



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) (INCLUSION) POLICY

AIMS AND VISION

This policy complies with the statutory requirements outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2014) and has also been written with regard to current legislation, such as the Children and Families Act (2014) and the Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools DfE Feb. 2013.

The River School is an independent Christian school, providing education for students aged 2-16 years. The Early Years and Foundation Stage is externally-funded and has separate policies and procedures, including for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). Education in Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 is funded by school fees that are paid by parents/carers, with the exception of those pupils who have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) (see below) and who may be in receipt of additional external funding.

The support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities involves teachers, support staff, parents and the pupils themselves. It may sometimes involve outside agencies or specialist professionals as well. We are committed to identifying potential barriers to learning as early as possible, with the focus on meeting most needs through high quality classroom teaching. To that end, we aim to equip our teachers and support staff with the knowledge and skills to meet the educational needs of the majority of pupils through general classroom provision. Our aim is to work closely with parents and pupils to identify what support is most likely to help each pupil to fulfil his/her potential.

At The River School, we are concerned with the development of the whole child, not just academic achievement. We believe that God has a plan for everyone's life and it is particularly important that pupils with educational, health or social care needs realise that they are loved and valued for who they are. We want to celebrate strengths, as well as help pupils to make progress in areas where they face challenges. The River School is a community and we aim to fully involve parents/carers and pupils in all aspects of school life, including where there is a need for additional educational support.

The Trustees of the The River School, through the Senior Leadership Team, of which the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is a member, will, within the resources available, make their best endeavours to ensure that all pupils with SEND can access the curriculum and be fully included in the life of the school community.

DEFINITIONS

SEND is defined in the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 as follows:

‘A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.’

Under the Education Act 2016, a pupil has ‘special educational needs’ if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision or he/she has a disability which either

prevents or hinders him/her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for students within the school.

A pupil has a 'learning difficulty' if he/she has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age. Scores on standardised tests, such as those for reading, that are less than 85 are regarded as 'below average' and therefore of significance, e.g. in older pupils it may entitle them to examination access arrangements at GCSE.

Under the Equality Act, 2010, a pupil is considered to have a disability if he/she has a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The following categories are identified in the SEND Code of Practice:

1. Cognition and Learning.
2. Communication and Interaction.
3. Social, mental and emotional health.
4. Sensory and/or physical.

Some students may have additional needs that fall into more than one category.

It is important to note that students whose first language is not English are not assumed to have SEND. These students may struggle to make progress purely because of limitations in their command of English, which requires specific tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL). If difficulties persist then it may be necessary to consider SEND as an alternative explanation.

ADMISSIONS

As with all schools, The River School cannot provide for every child, but will meet each individual's needs through any reasonable adjustments that have been identified as being necessary. The same admissions process applies to all potential new students at The River School. Please see the 'Admissions Policy' for further details. It is essential that parents/carers of potential new students disclose in full any additional learning needs at the outset of the admissions process. Consideration will be given to whether needs can be met through the educational provision that is offered to all students, which is likely to be the case with the majority of students. It may be possible to meet more complex needs by making reasonable adjustments that enable the student to access the school's educational provision and this is discussed with parents/carers as part of the admissions process. Adjustments are regarded as reasonable where they do not put undue pressure on the school's resources and where they are conducive to the learning of other students.

Students who have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) (see below), or who are in the process of receiving one, will require the agreement of the Local Authority for The River School to be the named school on the plan. The Local Authority would need to be satisfied that the school can meet the student's needs, as outlined in the plan.

UNIVERSAL PROVISION

The needs of most pupils, including those with SEND, are met through the provision of high quality classroom teaching. Class numbers are small and members of staff get to know each student very well as an individual. This is at the heart of providing for each pupil's individual needs. It is very often small adjustments, such as providing a pupil with some additional classroom resources, that make a big difference. All members of staff have regular training in a range of additional needs and we are prepared to support additional training when a new pupil arrives who has needs that are not so familiar to the teaching staff. It is also very important to us that we work closely with parents/carers and the students themselves.

Teachers regularly assess the progress of pupils and there is a whole school tracking system for literacy and mathematics skills. Standardised testing of core literacy and mathematics skills happens in Years 1-9. Any difficulties that emerge from these assessments, as well as from observations made by members of staff, may be passed on to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). The SENCo may give advice to staff, carry out further assessments and/or meet with parents to discuss the concerns.

ADDITIONAL PROVISION

Where a pupil has additional needs that cannot be met from universal provision, additional support and/or resources will be put in place. The form that this should take will be discussed with the pupil, parents/carers, any outside professionals involved and relevant school staff. The pupil will be placed on the 'SEN Register', in the category of 'SEN Support'.

The 'graduated response' refers to the idea that there is a continuum of needs, with more complex needs requiring a higher level of intervention. This means that needs are identified, next steps are agreed, provision is planned and additional support, sometimes including help from outside professionals, is put in place. A cycle of Assess/Plan/Do/Review ensures that progress and additional support are regularly reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted. An 'SEN Support Provision Record' tracks this cycle through the school year. Teaching staff may also have access to additional information about the pupil's needs, e.g. professional reports, which are held securely by the SENCo.

Each pupil in the category of 'SEN Support' will have a 'Pupil Profile' that is available for everyone working with them. This contains information about support needs, including the perspective of the pupils themselves. A 'Provision Map' will outline in more detail the targets that a pupil is working towards.

Additional provision can take many forms and we aim to customise it, as far as is possible. However, the most common forms of additional provision are as follows:

- More focused help from a teacher and/or teaching assistant, e.g. additional one-to-one reading session for primary pupils. We are also able to offer primary pupils short-term interventions for aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- Provision of additional resources/equipment, e.g. a 'fiddle toy' for someone who needs help focusing.
- One-to-one work with the SENCo.
- Additional pastoral care, e.g. mentoring.

- Rest breaks.
- Examination access arrangements (please also see below for how these arrangements work for GCSE examinations).
- Support for speech and language and social skills, as recommended by external professionals.
- Support in accessing external services, e.g. speech and language therapy.
- Support choosing appropriate GCSE options.
- Support choosing post-16 options. N.B. Relevant paperwork, such as that relating to examination access arrangements, is passed on to post-16 educational settings. It is important that students with additional needs share details of these on college application forms so that the learning support department at the setting is aware of the need to request information from the SENCo at The River School.
- Meeting regularly with the pupil and parents/carers.

GCSE EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

We aim to ensure that all pupils have their support needs fully identified. This includes consideration of whether examination access arrangements are going to be required for public examinations, such as GCSEs. We aim to establish a student's normal way of working during these years so that we have good evidence regarding the need to assess for examination access arrangements. Students who need additional time in examinations in Years 7-9 are likely to need formal assessment to see whether there is sufficient evidence for an application to be made for extra time in GCSE examinations. Some students require other access arrangements, such as a reader or scribe. The rules about assessment for examination access arrangements for GCSEs are very strict. The assessment must be carried out no earlier than Year 9 and it has to be carried out in school. Any parents/carers who feel that their child is likely to need examination access arrangements need to talk to the SENCo about this, although it is likely that the possibility will already have been discussed during Years 7 and 8.

Some students find that they are better recording written work, particularly extended writing, on a laptop. We have flexible arrangements in the senior school about use of a laptop and we are willing to discuss this as a long-term arrangement. However, it is important to note that the final decision about whether a student is permitted to use a laptop in GCSE examinations is taken by the Examinations Officer and SENCo, who would expect to have evidence that this is the best way for the student to write in examinations and it has been established as the normal way of working.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Where pupils continue to face challenges, despite additional support, it may be appropriate to involve outside professionals. Some universal services can be accessed via GP referral, e.g. Umbrella Pathway assessment for Autistic Spectrum Disorders. We can advise and support parents in seeking help from such outside professionals. We would always advise parents to have a discussion with the SENCo before seeking assessment by external services. Professional assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties, such as Dyslexia, can be carried out in school. This can be arranged in discussion with the SENCo.

EHC NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The majority of pupils with SEND will have their needs met within school. However, where a pupil is not making the expected progress and it becomes clear, usually through assessment by relevant professionals, that there are complex needs, it may be necessary to initiate a needs assessment with a view to providing an Education and Health Care Plan. This is the replacement for the old 'statement'. The Local Authority carries out the needs assessment and will only agree to do so if there is strong evidence that it is necessary. Parents and school would consult in order to decide whether to request an EHC Needs Assessment. It is important to note that an Education and Health Care Plan may not always be issued following on from an EHC Needs Assessment.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE PLAN

Education and Health Care Plans (EHC Plans) include health and social care needs alongside educational needs. They can be extended up to the age of 25 years so may be very important for individuals who are likely to need some form of long-term support. The Local Authority may agree to provide an EHCP for an existing pupil in an independent school or to place a child with an existing EHC Plan in an independent school, if the parent or young person requests this. The school may then be named on the plan and the Local Authority will then pay the school fees and the costs of the support outlined in the plan. EHCPs must be reviewed on an annual basis.

ACCESSIBILITY

We aim to make the school site as accessible as possible, given the constraints of being on a site that includes listed buildings. Accessibility would be a factor to consider as part of the needs assessment that is made during the admissions process.

STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL/HEALTH NEEDS

Students with medical and/or health needs may be placed on the SEN register if they require additional support. It may be appropriate to provide these students with an Individual Health Plan and involve external medical/health professionals in contributing to the contents of the plan.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

Support for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) is provided on the basis of individual need. The following support is available:

- Initial meeting and discussion with parents/carers to establish need and, if necessary, create a support plan.
- Class and subject teachers are able to differentiate work in lessons to take account of individual needs, including EAL. For example, specific subject vocabulary could be provided in advance of a lesson so that the individual is able to develop understanding of new vocabulary.
- Examination access arrangements can be assessed and provided for, where necessary.

- Laptops are available for pupils to record written work and parents might be able to contribute towards purchasing relevant software.
- Parents/Carers may wish to fund private EAL tuition outside school, with teachers liaising with the tutor, as appropriate.
- Other individual provisions can be made on a need by need basis.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) is responsible for making arrangements for English as an Additional Language (EAL), although students with these needs are not classed as having SEND unless there is evidence of other difficulties in addition to those associated with having English as an Additional Language (EAL).

RECORDS

Appropriate records are kept securely, either on paper or electronically. They are available on a need to know basis, e.g. a new class teacher may want to read professional reports about the pupils in their care. Records are sent to the receiving establishment when pupils move on to other schools or post-16 colleges, and the SENCo is available to discuss a student's needs with staff at the receiving establishment.

COMPLAINTS

General concerns should be shared with class teacher's/form tutors in the first instance. If concerns persist, or they are more complex, an appointment can be made with the SENCo through the school office or directly by email jchester@riverschool.co.uk. Formal complaints should follow the official complaints procedure.

SEND INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE (SENDIASS)

Parents/Carers who need impartial advice regarding SEND can contact this service. Contact details are below:

Website: www.SENDworcestershire.co.uk

Email: sendiass@worcestershire.gov

Telephone: 01905 768153

Address: SEND Information, Advice and Support Services, PO Box 73, Worcester, WR5 2YA