Special Education Needs and Disabilities Policy (SEN)

Date Implemented: July 2026
Review Date: July 2027

Section 1: Purpose

Digitech Studio School (Digitech) aims to meet the needs of all its students by creating an inclusive environment where all students are helped to overcome their barriers to learning and access an appropriate and relevant curriculum. Digitech is committed to meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN) within the guidance offered by the SEN code of practice. All teachers are teachers of SEN and therefore this is a whole school responsibility requiring a whole school response. Digitech acknowledges that consistently good quality teaching along with effective management of the school ethos, the learning environment, disciplinary and pastoral arrangements are all key to meeting the student's needs.

Section 2: The Aims and Objectives of our Policy:

- To meet the learning needs of all students so that they can access the curriculum
- To support staff in meeting students' needs during lessons, planning lessons to ensure ALL students make good progress
- Promote independence, equality and consideration for others

Objectives:

- To identify and provide for students who have Special Educational Needs and/ or a disability
- To work within the guidance provided in the SEN Code of Practice, 2014.
- To operate a "whole student, whole school" approach to the management and provision of support for SEN.
- To provide a Special Educational Needs & Disability coordinator (SENCo) who will work with the SEN policy.
- To provide support, advice and guidance for staff working with students with SEN.
- Monitor the progress of pupils in order to aid the identification of pupils with SEN.
- Make appropriate provision to overcome barriers to learning
- Ensure parents have a better understanding of their child involving them in all stages of education
- Create a school environment where pupils can contribute to their own learning by offering students the opportunity to voice their own opinions.

Section 3: Identifying Special Educational needs

The current government has reformed the way in which provision and support is made for young children with special educational needs and/or disabilities in England. New legislation (The Children and Families Act, 2014) came into force on the 1st September 2014. The SEN code of practice accompanies this legislation.

More detail of the reforms can be found on the Department for Educations website:

www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/sen

The SEN Code of Practice states that all teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class, including students who access support from teaching assistants. Digitech recognise that Quality First Teaching is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEN. Digitech will regularly monitor and review the quality of teaching for all students, including those at risk of underachievement. Where necessary, Digitech will take steps to improve the quality of teaching.

At Digitech we identify the needs of our students by considering the needs of the whole student. The SENC ode of Practice identifies four broad areas of needs. The purpose of identification is to work out what action Digitech needs to take, not to fit a student into a category. The four broad areas of needs are:

- Communication & Interaction
- Cognition & learning
- Social, emotional & mental health difficulties
- Sensory & or Physical needs.

Communication & Interaction

This includes students with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have difficulty in communicating with others. The students may have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. This group can also include students with Autism who are likely to have difficulties with social interaction.

Cognition & learning

This includes students who may learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with adaptations, students with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), students with severe learning difficulties (SLD), students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and also where students are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment. This area of need also includes students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia (SPLD).

Social, emotional & mental health difficulties

This area of need describes students who may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties; these can manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming isolated or withdrawn, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders. Other students may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) or attachment disorder. Identifying 'behaviour' as a need will no longer be an acceptable way of describing SEN. Any concerns relating to student behaviour should be described as an underlying response to a need which the school is able to recognise and identify clearly.

Sensory & or Physical needs

This area of need describes students that require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinder them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. Their difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Students with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and / or equipment to access their learning. Some students with a physical disability (PD) require additional on-going support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

Quality First Teaching: 'The baseline of learning for all pupils

Quality First Teaching is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEN. If a child requires more support than the majority of their peers, the teacher will make the SENCO aware of this.

- Any pupil who is falling significantly outside of the range of expected academic achievement in line with predicted performance indicators and grade boundaries will be monitored.
- Once a pupil has been identified as possibly having SEN they will be closely monitored by staff in order to gauge their level of learning and possible difficulties.
- The subject teacher will take steps to provide adapted learning opportunities that will aid the pupil's academic progression and enable the teacher to better understand the provision and teaching style that needs to be applied.
- The SENCO and Hub Team (Learning Support) may be consulted for support and advice.
- Through the above actions it can be determined which level of provision the pupil will need.
- If a pupil has recently been removed from the SEN register they may continue to be monitored.
- Parents will be informed fully at every stage of their child's development. Parents are encouraged to share information and queries with the school.
- The Pupil is monitored if concern is raised by parent or teacher but this does not automatically place the pupil on the school's SEN register, concerns are recorded as an aid to further progression and for future reference.
- Pupil progress meetings, Triage meetings, academic tutorials and parent evenings are used to monitor and assess the progress being made by all students. The frequency of these meetings is dependent on individual progress.

SEN Support:

Where it is determined that a pupil does have SEN, parents will be formally advised of this before inclusion of the individual on the School SEN Register. The aim of formally identifying a pupil with SEN is to help school ensure that effective provision is put in place and so remove barriers to learning. The support provided consists of a four part process indicated below:

- Assess
- Plan
- Do
- Review

This is an ongoing cycle to enable the provision to be refined and revised as the understanding of an individual grows. This cycle enables the identification of those interventions which are the most effective in supporting the pupil to achieve good progress and outcomes. The cycle is embedded in our practice for all students.

Assess

In identifying a child as needing SEN support the subject teacher and the SENCO should work together to develop strategies to support the student. This should draw on subject assessments, teacher observations, and details of previous progress and attainment, comparisons with peers and national data, as well as the views and experience of parents. The opinion and feelings of the individual and advice from external support services will also be considered. Any parental concerns will be recorded and compared with the school's information and assessment data on how the pupil is progressing.

This analysis will require regular review to ensure that support and intervention is matched to need; barriers to learning are clearly identified and being challenged and that the interventions being used are developing and evolving as required. Where external support staff are already involved their work will help inform the assessment of need. Where they are not involved they may be contacted, if this is felt to be appropriate, following discussion and agreement from parents.

Plan

When it is decided to provide a pupil with SEN support, parents will be informed. Planning will involve consultation between the teacher, SENCO, SLT and parents to agree the adjustments, interventions and support that are required; the impact on progress, development and or behaviour that is expected and a clear date for review. Parental involvement should be sought, where appropriate, to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

All those working with the pupil, including support staff, will be informed of their individual needs, the support that is being provided, any teaching strategies/approaches that are being employed and the outcomes that are being sought.

Do

The subject teacher retains responsibility even where the interventions may involve group or 1:1 teaching away from the mainstream classes. They may work closely with Teaching Assistants (TAs) and relevant specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and links with classroom teaching. Support with further assessment of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses, problem solving and advising of the implementation of effective support can be provided by the SENCO.

Review

The review process will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. The SENCO may revise the support in light of pupil progress and development, making any necessary amendments going forward, in consultation with parents and subject teachers.

Referral for an Education, Health and Care Plan:

If a pupil has lifelong or significant difficulties, they may undergo a Statutory Assessment Process which is usually requested by the school but can be requested by a parent. This will occur where the complexity of need or a lack of clarity around the needs of the pupil are such that a multi-agency approach to assessing that need, to planning provision and identifying resources, is required.

The decision to make a referral for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be taken at a progress review involving parents, SENCO and other relevant staff.

If an application for an EHCP is accepted by the local Authority (LA) for assessment, they will gather information from:

- The Child
- Parents
- Teachers
- SENCO
- Healthcare and other outside agencies as appropriate

Information will be gathered relating to the current provision and a summary of any action points taken; the preliminary outcomes of the targets set form the basis of the profile. A decision will be made by a group of people from education, health and social care about whether the pupil is eligible for an EHCP. Parents have the right to appeal against a decision not to initiate a statutory assessment leading to an EHCP.

Further information about EHC Plans can found via the SEN Local Offer:
South Glos Way Inclusion toolkit
Or by speaking directly to South Gloucestershire's SEN Department: 01454 865137

If you are a Bristol resident information can be found via this link:
https://www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-local-offer/professionals/all-ages/education-health-and-care-ehc-plans

Further information can also be found on the SEN and You website:
https://www.sendandyou.org.uk
or by phoning: 0117 989 7724

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

Following Statutory Assessment, an EHCP will be provided by South Gloucester Council, Bristol County Council, North Somerset Council or BANES if it is decided that the needs of an individual are not being met by the support that is ordinarily available. Both staff in school and parents will be involved developing and producing the plan.

Parents have the right to appeal against the content of the EHCP. They may also appeal against the school named in the plan if it differs from their preferred choice.

Once the EHCP has been completed and agreed, it will be kept as part of the pupil's formal record and reviewed at least annually by staff, parents and the pupil. The Annual Review

enables provision for the pupil to be evaluated and, where appropriate, for changes to be put in place.

Section 4: Inclusion of Pupils with SEN

This identifies the processes by which Digitech has identified and manages students with SEN. The school's criteria for entering a student on the SEN register includes:

- An account of what work has been done in the past and by whom. Quality first class teaching from the class teacher, which is adapted for individual students to meet their needs, is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEN.
- Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all students in their class, including students who access support from teaching assistants.
- Digitech regularly and carefully reviews the quality of teaching for all students, including those at risk of underachievement, in the following ways; learning walks, carried out by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), regular assessment cycles, regular in class assessment, book scrutiny, mock exams and tracking of student data.
- As a school, the involvement of the class teacher in conjunction with the SENCO will consider all information gathered from the school about the students' progress alongside national data and expectation of progress. This will include accurate formative assessment. Once the information has been gathered a decision will be made with consultation of both the parents and the child. If further investigation is required from outside agencies or our on-site specialist teacher, this is then completed.
- Once a need has been identified, teaching and support staff will work together to devise appropriate strategies to support the learning of the child.

The Principal oversees the SEN policy and is responsible for ensuring that it is implemented effectively throughout the school.

Where a behavioural incident warrants exclusion the relevant member(s) staff and SLT will consider the incident in line with the School Exclusion Policy and with reference to the SEN code of practice.

Section 4: Managing students' needs on the SEN register

From the information gathered about their learning needs a student profile is created. This identifies the student's presenting issues or needs, strategies to support their learning in the classroom, and their strengths.

Students with SEN are discussed in weekly staff briefings to share good practice and ensure all staff are aware of support strategies.

Students with an EHCP have an annual review carried out by the SENCO and this will also involve any outside agencies that support the needs of the student. The annual review will include information gathered by the SENCO from subject teachers along with the views of both the parent and student on how needs are being met in the classroom and any additional support or intervention they may require.

Section 5: Criteria for exiting the SEN register

Any student who has been identified as requiring SEN support may be removed from the SEN register if they have made continued progress and are meeting their expected target grades. This will be done in consultation with parents and relevant staff.

Section 6: Supporting Students and Families

The Local Authority (South Gloucestershire) publish a local offer. This sets out all the information in one place about provisions families can expect to be available across education, health and social care for students and young people who have SEN but do not have an EHCP. A link to South Gloucestershire local offer can be found here: https://life.southglos.gov.uk/kb5/southglos/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0

Digitech has links to many outside agencies including an Educational Psychologist. Within school we have several teaching assistants to support in class and to run individual and small group sessions.

Parents or carers with any concerns need to contact the SENCO directly regarding SEN Support and Exam Access Arrangements.

When students are moving from class to class, across key stages or to another school Digitech recognises that transitions can be difficult for a child with SEN and will take steps to ensure that any transition is a smooth as possible.

- If your child is moving child to another school:
  - We will contact the school's SENCO and ensure they know about any special arrangements or support that needs to be made for your child.
  - We will make sure that all records about your child are passed on as soon as possible.
- When moving to another year group or subject teacher:
  - All information is shared with staff
  - Meeting with individual subject teachers can be arranged with the SENCO

Section 7: Supporting Students at School with Medical conditions

Digitech recognises that students at school with medical conditions should be supported. Students are entitled to have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. Some students with medical conditions may be disabled and, where this is the case, school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Some students who have a medical condition may also have special educational needs (SEN) and may have an EHCP which brings together health and social care needs as well as their special educational provision where the SEN Code of Practice (2014) is followed.

For students with a medical condition please refer to the school's medical policy.

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation of SEN

Digitech will regularly review, monitor and evaluate the quality of provision that is on offer to our students.

Students who are in receipt of Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) must undergo a stringent assessment process carried out by an Exam Access Coordinator, with evidence provided by class teacher that this level of support is required by the student and is also their 'normal

way of working'. Exams Access Arrangements are reviewed with students; if they feel they no longer require the support, or do not use the concessions during mock examinations, the EAA may be removed.

Section 9: Training and resources

The needs of staff training identified at the start of the academic year. All staff have access to the schools CPD opportunities which this year involves closely working with the Cabot Learning Federation.

At the start of the academic year the SENCO will address both teachers and support staff about key students that require support and where to access SEN information. Any new staff joining the school will also meet with the SENCO who will outline which students require additional support. The SENCO will attend the Local Authority's cluster meetings for secondary SENCOs. The SENCO may also attend SENCO conference held annually by the Local Authority and will also work closely with the Cabot Learning Federation.

Section 10: Roles & Responsibilities

The Academy Council will:

- Do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any student who has SEN.
- Ensure that, where the SENCO/Principal/Council has been informed that a student has SEN, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach the student, following assessment.
- Ensure that teachers are aware of the importance of identifying, and providing for, those students who have special educational needs.
- Ensure that a student with SEN joins in the activities of the school together with students who do not have SEN, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the child receiving the special educational provision, the efficient education of the students with whom they are educated and the efficient use of resources.
- Report to parents/carers on the implementation of the school's policy for students with special educational needs as required (See Section 317, Education Act 1996).
- Have regard to the Code of Practice when carrying out its duties toward all students with SEN (See Section 313, Education Act 1996).
- Identify a named Academy councillor for Special Educational Needs.

The Principal:

- Has responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the School's work, including provision for children with SEN.
- Should keep the School Council informed of the progress made by SEN students.

Teaching and non-teaching staff:

- Are made aware of the School's procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for students with SEN through the Staff Handbook, SEN Register and other information distributed by the SENCO. All teachers and support staff have a responsibility to bring to the attention of the SENCO any child whose needs they believe are not being met.
- Teachers retain responsibility for the progress of all children in their class.

SENCO

- Quality assurance of SEN provision in the school.
- Administration of EHCP applications.
- Administration of the annual review process.
- Administration of Exam Access Testing.
- The day-to-day operation of the SEN Policy and for co-coordinating provision for students with SEN.
- Liaising with and advising other members of school staff.
- Maintaining the School's SEN Register and overseeing the records of all students with SEN as well as coordinating EHCPs.
- Liaising with the parents and carers of children with SEN.
- Liaising with external agencies, including the educational psychology service, the health and social care services and relevant voluntary bodies.
- Leading and deploying the school's Teaching Assistants
- Keeping up to date with changes in SEN and Inclusion i.e. legal changes, good practice, new resources and ideas with respect to students with SEN.

SLT SENCO line manager

- Assistant Principal responsible for managing the SENCO

Section 11: Storing and managing information

All paper-based SEN documents are stored in locked cabinets. At the end of each academic year the files are then transferred and boxed and placed in a locked cupboard. All SEN paperwork is stored until the student reaches their 25th birthday. All paperwork is then shredded.

Section 12: Reviewing the policy

The SEN Policy will be reviewed annually by the SENCO, SLT and the SEN Governor.

Section 13: Accessibility and Admissions

Please refer to the information contained in our school prospectus and on the school website.

The admission arrangements for all pupils are in accordance with national legislation, including the Equality Act 2010. This includes children with any level of SEN; those with Education, Health and Care Plans and those without. Please refer to the information contained in our school prospectus.

Where appropriate upon transition, children with identified needs will be supported through liaison meetings with parents, key staff from both settings and support agencies. A transition package can be put in place for SEN students with high needs.

Please refer to the accessibility policy.

Section 14: Dealing with complaints

Please refer to the complaints against school policy

Section 15: Bullying

Please refer to anti-bullying policy