

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH SCHOOL
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS and DISABILITY POLICY

Date of Policy: April 2017

Date of Review: April 2019

AIM:

It is our aim that all students achieve their potential and are fully included in the life of the school. It is crucial to the ethos and culture of the school that ***'all teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs'*** (SEN Code of Practice 2014).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, faith, gender or capability in all aspects of school. We promote self and mutual respect and a caring and non-judgmental attitude throughout the school

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN/D):

The 2014 Code of Practice states:

"A person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. At compulsory school age this means he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning 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 a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools." Taken from 2014 SEN Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years– Introduction xiii and xiv

There are four broad categories of SEN/D:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Physical and sensory.

SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS:

Thomas Gainsborough School aims to be fully inclusive. All students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities are welcome and arrangements for their admission to this school will be in accordance with the Thomas Gainsborough School Admissions policy.

ADAPTATIONS TO THE CURRICULUM AND TEACHING & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

Adaptations to the physical environment will be made, as appropriate, to accommodate students with sensory or physical disabilities. All of our classrooms are inclusion-friendly: we aim to teach in a way that will support students with learning difficulties and enable them to access the full National Curriculum. As part of normal class differentiation, curriculum content and ideas can be simplified and made more accessible by using visual, tactile and concrete resources. We also have our Access Curriculum which is a nurture group for students who, for a range of reasons, might have difficulties in accessing a mainstream timetable.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The head teacher and all school staff

- The head teacher has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the school's work, including provision for children with SEN/D. The head teacher will keep the governing body informed and work closely with the school SENCO
- All teaching and non-teaching staff will be involved in the development of the school's SEN/D policy and be fully aware of the school's procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for students with SEN/D.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)

The SENCo working closely with the head teacher, senior management team, teachers and teaching assistants will:

- be closely involved in the strategic development of the SEN/D policy and provision to raise the achievement of students with SEN/D
- maintain the impetus of the inclusion agenda across the school
- have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN/D policy and for co-ordinating provision for students with SEN/D, particularly through Individual Educational Plans and Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP).

Governors

The governing body of the school in liaison with the staff and head teacher will:

- do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any student who has special educational needs
- ensure, that where the 'responsible person' – the head teacher or the appropriate governor – has been informed by the LA that a student has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach him/her
- ensure that teachers in the school are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for those students who have special educational needs
- consult the governing bodies of other schools when it seems to be necessary or desirable in the interests of co-ordinated special provision in the area as a whole
- ensure that a student with special educational needs joins in the activities of the school, together with students who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible
- report to parents/carers on the implementation of the school's policy for students with special educational needs
- have regard to this policy when carrying out its duties toward all students with special educational needs

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT, PROVISION AND REVIEW PROCESSES:

Identification and Assessment

Early identification of students with SEN /D is of the utmost importance. This is achieved during year 6 through liaison with the feeder primary schools. Early warning is given to the school by the primary schools who send us copies of relevant reports from the educational psychologist/advisory teachers and also a copy of the Education Health Care Plan. Visits are made to the feeder primary schools in the summer term to meet with the learning support manager and relevant support staff to exchange information and records and to meet with students. Discussion takes place between the SENCOs and the parents concerning students who have SEN/D, a Record of Support and/or have received any extra help or experienced any academic or social problems. Students with behavioural/emotional problems significant enough to have needed some intervention are discussed. Details of students with physical problems that may present difficulties in fully following the curriculum are passed on to the relevant staff via the Student Support Manager.

All staff at Thomas Gainsborough School are notified of students entering the school who have an EHCP; those who have caused concern at primary school, or are being monitored by the Student Support Department via a bulletin which is issued before the students transfer to us.

A comprehensive list of SEN/D students throughout the school is circulated at the start of each academic year. It is then the responsibility of individual staff to refer to the SENCO for further detailed information and provisions for the students they teach.

The success of the whole school approach to SEN/D is monitored continuously by all teaching staff, through progress checks and departmental meetings. Success can also be seen by an improvement in reading and spelling ages, and progress through the levels of the National Curriculum subjects, and finally achievement measured by success in gaining external qualifications such as GCSEs, BTECs or 'A' levels as appropriate. Further indicators include attendance, participation in extra curriculum activities, punctuality, behaviour and effort.

The work of teachers and intervention and support staff across the partnership is led by the SENCO. The Learning Support team have a key responsibility for the additional and specific support each individual child might need. This means direct support in lessons, providing strategies to staff that will help in lessons or through the delivery of evidence-based interventions designed to accelerate progress and ensure students catch up with their peers. They are responsible for ensuring this policy is up-to-date and implemented across each academy. The work of each academy will reflect the 2014 Code of Practice. The SENCO will also strive to keep up to date with all changes in SEN/D such as legal changes, good practice guidelines, new resources and ideas and will be supported in this through regular training.

Provision:

At Thomas Gainsborough School we follow national guidance regarding stages of SEND, which is a staggered approach classed as waves. Learners may move up or down the waves as necessary, according to their needs, alongside consultation with the child or young person and their parents. Quality first teaching ensures teachers plan and deliver learning challenges for all learner groups within the class. In addition at Thomas Gainsborough School we offer an alternative pathway for students with specific needs via our Access provision.

Wave 1

The class teacher, academic tutor or student support manager will discuss progress with the young person and their parents and plan to provide additional support within the classroom, to help secure progress and close gaps in learning. Support will be closely monitored. If no progress is made or further strategies are needed, they will discuss next steps with the SENCO. Parents will be informed about any outcomes and next steps.

Wave 2

The class teacher and academic tutor, with the SENCo, may plan extra interventions to support learning if it is felt that a learner needs different or additional support than what is happening within the classroom. This support could be, for example, extra support from a learning support assistant or learning mentor or personalised resources. This provision will be discussed and planned with the young person and their parents and progress will be monitored by the staff in conjunction with the SENCo in the form of an individual education plan.

Wave 3

If a young person continues to make little or no progress over a period of time, the SENCo will seek advice from outside agencies such as Speech and Language Therapists or the Educational Psychologist. In this case, the child or young person and their parents will be consulted in a meeting and asked to give written consent for external agencies to work with their child. The external agencies and school will then work together to devise the best ways to support the learner. Individual interventions will be planned to support progress.

DOCUMENTING SUPPORT FOR SEN/D STUDENTS:

Once a student has been identified as needing SEN support they are placed on the SEN register and the following paperwork is completed:

- Termly, at progress meetings, individual targets will be produced and reviewed, recording specific and challenging targets for the student to achieve in a term, together with the personalised provision (which may be 1-1 or in a small group) put in place to enable the student to achieve these targets
- Monthly, in conjunction with the Learning Support Assistant who work with the student, smaller targets are discussed with student (and sometimes) parents and agreed next steps are recorded towards the longer term targets
- Weekly, on tracking records or in planners the teacher or the learning support assistant records a short comment about progress made towards each of the targets.

MOVING TO AN EHCP (EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN)

If students fail to make progress, in spite of high quality, targeted support, we may apply for the student to be assessed for an EHCP.

Generally, we apply for an EHCP if:

- The student is Looked After and therefore additionally vulnerable
- The student has a disability which is lifelong and which means that they will always need support to learn effectively
- The student's achievements are so far below their peers that we think it likely that the child may at some point benefit from special school provision.

Students, who we think will manage in mainstream schools, albeit with support, are less often assessed for EHC Plans. Having a diagnosis for example of ASD, ADHD or dyslexia does not mean that a student needs an EHCP.

If the application for an EHCP is successful, a member of the Local Authority will call a meeting for parents, the student and the school, together with any health or social care professionals who are involved with the family. The meeting will record the student's strengths, his/her dreams and aspirations as well as the barriers s/he face. Following the meeting, the Local Authority will produce the EHCP, which will record the decisions made at the meeting.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS:

We aim to have good and informative relationships with our students and parents. If a student is experiencing difficulties, parents will be informed as soon as possible. It should not come as a surprise to a parent to learn that his/her child is being identified as having SEN.

Once a student has been identified as having SEN, the school will invite the parents to a meeting to:

- formally discuss that their child is being placed on the SEN register
- discuss assessments that have been completed
- agree a plan and provision for the next term.

This is part of the graduated approach cycle of 'Assess, Plan, and Do, Review' required in the SEN Code of Practice (2014).

The student will be invited to attend all or part of the meeting. Records are kept of these meetings and copies are available to parents.

Thereafter, parents are invited to a meeting at least each term to review progress made, set targets and agree provision for the next term. In the summer term, there is an annual review of the student's progress.

LIAISON:

Liaison with other schools/colleges

At Thomas Gainsborough School it is recognised that close liaison with the primary schools is essential if there is to be continuity in the support offered to students with SEN and/or disabilities throughout their education.

Regular liaison meetings are held with the SENCos, to discuss respective policies, implementation of such policies and problems encountered in the course of the year.

There are links with various specialist agencies and professionals to ensure that support, advice and further intervention can be accessed to enable SEN students achieve their potential.

ACCESS TO EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

All of our students have equal access to before school, lunchtime and after school clubs which develop engagement with the wider curriculum. Where necessary, we make accommodation and adaptation to meet the physical and learning needs of our children. School trips are part of our curriculum and we aim for all students to benefit from them. No student is excluded from a trip because of SEN/D, disability or medical needs. For further information see the Accessibility Plan on our website.

EXAMINATION CONCESSIONS:

Students will be identified for examination concessions in line with the identification of all SEN/D students. Students can be eligible for a reader, writer, additional time, modified examination papers, enlarged scripts, EAL support, use of a laptop, etc. dependent upon the students' individual needs. Suggesting students for examination concessions should be done as soon as possible as application can be a lengthy process. The student will initially be screened by the SEN/D department and our assessment will be checked by the County Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist or a Medical Practitioner. The ultimate decision for eligibility and provision will rest with the Examinations Board and not with staff or parents. Provision is only granted for students to access the examinations not to give them advantage over other students.

STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS:

Behavioural difficulties are not recognised as a special educational need in the 2014 SEN Code of Practice. All staff are trained in managing and supporting behaviour. All student behaviour is responded to consistently in line with our Expectations for Learning policy, although reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate individual needs. The school has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.

If a student's behaviour is felt to be a response to trauma or to home-based experiences (e.g. bereavement, parental separation) we will offer to complete a Common Assessment Framework referral (CAF) with the family and support the child through that process. If parents and school are concerned that the student may have mental health needs, we encourage parents to ask their GP for a referral to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

STUDENTS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL):

Pupils who speak English as an additional language will be provided with additional support if required.

National guidelines on expected progress for students new to English are used to identify any underlying learning difficulties if concerns are raised by the school or the parents/carers.

SUFFOLK'S LOCAL OFFER:

The purpose of the local offer is to enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. It includes provision from birth to 25 years across education, health and social care.

Suffolk's Local Offer is available on the Suffolk County Council website.

In addition, <https://www.access-unlimited.co.uk/> provides children and young people with additional needs and disabilities with a range of information and resources. It includes information about activities and breaks available for Suffolk children with SEN/D as well as information for parents about benefits, about how Suffolk aims to support children through education, health and social care.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Thomas Gainsborough School will always aim to support students and Parents/Carers and provide appropriate provision for students with special educational needs. All members of staff are prepared to meet with Parents/Carers (by appointment) to discuss matters in an attempt to resolve them. Should Parents/Carers find the outcome unsatisfactory they have the right to make a formal complaint to the Head teacher?

REVIEW FRAMEWORK

The policy will be reviewed biannually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance)

SEN/D GOVERNOR: Jenny Smith

GLOSSARY OF TERMS / ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyper-activity Disorder
ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder
CAF - Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
EAL - English as an Additional Language
EHC - Education, Health and Care
EHCP - Education, Health and Care Plan
GP - General Practitioner
HLTA - Higher Level Teaching Assistant
LA - Local Authority
LSA - Learning Support Assistant
SEN - Special Educational Needs
SENCo - Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENS - Special Educational Needs Support
SIMS - In school record keeping system