

# Whitecross Hereford: High School & Specialist Sports College

Policy: Special Educational Needs

Reviewed by: Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare Committee

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## Introduction

All teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs. Teaching such children is therefore a whole school responsibility.

High quality teaching; which is differentiated and personalised should be available for all students. At the heart of the work of every school class is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and assessing which takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of children. The majority of children will learn and progress within these arrangements. Those children whose overall attainments or attainment in specific subjects fall significantly outside the expected range may have special educational needs.

This policy has been written with comprehensive reference to the SEN Code of Practice 2015, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010, and is to be read in conjunction with our:

- Core Commitment
- Curriculum Policy
- Equality Policy
- Policy on supporting students with medical conditions
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Our report on the implementation of its SEN policy.

And with regard to the following principles:

- Participation of parents and students in all stages of decision-making
- Early identification of needs
- Collaboration with health and social care services
- High quality teaching and provision underpinning educational needs
- Best endeavours being made to make reasonable adjustments to enable inclusion
- Changing and sometimes temporary needs of students.

## Definition of Special Educational Need

A student has special educational needs, where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision. That is, provision *different from or additional to that normally available to students of the same age*. Special educational provision is called for in situations where, *despite targeted intervention*, a student *continues to make less than expected progress* given their age and individual circumstances.

Progress that is *less than expected* can:

- Be significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fail to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- Fail to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- Widen the attainment gap
- Include progress in wider development or social needs.

The process of identifying, assessing, planning, delivering and reviewing the special educational need is captured in a stepped approach detailed below.

### **Step 1: Raising Concern**

Concerns can be raised in a number of ways. On entry by either the previous school or parent; by regular routine analysis of school records; by individual staff; parents or the student expressing concern that there may be a special educational need. When a concern is raised by whatever means relevant evidence is collected. This may include some or all of the following:

- Parent views
- Student views
- Key Assessment data
- Homework marks
- Milestone target progress data
- Progress data from small group withdrawal work
- National data comparisons
- Expectations of progress
- Specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.

Where the concern is raised by a parent this must be logged on the child's file; at Whitecross this will be held electronically on the School Management Information System.

### **Step 2: Assessing the Need**

The student's needs are likely to fall into one or more of the following broad areas, although the profile of difficulty or disability for each student will be different within each broad area and may change over time.

- **Communication and interaction**, including speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and Autism Spectrum Continuum (ASC, still sometimes referred to as 'disorder' - ASD). Such students may have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or understanding/using social rules of communication or imagination.
- **Cognition and learning** difficulties can be moderate (MLD), severe (SLD) or profound and multiple (PMLD). Students with SLD are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum. There may be associated difficulties with mobility and communication. Students with PMLD are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as physical or sensory impairment. Students may also have specific learning difficulties (SpLD), where one or more specific aspect of learning is affected, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.
- **Social, emotional and mental health** (SEM, previously referred to as BESD or SEBD) difficulties are manifested in different ways including becoming withdrawn or displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, such as self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or other physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. These behaviours and conditions may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression or may be a result of disturbance or upset in the student's home life. Other students may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or attachment disorder.

- **Sensory and/or physical needs** prevent or hinder a student from making use of educational facilities. Such conditions may include physical disability (PD), visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or multi-sensory impairment (MSI) and may require specialist support or equipment.

When identifying SEN, it should be noted that:

- Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a student has special educational needs.
- Slow progress and attainment do not necessarily mean that a student has SEN. Equally, it should not be assumed that attainment in line with chronological age means that there is no learning difficulty or disability.
- Short term learning difficulties and wider mental health problems can be caused by events such as bullying or bereavement. Such events will not always lead to children having SEN, although where difficulties are persistent the school will consider whether the student will benefit from being assessed for SEN.
- Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN.

Once a special need has been identified parents/guardians will be invited to discuss the planned intervention.

### **Step 3: Plan**

The Learning Manager and SENCO will agree, in consultation with the parents and the student, the adjustments, special interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress. This will be done in the light of evidence and decisions from Steps 1 and 2. Once the plan is agreed it will be held on the student record and a copy provided for the parent.

### **Step 4: Delivery (Do)**

All relevant staff will be informed of the plan; this will include the subject teachers, teaching assistants and anyone delivering one to one or small group intervention. Where necessary additional training will be provided for staff and the SENCO will play a key role in ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities for each individual child with special needs.

### **Step 5: Review**

Each plan must be reviewed at least three times every year; which would usually be termly. These reviews will form part of the schools usual cycle of consultation and be overseen by the SENCO. These reviews will include parents and will be recorded on the students file, and made available to teachers.

### **Outside Specialist Support**

The school will work closely with the Local Authority and other providers (see Local Offer) and may commission specialist services directly. Such specialist services include, but are not limited to:

- Educational Psychologists
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Specialist teachers with a specialist SEN qualification for students with specific impairments
- Therapists (physio, occupational and speech and language)
- Other health care professionals.

### **Funding for SEN Support**

The school is given an amount of money to support students with additional needs; this is based on the number of students who have historically needed support. This provides differentiated materials and equipment and additional staff to provide intervention and / or support. Students with higher levels of need as identified in EHC plans (see below) may receive additional funding to accommodate their additional needs. The use of this funding will be agreed when the plan is discussed and reviewed.

## **Education Health and Care Plans (EHC)**

Where, despite the school having taken the relevant and purposeful action described above to identify, assess and meet the special needs of a student, that student has not made expected progress, we will consider requesting an Education, Health and Care assessment from the Local Authority. This will only be successful if the student's needs meet the criteria as identified by the Local Authority. Parents may also request an EHC assessment directly however the school will still be asked to provide evidence in support of the request. An EHC needs assessment is likely to be the case where the special educational provision required to meet the student's needs cannot or can no longer be reasonably provided from within the resources normally available to the school.

This assessment should not normally be the first step in the process, but rather will follow the cycle above carried out in the school. The student's parents or the student have the right to request Whitecross to be the named school in their EHC plan. The Local Authority must comply with this preference unless it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the student, or the attendance of the student there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources. The school will be consulted on this. The EHC plan replaces the function of the previous 'statement of SEN'.

An EHC plan may be needed in cases where a student who was well supported at school moves to a further education college where the same range or level of support is not available.

An EHC needs assessment will not always lead to an EHC plan. Parents have the right to appeal if they requested the EHC plan and their request was denied.

## **Support**

The school has a fully qualified Special Educational Needs Coordinator; who is supported by an Assistant SENCO and experienced High Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs). Other HLTAs and TAs are based in subject areas and provide additional support when students attend their subjects or provide intervention for Literacy, Numeracy or Learning Behaviours. The work of the Special Educational Needs department is overseen by the Deputy Headteacher in charge of Provision. The Governors 'Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare' Committee monitors provision for SEN alongside their other responsibilities. This committee has a designated governor with oversight for SEN students and their provision.

## **Complaints**

Concerns should be discussed with the SENCO and / or Learning Manager in the first instance. In the event that this does not find a successful resolution the matter should be referred to the Headteacher. The complaints policy can be found on the school website. In the unlikely event that the complaint is still not resolved the Chair of Governors can be contacted via the school.