



LINKS
ACADEMY
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Trust SEND Local Offer and Information Report

September 2023

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Trust SEND Local Offer and Information Report

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Amendments

Periodically the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees will add to or revise the content within this policy. Any revision made are noted below.

Edition	Date	Revision made by	Content revised
1.0	01.09.20	Gemma Nash	Updated to MAT format. No other changes made from the previous policy (September 2019)
2.0	01.09.20	Gemma Nash	No significant changes
3.0	16.09.22	Gemma Nash	No significant changes
4.0	15.09.23	Gemma Nash/Michelle Bruce	No significant changes

Please note that for the purpose of this policy, the following terminology will apply:

Headteacher	Executive Head, Head of School, Headteacher
Trust	Links Multi Academy Trust
School	Links Academy St Albans, Links Academy Hatfield and Cedars
Parent	Parent means the person with parental responsibility, and could be the carer.

Contents

The Links Academy – School offer	4
Who are we?	4
The team	4
Assessment	4
Parental involvement	5
Meeting students’ needs	5
LINKS SEN Information Report 2023/24	6
1. How does the school know if students/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?	6
2. How will school staff support my child?	6
3. How will I know how my child is doing?	7
4. How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child’s needs?	7
5. What support will there be for my child’s overall wellbeing?	7
6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?	8
7. What training have the staff, supporting students and young people with SEND, had or are having?	8
8. How will you help me to support my child’s learning?	8
9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child’s education?	9
10. How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?	9
11. How accessible is the school environment?	9
12. Who can I contact for further information?	9
13. How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a mainstream school or the next stage of education and life?	10
14. How are the school’s resources allocated and matched to student’s special educational needs?	10
15. How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?	10
Policy Review – SEND School Offer and Information Report 2021	11

The Links Academy – School offer

Who are we?

We are an Education Support Centre (ESC) for students in school years 7 – 11 at risk of or permanent exclusion from school – the majority of the students educated here arrive with some barriers to learning.

We also have a Primary Support Base which provides support to all primary schools in St Albans and Harpenden with students who are at risk of permanent exclusion or those that have been excluded-these students are in Yr1 to Yr6. We also provide an Outreach service to Primary in DSPL 7 and Secondary in DSPL 5, 6 and 7. Students are referred to us through mainstream provisions or through Hertfordshire County Council.

Links Academy work towards raising the achievement of all our students and ensure equality of opportunity for all regardless of gender, race, SEND, background and sexual orientation. Our aim is to provide all students with strategies for dealing with their needs in a supportive environment and to give them meaningful access to learning regardless of their special educational needs/disability.

The team

We have a diverse team, including Senior Leadership, Administration, Teaching Staff, Pastoral Leaders and Support Assistants who are here to help support students in achieving their own personal best.

Our SEND leaders are:

- Miss Gemma Nash (St Albans)
- Miss Michelle Bruce and Ms Natalie Radmore (Hatfield)

Our SEND Trustee is:

- Silvia Hundal

The staff team have experience in a range of settings and undergo frequent training to enable the best possible support for the students.

Assessment

Home schools and families provide us with background information and key data. On entry all students undertake a range of initial assessments. Baseline data including academic data allow us to plan teaching and support strategies that are reviewed frequently so that appropriate interventions are in place for each young person. As part of the Trust's admission arrangements there is an Induction meeting with parents/carers and the young person to discuss any specific needs and share information.

Parental involvement

The parents, carers and students are invited in for an induction meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to provide them with a clear idea of what to expect at school. This is also an opportunity to sign paperwork and ask any questions that parents/carers/students may have.

The Links encourages contact with parents or carers. Three times a year we formally invite parents/carers to meet with form tutors, which provides an opportunity for parents/carers to explore progress, celebrate success and to discuss any concerns or issues. Every student has their own profile and is set specific challenge targets matched to the child's needs. Strategies and interventions are identified and referrals made where appropriate to outside agencies.

Progress is reported half termly with a full school report generated every term. We have a team of Pastoral Leaders that are in touch with parents frequently and can be contacted by parents/carers for support by phone/email or face to face. The Pastoral Leaders alongside tutors provide support for the students.

We actively encourage parents and carers to become involved in school life, working closely with us.

Meeting students' needs

As we are an interim education provision we plan for the next educational placement for our students. If appropriate we will support an application for an Education Health and Care Place (EHCP) and support the transition in to the next school. Parents/carers are included in all areas of discussion about key developments.

Each student has specific targets that focus on learning and behaviour. These are reviewed every half term and strategies are put in place for each individual.

Students have the benefit of very small class groups. Each student is taught by subject staff and may also be supported by a teaching assistant. Support staff are used flexibly to meet students' needs.

The school work closely with external agencies to provide extra support for students if required. These are listed below:

- Healthy lifestyle lead
- Educational Psychological Team
- Specialist Adolescent Support Hertfordshire (SASH)
- Education Support Team for Medical Absence
- Families First
- CAMHS
- Youth Offending Team (YOT)
- Integrated Services for Learning (ISL)

Students are guided by Services for Young People in preparation for next steps-where appropriate work experience can be arranged.

LINKS SEN Information Report 2023/2024

How does the school know if students/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

- The requirement of additional support is identified through thorough and individualised assessment of the students, including: observation, regular teacher assessment, testing and diagnostic assessment.
- On arrival to the Trust students go through a process of induction. Referral forms from previous settings will provide initial key SEND information which is shared with all staff. The Induction process occurs over a 10 day period for two hours daily. The time is spent completing Core Subject baseline assessments supported and guided, completion of CATS and standardised assessments such as the NGRT and NGST. Time is also given to support integration into lessons and social times. This data is then analysed by the SENCo and shared with subject teachers which will allow the best possible support and strategies to be put in place to support any need identified. The SENCO and Mentoring Team lead will also provide a time to gain an insight into the young person's views and identify an appropriate Mentor within school.
- We will communicate any concerns and consult with all stakeholders through: Student Progress Meetings, Parent's Evening Meetings, Form Tutor Review Meetings, target setting with students and individual student support meetings.
- We will monitor the progress of all students during the year and intervene whenever the progress of a student is below expectation.
- If you have any concerns or questions, please contact the Pastoral Leader in the first instance or the SENCO.

How will school staff support my child?

- Subject teachers adapt resources to meet individual needs.
- TAs – class based and specialist to work on specific learning/social development interventions.
- Adapted resources e.g. practical resources, displays, visual timetables.
- Support for students and parents from SENCo and Pastoral Team.
- Personalised support, based on assessment.
- Mentoring scheme
- Support from Outside Agencies (direct working and advice for staff).
- Healthy lifestyle lead intervention
- Mental Health Support Team Practitioner
- For further information on specific interventions

How will I know how my child is doing?

- On arrival into Links, all students undertake baseline assessment.
- We use appropriate, intervention-specific assessment tools when students have taken part in an evidence-based intervention. You will be informed regularly regarding your child's progress.

- Student progress, attitude to learning and any concerns are tracked and parents are regularly informed of progress.
- We hold Student Progress Review Meetings (SPR), involving the Form Tutor, during which we review the progress of students with SEND.
- Individual student support meetings are held with staff and parents, along with the school Parent Student Review Meetings; we work closely with parents to obtain their views and help shape provisions for students.
- All students with SEND are actively encouraged to review their performance, identifying strengths and areas for development.

How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

- Students with SEND are inclusively educated within a very small or in some cases one to one classroom environment.
- Teaching and resources are differentiated within the classroom to ensure students are able to achieve objectives and access the curriculum.
- The learning environment within the classroom and tailored teaching styles support the student's journey towards independence.
- If additional support is identified students take part in planning, evidence-based intervention, as necessary.
- Support is personalised and targeted.
- Adults working with a student with SEND communicate regularly to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning.

What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

- The Outreach Team and school staff work with students on a 1-1 basis and in groups to develop social and emotional skills.
- All Extra-curricular activities are targeted to develop and enhance well-being.
- Specific interventions include, amongst others, social skills and PSHE programme covers a range of areas to promote well-being.
- The SENCo and Pastoral Leader facilitates communication to ensure all those working with the student, including the student themselves and the family, are aware of the support being implemented.
- The Pastoral Team supports parents and/or students as needed.
- Students are educated for the vast majority of the day in their class with peers, including opportunities for mixed-ability collaboration.
- Key workers are identified for students who need access to 1-1 emotional support.
- All students are be provided with a Mentor and will have weekly 1:1 sessions to support emotional wellbeing.
- The Pastoral Team, key workers and form tutors and available for parents/carers to respond to queries, concerns and, on the rare occasion, any crisis.

What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

- We seek advice from the Advisory Support Team, SPLD base, Speech and Language therapist, Educational Psychologist and medical professionals, counselling and bereavement support, as required.

What training have the staff, supporting students and young people with SEND, had or are having?

- Regular training, which is disseminated amongst all staff.
- Support from Outside Agencies to deliver whole staff training e.g. EAT training from specialist teacher, SLT, hearing impairment, visits and advice given.
- All staff have Therapeutic Thinking training annually- a therapeutic approach to behaviour management.
- All staff, teaching and support, have regular Level 1 training in Child Protection.
- Weekly team meetings and training sessions.
- Targeted training to meet individual specific needs, as required.
- A lead practitioner for Autism and Mental Health within the setting delivers training and support to staff.
- All staff have had Attachment and Trauma training
- All staff have specific advice about strategies to support each child.

How will you help me to support my child's learning?

- Termly Parent Student Review Meetings.
- Individual student support parental consultations for young people identified as having a Special Educational Need; we work closely with parents and the young person to obtain their views and help shape their individual provision.
- Dedicated Pastoral Team who work with parents and students.
- 'Open-door' policy.
- Relevant information about how parents can support their child at home is shared at regular intervals.
- Termly full reports to parents and half termly data reports.

How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's education?

- You will be invited to Student Parent Review meetings with the teachers.
- There will be individual parental consultations for students identified as having SEN, and you will be encouraged to help shape provision for your child.
- You will be able to contact a member of the Pastoral Team or SENCo if you have any concerns/queries or questions.

How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

- School trips and rewards visits are available and encouraged for all students at The Links throughout the year. We also encourage working and supporting our the local community.

How accessible is the school environment?

- We meet the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), 1995. See Accessibility Plan for additional information.
- We meet the statutory requirements of the Equalities Act (2010) see Equality and Diversity Policy and Accessibility Plan.
- Resources and teaching are differentiated according to individual student needs.
- We access support from outside agencies, such as advisory teachers, CAMHS, Educational Psychologist, and Step two amongst many others.
- Appropriate members of staff regularly take part in training and disseminate this as required.

Who can I contact for further information?

- Miss Gemma Nash- SENCo St Albans
- Ms Teresa Wallace -Pastoral Team Leader St Albans
- Ms Michelle Bruce/Ms Natalie Radmore -SENCo Hatfield
- Miss Lauren Brown Pastoral Team Leader -Hatfield

How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a mainstream school or the next stage of education and life?

- We liaise with home and schools and offer additional meetings, visits, preparation and Outreach for students to transition to and from The Links.
- Our students take part in taster days at colleges, meetings about apprenticeships with additional support to attend interview.
- Through discussions with the students and parents/carers and Connexions advisors we identify short, medium and long term desired outcomes and consider the long term aspiration of young people.
- We incorporate the teaching of basic key skills necessary for a successful educational career and future adult life.
- We offer social skill interventions for students who need additional support for transition.
- We work closely with outside agencies to ensure that students leaving The Links are well prepared for their next placement and life beyond our school community.
- KS4 students are offered Work experience and an opportunity to carry out a College placement.

How are the school's resources allocated and matched to student's special educational needs?

- Resources are allocated on the basis of a student's rate of progress and level of need.
- Class work is differentiated in small groups and individually.
- As required, class-based TAs work alongside the class teacher to support students with SEN.
- Student provision, targets and outcomes are evaluated regularly and resources are deployed accordingly to ensure the best possible outcomes for all young people.
- Staff are regularly advised on the best strategies to use per student to maximise progress.

How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?

- The level of support will depend upon the student's level of need and will be agreed in consultation with the young person, parents and/or carers. The support will also be reviewed and adapted to meet needs.

Policy Review – Trust SEND Local offer and Information Report 2023

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Academy Resources and Audit Committee (ARAC) every **1** year, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Academy Resources and Audit Committee and the Trustees in September 2023.

It is due for review in August 2024.

Signature

Date

David Allen
Executive Headteacher

Signature

Date

Maire Lynch
Chair of Trustees