

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.

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;
- The phasing out of Statements of Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments and replacing these with 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;
- The phasing out of the old School Action and School Concern Registers for one register entitled SEND Support. This is to be in place by 2015;
- It reinforces the policy that all teachers are responsible for delivering a differentiated curriculum in order for their pupils to access the curriculum.

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 part time Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) up to Form 6 and a full time SENCO for Forms 7-11 and 5 peripatetic learning support teachers who support pupils with literacy and maths difficulties. 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 two 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, MidYIS in Form 7 and 9.

All pupils entering the department will be initially screened. For pupils in Form 3 and above we screen to ascertain pupils' current reading comprehension, single word reading and spelling age. We will also ask the pupils to complete a piece of free writing to assess their prose, their processing speed and handwriting.

However, 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.

We seek parents'/guardians' consent and the pupils' before any initial testing. Parents/guardians are informed about the procedure for testing and the range of tests used. A meeting after the assessment is arranged by the SENCO with parents to discuss a way forward and a 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 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. Parents/guardians and pupils will have their say in terms of targets so that all parties are in agreement with the intervention provided. 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 Word Shark for Spelling, Maths Shark and mind mapping to help plan and organise work. 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 Statements of Special Educational Needs

Under the new SEND Code of Practice, Statements are currently being phased out and where appropriate they will be replaced with EHCPs. The government suggests that this phased approach be at transition periods in a pupil's education such as the transition from primary to secondary school etc. All Statements will cease as of 1 April 2018.

Pupils who currently have a Statement will continue to have their annual reviews. However, it may be that the relevant Council will contact us to help complete a transfer from Statement to EHCP in due course.

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/tablets are provided by parents/guardians until Form 9 when the school issues every pupil with a tablet. The Department can lend a tablet 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/tablets 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 Learning 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.

Each student also has their own personal folder which their Academic Support Teacher has. This houses their current ISP, work, plus test scores. These folders are kept in the individual teacher's rooms.

In order to keep track of the students in the Department we keep the SEND Support List which is available on the school's intranet. This document outlines the pupil's specific learning difficulty, chronological age, recent test scores and what reports we have on them.

Reviewed September: 2016 AMB/HB

Review Date: September 2017