

SEND Policy

February 2026



Introduction

This policy has been developed in line with the following legislation and guidance:

- The SEND Code of Practice (2014)
- Equality Act (2010)
- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- SEND Review and Green Paper (2022)

Blend Youth Project has two main areas of practice; the first is to provide a comprehensive youth work service to young people and the second is to provide quality alternative education provision to students across Derbyshire. For the purposes of this policy we will be focusing on the latter of the two, the delivery of alternative education.

Blend Youth Project is committed to providing quality education for students who have significant and complex needs. Many of these students are at the risk of exclusion, out of school due to a lack of suitable placements, following a part time timetable or in need of support during transition. This list is not inclusive of the many individual reasons for referral.

Special Educational Needs according to the SEN Code of Practice:

- 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 him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she: 15
- A child or young person has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- A child or young person has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.
- 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 or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

Many of the students who attend Blend Youth Project have: a formal diagnosis of Special Educational Needs, a disability, an EHCP or are awaiting an assessment for an additional need diagnosis. At Blend Youth Project we recognise that all of our students have additional educational needs, even if this need has not been formally recognised. Factors we consider that may not be categorised as Special Educational Needs include:

- Attendance and punctuality

- Health and Welfare
- Being a looked after child
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Bereavement
- Being a young carer
- Addiction and criminal involvement
- Unstable home environment

At Blend Youth project we take a holistic approach to education, providing a nurturing environment for students to thrive. In order to support students to achieve their full potential we endeavour to identify unsuccessful approaches which have been implemented previously. The student, family and referring school will all be consulted during the planning of education so that we can best assess the suitability of the provision for the student.

We are committed to recruiting staff who share Blend Youth Project's holistic values, supporting students to not only fulfil their educational goals but to give focus on supporting students with personal achievements. Outcomes such as: participation, attainment, creating a sense of ambition, increasing self-esteem and promoting resilience are valued as a core aspect of our educational offer.

Blend Youth Project will encourage innovation in delivering alternative education which is evolutionary and individual in its response to individual need. A student centred approach to the design and implementation of education allows the students to engage in meaningful experiences. Continuous professional development of staff ensures that we take an evidence based approach to education, well-being and the promotion of emotional and physical health.

Ethos and Values

Our ethos is best captured in the tag line, "Raising Aspirations, Releasing Potential".

At Blend Youth Project we strive to create and provide holistic, inclusive and innovative learning environments and experiences that enable young people to develop and grow both personally, socially and academically. We recognise that the majority of our students are experiencing challenges and barriers to learning which are often related to a variety of external factors such as poverty and special educational needs. Therefore, we ensure that our provision is student-centred and needs-led, and aim to make learning engaging and tailored to the individual young person.

Blend Youth Project aims to provide a space where young people feel safe, valued and supported.

Definition

The definitions of **Special Educational Needs and Disability** are taken from the SEND Code of Conduct (2015).

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 him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

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 or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition in paragraph (above) when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).

Post-16 institutions often use the term learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The term SEN is used in this Code across the 0-25 age range but includes LDD.

Disabled children and young people

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010, that is '...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 definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition. The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people.
- They must not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person's disability.
- They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.

Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and nondisabled children and young people. Public bodies also have specific duties under the public sector equality duty and must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and must prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty. Objectives must be specific and measurable. The general duty also applies to bodies that are not public bodies but that carry out public functions. Such bodies include providers of relevant early years education, non-maintained special schools, independent specialist providers and others making provision that is funded from the public purse.

These duties cover discrimination in the provision of services and the provision of education, including admissions and exclusions. All providers must make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices and by the provision of auxiliary aids and services. Most providers must also make reasonable adjustments by making physical alterations. Schools and local authority education functions are not covered by this last duty, but they must publish accessibility plans (and local authorities, accessibility strategies) setting out how they plan to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information.

School governing bodies and proprietors must also publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and their accessibility plans.

Where a child or young person is covered by SEN and disability legislation, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements should be considered as part of SEN planning and review. Where school governors are publishing information about their arrangements for disabled children and young people, this should be brought together with the information required under the Children and Families Act 2014.

Here, and throughout this Code the term 'parent' includes all those with parental responsibility, including parents and those who care for the child.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that Blend Youth Project complies with the relevant statutory guidance and that these requirements are implemented effectively.
- To inform training and practice ensuring that staff, at all levels, are aware of best practice when planning, coordinating and delivering education and for those who manage resources.
- To ensure that every pupil with special educational needs:-
 - achieves their best
 - becomes confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
 - makes a successful transition into adulthood

Referral Process

Before a student can be offered a place at Blend Youth Project, the referring agency must complete a referral form. They should provide as much information as possible so that Blend Youth Project can fairly judge whether we can fully support the student and meet their individual needs. If the Alternative Education Manager is satisfied that Blend Youth Project can meet the needs of the student, given the information in the referral form, they will offer the student a visit. Parents/ carers and keyworkers will be invited to accompany the student on their visit.

Following the visit the Alternative Education Manager will liaise with the relevant staff members at Blend Youth Project as well as parents, carers, the referring agency and the student. If everyone is in agreement that a placement, at Blend Youth Project, will: enrich the student's life, fulfil relevant educational targets and meet the requirements and need of the student they will be offered a place. This may be agreed on a trial basis if there is any doubt from either party regarding the suitability of the placement.

Due to the nature and age of some of our locations each student's physical suitability will be assessed to ensure that they can access the site safely. Each site is risked assessed based on its unique features and environment. Reasonable adjustments will be made to improve accessibility where possible.

Assessing, Monitoring and Responding to Individual Needs

Blend Youth Project recognising that all of our students have special educational needs, whether this is formally diagnosed or not, all students will appear on the SEN register. This is a dynamic list, which should be managed using the guidance from the SEND Code of Practice.

Blend Youth Project takes a graduated approach to assessing and identifying student's special needs. This approach allows staff to make continuous reflection on the suitability of the placement, resources, groupings and environment. Blend Youth Project will take a four step approach to assessing need and the success of current method of working:

1. Assess
2. Plan
3. Do
4. Review

Blend Youth Project will assess skills, levels of attainment and progress; this should be carried out considering the following four broad areas of SEN:

1. Cognition & Learning
2. Communication & Interaction
3. Social, Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties
4. Sensory and/ or Physical Needs

Where a student has an EHCP, assessment should be made considering the relevant objectives detailed in their plan.

All staff to be fully up to date with the needs of the student so that this method of intervention can be used successfully. Monitoring of need will be documented in daily behaviour monitoring records, meetings and continual communication between the tutors, support workers and keyworkers. Keyworkers will log any issues, unsuccessful interventions, successful interventions and any other relevant information which will support the student in their PCAP (Personal Curriculum and Accreditation Plan).

If staff noticed that any student is struggling to make adequate progress and access curriculum that is appropriate to their needs, they should first discuss this with the student. Any difficulties faced by the student should be recorded within the behaviour monitoring document, along with any plan to address the barrier or issue experienced by the student. This information should be shared with the student's keyworker.

The keyworker will use this information to update the PCAP for the student. This information should be used to inform the future planning for the success of the student.

PCAPs should be used to track and monitor student progression. Any needs of the student should be detailed in the PCAP including: special educational needs, EHCP objectives, current levels and targets, what works well for the student, what does not work well for the student, attendance, medication and other relevant information necessary in supporting the student to be successful during their placement at Blend Youth Project.

A Student Centred Approach

Our philosophy is that the student should be involved in the decisions around their future. This student centred approach to education gives the students some autonomy in their present and future experiences. Underpinning the delivery model of alternative education at Blend Youth Project are the cornerstones of youth work; these are:

- Active participation and empowerment of young people
- Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion
- Voluntary engagement by young people
- Non-formal education and informal learning

Our staff make a conscious effort to create meaningful relationships with students so that they can best support them in a nurturing way. Blend Youth project does not have a system of repercussions, instead we encourage and promote students to engage positively by giving them choices in the decisions which effect their education. By creating respectful relationships we manage behaviour using de-escalation techniques.

Group sizes are never-more than six students to two tutors, one-to-one support can be offered in some cases where it is felt that the student needs additional support. This is subject to staffing availability and does incur an increased daily fee. Small group sizes allow us to support the needs of our students effectively.

Staffing Arrangements

The Alternative Education Manager and the Specialist Teacher SEN & Progress are responsible for the review and implementation of this policy.

Leadership Responsibilities:

- Having high expectations and aspirations for every learner on the provisions roll.
- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the provisions SEND policy.
- A robust quality assurance framework.
- Liaising with all staff, communicating information appropriately.
- Managing the team supportively.
- Attending EHCP reviews, reporting on EHCP objectives honestly and with integrity.
- Ensuring that all student records are up to date.
- Liaising with external agencies.
- Coordinating the curriculum for students.
- To ensure that all staff are up to date with all relevant and statutory training.

The Team's Responsibilities:

- Delivering engaging education which meets the objectives of the student's qualification.
- To differentiate work so that it meets the needs of the individual student.
- To recognise and embed enrichment activities, promoting development of self, social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.
- Staff must complete any training designated to them by their manager in a timely manner.

Staff Training and Development

All staff will complete statutory safeguarding training in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance, this will be updated each year. Updated KCSIE guidance will be disseminated to all staff and volunteers.

Staff will be required to contribute to their continuous professional development and track any training. Blend Youth project provides all staff with access to online training through TES, using the EduCare platform. Required and advised courses to be completed by all staff:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) plus Annex A- Statutory
- Extremism and Radicalisation- Statutory
- ADHD Awareness
- Autism Awareness
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Dealing with Bereavement and Loss
- Hidden Disability

Inset days will provide whole team training opportunities. Ensuring that staff are up to date with the latest developments in research and practice.

You may find other related information in the following policies belonging to Blend Youth Project:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Equality and Diversity Policy