SEND Policy

Effective Date: September 2026

Review Date: April 2027

Purpose

This policy sets out Life Journey Academy's commitment to supporting children, young people, and adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It describes how we identify and respond to individual needs, how we work alongside families and professionals, and how we ensure that every person we support receives appropriate, respectful, and effective provision.

Scope

This policy applies to all children, young people, and adults accessing Life Journey Academy's services, including those referred by schools, local authorities, families, or other professionals. It applies to all staff, contractors, and volunteers involved in delivery.

Our Approach

Life Journey Academy is a non-school alternative provision. We do not diagnose, assess, or replace clinical or statutory services. Our work is informed by referral information, existing plans, and direct engagement with the young person, their family, and the professionals around them.

Support is shaped around each individual's strengths, goals, and needs. We do not require a formal diagnosis or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for a young person to access our services. Where a formal plan exists, our provision aligns with its objectives.

We take a trauma-informed, neurodivergent-affirming approach across all our work. This means we recognise that behaviour is communication, that each young person's

experience is unique, and that building a trusted relationship is the foundation of effective support.

Identifying and Responding to SEND

At the point of referral, Life Journey Academy gathers information about the young person's needs, existing support, and goals. This may include:

- Referral information from schools, local authorities, or families
- Existing plans such as EHCPs, SEN Support plans, or Early Help plans
- Direct conversation with the young person and their family
- Input from other professionals involved in the young person's support

This information is used to plan provision that is appropriate and proportionate. We do not carry out statutory or clinical assessments. Where concerns emerge during delivery that suggest previously unidentified needs, we discuss these with the family and referring professional and signpost to appropriate services where relevant.

SEND and Safeguarding

Life Journey Academy recognises that children and young people with SEND may experience additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and may face barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff must not assume that changes in behaviour, communication, presentation, emotional regulation or attendance are solely related to a child's disability, neurodivergence, SEMH needs or known diagnosis. Such changes may indicate a safeguarding concern and must be considered in the context of the individual child.

Communication needs and reasonable adjustments are taken into account when listening to children and young people, responding to disclosures and providing safeguarding support.

Any safeguarding concern is reported to the DSL without delay and managed in accordance with LJA's Safeguarding Policy.

Planning and Delivery

Provision is planned collaboratively with the young person, their family, and the referrer. Where an EHCP is in place, mentoring aligns with its outcomes. Where no formal plan exists, goals are agreed directly and reviewed regularly.

Session delivery is flexible, strengths-based, and built around what works for each individual. Approaches used include trauma-informed practice, the PACE model (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy), Zones of Regulation, explicit instruction, and Positive Behaviour Support where appropriate.

ASDAN accredited programmes are available for learners aged 13 and above. These are planned and delivered in line with ASDAN centre requirements and are mapped to individual goals and, where applicable, EHCP outcomes.

Working with Families and Professionals

Life Journey Academy works alongside schools, local authorities, families, and other professionals. We do not replace existing provision. We contribute specialist mentoring and outreach expertise as part of the wider support around the young person.

We share written session reports with commissioners and families as agreed at the start of a placement. We attend multi-agency meetings where appropriate and contribute to review processes.

Parents and carers are kept informed and involved throughout. We welcome their knowledge of their child and incorporate it into planning and delivery.

Roles and Responsibilities

Lee Johnson, Lead Mentor, holds responsibility for the quality of SEND-informed delivery across all placements. He holds a Level 3 Certificate in Understanding Autism, a Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training, and Level 2 Mental Health First Aid, alongside experience working with young people with a wide range of SEND and SEMH needs.

Natalia Krasnianska, Operations Director, holds responsibility for ensuring this policy is maintained, reviewed, and accessible. She holds a Level 2 Certificate in Children and Young People's Mental Health.

All staff and contractors working with young people are required to have demonstrated experience of working with children or young people with SEND or SEMH needs, verified before independent delivery.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information about a young person's SEND needs is handled in accordance with LJA's Privacy and Data Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy. Information is shared lawfully and proportionately with those who need it to support the young person or safeguard their welfare. Data protection requirements do not prevent LJA from sharing information where this is necessary and lawful to protect a child or young person.

Accessibility

Life Journey Academy delivers support through outreach, coming to the young person rather than requiring them to come to us. Sessions take place in schools and in appropriate settings based on the individual's goals. This may include educational, recreational, or practical environments where mentoring can take place safely and purposefully. Adult mentoring may also be delivered online.

Accessibility needs are discussed in advance to ensure suitable arrangements. We work with the referrer and/or the individual to agree on a suitable setting and approach.

Complaints

Any concerns about how SEND needs have been identified or responded to should be raised in the first instance at contact@ljacademy.co.uk. Formal complaints are handled in line with our Complaints Policy, published at ljacademy.co.uk/resources-and-blog/policies.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or following any significant change in legislation, guidance, or organisational practice. The next review is due April 2027.