

The Altus School SEND Information Report

2025-26



About this report

The Children and Families Act 2014 says that all schools and academies must publish a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report every year. This report explains how the Altus School meets the needs of children with SEND. It will be published on the school's website. In this report, we explain how we meet our duties towards students with special educational needs and disabilities. This report should be read alongside the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.

What is included in this report?

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1. About the Altus School – What children do we provide for?

The Altus School is an alternative provision school providing an education for pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream settings from Year 1 to Y11. These referrals come directly from the Local Authority and the school is commissioned for 280 places.

There are also occasions when we make education provision for some pupils where their mainstream school agrees with parents/carers that a short-term alternative placement might be appropriate (in the form of an offsite direction). These referrals are considered on a case-by-case basis, including the school's capacity to provide support at the time the referral is made.

A large number of pupils that are on the school roll have Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs. However, we are also aware of the range of needs that students may have which will require additional and/or different support. This includes:

- Communication and interaction - this includes Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, speech and language difficulties
- Cognition and learning - this includes dyslexia, dyspraxia,
- Sensory and/or physical needs - this includes visual impairments, hearing impairments, processing difficulties, epilepsy

The school is made up of eight centres and a primary satellite base (detailed below) and students are placed based on their age, location, need, type of provision and capacity within each centre.

- Rutherford House (Gloucester) – Primary
- Satellite base (Andoversford) - Primary
- Russet House (Gloucester) – KS3
- Ryeleaze (Stroud) – KS3
- Belle Vue (Stroud) – The Hub – KS3 & KS4
- Eastbrook Road (Gloucester) – KS4
- Horton Centre (Gloucester) – KS4
- St George's (Cheltenham) – KS4

2. How does The Altus School identify young people with SEND?

When students are referred to us, we rely on information provided by the mainstream school who have either permanently excluded the young person, or who are making the referral for additional support.

In the initial induction meeting with the student and parents/carers, the students' needs will be discussed and actions to support those needs agreed. When a child joins with an EHCP, the Altus School will be part of a multi-professional meeting (that may be an emergency annual review) to agree a shared plan for the students' next steps. When students start with us, we undertake baseline assessments that may support the understanding of a students' previously unidentified SEND. During their time with us, subject teachers will make regular assessments identify those whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline,
- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress,
- Fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers.

In addition, students' SEMH progress and needs are discussed regularly in team meetings and in meetings with parents/carers. Regular Student Action Meetings (SAMs) take place involving:

- Deputy Director
- The Centre Manager
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- SENCO

These meetings review any students' behaviour, attendance, SEND and safeguarding concerns and allow for any possible SEND to be quickly identified.

3. How does The Altus School teach and support young people with SEND (including social and emotional development?)

Our first step in supporting students with SEND is through 'Quality First Teaching' which ensures that teachers use a range of strategies and resources within their classroom to adapt and differentiate to meet student needs. Within our setting, ordinarily available support includes:

- Small classes with high staff to student ratios
- An adapted curriculum which focuses on English and Maths, and a wide range of opportunities to support students SEMH needs, including outdoor learning and offsite activities (e.g., Forest School), explicit teaching of a social/emotional curriculum in our primary setting
- Zones of Regulation
- Trauma informed/relational approaches to supporting children.

In addition, a number of students may access additional support, including:

- Counselling support in school

- Targeted work with a Thrive Practitioner
- Academic interventions
- Mentoring (provided by an external company) for an agreed fixed period
- An Individual Health and Care Plan, compiled in partnership with the school nurse and parents and if appropriate, the pupil themselves, when a young person has significant additional medical needs.

All students have key adults who they spend time with on a daily basis; as groupings are small, they are well placed to build strong and trusting relationships. Support is available from family support workers and other support staff in school so that all students have someone they can talk to about any safeguarding or bullying issues for example.

4. How do we assess and review students' progress towards outcomes?

Student progress is assessed and reviewed in a number of ways:

- Student Action Meetings (SAMs)
- Meetings with the student and parents/carers which looks at behaviour, academic progress and attendance
- Annual reviews of a child's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Regular review of a My Plan/ My Plan+
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children in Care

Additionally, there may be some students who have a number of different agencies working with them. Where this is the case, progress may be reviewed by this multi-professional group alongside parents/carers and the young person.

5. How do we make adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment, including ensuring engagement in wider opportunities?

When a pupil has been identified as having special educational needs, the curriculum and the learning environment will be adapted by the class teacher to reduce barriers to learning and enable them to access the curriculum more easily. These adaptations may include strategies suggested by the SEND team and/or external specialists. In addition, if it is considered appropriate, pupils may be provided with specialised equipment or resources such as ICT and/or additional adult help.

We recognise that some students need an even more bespoke curriculum than our ordinarily available offer. This could mean students access:

- Mentoring (offsite) for a fixed period of time
- Additional off-site learning activities e.g. Music Works
- Work experience (at KS4)
- Online learning

As all students require additional support (due to the nature of their referral), regardless of their SEND, activities are designed to include all learners, and all school trips and activities are available to all pupils with any extra SEND provision being made where needed. This is often supported through an individual or activity-based risk assessment.

6. How do we support children and young people in moving between phases of education and in preparing for adulthood?

Children returning to mainstream without an EHCP will go through a process called the Fair Access Protocol (FAP). During this process, information is shared with the new school and parents/carers, as well as the student, are invited to meetings supported by either school staff or staff from the Local Authority overseeing the FAP process. This ensures that all information is shared in a timely manner and that the new school understands the needs and support required to allow the young person to be successful in their new setting.

When a child has an EHCP, a new school place is sought by the LA SEND team; there is a similar process followed by both mainstream and specialist schools to ensure that the needs and support are fully understood.

The Altus School recognises the importance of high-quality careers advice and guidance particularly at KS4 for students finishing their formal education, to ensure a successful post 16 transition. Students are provided with information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways. Our PSHE programme addresses a wide range of topics that supports young people moving into adulthood.

7. How do we work with other agencies?

We work in collaboration with a range of external agencies to support our young people. Other agencies working with many of our young people with SEND include:

- EHCP Team
- Virtual School (if a child is in care and requires a PEP)
- Social Care (if a child has a Child in need or Child Protection Plan)
- Youth Support Team (if a child has been referred on a statutory order due to offending behaviour)
- Co-ordinated Support Team (CST) – the local authority Alternative Provision Specialist Task Force

Where other services are statutorily involved with a child and their family, we will work to develop and implement shared plans.

We may also make referrals to other agencies where there is a need that cannot be met through education or school staff alone. Any referral will be discussed and agreed through engagement with parents/carers and the students themselves via RESET meetings, EHCP Annual Reviews and direct contact with home when concerns arise. Referrals may include:

- Voluntary or third sector organisations such as Winston's Wish for bereavement support
- Educational Psychology
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- School Nursing Team
- Advisory Teacher Service
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech and Language Services
- Social care (these referrals may sometimes be made without parental consent if we deem the threshold for significant harm to have been met)

8. Expertise and training of staff

All of our teaching and student support staff are skilled in working with young people who display a variety of Special Educational Needs, in particular SEMH needs. We have staff who have specific training and expertise in:

- Team Teach
- Thrive
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Counselling
- Emotional Literacy
- Emotion Coaching
- Speech and Language
- Outdoor education (including Forest School, bushcraft, mountain biking)

We also have teachers who access subject networks in English and Maths, as well as teachers who access training from specific exam boards to ensure high quality first teaching within subject teams.

9. Who do I contact about my child's special educational needs?

If you have any questions or want to talk about your child's special educational needs, you can contact SEND@altusschool.org.uk

SENCO (Primary & KS3) – Rachel Godwin
SENCO (KS4 & Transition) – Sarah Cole

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Where can I go for further information or if I have any concerns?

If you wish to discuss your child's special educational needs or are unhappy about any issues regarding the school's response to meeting these needs, please contact the following:

- Your child's key adult or Centre Manager
- The appropriate SENCO

Further information about the Local Offer can be found at: [Glosfamilies Directory | Support for Families with SEND - Gloucestershire's Local Offer for Parent & Carers](#)

SENDIASS Gloucestershire provides information, advice and support on matters relating to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The service is offered to parents and carers of children and young people aged between 0 and 25 years old. More advice can be found at <http://sendiassglos.org.uk/>

Parents/Carers may also find the Gloucestershire Parent Carers Forum a supportive network. Information can be found at: [Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum](#)

If you wish to make a complaint about the school's SEND provision, details of the school's complaints policy can be found on the website [The Altus School - Policies and Procedures](#). In the first instance, you should contact the Director of Alternative Provision, Emma Gundry or Lyn Dance, is the chair of the Altus School Management Committee.