



## 5.2 The Role of Governors and Trustees

*There should be a member of the governing body or sub-committee with specific oversight of the school's arrangements for SEN and disability. School leaders should regularly review how expertise and resources used to address SEN can be used to build the quality of whole-school provision as part of their approach to school improvement.*

- SEND Code of Practice 6.3

Each school should have a lead SEND Governor and each MAT a lead trustee for SEND. It is important that a school governor or trustee has a clear and accurate understanding of how well all children and young people benefit from the education provided in the school. For children and young people with SEND it is the responsibility of everyone on the governing board to understand enough to be able to offer the executive leadership constructive challenge and to be assured that these potentially vulnerable learners are achieving, attaining and progressing well.

The SEND Governor/trustee working with their governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions for the school:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its learners;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governors/Trustees play a key role in the strategic leadership and development of SEN provision, offering appropriate support and challenge in relation to the above areas with a specific focus on SEN. The SEN Governor/Trustee will inform the Governing Body on all aspects of SEN in the school to ensure that SEN work is valued and well supported. This should be linked to clearly identified impact and outcomes for learners with SEND.

All boards have legal duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and must have regard to the statutory guidance, 'the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years'. Academies must also meet these requirements by virtue of their funding agreement.

## **The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals**

They **must** (SEND Code of Practice references provided):

- co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally (Chapter 3) and developing the local offer (Chapter 4);
- use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people’s SEND (para 6.2);
- ensure that children and young people with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEND (para 6.2);
- inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child (para 6.2);
- ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions (para 6.11);
- provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum (para 6.12);
- ensure that pupils from Year 8 until Year 13 are provided with independent careers advice (para 6.13);
- have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND (paras 6.14 – 6.63);
- provide an annual report for parents on their child’s progress (paras 6.64 – 6.51); • record accurately and keep up to date the provision made for pupils with SEND (paras 6.52 – 6.58);
- publish information on their websites about the implementation of the board’s policy for pupils with SEND, the School SEN Information Report<sup>46</sup>; (paras 6.59 – 6.83);
- publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and their accessibility plans;
- ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school (paras 6.84 – 6.94);
- determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEND (paras 6.95 – 6.99).

While the role of a SEN Governor/Trustee may be delegated to an individual board member or committee it is important that the board does not lose sight of their corporate responsibility for SEND. This responsibility should be seen as more than statutory compliance ensuring that all learners with SEND access the highest quality provision.

They should be able to:

- Articulate the vision for SEND provision and outcomes in their school or MAT
- Check that the SEND Code of Practice and the DfE census guidance is used when categorising a CYP’s area of need
- Inform themselves about the patterns of need at school, academy, trust level in order to support the development of provision

## **The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals**

- Inform themselves about SEND systems and practices in school through regular meetings and school visits
- Articulate their understanding of their accountabilities towards learners with SEND
- Report on the publication of key SEND information, such as relevant policies and a SEN information report.
- Closely monitor the progress of learners with SEND through reviewing and understanding internal and external data
- Closely monitor the school's analysis of exclusion data ensuring that the representation of learners with SEND, in fixed term exclusions is proportionate

### **The South Glos way is not to permanently exclude any CYP with an identified SEND.**

- Understand how the notional (delegated – element 2) SEN budget is used and ensuring that wider financial decisions do not adversely impact on the support for learners with SEN;
- Understand the national and local context of SEN support using their school visits to inform them about the work Senior Leaders and the SENCO are leading on
- Ensure that the views of learners and parent/carers in relation to the SEND provision are sought
- Build a trusting and supportive relationship with both leaders and the school SENCO

It is important for the SENCo and SEN Governor/Trustee to have a good working relationship. They should meet regularly, alongside the more formal reporting systems that will be in place. Governors/Trustees should offer both the SENCo and school leaders constructive challenge as well as support so they can be assured that children and young people with SEN are achieving, attaining and progressing well.

## **Further Advice and Support**

[The DfE's Governors Handbook updated in March 2019](#)

[Whole School SEND Governance Review Guide](#)

[Integra Schools, Governor Services training and development programme](#)