Special Educational Needs (SEND) Information Report 2026-27

Key Information

Principal: Danny Bullock
SENDCo: Kirstie Maude
Assistant SENDCo: Neve Broughton
SEND Administrator: Michelle Saunders
SEND Governor: Gary Aubin
Senior Mental Health Lead: Kirstie Maude
Link to Local Offer: https://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer

Inclusion at United Learning

At United Learning, we are ambitious for all students. To achieve this ambition, we are committed to developing inclusive practices that ensure every child receives the support they need. It is driven by three trust-wide frameworks: high-quality inclusive teaching; inclusion-led leadership at all levels; inclusive community approaches. By embedding inclusive practice across every layer of school life, we ensure that all children regardless of need are supported to succeed, feel a sense of belonging, and thrive in every aspect of their education.

Working with Families

We understand what a huge decision it is to choose a school which will enable your child to thrive. We strive to make sure that our families feel included and supported in all decisions made about their child.

We involve parents and carers by:

- Holding regular review meetings and annual reviews
- Gathering parent and pupil views as part of the Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycle
- Sharing SEND Support Plans through Provision Map software
- Keeping communication open through email, phone calls, and meetings

We are exploring the introduction of Parent Champions who can offer informal support and guidance for families. Details will be added once confirmed.

Context

As of September 2026, Fir Vale Academy has 790 students on roll.

- 17 students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- 174 students receive SEND Support (K)
- The most common area of need is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

The school also supports pupils with needs in:

- Communication and interaction (ASD, speech and language)
- Cognition and learning (dyslexia, dyspraxia, moderate learning difficulties)
- Sensory and/or physical needs (hearing impairment, visual impairment, epilepsy)

Admissions Arrangements

Students with SEND are welcomed into Fir Vale Academy in line with our inclusive ethos and Equality Act 2010 duties.

- Students with an EHCP apply through Sheffield Local Authority's SEND team.

- Students without an EHCP follow the normal admissions process.
- Our SENDCo may attend Y5 or Y6 annual reviews to support transition planning.
- We encourage families to visit the school to discuss their child's needs.

No student will be refused admission to Fir Vale Academy based on his or her special educational needs. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will not discriminate against disabled children in respect of admissions for a reason related to their disability.

Where Sheffield Local Authority proposes to name Fir Vale Academy in an EHCP, made in accordance with section 324 of the Education Act 1996, the school will be sent a consultation and will outline whether the student's needs can be met and whether a place will be offered or not. If it is deemed that it would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other children, this will be outlined in the consultation response to the Local Authority.

Fir Vale Academy welcomes any requests to visit our site to ensure we can meet individuals' needs (with advice as necessary from health professionals on suitability).

Identification and Assessment

We identify students' needs early using:

- Baseline reading and cognitive assessments on entry for all pupils
- A full SEND baseline assessment for pupils identified from these assessments
- Teacher observations and progress data
- Parent and pupil input
- External professional assessments (if required)

We follow the Graduated Approach (Assess – Plan – Do – Review). This means support is carefully planned, delivered, reviewed, and adapted regularly. We work to understand the root cause before placing a pupil on the SEND register.

We record and monitor all SEND support through Provision Map, which tracks interventions, outcomes, and reviews.

Reviewing Progress

Each student's progress is reviewed termly using a mix of:

- Data and teacher feedback
- Pupil and parent voice
- The impact of interventions
- Boxall Profile re-assessments for SEMH needs

Annual reviews are held for students with EHCPs, and SEND Support reviews are held at least three times a year.
SEND progress and provision are monitored by the SENDCo, SEND Governor, and the Senior Leadership Team.

High Quality Inclusive Teaching

All teachers at Fir Vale Academy are teachers of SEND. We expect high-quality, inclusive classroom practice for every pupil.
Examples include:

- Differentiated tasks and resources
- Use of visuals, key vocabulary, and modelling
- Flexible groupings and scaffolding
- Additional processing time and supported instructions
- Use of laptops, overlays, or enlarged text as required

We provide staff with regular training on adaptive teaching, communication needs, and SEMH support.

Evidence-Based Interventions

When pupils need extra help beyond classroom teaching, we offer a range of targeted interventions, including:

- *Talkabout for Children*
- *Anger Gremlins, Anxiety Gremlins and Exam Stress Gremlins (emotional regulation)*
- *Brick Building Therapy (social communication)*
- *Narrative Improvement Program (NIP) and Verbal Improvement Program (VIP)*
- *Lexonics*

We also work closely with professionals such as:

- *Educational Psychologist*
- *Speech and Language Therapist*
- *Occupational and Physiotherapists*
- *Autism Service*
- *Hearing and Visual Impairment Services*
- *Team Around the School (TAS)*
- *Unravel*
- *SSENDIAS (Sheffield SEND Information, Advice and Support)*

Mentally Healthy School

Our Senior Mental Health Lead is Kirstie Maude.

- *We promote wellbeing through:*
- *Regular staff training on mental health and early intervention*
- *Emotional support interventions*
- *Referrals to the Mental Health Support Team (MHST)*
- *Access to safe spaces like The Learning Zone or the school Library for regulated breaks and support*

Behaviour Support

The SEND Code of Practice (2014) states that, *'Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues.'*

Reasonable Adjustments

At Fir Vale Academy, we make reasonable adjustments for managing behaviour which is related to a students' Special Educational Need (SEN) or disability, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. These reasonable adjustments are tailored to the individual student and consider the advice of professionals as required. These adjustments may relate to the way that instructions are given, the way that behaviour is managed or the consequences and rewards that are used. Fir Vale Academy is committed to providing early intervention to support student behaviour and to ensure that students are supported in improving their behaviour *(for more information please see our Behaviour Policy).*

Inclusive Community

Students with SEND are fully included in school life. We encourage all students to join:

- Leadership roles and the student council
- Sports, clubs, and enrichment activities
- Educational visits and residentials

Pupils also take part in school-wide events, helping to build confidence and social skills.

Transition

We plan transitions carefully at each stage:

Primary School Transition

- Attendance at Y6 annual reviews
- Extra transition visits for identified pupils
- Joint meetings with primary SENCOs

KS3 to KS4 Transition

- Ongoing careers advice and subject guidance
- Supported option choices and taster sessions

Post 16 Transition

- Support from school's careers adviser
- Preparation for Adulthood mentoring
- Information sharing with next education provider
- Life skills and independence preparation

Staff Expertise

Our SENDCo, Kirstie Maude, is an Assistant Headteacher with extensive experience in leadership, teaching, and SEND coordination.
The Assistant SENDCo and SEND Administrator both bring many years of experience and training in SEND processes, including exam access arrangements and dyslexia support.

Our team of Teaching Assistants and United Learning SIT Graduates deliver interventions and classroom support.
Staff are trained in:

- SEMH strategies
- Literacy and communication support
- Autism awareness
- Positive handling and de-escalation

Communication and Complaints Process

Parents can raise concerns with the SENDCo, Assistant SENDCo, or the Headteacher. If an issue cannot be resolved informally, the school's complaints process should be followed.

link to Complaints Policy

Families can also seek independent advice from:
Sheffield SENDIAS: https://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/sendias

Accessibility Plan

Schools need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils (as directed in the Equality Act 2010). This plan must be reviewed at least every three years.

Schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Links to other Useful Policies

Link SEND Policy
Link Safeguarding Policy
Link Behaviour Policy
Link Accessibility Plan
Link Complaints Policy