

# SEND POLICY



**MINERVA'S**  
virtual academy

## KEY CONTACTS

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## INTRODUCTION

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Minerva's 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.

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.

We aim to provide students with the skills, understanding and confidence to participate fully in all subject lessons and virtual learning 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.

## 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 providing for students with SEND
- Ensure that the environment and education of MVA enable all students to thrive academically and personally, whatever their needs

## 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**

Students with disabilities and other needs will be considered for entry to MVA subject to the School being satisfied that it will be able to meet the majority of the needs of the child without adversely affecting the education of other students.

Such students may be admitted for a trial period to monitor and assess how well MVA meets their needs and feedback provided from the student, parents/carers, teachers and any external interested parties before a final decision is made.

A full picture of each individual student's need is gathered from parents/carers and previous schools during the Admissions process in order for MVA and its SENDCo to obtain a holistic picture. Please refer to MVA's Admissions policy.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

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### **SENDCo**

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

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of MVA's SEND provision
- Maintaining up-to-date records for all SEND students in the iSAMS 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 Intervention Lead & other Learning Support staff involved specifically with SEND provision

- Overseeing the records of all students with SEND
- Advising parents/carers of students with SEND regarding public examination access arrangements
- Contributing to the in-service training of teaching staff
- Acting as point of contact for external agencies
- Analysis of whole school SEND needs and patterns to allocate resources as appropriate, using iSAMs and CPOMs

## **SEND SUPPORT LEAD**

The SEND Support Lead works under the direction of the SENDCo to provide targeted personalised online support to individual students and small groups with SEND. Learning Support programmes provided by the SEND Support Lead are a paid extra and parents/carers are consulted before any courses begin. The SEND Support Lead is responsible for:

- Assessing individual students referred by the SENDCo and in agreement with parents/carers
- Following the Graduated Response process of: assess, plan, do, review in order to plan and deliver personalised intervention programmes to help students develop the skills to become more effective, resilient and independent learners
- Plan and deliver small group courses to address identified issues with a number of students presenting with the same or similar difficulties simultaneously (e.g. working memory)
- Monitor, record and report on progress to parents/carers, the SENDCo, Heads of Year and mentors as appropriate
- Keep teaching staff informed about student progress and any amendments to provision following the completion of a Learning Support programme

## **TEACHERS**

Minerva's Virtual Academy teaching staff are expected to play a full role in ensuring that all students, with or without SEND, have access to the very best teaching and learning 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 iSAMS SEND register
- 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 SENDCo to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions
- Working with mentors, Heads of Year and the SENDCo to review the progress of students and decide on changes to the provision and targets
- Use CPOMs to record incidences related to SEND and add/allocate appropriate action(s) as needed
- Use the SEND concern function in iSAMs to raise a potential need with the SENDCo who will review and action as appropriate

## MENTORS

MVA mentoring staff are expected to provide highly impactful, personalised care and guidance to all students, with or without SEND, to help them develop in confidence, resilience, academic performance and as social interaction. We pair students with mentors sensitively, ensuring that staff caring for our most vulnerable SEND students have sufficient experience and understanding to provide appropriate guidance and support. With this in mind, the role of mentoring staff at MVA includes:

- Being aware of students in their mentoring group 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 SENDCo 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 incidences related to SEND and add/allocate appropriate action(s) as needed
- Use the SEND concern function in iSAMS to raise a potential need with the SENDCo who will review and action as appropriate

## MANAGING SEND

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Our Learning Support Department is staffed by a registered SENDCo and, at time of writing, a qualified SEND Intervention Lead. Many members of MVA staff have significant experience and expertise in educating and enhancing the lives of students with SEND, and represent a strong consulting team around the core Learning Support staff. We are able to support students with a range of specific learning difficulties, including but not limited to those presenting with symptoms of:

- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Dyslexia
- Dyscalculia
- Developmental co-ordination disorder (Dyspraxia)
- Speech and language difficulties
- Sensory and cognitive processing difficulties
- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties
- Visual and hearing impairments
- Physical disabilities

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. Differentiation ensures all students are able to access the curriculum.

A variety of different aids may be used on the advice of the SENDCo or SEND Intervention Lead, 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 Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. The SENDCo will advise if a student requires additional time, a reader or other access arrangements for internal work and examinations, as well as liaising with parents/carers and guiding them through the process of applying for Access Arrangements for their child as a private candidate in public exams..

## **IDENTIFICATION**

A graduated response to identification of learning difficulties is adopted. This matches action to the individual child's needs 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
- Ongoing monitoring by teachers and mentors of student engagement on the VLP and in live lessons

## **REFERRAL**

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

## **THE GRADUATED RESPONSE TO PROVISION**

Minerva's Virtual Academy follows the graduated approaches outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2014 in order to match interventions to needs:

- Assess
- Plan
- Do
- Review

The SENDCo and SEND Intervention Lead ensure that any documentation relating to students with SEND is kept up-to-date and simplified for teacher action in the iSAMS SEND register.

## **PROVISION**

The SEND Intervention Lead and specialist mentors support students who require structured additional help and confidence building, to realise their full potential. This support varies according to need and may include academic, physical or emotional issues.

The Code of Practice does not assume that there are hard and fast categories of SEND, but recognises 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.

Suitably experienced mentors and, where required, the SEND Intervention Lead, provide support:

- to any student with an additional need that warrants intervention strategies
- students who may need help with a particular aspect of their work (e.g. handwriting or processing speed)
- with structuring and managing a student's self-study schedule

- to help students learn strategies to become active learners, to grow in confidence and to take small steps towards big goals

Liaison between SENDCo and the Principal aims to provide students with the tools needed to have a positive, life-long mental health and resilient and robust wellbeing. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing 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).

## **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 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 (September 2014) 3.65 and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

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

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

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This procedure is designed to set good practice standards. 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.

Date Policy created:	February 2023
Last Review Date: Reviewed by:	February 2024 Suzanne Lindley
Next Review Date:	February 2025