral part of the Academy’s strategic planning for improvement is to develop cultures, policies and practices that include all learners of all abilities. We aim to engender a sense of community and belonging, and to offer new opportunities to learners who experience difficulties. This does not mean that we will treat all learners in the same way, but that we will respond to learners in ways which take account of their varied life experiences and needs by ensuring an appropriate curriculum; appropriate support and challenge and a commitment to academic and personal success.

All staff commit themselves to uphold the principles embedded in the 1996 Education Act, the Children and Families Act (2014) and in the SEND Code of Practice (2014), to identify needs promptly, and put in place appropriate provision for all students who have SEND in order to minimise potential barriers to achievement.

Special Educational Needs – A Definition

There is a wide spectrum of special educational needs which are frequently inter-related, although there are also specific needs that usually relate directly to particular types of impairment. Children may have additional needs and requirements which may fall into at least one of the following areas:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory / Physical
- Medical

We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background. We pay particular attention to the provision for, and the achievement of, different groups of learners including:

- Girls and boys, young men and women;
- Minority ethnic and faith groups, travellers, asylum seekers and refugees;
- Learners who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL);
- Learners with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs (SEND);
- Those who are ‘looked after’ by the local authority (LAC);
- Others such as those who are sick; those who are young carers; those who are in families under stress; pregnant girls and teenage mothers;
- Learners for whom the Pupil Premium provides extra support;
- Learners who are vulnerable and / or at risk of disaffection and exclusion;
- Learners with low reading and spelling ages;

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- Learners who have difficulty in understanding oral and / or written information and instructions;
- Learners who have difficulties in completing classwork and homework;
- Learners whose oral work and written work vary significantly in quality;
- Learners whose performance in formal tests vary significantly with classwork assessment;
- Learners who have difficulty staying on task.

We recognise that students learn at different rates and that there are many factors affecting achievement, including ability, emotional state, age and maturity. We believe that many students, at some time in their Academy career, may experience difficulties which affect their learning, and we recognise that these may be long or short term. At Merrill Academy we aim to identify these needs as they arise and provide teaching and learning contexts which enable every student to achieve to his or her full potential.

Merrill Academy sees the inclusion of students identified as having additional needs including SEN as an equal opportunities issue, and we will therefore also aim to model inclusion in our staffing policies, relationships with parents/carers and the community.

From Sept 2014, SA and SA+ categories became a single category called “SEN support”, with Statements of SEN replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The practice of the Academy and the SEND Policy continue to undergo frequent review in order to cater for the new framework. Additionally, the SEND Policy is reviewed in line with DfE and Ofsted framework updates so that our practice is commensurate with national changes.

Objectives

- To ensure the Children and Families Act and relevant Codes of Practice and guidance are implemented effectively across the Academy.
- To ensure equality of opportunity for, and to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against, students labelled as having ‘special educational needs’.
- To continually monitor the progress of all students labelled as having special educational needs and to identify additional needs as they arise. Following this identification, to provide relevant support as early as possible so that each students achieves academically at least in line with national expectations.
- To provide full access to a curriculum which is suitable for each individual
- To provide specific personalised input, led by individual needs, in addition to differentiated classroom provision, for those students recorded as having SEN Support, or with a Statement of SEN / Education Health Care Plan (EHC Plan).
- To ensure that students with SEN are perceived positively by all members of the Academy community, and that SEN and inclusive provision is positively valued and accessed by all Academy staff and parents/carers.
- To ensure that we are able to meet the needs of as wide a range as possible of students who live in our catchment area, especially those who have chosen to attend Merrill Academy.
- To enable students to move on to their next destination well equipped in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, emotional literacy, resilience and social independence to meet the

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demands of life beyond the Academy.

- To involve parents/carers and any associated professionals, at every stage in plans to meet their child's additional needs.
- To involve the students themselves in planning and in important decision making that affects them.
- To enable students with emotional, mental and social difficulties to remain in the mainstream classroom where possible, whilst following programmes of tailored support.
- To offer a range of short-term intervention or shared placements to students in order to address their difficulties.
- To address any learning and / or social needs that the student has.
- To provide guidance and advice to members of staff about dealing with students with additional needs including SEND.
- To reintegrate students successfully into mainstream lessons when they are confident and able to do so.

A Policy for Meeting Additional Needs including SEND

At Merrill Academy we aim to:

With the resources normally available to the Academy, give all our young people the opportunity to learn in ways which meet their individual needs.

Offer a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

Build a partnership between students, teachers, parents and the community and break down barriers which may exist between them.

Encourage young people to appreciate and celebrate achievement and personal success.

Help each young person develop his / her full potential and offer guidance and counselling.

Make learning experiences interesting, varied and appropriate.

Value and encourage academic and all other forms of achievement.

Equip our learners with the skills, attitudes, concepts and knowledge which will enable them to live fulfilled lives in an ever-changing society.

Inclusion Principles

Staff at Merrill Academy value students of different abilities and support inclusion. Teaching students with special educational needs is a whole school responsibility. Central to the work of every teacher – a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and assessment and evaluation that takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of all learners.

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Within the Academy, staff and students will be constantly involved in the best ways to support all students' needs. There is flexibility in approach in order to find the best curriculum offer for each student; Nurture support and EAL provision are key components of this.

Within each class, teaching and learning styles and organisation will be flexible to ensure effective learning. Intervention to support students identified with additional needs will be part of this process.

Programmes are in place in the Learning Centre, Nurture Base, and Language Lab to address the diverse range of additional needs across Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. Additionally, extraction groups within mainstream timetables focussing on programmes of Literacy, English as an Additional Language (EAL), and Social and Emotional Development.

Access to the Environment

Merrill Academy is a single site Academy serving Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 students.

A Specialist Learning and Inclusion Assistant is employed to provide bespoke support for our most vulnerable students with disabilities. Students requiring equipment due to an impairment will be assessed by diagnostic testing in the Learning Centre and specialist external services in order to gain the support that they require.

The Academy is thoroughly accessible for wheelchair users with lifts between floors, with a toileting and standing frame suite built into the PE area. There are two lifts at each end of the Academy, one of which is next to the Learning Support area, allowing students with mobility issues to move between both floors. Each staircase has an evac-chair installed, with key staff trained in safe use.

The Learning Support area is situated on the Ground Floor of the Academy and consists of three classrooms, the Learning Centre, the Nurture Base and the Language Lab. The Nurture base has a learning and soft furnishings area which ensures a positive physical environment for students. The Learning Support Area is on the ground floor and can be accessed by wheelchair users and learners with physical impairment via the main entrance. Stairs, pillars and glass doors around the Academy are clearly marked to aid visually impaired learners. A hearing loop is available in a few classrooms close to the Learning Support Area.

Food rooms, workshops and science labs have adjustable tables, benches and specially adapted equipment to allow students in wheelchairs or with physical impairment to access practical lessons.

Arrangements for providing access to learning and the curriculum

The Academy will ensure that all students have access to a 'balanced and broadly based' curriculum, and that the National Curriculum's programs of study are flexible enough to meet students' needs. No student will be excluded from any learning activity due to their impairment or learning difficulty, every effort will be made to be inclusive.

Learning opportunities aim to be absorbing, rewarding and effectively differentiated and the teaching styles will be diverse. Staff will work in a way to avoid the isolation of the students they are supporting, and will encourage peer tutoring and collaborative learning. Schemes of work and policies for each area of the curriculum are being constantly developed to include appropriate, differentiated learning outcomes for all students.

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Differentiation takes a variety of forms within teacher planning. Learning intentions are always made explicit and then activities may be adapted, or planned separately as appropriate. Alternative methods of responding or recording may also be planned for where this is appropriate.

The Academy will ensure that the 'hidden curriculum' and extra-curricular activities are barrier free and do not exclude any students. We adapt printed materials so that students with literacy, visual or physical difficulties can access the text or ensure access by pairing students/peer support/extra adult support. We provide alternatives to paper and pencil recording where appropriate, and use of a range of assessment procedures within lessons (such as recording, role-play and drama, video, drawing) to ensure students with additional needs are able to demonstrate their achievement appropriately.

Specialist diagnostic testing, supported by our sponsors Derby College, managed by their Advanced Skills Inclusion Co-ordination Team enables the Academy to provide Examination Access for learners with additional needs in the form of readers, scribes, use of word processors, voice activated computer software, use of bilingual dictionaries, extra time, rest breaks and small group / individual examination sittings.

Learning Support Literacy Statement

Merrill Academy holds the fundamental belief that every student should leave Academy functionally literate. Staff should be aware of and contribute to whole Academy approaches to reading, spelling, writing and oracy. The areas developed range from group work, writing frames, specific vocabulary and information retrieval, to a structured approach to the teaching of spelling and paired reading.

The Learning Centre will provide specific literacy groups for students in years 7, 8 and 9, with in class support and very small precision teaching extraction groups for those students with significant literacy issues in years 10 and 11.

Learning Support Numeracy Statement

Merrill Academy holds the fundamental belief that every student should leave secondary education functionally numerate. Staff should be aware of and contribute to, whole Academy approaches to numeracy.

The Maths area will provide extraction groups during Maths curriculum time for those students who are finding aspects of the mainstream Maths curriculum particularly difficult to access. This intensive provision will occur during mainstream Maths lessons, will be in line with national curriculum requirements in Maths, and be staffed by Level 2 specialist Learning Inclusion Assistants and teachers. Learners will be targeted by regular progress testing and assessment point data.

Arrangements for co-ordinating Additional Needs provision including SEND

Learning Support across Merrill Academy is lead strategically by the Assistant Principal, Teaching and Learning and the Director of SEND. The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is led by the Learning Centre and SEND Interventions Manager, Nurture Learning and Inclusion Co-ordinator and the Teacher of English as an Additional Language (EAL).

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Learning Support Team - Roles and Responsibilities

- Assistant Principal, Teaching and Learning – SLT SEND link and strategic lead

Learning Support Leadership team:

- Director of SEND (SENCO)
- Teacher of English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Learning Centre and SEND Interventions Manager

Learning Centre support team:

- Nurture Learning and Inclusion Co-ordinator
- Learning Centre and New Starters Co-ordinator
- Specialist Learning and Inclusion Assistant
- Learning and Inclusion Assistant (EAL)
- Learning and Inclusion Assistant (English)
- Learning and Inclusion Assistant (Maths)
- Learning and Inclusion Assistant (Science)

Learning Support staff liaise with subject teachers and curriculum leaders once a term regarding Student Passports and the progress of students is reviewed. This, in turn, supports the statutory reviews for students at SEN Support and those with Statements of SEN / EHCPs. Targets arising from Student Passport review meetings and SEND whole school directed time will be used to inform and support whole class approaches to inclusion. These include such foci as differentiation, varied teaching styles and specific strategies that should be used to support specific students with additional needs.

SEN support is primarily delivered by subject teachers through differentiated teaching methods. Additional support is provided by the Director of SEND, the Learning Centre leadership team, the Student Engagement Team, and by trained Learning and Inclusion Assistants throughout the Academy. This is funded from the Academy's annual budget. The support timetable is reviewed at least termly by the Director of SEND and the Learning centre leadership team in line with current learner needs and educational initiatives such as literacy and numeracy strategies. Some additional support is funded through individual allocations from the Local Authority.

Learning Support staff, Heads of Progress, subject teachers, the Director of SEND, the Safeguarding Team and outside agencies liaise and share developments in order to inform reviews and forward planning.

Additional Needs provision at Merrill Academy

Extraction of small groups of students and sometimes one to one may be necessary. Learners can be withdrawn from curriculum areas for the following types of specific intervention in negotiation with SLT, Curriculum Leaders, class teachers, parents / carers, learners, Heads of Year, learning support staff and external agencies:

- 'Read Write Inc.' phonics boosting level 1 to level 3 (English)
- Hodder Reading Programme: NC level 2 - 3 (English) at KS3
- Numeracy extraction and support as outlined in the 'Learning Support Numeracy Statement'
- Dyslexia screening, diagnostic testing and intensive literacy teaching
- Language Lab: EAL new arrivals, extraction and classroom support

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- Before school, break, lunchtime 'safe haven'
- Homework help / extra tutoring
- In-year Admissions induction / screening
- Nurture Base programmes focussing on social interaction, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech and Language, exceptionally low academic levels, dyslexia and social skills.

In-class support and extraction for students with additional needs across Merrill Academy is mapped and reviewed at least half-termly, and is subject to adjustment and alteration in line with needs, personal circumstances, achievement and attainment.

Links with Outside Agencies

Merrill Academy regularly consults and seeks advice from a variety of outside agencies / sold services including:

- New Communities Achievement Team
- Specialist Teaching and Educational Psychology Service (STEPS)
- Advisory teachers for: Physical Impairment; Hearing Impairment; Autism; Visual Impairment; Behaviour
- Educational Welfare Officer
- Community Paediatrician
- School Health
- School Counsellor
- Social Care
- Parent Partnerships
- Connexions

Transition

The Transition Co-ordinator and the Director of SEND work closely to ensure the successful transfer of appropriate information across the Academy prior to transfer from Year 6. Feeder schools will be consulted regarding current provision for learners with SEND in primary schools. The Director of SEND will attend statutory reviews in Year 6. Programmes of additional transition visits for learners with additional needs will be organised.

Levels of Support

The school will follow the graduated approach to special needs as prescribed in the Code of Practice (2014): Assess – Plan – Do – Review.

Students will be placed on the SEND register on 4 levels:

- Wave 1
- Wave 2
- Wave 3
- EHCP / Statement of SEN

Wave 1: Inclusive 'Quality First teaching'

Wave 1 is the effective inclusion of all students in high-quality everyday personalised teaching across the Academy; monitored by SLT and Curriculum Leaders during Learning Walks. Clearly differentiated lessons across the Academy will ensure that all students, not only those with SEND, have access to the curriculum and can make progress. The use of a variety of teaching styles and techniques are the best way to reduce the number of students who need extra support with their learning or behaviour.

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Wave 2: SEN Support

Wave 2 is specific, targeted and time-limited intervention for students who need help to accelerate their progress to enable them to work at age-related expectations. Students will be extracted in small groups for targeted interventions to meet their needs. A Student Passports will be drawn up and reviewed once a term. If the student fails to make progress over an agreed period of time they will move to Wave 3.

Wave 3: SEN Support with External Agencies

Wave 3 is in addition to, and highly personalised interventions for a small minority of students across the Academy where it is necessary to provide highly tailored intervention to accelerate progress or enable students to achieve their potential. This may include one-to-one or specialist interventions, supported by specialist staff or external agencies and may be needed on a long term basis. There may also be a diagnosis in a particular area of SEND. A Student Passport will be drawn up with specific targets and reviewed once a term.

EHCP / Statement of SEN

Some students may require an 'Education, Health and Social Care Plan' (EHCP). These will gradually replace the 'Statement of SEN' by 2017 and will be maintained by Derby City Council. Appropriate provision for the student will be put into place, either by the school or the authority. Either pastoral staff and/or staff with curriculum responsibility will liaise with the Director of SEND in drawing up a Specific Student Passport, and relevant staff will be consulted prior to the annual reviews.

Review Arrangements

The Academy's system (assessment points) for regularly observing, assessing and recording the progress of all students is used to identify students who are not making expected progress and who may have additional needs.

Wave 2

Parents / carers of all students with additional needs including SEND will receive information outlining the nature of and reason for the extra provision that has been put in place. Opportunities will be offered for parents / carers and learners to comment on their progress, and their views on the quality of provision. Progress towards targets and objectives will be reviewed termly, in line with the assessment point system.

Progress at 'Wave 2' will be measured by:

- Assessment Point progress in Maths, English and non-core subjects
- Reading age tests
- Monitoring the impact of targeted intervention
- Reductions in negative incidents and exclusions
- Level of reintegration into mainstream lessons

- Parents/carers complete a parents' voice form
- Learners complete a student voice form
- Progress is monitored and targets are discussed and set with the student.
- Decisions are made on whether to maintain or move students from one wave to another.

Wave 3

As 'wave 2', but also:

- Students receive three reviews per year.
- Progress towards targets are monitored by all teaching and pastoral staff

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- Parents/carers complete a parents' voice form which is returned prior to the review
- The student completes a student's voice form which is also completed prior to the review.
- Parents/carers and the student are invited to attend the review.
- Progress is monitored and targets are discussed and set with the student.
- The Student Passport is reviewed and updated, and saved on the Staff M:drive, with a copy sent to parents / carers.
- A decision is made whether to maintain the student at Wave 3, or to move them to 'Wave 2' or to apply for Statutory Assessment.
- Staff are made aware of this.

Education, Health and Care Plans

- Students with Education, Health and Care Plans will have a formal annual review led by the Director of SEND. The student, parents/carers, Learning and Inclusion Assistants, Mentor and representatives of any outside agencies are invited to attend.
- At least two further additional reviews are conducted during the year.
- Prior to the reviews, progress towards targets forms are circulated to all relevant teaching and pastoral staff.
- The student completes a student's voice form before the review.
- Parents are sent a parents' voice form which they complete and return to the SENCO prior to the review.
- The Student Passport is reviewed and updated, and is saved on the Staff M:drive, with a copy sent to parents / carers.
- Staff are alerted to this.

Academy request for a Statutory Assessment

For a student who is not making adequate progress, despite a period of support at Wave 3, and in agreement with the parents/carers, the Academy may request the LA to make a statutory assessment in order to determine whether it is necessary to draw up an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The Academy is required to submit evidence to the LA whose weekly SEND panel makes a judgement about whether or not the student's needs can continue to be met from the resources normally available to the Academy. This judgement will be made using the LA's current criteria for making a statutory assessment.

Planning, provision, monitoring and review processes continue as before while awaiting the outcome of the request.

Education, Health and Care Plan

A student who had a statement of special educational needs will continue to have arrangements as for Wave 3 support, and additional support that is provided using the funds made available through the statement.

There will be an Annual Review, chaired by the Director of SEND, to review the appropriateness of the provision and to recommend to the Local Authority whether any changes need to be made, either to the statement or to the funding arrangements for the student.

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Student Passports

Strategies employed to enable the student to progress are recorded for students with ECHPs and SEN Support (Waves 2 & 3) within a Student Passport which includes information about:

- The short-term targets set out for or by the student;
- The teaching strategies to be used;
- The provision to be put in place

EHCP will also include

- When the plan is to be reviewed;
- Outcomes (to be recorded when Student Passport is reviewed).

All curriculum areas share the responsibility of providing appropriate lesson content for all students.

By referring to the Student Passport, Academy staff input subject specific targets for their students, in addition to targets set on Wave 3/EHCPs. In this way, staff are able to demonstrate an awareness of individual students needs and obtain help in their planning for progress for SEND students.

Support for students with English as an Additional Language

The Language Lab is staffed and supported by a Teacher of EAL and a Learning and Inclusion Assistants specialising in EAL. It is a requirement that both members of staff are multi-lingual, and that they all speak an eastern European language, to reflect the changing demographics of the Academy and the area which it serves.

Students who speak EAL are assessed using the QCA EAL Steps to progression in the areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. From this, each EAL student is given a red / amber / green rating. Students rated as red are new to English and have very little language acquisition. Students rated as amber are acquiring English and have an increasing vocabulary, but still require support in class or through intervention programmes in the Language Lab. Students rated as green have very little or no language barrier, and are classed as “fluent” in English.

Each student classed as red has an EAL student passport. This clearly shows where each student is in acquiring English. It also shows progress over time through a colour coded termly review of progress within the key strands of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The Academy holds regular coffee mornings for families of EAL students, with an opportunity to tour the school, watch presentations by EAL students, to look at examples of students’ work, and to meet key staff. This event is supported by the New Communities Arrival Team (NCAT), and translators are provided where appropriate.

Merrill Academy arrangements for Additional Needs including SEN In-Service Training

The Director of SEND will attend LA SENCO network meetings to update and revise developments in Special Needs Education and Inclusion.

The Director of SEND will be undertaking the ‘National SENCO Award’, beginning in the Autumn term of 2016, which is a mandatory requirement for all school SENCOs.

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Meeting additional needs and inclusion issues are targeted each year through the Academy's long-term goals, the Academy development plan and the SEND Improvement Plan. In-service training and individual professional development is arranged and matched to these targets.

All staff have access to professional development opportunities and are able to apply for additional needs or inclusion training where a need is identified either for an individual student, class or whole school level.

Support staff are encouraged to extend their own professional development and the Senior Leadership Team will ensure training is funded and undertaken where appropriate.

Responsibilities of Curriculum Area Leaders/Teaching Staff

Merrill Academy is committed to the principles within the National Inclusion Statement in that we always strive to:

- Set suitable learning challenges for students with SEND;
- Respond to students' diverse and individual needs;
- Attempt to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for students with SEND.

The Academy will:

- Modify, as necessary, the National Curriculum programmes of study to provide all students with relevant, appropriately challenging work at each Key Stage
- Develop an increasingly personalised curriculum which supports the individual learning styles of students with SEND and caters for students with disabilities
- Provide flexible programmes of study with an emphasis on personal pathways and opportunities for appropriate academic or work-related learning programmes
- Ensure that support is deployed effectively so that students with SEN and disabilities can make progress and participate fully in the life of the school, as independently as possible
- Maintain high expectations that all students will have access to a broad, balanced but flexible curriculum, where any disapplication is fully in accordance with statutory regulations and are discussed with parents/carers and students
- Map curriculum provision at student, cohort and school level, to maximise achievement and ensure that curriculum provision is matched to need
- Use assessment for learning and effective target setting as an integral part of the planning process.
- Ensure all students with SEND are provided with full access to the school's extra-curricular activities.

Evaluating the success of the education for students with Additional Needs including SEND

The Governing Body, in partnership with the Director of SEND and support staff, will monitor the success of the education provided for students with SEND in a variety of ways, including:

- Monitoring and evaluating the success of short/medium term targets set for students.
- Monitoring and evaluating the progress made by students with EHCPs in relation to objectives set within their Plans.

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- Monitoring the progress made on 'P' scales, National Curriculum teacher assessments, and exam results.
- Seeking the degree of satisfaction of parents/carers and students with the quality of education provided, during parents' review meetings and, for students with EHCPs, at annual review meetings.
- Analysing faculty attendance and progress data for targeted groups of students, including students with SEND.
- Participating in scrutiny of students' planners and workbooks to assess the impact of the marking scheme and the quality of work completed.
- Evaluating evidence from monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessments for students with SEND, through the regular cycle of monitoring as part of the performance management structure and themed visits.
- Evaluating the impact of tailored provision and programmes of study for students with SEND.
- Analysing attendance and exclusion data for students with SEND.

Partnership with Parents / Carers and Students

Merrill Academy believes that parents and carers have a fundamental role to play in the process of inclusion for their children. It seeks to include all parents/carers in the education of their children. In recognition of this the school offers a range of opportunities, both formal and informal, for parents and carers to be involved with the education of their child, including through:

- A formal meeting with parents / carers each year with subject teachers.
- Three review meetings per year, with the student, the SENCO, and other relevant outside agencies, to discuss progress against targets set and to set future targets. These are usually held in the school, but arrangements can be made to meet in the parents / carers home if necessary.
- Signposting parents/carers of students with SEND to a variety of parents'/carers' groups.
- Encouraging parents/carers to communicate through students' planners.

Working with Parents and Carers with a a disability or inclusion need

Merrill Academy recognises there will be a number of disabled parents/carers of students within the Academy and we work to try ensure they are fully included in parents/carers activities. We also make sure that parents / carers' meetings venues are accessible, we will visit parents at home if they cannot access the Academy. We ask parents / carers about their access preference and then send notes or letters in the required format. Some parents/carers receive regular contact by telephone as this is their preferred method of communication.

Disability equality and trips or out of Academy activities

Merrill Academy strives to make all trips inclusive by planning in advance and using accessible places. Learning Inclusion Assistants accompany students on trips and activities providing support for students. All students are welcome at our after Academy activities and we try to arrange transport where appropriate.

The Advice, Information and Guidance curriculum includes issues of disability, difference and valuing diversity. Advice will be sought from disabled people's organisations or appropriate resources.

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The library resources are regularly reviewed to ensure they include books that reflect the range of 'special educational needs' issues and come from a disability equality perspective. Priority is given to the ordering of books with positive images and a positive portrayal of disabled people as they become available.

The Academy is aware of the impact of language on the students within our Academy. We work with our students to understand the impact of the words they use, and deal seriously with derogatory name calling related to special educational needs or disability under our Anti Bullying Policy.

We also try to make sure we have positive images of disabled students and adults in displays, resources etc.

Concerns

If a parent has concerns about the way the Academy is responding to the special needs of his/her child the following channels exist to ensure that concerns are dealt with. Contact should be made with the Director of SEND. As they have an overview of the support structure of the Academy it is highly likely that any issue that arises can be dealt with quickly.

In the event of a difficulty not being resolved by the Director of SEND, the parent should contact the Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning. If, at this stage, parents still have concerns, then a formal letter should be written to the Headteacher clearly stating the grievance that exists.

The Headteacher would then assess the evidence and on the basis of the cases put forward by the parents and the Academy and reach an impartial decision.

Health and Safety

The Learning Support Area has full regard for the Health and Safety of students and staff. It follows the School Health and Safety Policy. Risk Assessments are carried out prior to any SEND student taking part in any activity if considered appropriate.

Conclusion

Every student will be encouraged to develop positive attitudes to learning, and thereby gain confidence in their own abilities to cope with all aspects of school life. The 2014 Disability and Special Educational Needs Code of Practice maintains that schools must do everything in their power to make provision for students with special educational needs. At Merrill Academy we have regard for this Code of Practice. We are committed to developing strong partnerships between students, parents, the local authority, health and social services and voluntary organisations. In this way we will strive to remove barriers to participation and learning and ensure achievement for all.

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