



WILLOW TREE FEDERATION



Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Willow Tree Federation
Willow Lane Community Primary School and Appletree Nursery School

Mission Statement

The children are at the heart of everything we do. Willow Tree Federation takes a holistic approach to child development and works with children, families and the wider community to change and enhance lives. We celebrate diversity and believe that learning in an inclusive community empowers every child: we plant the seed that grows the future.

We hold high aspirations for pupils with SEND. We will identify needs early, remove barriers, provide high-quality teaching and special educational provision, involve pupils and parents in decisions, and evaluate whether support improves progress, participation, independence, wellbeing and preparation for the next stage.

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SEND governor	Paula Hamilton
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Related publication	Annual SEND Information Report and Inclusion Strategy

1. Purpose, scope and statutory framework

This policy explains how the federation identifies, assesses and meets special educational needs; secures a graduated response; monitors progress; works with families and professionals; and fulfils its duties for pupils with SEN and disabilities. It applies to all pupils and all staff across Willow Lane Community Primary School and Appletree Nursery School.

The governing body and staff must have regard to the Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years. This policy should be read with the current versions of:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated SEND Regulations 2014;
- Equality Act 2010, including the duties not to discriminate, to make reasonable adjustments and to plan to increase disabled pupils' access;
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework and National Curriculum;
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions statutory guidance;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, statutory assessment guidance and the Teachers' Standards;
- Lancashire Local Offer, local criteria and procedures; and the federation's Safeguarding, Accessibility, Admissions, Attendance, Medical Conditions, Equality, Complaints and Willow Tree Way relationships for behaviour policy.

2. Definition of special educational needs and disability

A child has SEND where they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made. For compulsory-school-age pupils, this means they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or a disability which prevents or hinders them from using educational facilities generally provided for peers. Special educational provision is provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for others of the same age. For children under compulsory school age, the definition considers the provision they are likely to need when they reach that age.

A disability is a physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities. A pupil may be disabled, have SEN, both, or neither. Reasonable adjustments and support will be made whether or not a pupil is recorded at SEN Support.

Four broad areas of need

Area	Examples of barriers we assess
Communication and interaction	Speech, language and communication; understanding or expressing language; social communication and interaction; autism-related differences.
Cognition and learning	Learning at a slower pace despite appropriate teaching; specific learning difficulties affecting literacy, numeracy, coordination or processing; moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.
Social, emotional and mental health	Difficulties with emotional regulation, relationships, attention, anxiety, mental health or behaviour that may communicate an underlying need.
Sensory and/or physical	Hearing or visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment, physical disability, motor or sensory-processing needs requiring additional provision or equipment.

These areas are not labels. Needs often overlap and change over time; assessment considers the whole child, strengths, context and the effect of barriers on learning and participation (Code 6.25-6.35).

3. Principles and aims

- Every teacher is responsible and accountable for the progress and development of every pupil in their class, including where support is delivered by others.
- High-quality adaptive teaching is the first response. Additional intervention cannot compensate for weak teaching.
- Identification is intended to decide what action is needed, not to fit a child into a category or wait for a diagnosis.

- Pupils and parents are partners in assessment, outcome setting, provision and review; information is accessible and strengths-based.
- Provision is ambitious, evidence-informed, inclusive and designed to develop independence and participation with peers.
- A graduated assess-plan-do-review cycle increases in precision, frequency and specialist input as necessary.
- Resources are deployed transparently and evaluated for their impact on outcomes.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Governing body	Ensure legal duties are met; appoint a qualified teacher as SENDCo; oversee the policy, SEN Information Report, Accessibility Plan, funding and outcomes; challenge leaders and ensure the SENDCo has sufficient time and resources.
Headteacher	Hold executive accountability for inclusive provision; ensure policy implementation, staffing, training, safeguarding, attendance and curriculum alignment; work with the SENDCo and governors.
SENDCo	Lead day-to-day operation; coordinate provision and records; advise on the graduated approach and resources; liaise with pupils, parents, designated teacher, staff, next settings, local authority, health, social care and specialists; monitor quality and impact.
Class teacher / key worker	Identify emerging concerns; deliver adaptive teaching; assess and record progress; lead daily provision and parent/pupil discussions; implement and review TLPs; coordinate with teaching assistants.
Teaching assistants and pastoral staff	Deliver agreed support under teacher direction, with fidelity; provide observations and assessment information; promote independence and help pupils transfer learning into class.
All staff	Know this policy and pupil-specific adjustments; maintain high expectations; protect dignity, safety and belonging; raise concerns promptly and contribute to review.
Pupils and parents/carers	Share strengths, aspirations, concerns and relevant information; contribute to outcomes and reviews; help evaluate whether support is working.

5. Our inclusive universal offer

The Willow Tree Federation's curriculum adaptations and provision maps define a universal offer available without a diagnosis. Teachers select approaches in response to assessed barriers while retaining ambitious curriculum goals. Core approaches include:

- explicit teaching and repeated exposure to subject vocabulary; simplified but not impoverished language; checking understanding and allowing processing time;
- clear modelling, worked examples, chunking, stem sentences, writing frames, visual organisers, visual timetables, symbols and dual coding;
- multi-sensory teaching, manipulatives, flexible grouping, retrieval and additional guided practice;
- alternative ways to communicate, participate and record, including assistive technology, word processing, speech-to-text, scribing and touch typing where appropriate;
- predictable routines, positive relationships, restorative conversations, movement or regulation breaks, calm spaces and carefully planned group roles;
- reasonable adjustments to environment, resources, assessment, trips, clubs, sport, arts and social times; and
- specialist equipment or advice for hearing, vision, physical, medical or sensory needs.

Subject leaders and the SENDCo monitor whether adaptations preserve ambition, support participation and lead to increasing independence. Teaching assistants supplement teacher instruction and do not become a substitute for it.

6. How we identify pupils who may have SEND

What may prompt a concern

A concern may arise from one indicator or a pattern over time. Staff do not wait for a formal diagnosis. Evidence may include:

- slower than expected progress from the pupil's starting point, despite high-quality teaching and appropriate adaptations;
- a widening gap, uneven attainment profile, difficulty retaining or applying learning, or reliance on unusually intensive scaffolding;
- communication, interaction, attention, regulation, sensory, motor, physical, independence or self-help barriers;
- withdrawn, distressed or disruptive behaviour that may indicate an unmet communication, learning or mental-health need;
- concerns raised by the pupil, parent/carer, teacher, key worker, previous setting, health professional or specialist;
- information from the two-year progress check, EYFS assessment, Reception Baseline, phonics and curriculum assessments, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding or transition records.

Factors that are not SEN by themselves

Slow progress or low attainment does not automatically mean SEN, and age-related attainment does not rule SEN out. Disability, English as an additional language, attendance and punctuality, disadvantage, being looked after or previously looked after, health and welfare, family circumstances or being a Service child are not SEN by themselves, although they may coexist with SEN and require support. Staff assess underlying causes and do not assume that behaviour or EAL is SEND (Code 6.21-6.24).

Identification pathway

Stage	Action and evidence	Decision / record
1. Notice and listen	Teacher/key worker records the concern, pupil strengths and examples; checks prior information; speaks promptly with pupil and parents. Immediate safeguarding, medical or attendance action is taken where relevant.	Brief concern note on the school system (CPOMS); teacher to record short-term actions/ adaptations and a review date.
2. Review teaching and barriers	Teacher, with Key Stage/ Subject leaders as needed, checks curriculum access, attendance, teaching quality, reasonable adjustments and response to the universal offer. Baseline measures are selected.	Adaptations documented; baseline and expected response agreed. This is not automatically SEN Support.
3. Assess response	Over the agreed period, normally 4-6 teaching weeks unless urgency requires faster action, the teacher monitors progress, engagement and independence and samples work.	Review initial actions with pupil/parents; Add to CPOMS: resolve, continue universal support, consult SENDCo, or move directly to specialist/urgent action.

Stage	Action and evidence	Decision / record
4. SENCo analysis and decision	Teacher and SENDCo analyse attainment, progress, developmental and wider evidence; pupil/parent views; intervention response; previous history and, where needed, specialist assessment.	If special educational provision is required, record SEN Support and formally inform parents. If not, record the alternative support and review.
5. Graduated SEN Support	Agree outcomes, provision, responsible staff, frequency, measures and review date in the TLP. Implement assess-plan-do-review with increasing precision.	At least termly formal review; continue, adapt, step down, seek specialist advice or consider an EHC needs assessment.
6. Statutory pathway where necessary	Where needs may require provision beyond that reasonably available through SEN Support, discuss requesting an EHC needs assessment. The school may act sooner for severe, complex or rapidly emerging need.	Evidence submitted in line with law and Lancashire procedures; current support continues while decisions are made.

There is no fixed period a pupil must spend at SEN Support before an EHCP needs assessment can be considered. Decisions are based on the nature, severity and persistence of need, action already taken and the provision that may be required.

7. Assessment: what we collect and how we judge progress

A clear baseline

Before additional or different provision begins, the teacher and SENDCo establish a starting point that is proportionate to the concern. Assessment draws on multiple sources and never relies on a single score or label:

Evidence domain	Examples used at Willow
Attainment and curriculum	Teacher assessment; statutory and school assessments; phonics, reading fluency/comprehension, spelling, writing and mathematics measures; work samples; curriculum checkpoints.
Early development and communication	Development Matters/EYFS assessment, two-year progress check, Reception Baseline, WellComm where appropriate, observation of communication in different contexts and speech-language advice.
Smaller-step progress	PIVATS or Lancashire progression materials, ATTS in early years, task analysis or other criterion-referenced measures where age-related measures are too broad.
Learning behaviours and independence	Attention, working memory, organisation, initiation, persistence, use and removal of scaffolds, transfer of strategies and ability to participate with peers.
Wellbeing, regulation and participation	Pupil voice, belonging, anxiety/regulation observations, Boxall Profile, behaviour patterns, attendance/punctuality, participation in lessons, social times, trips and clubs.
Context and professional evidence	Parent/carer views, previous-setting records, medical information, sensory/environmental audit, and reports from educational psychology, SALT, OT, physiotherapy, specialist teachers, health or social care.

Outcome and progress measures

Each TLP outcome is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. It describes the change expected for the pupil, not merely the provision adults will deliver. For every outcome the plan records:

- the baseline and success criterion, including the context in which the skill should be demonstrated;

- the universal adaptations and additional/different provision, frequency, group size, responsible adult and intended duration;
- how progress will be measured and by whom; the review date; and the pupil's and parent's contribution;
- how targeted learning will connect to classroom teaching and how independence/generalisation will be checked.

We judge progress against the pupil's starting point and agreed outcome, considering accuracy, fluency, independence, generalisation, participation and wellbeing. A pupil may be making progress even when working below age-related expectations; equally, attainment at age-related expectations does not rule out significant difficulty or disproportionate effort.

Progress-monitoring timetable

When	What happens	Record and accountability
Daily / weekly	Teacher and staff observe response to adaptations, collect brief formative evidence and check intervention attendance/dosage.	Class records and intervention log; teacher remains accountable.
At agreed intervention checkpoints	Use the same or comparable measure as the baseline; review delivery, pupil response and transfer into lessons.	Intervention record; decision to continue, adapt or stop.
At least half-termly for TLP outcomes	Teacher evaluates progress toward each outcome with the pupil; SENDCo samples quality and supports problem-solving.	TLP updated with evidence and a clear decision.
At least termly with parents	A structured review led by a teacher who knows the pupil; sufficient time for family and pupil views; agree new outcomes/provision with specialist advice.	Written review shared with parents and relevant staff; information system updated.
Termly leadership review	SENDCo/SLT analyse individual and group outcomes, attendance, participation, provision quality and value for money.	Provision map, inclusion dashboard and governor report.
EHCP review	Progress toward each outcome and provision is reviewed at least annually; for children under five, more frequent reviews may be appropriate.	School cooperates with the local authority and circulates reports within required timescales.

What counts as adequate progress

The Willow Tree Federation considers whether the pupil:

- closes the attainment gap with peers, prevents the gap from widening, or matches/improves upon previous progress;
- accesses the full curriculum and demonstrates improved knowledge, skills, fluency, independence or participation;
- achieves or is on track to achieve the TLP/EHCP outcomes and sustains/generalises learning;
- shows improved attendance, engagement, regulation, wellbeing or readiness for the next stage where these are relevant barriers.

8. The graduated approach: assess-plan-do-review

Part	Willow practice
ASSESS	Teacher and SENDCo analyse strengths and needs using accurate formative assessment, prior attainment/progress, pupil and parent views, response to teaching, wider context and professional advice. Assessment is reviewed when needs or circumstances change.

Part	Willow practice
PLAN	Pupil, parents, teacher and SENDCo agree ambitious outcomes; evidence-informed provision and adjustments; responsible staff; frequency/duration; baseline and measures; review date. Parents are formally informed when SEN Support begins and receive the plan.
DO	The teacher remains responsible for daily teaching and progress. Staff receive guidance and training, deliver provision as agreed, record dosage/response and link targeted support to classroom learning. The SENDCo supports problem-solving and implementation.
REVIEW	At the agreed date, evaluate progress, impact and quality/fidelity of provision with pupil and parent views. Decide to sustain, adapt, intensify, seek specialist assessment, step down or consider an EHC needs assessment. Record and share the decision.

9. The Willow Tree Federation graduated provision

Provision maps for EYFS/KS1, Years 3/4 and Years 5/6 show universal, targeted and specialist support across the four broad areas. Provision is selected from assessment, not from diagnosis alone, and is reviewed for impact.

Area	Targeted examples currently available	Specialist / individualised examples
Communication and interaction	WellComm-informed support, Lexia, BPVS, DSL, Talk Boost, Time to Talk, Communication Cookbook, vocabulary pre-teaching, Lego Therapy.	SALT programmes; symbols/PECS and individual communication systems; social stories/comic-strip conversations; specialist assessment; TACPAC where appropriate.
Cognition and learning	Phonics catch-up, Lexia, additional/paired reading, reading comprehension, Sentence Adventure, Catch Up Maths, 5 Minute Box, precision teaching, Plus 1/Power of 2, executive-function teaching.	Individualised curriculum/access arrangements; specialist teacher or educational psychology advice; intensive one-to-one teaching where assessed as necessary.
Social, emotional and mental health	Pastoral support, movement breaks, regulation teaching, Talkabout, structured social support and restorative conversations.	Individual regulation plans; sensory circuits; calm/work spaces; Zones of Regulation/5 Point Scale; Early Help, health or specialist involvement.
Sensory and/or physical	Dough Disco, fine-motor groups, BEAM, Squiggle Wiggle, Write from the Start, handwriting tools and touch typing.	OT/physiotherapy programmes; hearing/vision/physical-disability specialist advice; radio aids, sensory equipment and individual access/risk plans.

Programmes named in the maps are examples, not entitlements or a fixed menu. Leaders may replace, stop or adapt an approach when evidence, need, implementation quality or impact indicates this is appropriate.

10. Specialist involvement and EHC needs assessments

Specialists may be involved at any point, with parents involved in the decision. The Willow Tree Federation seeks advice where needs are complex, safety or access requires prompt expertise, or a pupil continues to make little or no progress despite well-implemented evidence-informed SEN Support. Advice is translated into teaching, TLP outcomes and provision, recorded and reviewed.

A parent, the school or another permitted person may ask the local authority for an EHC needs assessment. The federation will consider this with the family where the pupil may need special educational provision beyond that normally available from the school's resources. The request will evidence strengths and needs; pupil/parent views; progress and attainment; SEN Support cycles;

provision and cost; intervention fidelity and impact; specialist advice; attendance, health and social care information where relevant. Provision continues during the process.

Where an EHCP is issued, the school must use its best endeavours to secure the specified educational provision, cooperate with reviews and monitor progress toward outcomes. EHCP provision is not limited to the school's general provision map.

11. Pupils and parents as partners

- Concerns are discussed early. Meetings start with strengths, aspirations and the pupil's lived experience, then agree outcomes, support and next steps.
- Pupil voice is gathered in an accessible way through conversation, observation, visuals, choices, TLPs and EHCP reviews.
- Parents receive a written record of SEN Support decisions/ reports and reviews and clear information about impact, planned next steps, the Lancashire Local Offer and SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.
- Plans may include practical ways families can reinforce learning at home, but school provision is not made conditional on parental capacity.
- Information is provided in accessible language and interpretation or alternative formats are arranged where reasonably required.

12. Working with wider services

With appropriate information sharing and consent, the federation works with Lancashire Inclusion Service, educational psychologists, specialist teachers, Portage, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, school nursing, health visiting, paediatrics, play therapists, CAMHS, Children and Family Wellbeing Service, Children's Social Care, attendance services, short-stay or special schools and voluntary/community services. Where wider family circumstances contribute to barriers, a Your Family's Early Help Assessment or other multi-agency response may be appropriate.

13. Admissions and transitions

Pupils with SEND are admitted in line with the school's Admissions Policy and legal duties. The school does not discriminate and will make reasonable adjustments. For a child with an EHCP naming the school, admission follows the statutory process.

- On entry, staff obtain information from the pupil, family, previous setting and professionals and put necessary provision in place without avoidable delay.
- For room, class and key-stage moves, current and receiving staff share TLPs, provision and successful strategies; pupils receive visits, visual preparation or phased transition as needed.
- For nursery-to-Reception and primary-to-secondary transfer, the SENDCo liaises with the receiving SENDCo, agrees information sharing with parents, invites next-setting staff to reviews where useful and arranges additional visits.
- EHCP phase-transfer reviews and amendments follow statutory timescales; transition outcomes include communication, independence, belonging and curriculum access.

14. Assessment access arrangements

Normal classroom practice should build independence and show a pupil's usual way of working. Access arrangements for statutory assessment are based on current national guidance and evidence of need; they must not change the construct being assessed. Parents are informed of significant arrangements. Any decision about participation in statutory assessment follows the applicable statutory guidance, not a general policy of disapplication.

15. Medical conditions, accessibility and full participation

Medical conditions do not automatically constitute SEN. Pupils may require an Individual Healthcare Plan, reasonable adjustments and/or SEN provision. The federation follows its Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy and obtains appropriate training and risk assessment. SEND and medical information is shared only with staff who need it to keep the pupil safe and included.

Willow Lane is on one level, has double entrance doors and two accessible toilets, including one with a shower and changing bed. Appletree Nursery is on one level with double entrance doors and an accessible toilet. Physical access is only one aspect of accessibility: the Accessibility Plan also addresses curriculum, information, sensory environments and participation.

Trips, clubs, physical education, arts, outdoor learning, playtimes and leadership opportunities are planned inclusively. Adjustments may include accessible information, specialist equipment, additional staffing, quiet or sensory options, transport planning or phased participation. A pupil will not be excluded from an opportunity because adjustments were considered too late.

16. Behaviour, wellbeing, attendance and bullying

The Willow Tree Way combines high expectations with explicit routines, positive relationships, recognition that behaviour communicates need, calm and least-intrusive responses, restorative repair and graduated support. Where behaviour is persistent, withdrawn or distressed, staff assess possible communication, learning, sensory, mental-health, safeguarding, bullying, attendance and family factors. SEND does not remove expectations, but reasonable adjustments and proactive support must be considered and recorded.

Attendance is monitored for pupils with SEND and considered alongside progress and wellbeing. Where absence is a concern, school works with the pupil, family and relevant services to identify barriers and agree a reviewed support plan. Bullying is not tolerated; pupils with SEND are supported to report concerns accessibly and receive appropriate protection and follow-up.

17. Records, confidentiality and information sharing

The federation keeps accurate and up-to-date records of concerns, discussions, decisions, SEN status, outcomes, strategies, additional/different provision, specialist involvement and impact. TLPs, provision maps, intervention records and EHCP documents form part of the pupil record and are shared with parents and relevant staff. Records are stored and shared in line with UK data protection law, safeguarding requirements and the federation's retention arrangements. Information is shared with professionals on a lawful, necessary and proportionate basis; consent is sought where required.

18. Funding, resources and staff development

The governing body, headteacher, SENDCo and business manager oversee the use of core funding, notional SEN funding, pupil-specific high-needs top-up and other grants. Funding streams retain their distinct purposes. Resources are allocated according to assessed need and statutory duties, not solely by diagnosis or funding band, and are evaluated for impact and value.

Training priorities arise from cohort need, policy implementation, lesson/provision review and staff confidence. Staff development includes adaptive teaching, the four areas of need, teaching-assistant deployment, intervention delivery, medical/safety needs and use of specialist equipment. External professionals and local networks contribute expertise. The SENDCo receives sufficient leadership time and administrative support.

19. Monitoring and evaluation

The SENDCo and senior leaders evaluate both implementation and pupil outcomes. Governors receive at least termly assurance without identifiable pupil information. Monitoring includes:

- attainment and progress from starting points, TLP/EHCP outcomes and smaller-step measures where relevant;
- attendance, behaviour, suspensions, bullying, wellbeing, belonging, participation and independence;
- quality of adaptive teaching through learning walks, observation, work/planning review and pupil voice;
- intervention entry, dosage, fidelity, progress, classroom transfer, exit/adjust decisions and cost;
- parent and pupil experience, review attendance, complaints and external recommendations implemented;
- patterns by SEND/EHCP and other relevant groups, used proportionately to improve the universal offer.

The policy, SEN Information Report, provision maps and SEND priorities are reviewed annually. The SENDCo reports to the governing body; findings inform the school improvement plan, inclusion strategy, staff development, Accessibility Plan and budget.

20. Complaints and impartial advice

Concerns should normally be raised first with the class teacher/key worker, then the SENDCo and headteacher so that they can be addressed promptly. If unresolved, the federation's published Complaints Policy applies, with governing body involvement as specified. Parents are signposted to Lancashire SEND Information, Advice and Support Service for free, confidential and impartial support. Statutory rights relating to EHC assessments, mediation and tribunal appeals are explained by the local authority and SENDIAS.

21. Linked school documents

Document	How it connects
SEND Information Report	Annual, accessible description of how this policy is implemented and the school's contribution to the Lancashire Local Offer.
Inclusion Strategy 2026-27	Seven-principle improvement priorities, barriers, intended outcomes, monitoring and funding plan.

Document	How it connects
EYFS/KS1, Y3/4 and Y5/6 Provision Maps	Graduated universal, targeted and specialist examples across the four areas of need.
SEND Curriculum Adaptations	Subject-specific ways to anticipate and remove cognition, communication, sensory/physical and SEMH barriers.
Willow Tree Way Relationship Approach to Positive Behaviour	Explicit routines, positive relationships, restorative practice, graduated response and SEND-aware adaptations.
Accessibility Plan and Equality information/objectives	Planned improvements to physical access, curriculum, information and reasonable adjustments.
Safeguarding, Attendance, Medical Conditions, Admissions, Anti-bullying and Complaints policies	Related statutory and operational duties that may intersect with SEND.

References and useful links

Department for Education and Department of Health, SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015; GOV.UK page updated September 2024). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/part/3>

Equality Act 2010. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Lancashire SEND Local Offer. <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/>

Lancashire SEND Information, Advice and Support Service. <https://lancssendias.org.uk/>

Education Endowment Foundation, Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send>

Education Endowment Foundation, Guide to Inclusive Teaching. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/inclusive-teaching>