



Ada, the National College for Digital Skills

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Report

Named Personnel with Designated responsibility for all matters associated with SEND:

Role	Designated Person	Contact Details
Assistant Principal Learner Services and DSL	Janet Davidson	Janet@ada.ac.uk
SEND Link Board Member	Alice Ward	info@ada.ac.uk

Policy Review (frequency of review: annual)

Academic Year	Date released	Next Review Date
2022-23	July 2022	September 2023
2023-24	September 2023	September 2024
2024-2025	September 2025	September 2026

Principles underlying all our practice at Ada

Ada, the National College for Digital Skills is committed to inclusive learning and strives to meet individual learning support needs. We believe that all applicants and learners who have disabilities or learning needs are entitled to receive support to enable them to participate as fully as possible in college life, and to complete their programme of study successfully.

At Ada, our additional learning support includes any activity providing direct support to an individual learner, over and above that which is customarily provided to our cohort, and which enables the achievement of their qualifications and learning goals.

The College values diversity and takes its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 seriously; we, therefore, make every effort to meet the individual needs of every learner.

The following reflects our provision for learners whose special educational needs or disability (SEND) deem them to need learning support, and has been written as guidance for staff, parents/carers or guardians and learners.

What kind of need can be supported at Ada?

Learners with every type of need are supported at our College and we ensure that every individual in our College makes good progress and is supported to be successful in their wider life.

What is SEND?

According to the Code of Practice 0-25 (2015), a learner has special educational needs and disabilities if the person:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of the same age, or
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders the learner from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for learners of the same age in other mainstream schools or colleges within the local authority;
- Is under compulsory school age and falls within the definition in the first two bullet points, or would do so if the special educational provision was not made for the learner.

The SEND Code of Practice 0-25, 2015 outlines four main areas of need:

Area of Need	Definition	Examples
Communication and interaction	Children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty communicating with others. This may be because they 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.	Speech & Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Cognition and learning	Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning.	Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia)
Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties	<p>Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour.</p> <p>Other children and young people may have disorders such as Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder or Attachment Disorder.</p>	<p>Mental Health Difficulties (anxiety, depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders)</p> <p>Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Attachment Disorder (AD), ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder)</p>

Sensory and/or physical needs	Some children and young people require special educational provisions because they have a disability that prevents or hinders them from using the educational facilities generally provided. Many children and young people with Sensory and Physical Needs will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning.	Vision Impairment (VI), Hearing Impairment (HI), Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI), Physical Disability (PD)
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Please note: The guidance given above from the SEND Code of Practice is also used to categorise the additional learning needs of our adult learners on apprenticeship and short course programmes of study.

Who can I talk to at Ada about a learner’s progress, special educational needs, medical needs, disabilities and/or any other additional needs?

- SEND Specialist
- Subject Teachers
- Subject Lead teachers
- Team Leads (Tutors)
- Assistant Principals
- Principal

Please note: For learners on adult programmes of study (apprenticeships and short courses), the consent of the learner will need to be sought before any discussion can take place.

How are learners’ needs identified at Ada?

Ada identifies learners with SEND in several different ways:

- By learners telling us either verbally or in their application
- By a parent telling us - talking to or emailing teachers/pastoral staff;
- Through teacher assessments;
- Other information that may be used to identify learner needs e.g. analysis of their work, behaviour and achievements log, pastoral/medical logs/attendance and punctuality, or discussion with professionals within the College;
- During a review of progress against SEND desired outcomes- these happen twice a year for learners with an EHCP, and once a year during parents’ consultation day for Sixth Form learners without an EHCP;
- Lift off day (interview day) discussion;

- Meeting with the SEND Specialist during the interview process;
- Meeting with parent/ carers or guardian during the enrolment process;
- Working with previous schools or educational settings;
- Working with different Local Authorities' SEND departments;
- Working with professionals and/or other organisations involved with the learner.

How will Ada let parents/carers or guardians know if we have any concerns about a learner's progress, special educational needs and/or disabilities?

- SEND specialists will work closely with the learners's Team Lead or subject teacher and if any concerns are raised this will be followed through various communication channels including meeting with their parent/carer or guardian or monitoring on the college CPOMS system for actions put into place to support the learner.
- The learner's Team Lead or subject teacher will initially speak to the learner and/or their parent/carer or guardian to discuss the concerns. For adult learners (apprenticeships and short courses), consent will be gained for information sharing before any concerns are discussed with next of kin;
- For Sixth Form learners, an Assistant Principal or the Principal may contact parents/carers or guardians to discuss the concern further or arrange a meeting to discuss the difficulties the learner is facing and to discuss strategies and further investigation of the difficulties if necessary.

How does Ada seek a learner's views about any difficulties with learning, special educational needs and/or disabilities or any other additional needs?

- Learners can discuss their needs with their teacher(s) or Team Lead (Sixth Form) or Skills Coach (Apprenticeships). For Sixth Form learners, the parent/carer or guardian and learner can share their views and discuss the learner's progress and needs at Consultation Days or at any time via email, telephone or face to face communications.
- For Sixth Form learners, the parent/carer or guardian can request an appointment with the learner's team lead, subject teachers, Assistant Principal or Principal throughout the year;
- If the learner has an EHCP, the parent/carer or guardian and the learner will be able to share their views at an Annual Review Meeting.

How are learners able to communicate their views on their progress?

- Learners with an EHCP express their views in Annual Reviews.
- Learners with SEND, but without an EHCP, also express their views to create their learner profile. Ada follows a person-centred approach when writing every learner profile.

What provision is available to support learners with Special Educational Needs?

At Ada, the support learners receive depends on their individual needs. We follow the three-tiered approach to support learning.

Universal: As an inclusive college, we believe in high-quality teaching for all, with an appropriate level of differentiation to meet a learner's needs. The College ensures that quality-first teaching is a key element to all lessons. We recognise that it is the role of the subject specialist teacher to provide for every learner's individual needs. Reasonable adjustments and good quality personalised teaching should always be undertaken before the learners are considered as having SEND.

Targeted: If needed, short-term interventions can be used to remove the barriers to learning. It takes the form of a four-part graduated approach:

- **Assess**- assess the needs of the learner;
- **Plan**- plan how to remove the barriers to learning;
- **Do**- offer the tailored intervention;
- **Review**- review the effectiveness of the intervention and the progress the learner has made.

Specialist: When necessary we seek specialist advice and regular long-term support from specialists and professionals from outside agencies to cater to the learners' needs. A small number of learners who have an EHCP may access these services through their local authority due to provisions in their EHCP. When applying for Ada with an EHCP, please be aware that we will not be able to make a provisional offer until a formal consultation has been completed with the Local Authority. It is the responsibility of the learner and/or parent or carer to inform their Local Authority that a consultation with Ada needs to take place.

The current specific interventions provided at Ada include:

- Ada skills - a programme of personal and professional skills development that all Ada students undertake
- Individual learner support;
- In-class support;
- Counselling from our on site counselling service if identified as part of the support package

Learners may also be referred or signposted to a range of services including Spectrum Life an online 24 hour counselling app that the college has registered with and or external services are available as appropriate

How do we adapt the curriculum and learning environment for those who have SEND?

As an inclusive college, we believe that learners' needs are first met through quality first teaching. All teachers at Ada deliver high-quality teaching for all with appropriate adaptation to meet the diverse range of needs of our learners. In the conclusion of a recent Ofsted research into the provision for learners with SEND, it states the importance of understanding 'pupils as individuals with unique strengths, removing barriers to learning and providing support that meets needs and makes a positive difference'. We adhere to this belief and highly tailored differentiation is a norm in our college. We expect to see this in all our lessons and activities around the College.

Where learners have visual and/or hearing impairments, specialist teachers' advice is applied when planning for lessons and appropriate aids are used.

What kind of training and development are there to ensure the staff are appropriately trained to support learners' special educational needs and/or disabilities?

All staff are trained to cater to the diverse needs of learners with SEND through the following training:

- Continuous training for all staff regarding the learners who have EHCPs, receive High Needs funding or are on the SEND register.
- CPD for all staff on differentiation; work scrutiny shared with staff and engaging external services to provide discreet SEND training.
- CPD for all staff on different special educational needs, what they mean, how it is manifested in classrooms and the effective strategies to support learners with SEND.
- CPD for all new and trainee staff on the SEND Code of Practice (2015 and all the updates)
- Specialist CPD sessions by relevant professionals or agencies working with learners with SEND; digital tools which are accessible with clear guidelines on use.
- All teachers are expected to share good practice through structured feedback on individual learners; review of routines through half termly learning walks to target cohorts, learner passports shared with teachers, under quality assurance - reviewing effectiveness of practice.
- Advice and support from the Inclusion team regarding individual learners. Teachers have a partnership with Learning Support Assistants to embed and adapt support for learners.
- Learner profiles are shared by the Inclusion team. The person-centred approach is used to design these profiles, providing both the learner and professionals an opportunity to explain their needs, recommended strategies and targets with teaching staff. This supports the Inclusion team to be able to assess the impact of interventions and regularly review the most effective strategies for each learner.

How does Ada support learners to reach their full potential?

- Learners' progress is continually monitored.
- High-quality teaching is provided to support every learner to reach their full potential.
- Teaching and learning strategies are reviewed constantly.
- Our college regularly works with external agencies, professionals and specialists to review learner progress and adapt planning accordingly.

What support does Ada provide for a learner's well-being, emotional and social development?

All staff at Ada take the well-being and welfare of every learner seriously. We strongly believe that wellbeing and welfare are vital in supporting learners' progress, attainment and personal development.

Our Sixth Form learners are supported by Learning Support Assistants, Assistant Principal (Learner Services), our on site Counsellor, Senior Attendance and Pastoral Officers, Team Lead and our SEND specialist. This team of professionals works closely to provide support to match a learner's needs, signposting to external specialist services as required.

Learners have weekly Ada Skills and Team Time sessions. This dedicated time supports learners to develop the knowledge, skills and experiences to be successful and safe in their future careers and wider lives.

At Ada learners are regularly involved in Industry projects. These support learners to prepare for the world of work and network with potential future employers.

Our adult learners on apprenticeship and short course programmes can also access many of these support services from their Skills Coach and/or the Apprenticeship Operations team.

How are learners included in the same activities as their peers at Ada?

At Ada we are committed to offering as many opportunities as possible to all our learners and we are committed to providing equal opportunities for all our learners.. All learners are included in trips, educational visits, clubs and industry projects. A risk assessment is carried out before any off-site activities to ensure the safety of all learners, and the staff who will be accompanying them. We make reasonable adjustments and provide additional support to suit each individual learner's needs to make sure everybody can be included in the opportunities we provide.

How is the College building accessible to learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Our buildings in both London and Manchester have step free access from the road and our reception area has been designed to be accessible for both visitors and learners who may have additional needs and/or

disabilities. All areas of the College are accessible to those with physical disabilities, with lifts and accessible toilets throughout the building. In London, the Sports Hall has attached accessible changing rooms with a medical room close by on the same floor.

Each floor has a range of different learning environments and rooms for meetings and lessons, with defined quiet spaces for learners who may have sensory and/or other needs.

How does Ada support learners in their transition stages?

- Throughout their time with Ada, learners are supported with the end of college decision-making process;
- During Team time, Ada Skills sessions and Industry Projects, learners get support with how to prepare for interviews, writing personal statements, CVs, developing their professional behaviours and networking;
- Sixth Form learners are also guided through the UCAS process to apply for university and how to apply for post-18 apprenticeship programmes.

Learners are also supported when joining Ada by:

- **Lift off days:** when learners apply to join Ada, they are invited to a "lift-off" day where they are assessed through interviews and other assessments to ensure they are ready to access the curriculum Ada offers;
- **Meeting** with our SEND Specialist to understand their needs and plan support;
- Receiving optional **coaching** sessions: many learners have regular coaching sessions with trained and vetted industry partners to prepare them for the transition from Ada to the world of work or to universities.

What other agencies work in partnership with Ada to improve progress and support learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Ada works with many different agencies and professionals to support learners' needs. These agencies includes:

- Local authorities and their SEND teams
- CAMHS (Children, Adult Mental Health Service) and a variety of health professionals.
- Child and adult social care services.
- Local charities and specialist support services.
- Our industry partners.
- The School Liaison Police Officers, British Transport Police and Safer Neighbourhood Team.

How are Ada's resources allocated and matched to learners with SEND?

- The Principal, in consultation with the Executive Leadership, Team and Board members decides how the SEND funding should be spent considering the needs of the SEND learners.
- Every academic year, the Principal and/or the Assistant Principal and SENDCo evaluate the effectiveness of the current interventions and provisions. This evaluation informs the development plan, objectives and actions for the year, which may include additional or alternative interventions, staff training and equipment needs.

What is the Local Offer? Where can I get information on the Local Authority's Local Offer?

A Local Offer is information for parents/carers of people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and it explains the support a particular local authority offers.

You can find more information about Westminster's local offer [here](#). If you live outside of Westminster you may wish to look up the Local Offer for the local authority you live in.

You can find out more about Manchester's local offer [here](#). If you live outside of Manchester you may wish to look up the Local Offer for the local authority you live in.

How can I raise concerns if I need to and with whom?

If you have any questions or concerns, initially, discuss them with an Assistant Principal or the Principal. If you think your concern has not been dealt with, and you wish to make a formal complaint, please follow the College's complaint procedure which can be found on the College's website.