

Role of the Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Governor

1. Introduction

Governing Boards (GBs) have important statutory duties towards pupils with SEND. Under the provisions of the Children & Families Act 2014 and statutory guidance on the 'SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years', GBs have a duty to use their best endeavours to ensure that a child with SEND receives the support they need. Put simply this means that a school is doing everything they can to meet children and young people's SEND.

GBs also have duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to disabled pupils, and advice is available for school leaders, staff and GBs to help schools understand how the Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties (*see essential reading*).

GBs should decide, with the executive leader, the school's policy and approach to meeting children and young people's SEND requirements, including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

GBs should familiarise themselves with Birmingham's Strategy for SEND and Inclusion (see essential reading). This sets out Birmingham's vision, mission, objectives, key priorities and outline delivery plan for 2023-28.

Every school must have a qualified teacher designated as a Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENCO) (although some smaller schools may share a SENCO) and there should be an individual on the GB or a committee with specific oversight of the school's arrangements for SEND. It is therefore, usual practice for GBs to appoint a link SEND Governor who will liaise with the SENCO and act as the link between the GB and school to ensure the GB is well informed about issues relating to SEND.

What is the role of a SEND Governor?

(note, the term SEND governor also includes an academy trust boards' lead)

- Ensuring the ongoing achievement and success of SEND Learners is a collective responsibility of the Governing Body, although this may come under the responsibility of a specific SEND Governor.



- The SEND Governor is the Governing Body's champion for Learners with SEND and those with inclusion needs. They will support and challenge the school to ensure that no Learner is treated less favourably, denied opportunity or left behind because they have additional needs.

What are the priorities for SEND governance?

- Review SEND provision including staff and other resourcing.
- Understand how the SEND notional budget is used and what impact it has on the progress and attainment of learners
- Revise and update the school's SEND information report to reflect the changing nature of the SEND cohort.

SEND Governor's Responsibilities

- To act as the champion for children with SEND and inclusion needs
- To ensure that the school is fulfilling its duties to children with SEND
- To undertake required training, including school-specific induction with the school's SEND Coordinator (SENCO)
- To meet the SENCO in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms as a minimum
- To ask questions and raise awareness relating to SEND and inclusion provision at Governing Body
- To monitor the SEND notional budget and what impact that spending has had on learner progress and attainment
- Work with the SENCO to produce a SEND Annual Report to Governors

2. Questions that the SEND Governor might ask include:

- Is our SENCO suitably qualified and if not are they being appropriately supported to gain their qualification? (National Award for SENCO changes to NPQSENCO from Sep 24)
- What is the SENCO responsible for? (SEN + Disability and accessibility planning? Looked after children (LAC)? Pupil premium? Medical needs?)
- How much time is the SENCO allowed in the week to carry out their responsibilities?
- What systems are in place to ensure that pupils' needs are identified?
- What is the range of SEND needs across the school?
- How many pupils are there on the SEND database? i.e. SEN support, EHC plan?
- Are there any particularly vulnerable year groups in terms of SEND?
- What support do pupils on the SEND database typically receive?
- Who monitors the progress of the pupils?
- How is this progress tracked and monitored?
- How often are their needs reviewed with parents?

- How does the school gain pupil's views about their needs and the support that they receive?
- How is the notional SEND budget spent? (same question for pupil premium if appropriate)
- How many pupils have been added to/removed from the SEN database?
- Which outside agencies does the school liaise with?
- When was the SEND updated?
- When was the SEND information report on the website reviewed? Was this done with parents / pupils?

3. Essential Reading

<u>SEND strategy 2023 to 2028 Birmingham City Council</u>	Birmingham's Strategy for SEND and Inclusion 2023-2028, setting out the vision, mission, objectives, key priorities and outline delivery plan.
<u>Home - Local Offer Birmingham</u>	Birmingham's Local SEND offer sets out, in one place, information about the provision that is available and provision that is expected to be across education, health and social care for children and young people who have SEND.
<u>Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years</u>	Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.
<u>Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools</u>	Advice for school leaders, staff and governing boards to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the act.

4. Other Useful Reading

<u>Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>	Section 7.2.2 outlines GB responsibilities in relation to SEND.
<u>Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>	Section 4.3 and 7.4.1 outlines the trusts responsibilities in relation to SEND
<u>Helpful information and questions for SEND governors</u>	Signposting from the DfE to support SEND governors in their role.

5. Keeping Updated and Training

SEND Governors should keep abreast of current developments through regular contact with the SENCO Working alongside the SENDCo is both interesting and rewarding and provides the basis for the SEND Governors reporting to the GB.

Training is also important, and it is strongly recommended that all SEND Governors attend a role specific training course and take advantage of any school based SEND training that is offered to them.

The Role of the SEND Governor course is designed for Governors newly appointed to the position. The course outlines the duties of the school under the SEND Code of Practice (2015), clarifies the role and duties of the SEND governor, their relationship with the SEND Co-ordinator (SENCO) and how they challenge and support the Senior Leadership Team. The course also covers Birmingham's Local Offer. For more information and available dates download the Governor [Training Programme](#).

School & Governor Support

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