Newtown School

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy 2026–27

Prepared by:	Karen Dunton
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SENCO:	Karen Dunton
SEND Governor:	Fiona Downing
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Hayley England
Designated Teacher for looked-after children:	Hayley England
Data Protection Officer:	Nicola Cook

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1. Introduction and aims

At Newtown School our caring approach, high standards and diverse community create a special environment where children are happy and prepared for their next steps. High-quality teaching is the first response to every child's needs. Some children will need more than this at some point in their time with us, and this policy explains how we identify those needs and meet them, working closely with parents, carers and other professionals.

Newtown School is an inclusive infant school serving children from pre-school through Nursery and Reception to the end of Key Stage 1. It includes The Nest, a specialist provision for children with complex needs (see section 6).

We aim to enable every pupil, whatever their needs, to reach their full potential and to be fully included in the life of the school, where all are equally valued.

Objectives

1. To identify children's special educational needs as early as possible, from pre-school onwards.
2. To use our best endeavours to make the special educational provision each child needs, following the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
3. To take a "whole child, whole school" approach, with every teacher responsible for the progress of the children with SEN in their class.
4. To involve children and their parents in decisions about their support, and to take their views seriously.
5. To have a qualified SENCO who coordinates provision and supports staff.
6. To give all staff the training and advice they need to support children with SEND.
7. To meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010, including making reasonable adjustments for disabled children.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of, and has been written with reference to:

- Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE, January 2015)
- Equality Act 2010, and Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE, 2014, updated 2018)
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE, December 2015, updated August 2017)
- Keeping children safe in education 2026 (DfE)
- Working together to safeguard children 2023 (DfE)
- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2024)
- Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance (DfE, 2024)
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage: group and school-based providers (DfE, September 2025)
- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (DfE, 2018)
- The national curriculum in England: key stages 1 and 2 framework document (DfE, 2013)
- Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011, updated 2021)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018

The school's SEN Information Report, published on the school website and updated every year, sets out how this policy works in practice.

3. Definitions

Special educational needs

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice define special educational needs (SEN) as follows:

> *A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.*
>
> *A child of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or have 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.*

Because we teach children below compulsory school age, the following also apply:

- A child under compulsory school age has SEN if they are likely to fall within the definition above when they reach compulsory school age, or would do so if special educational provision were not made for them.
- For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children of the same age in mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools and early years settings.

A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language of their home is different from the language in which they are taught.

Disability

Many children with SEN are also disabled under the Equality Act 2010, which defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". This includes long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and epilepsy. A child may be disabled without having SEN, and may have SEN without being disabled. Where a child is disabled, the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments and not to discriminate, whether or not the child also has SEN.

Areas of need

The Code of Practice describes four broad areas of need. A child's needs may fall into more than one area, and we plan for the whole child rather than a category:

- Communication and interaction (including autism)
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical needs

Factors that are not SEN on their own

The following can affect a child's progress but are not, on their own, special educational needs. We take them into account when considering a child's needs:

- Disability (where reasonable adjustments alone meet the child's needs)
- Attendance and punctuality
- Health and welfare

- English as an additional language
- Being in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant
- Being a looked-after or previously looked-after child
- Being the child of a serviceman or servicewoman

Behaviour is not in itself an SEN. Where a child's behaviour gives cause for concern, we look at the underlying causes, which may include an unidentified need.

4. Identifying special educational needs

We aim to identify needs early, as early action makes the most difference. Needs may be identified by staff, by parents, by health or early years professionals before a child joins us, or by the child themselves.

In the early years

- Practitioners observe and assess each child's development against the EYFS, and share concerns with parents and the SENCO promptly.
- We use the progress check at age two (for children in our pre-school aged between two and three) and information from health visitors and previous settings to spot needs early.
- On entry to Reception, we use the Reception Baseline Assessment alongside our own observations and information from parents.

In Key Stage 1

- Class teachers assess every child's progress regularly and hold termly pupil progress meetings with the Headteacher and SENCO.
- Where a child is making less than expected progress for their age and starting point, or where there are concerns about their wider development, the class teacher first adapts their teaching and may provide targeted support.

The Monitoring List

A child whose progress or development is causing concern, but who is not yet identified as having SEN, may be placed on the school's Monitoring List. Parents are told when this happens, why, and what additional support is being put in place, and are encouraged to share their own knowledge of their child. The class teacher may consult the SENCO, who may observe the child. Children recently removed from the SEN register may also stay on the Monitoring List for a time.

Slow progress is not the only sign of SEN, and we do not delay putting support in place while waiting for a pattern of progress to emerge. Where it is clear that a child has needs that call for special educational provision, we move straight to SEN Support.

5. A graduated approach: SEN Support

High-quality teaching

High-quality teaching, adapted to meet individual needs, is the first step in responding to children who have or may have SEN. Our continuous provision approach across EYFS and Key Stage 1 gives teachers flexibility to offer individual support within the classroom. Class teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of every child in their class, including where children receive support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

SEN Support

Where a child is identified as having SEN, we take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. **We will always formally tell parents when we are making special educational provision for their child**, and the child is then recorded on the SEN register as receiving SEN Support.

SEN Support follows a four-part cycle of **assess, plan, do, review**. Each cycle builds on the last, so that support is refined as our understanding of the child grows.

Assess

The class teacher and SENCO analyse the child's needs using the teacher's assessments and experience of the child, their previous progress and attainment, their development in comparison with peers, the views of the child and their parents, and, where relevant, advice from external professionals. Where outside specialists are not already involved, we may, with parents' agreement, ask them to help with assessment.

Plan

The teacher, SENCO and parents agree the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, the outcomes expected and a date for review. These are recorded in the child's **SEN Support Plan**, which is written by the class teacher with the SENCO and agreed with parents. Targets are specific, measurable and achievable within the agreed time, and parents are given ideas to support progress at home. All staff who work with the child are told about their needs, the support in place and the strategies to use.

Do

The class teacher remains responsible for working with the child day to day, including where interventions take place in a small group or one to one away from the class. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants and specialist staff to plan support and check its impact. The SENCO supports further assessment, problem-solving and advice on effective support.

Review

SEN Support Plans are reviewed at least termly, on the agreed dates. The review looks at the impact and quality of the support and takes account of the views of the child and their parents. The class teacher and SENCO then revise the support and outcomes with parents and the child. If a child is not making the expected progress, we look again at their barriers to learning and may seek advice from external specialists.

We meet parents of children receiving SEN Support at least three times a year, including at termly SEN review meetings. Parents are given a copy of their child's SEN Support Plan or Passport and clear information about the impact of support so that they can help plan next steps.

Where a child no longer needs special educational provision, we agree this with parents and remove them from the SEN register. They may stay on the Monitoring List for a time.

6. The Nest

The Nest is Newtown School's specialist provision for children with complex needs, including autism and pathological demand avoidance (PDA) profiles. It offers a smaller, calmer environment with a higher staff-to-child ratio, a sensory-aware setting and an approach built around each child's regulation, communication and interests.

How The Nest works with the rest of the school

- Children in The Nest are pupils of Newtown School and have the same entitlements as all other pupils, including access to the curriculum, trips and whole-school events.
- The children in the Nest follow a sensory curriculum.
- Where it is right for the child, time is planned in mainstream classes, with support, and increased gradually.
- Each child has an SEN Support Plan or EHC plan setting out their outcomes and provision, reviewed with parents on the same cycle as the rest of the school (and, for EHC plans, through the annual review process described in section 8).
- The SENCO oversees provision in The Nest and staff receive specialist training in autism, PDA and co-regulation approaches.
- Low-demand, relationship-based approaches used in The Nest are set out in the Behaviour Policy and are shared with parents.

7. Funding for SEN provision

Schools receive a notional SEN budget as part of their core funding. The school is expected to meet the costs of SEN Support from this budget, up to £6,000 per pupil a year in additional support.

Where a child needs support costing more than this, the school can apply to Buckinghamshire Council for **High Needs Block Funding (HNBF)**, in line with the council's current criteria. HNBF is short-term funding. It gives the school extra resources to put support in place and to assess the child's barriers to learning through the assess, plan, do, review cycle. Where a child is likely to need longer-term support, the school or parents may request an EHC needs assessment.

In the early years, the school may apply to the local authority's early years SEN Inclusion Fund for children taking up funded early education, and claims the Disability Access Fund for eligible children who receive Disability Living Allowance.

8. Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans

Requesting an assessment

Most children's needs are met through SEN Support. Where a child's needs are complex or long-term and the school, despite relevant and purposeful action, cannot meet them through SEN Support alone, an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment may be needed.

A request can be made to Buckinghamshire Council by the school or by a parent. **Parents have the right to request an assessment directly at any time; they do not need the school's agreement.** Health, social care and early years professionals can also bring a child to the council's attention. Where the school makes the request, we will always discuss it with parents first and gather evidence from parents, teachers, the SENCO and any professionals involved, including health and social care.

The council's decisions and timescales

- The council must carry out an assessment where a child **has or may have SEN** and **it may be necessary** for special educational provision to be made through an EHC plan.
- The council decide whether to carry out an assessment within **6 weeks** of the request.
- Following assessment, the council issues an EHC plan where it is **necessary** for special educational provision to be made in accordance with a plan.
- The whole process, from request to final plan (or a decision not to issue one), should be completed within **20 weeks**.

The school and parents are involved throughout, and the school provides the advice and information the council asks for within the required timescales.

Reviewing EHC plans

- EHC plans are reviewed at least once a year at an annual review meeting with parents, the child, school staff and relevant professionals. The review considers progress towards outcomes and whether the plan and provision should change.
- For children under five, reviews are held more often – we will ask the council to consider a review every six months, as recommended by the Code of Practice.
- Moving from Year 2 to junior school is a transfer between phases of education. The child's EHC plan must be reviewed and amended to name the new school by **15 February** in the year of transfer, so we hold the Year 2 annual review in the summer term of Year 1.

Disagreements and appeals

Parents can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) against a council's decision not to carry out an assessment, not to issue an EHC plan, the special educational content of a plan, the school or setting named (or not named), or a decision to cease a plan. Before most appeals, parents must first contact a mediation adviser; this is not needed for appeals about the school named only. The Tribunal can also make non-binding recommendations about the health and social care parts of a plan.

Free, impartial advice is available from **Buckinghamshire SENDIAS** (SEND Information, Advice and Support Service).

9. Working in partnership with children and families

Children's views

Children have the right to be involved in decisions about their support. We gather their views in ways that suit their age and communication – for example through talking, pictures, symbols, observation and the views of the adults who know them best – and use these views when setting outcomes and reviewing progress. Children are invited to contribute to their SEN Support Plan reviews and EHC plan annual reviews.

Working with parents

Parents know their child best. We will:

- listen to parents' concerns and act on them;
- tell parents when we have concerns about their child, and when we begin making special educational provision;
- involve parents in planning and reviewing support, and give them copies of their child's plan;
- meet parents of children with SEN at least three times a year; and
- tell parents about sources of independent information and support, including Buckinghamshire SENDIAS.

The Local Offer and SEN Information Report

Buckinghamshire Council publishes a Local Offer setting out the education, health and social care support available to children with SEND in the area: familyinfo.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/send.

The school publishes an SEN Information Report on its website and updates it every year. It sets out how we identify and support children with SEN, our arrangements for disabled children, and how parents can raise concerns.

10. Working with other agencies

We work closely with other services to support children and their families. Any service may raise a concern about a child, which will be discussed with the SENCO and the child's teacher or key worker, and parents will be told as soon as possible. Where a child is causing concern, we arrange focused meetings with the relevant professionals. Services we work with include:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy
- Educational Psychology
- Specialist Teaching Services (including the visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, cognition and learning, and speech, language and communication teams)
- School Nursing and Health Visiting
- Community Paediatrics
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Family Support and Early Help services
- Children's Social Care
- Buckinghamshire Council's SEND team and Virtual School

11. Transition

Transitions can be difficult for some children, and we plan them carefully.

- **Joining the school:** the SENCO or Early Years Lead contacts pre-schools, nurseries and health professionals to share information before a child with SEND starts, and arranges extra visits where helpful.
- **Moving through the school:** as children move between pre-school, Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1, class teachers meet to discuss every child. The SENCO attends where a child has SEN, and children are given extra visits, photo books or social stories as needed.
- **Moving to junior school:** the SENCO works with staff at the receiving junior schools to plan individual transition programmes, share information and arrange additional visits. For children with EHC plans, the phase transfer timescale in section 8 applies.
- **Moving schools at other times:** records are transferred promptly and securely, and we speak to the new school's SENCO.

12. Supporting pupils with medical conditions

The governing body has a legal duty to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Pupils with medical conditions are properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. Some children with medical conditions are disabled, and the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Where a child also has SEN, their provision is planned and delivered in line with the SEND Code of Practice.

Where appropriate, children with medical conditions have an individual healthcare plan, agreed with parents and health professionals. Plans are kept in the medical file in the school office, and relevant information is held securely in each class. Staff are made aware of the medical needs of the children

they work with. Full details are in the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and the Allergy Policy.

13. Safeguarding, behaviour and attendance

Safeguarding

Children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges. They may be more vulnerable to abuse and less able to tell someone about it, and signs of abuse can be mistaken for features of their needs. Staff are trained to be alert to this, and all concerns are recorded on CPOMS and passed to the safeguarding team in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping children safe in education 2026. The safeguarding team is:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Hayley England (Headteacher)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Nada Alley and Karen Dunton
- Also members of the safeguarding team: Kathryn Hooper and Katie Evans (nurture leads) and Reshma Chandy (attendance officer)

Behaviour and physical intervention

Our Behaviour Policy takes account of children's SEND and our duty to make reasonable adjustments. Any use of reasonable force follows the Behaviour Policy and current DfE guidance, is recorded on CPOMS and is reported to parents on the same day. Where a child may need physical support, this is planned in advance with parents in a positive handling or individual behaviour plan.

Suspensions

We avoid suspending children with SEND wherever possible and consider their needs, and whether reasonable adjustments or extra support could prevent a suspension, before any decision is made. Any suspension follows the DfE's suspension and permanent exclusion guidance.

Attendance

Improving attendance for children with particular needs is a school priority. We work with families to understand and remove barriers to attendance linked to a child's SEND, including emotionally based school non-attendance, and follow Working together to improve school attendance. Part-time timetables are used only as a temporary measure to meet a child's individual needs, are agreed with parents, have a clear end date, are reviewed regularly and are recorded. Keeping children safe in education 2026 recognises that children on part-time timetables, or repeatedly removed from class, may need early help, and the safeguarding team is kept informed.

14. Looked-after and previously looked-after children

The school's Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children works closely with the SENCO where a child also has SEN. The child's Personal Education Plan and SEN Support Plan or EHC plan are coordinated, and we work with Buckinghamshire's Virtual School Head (or the child's home authority's Virtual School) so that the child's needs are met.

15. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

The governing body must:

- use its best endeavours to make sure that every child with SEN gets the support they need;

- make sure a qualified SENCO is designated for the school;
- make sure parents are told when special educational provision is being made for their child;
- publish an SEN Information Report on the school website and update it every year;
- publish information on the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent them being treated less favourably, the facilities provided to help them access the school, and the accessibility plan;
- make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions; and
- co-operate with Buckinghamshire Council in reviewing SEND provision.

The SEND Governor

The SEND Governor meets the SENCO termly to discuss SEND provision and the progress of children with SEND or medical needs, reports to the governing body, and attends training to keep up to date.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for SEND provision, including making sure the SENCO has enough time and resources to carry out the role, and that SEND is part of the school's improvement planning, staff development and performance management.

The SENCO

The SENCO is a qualified teacher working at the school. A SENCO appointed on or after 1 September 2024 must gain the National Professional Qualification for SENCOs within three years of taking up the role. The SENCO has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy and for coordinating provision for children with SEN, including those with EHC plans. This includes:

- advising and supporting staff on the graduated approach and on effective teaching and interventions;
- advising on the use of the school's SEN budget and other resources;
- liaising with parents of children with SEN;
- liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals and voluntary bodies;
- liaising with the Designated Teacher where a looked-after child has SEN;
- planning transitions with the next school or setting;
- working with the Headteacher and governors so that the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- keeping the SEN register and records of children's SEN up to date; and
- arranging training so that staff are confident in meeting children's needs.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all children in their class, including those receiving support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. They plan and adapt teaching to meet children's needs, work with the SENCO through the assess, plan, do, review cycle, write and review SEN Support Plans with parents, and make sure that support staff know how to support each child.

Teaching assistants and support staff

Teaching assistants work under the direction of the class teacher to deliver agreed support and interventions, and share their observations of children's progress. Where a child is taught in a group or one to one outside the classroom, the SENCO agrees the reason and focus, and parents are told.

16. Monitoring and evaluation

Termly pupil progress meetings between class teachers, the Headteacher and the SENCO review the progress of all children, including those with SEN. The SENCO analyses progress data for children with SEN and shares the findings with staff and governors. Where children are not making enough progress, the SENCO leads an action plan. Informal meetings between class teachers, support staff and the SENCO also take place regularly to review individual children's progress and agree next steps.

The SENCO meets the SEND Governor termly, and a full SEND report is presented to the governing body each year. We also gather the views of staff, parents and children, including through questionnaires, and use them to improve our provision.

17. Training and resources

All staff are expected to develop their knowledge and skills in supporting children with SEND. All new teachers and support staff have an induction meeting with the SENCO about the school's SEND systems and the needs of the children they will work with, and early career teachers receive SEND training as part of their induction. Staff working in The Nest receive additional specialist training.

A record of staff training is kept by the School Business Manager. The SENCO attends Buckinghamshire Council's SENCO network meetings to keep up to date with local and national developments.

18. Storing and managing information

Information about children with SEND is personal data, and much of it is special category data. It is collected, stored, shared and kept in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Data Protection Policy. Confidential SEND records are stored securely on CPOMS or in the school office. Information held by class teachers on the school network is kept in access-restricted folders. Information is shared with other professionals only where it is necessary and lawful to do so, and usually with parents' knowledge. SEND records are passed to the child's next school when they leave and are otherwise kept in line with the school's records retention schedule. The school's Data Protection Officer is Nicola Cook.

19. Accessibility and admissions

Disabled children are admitted to the school on the same basis as all other children, in line with our admissions arrangements. Where a child has an EHC plan naming the school, the school must admit them. We take reasonable steps, including making reasonable adjustments, to make sure disabled children are not treated less favourably than others, and we plan ahead to meet their needs.

The school's Accessibility Plan sets out how we will improve disabled children's access to the curriculum, the physical environment and written information over time. It is reviewed at least every three years. See also the Equality Policy.

20. Complaints and resolving disagreements

We want to resolve concerns quickly and informally wherever possible. Parents with a concern about their child's SEN provision should:

1. speak first to their child's class teacher;
2. if the concern is not resolved, speak to the SENCO; and

3. if it is still not resolved, follow the school's Complaints Policy. As the Headteacher is also the SENCO, a formal complaint about SEN provision will be considered by the Chair of Governors.

Parents can also:

- get free, impartial advice from Buckinghamshire SENDIAS;
- use the disagreement resolution and mediation services arranged by Buckinghamshire Council;
- appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) about decisions on EHC needs assessments and plans (see section 8); and
- make a claim of disability discrimination to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), usually within six months of the matter complained about.

21. Bullying

Children with SEND can be more vulnerable to bullying. We take all bullying seriously and respond in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Child-on-child Abuse Policy.

22. Reviewing this policy

This policy is reviewed every year by the SENCO and approved by the governing body. The SEN Information Report is updated every year.

The government's Schools White Paper (February 2026) sets out proposed reforms to the SEND system. These require new legislation and are not expected to take effect before September 2029. Until then, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the current Code of Practice continue to apply in full. We will update this policy as any changes come into force.

23. Linked policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- SEN Information Report
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Allergy Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy