THORNHILL ACADEMY

# SEND Policy & Information report

2025/2026

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| Date of Approval: | September 2024 |
| Approved by: | LAB |
| Date of next Review: | November 2025 |

Consilium Academies

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# Thornhill Academy SEND policy and SEND information report.

## 1. Aims and introduction

**Our SEND policy and Information report alms to:**

- Set out how Thornhill Academy will support and make provision for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEND.

**Thornhill Academy aims to:**

Identify and monitor student's individual needs during transition and/or at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate provision can be made to meet any SEND.

- Provide curriculum opportunities to prepare for adulthood and develop the young persons' perspective of appropriate workplace skills and higher or further educational pathways.
- Engage students with learning and encourage high aspirations and expectations tailored to each.
- Work with other professionals and support services where appropriate to improve outcomes for students with SEND needs.
- Plan and deliver an effective curriculum to meet the needs of learners with SEND in line with the Code of Practice 2015
- Assess SEND and identify students for access arrangements prior to external examinations.
- Communicate regularly with parents and carers to support inclusion and best practice.

  Continue to develop staff practice and areas of special expertise through training and experience, which can be driven by student's needs.
- Monitor and review our SEND policy annually.

Thornhill Academy uses the graduated response system for identifying, assessing, and responding to students' SEND. Within Sunderland, the SEND Ranges are used by SEND staff to understand student's needs based on type and range within which their child fits. A register of students with SEND is maintained in school. Where the student has an EHCP in place, this will be followed to meet the students' needs. Reviews of the EHCP will take place annually with any additional meetings included throughout the year as required. Any additional support which is required for a child with an EHCP can be addressed with the local authority via the review meeting.

All staff at Thornhill have responsibility for teaching students with different learning needs (including SEND) and are expected to provide for them appropriately to meet those needs in line with the standards for classroom teachers. Where a student has a specific need, reasonable adjustments can be made. The Academy is equipped with disabled toilet facilities and double door access to many areas.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy and information report is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN coordinators (SENCOs) and the SEND information report
- Thornhill Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2023. This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. Definitions

A pupil has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for an altered or special educational provision to be made for them.

They have learning difficulties or a disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most of the others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### The SENDCO

The SENDCO at Thornhill Academy is:
Ms Alexa Riddle
She is supported by Mrs. Margaret Mcleish - Assistant SENDCO
SENDCos can be contacted by emailing thr-enquiries@consilium-at.com or on telephone by 0191 500 7981.

Those leading SEND must work with the headteacher and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school. They also:

- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND, including those who have EHC plans.

  Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching.

- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEND support.

  Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively.

  Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services.

- Liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements

- Ensure the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up to date.

### The SEND governor

The SEND governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND and disability provision within the school and update the governing board on this.
- Work with the Headteacher and SENDCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.

### The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Work with the SENDCO and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school.
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEND and/or a disability.

### Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.
- Working with the SENDCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision.
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy.

## 5 SEN admissions arrangements

School's admissions policy for special educational needs (SEND) mirrors the standard admissions process, but with specific considerations for children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. For children with an EHC plan, the plan itself will specify the appropriate school placement in Section I. This will be decided and planned for in advance in their annual review meeting at primary school. Children with EHC plans have their school placement determined by the plan itself, and the local authority should adhere to this.

For children without EHC plans, the standard application process for their relevant school year applies, and the council will consider their needs during the allocation process. Schools cannot refuse a child a place solely because they have special educational needs. The Fair Access Protocol may apply to children facing challenges in securing a school place, including those with SEN. Parents have the right to appeal if their child is refused a place at their preferred school, including those with SEN. For specific queries about SEND admissions, contact the local authority's Admissions and Exclusions Team.

## 6 SEND information report

### The kinds of SEND that are provided for

Our school currently provides additional and/or different provision for a range of needs, including:

- Communication and interaction, for example, autistic spectrum disorder and speech and language difficulties
- Cognition and learning, for example, dyslexia, dyspraxia and moderate learning difficulties
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties, for example, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety and stress
- Sensory and/or physical needs, for example, visual impairments and hearing impairments

### Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs

We will assess each student's current levels of attainment on entry. Throughout their time at the Academy, class teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all pupils and identify those whose progress:

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

- Fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers.
- Widens the attainment gap.

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, social needs or engagement.

Slow progress and low attainment could result in a SEND being identified but will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEND.

When deciding whether special educational provision is required, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

### Consulting and involving students and parents or carers

We warmly welcome all parents and carers into the Academy, and we would encourage parents or carers to contact school with any information, advice or queries related to the young people we work with.
We will have an early discussion with the student and their parents or carers when identifying possible special educational provision. Together we form the partnership which holds the shared goals of providing the best opportunities for learning and supporting our young people to reach their potential. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty.
- We consider the parents' or carers' concerns and the views of the young person.
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child and what the next steps are.

We will formally notify parents when it is decided that a pupil will receive SEND support.

## Assessing and reviewing pupils' progress towards outcomes

We will follow the graduated approach and the four-part cycle of ***assess, plan, do, review***
The subject teacher will continually monitor the student's progress throughout the year using formative assessment and with formal assessment reviews at two points throughout the year. Teachers and pastoral staff work with the SENDCo to carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs.

All teachers and support staff who work with the student will be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided, and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required via a student overview. We will regularly review the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the student's progress.

## Supporting pupils moving between phases and preparing for adulthood

We work closely with our local primary schools to ascertain the needs of individual students who are planning to join the Academy.

Curriculum transition points are well supported with young people being informed and supported to make relevant choices for Key Stage 4 curriculum choices. When exiting KS4 students will receive careers advisor appointments and guidance. We will share appropriate information with the school, college, or other setting the student is moving to.

## Our approach to teaching pupils with SEND

Quality first teaching is our first step in responding to pupils who have SEND which means that the teacher has the highest possible expectations for all students in their class. The teacher may adjust their teaching style to incorporate more practical learning or utilise strategies as outlined within the young person's

student overview.
Where a young person requires support beyond what can be offered within the classroom, we will also provide appropriate intervention.

We also work closely with many external agencies who offer support, guidance and input for individual students based on their needs and existing diagnoses.

## Learning Support Unit

Our Learning Support Unit is overseen by specialist HLTA and provides a small group nurturing environment for students who need intervention.

## Thrive

Thrive is staffed by a HLTA and provides small group SEMH interventions

### Expertise and training of staff.

Mrs. Riddle is a qualified and experienced SENDCO. Holding the NASENDCo award. She is supported by a very experienced teacher as an Assistant SENDCO. The learning support team are led by two HLTAs one qualified recently in childhood studies and the other holding a degree in psychology; the latter leading our SEMH provision. Our Principal line manages the department and is also an experienced and qualified SENDCO.

SEND CPD is regularly calendared for staff. This includes identification and implementation of reasonable adjustments. SEND students are capably supported by our team of LSAs. Our pastoral team also support students with SEND and this is made up of some very skilled senior colleagues.

All teachers are qualified to teach students with a special educational need. As a school, we deliver regular training sessions, to refresh staff knowledge and to update them on any changes that they need to be aware of. Staff also receive regular, confidential, fortnightly SEN bulletins, which will give them additional information about specific students on the SEN register.

### Adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment.

We make the following adaptations to ensure all pupils' needs are met:

- A differentiated curriculum to ensure all students can access learning. Students may be grouped by need, teaching style may be adapted and content of the lesson may vary depending on the needs of students. On occasion, students may be provided small group or 1:1 work.
- Resources are differentiated appropriately and staff adapt as needed.
- All staff have received input from the SENDCo on use of additional aids, such as laptops, computer readers, coloured overlays, visual prompts and other tools.
- Differentiation which includes quality first teaching methods such as additional processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud. Differentiation may also include bespoke strategies such as prompting for sensory breaks, seating allocations and individual adaptations.
- Medical needs may or may not be related to SEND and are coordinated by the managing medication team under the responsibility of the SENDCo. Care plans are individually designed and agreed with parents, carers and professionals where appropriate. There is a designated medical facility in school with identified key staff. Information about medical needs is passed to appropriate staff through our provision map.

### Securing equipment and facilities.

Our school is committed to making reasonable adjustments wherever possible. This may include:

- Contacting the local authority to see if adaptations to the building are required
- Ensuring that the right equipment is available to meet every child's needs

- Where specialist equipment is needed, contacting the Local Authority team and relevant health professionals to assess needs and provide advice and/or equipment

## Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEND by:

- Reviewing individual progress towards their outcomes
- Using student voice and focus groups.
- Monitoring by the SENDCo and Head of Department
- Using provision maps to measure progress and track completed intervention.
- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans

## Enabling pupils with SEND to engage in activities available to those in the school who do not have SEND

Extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all students, including our before-and after-school clubs.

All students are encouraged to participate in our residential and non-residential trips. All students are encouraged to take part in special events and workshops such as sports day. No child is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEN or disability.

Outside of the school, there are allocated parking bays for Blue Badge holders near to the main reception.

We have an accessibility plan.

## Support for improving emotional and social development.

We provide support for pupils to improve their emotional and social development in the following ways:

- Pupils with SEN are encouraged to be part of the school council.
- Pupils with SEN are also encouraged to be part of the learning support lunch club to promote teamwork/building friendships etc.
- Pupils with SEN are included in extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils with SEN take part in pupil voice regularly throughout the year.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.

## Working with other agencies

Our school has strong relationships with many agencies, and we continue to work alongside health and social care professionals to ensure the needs of our students and their families are met. We work with the following agencies to provide support for students with SEND:

- Mental health services including CAMHS, CYPS, Washington MIND and School Counsellor
- Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists
- Hearing Impairment Team and Sensory Team
- Autism Outreach Team, Youth Offending Team, Wear Kids and Youth Drug and Alcohol Project
  School nurse
- Early Help Team and Social Workers

## Complaints about SEN provision

Complaints about SEND provision in our school should be initially made to the SENDCo in the first instance. They will then be referred to the school's complaints policy outlined on the website if unresolved.

### Contact details of support services for parents of pupils with SEND

SENDIASS are a service for young people (aged 25 or under) who are disabled or need extra help with learning or parents and carers of those young people. Services can give information, advice and support on:

Schools, college or training

Getting the right healthcare

Getting the right support at home, school or in the workplace

https://cyp.iassnetwork.org.uk/service/sunderland-send-information-advice-and-support-service-parentpartnership/

### The local authority local offer

Our local authority's local offer is published here:

https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/article/21485/Sunderland-Local- Offer

## 6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy and information report will be reviewed by the SENDCo **every year.** It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.
It will be approved by the governing board.

## 7. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to our other policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

## 8. Disclaimer

Thornhill Academy is a mainstream secondary school which is not connected to and is separate from the Consilium Evolve Alternative Provision which caters for secondary age students who experience emotionally based school avoidance.