

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy



1. Introduction

Wycombe Abbey is committed to the equal treatment of all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Council, governing body, is responsible for determining School policy and provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

This policy works towards eliminating disadvantages for pupils with SEND by:

- using best endeavours to ensure that all pupils (including those with medical conditions) get the support needed in order to access our educational provision
- treating SEND pupils equally to peers
- making reasonable adjustments so that SEND pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage in matters of admission and education
- ensuring that pupils with SEND engage as fully as is practical in activities alongside pupils who do not have SEND
- ensuring parents are informed when SEND provision is made for their child and are kept up to date as to their child's progress and development.

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

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Mental Health and behaviour in schools (Nov 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023)
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance – Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2019)
- Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance 'Technical guidance for schools in England' (last updated July 2024)
- Equality Act and School, DfE non-statutory advice (May 2014)

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Admissions Policy, Equal Opportunities for Pupils Policy, Accessibility Plan, Pupil Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions and Wellbeing and Mental Health – Pupils Policy.

2. Definition of special educational needs

A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, a child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age.

- have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream.

The expression 'learning difficulty' covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as an autistic spectrum condition, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The expression may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing. Pupils will not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. Our support for those pupils whose first language is not English is set out in our English as an Additional Language Policy (EAL).

3. Definition of disability

A pupil is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). Long term means that the impairment will have lasted or be likely to last for 12 months or more. Not all pupils who have SEN are disabled and not all disabled pupils have SEN, but the School recognises that, understandably, there is overlap.

4. Staff responsibilities

The Deputy Head (Academic) is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the SEND provision and for keeping Council informed of the implementation of the policy in practice.

The Head of Learning Enhancement's responsibilities include:

- determining the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision, together with the Headmistress and Deputy Head (Academic)
- having overall day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEND policy
- coordinating specific provision for children with SEND, including those who have EHC plans
- ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities to pupils with SEND and approach to identifying and SEND needs
- ensuring that teachers are given any necessary information relating to a pupil's learning support needs and/or disabilities (if known) so that teaching practices are appropriate
- ensuring parental insights are considered to support their child's SEND
- liaising with Health Centre staff, external professionals and agencies, as appropriate
- ensuring records of all pupils with SEND up to date
- working with the Exams Office to ensure that access arrangements are put in place to meet the needs of SEND pupils.

The Learning Enhancement Department consists of specialist dyslexia teachers, English as an Additional Language (EAL) specialists, as well as a Specialist Teacher.

Consistent with the Teaching Standards (TS5) all teachers are responsible for helping to meet a pupil's needs (irrespective of any specialist qualifications or expertise). All teaching and pastoral staff are expected to understand this policy so that they can identify, assess and make provision to meet those needs.

5. Admissions

The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can reasonably offer them any support that they require and cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them.

Our policy is to apply our admission criteria to all potential pupils. We require parents of children with special educational needs, disabilities or allergies (suspected and diagnosed) to discuss their child's needs with the School at the outset of the admissions process so that we can consider and make – to the extent reasonable – appropriate provision for them.

Parents are required to provide with the Registration Form full details of all relevant information about their child, including any reports (including any educational psychologist reports, medical reports or assessments or other relevant expert third party reports), materials or information about their child's needs (educational, health or otherwise), and this may include any final or draft EHC needs assessments (or applications for a needs assessment) or final or draft EHC Plans (or applications for an EHC Plan). This is so that the School can assess their child's needs and consult with parents about any adjustments which can reasonably be made and so that the School can ensure, for example, that their child will be able to access meaningfully the education offered and that we are able to ensure their health and safety, and the health and safety of others. This information should be provided prior to the admissions assessment process.

Where parents of a prospective pupil feel their child requires adjustments, (in respect of the admissions process and/or with regards to education at School and participation in school life in the event they are offered and take up a place at the School), parents should raise these with the School at the outset and the School may – depending on the circumstances - require some further information from parents, from the current education setting, or request further assessments in respect of the needs identified and will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments proposed and whether they can reasonably be made for the child if they were to become a pupil at the School.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's special educational needs and/or disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments (in the case of disability), we feel that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to access meaningfully the education offered, or that their health and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, or where the School cannot reasonably accommodate the adjustments required or reasonably provide the nature or level of the support required.

6. Identifying and supporting pupils with SEND

The curriculum, plan and schemes of work take proper account of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Pupil progress is regularly reviewed to help monitor whether pupils are making expected progress. Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a pupil has SEND (and should not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having SEND). However, where it is reasonably considered that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, for example where there are early indications that a pupil is not making expected progress, the School will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents and the pupil (as appropriate) to help determine the action required including whether any additional support is needed.

A request for parents to obtain a formal assessment of their child (such as by an educational psychologist) may be made, the cost of which will usually be borne by the parents. A specialist who has a working relationship with the School, as per the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), regulations, must carry out any formal assessments.

If there are significant emerging concerns, or identified SEND, the School will take action to put appropriate special educational provision in place taking into account any advice from specialists, consult

with parents and keep them informed of any action taken to help their child, and of the outcome of this action. Due weight will also be given to a pupil's wishes.

Arrangements for special educational provision and support are made through a graduated approach to SEND support: assess - plan - do - review:

- **Assess:** The School will carry out an analysis of the pupil's needs so that support can be matched to need. All pupils are assessed on entry using an on-line dyslexia screener. Results of English spelling tests, school tests, examinations and teacher recommendation also informs the assessment. If not already done so, the School may recommend, in consultation with parents, that external agencies and professionals are engaged to help assess the pupil's needs and to advise on any support needed. Any specialist advice received will usually be discussed with the pupil and the pupil's parents.
- **Plan:** Where it is decided to provide SEND support the Head of Learning Enhancement will agree in consultation with parents and the pupil the adjustments, interventions, support and any teaching strategies or approaches that are to be put in place. These will be recorded on the pupils Individualised Education Passport (IEP).
- **Do:** Teachers will work closely with the Head of Learning Enhancement to assess and monitor the targeted plan of support and the impact of support and interventions in place for the pupil.
- **Review:** The effectiveness of any support and its impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed as agreed between the School and parents at the Learning Enhancement parent/teachers meeting. Teachers, working with the Head of Learning Enhancement, will revise the impact and quality of the support and interventions in light of the pupil's progress and development and will decide on any changes to the support in consultation with parents and the pupil (as appropriate).

7. Reasonable Adjustments

The School is committed to treating all pupils fairly. In light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the School will seek to ensure that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage, by comparison with pupils who are not disabled, by making reasonable adjustments:

- i. to policies, criteria and practices (i.e. the way the School does things); and
- ii. by providing auxiliary aids and services (i.e. provision of additional support or assistance).

There is no standard definition of an auxiliary aid or service. Anything which helps, aids or renders assistance for disabled pupils or applicants is likely to be an auxiliary aid or service.

The School is not required to remove or alter physical features to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils or applicants. Similarly, the School is not required to provide auxiliary aids for personal purposes unconnected with its provision of education and services.

School staff seek to understand the needs of each and every pupil and to ensure that all pupils have the chance to make good progress according to their ability. In practice, making reasonable adjustments can be a daily, iterative process. Adjustments can often be made by staff at short notice or no notice, for example, taking steps to ensure that a child has understood instructions, or that they are seated where they are able hear and concentrate.

Once any required adjustments have been identified, the School will consider whether they are reasonable adjustments for the School to make by reference to the following factors:

- whether it would overcome the substantial disadvantage the disabled child is suffering;
- the practicability of the adjustment;
- the effect of the disability on the pupil;
- the cost of the proposed adjustment;
- the School's resources;
- health and safety requirements;
- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards; and
- the interests of other pupils (and potential pupils).

The School will discuss the proposed adjustments with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, The Head of Learning Enhancement, and (with the parents' consent) any appropriate third party, which may include, for example, a medical practitioner or educational psychologist. The School will communicate any decision regarding reasonable adjustments with parents and the child (where appropriate).

Parents can assist the School in this process by ensuring that staff are informed of their child's needs, making available any relevant reports, assessments and information and working with the School if appropriate to implement any measures or reinforce any strategies put in place.

Where, despite reasonable adjustments to assist a child's access to educational provision and the other benefits, facilities and services the School provides, a disabled pupil is evidently still at a substantial disadvantage, the School may draw this to the attention of the parents and make recommendations. This might include, for example, seeking further external professional advice, seeking a statutory assessment, additional support funded by the parents or other external sources.

If the parents feel that there are further particular adjustments the School could make, parents may write to or speak with Head of Learning Enhancement. Parents are encouraged to provide copies of any medical or specialists reports as evidence of the adjustments required.

8. Recording progress of pupils with SEND

Progress and any support for pupils with significant learning difficulties or disabilities or where they have an Education Health Care Plan, is recorded. This will be recorded by way of an Individualised Education Passport. IEPs are drawn up in consultation with teachers, Head of Learning Enhancement and the Housemistress. The IEP contains key information such as:

- SEND Information
- Strengths and areas of difficulty
- Strategies for teachers
- Strategies for the pupil
- Considerations for in the boarding house
- Considerations for Co-Curricular

IEPs are under constant review and are updated as required.

Tracking records inform progress and attainment levels. The School measures the overall progress of pupils with SEND at the end of the various key stages such as GCSE and A level to see how much progress they make compared with that of their peers.

The pupil, together with their teachers, sets their own targets in academic lessons.

9. SEND provision

The School's SEND provision currently includes: in-class differentiation, learning support (in and out of class), additional specialist teaching, support from the Head of Learning Enhancement, additional one-to-one lessons (usually charged to parents). Drop-in sessions are also available to all pupils.

10. Pupils with an Education Health Care Plan ('EHC Plan')

The needs of the majority of pupils with SEND will be met effectively through SEND support. However, where the pupil has not made expected progress despite the SEND support in place, parents and the School have the right to ask the Local Authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC Plan for their child. Parents are asked to consult with the School before exercising this right. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right.

If the Local Authority refuses to make an assessment, parents have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND). The School does not have this right of appeal.

Where either a prospective pupil has an EHC Plan, or a current pupil obtains their first EHC Plan, the School will consult with the parents and the Local Authority (where appropriate) to ensure that we can deliver the provision specified in the EHC Plan can be delivered at the School. Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHC Plan may need to be charged to the Local Authority if the Local Authority is responsible for the fees and Wycombe Abbey is named in the EHC Plan. In all other circumstances, charges may 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.

The School co-operates with the Local Authority to ensure that relevant annual reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.

11. Further aspects relating to SEND provision

11.1 Admissions

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

Every application from a SEND pupil will be treated in a fair, open-minded way. However, all pupils are assessed for admission on the basis of a standard selection criteria.

The School endeavours to ensure that the needs of all prospective pupils are fully supported. Parents of pupils with disabilities, SEND or learning difficulties are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the School before they sit the entrance exam so that adequate provision can be made for them on the day. Parents are asked to provide a copy of a medical report, educational psychologist's report or equivalent 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 possible to adequately cater for and meet any SEND (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 the needs of the pupil cannot be met or provided for. The School will always consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The Admissions Policy can be found on the website. It applies equally to all prospective pupils and details how applicants with SEND are supported.

11.2 Withdrawal

Where, after all reasonable adjustments have been made or considered, the School feels a SEND pupil's needs cannot be met through reasonable adjustments, or in the case of a child with an EHC Plan we are unable to meet the provisions of the Plan, we reserve the right, following consultation, for parents to withdraw their child. In these circumstances the School will support the parents in finding an alternative placement which will meet the child's needs. Any decision to request withdrawal or require the removal of a pupil will be made as a last resort and in line with the terms of the parent contract. Fees in lieu of notice will not be chargeable in these circumstances and the acceptance deposit returned.

11.3 Entitlements to additional time and/or support in external assessments

Pupils who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be entitled to adjustments, such as additional time and/or modified provision, to complete external assessments. These adjustments are known as exam access arrangements. Exam access arrangements allow examination candidates with SEND to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. These are strictly regulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) on behalf of the examination boards, under the remit of Ofqual, and are administered and applied by the School; in accordance with the published guidance and requirements.

Parents should speak to the Head of Learning Enhancement with regard to any application for additional support as soon as reasonably practicable. The Head of Learning Enhancement will process applications for appropriate examination access in conjunction with the Housemistress, Exams Office, Head of Sections and Deputy Head (Academic).

11.4 Three-year accessibility plan

A copy of our 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 curriculum; improve the physical environment 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; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

11.5 Bullying and behavioural issues

All pupils are taught that any form of discrimination, bullying and harassment is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Pupils are taught through Wellbeing lessons, General Studies and Chapel the importance of respecting each other and behaving towards each other with kindness, courtesy and consideration. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies make clear the seriousness of bullying, victimisation and harassment and that appropriate sanctions will be applied to any pupil who displays inappropriate behaviour.

The School recognises that disabled pupils or those with SEND may be particularly vulnerable to being bullied. The Anti-bullying strategy makes it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously.

The School also recognises that bullying (or other matters such as bereavement) can lead to learning difficulties or wider mental health difficulties. Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not

necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEND but where there are concerns, an assessment may be undertaken to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues.

The School recognises that pupils with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges and additional barriers can therefore exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of pupils. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's disability without further exploration.
- the potential for pupils with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Staff will support such pupils in expressing any concerns they may have and will be particularly vigilant to any signs or indicators of abuse, discussing this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate. The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed if there are any safeguarding concerns relating to a pupil. The Head of Learning Enhancement meets regularly with the DSL to review caseloads.

11.6 Staff Training

Teaching staff receive regular training on the learning needs of pupils with SEND and also on identifying pupils with possible difficulties. All teachers are trained to differentiate within the curriculum and to take into account pupils' learning difficulties. All new teaching staff receive specific training in SEND as part of their induction programme. The Head of Learning Enhancement liaises with the teaching staff about the most appropriate means of meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. The Learning Enhancement Department provides information, accessed through IEPs, which summarise for teachers the difficulties a pupil faces with their learning and suggests useful strategies. In addition to this, the Learning Enhancement staff offer individual advice to teachers.

11.7 Concerns

The School will listen to any concerns expressed by parents about their child's development and any concerns raised by pupils themselves. Parents must notify their child's Housemistress or Head of Learning Enhancement if their child's progress or behaviour gives cause for concern. It is hoped that any difficulty or concern can be sensitively and efficiently handled and resolved informally before it reaches the formal complaints stage. That said, the School's Complaints Procedures on our website sets out how parents can raise a formal complaint and how the School will handle it.

11.8 Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the School meets the needs of those pupils with SEND.

11.9 Storing Information

All data will be stored in line with the Data Management and Retention Policy and Data Protection Policy. Please see the Privacy Notice for Pupils for further information.

Member of staff

Deputy Head (Academic)

Reviewed

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Related Policies

Accessibility Plan

Admissions

Equal Opportunities for Pupils

English as an Additional Language

Wellbeing and Mental Health – Pupils

Anti-bullying Strategy

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Data Management and Retention

Data Protection