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CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST

Inclusion Policy

Academic Year 2025-2026

Version and Date		Action/Notes	Date to be Reviewed
7.0	16.07.2024	Approved by the Trust Board	1 Year – July 2025
8.0	08.07.2025	Approved by the Trust Board	1 Year – July 2026

Connect Education Trust Vision for Inclusion

The Connect Education Trust fully supports the Government's aims expressed in the Children and Families Act 2014. We therefore aspire to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill health, abuse, neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour amongst children and young people. Parents are informed about our inclusive practice and procedures through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report available on the Connect Education Trust school websites and during the admission to school meeting.

Aims of this Policy

It is our aim that every child:

- Will be treated fairly, equally and with respect in line with the Trust's Equality Information and Objectives and the school's Equality Plan with due regard to pupils who share a protected characteristic
- is fully involved in school life and given equal opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding, regardless of race, gender, religious beliefs, special educational needs, disabilities, learning style or any other factor that may affect their attainment or ability to feel included;
- is a successful learner at a pace appropriate to their abilities and development (this includes those who display some form of giftedness and may require an enhanced curriculum compared to their peers);
- is valued as a unique individual; we believe that all our children are equally important, as are their achievements, experiences, interests and well-being;
- has access to a broad, balanced and challenging academic and social curriculum. It is our responsibility to provide appropriate educational experiences, remove barriers to learning, and to develop and celebrate the achievements of all our pupils;
- has their strengths recognised and valued and their weaknesses supported, whether these be social, behavioural, physical, medical, emotional or academic;
- every adult accepts differences in others and works together to promote individual and group success and achievement.

All children follow the prescribed curriculum. We provide teaching and learning opportunities that encourage all pupils to make good progress. We promote equality of opportunity for our multi-ethnic community in our attitudes, practices and policies.

This Inclusion policy should be read alongside other school policies.

Responsibilities

Inclusion is a matter for the trust as a whole. In addition to the Local Governing Bodies/ Interim Management Boards, Trustees, the Chief Executive Officer and Headteachers, the Inclusion Managers and all other members of staff have important day-to-day responsibilities.

Inclusive teaching is a whole school responsibility. Each school will provide an appropriately differentiated and challenging curriculum to meet the needs of all students and consider different abilities, teaching styles, resources, activities and assessment procedures.

At the heart of the work in each class is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and assessment. The majority of children will learn and make adequate progress within these arrangements.

The development of independent learning skills is a vital part of our daily practice. Personalised learning opportunities and assessment for learning are promoted in order to develop students as independent learners.

Those children whose attainment falls significantly outside the expected range, and who are not making adequate progress, may have an additional or special educational need. If a teacher feels that this is the case, then he/she will discuss their concerns with the Inclusion Manager/ SENCO/ Headteacher.

The Role of the Inclusion Team
The Inclusion Team, in collaboration with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, is responsible for:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Inclusion Policy;
- coordinating the provision for vulnerable groups of children and those with SEND;
- liaising with and advising fellow teachers, support staff and collaborating with curriculum coordinators so that learning for all children is given equal priority;
- managing and supporting the continuing professional development of all staff regarding inclusion, SEND and other related topics;
- overseeing the Looked After Children (LAC) and SEND registers;
- liaising with parents or carers of SEND and LAC children;
- liaising with external agencies (see Appendix 1).

The Role of the Local Governing Body/ Interim Management Board
The role of the Local Governing Body/ Interim Management Board is:

- to work with the Headteacher and Inclusion Manager/SENCO to ensure the relevant information is communicated to the Trustees and Local Governing Body / Interim Management Board, in order that it can fulfil its role in evaluating and reviewing practice regarding inclusion upon how the school is fulfilling its responsibilities.

Key Principles

Admission Arrangements
All pupils will be admitted to Connect Education Trust schools in accordance with the requirements of the 1996 Education Act and the Admission Policy. Prior to entry an admission meeting is held where needs and previous attainment are established. We will seek appropriate support to ensure individual needs are met, as necessary.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)
The term EAL is used when referring to pupils whose main language at home (mother tongue) is a language other than English. The child could already know some English and may have been born in the UK. The child's language skills may be developing through the stages set out in 'A Language in Common'. Children will not be regarded as having SEN solely because of this language difference.

The school will aim to support children learning English as an additional language by:

- building upon their experience of acquiring language at home and in the wider community, so that this experience supports their developing use of English;
- providing a range of opportunities for them to engage in English speaking and listening activities, with peers and adults;

- providing visual cues and signs in classroom environments and around the school;
- providing a range of dual language texts as well as English texts;
- actively dealing with prejudice and discrimination through the curriculum and our other school policies.

The identification and assessment of the special educational needs of children whose first language is not English, requires a particular care. Where there is uncertainty about an individual child, teachers will look carefully at all aspects of a child's performance in difference subjects and in their home language. The Inclusion Team will support this process.

Disability
The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a 'physical or mental impairments that has substantial and long-term negative effect on his or her ability to do normal daily activities'. The Connect Education Trust will aim to:

- be fully inclusive of all children, both in lessons and in the wider curriculum, including extra-curricular activities and clubs;
- provide a rolling programme of alterations to its buildings and sites to make them increasingly accessible to children with disabilities;
- provide modifications to the learning environment for pupils with a physical disability as needed, such as a sound field system (for pupils with a hearing impairment), playground shelter from the sun and appropriate lighting in the classroom (for pupils with a visual impairment);
- recognise that some of the Connect Education Trust buildings currently present difficulties in terms of access to the upper floor. See Accessibility Plan for further details.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Children are considered to have SEND if they have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it significantly harder for them to learn or access education than most other children of their age. The Connect Education Trust will aim to:

- ensure that all teachers are able to identify and provide for those pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities;
- promote high expectations and progress for all children, relevant to their starting point and ability;
- encourage every pupil to join in with the activities of the school, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the efficient education of all pupils;
- develop partnerships with parents, external agencies and the LA in order to meet the needs of children with special educational needs or disabilities;
- work towards the realisation of the school vision for inclusion by actively developing:
    - expertise in using inclusive teaching
    - the content of the school's curriculum
    - the resources and provision available within school

Able, Gifted and Talented
Able, Gifted and Talented children are those who have potential or demonstrated abilities which, when promoted and encouraged by appropriate teaching, resources and learning opportunities, are evidenced in high performance in areas such as intellectual, creative, specific academic, leadership ability, or in the visual and performing arts.

Gifted children are those who have been recognised as showing potential academically, whether in a particular subject such as English, Maths, Science or in all subjects and areas of the curriculum, above the majority of their peer group.

Talented children are those showing exceptional ability in one of the arts, e.g. music, art, dance, drama or in PE, e.g. gymnastics, football, etc., above the majority of their peer group.

The Connect Education Trust will aim to:

- support these children by providing a differentiated curriculum for which offers opportunities for extended learning and challenge;
- focus upon matching teaching to the individual needs of all learners;
- provide opportunities for expression of pupil voice and act upon their views;
- engage with LA initiatives to promote inclusion in Gifted and Talented activities;
- ensure that termly progress meetings are used to inform planning and teaching and learning.

Behaviour, Emotional and Social Needs
Staff at the Connect Education Trust recognise that all children are individuals with a wide range of needs, skills and abilities and may need a range of support available to them:

- Learning Mentors play an essential role in supporting pupils with emotional difficulties. This provision supports a number of pupils in long or short term, individual or small group sessions, where they are able to talk about issues that are concerning them.
- There are Nurture Groups in some of our schools.
- Positive behaviour is promoted by supporting children to make the right behaviour choices both in the classroom and in playground. Achievement is rewarded through celebration assemblies that recognise children who have made improvements in relation to our school values and those children who always make the right choices.
- A range of clubs are available throughout the year, which provide opportunities for sports, arts and crafts, dance and music.

Vulnerable Groups
We recognise that Young Carers, Looked After Children and Travelers have specific needs which must be addressed to promote inclusion and ensure they are not discriminated against.

The school supports these pupils through a whole-school approach and by establishing a referral network to meet individual needs. The Connect Education Trust will regularly review its policies and practices to ensure that all possible opportunities are made available to support children who may have extra caring responsibilities, fewer life choices or a different lifestyle.

Assessment
The school will assess each child's current levels of attainment and preferred learning styles using Assessment for Learning, teacher assessments and other standardisation tests and observations.

Assessment for Learning allows teachers to look for evidence to inform teaching and learning, identify any barriers to learning and promote individual strengths. It also involved the meaningful inclusion of the views of leaners to help them make the best possible progress.

Accurate assessment is critical to measuring pupil progress and P Levels may be used for some children where progress is particularly slow.

In order to help children who have additional needs, the school will adopt a graduate response that recognises there is a continuum of educational need and brings increasing specialist expertise to bear upon the difficulties that a child may be experiencing.

Teachers' ongoing assessment and termly reviews with senior leaders will provide information about areas where a child is not progressing satisfactorily.

Some difficulties in learning may be cause or made greater by the school's learning environment and/or adult/child relationships. The Inclusion Manager/ SENCO and class teacher look carefully at potential barriers to learning i.e. classroom organisation, teaching materials and teaching style. This review may lead to the conclusion that the pupil requires help beyond SEND Support in school level. A referral may then be made to outside agencies for advice.

Inclusion, Adequate Progress and Provision of Interventions
It is the long term aim of the Connect Education Trust to provide all support in the most inclusive manner possible. Children with SEND should generally take part in lessons in their classroom with their peers (with group or individual support where appropriate). Separate provision may be necessary for some children as a short-term solution to enable their needs to be met and entitlement to an appropriate curriculum secured.

Adequate progress can be defined in a number of ways. It might be progress which:

- closes the attainment gap between the child and their peers or prevents the attainment gap from growing wider;
- is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment target baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers;
- matches or betters the child's previous rate of progress and ensures access to the full curriculum;
- demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills;
- demonstrates improvements in the child's behaviour;
- highlights under performers who have the potential to be high achievers.

Provision of Interventions
Intervention may include some of the following:

- differentiation of the curriculum;
- different learning materials or special equipment;
- extra adult time to devise the nature of the planned intervention and to monitor its effectiveness;
- staff development and training to introduce more effective strategies;
- access to LA support services for one-off or occasional advice on strategies or equipment
- small group or individual intervention programmes
- provision of catch-up programmes including some small group support with a TA;
- Nurture Group provision on a fill or part-time basis
- Tiger Team or Tiger Cubs provision;
- support from a Learning Mentor on a 1:1 basis or in a small group;
- individual tuition from a teacher
- re-integration of all children with SEND into all class activities with initial support to enable and encourage them to apply the skills and independence they have developed;
- reduction of support and encouragement towards full integration of the child as and when it is deemed appropriate.

Partnership with Parents
Partnership with parents plays an essential role in enabling all children to make adequate progress and becoming successful learners. The Connect Education Trust recognises that parents hold key information, knowledge and experience about their child. Parents will be informed immediately if the school feels their child may have special educational needs. They will also be invited to reviews with the class teacher and, where appropriate, Inclusion Manager to discuss their child's progress and, if unable to attend, will be sent a copy of targets and strategies that are being implemented. Parent's views are also sought at 'drop in' sessions, coffee mornings, parent consultation meetings and through parental questionnaires. Learning Support Plans, for children considered to have SEND, will be shared with parents on a termly basis.

Involving Pupils
The school will make every effort to involve all pupils in discussions about their needs. Pupils are active partners in inclusion and are encouraged to contribute through:

- selecting some of the Learning Journeys and reviewing them;
- the school council, which meets regularly and is made up of pupil representatives who work in classes across the school providing the children with a 'pupil voice';
- taking an active part in the day to day operation of the school e.g. assemblies, the buddy system, school ambassadors, and pupil questionnaires;
- inclusion in LSP reviews, Annual Reviews of Statements for Education, Health and Care Plans and parent consultation meetings, as appropriate.

Links with Other Schools and Professionals
The records of all pupils transferring to other schools, for whatever reason, will be passed on promptly to the receiving school, along with any other information which would support the new placement. Parents are entitled to access any such records or information. The Connect Education Trust maintains extensive links with support agencies and other professionals and uses them for individual support and to provide advice to teachers. For a list of professionals currently involved see Appendix 1.

Training and INSET
We are committed to furthering our knowledge of any new developments that enable acceleration towards our vision of inclusion. Various staff members will attend courses and information will be shared and evaluated regularly through informal arrangements and through INSET. Training is prioritised in accordance with school improvement plans, which are updated annually. Trustees and Governors are encouraged to undertake training as a team within the overall provision for the trust.

Allocation of Resources
The Connect Education Trust budget is used to support and increase inclusion and the money allocated to SEND is used for provision that is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made available for most children.

Evaluating the Success of the Inclusion Policy
Every year the Connect Education Trust analyses the data on the percentage of pupils with a very high or low attainments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, compared to the percentage in similar schools (Fischer Trust/Benchmarking). Data is also analysed in regards to behaviour, major incidents and exclusions. This information is then used to plan provision mapping and allocation of resources. New targets are set for the year ahead in relation to inclusion, equality and SEND. Progress against these targets is reported to the Trustees through the Headteachers' report.

Appendix 1

The Connect Education Trust maintains extensive links with support agencies and other professionals and uses them for individual support and to provide advice to teachers. A sample list of professionals is below:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Cheviot's Children's Disability Service
- Educational Welfare Officer
- Behaviour Support Service
- Speech and Language Therapy Service
- School Nurse and Specialist Diabetic Nurses
- Child Development Team including the Community Consultant Paediatrician
- Blanche Neville School Advisory Teacher Service
- Joseph Clarke Service for the Visually Impaired
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Suffolk School and Houndsfield School Language Units
- Russet House School Outreach Workers
- Social Services
- Other Additionally Resources Provisions/Special Schools
- Police and Youth Offending Team
- Early Years' Social Inclusion
- Transition links between Key Stages
- School Improvements Service
- Pre-School Support Service, including the home visiting teacher
- Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Services
- Appropriate Charities