

# WHITGIFT SCHOOL

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS / LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

**Supporting neurodiverse students and students with disabilities.**

### Colleagues responsible for this policy:

William Munks (Assistant Head (Academic))

Email: [dwm@whitgift.co.uk](mailto:dwm@whitgift.co.uk)

Kirstie Richardson (Head of Learning Support)

Email: [kir@whitgift.co.uk](mailto:kir@whitgift.co.uk)

Policy reviewed: June 2024

Next review: June 2026

## Aims and Objectives

### Introduction

This policy outlines the commitment of Whitgift School to support students with Special Educational Needs, neurodiversity and Disabilities (SEND). We aim to create an inclusive environment that fosters the educational, social, and emotional development of all students, ensuring they achieve their full potential and hopefully beyond.

Whitgift aims to duly observe The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015, as well as the Equality Act 2010 as it applies to this school.

### Definition of SEND and Neurodiversity

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has as a significantly greater difficulty than the majority of others the same age, or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of any kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or post 16 institutions.

Neurodiverse refers to an understanding that neurological differences (such as those related to autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, intellectual disability, and social and emotional disorders) should be honored and respected like any other human variation. It emphasises acceptance and celebrates diversity in how individuals learn and process information.

For the purpose of this policy please take SEND to also incorporate the ethos of neurodiversity.

## Objectives

- To identify and assess all SEN/neurodiverse and/or students with Disabilities as early as possible.
- To provide a differentiated and inclusive curriculum tailored to meet individual needs, in consultation with the SENDCO, Director of Sections and parents and students.
- To ensure all SEN/neurodiverse and/or students with Disabilities are fully integrated into all school activities.
- To work collaboratively with parents, carers, and external agencies.
- To monitor and review progress regularly and adjust support as necessary.

If a student has an Education Health and Care Plan, the school will ensure the objectives within it are met and reviewed at least annually.

## Admission arrangements:

Students with SEND will have equal opportunity to join Whitgift if they satisfy the School's selection procedures. Parents may be asked to contribute to any special resources required to meet their needs. If exam concessions are requested for the entrance exam, e.g. a scribe, a reader, use of a laptop and extra time, evidence should be submitted to demonstrate this is their usual way of working and there are up to date assessments to support this. We strongly encourage parents/carers to share all information known at the time of application, as discovery at a later stage may affect our ability to support and hence admit a student.

## Identification and Assessment

The School's Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is responsible for overseeing arrangements for the implementation and co-ordination of the SEND policy. The SENDCo/ Head of Learning Support is Mrs Kirstie Richardson.

- **Early Identification:** Teachers and staff will use observations and assessments to identify students who may be neurodiverse or have SEND. Referrals will be made through CPOMS and collated by the Learning Support Department (LSD). It is important parents alert staff to any concerns as students can mask difficulties in many ways.
- **Parents should always liaise with the school prior to having an external assessment completed, not doing so could invalidate the assessment for use for external Access Arrangements. External assessments are taken as advisory and will be used to inform the school's knowledge of a student but there is no obligation to follow through on recommendations especially if they do not match the school's profile of a student.**
- **Formal Assessment:** If a potential neurodiversity or SEND is identified, the school will conduct screening assessments in school which may lead to formal assessments by one of our Specialist Teachers or referral to relevant professionals.

- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Regular monitoring and review of student progress to identify any emerging needs, via departments and Heads of Year through regular reporting periods.

## Provision for neurodiversity and SEND

### SEND register

- Students who have been identified as Neurodiverse/SEND will be added to the School's SEND register and marked with a Star. The SEND register will be shared confidentially with all staff (teaching and non-teaching) via iSAMS, so that the individual student's need is recognised and addressed appropriately and effectively. The register will give the following information:
  - **Name, tutor group, need type, short description and provision if applicable.**
  - **Blue Star** – monitor - student has previously had SEND involvement. Students have presented needs which may or may not have been diagnosed by a specialist, they are monitored but do not require intervention. They are supported in class by their subject teacher through differentiation as required. Staff may seek additional advice from the LSD.
  - **Grey Star**- An identified need not requiring intervention, awareness only.
  - **Yellow Star** – intervention and need - students have an identified need, which may or may not have been diagnosed by a specialist, that requires provision different from or additional to that normally available to students of the same age. They are supported by their class teacher as well as strategies and possibly intervention from LSD.
  - **Red Star** – the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Students will be supported by their class teacher as well the LSD, as directed by the EHCP and in liaison with the Local Authority.

**Student Information Sheets (SIS):** Will be provided by the LSD for those with Yellow and Red Stars. The document describes the student with specific strategies and interventions in place to support them. These will be shared with parents/carers.

**Differentiated Teaching:** Adapting teaching methods and materials to meet the needs of neurodiverse/SEND students. Each Department provides a statement detailing how they specifically ensure access to their subject.

### Learning Support Department:

- Deployment of Learning Support Mentors/Teachers to provide additional support in class.
- Provision of intervention sessions to support specific needs in small groups.
- Provision of Option Support Lessons in order to provide an inclusive curriculum.

In the allocation of resources, priority will be given to those students who are identified as having the greatest need following consultation with the SENDCo, external agencies, parents and teachers.

Currently the Learning Support Department has the following staff in charge of supporting student learning:

Mrs Richardson - Head of Learning Support/ SENDCo holding the Hornsby Diploma in SpLD and National Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators. PGCE, BA (Hons).  
Mrs Glenin - HLTA/Specialist Teacher – OCR Diploma in SpLD  
Mrs Kelly - HLTA/Specialist Teacher – OCR Diploma in SpLD  
Mr Powell - HLTA  
Ms Cook - Learning Skills Mentor  
Mr Benson - Learning Skills Mentor  
Ms Trantor - Learning Skills Mentor

## **Assessment of and Provision for SEND**

**We operate a graduated approach, in line with the SEND and disability code of practice: 0-25 guidance (SEND 2015). Assess, Plan, Do, Review**

When a concern is expressed, the SENDCo will be informed via CPOMS and will arrange for consultation and an initial assessment if required to be made.

Based upon this assessment, one of a number of possible outcomes will result, leading to the conclusion that:

- No special help is needed, but teachers will be made aware of the concern and the student will be monitored.
- Teachers are advised of strategies via a SIS, they may employ in the class to support the student.
- The student may be invited to join a small group to address the specific difficulty through a structured teaching programme. This will be reviewed on a termly basis and progress monitored.
- A student may be provided with a specific mentoring programme to support their emotional, organisational and learning needs. This will be reviewed on a termly basis and progress monitored with HOY.
- In consultation with parents, further advice may be sought from external agencies.
- Additional help may be offered during lunchtimes or after school.
- Parents may be encouraged to support their child with specific tasks at home.

In exceptional cases, the School, in consultation with parents, may recommend a modification of the curriculum or a restricted timetable in order to provide an individual programme of support. Parents may be asked to contribute to any additional costs to meet individual additional needs.

## **Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluation**

Individual subject teachers undertake monitoring of student performance in line with department and school policy by marking of classwork, homework and tests, together with formal assessments and examinations in their subject area. Subject teachers keep records

to demonstrate student progress and produce written reports with targets and advice for the students. Heads of Department (HoDs) and Heads of Year (HoYs) review student progress and liaise with the SENDCo with regard to students presenting ongoing difficulties or underachievement.

The Head of Learning Support/ SENDCo reviews the progress of students following the Intervention classes, by informal and formal assessment to ensure progress. A review of progress is given formally through Grade cards, at Parents' Evenings and through informal communication by phone/email. Annual reviews are held for those students on an Education, Health and Care Plan in addition to regular phone or email contact as well as the above.

## **Access Arrangements**

An Access Arrangement can be used for students whose Neurodiversity/Special Educational Needs or Disability are such that it may disadvantage them in assessment situations. Some examples of the type of Access Arrangement that can be granted include an additional time allowance and/or rest breaks, the use of a reader, a scribe, use of a laptop, specially adapted papers (enlarged script, Braille etc) or text to speech, speech to text technology or headphones.

Any application for Access Arrangements will require supporting evidence/information. A learning difficulty in itself does not justify an Access Arrangement, and evidence has to be submitted to prove that the difficulty would unfairly impair the student's performance while being assessed. Where evidence suggests that an Access Arrangement would be unjustified, the School reserves the right not to submit a request. The exam boards have strict criteria to adhere to when requesting Access Arrangements and evidence and recommendations must be provided by specific professionals holding qualifications to do so for example: Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Specialist Teachers, Consultants holding qualifications recognised by JCQ and IB whom MUST seek advice from the school in order to complete any assessment. The school must collate ongoing evidence of need to compliment any assessment.

The School's Examinations Officer in liaison with the SENDCo will co-ordinate the Access Arrangements procedure.

HoDs and HoYs may refer students to the SENDCo for assessment for Access Arrangements, however this needs to be done as early as possible, so that evidence can be submitted to the exams boards well in advance of the final exam. Students deemed eligible for Access Arrangements should have the opportunity to pilot them prior to the public examinations. JCQ and the IB recommend that most Access Arrangements should be in place at the beginning of the course being followed. It is therefore important that teachers, students and parents highlight difficulties early on to enable us to follow the correct protocol.

Updated assessments should take place in the Third Form (Year 9) ready for IGCSEs and GCSEs, similarly early in the Lower Sixth (Year 12) for AS/A2 and IB. These students will mostly have had these arrangements as their normal way of working in earlier internal examinations and in lessons.

Students must sign a data protection sheet to confirm agreement that their information can be shared with a third party for this purpose.

## Professional development

The SENDCo is a member of the Independent Schools SENDCo forum and meets annually in the area cluster to share knowledge, expertise and good practice. The department has active membership to PATOSS and NASEN and continually keeps up to date through CPD with recent educational developments. The Learning Support Team have regular opportunities to attend training and share this with the rest of the team. Whitgift staff are given frequent opportunities to develop their knowledge of SEND through Teaching and Learning Sessions and INSET days. All new staff are offered specific SEND training. There is a programme of SEND training for ITT staff.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- **Headteacher:** Overall responsibility for ensuring provision for students with SEND.
- **SEND Coordinator (SENDCo):** Manages the day-to-day operation of the SEND policy, coordinates support, and liaises with parents, staff, and external agencies.
- **Teachers:** Implement strategies and support as outlined in SISs, monitor student progress, and report to the SENDCo, HOD and HOY.
- **Learning Support Teachers and Mentors:** Support students with SEND under the guidance of teachers and the SENDCo.
- **Governors:** Ensure the school meets its statutory duties regarding SEND and hold the school to account for the provision and outcomes of students with SEND.

## Partnership with Parents and Carers

- **Communication:** Regular communication with parents and carers regarding their child's progress and any changes to support, via the tutor, grades cards and phone/email contact.
- **Involvement:** Encouraging active participation of parents and carers in the decision-making process regarding their child's education. Encouraging Parents SEND group to support one another and providing opportunities for parents to meet in a less formal way.
- **Support:** Providing information and support to parents and carers to help them support their child's learning at home. Providing opportunities for parents to meet once a term with the SENDCo and a Pastoral lead to discuss SEND.

## Complaints Procedure

Parents and carers who have concerns about SEND provision should follow the school's standard complaints procedure. Initial concerns should be discussed with the SENDCo, and if unresolved, referred to the Headteacher and subsequently to the governing body.