



St Augustine's Catholic College

Special Educational Needs Policy

This policy document should be read in conjunction with the College's Information Document which can be found on the College's website: College Documents>SE> SEN Information Report 2017.

1. INTRODUCTION

The College's SENCO is Louise Pyper who may be contacted at lp@st-augusines.wilts.sch.uk. Ms Pyper is not a member of the Senior Leadership Team but works closely with Mrs Dixon, who is a Deputy Head; in addition all the members of the SLT are committed to ensuring that the College does everything possible to enable the students to achieve the best outcomes possible.

Ms Pyper is an experienced teacher of children and young people with additional needs, having worked with them in mainstream and special school settings for 36 years. Her particular experience has been in working with those who are on the Autistic Spectrum and present with related issues, although she has worked, and continues to work, with students with a range of needs.

Mrs Clark teaches at the College part-time and has also had experience in mainstream schools, having been a SENCO for 16 years in a secondary school, and special schools. Dyslexia is her specialism and she holds an AMBDA qualification.

In common with the ethos of the whole college, we aim to include students with SEN in the mainstream life of the school both academically and socially, providing additional teaching, support and adjustment as far as is appropriate and feasible.

This policy is framed by the SENCO and the SEN Governor, using the guidance contained in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 and the Equalities Act. We continue to try to develop further the participation of the students and parents so we may reflect their views as far as possible in both policy and practice.

2. AIM OF THE LEARNING SUPPORT (SEN) DEPARTMENT

Our fundamental aim is to raise the aspirations and expectations of and for all pupils with additional needs through creating a focus on outcomes. We then work with the student, their teachers and their families to see how these outcomes might be achieved. This positive looking forward provides a framework for development for the pupil, putting them very much at the heart of the process and shifting the balance away from a more passive focus on hours and provision.

3. OBJECTIVES

- a) Initially we need to identify the needs of individual students (see below) and ensure that we develop specific objectives and then appropriate provision that best meets their needs.
- b) Underpinning our actions with individual students, we work with the belief that enabling the development of all students is the responsibility of all teachers and support staff, in line with the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice 2014. We therefore provide support and advice for all teachers, both during the identification process and when objectives and needs have been clarified.

4. IDENTIFYING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In Section 6.3 of the Code of Practice, four broad categories of need are described:-

Communication and interaction
Cognition and learning
Social, mental and emotional health
Sensory and/or physical needs

These can provide an overview of things which might be difficult for a student and so help both with the assessment of the student's needs and decisions about appropriate actions. When considering these issues we do, of course, look at the whole person and not just these specific areas of need. We will also hold in mind that other factors may have an impact on progress and attainment but are not Special Educational Needs. These include issues around:-

- Disability (the Code of Practice outlines the duty for schools to employ "reasonable adjustment" under current Equality legislation but this is not alone a special educational need)
- Attendance and punctuality
- Health and welfare
- EAL
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium
- Being a Looked After Child
- Being a child of parents in the Services

Questions around appropriate provision for students who fall within the above categories are the responsibility of other departments in the College, details of which can be found elsewhere on the college website. (It should be noted that identifying "behaviour " as a need is no longer a way of describing SEN. Concerns relating to a student's behaviour will be looked at as a response to an underlying need which may or may not have an educational element. We will, of course, try to work with others in the College to identify the need so that it may then be addressed in an appropriate way).

5. THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH SEN

Subject teachers are initially responsible for the progress and development of all the students in their classes, including those for whom there is additional support. High quality, differentiated teaching is the first step that is tried. Additional interventions and support are put in place to complement what the teacher is doing.

The progress of students is looked at regularly in terms of their mainstream teaching. The SENCO and Learning Support teacher are working with departments to support teachers in their work of meeting the needs of students with SEN within classes and there is other, more general, training provided by the department or outside specialists covering the most frequently encountered areas of need.

As well as observations in class and from teachers, information from previous schools, requests from parents and students themselves will always be looked at when considering the need for additional or alternative input. Attainments in literacy assessments (the latter are carried out for all students at the start of Year 7 and the end of Year 8 as well as the start of Year 10 for those for whom exam access arrangements may be appropriate) also play a significant part in the process. Students who have difficulties in this area are tested more frequently so that appropriate provision can be made.

In the case of students with communication needs, including those on the autistic spectrum, observation plays an especially significant part in any decisions.

Where students have a higher level of need of any sort we draw on the expertise of other agencies, such as Speech and Language, Educational Psychologist etc.

Placing students on the SEN register, or removing them from it, will reflect all of the above. Parents will be given the opportunity to contribute to this. There are often cases when a child has a positive transition from primary school and continues to make progress in Year 7 showing they have overcome

the needs that they had in an early years environment. In these cases parents and staff will be consulted with the aim of removing the child's name from the register.

6. MANAGING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE EHCPs

Currently, students who have EHCPs indicating a high level of need will have My Plans which contain details of previous and current attainment, long and medium term objectives. From this formal document, at least two medium term objectives will be decided on by the student with their key worker and the SENCO to be a focus and these will be reviewed twice a year. Information from such reviews will be sent to the student's specific teachers. Parents will be invited in at least three times a year to review progress (one of these meetings will be the formal annual review) and they are also encouraged to contact the SENCO whenever they have concerns and queries.

7. PROVISION FOR STUDENTS ON SEN SUPPORT

As a college we believe that all our students have the right to access the full curriculum and so we try to keep the withdrawal of students from mainstream classes to a minimum. Within class, as well as teachers being responsible for meeting the learning needs of all students as far as is possible, there will also be Teaching Partners (TAs in other settings) working with some groups which contain students with significant needs to maximise opportunities. It is part of our ethos that we are supporting all students to become independent learners as far as possible, so our TPs often take on an advisory, questioning role and we also encourage teachers to direct the TPs to work with groups other than those who have specific SEN.

In KS3 the SENCO and Learning Support teacher withdraw some students from class in small groups (usually 2-5 students) to work on specific aspects of literacy for an hour a week for 10-12 weeks. This length of programme has been shown to maximise interest and progress and also avoids students missing too much curricular time. Decisions about which students access this are made largely using reading and spelling assessments along with discussion with other teachers and TPs, as mentioned in the previous section.

Students are, of course, assessed at the start of the intervention both using tests and also through discussion. Information/context sheets, similar to those mentioned in the previous section, are then passed on to the student's current teachers. At the end of interventions further assessments are made and parents are invited in to discuss progress, future objectives and how the student can best be supported by all. Context sheets are updated and play a part in informing future planning.

The SENCO also runs Social Communication groups using a similar time frame and model. The specific needs of individuals inform the type of issues looked at, but they will usually include recognising and then managing emotions in ourselves and others, friendships and some specific skills such as listening, taking turns, maintaining topic and so on. Most of the learning is done through games, role play and discussion and there is always a focus on the social aspects of interaction throughout. Assessment before and after cannot be as clear cut as for other types of learning and is more reliant on observation of need and development from staff and parents.

In addition to specific assessments, the SENCO tracks the progress and interventions of all students on the register year on year and this, again, enables future planning to be more effective.

If, in spite of good teaching, support and interventions, we feel a student is not flourishing we may refer them to an EP, or Speech and Language Therapist, using a Single Agency referral form or a CAF. Parents would, of course, be part of this process.

8. SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Students with an especially high level of need (those with EHCPs and a few others) are allocated a key worker. This role is usually assigned to one of the TPs and forms a crucial link, both for the student in the College and between the College and home for issues that may occur on a daily basis. We try to ensure that, as far as possible, the student sees their key worker most days in class for at least one lesson (though timetabling means this is not always possible) and every student with a key worker has a 15 minute slot with them individually each week. This gives the student the opportunity to talk about

anything that they want and confirms that they have a “special person”. The key worker is also available, as well as the SENCO, to communicate with home as needed.

Positive transition into the College is obviously crucial and will involve additional visits where the student can usually meet their key worker. We usually find one or two extra visits are a good number but can always be flexible to meet individual need. All the Learning Support departmental staff, as well as others in general, will watch out, especially for the first few weeks, and do their best to allay any concerns about being lost, not having books that are needed and so on. We try to make things as easy as we can and, again, the SENCO is always on hand to support and advise families, whether by phone, e-mail or meeting (though the latter may entail some delay).

At the end of Year 9/beginning of Year 10 the SENCO will speak with staff, arrange for assessments and apply to exam boards for exam access arrangements where appropriate and necessary. The granting of these arrangements is not dependent on students having a specific, diagnosed need and, by the same token, having such a diagnosis will not of necessity lead to such special arrangements being granted by the exam board. Teachers’ evidence of normal practice for the student in the classroom carries significant weight, along with assessments carried out in school.

9. SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL NEEDS

The College of course recognises that students with medical needs may need additional support, especially with taking medication and in cases of illness; the first contact regarding these matters should be with Mrs Sharp or Ms Preuveneers on Reception.

If a student has a disability the SENCO will work with other staff to ensure that they are not discriminated against with regard, for instance, to school trips and will work with the family to make sure that reasonable adjustment is made to enable students to participate fully as far as is possible. If a student has SEN as well as medical needs the same procedures as described in other areas of this document will pertain with adjustment, if that is possible and appropriate.

The College’s policy can be seen on the website: Key Information>College Policies>Supporting Children with Medical Conditions.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATING SEND

In addition to the monitoring of individual students as mentioned above, the SENCO monitors the performance of those in the department through annual observation and appraisal. She, in turn, works closely with Mrs Dixon, Deputy Head in charge of Teaching and Learning, with whom she works to set and appraise personal and departmental targets. In line with other departments in the College the SENCO completes a Self-Evaluation Form which both looks at specific departmental issues and checks that the objectives and performance of the department cohere with the College Improvement Plan.

The SENCO works closely with the SEN Governor to ensure that everything that happens in the department reflects good practice and adheres to current legislation; we aim to ensure that the opinions of all stakeholders are heard and incorporated into practice where appropriate.

11. TRAINING AND RESOURCES

There are three main sources of funding for SEN:

- Money devolved to the College which is worked out on a funding formula and is not assigned to any specific students. (This is not ring-fenced for SEND use);
- Money to support specific named students with especially significant needs.

We try to develop training using the expertise we have within the College as well as outside specialists; TPs are paid to attend training on TD days and, in addition, the Department meets regularly to focus on specific areas of need as well as to share ideas about working with students.

The SENCO is part of a cycle of staff who deliver short “hot spot” sessions, often again focusing on a particular need, suggesting strategies that will support the students and staff.

There are opportunities for longer term training which may take the form of workshops to increase active involvement from staff.

At the start of the year the SENCO meets with new teachers to explain the systems in place in the College and also to highlight some of the key features of the needs which the teachers are most likely to encounter and to suggest some key strategies.

The SENCO also produces a Learning Strategies booklet at the start of the year which, as well as giving some general guidance, highlights the barriers to learning and strengths of all individual students with additional needs in the College and suggests strategies that should be useful in working with that student. This confidential document is distributed to all adults working in the College.

12. STORING AND MANAGING INFORMATION

Information that teachers and TPs need to know about students is kept on a shared area so that it may be accessed easily. There is more detailed paper information, eg statements or medical reports, which is locked and kept by the SENCO, but available to those who need to know.

If a student leaves before the end of Year 11, any information will be passed on to their next school. If they complete their schooling at St Augustine's, paperwork will be stored for seven years in locked archives and then destroyed.

13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the SEN Governor is that of critical friend, asking challenging questions where needed and overseeing that provision for students with SEN is as it should be.

The Teaching Partners' role is to support and encourage students in their learning, always keeping the objective of enabling the students to be independent learners in their minds.

Beyond their key worker responsibilities, no TP is particularly linked with any individual student; a change from the normal primary school practice that some children and families can find a little difficult to work with initially.

Safeguarding Officers - Mrs Hicks, Head of Pastoral, and Mr Alsop, Head Teacher - have specific safeguarding responsibility.

Pupil Premium and LAC funding is the responsibility of Mr Pitcher, Assistant Head.

Medical needs – these are overseen by Mrs Sharp who works on Reception.

14. REVIEWING THE SEN POLICY

This will be undertaken by the SENCO with the support of the SEN Governor.

15. ACCESSIBILITY

The Business Manager has the overview of the developing accessibility of the College for students with disabilities. She also works with the SENCO to produce evacuation plans for individual students where needed and they receive advice from Alison Packer from Wiltshire Physical and Medical Specialist Support Service.

The SENCO works with Department Heads to ensure that, as far as possible, students for whom stairs are difficult are taught on the ground floor or in one of the buildings where lifts have been installed. An additional automatic door and another ramp have been put in and there are disabled toilets in main buildings.

Trips out of college are managed through liaison between the College and parents to, again, make sure the students are able to participate as fully as possible.

As with all additional needs communication between parents, the College and, where appropriate, outside agencies, is crucial. Day to day issues will be dealt with by the student's key worker and parents may always contact the SENCO, whose e-mail address is at the top of this policy, with queries or concerns.

The College's policy can be seen on the website: Key Information>College Policies>Accessibility Plan.

16. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

If there is an issue about a particular academic subject it is best to contact that teacher initially. If the concern does not fit into this category all parents are advised to talk to the student's tutor and then Head of Year about any general complaints.

If the complaint has a specific SEN angle, then the SENCO is a good place to start. If she is unable to sort out an issue she will suggest which route may be followed, depending on the nature of the issue.

We will always try to support all involved in reaching a resolution.

The Complaints Policy can be seen on the website: College Policies>Complaints Policy.

17. BULLYING

Bullying is taken very seriously and any concerns should again be directed to tutors, Heads of Year, the Pastoral Support worker, Mrs Bundy, or the Head of Pastoral, Mrs Hicks.

If students, or their parents, feel happier talking to one of the TPs or the SENCO initially they will, of course, try to resolve issues and then pass them on through the appropriate channels if necessary.

We try to offer a supportive environment for all our students and there is generally an ethos of positivity and valuing that underpins both our ethos and the day to day reality of life in the College. On occasion we support students to talk about things they may find difficult to a small group as this can be a positive way of developing knowledge and empathy in some cases.

The College's Anti-Bullying Policy can be seen on the website: Key Information>College Policies>Anti Bullying Policy

The use, and abuse, of social media has become an issue as in all schools and we try to educate all students and parents as to the legalities, risks and possible consequences concerned. There is a policy document outlining this and, in addition to the issue being tackled in tutor time, community police representatives also work with all KS3 students in PSHE classes.

Further information is available on the website: College Policies>E-safety Policy and Procedure.

Please refer to the SEN Information Report to supplement information found in this policy. This can be found on the college website: Key Information> College Documents>SEN>SEN Information Report 2017.

If you would like to raise more specific queries about particular needs or issues, please contact the SENCO, Louise Pyper, at lpy@st-augustines.wilts.sch.uk and she will reply to you as soon as she is able.