

SEND Policy

LEAF STUDIO

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Contents

1. Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1. Statement of intent.....	3
1.2. Audience.....	3
1.3. Revision history	4
1.4. Definitions	4
2. Ethos.....	6
3. Legal framework	7
4. Learners with SEND	8
5. Children with health needs who cannot attend school.....	10
6. Policy statement.....	11
7. Training.....	14
8. Learners with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and learners from Minority Ethnic Groups (MEG)	14
9. Responsibilities	16
10. Monitoring and compliance	17
11. Related documents.....	17
Appendix A: SEND approaches.....	18

1.1. Vision and Values for Inclusion

At LEAF Studio School, we believe that every young person has the right to feel valued, understood and included within an ambitious learning community. We are committed to providing an inclusive education where every learner is recognised as an individual, barriers to learning are identified and removed, and all students are supported to achieve their full potential.

Our approach is founded on the belief that inclusion is not simply about where a child is educated, but about ensuring they receive the right support, in the right environment, at the right time. We work collaboratively with students, families and professionals to develop provision that meets individual needs while maintaining high aspirations for every learner.

We recognise neurodiversity as a natural variation in how people think, learn and experience the world. Rather than focusing solely on labels or diagnoses, we seek to understand each learner's individual strengths, needs and aspirations. We adopt a strengths-based approach, beginning with what is strong rather than what is wrong, so that support is built around each young person's unique profile.

We believe that high expectations and inclusion go hand in hand. We do not lower expectations because a learner has special educational needs or disabilities. Instead, we identify and remove barriers to learning through high-quality teaching, reasonable adjustments and evidence-informed interventions, enabling all learners to participate fully in academy life and make meaningful progress.

Relationships are at the heart of everything we do. We foster a relational and trauma-informed culture where behaviour is understood as a form of communication, while maintaining clear expectations, consistency and accountability. We believe that understanding the reasons behind behaviour enables us to provide effective support, whilst helping young people develop responsibility, resilience and self-regulation.

We recognise that barriers to attendance are often barriers to learning, wellbeing and belonging. We work proactively with students, families and external professionals to understand these barriers and develop collaborative strategies that promote regular attendance, engagement and successful participation in school life.

As a specialist Performing Arts and Sport academy, we celebrate the talents, interests and aspirations of every learner. In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, we recognise the importance of considering both need and aptitude, ensuring that students with SEND have equitable opportunities to develop their strengths and access the specialist opportunities available within our academy.

Preparing young people for adulthood is central to our vision. We actively promote independence across all aspects of school life by developing the knowledge, skills and confidence that learners need beyond education. Wherever appropriate, we promote the use of assistive technology, adaptive strategies and independent learning approaches that reduce reliance on adult support and enable students to access further education, employment and adult life with confidence.

Through partnership, ambition and inclusion, we strive to ensure that every learner leaves LEAF Studio School equipped with the confidence, resilience, independence and skills to thrive in education, employment and their wider community.

Audience

This policy applies to all education staff, as well as professional services staff when considering reasonable adjustments, funding, and provision for learners with SEND.

1.2. Revision history

Issue	Date	Author	Changes
V0.01	03/09/2025	Simon Tanner and Rachel Yetton	Updated from previous Trust policy
V0.02	27/8/26	Updated by Ollie Yeats	

1.3. Definitions

1.3.1. Definition to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

- There is a clear distinction between 'underachievement,' often caused by a poor early experience of learning, and 'special educational needs. Some learners may be underachieving but will not necessarily have a special educational need; it is our responsibility to identify this quickly and ensure that appropriate support is put in place to help these learners 'catch up.'

- A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability, which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
- A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty if they:
 - Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
 - Have a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.
- For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children and young people of the same age by mainstream schools and early years' settings.

1.3.2. Definition of disability

- Many children and young people with SEND may also have a disability. A disability is described in law (the Equality Act 2010) as 'a physical or mental impairment, which has a long-term (a year or more) and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This includes, for example, sensory impairments such as those that affect sight and hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy.
- The Equality Act requires early years' providers, schools, colleges, other educational settings, and local authorities to:
- Not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass, or victimise disabled children and young people.
- Make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of extra aid services (for example, tactile signage or induction loops), so that disabled children and young people are not disadvantaged. This duty is known as 'anticipatory.'

2. Ethos

- 2.1. At Authentic Education, we believe that every child has the right to an inclusive, empowering, and high-quality education. Our SEND provision is guided by a strong moral purpose and the belief that children wherever possible can attend their local community Academy and that difference should be recognised, respected, and valued. We are courageous in our commitment to advocating for learner's with SEND, challenging inequality, and removing barriers to learning so that all children can thrive in an environment where they feel supported to develop.
- 2.2. Our ethos also embraces being innovative in how we meet the needs of learners. We use creative and evidence-based approaches to personalise support and continually reflect on our practice to improve outcomes for all. Alongside this, we strive for excellence in everything we do, ensuring our staff are well trained and our expectations for every learner remain ambitious. Through this shared commitment, we foster a culture where every child is enabled to reach their full potential.
- 2.3. Our aim is to ensure every learner has the opportunity to achieve his or her best. We do this by always placing the child at the forefront of everything we do and reinforcing our Academy values.
- 2.4. We are committed to providing an inclusive curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for all our learners whatever their needs or abilities. Not all learners with disabilities have special educational needs and not all learners with SEND meet the definition of disability, but this policy covers all these learners.
- 2.5. We aim to achieve this through the removal of barriers to learning and participation. We want all our learners to feel that they belong and are a valued part of our Academy community. Through appropriate curricular provision, we respect the fact that learners:
 - Have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations.
 - Require different strategies for learning.
 - Acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates.
 - Need a range of different teaching approaches and experiences.

Teachers and support staff respond to learner needs by:

- Providing support for learners who need help with communication, language and literacy.

- Planning to develop learners understanding through use of all their senses and through varied experiences.
- Planning for learners' full participation in learning, in physical and practical activities.
- Helping learners to manage their behaviour and to take part in learning effectively and safely.
- Helping learners manage their emotions and to take part in learning.

3. Legal framework

- 3.1. This policy is compliant with the following legislation and regulation:
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3
 - The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014

4. Learners with SEND

- 4.1. The Code of Practice (2014, updated May 2015) makes clear the four broad areas of Special Education Need; these are:
- Communication and interaction
 - Cognition and learning
 - Social, emotional, and mental health difficulties
 - Sensory and/or physical needs
- 4.2. In line with the Code of Practice, all schools follow the graduated approach to a learners' special educational needs. This support should take the form of "a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the learner's needs and of what supports the learner in making good progress and securing good outcomes." This is referred to as Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR):



- 4.3. Our academies gather information regularly about every learner's progress, alongside national data and expectations of progress. Academic data is updated following assessment windows and shared with learners and parents/carers. Progress is the crucial factor in determining the need for additional support. Less than expected progress might:
- be significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
 - fail to match or better the learner's previous rate of progress
 - fail to close the attainment gap between the learner and their peers
 - widen the attainment gap.
- 4.4. Learner's may also be identified via pastoral and academic meetings where attendance and behaviour data are considered. Where teachers decide that a learner is making less than expected progress despite verified high quality, differentiated teaching and use of the graduated response. Learner's should be identified in line with our academy's identification process following support from the teacher, head of year/phase lead.
- 4.5. The academy demonstrates strong leadership and responsibility for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) through a clear and strategic approach to provision. Key staff members are identified and recognised for their roles in supporting SEND, and ongoing professional development and performance reviews are used effectively to improve outcomes for pupils with SEND.
- 4.6. Where appropriate and evidence is either provided or identified, our academies will implement appropriate access arrangements for our learner's which will be used as 'normal way of working'. Any award will be made in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance for Secondary academies and the Standard & Testing Agency for Primary academies.
- 4.7. Enjoyment and innovation for learners with SEND is well evidenced through high quality teaching and intervention, which is targeted and appropriate and which enthuses and engages, resulting in consistently high expectations and aspirations of all and a belief that learning is without limits.
- 4.8. The Aspiration and development of learners with SEND is well evidenced through robust tracking and monitoring processes, which ensure levels of achievement and attainment are substantial and sustained, based on individual starting points, and where all learners are well-prepared for the next stages of their educational journey.

- 4.9. Collaboration and inclusion are well evidenced when the provision for learners with SEND is well developed and innovative, with opportunities available for personalisation and flexibility; providing a curriculum offer which is different from and/or additional to that already offered and which secures effective partnership working for all involved – including parents/carers.
- 4.10. The academy is committed to acting with honesty and with integrity in the appropriate and early identification of learners' needs; where the SEND register is an accurate and regularly updated 'live document' and where specialist support is available 'at the right time'.

5. Children with health needs who cannot attend school

- 5.1. Authentic Education aims to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, to enable them to reach their full potential.
- 5.2. Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, learners should receive their education within their academy, and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate learners back into school as soon as they are well enough.
- 5.3. We understand that we have a continuing role in a learner's education whilst they are not in school and will work with local authorities, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.
- 5.4. Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school. The Principal, SENDCo and designated safeguarding lead will be responsible for making and monitoring these arrangements.
- 5.5. A meeting will be held with parents/carers to discuss arrangements for working from home or hospital. A modified curriculum plan (MCP) will be drawn up detailing agreed actions from the discussion; the plan will be signed by the academy and parents/carers. The plan will then be carried out and reviewed regularly to deliver education to the child. The attendance team will support as agreed on the MCP. This will always be completed with the full support of medical professionals.

- 5.6. Arrangements could include sending work home, attending a hospital school or designated provision signposted by the local authority.
- 5.7. The learner will be slowly integrated back into school with either alternative arrangements to make it possible such as alternative spaces for break or lunch times or the learner may come back into school on a reduced timetable until their health needs have been met.
- 5.8. We will work in partnership with the Local Authority, health services and other organisations to maintain links to support the child to ensure they have access to the appropriate education provision.

6. Policy statement

- 6.1. Authentic Education's three core values of being Courageous, Innovative and Excellent are at the heart of all we do, and this policy strongly advocates that.
 - Partnership working across academies and utilising Trust expertise, local, and specialist agencies, as well as a meaningful child and family centred approach ('Innovative').
 - High aspirations and opportunity ('Excellent').
 - A commitment to legal compliance; and A genuine desire to support all children and young people ('Courageous' and do everything we can to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need).
- 6.2. We will ensure that:
 - All academies have regard for the voice of the child or young person with SEND as well as those of the parent/carer, and take into account their feelings, wishes and views.
 - Academies will work closely with the local authority to assist them in fulfilling the obligations under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and its associated guidance.
 - All academies have procedures and professionals in place to enable them to fulfil their statutory duties and to drive the ethos and vision that runs through the SEND Code of Practice.

6.3. Support for our Academies

- 6.3.1. The Director of School Improvement (SEND) will ensure that the strategic direction of SEND is followed across all of the academies as well as developing and sustaining effective systems and structures to maximise outcomes for learners with SEND. This will include training for all staff and direct support for SENDCo's, inclusion leads and teaching assistants
- 6.3.2. The services offered to academies may include:

- Training for senior leaders.
- Training, guidance, coaching and mentoring for SENDCo's.
- SEND reviews.
- Support in identification and intervention.
- Specialist assessment.
- Legal advice.
- Whole staff training and conferences.
- SEND audits and reviews of provision.
- Brokering of support services within regions.
- Pre-Ofsted or JCQ inspection preparation.
- Cluster meetings to inform and share best practice.
- Parent/carers consultation groups.

6.4. Education and Health

- 6.4.1. All academies must work jointly with education and health care professionals and agencies to secure the best possible outcomes for the children and young people in their setting. Academies will work with local and national providers to secure the services needed to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. These services might include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, educational psychology assessment, mental health services, and other health and social care professionals.
- 6.4.2. All academies will make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people and will make arrangements to support those with medical conditions.
- 6.4.3. Each Authentic Education Academy will cooperate with the relevant Local Authority in developing and reviewing its local offer.

6.5. What our academies will do

- 6.5.1. Academies will designate a qualified teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEND provision (the designated SENDCo) who will have completed the National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination within three years of taking up the position (Pre September 2024). From September 2024, the NPQ SEND replaces the NASENCo qualification. All new SENDCos are expected to complete the NPQ SEND within 3 years of appointment.
- 6.5.2. Academies may designate an appropriate professional to support the SENDCo (Inclusion lead) as required. Where possible, this member of staff will also complete the NPQ SEND award.
- 6.5.3. Academies will prepare a SEND Information Report in accordance with paragraphs 6.79 onwards of the DfE (Department for Education) SEND Code of Practice and publish their Information Reports on their website. This report will set

out the details regarding the implementation of the Authentic Education SEND and Learning Policy. This will be reviewed and updated every September to coincide with the start of the academic year.

- 6.5.4. Academies will ensure that all teachers accept that SEND is their responsibility and, in particular, that class and subject teachers take full responsibility for the progress of the children and young people with SEND whom they teach.
- 6.5.5. Academies will ensure that learners with SEND acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. They will have the same opportunity to partake in all areas of school life. Reasonable adjustments, where possible, must be made to ensure equal opportunity to participate.
- 6.5.6. Academies will ensure there is high ambition for learners with SEND and ensure they are not provided with a reduced curriculum. It will be broad and balanced and support progression to the next phase of education.
- 6.5.7. Academies will employ a variety of assessment and screening tools to assess a child or young person's skills and attainment to identify and build on information received from previous settings in consultation with their parents/carers. This could lead to learners being placed on 'SEND support' (see Appendix A)
- 6.5.8. As part of the screening process, academies will consider any evidence that the young person may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments for them.
- 6.5.9. In their settings, academies will ensure that children and young people with SEND engage in all activities alongside those who do not have SEND unless a particular provision or arrangement is agreed with the parents or carers, and the child or young person.
- 6.5.10. Class and subject teachers, supported by the SENDCo, Inclusion lead, pastoral, curriculum leaders and Senior Leadership Team, will make regular assessments of the progress for all learners and identify appropriate actions, particularly those making less than expected progress, given their age and prior attainment.
- 6.5.11. Academies will inform parents/carers when they are making special provision for their child and shall then work in partnership with them to establish support needed and specialist input, to secure best outcomes, taking full account of their views and wishes. For all children and young people on 'SEND Support,' academies will make arrangements for an appropriate member of staff, with input from the SENDCo and Inclusion lead as appropriate, to meet with the parents/carers at least three times a year to review progress and support. Academies will actively promote co-production with parents/carers, and learners, including those preparing for adulthood, through their review process and support.

- 6.5.12. Academies will ensure that a graduated approach using the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle (as set out in paragraphs 6.44–6.56 of the SEND Code of Practice, see Appendix A) is in place for all young people on 'SEND Support'.
- 6.5.13. After consultation with the parent/carer and the child or young person, an academy will request the local authority to undertake an Education, Health, Care needs assessment for any child or young person for whom we believe this is necessary.
- 6.5.14. Academies will do everything they can to meet the needs of young people with SEND including delivering the elements of an EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan).
- 6.5.15. Academies will work with relevant local authorities in a timely manner to undertake annual reviews of EHCPs (Education, Health, and Care Plan), so that they are conducted within the statutory timeframes and so that they take into account the views of the child or young person and those of the parent/carer.
- 6.5.16. Academies will support effective transition between Key Stages including Inclusive pathways into post-16 settings, specialist settings and AP, with appropriate SEND support and planning.

7. Training

- 7.1. Academies will ensure training is provided to all staff on identifying special educational needs. They will learn about and develop best practice in supporting learners with SEND both inside and outside of the classroom. The collaboration within and across our academies will support the sharing of best practice for SEND.
- 7.2. Authentic Education will provide training for SEND staff to ensure they are skilled in completing evidence-based interventions both in small groups and 1-2-1 where applicable. Where possible, this will also include the sharing of best practice across our academies.

8. Learners with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and learners from Minority Ethnic Groups (MEG)

- 8.1. The term EAL learner is often used interchangeably with 'bilingual learner' (DfES 2007); the government definition of a bilingual learner is that it refers to 'all learners who use or have access to more than one language at home or at school – it does not necessarily imply full fluency in both or all languages. (DfES 2003).

- 8.2. To ensure equity of learning for our EAL and MEG learners, it is important that recognition and respect is given to the value and significance of the first language and the associated cultural expectations and norms. "EAL learners, their families / carers and communities are not homogenous groups; it is important to know and understand who they are, in order to effectively support their needs."
- 8.3. English as an Additional Language (EAL) is not considered a Special Education Need. Differentiated work and individual learning opportunities must be provided for children who are learning English as an Additional Language as part of our provision for vulnerable learners; this may be underpinned by the approaches highlighted for the disadvantaged and more-able, where appropriate.
- 8.4. The Office of National Statistics (2003) states that 'in British government research, minority ethnic groups are differentiated based on a combination of categories including 'race', skin colour, national and regional origins and language...this is based on the assumption of an 'ethnic majority' that is white, of British origin, and English-speaking'.
- 8.5. Responsibility and leadership, which enhances provision for EAL and MEG learners is evidenced when there is a clear strategic approach, with key personnel identified and recognised, and where CPD and performance management are successful in improving outcomes for EAL and MEG learners.
- 8.6. Enjoyment and innovation for EAL and MEG learners is well evidenced through high quality teaching and intervention, which is targeted and appropriate and which enthuses and engages, and actively promotes a safe environment where risk taking is encouraged to enhance independence.
- 8.7. The Aspiration and development of EAL and MEG learners is well evidenced through robust tracking and monitoring processes, which ensure levels of achievement and attainment are substantial and sustained, based on individual starting points, and where all learners and all languages are equally valued and respected.
- 8.8. Collaboration and inclusion are well evidenced when the provision for EAL and MEG learners is well developed and innovative, with opportunities available for personalisation and flexibility; providing a curriculum offer which capitalises on opportunities for active and practical learning experiences and which secures effective partnership working for all involved. This actively includes parents/carers so that they feel confident that their home and community language, and the narratives and culture in which their language is embedded, is respected by the school. Academies will consider the intersection of SEND with other characteristics (e.g., EAL, disadvantage, trauma) when planning support and will use culturally responsive pedagogy and inclusive resources.

- 8.9. Honesty and integrity are well evidenced in the appropriate and accurate identification of needs specific to EAL and MEG learners, where an ethos of Respect for All is promoted and a where all languages are equally valued and central to the development of identity and belonging in contemporary British society.

9. Responsibilities

- 9.1. The following responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:
- Principals are responsible for ensuring an appropriately qualified member of staff is the designated SENDCo within their academy.
 - Principals are responsible for enabling the SENDCo to work strategically within their academy to ensure the best possible education for learners with SEND.
 - SENDCo's are responsible for ensuring the education within the academy is compliant with the Authentic Education SEND and Learning Policy, as well as supporting parents/carers and learners in meeting their responsibilities.
 - Teachers are responsible for working in line with the DfE Teachers' Standards and providing appropriate education for all the learners within their class(es) as outlined in Section 6 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015. Curriculum and senior leaders will quality assure this to ensure implementation in the classroom.
 - Trustees and Authentic Education central team have overall responsibility for the implementation and approval of this policy.
- 9.2. All academies are committed to providing:
- High Quality Teaching (HQT) which meets the needs of all learners, and which is appropriately adapted.
 - Effective systems for tracking and monitoring progress, so that early intervention can address gaps in learning; this includes, but is not exclusive to, monitoring and evaluation through learning walks and work scrutiny, across all learner groups.
 - Opportunities to extend and challenge all learners, so that they can achieve their potential.
 - Effective lines of communication between home and school, so that through collaboration, a shared understanding of 'what success looks like' is achieved for each learner and their family
- 9.3. *It is best practice, but not a requirement,* for all schools to also have the following:
- SEND Action Plan for Improvement.
 - A coordinated provision map, which identifies additional support / strategies by learners, and which can be filtered according to learner characteristics.
 - Links to disadvantaged, SEND and more-able learners in the whole-school Improvement Plan.

10. Monitoring and compliance

- 10.1. Principals will monitor compliance with this policy within their academies. Through the agreed assurance activities, Director of School Improvement (SEND) will scrutinise the impact of this policy in supporting SEND learners and in meeting the SEND Code of Practice.

11. Related documents

- 11.1. This policy is compliant with the following documents:
- Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Academy SEND Information Report
 - Academy Equality Objectives (Academy specific)
 - Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
 - Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy

Appendix A: SEND approaches

The Graduated Approach

Academies will adopt a 'Waves model' to outline, audit and develop support and provision available within their setting. This is known as the Graduated Approach or Response.

Wave 1: Teaching learners with differing needs requires a whole academy approach and teachers will plan, teach, assess, and evaluate in ways that will meet the range of abilities, aptitudes, and interests of the learners. A whole academy sanctions and rewards system that provides structure, boundaries and opportunities for success is an example of a whole academy provision that is carefully designed to support the range of learners within an academy. Wave 1 provision may also be in the form of training such as sessions on supporting children and young people with a diagnosis of ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder.)

Wave 2: Targeted support within class from a learning support assistant, slightly adapted timetables (for example being allowed to leave a lesson 5 minutes early in order to have more time to get changed) or small group teaching and intervention are examples of Wave 2 provision. A learner on 'SEND support' whose needs have been identified will often have a learner profile sheet or support plan document that outlines some of the Wave 2 provision that is in place to enable them to access learning and achieve success.

Wave 3: Despite receiving Wave 2 support and provision, a learner might still struggle to make progress and access learning. Specialist support, guidance, training and one to one provision may then be applied for or put in place. This is known as Wave 3 provision.

SEND Support and Assess Plan Do Review

The Code of Practice 2015 outlines the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle. The SENDCO and other appropriate teachers within the academy will use a range of assessment tools, which can include summative assessments (conventional tests), screenings such as a dyslexia portfolio screening, learner and parent/carers voice, observations, external reports and Learning Support Assistant input, to decide on the level of support a child or young person might need **['Assess']**.

Appropriate provision is then planned (for example a phonics intervention, adapted resources or additional 1:1 support at key transition points of the day) **['Plan']**.

This support plan is then delivered over a set period of time **['Do']**, with a review date at the end of a delivery cycle (for example after an 8-week period) **['Review']**.

At the Review meeting, there will be reassessment information to inform those supporting the child or young person regarding whether the support plan is effective. Provision will either be continued, changed, or increased (see the Waves model) depending on progress made. Additional assessment may also be sought such as input from a specialist assessor or a specialist advisory team.

If a learner is unable to make progress or access learning, despite being supported via SEND Support, then it might be appropriate for a request for an EHC needs assessment (EHCNA) to be submitted to the local authority.