

# BLACKFRIARS ACADEMY

## SEN POLICY AND SEN INFORMATION REPORT

*Developed:*

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2024

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# SEN POLICY AND SEN INFORMATION REPORT

## LEGISLATION:

This policy and report is written in the context of:

- The Children and Families Act: Section 69
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The 0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015

## School Context - The kind of SEN that are provided for:

Blackfriars Academy is a generic secondary academy that meets the needs of students with various SEN and levels of ability. There are students with physical difficulties, learning difficulties, ASD, EBSD, Speech and language difficulties and medical needs. Students come to Blackfriars from other special schools, mainstream schools and after being home tutored or out of school for extended periods.



## The Immersive Pathway (link to Pathway)

There are classes that meet the need of students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), these students often have a high level of medical needs and require alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) strategies and follow an adapted sensory curriculum, that includes communication as the main focus and allows for physical management and frequent change of positions so that the holistic needs of the students are met throughout the day.

The Immersive Pathway is for those students who need a range of multi-sensory experiences to make sense of their world and to stimulate engagement and interaction. Through structured, repetitive immersive environments and topics that stimulate the senses, the pupils will be motivated to engage, experience, anticipate, participate and develop their interaction and communication skills. Communication opportunities and development is at the heart of the pathway and is implemented through Intensive Interaction, Resonance Board sessions, Rebound, Sensology, Music and Movement, Breakfast club, Story Massage, TacPac, 4D Immersive technology sessions, hydro pool sessions to name a few.

There are opportunities for the classes in the Immersive pathway to mix together in the mornings for active Sensory Regulation sessions and in the afternoon for Therapy sessions.

The students' social, independence and self-help skills are promoted as much as possible through the above activities and at other times with the support of the physiotherapy team in school, the Personal Care team who assist in the bathroom and with physical management for those that it is appropriate for, the School Nurse who oversees Care plans and the administration of medication and the Multisensory Impairment Team who visit school.

### [The Exploratory Pathway](#) ([link to Pathway](#))

Our Exploratory Pathway endeavours to develop the potential of each individual student

We support students with Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) where necessary, encouraging them to listen, through modelled speech, and be listened to giving them the freedom to ask questions and communicate key information from home, the school day and topic related vocabulary

- \* Students are encouraged to take ownership in developing their independence and learn skills for life ([link to café](#)) – with support they learn social skills including finding ways to keep themselves clean; why it's important to use good manners and how to greet people; discovering how they can help with simple tasks around the home and how to prepare simple drinks and snacks.
- \* Students are encouraged to take part in and enjoy a wide range of physical activities – including swimming, Rebound therapy, sensory circuits, yoga & relaxation which helps develop their confidence as well as fine and gross motor skills. Students also follow programmes advised by the physiotherapist.
- \* Literacy and numeracy skills are developed in a variety of meaningful and engaging cross-curricula topics and real life activities; enabling students to explore reading, recording and maths in practical familiar situations. Numbers, quantity, times and money are further investigated through play and exploration.

All of the curriculum is delivered in a nurturing, purposeful and enjoyable environment by a team led by qualified teachers who are experts in teaching students with SEND. This team approach ensures that students receive a bespoke education and learning experience personalised to their needs. Assessment is ongoing throughout their journey on the Exploratory pathway, providing a direction for learning that is relevant to the individuals' needs.

### [The Questioning Pathway](#) ([link to Pathway](#))

The rest of the academy caters for students who have moderate learning difficulties or social difficulties that has made it hard for them to progress in a mainstream setting. These students are supported through the National Curriculum to achieve to their full potential. Students are offered the same opportunities that they would have had in a mainstream school, in addition there is a great

emphasis upon the development of social and communication skills.

### What does our questioning pathway look like?

Our questioning pathway leads our students on a journey of self-discovery. Based on foundations of inclusiveness and self-awareness, students grow in confidence through developing an enquiring and questioning mind, as well as an understanding of self.

Through our personalised tailored curriculum, students study a wide range of subjects leading to internal and external qualifications. Alongside this they develop resilience, coping strategies and the courage to equip them for life beyond school.

Our school provides a caring and safe environment, to empower and enable all students. Specialist and dedicated staff meet the needs of the individual, with a holistic approach to ensure every young student achieves to their full potential.

Your child will be taught by a team led by qualified teachers who are subject specialists as well as experts in teaching students with SEND. This team approach ensures that pupils receive a bespoke education and learning experience personalised to their needs. Assessment is on-going throughout their journey on the questioning pathway, providing a direction for learning that is relevant to the individuals' needs.

### Nurturing Transition Groups

Often in Y7 there is a need to create a nurturing transition group that sits between two Pathways in order to settle pupils and build their confidence and self-esteem before moving into one Pathway. We place this group into the Exploratory Pathway initially in order to offer a timetable with a Class Teacher approach (as opposed to a Form Tutor and lots of different subject specialist teachers) Dependent upon the student/group we have the flexibility to move to the Questioning Pathway if more appropriate.

### Support for Students with a Physical need

The academy is fully accessible to students with a physical difficulty. Students with physical difficulties have access to the physiotherapy department that is based in the academy several days a week.

Teaching Assistants work closely with physiotherapists to develop their skills to facilitate any physical management that is needed, i.e. standing frames, walkers, splints. The academy has a hydrotherapy pool that, as well as being used for swimming lessons, is also used by the physiotherapists for students for whom it is appropriate. There are staff within the school who were part of the PDSS (Physical Disability Support Service) they of course use their skills in house to advise on equipment, positioning and assistive technology to support the recording of work, medical issues and care plans as well as adaptations to the academy. There are two teachers within the school who have a Conductive Education background that some pupils might have experienced when they were in their Primary setting.



### Support for students with communication needs

There are staff within the school that come together to oversee assistive technology and alternative and augmentative communication (AT/AAC). The team and class staff work very closely with the NHS Speech Therapist assigned to Blackfriars to meet the needs of students within the academy. Blackfriars staff are trained in the use of PECs, PODD, Grid 3 and SCERTS.

We also commission support from external organisations, for example, Smartbox, to support and train when necessary.

### **Introduction and aims of this policy**

This policy underpins the practice of our academy and supports our aims to:

- Provide a caring, supportive, enjoyable, person-centred learning environment where all students can achieve.
- Ensure that all our learners make the best possible progress in whatever way they can
- Ensure that parents/carers are fully informed and involved in their child's education, as partners, and to ensure there is effective communication between parents/carers and the academy by requesting, monitoring and responding to parent/carer/students' views.
- Ensure that all Academy Councillors are up to date and knowledgeable about the academy's SEN provision.
- Ensure full Academy Council involvement in the future development and monitoring of this policy
- Ensure that all our students, where possible, can express their views and are fully involved, as partners, in decisions which affects their education
- Involve and work in partnership with all health professionals and outside agencies to make sure there is a multi-professional approach to meeting the needs of all vulnerable learners.
- Ensure learners make a successful transition when they leave the academy
- Reduce barriers to achievement and offer a variety of alternative and /or individualised learning programmes as appropriate to meet the needs of our students
- To ensure high levels of staff expertise to meet student need, through quality, targeted continuing professional development.

#### **What are special educational needs?**

"A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her." SEN Code of Practice Sept 2014

The SEN Code of Practice says that a child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of young people of the same age.
- Has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for young people of the same age in schools within the area

Special educational provision means:

- Educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally available to others of the same age in a mainstream setting in England.

- Health or Social care provision which educates or trains a child is to be treated as a special educational provision.

For children with an EHCP, parents have a right to request a particular school and the Local Authority must comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless:

- It would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or
- the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

Before securing a placement at this school the local authority must consult the governing body / principal and will send the Academy Council a copy of the EHCP/draft EHCP – and consider their comments before deciding whether to name the school in the EHCP.

The Local Authority must also seek the agreement of the school where a draft EHCP sets out any provision to be delivered on their premises that have been secured by a direct payment (Personal Budget).

[Arrangements for consulting parents of children with SEN and involving them in their children's education and in assessing and reviewing their child's progress](#)

It is vital that the academy and home work in partnership in order to best meet the needs of students. Blackfriars has an open-door policy to parents so that they are welcomed in to discuss any concerns or successes involving their child. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the target setting for their child and in supporting them with homework. The academy keep parents fully informed of student progress with progress trackers and reports that are sent home. There is a fortnightly newsletter that shares activities and successes that have been taking place within the academy and a termly newspaper providing an in-depth look at academy activities.

Dependent upon parental needs, consultation and/or support groups are available – run by either our Clinical Psychologist or Senior TA.

[Arrangements for consulting young people with SEN and involving them in their education and in assessing and reviewing progress](#)

Students are involved in their target setting and discuss this with Form Teachers and Subject Teachers throughout the year. Their opinions are obtained through questionnaires, opportunities provided by the School Council and at their Annual Reviews/EHCP meetings. The students also contribute to their own end of year reports.

## Arrangements for supporting students moving between phases of education and preparing for adulthood

Each student has a Preparation for Adulthood Plan that outlines their hopes and aspirations, plans for independent / supported living and the steps to be taken that year to work towards those goals. This plan is drawn up in consultation with the students and their parents and carers. Y9 Students have an Annual Review Transition meeting where their skills and interests are explored and discussed in order to help them plan for their next setting. This is supported through Work Related Opportunities with workshops and Job Carousels to give them experience of the type of roles or next steps that can be taken. There are also opportunities to meet with past students to discuss their learning journey and steps after Y11.



In the Questioning Pathway we offer students the opportunity to study a broad and balanced curriculum up to 16 which ensures that there is a tight focus on developing skills for independence and a mindset that encourages them to engage with the wider world. Students are entered for appropriate qualifications which focuses their efforts on employability and independent living skills such as how to work as members of a team, develop an enterprise activity and are introduced to a range of different occupations and professions to enhance their understanding of the World of work.



For the Exploratory and Immersive Pathways, students focus on their social and communication skills and opportunities to be out in the community as much as possible. For students for whom it is appropriate key life skills around stranger danger, road safety and skills used when shopping and ordering in a café are embedded into the curriculum to support them in achieving the targets set in their Preparation for Adulthood Plans.

After year 11, The majority of Blackfriars students move onto Newfriars College an excellent specialist college provision in Bucknall with strong links to Blackfriars. Blackfriars work closely with local mainstream colleges as well and students have moved onto Newcastle college, Burslem college and Reaseheath college. Students are taken to visit colleges to help them make a decisions as to where to go next.

‘Transition’ Reviews, in line with local authority processes and procedures for phase transfers, are now held during the summer term of Y10 to enable parents, carers and students sufficient time to visit local colleges, for the local authorities to complete the phase transfer processes within the statutory time frames, and to allow for transition work to take place over the year with visits, taster days, and sharing of all appropriate information so that the next setting is fully aware of how to meet the students’ needs and to help to prepare students for the move.

## The approach to teaching students with SEN

The planning and differentiation process is person-centred.

Full assessments of students' academic ability, positioning, physical dexterity and communication take place so that the appropriate resources and strategies can be put in place and shared with all staff and parents for a consistency of approach. Students are then grouped appropriately so that the teacher can differentiate the level and pace of work appropriately and the support from Teaching Assistants is appropriately matched.

Students will follow a curriculum tailored to their needs and in some cases a personalised curriculum.

All students no matter what their level of ability are encouraged to reach their full potential. All students are entered for external accreditations.

Personalised targets are set for individuals and shared with students, so that where appropriate, have ownership of them. Progress is regularly tracked and discussed with students and parents / carers. If students are not making progress then appropriate interventions are put in place.

EHCP and Preparation for Adulthood targets are tracked through the use of the Evidence App which allows staff to store photos, videos and information about how a student is progressing – this will then produce pictorial reports that can be used to enhance and inform discussions at EHCP review meetings and when reporting to parents at other points throughout the year.

Staff are skilled at bringing subjects to life through creative, inspiring lessons and through the use of props, film footage, role play and visiting artists/poets to name a few; students become fully immersed in their learning.

For many groups routine, structure and clear boundaries are important as are the use of visual materials to reinforce meaning and understanding.

Specialist teaching and communication approaches are used throughout the school to match the needs of the student, such as elements of visual support systems, PECs, signing (Makaton), PODD.

## How adaptations are made to the curriculum and the learning environment of students with SEN

Our Accessibility Plan describes the actions the Academy has taken to increase access to the environment and curriculum.

Adaptations and interventions include:

- *Positioning* of students within the classroom to best suit their needs is always considered. Some students thrive in a very stimulating, interactive, colourful environment and others do not and careful consideration is made of this. Some students work best in their own work space and like the use of a screen to cut out distractions, others are very comfortable with group work activities.

- A Literacy and Numeracy *intervention programme* is run for the KS3 and KS4 students to boost students' basic Maths and English skills.
- KS3 and KS4 students with more profound needs are involved in *Sensory diet* activities and gross and fine motor skills work at these times, where students have physical activity before lessons start.
- Work is *differentiated, the use of feedback* and ways to improve their work is important.
- Reading and Literacy progress is underpinned by Twinkl phonics, a systematic, synthetic phonics programme, Lexia, an on-line bespoke literacy programme which helps students read, write and speak with confidence as well as other Multi-sensory language programmes and cued articulation. Interventions are SMART and follow the assess, plan, do, review cycle.
- *Numicon* is used in Maths to help support students learning in a concrete way.
- *Personalised timetables* are used to support individual learners to ensure they are fully engaged and suitably challenged.
- Subject-specific *withdrawal intervention groups*.
- The use of Student Premium money to employ a *tutor for Literacy/Numeracy support technician. Literacy is enhanced by cued articulation*.

The expertise and training of staff to support students with SEN, including how specialist expertise will be secured



The Academy is committed to the Continuing Professional Development of staff ranging from whole academy training in for example: individuals attending courses, several staff completing MA courses in Special Educational Needs. As a member of the Shaw

Education Trust's Institute of Education, Blackfriars also has access to exciting opportunities that staff can become involved in or lead on, for example, an evidence based research project where 11

members of staff advocated for a special need that they have researched and helped develop a MOOC on the website for parents and carers. The AT/AAC team have appropriate expertise and qualifications in that area. Four members of staff within the academy advise on good practice in mainstream schools. Medical training is co-ordinated by the school nurse so that the appropriate staff in the academy are up-to-date with relevant information and procedures. The Clinical Psychologist employed by school, advises and gives training on relevant areas and strategies.

Provision that the students have access to

- Physiotherapy
- Hydro pool
- Staff knowledgeable in AAC systems
- PDSS trained staff to address positioning, fine and gross motor skills
- Clinical psychologist
- Peer mentor
- Literacy and Numeracy Interventions
- EHCP Compliance Officer
- Equalities Officer

- School Nurse
- Work experience
- Preparation for Adulthood Room
- 4D sensory space
- Land Based Studies work area comprising poly tunnel
- Therapeutic animals

Evaluating the effectiveness of the provision made for students with SEN – How will I know how my child is doing?

1. Ongoing communication with parents:

- During Annual Reviews of the EHCP
- All parents have access to communication via Showbie
- Discussions with the class teacher or Senior Leadership Team
- During parents' evenings / afternoons
- During meeting with support and external agencies
- Development of target setting
- Consultation on the feedback from student progress reviews.
- Positive Relationship Support Plans and close working and communication with parents
- Progress is reported on a formal basis at least three times a year including data reports, parent consultations and review meetings. Our EHCP review meetings are enhanced through the teachers sharing information on the Evidence for Learning app with photos and videos, giving all pupils a voice and a context for their progress.

2. The class teacher plans for all the students in his/her class and is responsible for the overall assessment of their progress. Students are taught as a whole group, in small groups or 1:1 by a class teacher, Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) and teaching assistants.

3. The quality of the teaching and learning at Blackfriars is monitored in a number of ways including:

- Shaw Education Trust monitoring all aspects of Teaching and Learning
- Senior Leadership classroom monitoring
- External verifiers of classroom monitoring
- Ongoing assessment of student progress
- Work sampling and scrutiny of planning
- Student progress reviews
- Students and parent feedback on impact of interventions
- Attendance and behaviour records.
- Reviewing of the interventions and whether progress has been made against their targets
- Provision Mapping and analysis
- Data

4. Students are baselined within the first 6 weeks of being at Blackfriars and 'flight path' of aspirational progress is developed. Regular assessments of your child will be made throughout their time in school – this ensures that teachers always have a good understanding of the level the child is working at and what needs to happen next to move them forwards. The teacher will happily discuss this with parents at any time across the school year.
5. An Annual Review of the EHCP takes place for every child in the school – this is an opportunity for the parents to meet representatives from all agencies to discuss the progress of their child.

[Support for improving emotional and social development and the involvement of other bodies in meeting students' SEN and supporting their families:](#)

The school offers a wide variety of pastoral support for students. These include:

- The safeguarding of children is of utmost priority in school, all staff access safeguarding training – safeguarding procedures are well established in school and monitored to ensure good practice at all times.
- A Personal, Social, Health and Economic programme (PSHE) is developed across the curriculum that aims to provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to enhance their emotional, social knowledge and well-being. There are whole school focused PSHE days launched in an assembly then workshop type activities.
- Some students access additional support through small group nurture opportunities.
- The school has access to a school nurse – and a range of health and social care teams.
- Parent and student voice mechanisms are in place and fully supported by staff, including a Student Council.
- Rewards and achievements are fully celebrated in school – through assemblies, class reward systems, House points, and annual events such as sports days and prize giving.
- The curriculum has been developed to include a wide range of enrichment activities.
- Lunchtime clubs are in place to support the development of the self-esteem and confidence of the students.
- Many of the staff are trained as first aiders and in specific medical interventions to support individual needs.
- Blackfriars employ a Clinical Psychologist who runs small groups sessions addressing self-esteem or sees students individually as well as working with parents.
- Through the use of Drama groups addressing emotional issues, relationships, choices.
- Close working relationship with parents and outside agencies CAMHS, Educational psychologist and social workers.
- Peer Mentor Leader who sees all students so they are aware of her role and how she can support them if needed.
- Strong relationship with Form Teacher, TA, student and home is encouraged. Each group has an allocated Teaching Assistant to whom they can go for support
- EN funding has been used to support students with emotional difficulties to facilitate 1:1 support.

- Weekly 'Student of Concern' meetings where staff can discuss students and make everyone aware of how to support that student at that time and to form action points to address ongoing concerns.

The following additional support from external agencies is used as appropriate to support students:

- Hearing Impairment team
- Visual Impairment team
- Multi-sensory Impairment team
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social Services
- Onsite School Nurse
- Family Support Workers
- Occupational Therapists
- Educational Psychologist Service
- Onsite Clinical psychologist
- Speech and Physio NHS
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy are provided by the local health



authority at a level deemed appropriate by them. Blackfriars employs a Clinical psychologist in addition to the NHS. The school nurse is in school four days a week and regular clinics are held by the paediatricians. Dental services provide screening throughout the school. Whizz Kids come into school

to support students' wheelchair proficiency.

Open access is extended to social services and colleagues from the voluntary services.

It is acknowledged by all working at the academy that if the best possible care is to be provided for each child then all professionals and interested parties must work closely as a team to meet the individual needs and requirements of every child.

#### Performance Management

The academy's SEN policy is linked to the Performance Management policy. Self evaluation and improvement planning are key components of the Performance Management Policy which sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of staff, including the Principal and Deputy Principals, and for supporting their development within the context of the academy's plan for improving educational provision and performance to enhance student achievement, and the standards expected of all adults working at Blackfriars.

Appraisal in this academy will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all teachers have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. This includes teaching and supporting learners with SEND, It will help to ensure that staff are able to continue to improve their professional practice through high quality Continuing Professional Development.

#### Equal Opportunities

The academy is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, sexuality, faith, gender or capability in all aspects of the academy. We promote self and mutual respect, and a caring and non-judgmental attitude throughout the academy.

#### How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?

This decision will be reached in agreement with parents when the EHCP is being produced or at an annual review. Partnership working with parents is a key focus of our work so an ongoing dialogue about the meeting of needs is encouraged.

Who can I contact if I have any further concerns? If you wish to discuss your child's special educational needs or are unhappy about any issues regarding the school's response to meeting these needs please contact:

<b>Blackfriars Academy</b>	
Headteacher (Jamie Campbell)	01782 987150
Blackfriars Academy	01782 987150
Vice Principal with SENDCO responsibility (Ruth O'Connor)	01782 987150
For complaints please contact the Academy Council Chair via the Blackfriars Academy telephone number – complaints policy is available on the academy website.	

#### What services are available for me as a parent?

Staffordshire SEND Family Partnership Service | 01785 356 921

[www.sfpsstaffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.sfpsstaffordshire.gov.uk)

More information can be found at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/sfps](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/sfps)

Single Point Access | 03301 118 007

[sendreferrals@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sendreferrals@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Information regarding the Local Offer and Market place can be found at:

[www.staffordshirecares.info/pages/.../send.../Local-offer/local-offer.aspx](http://www.staffordshirecares.info/pages/.../send.../Local-offer/local-offer.aspx)

Name of Policy		
Approved		
Review Date:		Review Cycle:
Signed by Principal:		
Signed by Academy Council Chair		