



# **Special educational needs and Disabilities (SEND) information report**

## **UTC South Durham**

Updated November 2025

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The aim of this information report is to explain how we implement our SEND policy. In other words, we want to show you how SEND support works in our school.

If you want to know more about our arrangements for SEND, please read our SEND policy which you can find on our website.

**Note:** If there are any terms we've used in this information report that you're unsure of, you can look them up in the Glossary at the end of the report.

## 1. What types of SEN does the school provide for?

UTC South Durham defines Special Educational Needs as those of any student who has any barrier that hinders their access to learning which is delivered through Quality First Teaching (QFT). This includes those who have a significantly greater difficulty in learning and significantly slower progress than their peers, or have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of our educational facilities. Those students will access support which is different to, and in addition to, the provision which is normally available through QFT. UTC South Durham currently provides support and guidance for a number of students with a range of difficulties which fall into the 4 key areas of SEND which are:

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

## 2. Which staff will support my child, and what training have they had?

### **Our special educational needs co-ordinator, or SENDCO**

Our SENDCO is Jak Heslop.

She is a qualified and experienced teacher, and has complete the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination (NASENCO).

Our Assistant SENDCO is Lyndsey Parker.

### **Teachers**

All of our teachers receive SEND training, and are supported by the SENDCO and the SEND team to meet the needs of students who have SEND.

### **Teaching assistants (TAs)**

We have a team of TAs, who are trained to support our students and deliver SEND provision. These TAs are primarily funded to support individual students who have SEND provision made through their EHC plan however they are also able to provide support to other students in the classroom. The TAs also deliver small group academic and emotional interventions to our students.

We have TAs who are specialist in supporting students with ASC and an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant). We also have teaching assistants who are trained to deliver a diverse range of interventions such as Lego Therapy.

### **External agencies and experts**

Sometimes we need extra help to offer our students the support that they need. Whenever necessary we will work with external support services to meet the needs of our students with SEN and to support their families. These include, but are not limited to:

- Speech and language therapists
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists

- › GPs or paediatricians
- › School nurses
- › Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- › Education welfare officers
- › Social services
- › LA-provided support services, including autism support, the Cognition and Learning team, Communication and Interaction team, Hearing and Visual Impairment teams, the Anxious about Schools project.
- › Mental Health Support Team
- › Emotional Resilience and Wellbeing teams

### 3. What should I do if I think my child has SEN?

An SEN need can be initially identified by the child, parent or class teachers. Where a concern is raised, the SENDCO will gather further information from all of those involved in the day to day education of the child, including the student and parents. If it is found that there is evidence to suggest that additional intervention is necessary, a Learning Support Passport is produced collaboratively which details individual need and suggested strategies to provide the support necessary to facilitate progress.

If you have any concerns about whether your child has a special educational need, you should contact the SENDCO directly at [jak.heslop@utcsouthdurham.org](mailto:jak.heslop@utcsouthdurham.org) who will be in touch to discuss your concerns. We will then follow the process above.

### 4. How will the school know if my child needs SEN support?

Many students join UTC South Durham with an identified learning need, which is discussed openly at their 1 to 1 admissions meeting. This information, alongside any documentation shared by previous schools, is used to prepare a Learning Support Passport which details individual need, and strategies that can be employed to support the student. This passport will be shared with you for feedback and amendments.

As we get to know the students in their first term, we are able to assess whether they are making suitable progress and whether their needs can be met through Quality First Teaching (QFT), the offer ordinarily available in the classroom, in which the teaching is of high quality and inclusive of all needs. If this is the case, the student is placed on our SEN Monitoring List and no additional provision is put in place at that time.

If we deem that a student's needs cannot be met through QFT, or that they require substantial and long-term support with SEMH needs, then we would identify suitable additional provision which would facilitate them working towards meeting an agreed target. This would be added to the Learning Support Passport and the student would be placed on our SEND Register.

Students with a greater degree of identified need, who require a significant amount of provision which is different to that which is ordinarily available to their peers, will also have a more detailed Learning Plan generated, which again will be done in consultation with yourselves. Students at this stage will usually have the need for some input from external support services.

The progress of our students with SEN needs is monitored regularly, and Learning Support Passports are updated on an, at least, biannual basis. If there is any change to the provision made in the support of your child, then they may move from the Monitoring List to the SEN register and vice versa. You will be informed of this change and the Passport will be labelled as such.

There are students who join us who have not previously had their need recognised. All our class teachers and support staff are aware of SEND and recognise students who aren't making the expected level of progress in their schoolwork or socially amongst their peers.

If the teacher notices that a student is falling behind, they will identify any gaps in their learning. If they can find a gap, they will give the student extra support to try to fill it. Students who don't have SEND usually make progress quickly once the gap in their learning has been filled, for those with SEND, additional intervention may be required.

If the student is still struggling to make the expected progress, the teacher will talk to the SENDCO and we will contact you to discuss the possibility that your child has a learning, or emotional need.

A member of the SEND team will observe the student in the classroom to note their strengths and difficulties. They will have discussions with your child's teachers, to identify if there have been any issues with, or changes in, their progress, attainment or behaviour. They will also compare your child's progress and development with their peers and available national data.

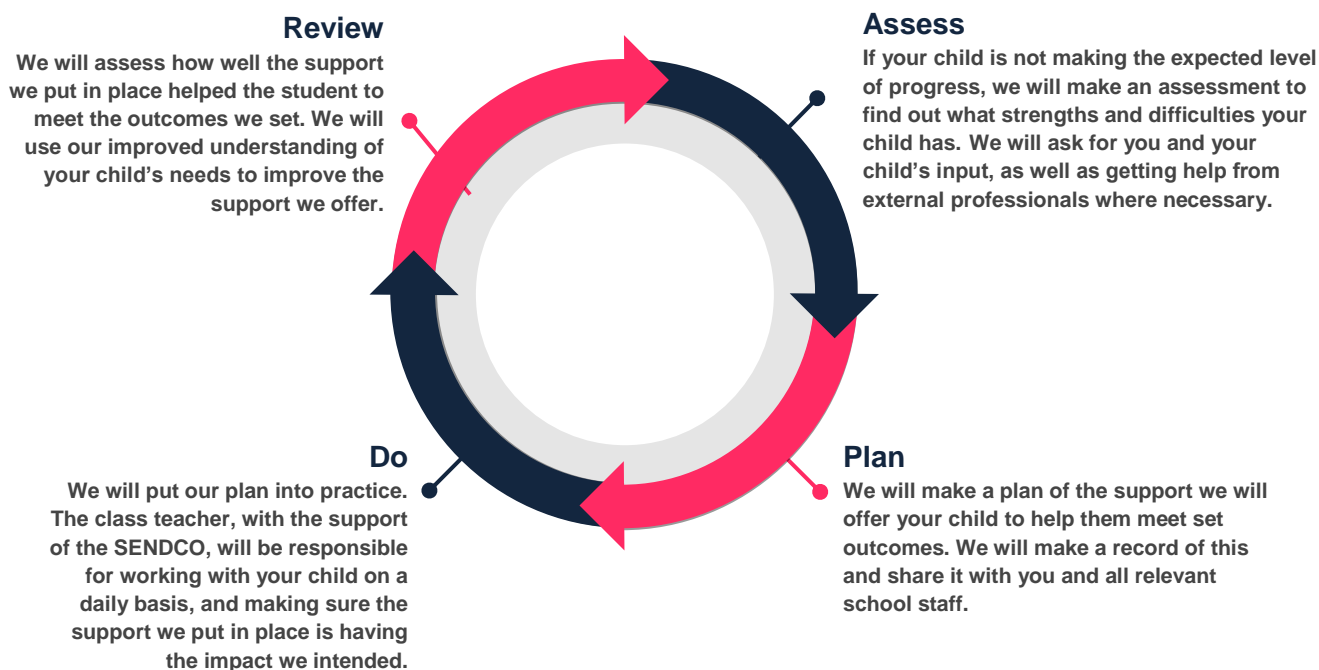
The SENDCO will ask for your opinion and speak to your child to get their input as well. They may also, where appropriate, ask for the opinion of external experts such as a speech and language therapist, an educational psychologist, or the local authority advisory team.

Based on all of this information, the SENDCO will decide whether your child needs SEN support and if so, prepare a Learning Support Passport. You will be advised of the outcome.

## 5. How will the school measure my child's progress?

For those students on the SEND register, we will follow the 'graduated approach' to meeting your child's SEN needs.

The graduated approach is a 4-part cycle of **assess, plan, do, review**.



As a part of the planning stage of the graduated approach, we will set outcomes or targets that we want to see your child achieve.

Whenever we run an intervention with your child, we will carry out a baseline assessment with them before the intervention begins. We do this so we can see how much impact the intervention has on your child's progress.

We will track your child's progress towards the outcomes set over time and, if necessary, adapt our offer as we learn what your child responds to best.

This process will be continual. If the review shows a student has made progress, they may no longer need the additional provision made through SEN support. For others, the cycle will continue and the school's targets, strategies and provisions will be revisited and refined.

## **6. How will I be involved in decisions made about my child's education?**

We will review your child's Learning Support Passport on at least 2 occasions throughout each academic year. These will be shared with you and we will share a schedule of dates and events on which you can feedback and discuss need with the SEND team. If your child has a Learning Support Plan, this may be revisited more frequently.

You will also be invited to meet your child's crew leader and class teachers throughout the year.

During these meetings you will be able to

- › Review progress towards outcomes
- › Discuss the support we will put in place to help your child make that progress
- › Identify what we will do, what we will ask you to do, and what we will ask your child to do.

## **7. How will my child be involved in decisions made about their education?**

We may seek your child's views by asking them to:

- › Attend meetings to discuss their progress and outcomes
- › Review their passport and where possible, self evaluate needs and progress
- › Prepare a presentation, written statement, video, drawing, etc, for example for their Student Led Conference
- › Discuss their views with a member of staff who can act as a representative during the meeting should they not wish to attend
- › Complete a survey

## **8. How will the school adapt it's teaching for my child?**

Your child's class teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the students in their class. They have high expectations of all students, including those with SEND. All teachers are made aware of each student's needs by means of their Learning Support Passport, and they work closely

with the SEND team to ensure that they are employing strategies which support each individual to make the best progress they can.

High-quality teaching is our first step in responding to your child's needs. We will make sure that your child has access to a broad and balanced curriculum in every year they are at our school.

We will adapt how we teach to suit the way the student works best. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to adapting the curriculum, we work on a case-by case basis to ensure the support and guidance, and any adaptation to the student's learning experience, achieves the best possible outcomes. These adaptations include:

- Differentiating our curriculum to make sure all students are able to access it, for example, by grouping, 1-to-1 work, adapting the teaching style or content of the lesson, etc.
- Differentiating our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.
- Adapting our resources and staffing
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays or paper, visual timetables, larger font, etc.
- Teaching assistants will support students on a 1 to 1 basis where that is laid out in their EHC plan or where there is significant short-term need identified
- Teaching assistants will support students in small groups when a gap in learning, or an SEMH need, is identified.

Most of our students follow the full UTC curriculum, but if deemed appropriate, some adjustments may be made for a student to respond to their individual needs. We will ensure that no student is disadvantaged by their disability, as outlined in our Disability Access Statement, which can be found on UTC South Durham's website.

These interventions are part of our contribution to Co. Durham's local offer.

## 9. How will the school evaluate whether the support in place is helping my child?

We will evaluate the effectiveness of provision for your child by:

- Reviewing their progress towards their targets
- Statistically analysing academic attainment following data captures
- Reviewing the impact of interventions
- Using student, parent and teacher voice
- Holding annual reviews (if they have an education, health and care (EHC) plan)

## 10. How will the school resources be secured for my child?

It may be that your child's needs mean we need to attempt to secure:

- Extra equipment or facilities
- More teaching assistant hours
- Further training for our staff

- External specialist expertise

If need is determined, we will consult with external agencies to obtain recommendations on what will be most effective in supporting your child access their learning.

The school will cover the first element of any necessary costs. If funding is needed beyond this, we will seek it from our local authority.

## **11. How will the school make sure my child is included in activities alongside students who don't have SEND?**

All of our extra-curricular activities and school visits are made available to all our students. There may be instances where additional support is needed to be to facilitate that, or where poor behaviour leads to that privilege being withdrawn. We will consider a child's SEND need when making those decisions, making reasonable adjustments wherever possible.

All students are encouraged to go on our school trips, including our residential trips and to take part in sports day and industry / community based visits and workshops

Where it is in their best interests, no student is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEN or disability and we will aim to make whatever reasonable adjustments are needed to make sure that they can be included.

## **12. How does the school make sure the admissions process is fair for students with SEN or a disability?**

UTC does not discriminate against students with SEND, regardless of over subscription. The SENDCO is available at Open Evenings for prospective students in order that SEN specific questions about need can be asked. Once an application to join UTC South Durham has been made, a member of the SEND team meets with the child and their parents in order to build a picture of need and the provision that needs to be available.

Where a consultation is made for the admission of a child with an EHCP, the provision required is carefully considered and a decision is made as to whether we can meet that need and whether the placement of that child will have no adverse effect on the education experiences of their peers.

## **13. How does the school support students with disabilities?**

UTC South Durham takes steps to ensure that the disability of a student does not lead to them being treated less favourably than their peers. Our building is fully accessible and inclusive. Where specialist equipment or resources are necessary, we may work with external services in order to provide them.

## **14. How will the school support my child's mental health and emotional and social development?**

We provide support for students to progress in their emotional and social development in the following ways:

- › Our Student Support team are available to listen to concerns, to act upon them, provide support and liaise with appropriate professionals,
- › Students with SEN have access to a quiet area for social times if necessary
- › Students with SEN take part in 1 to 1, or small group SEMH sessions aimed at developing confidence, self-esteem and social communication skills
- › We refer students to a range of emotional wellbeing, and mental health, support teams.
- › We have an ELSA trained TA, and trained counsellors
- › The Student Leaver Profile encourages all students to develop social skills within their UTC career
- › The SEND team run small group sessions and outings aimed at developing communication skills and building meaningful friendships
- › We provide extra pastoral support for listening to the views of students with SEND
- › We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying.

## 15. What support will be available for my child as they transition between classes or settings or in preparing for adulthood?

### Between years

To help students with SEND be prepared for a new school year we will invite the most anxious or vulnerable of our students to join us for a session ahead of the start of term.

### Between schools

Before joining UTC South Durham, and with your permission, we will approach your child's current school to request any SEND information. We run a comprehensive transition programme, its extent being determined by the level of individual need.

When your child is moving on from our school, we will ask you and your child what information you want us to share with the new setting.

### Onto adulthood

Our Student Leaver Profile aspires for all of our students to leave us 'career and life ready'. Our core skills are developed through activities in the classroom, through our Crew and PaCE curriculums, and also through DropDown Days and project work.

We provide all our students with appropriate advice on paths into work or further education. We work with DurhamWorks to provide further support to our most vulnerable students, and also take advantage of sessions run by Durham Enable in order to support students in becoming work ready.

We work with students to help them achieve their ambitions, which can include goals in higher education, employment, independent living and participation in society.

## 16. What support is in place for looked-after and previously looked-after children with SEN?

Our SENDCO, Jak Heslop, is also the Designated Teacher for children who are in the care of the local authority, or who are previously looked-after. She ensures that all teachers understand how a looked-after or previously looked-after student's circumstances and their SEND might interact, and what the implications are for teaching and learning.

Children who are looked-after or previously looked-after will be supported much in the same way as any other child who has SEND. However, looked-after students will also have a personal education plan (PEP) which is reviewed termly with the Virtual School. We will make sure that the PEP and any SEN support plans or EHC plans are consistent and complement one another. The Designated Teacher for LAC (or a UTC representative) will attend PEP meetings, LAC reviews and Care Team meetings.

## 17. What should I do if I have a complaint about my child's SEN support?

Complaints about SEN provision in our school should be made to the SENDCO or Principal in the first instance. They will then be referred to the school's complaints policy which can be found at <https://www.utcsouthdurham.org/home/policies/standard-policy-documentation>

If you are not satisfied with the school's response, you can escalate the complaint. To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEN Code of Practice](#).

If you feel that our school discriminated against your child because of their SEND, you have the right to make a discrimination claim to the first-tier SEND tribunal. To find out how to make such a claim, you should visit: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/disability-discrimination>

Before going to a SEND tribunal, you can go through processes called disagreement resolution or mediation, where you try to resolve your disagreement before it reaches the tribunal.

## 18. What support is available for me and my family?

If you have questions about SEND, or are struggling to cope, please get in touch to let us know. We want to support you, your child and your family.

To see what support is available to you locally, have a look at your local authority's local offer. Links to the relevant webpages can be found on our website.

Our local authorities also offer special educational needs and disabilities information advice and support services (SENDIASS) eg <https://durhamsendiass.info/> and there are many support groups for families of children with SEND eg Waves <https://www.mctdurham.co.uk/news-events/new-tewv-parent-support-group/>

National charities that offer information and support to families of children with SEND are:

- > [IPSEA](#)
- > [SEND family support](#)
- > [NSPCC](#)
- > [Family Action](#)
- > [Special Needs Jungle](#)

## 19. Glossary

- › **Access arrangements** – special arrangements to allow students with SEND to access assessments or exams
- › **Annual review** – an annual meeting to review the provision in a student's EHC plan
- › **Area of need** – the 4 areas of need describe different types of needs a student with SEND can have. The 4 areas are communication and interaction; cognition and learning; physical and/or sensory; and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- › **ASC** – Autism Spectrum Condition
- › **CAMHS** – child and adolescent mental health services
- › **Differentiation** – When teachers adapt how they teach in response to a student's needs
- › **EHC needs assessment** – the needs assessment is the first step on the way to securing an EHC plan. The local authority will do an assessment to decide whether a child needs an EHC plan.
- › **EHC plan / EHCP** – an education, health and care plan is a legally-binding document that sets out a child's needs and the provision that will be put in place to meet their needs.
- › **ELSA** – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
- › **First-tier tribunal/SEND tribunal** – a court where you can appeal against the local authority's decisions about EHC needs assessments or plans and against discrimination by a school or local authority due to SEND
- › **Graduated approach** – an approach to providing SEN support in which the school provides support in successive cycles of assessing the student's needs, planning the provision, implementing the plan, and reviewing the impact of the action on the student
- › **Intervention** – a short-term, targeted approach to teaching a student with a specific outcome in mind
- › **Local offer** – information provided by the local authority which explains what services and support are on offer for students with SEN in the local area
- › **Outcome** – target for improvement for students with SEND. These targets don't necessarily have to be related to academic attainment
- › **Quality First Teaching** - an inclusive approach to teaching where educators provide high-quality, differentiated, and personalized instruction for all students in a classroom, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- › **Reasonable adjustments** – changes that the school must make to remove or reduce any disadvantages caused by a child's disability
- › **SENDCO** – the special educational needs co-ordinator
- › **SEN** – special educational needs
- › **SEND** – special educational needs and disabilities
- › **SEND Code of Practice** – the statutory guidance that schools must follow to support children with SEND
- › **SEN information report** – a report that schools must publish on their website, that explains how the school supports students with SEN
- › **SEN support** – special educational provision which meets the needs of students with SEN
- › **PaCE** – Professional and Career Experiences, a curriculum bespoke to UTC South Durham
- › **Transition** – when a student moves between years, phases, schools or institutions or life stages

