

## **Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy**

### **The Abbey School, Reading**

Reviewed by:	Senior and Junior School SENDCo	Date January 2024
Ratified by:	Whole School Leadership Committee and Governor Audit	Date January 2024
Next review: February 2025		

## 1 Aims

- 1.1 The aims of this policy are to promote good practice in our identification and management of special educational needs and to explain the support we can provide for students and the co-operation we require from parents.
- 1.2 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats, if required.

## 2 SEND

- 2.1 A student has a special educational need and/or disability if they have an additional need which means that they need special educational provision to be made for them, for example:
  - the student has a significantly greater difficulty in accessing learning than the majority of others of the same age, nationally; or
  - has a disability which means that the student would have difficulty accessing educational facilities provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions;
  - is under five and falls within the definitions above or is likely to do so do when of compulsory school age if special educational provision was not made for the child.
- 2.2 A student must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the *language in which they are or will be taught is different from a language which they speak or is spoken at home*. However, students for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support where we observe that their learning is being impacted, provided that they meet the School's academic criteria. Please refer to the School's policy for students with English as an additional language.
- 2.3 A student who finds a particular subject difficult does not necessarily have an "additional need " in the legal sense of that expression; there will often be disparities in the speed with which children learn, in their skill at solving problems and in their general acumen.
- 2.4 The expression "additional need" covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as: dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, autistic spectrum condition and learning needs which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties.
- 2.5 In accordance with the 2010 Disability Act, a "disability" is a physical, sensory, medical or mental impairment which has a "substantial" and "long-term" negative effect on the ability to perform normal activities.
- 2.6 Students with additional needs may be of a high or low academic ability. Sometimes an additional need becomes apparent for the first time at the age of 11 or older, when educational pressures tend to increase.

## 3 Policy Statement

- 3.1 **The School:** The Abbey is a mainstream independent school with high academic standards which accepts girls from the age of three years. We use a range of appropriate tools in order to identify need. These include:

- Evidence obtained by teacher observation/formative assessment;
- Summative assessment data (to include Entrance Examination results in our Senior School, internal and external exam results)
- Information from parents, including external professional reports;
- Records from feeder schools;
- Screening /diagnostic tests;

We believe support of learning should be fluid, timely and open to all, in order to maximise progression for our students. We aspire to enable this through regular, open communication between classroom teachers and the SENDCo, together with feedback from parents and students. We aim for support of students' learning to occur, as much as possible, within the classroom.

To implement the 'graduated approach' to students identified as having additional needs as set out in the Code of Practice 2021.

In identifying a student as needing SEND support the teacher, working with the SENDCo, will carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs. This should draw on teacher assessment and experience of the student, their previous progress and attainment.. This assessment will be reviewed regularly. Where necessary the School may support parents in contacting outside agencies for further assessment.

- 3.2 **Provision:** In our Junior School, all teachers and teaching assistants who work with the student will be made aware of their needs, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. Support is timetabled accordingly. We aim for support of students' learning to occur, as much as possible, within the classroom. The impact and quality of the support will be evaluated regularly, through meetings with teachers and termly assessments.

In our Senior School, the provision which we can make for students who have an additional need includes: pastoral support, support of learning and referral to our Access Arrangements assessor or where appropriate advice on contacting an outside agency for a formal assessment.

- 3.3 **Consultation:** We will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents about their child's additional needs and to ensure that teachers are given any necessary information about a student's learning needs and that teaching practices are appropriate.

## 4 Implementation and Procedures

- 4.1 **Test:** Where appropriate we offer a range of tests, the purpose of which is to detect circumstances which may need further investigation or a formal assessment.
- 4.2 **Outcome of tests:** If the outcome of a test or any other circumstances gives us reason to think that the student may have an additional need, we will report and consult with parents as necessary and make recommendations.
- 4.3 **Formal assessment:** If the test results indicate that the student may have an additional need which ought to be assessed without delay, we may ask parents to agree to their child being formally assessed. Parents may consult an external assessor suggested by the School, or one of their own choosing. However, any external assessor should incorporate school-based evidence as part of their assessment, particularly if there is a need to justify Access Arrangements for external examinations in our Senior School, The Joint Council of Qualifications states that, "*a privately commissioned assessment carried out without*

*prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to process an application". The cost in either case must be borne by the parents.*

- 4.4 **Learning support:** Where appropriate, we offer Learning Support sessions to individuals or groups. It may be suitable for a student to be withdrawn from a curriculum subject and have learning support during the released time. This support is targeted to the individual's or group's needs. In our Junior School, a small learning support group may concentrate on developing skills such as phonics, spelling, mathematics and handwriting for a short, fixed period of time, though our first intervention tends to be within the classroom.
- 4.5 **Code of Practice:** Our approach to the detection and management of additional needs will be guided by the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years* (Department for Education (DfE), 2021)
- 4.6 **Education Health and Care plans (EHCP):** Parents and the School have the right under section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ask the local authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHCP. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right. If the local authority refuses to make an assessment, the parents (but not the School) have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).
- 4.7 Where a prospective student has an EHCP, we will consult with the parents and, where appropriate, the local authority to ensure that the provision specified in the EHCP can be delivered by the School. We will co-operate with the local authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.
- 4.8 Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHCP will need to be charged to the local authority if the authority is responsible for the fees and our school is named in Section I of the EHCP. In all other circumstances, charges will be made directly to parents unless the additional services can be considered to be a "reasonable adjustment" where no charge will be made, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.9 **Welfare needs:** The School recognises that students with special educational needs or disabilities may be at risk of being bullied. The school has an anti-bullying policy which makes it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously. If parents are concerned about their child's welfare they can approach the student's form teacher or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.
- 4.10 Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of students with SEND creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of students. The School is mindful in particular that:
- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the student's SEND without further exploration;
  - students with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
  - there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required.
  - any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- 4.11 **Disability:** The School recognises that some students may have a disability. The school will make all

reasonable adjustments in order to afford opportunity to disabled students. However, if, despite such adjustments, the School is unable to provide adequately for the student's needs, the School may decline to offer a place to a student or request you withdraw your child from the School (see 5.1 below).

4.12 **Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo):** The Junior School and Senior School SENDCos have responsibility for:

- ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of a student's additional needs;
- advising and supporting other staff in the School;
- ensuring that appropriate Pupil Passports are in place;
- ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with additional needs is collected, recorded and updated;
- undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice on SEND.

4.13 **Responsibility:** Parents bear the overall responsibility for taking decisions about the management of their child's additional needs. A parent who chooses to have a formal assessment should make arrangements, accordingly, with the School or outside but must ensure that we are given copies of all advice and reports received.

4.14 **External teaching:** Parents may opt for additional specialist teaching outside the School, provided that the Head is satisfied with your child's safety and travel arrangements and also that the additional specialist teaching is at times which fit in with the remainder of the curriculum, timetable and community life of the School.

4.15 **Information:** As some additional needs are inherited it may be beneficial to the student for the School to know at the outset if (either parent) or other children or close relations have additional needs. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. Parents must also provide us with a copy of any report or recommendations which have been made in relation to additional needs at the student's previous school or elsewhere.

4.16 **Concerns:** We need to know immediately if the student's progress or behaviour causes parents any concern so that we can devise and agree a strategy with the parents and implement it.

4.17 **Examinations:** Students who have been diagnosed as having additional needs may be eligible to apply for Access Arrangements in our Senior School. The School offers an assessment service in Upper IV and we ask parents to liaise with the Senior School SENDCo about arrangements. No such extra time is offered in our Junior School, although recommended strategies may well be adopted during summative assessments.

## 5 **Alternative arrangements**

5.1 **Withdrawal:** We reserve the right, following consultation with the parents, to ask or require parents to withdraw their child from the School if, in our opinion after **making all reasonable adjustments and exhausting appropriate strategies:**

- their child is in need of a formal assessment, additional specialist teaching, learning support or medication to which the parents do not consent; and / or
- the parents have withheld information from the School which, had the information been provided, would have made a significant difference to the School's management of their child's additional needs; and / or

- their child's needs require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Head, the School is unable to provide, manage or arrange;
- their child has additional needs that make it unlikely they will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities which we provide.

- 5.2 **Alternative placement:** In any of these circumstances we will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary level of teaching and support.
- 5.3 **Financial:** Withdrawal of a student in these circumstances will not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. The deposit paid in respect of the student will be credited to the parents' account.