



## **Academic Support and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy**

### **Aim**

To ensure all pupils attending St. Edmund's School have access to the curriculum via *reasonable adjustments* (Equality Act 2010) to enable them to achieve their potential. *Reasonable adjustments* can be made by differentiating the curriculum; accessibility for disabled students, under the St. Edmund's School Accessibility Plan, or both.

We seek to identify pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities as early as possible in order to provide appropriate academic support.

In drawing up this policy, the School has had regard to the following guidance and advice (in so far as they apply to the School):

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (April 2017)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Admissions Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Accessibility Plan.

### **Definition of SEND**

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 or young adult of school age is considered to have SEND if s/he has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has 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.

### **The SEND Code of Practice – 1st September 2014**

The SEND Code of Practice, which has been enacted under the Children and Families Act 2014, provides a revised guidance and sets out new practice for dealing with those children and young people with SEND.

The new code implements many changes including:

- Protection for children and young adults from the age of 0-25 years;
- A pupil and family centred approach;
- Educational Health and Care Plans or EHCPs;
- A multi-agency approach to make sure children have the best chance of achieving their potential. They term this 'a life course approach';
- Introduction of personalised budgets so that families and young people can have a say as to how to spend their resources on the services they feel are the most appropriate;
- It reinforces the policy that all teachers are responsible for delivering a differentiated curriculum in order for their pupils to access the curriculum.

## **Governor and Staff Responsibilities**

The governing body is responsible for determining school policy and provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

The Head is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the School's SEN provision and keeping the governing body fully informed of the implementation of the School's policy in practice.

The Head of Academic Support is Mrs Anne-Marie Burke, who is a member of the leadership team. Her responsibilities include:

- determining the strategic development of the SEN and disability policy and provision in the School, together with the Head and governing body
- having overall day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEN and disability policy
- coordinating specific provision for children with SEN and disabilities, including those who have EHC plans
- ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the School's approach to identifying and meeting SEN
- ensuring that teachers are given any necessary information relating to a child's learning support needs and/or disabilities (if known) so that teaching practices are appropriate
- ensuring parental insights are considered by the School to support their child's SEN and disability
- liaising with the School's medical staff, external professionals and agencies, as appropriate
- ensuring that the School keeps records of all pupils with SEN up to date.

All teachers are responsible for helping to meet a pupil's needs (irrespective of any specialist qualifications or expertise). All staff are expected to understand this policy so that the School can identify, assess and make provision to meet those needs.

## **The Academic Support Department's Objectives**

1. To identify, at the earliest opportunity, any child who may have special educational needs. To support our pupils with specific learning difficulties and to instil in them the confidence to become independent learners; working to build on their strengths whilst supporting their weaknesses.
2. To provide a safe learning environment for pupils to achieve their potential. Every pupil is different and it is our job to assess their learning style, to provide help and strategies for them to achieve in school.
3. To support a wide range of specific learning difficulties, in particular students with mild degrees of: dyslexia, dyscalculia, Developmental Co-ordination Disorders (DCD), Speech and Language difficulties (SALT) and Attention Deficit and Hyperactive Disorder (ADD and ADHD).
4. To ensure that pupils receive the appropriate support; to ensure all staff are made aware of the pupils receiving support; to review pupil's progress with regard to their difficulty and their ability to cope in the mainstream classroom; to help each student achieve the GCSEs grades they are capable of.
5. To maintain books and resources appropriate for use with children who have learning difficulties.

## **The Department**

The Academic Support Department consists of a full time Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, a member of support staff and 5 peripatetic learning support teachers who support pupils with literacy and maths difficulties. We also have 3 ELSA trained teaching assistants. Our teachers are fully qualified to deal with a wide range of specific learning difficulties. Our learning support teachers help pupils on an individual basis, shared, in small group work and in class support, depending on the level of need. Staff development through in service training and courses is encouraged.

The Department has a wide range of teaching, learning and assessment materials. There are dedicated academic support rooms, equipped with computers.

## **How Pupils come to the Department**

Pupils come to the department via a variety of routes:

1. Pupils arrive at the School with reports from educational psychologists, occupational therapists and/or speech and language therapists.
2. With older pupils, Form 3 upwards, their initial testing for entrance to the School flagged up some difficulties.
3. Pupils are flagged up by teachers who email or talk to the Academic Support department. Pupils in EYFS are discussed with the Head of EYFS and in turn she will contact the Academic Support as necessary.
4. Pupils are brought to the Department's attention via the whole year screening using InCAS in Forms 1-6, CAT4 in Form 7 and 9.

Sometimes tests need further investigation by other professionals and in this instance a referral to an educational psychologist, occupational therapist, or speech and language therapist may be recommended.

If there are concerns raised about a pupil, the SENCO will organise a meeting with the parents to discuss a way forward and plan for intervention.

### **Academic Support Provision**

Academic support aims to help those pupils who need specific intervention, due to their specific learning difficulty (SPLD), or for those pupils who may need a short boost in certain skill areas to increase their confidence.

Staff are given a brief summary of the needs of all pupils who attend the Department, outlining their specific needs, strengths and weaknesses and what *reasonable adjustments* are necessary for them in the classroom and for examinations to access the curriculum. The summary also includes recommendations for staff that might be relevant in the classroom.

Once a pupil's need is identified and if the pupil has one to one lessons, the Academic Support Teacher will provide a plan of targeted intervention to support their pupil's particular needs; this is an ISP. This plan will be reviewed twice a year. The ISP plans will be available to teachers.

A multi-sensory approach to learning is taken with our pupils. We tailor our teaching programmes to suit a pupil's individual needs using a wide variety of apparatus to support our teaching such as individualised worksheets, writing frames for essays and descriptive work, spelling cards, mini whiteboards, counting blocks/rods and computer programmes such as Nessy for reading and spelling, Doodle maths and mind mapping to help plan and organise work. Touch typing sessions are run for those pupils who have been identified as needing to work on a laptop. We also use a variety of educational apps that have become available to make the work more interactive. At senior level remediation involves learning study skill techniques to help cope with weaknesses in working memory, speed of processing and organisational difficulties. Working in a multi-sensory way helps to reinforce learning. Lessons are usually for half an hour but some can be for an hour. They may be on an individual, shared or group basis. Pupils are taken out of lessons but not from core lessons and they are not taken out of lessons that they have a particular strength or interest in.

## **Pupils with Education Health Care Plans**

Pupils who have an EHCP will have their annual review with the relevant staff and case worker from the county who has written the EHCP.

## **Access Arrangements for School exams and Public Examinations**

Pupils who have SEND may be entitled to additional time and other *reasonable adjustments*, such as a reader, scribe or prompt, in public examinations. In order for this to occur the pupil will have to be assessed in line with the current JCQ regulations regarding assessment. Parents/guardians may wish to have their child assessed externally by an educational psychologist (E.P) but the final decision as to whether a pupil will receive additional time or other arrangement will be made by the specialist assessor at St Edmund's School in view of the pupil's past need and other assessment results including the E.P's. Under the JCQ regulations, an externally written report is no guarantee of access arrangements in external exams.

Internal examinations – Pupils who have a history of need and scores to support their need in line with the JCQ regulations will receive additional time and other adjustments in the School examinations.

## **The Use of Laptops and Other Computer Aided Technology**

The Department allows pupils to use laptops if their typing speed is proficient enough for them to keep up in class for note taking etc. There must be an appropriate need for the use of a word processor, use of word processing is not granted to a pupil simply because they prefer to type rather than write. Preps can be word processed. Laptops are provided by parents/guardians. The Department can lend a device to a pupil for a trial period to see if this will be a more viable way of working for the pupil.

The use of voice activated software can be made available for those whose typing is not proficient due to their SPLD.

Laptops will be removed if pupils abuse the privilege by playing games etc. during lessons or when told to put them away.

The School provides all technology required for external exams.

## **Record Keeping**

The Department has a locked filing cabinet where all the confidential files are kept. Each child who receives Academic Support has a confidential, individual file. This is where all copies of reports are kept. Any evidence and documentation required by the JCQ for Access Arrangements are kept locked in the Exams Office.

In order to keep track of the students in the Department we keep the SEND Support information, which is available to staff on the School's intranet. This outlines the pupil's specific learning difficulty and advice of how to help the pupil in the classroom.

## **Further aspects relating to SEND provision**

### Admissions

The School welcomes all children who can make the most of the opportunities offered and can flourish in its caring environment. The School's Admissions Policy aims to eliminate from the admissions process, as far as possible, any substantial disadvantages which may be encountered by applicants with disabilities.

The School will treat every application from an SEN and disabled pupil in a fair, open-minded way. However, the School will assess all pupils for admission on the basis of its standard selection criteria from time to time.

The School endeavours to ensure that it is able to fully support the needs of all prospective pupils. Parents of children with disabilities, SEN or learning difficulties are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the School before the School considers the application for a place and before they sit the School's entrance assessment so that adequate provision can be made for them on the day. Parents are asked to provide a copy of a medical report or educational psychologist's report to support a request, for example, for large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other special arrangements. Before an offer of a place is made, the School will assess whether it is able to adequately cater for and meet any SEN and disabilities (if known) through discussion and meetings with parents, consideration of any professional reports and references from previous schools, assessment of the pupil at a taster day, as appropriate.

An offer of a place may not be made if the School determines, following consultation with parents, that they are unable to meet and provide for a child's needs. The School will always consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The School's Admissions Policy can be found on the School Website and the Parent Portal. It applies equally to all prospective pupils and details how the School supports those applicants with SEN and / or a disability.

## Withdrawal

Where, after all reasonable adjustments have been made or considered, the School feels that it is unable to accommodate a disabled pupil or meet their needs, the School may require parents, after appropriate consultation, to withdraw their child. Fees in lieu of notice will not be chargeable in these circumstances and the acceptance deposit returned.

## Access to School Building

Door access to all building is wide enough for an adult wheelchair. The school swimming pool is accessible to physically impaired children and appropriate staffing is arranged. Alterations have been made to the crossing at the entrance to the Puntabout. Recreational activities are plentiful, enabling social interaction, with stimulating activities.

## School Trips

Integration is regarded as being of paramount importance. Participation in educational visits and outings is enabled, sometimes through extending an opportunity for an adult family member to accompany the group.

## Forward Planning

Teachers and teaching assistants will have the necessary training to teach and support pupils who are disabled as the need arises.

Portable ramps have been sourced for use to improve access to the Puntablock and Auden centre. Future changes to the school environment will take into account the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties.

A designated parking space will be allocated as required.

Appropriate members of staff will receive lifting and handling training, and training with wheelchairs as required.

## Three-year Accessibility Plan

A copy of the School's Accessibility Plan can be provided upon request by writing to the Bursar. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

AMB – October 2024