



SEND policy

Approved by:
The Directors of Strive Alternative Provision

Signed on behalf of the Directors by:
Stacey Hickey, Head of Operations

Date Approved: October 2026
Review Date: October 2027

Policy Update Summary (2026)

- Full review and rewrite for Strive Alternative Provision, replacing school-based wording.

- Updated to reflect the Children and Families Act 2014, Equality Act 2010 and current SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Aligned with DfE Alternative Provision statutory guidance (updated 2025) and the 2025 Non-school Alternative Provision Voluntary National Standards.
- Clarified the respective responsibilities of Strive, commissioning schools and local authorities, including where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Strengthened person-centred planning, reasonable adjustments, transition information, ILPs/EHCP targets, progress monitoring and preparation for adulthood.
- Updated terminology and removed outdated references including 'Asperger's Syndrome', the 1993 Education Act and school-specific duties that do not automatically apply to Strive.

1. Purpose and Rationale

Strive Alternative Provision is committed to enabling children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to access meaningful, ambitious and appropriately adapted education. Many students referred to Strive have identified or emerging SEND, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), social, emotional and mental health needs, communication differences, neurodivergence, sensory needs or other barriers to participation.

This policy explains how Strive identifies and responds to SEND within the scope of a commissioned alternative provision placement, how information is used to plan support, and how Strive works with children, families, commissioning schools, local authorities and other professionals.

Strive is a commissioned alternative provision provider and is not the child's statutory home school or local authority. This means that some statutory SEND duties remain with the commissioning school, local authority or other body. Strive will support those duties through appropriate assessment, information sharing, delivery, review and evidence, but will not present itself as holding statutory responsibilities that legally sit elsewhere.

2. Legal and Guidance Framework

This policy is informed by relevant legislation and current guidance, including:

- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Equality Act 2010.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Education Act 1996.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, applied appropriately to Strive's safeguarding arrangements.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- DfE Alternative Provision statutory guidance, updated 2025.

- DfE Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards 2025.
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

The SEND Code of Practice is statutory guidance for the bodies specified in legislation. Strive will work consistently with its principles where relevant to its role, while recognising that the commissioning school and/or local authority may retain the statutory duty.

3. Definition of SEND

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, a child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The four broad areas of need described in the SEND Code of Practice are:

- Communication and interaction.
- Cognition and learning.
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

These broad areas are a starting point, not labels. A child may have needs across more than one area, needs may change over time, and presenting behaviour may communicate an unmet need. Slow progress, low attainment, poor attendance or distressed behaviour do not by themselves establish that a child has SEND.

4. Our Principles

Strive's approach to SEND is based on the following principles:

- The child or young person is at the centre of planning and review.
- High expectations should be maintained for children with SEND.
- Support should be individualised, strengths-based and proportionate to need.
- Reasonable adjustments should be considered proactively.
- Communication with parents/carers, commissioners and professionals should be clear and timely.
- Staff should understand the child's EHCP, professional reports, risk information and agreed strategies relevant to their role.
- SEND should not be viewed in isolation from safeguarding, attendance, health, trauma, family circumstances or other factors affecting the child.
- Children should be supported towards greater independence, participation and preparation for adulthood where age appropriate.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Head of SEN

- Provides strategic oversight of SEND practice within Strive.

- Supports staff to understand EHCP outcomes, identified needs and appropriate strategies.
- Coordinates or supports SEND-related information, ILPs, progress evidence and liaison with commissioners and professionals.
- Identifies themes, training needs and barriers to effective support.
- Supports preparation for reviews and contributes evidence where requested by the commissioning school or local authority.

5.2 Head of Provision

- Ensures organisational systems support safe and inclusive delivery.
- Supports implementation of reasonable adjustments, staffing and operational arrangements within Strive's commissioned scope and resources.
- Ensures this policy is reviewed and aligned with related safeguarding, equality, admissions and health and safety arrangements.

5.3 Provision Leads, Tutors, Instructors and Support Staff

- Read and apply relevant SEND information provided for the children they support.
- Use agreed strategies, adaptations and communication approaches.
- Record meaningful progress, barriers, concerns and changes in presentation.
- Raise concerns promptly where needs appear unmet or have changed.
- Contribute to ILPs, reports and review evidence as required.

5.4 Commissioning School / Local Authority

The commissioner remains responsible for the statutory functions that apply to it. Where a child has an EHCP, the local authority retains its statutory responsibilities for the plan. The commissioning school and/or local authority should provide Strive with sufficient and timely information to enable safe and appropriate delivery, including the current EHCP and relevant professional advice where applicable.

6. Referral, Admission and Information Gathering

SEND information forms part of Strive's referral and admissions process. Placement decisions are made on an individual basis and in accordance with Strive's Admissions Policy.

Before or at the start of placement, Strive will seek relevant information which may include:

- Current EHCP and identified outcomes.
- SEN support information and previous strategies.
- Educational psychology, speech and language, occupational therapy or other professional reports.
- Risk assessments, medical information and Individual Healthcare Plans where relevant.

- Communication, sensory, regulation and accessibility needs.
- Current attainment, engagement, attendance and curriculum information.
- The child's and parent's/carer's views, strengths, interests and aspirations.

Where essential information is missing, Strive will request it from the commissioner. A placement may need to be delayed, adapted or reviewed if Strive does not have sufficient information to understand or safely meet the child's needs.

7. Identification of Emerging or Changing Needs

A child does not need a formal diagnosis before staff can identify barriers and respond to need. Staff are expected to remain professionally curious where a child is struggling to access learning, communicate, regulate, attend, engage or participate.

Concerns should be shared with the Head of SEN or appropriate senior lead. Strive may gather observations, review existing information, speak with the child and family, and liaise with the commissioner. Where further specialist assessment may be appropriate, Strive will raise this with the commissioning school or local authority rather than implying that Strive itself can make a statutory diagnosis or determine entitlement to an EHCP.

8. Planning Support and ILPs

Strive uses individual planning to translate identified needs and outcomes into practical strategies for day-to-day provision. Where appropriate, an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) will identify priority outcomes, support strategies, reasonable adjustments and indicators of progress.

Where a child has an EHCP, Strive will use relevant EHCP outcomes and provision information to inform its planning within the scope of the commissioned placement. An ILP does not replace the EHCP and does not amend statutory provision.

Plans should be accessible to relevant staff and reviewed when needs change, following significant incidents, or as part of the agreed review cycle.

9. Teaching, Learning and Reasonable Adjustments

Strive will seek to remove or reduce barriers to learning through high-quality, inclusive and appropriately adapted teaching and support. Adjustments will be considered according to the individual child's needs and may include:

- Adapted communication, language and instructions.
- Visual supports, structured routines and preparation for change.
- Sensory adjustments and access to quieter or lower-stimulation spaces.
- Adapted tasks, resources, pace or recording methods.
- Movement or regulation breaks.
- Assistive technology or specialist equipment where available and appropriate.

- Changes to transitions, groupings or staffing arrangements where reasonably practicable.
- Individualised support for literacy, numeracy, communication, executive functioning, emotional regulation or independence.

Reasonable adjustments are considered individually. They do not require Strive to remove essential safety measures or provide provision outside the scope or capacity of the commissioned placement. Where needs cannot reasonably be met, Strive will work with the commissioner and family to review the placement and identify what further support or alternative arrangements may be required.

10. EHCPs and Review Arrangements

Where a student has an EHCP, the local authority remains responsible for maintaining and reviewing the plan in accordance with its statutory duties. The commissioning school may have responsibilities for arranging or contributing to annual reviews depending on the placement arrangement.

Strive will support the review process by, where requested and appropriate:

- Providing progress and attendance/engagement information.
- Reporting against relevant EHCP outcomes and Strive ILP targets.
- Providing observations about strengths, barriers, regulation, communication and participation.
- Contributing to review meetings.
- Sharing the child's views and aspirations where gathered through Strive's work.
- Identifying where provision or outcomes appear to require review by the responsible body.

Strive will not independently alter EHCP outcomes or statutory provision. Concerns about the suitability or sufficiency of an EHCP should be raised with the commissioning school and/or local authority.

11. Working with Parents, Carers and the Child

Parents and carers hold important knowledge about their child. Strive will seek to work collaboratively with families while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and information-sharing arrangements.

Children and young people should be involved in decisions about their support in a way that is appropriate to their age, communication needs and understanding. Their strengths, interests, aspirations and views should inform planning wherever practicable.

12. Multi-Agency Working

Strive may work alongside education, health, social care and voluntary-sector professionals involved with a child. This can include educational psychologists, speech

and language therapists, occupational therapists, CAMHS, social workers, family support services and other specialist teams.

Strive will share relevant information lawfully and proportionately, and will contribute to multi-agency planning where this supports the child's education, safety or wellbeing.

13. Safeguarding and SEND

Children with SEND may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities. Staff must not assume that changes in behaviour, communication or engagement are solely attributable to a child's SEND.

- Communication barriers may make it harder for a child to disclose harm.
- Some children may be more vulnerable to bullying, exploitation, coercion or online harm.
- Behaviour may communicate distress, unmet need, pain or safeguarding concerns.
- Staff must report safeguarding concerns to a DSL in accordance with Strive's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

SEND support and safeguarding action should complement one another; a safeguarding concern must never be delayed while SEND explanations are explored.

14. Attendance, Engagement and Emotionally Based Barriers

Poor attendance or engagement may be linked to SEND, anxiety, unmet need, health, trauma or other barriers. Strive will avoid simplistic assumptions and will work with the child, family and commissioner to understand relevant factors.

Strive will record and report attendance in accordance with its Attendance & Engagement Policy. Statutory attendance duties, register codes and enforcement responsibilities remain with the relevant school or local authority where applicable.

15. Transitions

Transitions into, within and out of Strive should be planned carefully for children with SEND. This may include visits, visual information, phased introductions, sharing of strategies, familiar adults, transition passports and liaison with the receiving or commissioning setting.

When a placement ends, Strive will provide proportionate information about progress, effective strategies and ongoing needs to support continuity, subject to lawful information-sharing arrangements.

16. Preparation for Adulthood

For older students, SEND planning should increasingly support preparation for adulthood. Depending on age and placement aims, this may include independence, communication, community participation, employability, work experience, travel skills, relationships, health and future education or training.

Where these areas form part of EHCP outcomes or commissioned objectives, Strive will contribute evidence of progress and support appropriate opportunities within its provision.

17. Training and Staff Development

Strive will provide or arrange SEND training proportionate to the needs of its students and workforce. Training may include autism and neurodivergence, communication, sensory needs, literacy difficulties, ADHD, trauma-informed practice, emotional regulation, reasonable adjustments and specific medical or accessibility needs.

Specialist training required for an individual child's safe support will be considered as part of placement planning and commissioning arrangements.

18. Monitoring Progress and Quality

Progress for children with SEND will be considered in relation to their starting points, commissioned objectives, ILP targets and relevant EHCP outcomes rather than academic attainment alone. Evidence may include engagement, attendance, regulation, communication, independence, relationships, functional skills, qualifications, curriculum progress and preparation for adulthood.

Senior leaders will use this information to identify themes, barriers, staff-development needs and improvements to provision.

19. Complaints and Concerns

Concerns about Strive's delivery of SEND support should be raised with the Head of SEN, Head of Operations or another appropriate senior leader. Where the matter cannot be resolved informally, Strive's Complaints Policy applies.

Complaints about a local authority's statutory SEND decisions, the content of an EHCP or another organisation's statutory responsibilities should be directed to the body responsible. Strive will provide relevant information where appropriate but cannot determine those matters on their behalf.

20. Related Policies

- Admissions Policy.
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
- Anti-discrimination, Equality & Inclusion Policy.
- Behaviour Management Policy.
- Attendance & Engagement Policy.
- Accidents & First Aid Policy.
- Medication Policy.
- Online Safety Policy.
- Educational Visits, Trips & Community Activities Policy.
- Complaints Policy.

- GDPR & Data Protection Policy.

21. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, commissioning requirements or Strive's operating arrangements change. The Head of SEN and Head of Provision will coordinate review and ensure relevant changes are communicated to staff.

END OF POLICY

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