



SEND A to Z Guide for Parents and Carers

Oakwood Academy

A quick reference guide to help you understand common terms and acronyms used in special educational needs and disabilities.

A

Annual Review A yearly meeting to review your child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Everyone involved in supporting your child comes together to discuss progress, update outcomes, and plan for the year ahead. At Oakwood Academy, we give you at least two weeks' notice and share all relevant information before the meeting.

Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) A lifelong developmental condition that affects how a person communicates, interacts with others, and experiences the world around them. Every autistic person is different.

Auxiliary Aids Equipment or devices that help pupils access learning, such as laptops, coloured overlays, communication devices, or adapted seating.

B

B Squared An assessment framework we use at Oakwood Academy to measure progress for pupils with complex learning needs, particularly for non-academic outcomes.

Baseline Assessment Tests carried out when your child first joins the school or at the start of a key stage to understand their current level in areas like reading, spelling, phonics, and maths.

Behaviour Support Strategies and interventions to help pupils manage their behaviour and emotions. At Oakwood Academy, we use approaches like Zones of Regulation, social stories, and trauma-informed practice.

C

CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) NHS services that support children and young people who are experiencing mental health difficulties. We work closely with CAMHS to support pupils' emotional wellbeing.

Cognition and Learning One of the four broad areas of SEND. This includes conditions like dyslexia, dyspraxia, and moderate learning difficulties that affect how a child learns and processes information.

Communication and Interaction One of the four broad areas of SEND. This includes conditions like autism, speech and language difficulties, and social communication needs.

Counselling One-to-one support from a trained professional to help pupils talk about their feelings and develop coping strategies. We have a counsellor who works at Oakwood Academy for 2 days per week.

D

Differentiation Adapting teaching methods, resources, or activities to meet individual pupils' needs. For example, giving longer processing times, using visual aids, or providing work at different levels.

Disability Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

Dyslexia A specific learning difficulty that primarily affects reading, writing, and spelling skills.

Dyspraxia (also called DCD - Developmental Coordination Disorder) A condition affecting physical coordination and movement, which can also impact organisation and planning skills.

E

Early Help Support provided to families before problems become more serious. This might involve working with social care, health services, or voluntary organisations.

Educational Psychologist (EP) A specialist who assesses children's learning and emotional needs and advises schools on how best to support them.

EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) A legal document that describes a child's special educational needs and the support they should receive. All pupils at Oakwood Academy have an EHCP. It's reviewed annually and can continue until age 25.

ELKLAN A speech and language training programme that helps staff support pupils with communication needs.

ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) A teaching assistant trained to support pupils with their emotional and social development through planned activities and interventions.

F

First-tier SEND Tribunal An independent body that hears appeals from parents about EHCPs and disability discrimination in schools.

G

Graduated Approach A four-stage cycle of support: Assess, Plan, Do, Review. This helps schools identify needs, plan support, put it in place, and check if it's working.

H

HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) A teaching assistant with additional training and qualifications who can take on more responsibility for planning and delivering learning. Oakwood Academy has 8 HLTAs.

The Hub The system we use at Oakwood Academy to gather and share information about pupils before EHCP reviews and meetings.

I

Inclusion Making sure all pupils, regardless of their needs or disabilities, can fully participate in school life and learning.

Inclusion Manager A member of staff who coordinates support for pupils who need additional help with behaviour, attendance, or wellbeing. We have 1 Inclusion Manager at Oakwood Academy.

Individual Support One-to-one help from a teaching assistant, often for pupils with specific EHCP outcomes or those who need intensive support to access learning.

Intervention A targeted programme or activity designed to help a pupil make progress in a specific area, such as phonics, speech and language, or social skills.

J

Joined-up Working When different professionals (teachers, therapists, social workers, health professionals) work together to support your child and family.

K

Key Adult Usually your child's form teacher or teaching assistant - the person who knows your child well and provides day-to-day pastoral care and support.

KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) Government guidance that all schools must follow to protect children and keep them safe.

L

Learning Difficulty When a child has significantly greater difficulty learning than most children of the same age, or has a disability that makes it harder for them to use the facilities generally provided in schools.

Learning Mentor A member of staff who provides emotional and social support to help pupils overcome barriers to learning. Oakwood Academy has 3 Learning Mentors.

Lego Therapy A social skills intervention where pupils work together to build Lego models, helping them develop communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.

Local Authority (LA) Your local council, which has responsibilities for education and SEND services. For Oakwood Academy, this is Salford City Council.

Local Offer Information published by your local authority about the support available for children and young people with SEND in your area.

Salford's Local Offer can be found at: <https://mycitydirectory.salford.gov.uk>

M

Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) When a child learns at a slower pace than their peers and may need support across the curriculum.

Multi-agency Meeting A meeting where different professionals (school staff, therapists, social workers, health professionals) come together to discuss and plan support for your child.

N

Nurture An approach that provides a safe, caring environment where pupils can develop social and emotional skills.

O

Oakwood Learning Stages (OLS) Our own assessment framework used at Oakwood Academy to track pupil progress.

Occupational Therapy (OT) Support from a therapist who helps children develop the skills needed for daily living, such as handwriting, using cutlery, getting dressed, or managing sensory needs.

Outcomes The goals and aspirations set out in your child's EHCP - what we want them to achieve in education, health, and preparing for adulthood.

P

Personal Development Part of the curriculum that focuses on life skills, relationships, health, wellbeing, and preparing for adulthood.

Physiotherapy Support from a therapist who helps children with physical movement, strength, and coordination.

PITA (Point in Time Assessment) Regular assessments we use at Oakwood Academy to track where pupils are in their learning at specific points during the year.

Provision The support, resources, and teaching strategies put in place to meet a child's special educational needs.

Provision Map A document that shows all the additional support and interventions a pupil receives, when they happen, and who delivers them.

Q

Quality First Teaching High-quality teaching that meets the needs of all learners. This is the foundation of support for pupils with SEND and includes clear explanations, appropriate challenge, and effective feedback.

R

Read Write Inc A phonics programme we use at Oakwood Academy to teach reading, writing, and spelling.

Reasonable Adjustments Changes schools must make under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure disabled pupils are not disadvantaged. This might include adapted equipment, extra time, or changes to the environment.

Restorative Approach A way of resolving conflicts and repairing relationships by bringing people together to talk about what happened and how to move forward.

S

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) The term used to describe children and young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age.

SEND Code of Practice Government guidance that tells schools and local authorities what they must do to support children with SEND.

SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) The person responsible for coordinating SEND support in school. At Oakwood Academy, the Heads of Year act as SENCo for their year groups.

Sensory and/or Physical Needs One of the four broad areas of SEND. This includes visual or hearing impairments, sensory processing difficulties, epilepsy, and physical disabilities.

Sensory Processing How the brain receives and responds to information from the senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, movement, body awareness). Some children are over-sensitive or under-sensitive to sensory input.

Sensory Room A specially designed space with equipment like soft lighting, bubble tubes, and tactile resources to help pupils regulate their emotions and sensory needs.

SIASS (Salford Information, Advice and Support Service) A free, confidential, and impartial service that helps parents understand SEND processes and their rights. Tel: 0161 778 0343 |

Email: siass@salford.gov.uk

Small Group Work When pupils work with a teaching assistant or teacher in a small group, often for targeted interventions like phonics, literacy, numeracy, or social skills.

SMART Room A specialist space at Oakwood Academy where bespoke interventions are delivered, focusing on social communication, social skills, and emotional regulation.

Social Communication The skills needed to interact with others, such as understanding body language, taking turns in conversation, and reading social cues.

Social Stories Short stories that explain social situations and appropriate responses, often used to help autistic pupils understand what to expect and how to behave.

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) Support from a therapist who helps children with communication difficulties, including understanding language, speaking clearly, and using language socially.

Statutory Required by law. For example, EHCP annual reviews are statutory - they must happen every year.

T

Team Teach A behaviour management approach that uses positive handling strategies to keep pupils and staff safe.

Transition Moving from one stage to another, such as changing year groups, moving to secondary school, or preparing for college or adulthood. We plan transitions carefully with enhanced visits, visual supports, and information sharing.

Trauma-Informed Practice An approach that recognises how past difficult experiences can affect a child's behaviour and learning, and responds with understanding and support.

U

Universal Support The high-quality teaching and support available to all pupils in the classroom, before any additional or specialist provision is needed.

V

Visual Impairment A condition affecting sight that cannot be fully corrected with glasses or contact lenses.

Visual Supports Tools like visual timetables, symbols, pictures, or written instructions that help pupils understand what's happening and what's expected of them.

Visual Timetable A timetable that uses pictures or symbols to show the sequence of activities during the day, helping pupils know what to expect and manage transitions.

W

Wellbeing A child's overall emotional, mental, and physical health.

X

Extra-Curricular Activities Clubs, trips, and activities that happen outside of normal lessons. At Oakwood Academy, all activities are available to all pupils - no one is excluded because of their SEND.

Y

Year Group The group of pupils in the same school year. At Oakwood Academy, each year group has a Head of Year who acts as SENCo for those pupils.

Z

Zones of Regulation A framework we use to help pupils recognise and manage their emotions. There are four zones (blue, green, yellow, red) representing different emotional states, and pupils learn strategies to move between zones.

Questions?

If you come across a term you don't understand, or would like more information about any aspect of SEND support at Oakwood Academy, please don't hesitate to contact your child's form teacher or Head of Year.

Contact us:

- Form Tutor or Class Teacher - first point of contact
- Head of Year - for SEND-specific questions
- School office - for general enquiries