Minerva Virtual Academy

SEND POLICY

Minerva Virtual Academy

KEY CONTACTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Minerva Virtual Academy is committed to providing the best possible care and education to all our students, including those identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). MVA believes that all students, with or without SEND, have the right to a balanced, broad and challenging curriculum and wider enrichment opportunities.

We aim to meet the needs of all students, as far as is practical in terms of the resources of the school, and to provide a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop a student's self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience; hence strengthening their overall well-being and capacity to learn, engage and socialise.

We aim to provide students with the skills, understanding and confidence to participate fully in all subject lessons, virtual learning and wider opportunities at MVA and to achieve their full potential in all areas of school life; with the goal of supporting students to extend their basic skills including literacy, numeracy and study skills such that they go on to achieve success in public examinations appropriate to their academic abilities. It recognises that all students have their own particular needs and seeks to ensure that each student is able to learn, experience success and feel valued in an environment free from obstacles and prejudice.

MVA recognises that mental health is a crucial factor in the overall wellbeing of our students and can affect their learning and achievement. The whole school promotes positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers).

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PURPOSE
This policy aims to:

- Set out how MVA will support and make provision for students with SEND
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in supporting students with SEND
- Ensure that the environment and education of MVA enable all students to thrive academically and personally.

DEFINITIONS
A student is identified as having SEND 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 the others of the same age; or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them in making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Special education 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.

Many children and young people who have SEND 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'. Not all children with a disability have SEN in line with the above definition, however, MVA understands its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments to include all children and their families where appropriate.

ADMISSIONS & SPECIAL NEEDS
MVA welcomes applications from students with special educational needs, disabilities and other additional needs.

During the admissions process, MVA works with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the student's previous school or other relevant professionals to develop a clear and holistic understanding of the student's needs. Parents/carers should provide copies of any relevant Educational Psychologist reports, medical reports, Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) documentation or other supporting information where available.

The student's individual needs and any reasonable adjustments or additional support that may be required will be discussed as part of the admissions process. To ensure that the student is able to access and participate in the school's educational provision.

A decision regarding admission will be made on the basis of the information available and in accordance with MVA's Admissions Policy and relevant legal requirements.

For further information about the admissions process for students with special educational needs or disabilities, please refer to MVA's Admissions Policy.

EHCP Admissions

Students with an EHCP are welcome to apply to MVA. Where a student has an EHCP in place, their application will require additional consideration to ensure that MVA can appropriately meet their individual needs and the provision identified in their EHCP, and that the MVA programme is suitable for them.

Families who intend to self-fund should contact the EHCP Admissions Team to discuss the student's needs, their EHCP and the next steps in the admissions process. The application will be subject to additional review by the appropriate school and EHCP teams before a place can be confirmed.

Families who are seeking Local Authority funding should liaise with their Local Authority to explore the available funding arrangements and next steps, and request that the Local Authority to make a formal consultation to ensure we can meet the needs and provisions identified in the EHCP.

An offer or place at MVA does not guarantee that Local Authority funding will be approved. Where a place is dependent on funding, the offer may be subject to the relevant funding being confirmed.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

SENDCos

The Admissions, Operations & Senior Leadership Teams ensure that as much is known as early as possible about any students joining MVA with possible and/or identified SEND. The admissions process includes a specific form for parents to submit key information related to their child's SEND. If the SENDCos have not been involved prior to enrolment, all information is then passed to them. The SENDCos are responsible for:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of MVA's SEND provision
- Ensuring up-to-date records are kept for all SEND students in the SEND register and ensuring teachers & mentors are aware of provision and resource needs for these students
- Liaising with and, where required, providing professional guidance to teachers, mentors, parents/carers and outside agencies to ensure that students with SEND receive appropriate

support and teaching
- Managing the SEND team including several Assistant SENDCos, the EHCP team and SEND Support Programme Manager
- Overseeing the records of all students with SEND
- Overseeing the advice for parents/carers of students with SEND regarding public examination access arrangements
- Delivering continual professional development (CPD) to staff
- Acting as point of contact for external agencies
- Analysis of whole school SEND needs and patterns to allocate resources as appropriate
- Oversee mediation and tribunal support for parents

SEND Team
The SEND team is managed by two qualified SENDCos who oversee several Assistant SENDCos, a SEND Support Programme Manager, an EHCP Coordinator and an Assistant EHCP Coordinator.

Assistant SENDCOs
- Be a first point of contact for mentors and families
- Provide support and advice for parents/carers
- Manage assess, plan, do, review processes for students requiring additional support
- Deliver individual targeted support sessions to students
- Work with mentors to support their mentees
- Contribute to staff CPD
- Deliver parent workshops
- Attend annual reviews
- Complete exam access arrangement processes

EHCP Team
- Be a main point of contact for MVA families for enquiries relating to EHCPs
- Oversee support for families in the EHCNA process
- Complete formal consults for students receiving an EHCP whilst at MVA
- Manage the annual review processes for students with EHCPs

SEND Programme Manager
- Oversees all the SEND Support Programmes (SSP) [SSPs are paid for programmes]
- Plans and delivers the SSP
- Writes reports for students on SSP
- Contributes to annual reviews

TEACHERS

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MVA teaching staff play a full role in ensuring that all students, with or without SEND, have access to the very best teaching and learning, enrichment opportunities and resources appropriate to their needs. With this in mind, the role of teaching staff at MVA includes:

- Being aware of students in their classes with SEND and the nature of their needs, ensuring familiarity with the SEND register
- Ensuring they are using best practice for planning and delivering lessons that are inclusive
- Making reasonable adjustments to their live lessons and VLP work to ensure learning is accessible for all students
- Working with mentors, Heads of Year and the SEND Team to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions as needed
- Working with mentors, Heads of Year and the SEND Team to review the progress of students and decide on changes to the provision and targets as needed
- Appropriately record information related to SEND and add/allocate appropriate action(s) as needed, including raising concerns about a potential need

MENTORS

MVA mentoring staff provide highly impactful, personalised care and guidance to all students, with or without SEND, to help them develop in confidence, resilience, academic performance and social interaction. All our mentors receive SEND-specific CPL from the SEND team to ensure they are equipped to support students with a range of needs. With this in mind, the role of mentoring staff at MVA includes:

- Being aware of their mentees with SEND and the nature of their needs, ensuring detailed familiarity with any information and documentation the school has regarding the student
- Through sensitive handling of mentor meetings, enhance their understanding of the needs of SEND students, what works well for them and what barriers they face
- Consult with the SEND Team and Heads of Year regarding what provision is or should be in place to ensure students are able to thrive
- Keep open channels of communication with students and with parents/carers to assess the impact of provisions and adjustments on their learning
- Use CPOMs to record incidents related to SEND and add/allocate appropriate action(s) as needed
- Appropriately record information related to SEND and add/allocate appropriate action(s) as needed, including raising concerns about a potential need
- Monitor attendance and engagement for all a student's activities, providing support strategies to overcome barriers if they arise
- Complete referrals into the SEND team for support as a mentor or request support for the family or student

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3. MANAGING SEND

Our SEND Team is managed by two qualified SENDCos. We support students with a range of learning differences including, but not limited to:

- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Cognitive processing differences
- Dyslexia
- Dyscalculia
- Physical disabilities
- Speech and language needs
- Sensory processing differences
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties
- Visual and hearing impairments

The School's teachers and mentors use appropriate assessments to set targets for students. Lessons and work on the VLP are planned to remove barriers to student achievement based on identified areas of difficulty. Adaptive teaching ensures all students are able to access the curriculum.

A variety of adaptations and aids may be used on the advice of the SEND team, noted in the iSAMS SEND register. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be advised of the need to provide such aids in the home.

The school follows the current Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance for Exam Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. The SEND Team will advise on access arrangements for internal work and examinations, including the gathering of appropriate evidence. We will organise these arrangements for students who use the Remote Invigilation Service, and will liaise with parents/carers to guide them through the process of applying for Exam Access Arrangements for their child as a private candidate in an exam centre.

IDENTIFICATION

MVA uses a graduated response to the identification of needs. This is done via the school's referral process and involves:

- Evaluation of information received from parents/carers and previous schools at enrolment

- Evaluation of previous school reports and outcomes from CEM baseline assessments undertaken by all students upon entry to MVA
- Analysis of student tracking data and test results - for individual students and for cohorts
- Feedback from teachers and mentors regarding engagement on the VLP, live lessons and wider school life

REFERRAL

Referral to the SEND Team may be made by any teacher, mentor, parent or carer who has concerns regarding a student's achievement, access to or engagement with learning.

THE GRADUATED RESPONSE

Minerva Virtual Academy follows the graduated approaches outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2015 in order to match support to needs:

- **Assess** - identify the needs or barriers
- **Plan** - set specific outcomes and support/resources required
- **Do** - carry out the support
- **Review** - evaluate whether the outcome was achieved and re-assess if necessary

The SEND Team ensures that any documentation relating to students with SEND is kept up-to-date and simplified for teacher action in the SEND register.

PROVISION

The SEND Team supports students who require structured additional help and confidence building, to realise their full potential. This support varies according to need and may address academic or pastoral concerns.

The SEND Code of Practice recognises that a child's needs and requirements fall into four broad areas:

- Communication & Interaction (Language & Autistic Spectrum Disorder)
- Cognition & Learning (General Learning and Specific Learning Difficulties)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical

The SEND Team provides support and advice to:

- students who may need help with a particular aspect of their work (e.g. handwriting or processing speed)

- structure and manage a student's self-study schedule
- help students learn strategies to become active learners, to grow in confidence and to take small steps towards big goals
- any student with a need or learning difference that requires some extra guidance
- parents, carers, teachers and mentors who wish to provide support for the student

WITHDRAWAL

The school reserves the right, following consultation with parents, to require parents to withdraw their child from MVA if, in the opinion of the school:

- Parents have withheld information which would have made a significant difference to the school's management of the student's learning difficulties; and/or
- The student has SEND that requires a level of support that the school is unable to provide; and/or
- The student is in serious need of medication, assessment or essential support relating to SEND or SEMH to which the parents are unwilling to give their consent.

TRANSFER

Information regarding support that has been provided to a student will be shared with the student's next school or educational establishment to facilitate transfer. All reports from external agencies are only shared with the permission of parents/carers.

This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2015) and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools DfE (2013)
- SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2015)
- Schools SEN Information Report Regulations (2014)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

This procedure is designed to set out the good practice standards that MVA will adhere to. However, the school recognises that best practice develops over time and, as such, will update it regularly in the light of experience and as a result of changes in legislation or its own internal organisation and policies. The procedure will be subject to a comprehensive review on an annual basis.

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Last Review Date: Reviewed by:	September 2026 Wayne Foster, Lacey Flook and Suzanne Lindley
Next Review Date:	September 2027