

# The SEND Governance Role training

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# Aims:

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- To gain an understanding of the statutory requirements relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- To understand the SEND governance role including recommendations and best practice within the role.

# Agenda:

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Definitions



The Legislation



The Governing Board's responsibilities



SEND Governor



Governing Board meetings

# The SEND Code of Practice (2025) 0-25years

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A child or young person has SEN if they have a **learning difficulty or disability** which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child or young person has a learning difficulty or disability:

- if they have a **significantly greater difficulty in learning** than the majority of others of the same age, or
- if they have a **disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities** of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision **different from or additional to** that normally available to pupils of the same age.

# The Equality Act 2010

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‘Defines disability as.. ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a **long-term** and **substantial** adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’

- **Long-term** is defined as “a year or more”
- **Substantial** is defined as “more than minor or trivial”
- Sensory (sight/hearing) impairments are included, as are long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

# Legislation and Guidance

- ~~SEND code of practice (0-25 years) 2015- chapter 6~~
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan 2023
- Equality Act 2010
  - Equality Act 2010 and disabled pupils: A guide for governors and trustees (January 2025)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities: guidance for school governing boards 2025

**The common focus is:**

**Inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning**

# What does this mean for schools?

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- Children with long-term health conditions do not necessarily have SEN (and vice versa) but there is a significant overlap.
- Schools must not discriminate (directly or indirectly, for a reason arising in consequence of the disability) and they must make **reasonable adjustments**.
- Schools/leaders must have regard to both the Equality Act and the SEND Code of Practice when they are planning their provision.

# Inclusion is everyone's responsibility not just the SENCo's

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## Be clear of roles and responsibilities

School Leadership and Governors - to support and challenge as well as hold the strategic overarching school vision and development plan, including SEND.

SENCo - Has whole school oversight, coordinates provision, quality assurance.

Class Teacher - **'All teachers are teachers of SEND' (CoP Jan 2015)**  
**Deliver high quality teaching for all children**, implement the graduated approach and work collaboratively with parents.

Learning assistants - **deployed** effectively to ensure good outcomes, promoting independence and resilience.

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**EVERY TEACHER IS A  
TEACHER OF SEND. EVERY  
LEADER IS A LEADER OF  
SEND.**

# Governing Board Responsibilities

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Boards of maintained schools and academies have **legal duties** in relation to pupils with SEND, including that they must:

- Ensure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school **alongside** those who do not have SEND.
- Use their **best endeavours** to make sure any child with SEND gets the support they need.
- Ensure parents are informed when making special educational provision for their child.
- Ensure arrangements are in place to support children with medical conditions.
- Co-operate with the LA on local provision and the Local Offer.

# Governing Boards must also..

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- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Have a clear approach for identifying and responding to SEND - including regarding the use of resources, keeping up to date, and the accurate recording of provision. **(SEND Policy)**
- Publish on their websites re **the implementation** of the board's policy for pupils with SEND **(SEN Information Report.)**
- Publish their arrangements for admission of disabled children, the steps being taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access for disabled children and their **accessibility plans.**
- Co-production and communication with parents on their child's progress.

# The SEND Governor

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There should be a member of the governing board, or a sub-committee, with specific oversight of the school's arrangements for special educational needs (SEN) and disability *The SEND Code of Practice 2015 (page 92 para 6.3)*

# The SENCo

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Governing Boards must ensure that there is a **qualified teacher** designated as Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) for the school.

*“...most effective if part of senior leadership team” (para 6.87)*

- 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

# Working with the SENCo

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## Inside the brain of a SENCO



*This chart is based on the share of article views from SENCOs on **The Key for School Leaders***

# The role of the SENCo

## Code of Practice 2015

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Drive strategic vision for Inclusion

Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy

Update statutory documentation (SEND policy, SEND information report, website)

Advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other

Accuracy of SEND register

Coordinating provision for children with SEN

Liaise with external professionals

Staff training

Quality assurance (teaching and learning/plans)

Oversight of EHCP provision, annual reviews, consultations, EHC NA requests

Ensure interventions are evidence based, high impact and cost effective

Offer support, advice and guidance to class teachers **AFTER** at least once cycle of APDR.

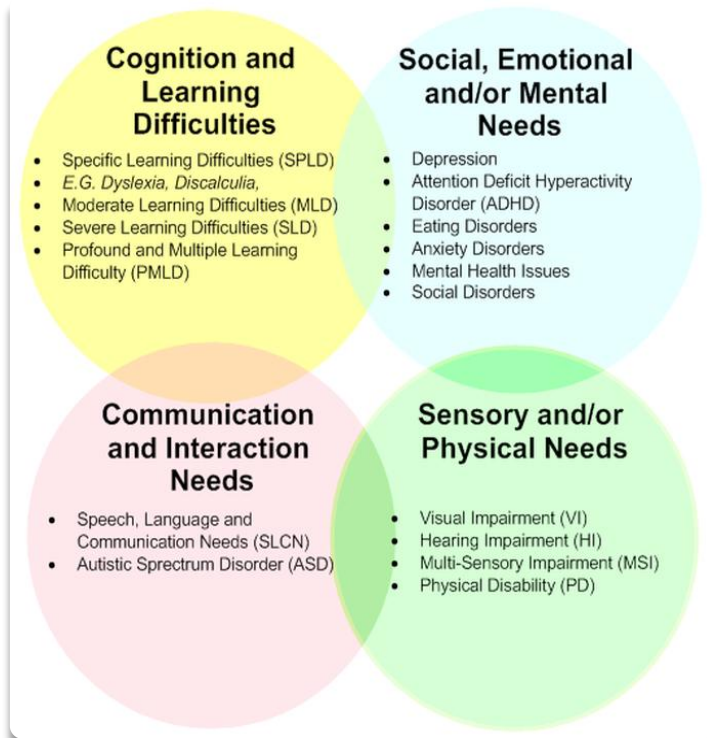
# The SENCo

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“The school should ensure that the SENCo has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions. This should include providing the SENCo with sufficient administrative support and sufficient time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in a similar way to other important strategic roles within a school. “

# School context

*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.*



**SEND demographic compared to national**

**How does school provision meet the need?**

**How is progress measured?**

2025	2024
19.5%	18.4%
Of children in England had SEND	
5.3%	4.8%
Had an EHCP at end of Jan '22	
14.2%	13.6%
Of pupils were on SEN Support	

Percentage of pupils with SEN, by SEN provision, 2015/16 to 2024/25



- In primary, 18.2% have SEN, an EHC plan (3.5%) or SEN support (14.8%), an increase from 17.1%.
- In secondary, 16.5% have SEN, an EHC plan (3.1%) or SEN support (13.4%), an increase from 15.16%

SEND support (without an EHCP)  
EHCP

# Funding

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The SENCO, headteacher and governing body or proprietor should establish a clear picture of the resources that are available to the school. They should consider their strategic approach to meeting SEN in the context of the total resources available, including any resources targeted at particular groups, such as the pupil premium.

*The SEND Code of Practice 2015 (page 110)*



**Notional funding-** Funding formula given to schools from the LA towards their best endeavours to meet needs of children and young people.



**High needs funding-** Top up funding to provide the targeted and specialist support detailed in EHCP plans- statutory provision

# Ofsted- Where does inclusion feature?

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- Safeguarding .....
- Inclusion .....
- Curriculum and teaching .....
- Achievement.....
- Attendance and behaviour .....
- Personal development and well-being .....
- Early years .....
- Post-16 provision .....
- Leadership and governance.....

# Inclusion- Ofsted definition

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The toolkits have been informed by our working definition of inclusion. This is as follows:

Inclusive providers are at the heart of their communities. They have high expectations and aspirations for every child and learner. They are particularly alert to the needs of those who need the most support to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders set a clear and ambitious vision for inclusion at the provider. They communicate this to children, learners, staff, and parents and carers. They create a culture in which every child and learner belongs, and feels safe, welcomed and valued. They make sure that all children and learners access a high-quality education, taught by experts with high ambition who strive to develop every child and learner's potential.

Leaders work in a close and effective partnership with parents and carers and other agencies to secure the best possible outcomes for every child and learner, regardless of their starting points. Inclusive providers are relentless in identifying and removing barriers to participation and learning, so that all children and learners can achieve and thrive.

# Inclusion

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This evaluation area considers how leaders and staff identify and support:

- socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for the pupil premium)
- pupils with SEND; this means pupils receiving special educational needs (SEN) support, and those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, such as children in need and looked-after children
- pupils who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being, which may include pupils who share a protected characteristic

- a qualified SENCo is empowered, through their leadership status within the school, to lead whole-school improvement for pupils with SEND
- the published SEN information report, as required by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and section 69 of the Children and Families Act 2014, is easily accessible and accurately describes the school's provision and support for pupils with SEND
- leaders identify pupils' emerging or changing needs quickly and accurately, make sure support is effective and draw on any specialist advice when necessary
- leaders use the 'graduated approach' (a continuous cycle of 'assess, plan, do and review') which helps to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate level of support and meets pupils' needs, and staff receive suitable training and support to implement it
- leaders make sure their work improves the progress and achievement of pupils with SEND and they do not lower their expectations of them
- leaders are committed to their role in the local area partnership's strategy to improve the experiences of, and outcomes for, pupils with SEND; they promote the local offer and help pupils with SEND, and their families, to find out what support is available and how to access it
- leaders meet the needs of pupils with SEND, and adapt the environment, teaching and the school's wider offer in ways that support them to access education
- leaders monitor the progress of pupils with SEND, and review adaptations and support systematically, making any necessary changes to improve their learning and/or well-being
- leaders support successful transitions for pupils with SEND, whether that is into or within the school or on to other settings or adulthood

# What does this mean for Governors?

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- Understanding of duties in relation to SEND
- Knowledge of context and cohort
- Understanding of strategic priorities
- Articulation of how they oversee SEND



**Discussion: Thoughts on the SEND  
Governor visit template**

**How often should visits take place?**

**What should the SEND Governor do...  
and report?**

# Governing board meetings

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As well as SEND Governor verbal and written reports:

- SENCo presentations / reports to the Board (*maybe*)
- Documents such as SEF/SEND review/SEN audits
- Headteacher's reports (including statistics relating to attendance, behaviour and exclusions)
- Finance committee minutes/reports: SEND notional funding and allocation; resources and facilities
- Standards committee minutes/reports:
  - Progress and attainment data for groups of pupils
  - Quality of teaching and assessment (*including CPD*)
  - Curriculum and co-curriculum/extended provision

# Does the Board... ?

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Allocate appropriate meeting time to SEND?

*Could this be a standing item on agendas?*



Review the SEND Policy on a regular basis, and ratify the SEN Information Report annually?  
*How is the SEN Information Report reviewed?*



Ensure **all** the school's policies fully support the principle of inclusion of pupils with SEND (behaviour, outdoor learning, educational visits.... )



Provide a succession plan opportunity for prospective SEND governors?

## The SEND Governor – final points



**Keep an aspirational strategic whole-school overview.** It is not the remit of the SEND Governor to become drawn into issues relating to individual children.



**Respect confidentiality.** The SEND governor may on occasion receive sensitive information about the circumstances of children who, although anonymised, may be identifiable by process of deduction - particularly in smaller schools. It is essential that the SEND Governor respects the confidentiality of such information.





# SEND glossary of terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Types of SEND	
SEN	Special educational needs. A pupil has SEN if they need special educational provision due to a learning difficulty or disability.
SEND	Special educational needs and disability. Both terms are used, often interchangeably.
Areas of need	4 broad categories are used to describe a pupil's SEN. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication and interaction</li><li>• Cognition and learning</li><li>• Social, emotional and mental health</li><li>• Sensory and/or physical needs</li></ul>
ASD/ ASC	Autistic spectrum disorder/condition
MLD	Moderate learning difficulties.

# Where can schools go for advice and support?

## Ordinarily available provision (AfC/RBWM)

\***Co-produced** for professionals, parents and carers as a useful resource to share ideas for **reasonable adjustments** and **quality first teaching** strategies in the classroom for all **four broad areas** of need.

\*Clear guidance on **graduated offer**, **assessment tools**, **interventions**, with a useful **glossary**.

\***Signposting** to external professionals

### Ordinarily available provision



More details



<https://rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/education/about-sen-support-in-schools/ordinarily-available-provision>

# Where can schools go for advice and support?

## Leadership update (AfC)



# SEND GOVERNANCE

## Review Guide



### The 5 Pillars of SEND Governance

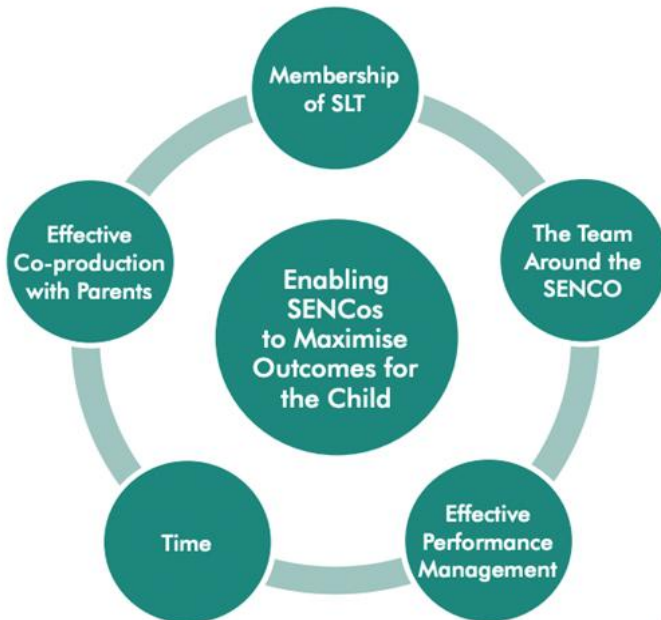




# Effective SENCO Deployment Guide - WSS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YX6QPn0RCK0>

*The aim of this document is to help line managers of SENCOs feel confident that leadership of SEND is well-supported, purposeful and progressive; and, ultimately enhance educational outcomes and personal developments of children and young people with SEND.*



The Five Key Themes to help Maximise the Impact of the SENCO

<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources/effective-senco-deployment>

Any questions?

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