

The Rydal Academy

Local Offer

Accepted by: The Rydal Academy LGB

Approving Body: Local Governing Body

Committee: LGB

Review Cycle: Annually

Last reviewed: September 2025

Date for next review: September 2026

How does The Rydal Academy know if children need extra help?

Children may be identified as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in several ways, including:

- Concerns raised by parents or carers
- Observations by the class teacher, if behaviour or self-esteem is affecting performance
- Performing below age expectations and not making progress, even with support
- Information shared from a previous school or nursery
- Input from external professionals (e.g. physiotherapists)
- Medical diagnosis from a doctor or paediatrician

We are committed to identifying SEND early and follow a graduated approach, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

We consider intervention when a child, despite receiving adapted teaching:

- Makes little or no progress in key areas
- Has communication or interaction difficulties and doesn't progress with a differentiated curriculum
- Struggles with literacy or maths, leading to low achievement
- Shows ongoing social or emotional difficulties that don't improve with standard strategies
- Has sensory or physical needs and still makes limited progress, even with specialist equipment

We assess progress against age-related expectations. Teachers regularly monitor each child's development and identify areas needing support. From entry to Year 6, we track progress.

Children not making expected progress are discussed during termly review meetings.

What should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

If you're concerned about your child's learning needs, please talk to us—we're here to help. Start by speaking with your child's class teacher. If you need more information, contact our SENCo or any staff member you feel comfortable with. We'll listen to your concerns and create a plan, which may include:

- Discussing with the class teacher
- Observing your child
- Providing extra support in class
- Using a specialist programme

How will The Rydal Academy staff support my child?

The SENCo monitors all additional support and tracks progress across the school. Your child's class teacher will plan and deliver lessons to help them progress in all subjects.

A Teaching Assistant (TA) may work with your child individually or in a small group. The support your child receives will be explained to you during regular meetings throughout the year.

How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?

Classroom activities are designed to suit each child's abilities. Pupils are encouraged to work independently using metacognitive strategies (techniques that help develop thinking skills).

If extra help is needed, Teaching Assistants may provide support to help pupils meet their learning goals. Teaching Assistants also lead the school's intervention programmes. We offer ongoing training to ensure they deliver these confidently and effectively.

To make our school inclusive, we use a range of adaptations and resources. We also adjust the learning environment when needed.

How will I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

If your child receives extra support or interventions, this will be recorded in a Support Plan. Support Plans are created with input from the child and shared with parents/carers each term. You'll be invited to school to discuss the plan and review the support your child is receiving.

We believe education is a partnership and aim to keep communication open—especially for children with complex needs.

- If your child has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a formal Annual Review will be held to discuss progress and write a report.
- Interim reviews can also be arranged if circumstances change or new concerns arise.

How do we know if the support or strategies used have had an impact?

We track each child's progress and set personalised targets. These are recorded on a provision map, which is reviewed regularly to check whether the support is helping the child achieve their goals.

We use this data alongside teacher assessments to monitor academic progress against age-related expectations. If a child isn't making expected progress, even with support, we break down their assessment data into smaller steps to better understand their needs and ensure progress is made.

What support will there be for my child's overall well-being?

Your child's class teacher is responsible for their academic progress, emotional well-being, medical needs, and social development. If extra support is needed, the teacher can work with the SENCo, Pastoral Lead, or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If specialist advice is needed, we may involve external agencies.

- The school has a policy for managing medicines. If your child needs medication during the school day, please contact us to discuss their needs.
- If medication is required, we will create an Individual Health Care Plan to ensure safe and appropriate administration.

How will my child be able to contribute their views?

Children from Reception to Year 6 are invited to complete an annual questionnaire to help improve the school.

What support is there for improving behaviour, attendance and avoiding exclusion?

We promote positive behaviour through a clear reward system used by all staff and pupils. If a child is struggling, we may create a support plan to identify the issues, provide targeted help, and set goals. We record all incidents of poor behaviour to spot patterns and tailor interventions. This process is overseen by the pastoral team.

What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by The Rydal Academy?

Our SENCo and shadow SENCo are fully qualified and accredited.

We work closely with a range of external professionals to support children's individual needs, including:

- Health services: School Nurse, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), Paediatricians, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, and Speech & Language Therapists
- Early Years Inclusion Team
- Social Care
- Educational Psychologists

If your child needs support from any external agency, we will always inform you first and ask for your permission before making any referrals or arranging professional involvement.

What training have staff had or going to have?

Most of our teaching assistants (TAs) have received training in a range of SEND areas, including:

- Attachment Disorder
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Dyslexia
- Phonics
- Annual Child Protection Level 1 training

All staff receive regular updates and training on SEND conditions, medication use, and available resources or interventions to ensure they can support children effectively.

We review our safeguarding policy every year and provide training on procedures and protocols. All staff access First Aid training, and additional training is provided as needed.

How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

All children are included in every part of the school curriculum, including trips and off-site activities. We provide the necessary support to make sure every child can take part safely and successfully.

Before any trip, we carry out a risk assessment to ensure health and safety. If it's not safe for a child to join a particular activity, we will offer an alternative activity in school that covers the same learning objectives.

How accessible is the school environment?

Our school is fully wheelchair accessible and built on one level. We have:

- Ramps at key access points

- Accessible toilets and changing facilities in both EY/Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 buildings

Additional resources for accessibility may be assessed by Occupational Therapy (OT) or Physiotherapy to ensure safety and comfort. For children with visual or sensory impairments, we work with the Low Incidence Needs Service to provide appropriate support.

How does the school communicate with parent/carers?

We make every effort to communicate clearly and regularly with all parents and carers. If English is not your first language, we can use translation tools to send letters in your native language.

How will the school prepare and support my child to join/transfer to a new school?

We encourage all new pupils to visit the school before starting. During the visit, they'll be shown around and any questions or concerns can be addressed.

Transition support may include:

- Extra visits to the new school
- Meetings with parents
- Help from the Darlington Information, Advice and Support Service

Many of our feeder secondary schools offer tailored transition programmes for vulnerable pupils. We work closely with staff at both the current and new schools to ensure all relevant information is shared and your child's needs are understood. If your child has complex needs, an EHCP review may be used as a transition meeting, with staff from both schools invited to attend.

How are the school's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?

We do our best to make sure every child receives the right level of adult support. The Headteacher and SENCo meet regularly to discuss SEND needs across the school. Teaching Assistants (TAs) are assigned to year groups, classes, or individual pupils based on the level of need. Some Teaching Assistants are funded through the SEND budget and deliver targeted programmes to support groups of children.

The SEND budget is allocated according to need. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) receive the level of support outlined in their plan, which may include additional adult support during the school day.

How is the decision made about what type and level of support my child will receive?

If your child is significantly behind their peers or has specific challenges with speech, language, emotional well-being, or social development, they may be referred to the SENCo and placed on SEN Support.

If your child has more complex physical or learning needs, we may request an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) from the local authority. EHCPs come with additional funding and usually include extra adult support to help your child meet their goals.

At every stage, your views as a parent or carer will be considered and included in the decision-making process.

Who can I contact for further information?

- **Class Teacher:** Your first point of contact for any concerns.
- **Mrs Turnbull (Deputy Headteacher):** For questions about education, progress, or attainment.
- **Mr Dickinson:** For safeguarding concerns.
- **Mrs Gaines (SENCo):** For support and provision related to SEND.
- **Mr Armitage (Headteacher):** Available to meet prospective pupils and families and show them around the school.

Links with other policies and documents

- Accessibility Plan
- Behaviour and self regulation policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Looked After Children Policy
- SEND Information Report
- SEND Information report – pupil guide
- SEND policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

The Local Offer

The purpose of the Local Offer is to 'offer' information for parents/carers, in a single place, which helps them to understand what services they and their family can expect from a range of local agencies. More information can be found on Darlington Borough Council's website or by clicking on [The Local Offer](#)

If your child has a special educational need or disability and you would like further information more information can be found on Darlington Borough Council's website or by clicking on [SEND IASS](#)