

Designated Governor for SEND: Role Description

The Trust Board and School Committees within Greensand Multi Academy Trust (the Trust) are responsible for holding leaders to account for the education of learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

As a School Committee Designated Governor for SEND, you will have a deeper understanding to help your School Committee monitor SEND in greater detail at your school. You will be the link person between the School Committee and the school in relation to pupils with SEND. You will ask questions to seek reasonable assurance about the school's arrangements for SEND and will obtain a reasonable understanding of:

- ❖ The School Committee's responsibilities under the special educational needs and disability (SEND) Code of Practice ([SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf publishing.service.gov.uk](#)).
- ❖ The different special educational needs and disabilities represented at the school.
- ❖ The local and national policy context for SEND.

You also need to know the legal obligations of your school, School Committee and the Trust around SEND. *(Please see the summary at **Appendix A**)*

As part of your role, you will ask questions to seek reasonable assurance that the school:

- ❖ Makes the necessary special educational provision for any pupil with SEND.
- ❖ Meets the needs of pupils with SEND.
- ❖ Makes reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 ([What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)).
- ❖ Ensures that all pupils with SEND join in with the everyday activities of the school together with the children without SEND.
- ❖ Has appointed a designated SENCO and they have received appropriate training.
- ❖ Has in place, reviews and implements an accessibility plan for pupils with disabilities *(Please see **Appendix B**)*.
- ❖ Has a suitable and up-to-date SEN information report and policy which is published on the school's website in accordance with the requirements of the [SEND Regulations 2014](#).
- ❖ Has an up-to-date SEND in a Nutshell document that is reviewed by Governors.

It is important that you visit the school to remain well informed. You will meet the SENCO at least once per year, ideally termly, to seek reasonable assurance about all aspects of SEND provision and the progress of pupils with SEND and:

- ❖ Focus on strategic oversight and the school's systems and processes for supporting pupils with SEND.
- ❖ Monitor that the school makes good use of its SEND budget and resources.
- ❖ Participate in any review processes of whole-school SEND undertaken by the school, by peers from within the Trust or by an externally sourced consultant.

*Please see the sample questions for SEND visits at **Appendix C**.*

NB. You will not need to know about the provision for individual children or which pupils receive SEND support.

It is your role to help raise awareness of SEND issues at School Committee meetings and to give up-to-date information on SEND provision within the school. You will regularly report to the School Committee on the monitoring work carried out, ensuring that the Committee:

- ❖ Is up to date about issues related to SEND.
- ❖ Asks challenging questions about the school's SEND provision and strategies.
- ❖ Reviews the school's child protection policy regularly to make sure that it reflects the additional safeguarding challenges that children with SEND can face and the greater barriers there can be to recognising abuse and neglect in children with SEND*.
- ❖ Receives confirmation that children with SEND are taught about safeguarding issues in an appropriate way that meets their needs*.

[*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)

You should encourage your School Committee to ensure your school always does the best it can for our pupils with SEND.

You will also attend training on the role of the SEND link governor, as appropriate, and seek to develop the practical skills and understanding you need to have an impact as the school's Designated Governor for SEND.

The Designated Governors for SEND and the Link Trustee for SEND form the Trust's SEND Governance Collaboration Group. Both at meetings of the Group and throughout your tenure as the school's Designated Governor for SEND, you will collaborate with the other members of the Group, share best practice and support each other. The Group meets once per term and there is an expectation that all members of the Group attend every, if not the majority, of those meetings.

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Appendix A - The legal obligations of your school, School Committee & the Trust around SEND

NB These requirements are set out in the [Special educational needs \(SEN\) and disabilities: guidance for school governing boards \(February 2025\)](#).

The board is the decision-making body of the school and is accountable and responsible for what the school does. It is vital that boards play an active role in providing support and challenge, to ensure schools are providing the best support for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

School governing boards have responsibilities to children and young people with SEN and disabilities under the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) (the 2014 Act) and to disabled children and young people under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

The governing board should be taken to mean the accountable body for the school or group of schools. In . . . an academy trust this will be the trust board. (Committees that have been delegated functions by the board should consider guidance to the board, to the extent that it relates to their delegated responsibilities).

The role and responsibilities of the governing board

The board is responsible for setting the values, culture and tone of the organisation. This includes creating an environment in which all pupils can thrive and play a full part in the life of the school.

Boards play an important role in ensuring high quality outcomes for pupils with SEN and disabilities. The board, in collaboration with executive and senior leaders, should establish the school's policy and strategy for addressing the SEN and disability requirements of pupils.

While overall responsibility rests with the board, there should be a lead member of the governing body or a sub-committee with specific oversight of the school's arrangements for SEN and disability. The lead member will:

- champion the school's support for pupils with SEN and disabilities, including good practice in pupil engagement*
- ensure that the board has the information it needs for assurance about the school's practice*
- work closely with the head teacher or principal, senior leadership team and (in the case of mainstream schools) the SENCO*

Responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 may benefit from the oversight of the same lead governor, trustee or sub-committee as the [2014 Act](#) responsibilities or they may sit with other equalities responsibilities.

There is a close connection between the duties relating to SEN and equality duties relating to disability. For example, equality objectives and information should typically include matters relating to the experience of disabled pupils and their education and employment outcomes. Some disabled pupils will also have SEN.

The board should get appropriate and regular training to help it discharge its duties in relation to SEN and disability and to help ensure the best possible outcomes for those pupils.

The . . . [academy trust governance guide](#) provide[s] information on the knowledge, skills and effective behaviours required by the board. This guidance should be used in conjunction with the SEN and disability information in the compliance section of the guides. This has more detail on the relevant legal duties and responsibilities placed on governors and trustees.

Legal duties owed by boards in relation to pupils with SEN and disabilities are set out in [Part 3 of the 2014 Act](#), the Equality Act 2010, and related regulations. This includes a duty on boards to have regard, when exercising relevant SEN and disability functions, to the [SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years](#).

SEN and disability checklist

Governors and trustees should ask the right questions of senior leaders to assure themselves that the school is providing appropriate support for pupils with SEN and disabilities. Whilst not an exhaustive list, this checklist can help governing boards to understand their role and responsibilities in providing appropriate support and challenge when those responsibilities are not being met.

Checklist

Governors and trustees will wish to be assured that:

- the school promotes an inclusive culture
- there is effective communication and engagement between the school and parents of pupils with SEN and disabilities
- parents are involved closely in keeping the school's general SEN and disability policy and practice under review
- the pupil voice is central to decisions about support for those with SEN and disabilities, at both individual and school level
- funding, including SEN funding, is allocated and spent effectively
- the school works effectively with the local authority in reviewing the SEN and disability provision available locally and developing the SEN and disabilities Local Offer
- staff have the expertise needed to support those with SEN and disabilities and that the school has access to external specialist skills where required

Governors and trustees should be satisfied with how the school:

- identifies a pupil with SEN or a disability and how it uses the 'graduated approach' to respond to that need
- monitors the progress and development of pupils with SEN and disabilities
- supports pupils in Preparing for Adulthood at each age and stage, and monitors outcomes and destinations - some tools and resources are available from the [National Development Team for Inclusion \(NDTI\)](#).

Governors and trustees of mainstream schools should also ensure that a qualified teacher or the head teacher is designated as the SENCO and that they:

- achieve the relevant mandatory qualification within 3 years of appointment
- have sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in a similar way to other important strategic roles within the school
- are empowered to support high quality outcomes for pupils with SEN and disabilities

Schools have a duty to prepare and regularly update:

- a SEN Information Report
- equality information - information to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- equality objectives
- an accessibility plan (setting out how the school plans to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information)

Governors and trustees should also be familiar with the school's SEN and disability policy and ensure that it is reviewed regularly (working with parents and pupils) to reflect changing needs of the school community.

Governors and trustees will wish to be assured that these documents help the school to:

- understand the impact of its policies, practices and decisions on different groups of pupils*
- identify areas of inequality that may need to be addressed*
- help plan for the school to be increasingly inclusive over time*

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance for schools on [Publishing equality information](#) has more information.

Use of data

It is an important part of a board's role to analyse school performance data and build an evidence base to underpin its strategic oversight. In relation to SEN and disability the board may find the following data sets useful:

- data on the population of those with SEN or disabilities in the school and comparisons with data from neighbouring schools, the local authority and nationally*
- what percentage of the school population has SEN or a disability (mainstream settings)*
- what percentage is at SEN Support (mainstream settings)*
- what percentage has an education, health and care (EHC) plan (mainstream settings)*
- what the breakdown is of pupils with SEN or a disability by category of need*
- data relating to SEN funding information, for example, notional SEN funding and top up funding, and:*
 - how that funding is spent and its impact*
 - if that funding is targeted strategically based on what is known of the school SEN and disability profile*
 - if the funding provided for those with SEN and disabilities is contributing to improved progress and if so, how*

Appendix B - Accessibility plans for pupils with disabilities

As Governors, your School Committee needs to make sure your school creates, reviews and implements an 'accessibility plan' for pupils with disabilities, as required by the [Equality Act 2010](#). The plan must aim to:

- ❖ Increase how much pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum.
- ❖ Improve the physical environment of the school, so pupils with disabilities can take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services the school provides.
- ❖ Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities.

Your school also needs to:

- ❖ Consider how it will provide adequate resources to implement the plan.
- ❖ Review the plan every 3 years.

The School Committee should hold the senior leadership team to account for implementing the plan.

Appendix C - Sample questions for SEND Designated Governor visits & School Committee meetings

1. How does the school manage SEND?
2. How many pupils are on the SEND register?
3. How does the school identify children with SEND? What happens once a pupil has been identified?
4. Is the school identifying SEND in line with national figures?
5. Do you have an action plan (or similar)? What have you put in place for each target and how do you know they are working?
6. How do the attendance rates for pupils with SEND compare to those pupils without?
7. What is the progress and attainment of pupils with SEND compared to those without?
8. What is being done to improve the progress and attainment of these pupils? How do you know it is working?
9. What interventions are in place for children with SEND and what is their impact?
10. How are interventions for children with SEND monitored?
11. What is the school's notional SEND budget?
12. How is SEND funding being used to support improved outcomes for children with SEND?
13. What are the suspension and exclusion rates at the school for children with SEND? How do they compare to the rates of children without SEND?
14. What's been the impact of X/Y for pupils with SEND?
15. How does the school communicate with parents/carers of children with SEND?
16. How are parents/carers of pupils with SEND involved in the processes?
17. How do you support other teachers who work with pupils with SEND?
18. Are there any resources you don't have that would help you/which you need to carry out your role effectively?
19. Is your workload manageable?
20. What SEND training is available for staff and does it meet their needs?

- 21.** Is there any training you need to help you fulfil your role?
- 22.** What is the school's policy for SEND and how effective is it?
- 23.** Who is involved in reviewing the school's SEND Policy? Does it reflect and meet the needs of the pupils?
- 24.** How does the SEND Policy link with the school's other policies, e.g. for behaviour, safeguarding and health & safety?
- 25.** What special facilities does the school have in place for particular needs?
- 26.** Has the school planned for the inclusion of disabled pupils?