

SEND INFORMATION REPORT A PARENT AND CARER GUIDE | 2026-27

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This report explains, in plain English, how Sporting Stars supports pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It tells you what support may look like, how decisions are made and who you can speak to if you have a question or concern.

A quick note about language: We use "pupil" and "young person" throughout this report. SEND can affect learning, communication, emotions, sensory or physical access - and every pupil's profile is different.

Every child belongs. Every child achieves. Every child thrives.

BELONG

I am known. I am safe. I am valued.

ACHIEVE

I can learn. I can succeed. My future matters.

THRIVE

I am becoming ready for my brighter future.

INCLUSION IS AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

Child-centred • Relational • Ambitious • Responsive

KNOW THE CHILD

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1. What Kinds of SEND Does Sporting Stars Support?

Sporting Stars Academy is an independent specialist setting. Pupils may have complex and overlapping needs, and their needs can change over time. We plan support around the individual pupil rather than around a label alone.

The four broad areas of SEND

Communication & interaction For example, understanding language, expressing needs, social communication or interaction.	Cognition & learning For example, literacy, numeracy, memory, processing or specific learning difficulties.
Social, emotional & mental health For example, anxiety, regulation, attention, emotional wellbeing or behaviour linked to unmet need.	Sensory and/or physical For example, hearing, vision, sensory processing, mobility or physical access.

A pupil may have needs in more than one area. We also consider strengths, interests, communication, relationships, sensory needs, attendance, previous experiences, wellbeing and aspirations.

2. How Do You Get to Know My Child?

Our starting point is simple: Know the Child. We build a picture of what helps your child feel safe, engage in learning and make progress. We use information from your child, you as their parent or carer, previous settings, the EHC plan (where there is one), assessments, staff observations and other professionals.

- what your child is good at and enjoys
- what they find difficult or overwhelming
- how they communicate and process information
- what helps them regulate and learn
- their literacy, numeracy and subject starting points
- their hopes for the future and Preparation for Adulthood

Important

A diagnosis can be helpful, but support does not wait for a label when we can clearly see a barrier to learning or participation.

3. How Will I Know if My Child Needs Extra Help?

Teachers and support staff look at the whole picture. A concern might show through learning, communication, attendance, behaviour or regulation, sensory needs, wellbeing, pupil voice or information from home. We do not assume that every difficulty is SEND - we try to understand what is getting in the way.

We use a simple cycle: Assess → Plan → Do → Review

ASSESS	PLAN	DO	REVIEW
What is happening? What is the barrier?	What will we try and what outcome are we aiming for?	Put the agreed support in place.	Did it help? What should we keep, change or stop?

Assessment may include classwork, curriculum assessments, reading or numeracy measures, structured observations, pupil and family views, attendance and incident patterns, standardised tools used for their intended purpose, and specialist assessment where needed. Screening tools are not treated as diagnoses.

4. How will teaching be adapted for my child?

High-quality inclusive teaching is the first response. We keep expectations ambitious and adapt the route into learning. In other words: we change what is getting in the way without automatically making the learning easier.

In lessons, this may mean:

- clear, short instructions and visual prompts
- work broken into manageable steps
- modelling and worked examples
- extra processing time
- pre-teaching key vocabulary
- reading, writing or communication support
- sensory or environmental adjustments
- planned movement or regulation breaks
- careful seating and reduced distraction
- assistive technology or adapted resources
- small-group or 1:1 support where this is identified as necessary
- support that is gradually reduced as independence grows

Our Teaching Principle

ADAPT THE ROUTE, NOT THE AMBITION. Support should help pupils access learning and build independence - not create unnecessary dependence on adults.

5. What is An Individual Support Plan (ISP)?

An ISP is a practical working plan that helps staff understand your child and use agreed strategies consistently. It brings together strengths, needs, pupil and family voice, reasonable adjustments, outcomes and the support that should happen day to day.

If your child has an EHC plan

The ISP supports staff to put the EHC plan into everyday practice. It does not replace the EHC plan and it cannot reduce or rewrite provision that is specified in it.

A useful ISP should tell us:

- what matters to the pupil and what they want adults to know
- strengths, interests and aspirations
- important needs and barriers to learning
- communication, sensory and regulation strategies
- reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies
- key outcomes and what progress will look like
- who is responsible for agreed support
- what is working, what is not working and what needs to change

6. How Will You Support My Child's Wellbeing and Behaviour?

We use a relational approach. This means adults try to understand what behaviour is communicating, help pupils regulate, keep clear boundaries and support repair after difficulties. Understanding the reason for behaviour does not mean ignoring unsafe or harmful behaviour.

Our relational response

CONNECT → REGULATE → REPAIR → RESTORE → RECONNECT

Support may include a trusted adult, check-ins, emotional literacy work, sensory or regulation adjustments, a calm space, individual wellbeing or safety planning, and support from outside services where needed.

Clear boundaries still matter

RELATIONAL PRACTICE IS NOT PERMISSIVE PRACTICE. Safety, safeguarding, accountability and respectful behaviour remain important.

7. What Happens if SEND Affects Attendance?

We treat attendance as more than a percentage. If a pupil is finding it hard to attend, we ask what is preventing access to education and what can be changed to help. SEND, anxiety, health, transport, relationships, sensory needs and previous school experiences can all be relevant.

Support may include:

- a named adult and supported arrival
- reasonable adjustments to routines or transitions
- a clear reintegration plan after absence
- work with parents/carers and other professionals
- reviewing curriculum access, regulation, transport or health barriers
- an individual attendance support plan where helpful

Any reduced or bespoke timetable is carefully considered, clearly planned and reviewed. The aim is to increase safe and meaningful access to education, not to allow a temporary arrangement to drift.

8. How Do Safeguarding and SEND Work Together?

Pupils with SEND can sometimes be more vulnerable to bullying, exploitation, abuse, unsafe relationships or online harm. Staff consider communication needs, disability, behaviour changes and the possibility that a pupil may show distress in an individual way.

If a pupil shares a safeguarding concern, staff follow the Academy's safeguarding procedures. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis so that the pupil can be protected and supported. We do not allow a SEND need or diagnosis to explain away a safeguarding concern.

9. What Specialist Help Can the School Use?

Where a pupil needs expertise beyond the school team, we work with the family, local authority and relevant professionals. The exact services involved depend on the pupil's needs and commissioning arrangements.

- Educational Psychology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- visual or hearing impairment services
- health and mental-health services
- social care
- youth justice or other safeguarding partners
- careers and Preparation for Adulthood services
- local authority SEND services and other appropriately qualified specialists

Specialist advice is translated into practical classroom or support strategies, with clear responsibility and review of whether it is helping.

10. How Are Parents and Carers Involved?

You know your child in a way that school cannot. We want to work with you openly and respectfully. Your views should help us understand what is working, what has changed and what your child needs next.

You can expect us to:

- listen to your concerns and your knowledge of your child
- explain support in clear language
- involve you in important planning and reviews
- share progress and concerns rather than waiting for an annual meeting
- seek your views when support needs to change
- work with you and other professionals when needs become more complex

11. How is My Child Involved?

Pupil voice is part of assessment, planning, review and transition. We adapt how we gather views so that communication needs do not become a barrier. A pupil might talk, write, draw, choose from options, use visuals or communicate through a trusted adult.

Three questions we keep coming back to

What is important to me?

What helps me learn and feel safe?

What do I want for my future?

12. How Will I Know Whether Support is Working?

We look for meaningful change from the pupil's own starting point. This may include learning and qualifications, but progress can also be seen in communication, attendance, engagement, regulation, relationships, independence, confidence and Preparation for Adulthood.

We use the Assess → Plan → Do → Review cycle. If something is not helping, we should not keep doing it simply because it is written on a plan. We review the evidence, listen to the pupil and family, and adapt the support.

13. What Happens at an EHC Plan Annual Review?

The Annual Review is a person-centred review of the EHC plan. It looks at progress towards outcomes, whether needs and provision are still accurate, the pupil's and family's views, and whether anything needs to change.

- progress towards EHC plan outcomes
- whether the description of needs is still accurate
- whether the provision remains suitable and is being delivered
- attendance and access to education
- changes in health, care, safeguarding or circumstances where relevant
- Preparation for Adulthood from Year 9 onwards
- whether amendments to the plan or placement should be recommended

The local authority is responsible for the statutory EHC plan process and makes decisions about whether a plan should be maintained, amended or ceased. Sporting Stars provides evidence and recommendations as part of that process.

14. How Will My Child Be Prepared for Adulthood?

Preparation for Adulthood is not just for Post-16. We build it progressively through the curriculum and make it a formal focus in EHC plan reviews from Year 9.

Education & employment Qualifications, work skills, careers, work experience and next steps.	Independent living Practical skills, choices, routines, money and increasing independence.
Friends & community Relationships, communication, belonging, travel and community participation.	Health & wellbeing Understanding needs, self-advocacy, healthy choices and accessing support.

15. How Do You Support Transitions?

Transitions are planned around the individual pupil. This includes joining Sporting Stars, moving between groups or pathways, returning after a difficult period, and moving on to college, training, employment or another setting.

Support can include familiarisation visits, photographs or visual information, a named adult, sharing key information with consent and in line with safeguarding requirements, transition meetings, gradual introductions and contact with the next provider.

16. Will My Child Be Included in Trips and Enrichment?

We want pupils with SEND to take part in the wider life of the Academy. Trips, sport, enrichment, volunteering, work experience and community activities are planned with individual needs in mind.

We consider reasonable adjustments, staffing, communication, sensory needs, medical needs, transport, risk and emotional wellbeing. A risk assessment does not automatically mean a pupil cannot take part - it helps us think about how participation can be made safe and successful.

17. How Accessible is Sporting Stars?

We make reasonable adjustments so disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Adjustments may relate to teaching, communication, routines, the environment, equipment, sensory access, assessment, timetables, transitions or the way a policy is applied.

The current site has disabled toilet facilities, a shower facility, disabled parking near the main entrance and wheelchair access. If you or your child need information in a different format or need help to understand written information, please contact the Academy so we can discuss what would help.

18. How Are Decisions Made About the Amount of Support?

Support is based on assessed need, the EHC plan where applicable, evidence of what is helping, safety, curriculum access and the pupil's growing independence. More adult support is not always better: the right support should help a pupil participate and develop skills without creating avoidable dependence.

Where needs change significantly, we may review the ISP, seek specialist advice, call or request an early/urgent EHC plan review, or discuss commissioning and provision with the local authority as appropriate.

19. What Training Do Staff Receive?

SEND is everyone's responsibility. Staff development is planned around the pupils we teach and the needs we identify. This can include SEND, SEMH, autism, ADHD, communication, literacy, relational and trauma-informed practice, safeguarding, regulation, sensory needs, mental health, adaptive teaching and individual specialist advice.

The SENDCo provides guidance to staff and identifies further training needs. Staff are also expected to know the individual plans, strengths, needs and agreed strategies of the pupils they teach or support.

20. What if I Have a Concern or Complaint?

Please raise concerns as early as possible. Many difficulties can be resolved more quickly when we can talk about what has happened, look at the evidence and agree next steps.

Who should I speak to?

- Your child's teacher, key adult or form tutor for day-to-day concerns.
- The SENDCo, Mrs Hannah Bennett, for SEND provision, EHC plans, ISPs or more complex concerns.
- A senior leader if the concern remains unresolved or is urgent.
- The Academy's Complaints Policy if you wish to make a formal complaint.

If your concern is about a local authority decision on EHC assessment, the content of an EHC plan, placement or provision, there are separate statutory disagreement-resolution, mediation and appeal routes. SENDIASS can provide impartial advice.

Useful Support for Families

Stoke-on-Trent SEND Local Offer

The Local Offer brings together information about education, health, care, activities and support for children and young people with SEND up to age 25.

[Stoke-on-Trent SEND Local Offer](#)

Stoke-on-Trent SENDIASS

SENDIASS provides free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support to children, young people and parents/carers about SEND.

[SENDIASS Stoke-on-Trent](#)

A Short SEND Jargon Buster

SEND	Special educational needs and/or disabilities.
SENDCo	The member of staff who leads and coordinates SEND across the Academy.
EHC plan / EHCP	Education, Health and Care plan - a legal plan for a child or young person with significant SEND who needs provision through an EHC plan.
ISP	Individual Support Plan - Sporting Stars' practical day-to-day plan for understanding and supporting a pupil.
APDR	Assess, Plan, Do, Review - the cycle used to understand need, try support and review its impact.
Reasonable adjustment	A change made to reduce a disadvantage linked to disability.
Preparation for Adulthood	Planning for education/employment, independent living, community participation and health as a young person moves towards adult life.

How this report fits with our other policies

This parent guide uses the same approach as our current Academy policies. The detailed policies contain the fuller procedures; this report explains the main points in a more accessible way.

SEND Policy	How we identify, plan, deliver and review SEND provision.
Inclusion Framework	Our whole-school Belong → Achieve → Thrive approach and “Know the Child” principle.
Teaching & Learning Principles	How teachers adapt teaching while keeping learning ambitious.
Relational Policy	How we understand behaviour, support regulation, maintain boundaries and repair relationships.
Attendance Policy	How we understand and address barriers to attendance.
Pupil Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy	How we identify and respond to wellbeing and mental-health needs.
RSE Policy	How relationships and sex education is made safe, accessible and appropriate for pupils with SEND.
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy	How we protect pupils and respond to concerns.
Accessibility arrangements / plan	How we improve access to the curriculum, environment and information.
Complaints Policy	How parents and carers can raise a formal concern.

SPORTING STARS PROMISE

We will seek to understand the child, work with families, keep expectations ambitious, adapt support when evidence tells us it is not working, and help each pupil move towards greater safety, learning, confidence and independence.

BELONG - We know the child.

ACHIEVE - We remove barriers to learning.

THRIVE - We prepare the child for their future.

ACHIEVING A BRIGHTER FUTURE