



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.

This policy is written in accordance with 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 them. A child or young adult of school age is considered to have SEND if they:

- Have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- Have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities 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, enacted under the Children and Families Act 2014, provides revised guidance and outlines new expectations for supporting children and young people with SEND.

Key elements include:

- Protection for children and young people aged 0–25
- A pupil and family centred approach
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- A multi-agency approach to improve outcomes
- Personalised budgets enabling families and young people to influence services
- The principle that all teachers are responsible for delivering a differentiated curriculum to ensure pupils can access learning

Inclusion and SEND Ethos

St Edmund's School is committed to:

- Celebrating neurodiversity
- Removing barriers to learning
- Fostering independence and self confidence
- Promoting equality of opportunity across all subjects and co-curricular activities
- Ensuring that every pupil feels valued, supported and able to thrive

Inclusion is embedded in all aspects of school life.

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 senior 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 meeting the needs of pupils in their classes, regardless of any specialist qualifications. 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, Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), 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 regarding 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 Academic Support Department

The Academic Support Department is staffed by a full-time Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), who is a fully qualified teacher with additional Level 7 training in Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), a qualified Academic Support Teacher trained and accredited to assess for Access Arrangements, and a further Academic Support Teacher with a Level 7 qualification in SpLD.

The department also includes five peripatetic learning support teachers who assist pupils with literacy and maths difficulties, a fully trained Specialist Teacher and Executive Function Coach, six Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA), and two Eklon-trained teaching assistants who support pupils with speech, language and communication needs.

All teachers within the department are fully qualified to support a wide range of specific learning difficulties. Support is delivered on an individual basis, in paired or small-group sessions, or through in-class support, depending on the level and nature of each pupil's needs.

The Department has a number of dedicated academic support rooms and a wide range of teaching, learning and assessment materials.

Academic Support Staff Training and Development

The school is committed to ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills required to support pupils with SEND.

Training opportunities include:

- Whole school CPD on areas such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism, and SEMH
- Training delivered by external specialists
- Updates on JCQ access arrangement requirements
- ELSA training for pastoral support staff
- Regular briefings and SEND information updates delivered by the SENCO

Staff training needs are reviewed annually and aligned with the needs of the pupil cohort.

How Pupils come to the Department

Pupils come to the department through several routes:

1. Pupils arrive at the school with reports from educational psychologists, specialist teachers, occupational therapists and/or speech and language therapists.
2. Older pupils (Form 3 upwards) may present with difficulties identified through entrance assessments.
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, who will liaise with Academic Support when necessary.
4. Screening processes, including CAT 4 (Forms 1-9), GL Progress Tests in Maths and English (Forms 1-8), and SWIFT (Form 7 and 9), may highlight additional needs.

Where further investigation is required, referral to an educational psychologist, occupational therapist, or speech and language therapist may be recommended.

If concerns arise, the SENCO will organise a meeting with the parents to discuss a way forward and plan appropriate 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 summary of the needs of all pupils who attend the Department, outlining their specific needs, strengths and weaknesses and what *reasonable adjustments* are required in lessons and examinations. Recommendations relevant to classroom practice are also included.

When a pupil receives one-to-one tuition, the Academic Support Teacher creates an Individual Support Plan (ISP) detailing targeted intervention. Where a pupil with SEND needs receives learning support within the classroom, the class teacher, in collaboration with the Learning Support Assistant, and with reference to EHCPs (if required) creates the Individual Support Plan of targeted intervention to support that pupil's particular needs. These plans will be reviewed twice a year.

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. Working in a multi-sensory way helps to reinforce learning

Touch typing sessions are offered to pupils who require laptop use and take place before, during and after school. At senior level, support focuses on study skills to compensate for working memory, processing speed and organisational difficulties. Lessons are half an hour though some may 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. Sessions may also take place before or after school.

Monitoring and Evaluation of SEND Provision

The effectiveness of SEND provision is monitored through:

- Regular observations of interventions and classroom practice
- Review of ISPs and pupil targets
- Analysis of assessment data and progress
- Feedback from teachers, pupils and parents
- Review meetings with external agencies
- Findings inform departmental development, training priorities and resource planning

Transition Arrangements

To ensure smooth transitions on entry to the school, the school provides:

- Meetings with parents and previous schools
- Review of reports and assessments
- Additional transition visits where required

During year-to-year transitions:

- Handover meetings between teachers
- Updated SEND reports shared with new staff

- Additional preparation for pupils who require it

During transition to other schools / post-16 education:

- Liaison with receiving schools
- Transfer of documentation
- Preparation for study skills and independence

Transitions are tailored to individual need.

Medical Needs and Related SEND

The school recognises that some pupils have medical needs that overlap with or impact their learning.

We ensure:

- Collaboration between the SENCO and the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Surgery Team
- Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) where appropriate
- Staff awareness of medical conditions and required adjustments
- Safe administration of medicines
- Risk assessments for activities, trips and PE

Medical needs are considered as part of a pupil's overall support package.

Safeguarding and SEND

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may be particularly vulnerable.

We ensure that:

- The SENCO and DSL work closely together to monitor pupils
- Staff are trained to recognise safeguarding concerns in SEND pupils
- Communication difficulties or behavioural changes are carefully explored
- Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure safeguarding processes are accessible

Safeguarding always takes precedence.

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 responsible for the EHCP.

Access Arrangements for School exams and Public Examinations

Pupils with SEND may be entitled to additional time and/or other reasonable adjustments in public examinations. For any access arrangement to be approved for public examinations:

- It must reflect the pupil's normal way of working in lessons and school assessments
- There must be clear evidence of sustained need
- Access arrangements are not introduced solely for the purpose of exams

This ensures compliance with JCQ regulations and fairness for all pupils. Please refer to the Access Arrangements Policy for further information.

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 determine whether this is a suitable method 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 specific learning difficulty.

Laptops will be removed if pupils misuse them, for example, by playing games during lessons or failing to follow instructions relating to their use.

The School provides all technology required for external exams.

Record Keeping

The Department keeps all confidential files in a locked filing cabinet. Each child who receives Academic Support has an individual, confidential file containing all relevant reports and paperwork. Evidence and documentation required by JCQ for Access Arrangements is stored securely in the Exams Office.

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 benefit from 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 treats every application from pupils with SEND in a fair, open-minded way. All applicants will be assessed based on the school's standard selection criteria.

The school endeavours to ensure that it can fully support the needs of all prospective pupils. Parents of children with disabilities, SEND or learning difficulties are advised to discuss their child's needs with the school prior to application and before they sit the school's entrance assessment to ensure appropriate provision can be made on the day. Parents are asked to provide relevant paperwork, for example, medical or educational psychologist reports, to support a request. Special arrangements may include large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other reasonable adjustments.

Before offering a place, the school will assess whether it can adequately meet the child's needs. This includes discussion with parents, review of professional reports, references from previous schools and, where appropriate, a taster day.

An offer may not be made if the school determines, following consultation with parents, that it cannot meet the 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 applicants with SEND and/or disabilities.

Withdrawal

Where, after all reasonable adjustments have been considered or implemented, the school feels that it is unable to accommodate a SEND pupil and 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.

Funding and Additional Costs

As an independent school:

- Academic Support and specialist teaching may incur additional charges
- Parents are informed of any costs before provision begins
- External assessments (e.g. EP, OT, SALT) are normally funded by parents
- The school ensures transparency around all SEND-related fees

Where possible, we work with families to identify affordable, appropriate support.

Access to School Building

Door access to all buildings is wide enough for an adult wheelchair. The school swimming pool is accessible to physically impaired children and appropriate staffing arrangements in place. Alterations have been made to the crossing at the entrance to the Puntabout. Recreational activities are varied and accessible, enabling social interaction and meaningful engagement.

School Trips

Integration is of paramount importance. Participation in educational visits and outings is facilitated wherever possible, sometimes through allowing a parent or family member to accompany the group.

Forward Planning

Teachers and teaching assistants receive appropriate training, as required, to support pupils with disabilities.

Portable ramps are available to improve access to the Puntablock and Auden centre. Future developments 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 in the safe use of wheelchairs, as appropriate.

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.

Complaints Procedure for SEND

If parents have concerns about SEND provision:

1. They should first contact the SENCO.
2. If concerns remain, the matter can be raised with the Head.
3. If still unresolved, the School's Complaints Procedure should be followed.

The school aims to work collaboratively with parents and resolve concerns promptly and constructively.

AMB – October 2025