

Special Educational Needs Policy

Document Management Information

Applicable to:	All staff and pupils at The Abbey School, Faversham
Dissemination:	The document will be available to staff via the Academy's Policy Centre on the shared area of the IT system. The document will also be published and shared electronically within the school.
Training:	Available to staff on request
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School Policy Owner:	Rowland Speller - Principal / Jackie Lucas - Vice Principal / Sara Spring - Vice Principal
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Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Definition of special educational needs	4
3. Definition of disability.....	5
4. Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision	6
5. Teaching and support for students with SEND	7
6. Working with parents, carers and students	8
7. Complaints procedure	9
8. Support services and professional partnerships	10
9. Support for parents, carers and young people.....	10
10. Transition arrangements.....	11
11. Kent SEND Local Offer	12

1. Introduction

The Abbey School is committed to ensuring that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access education, participate fully in school life and achieve their potential. We recognise that students' needs may change over time and that effective support requires collaboration with students, parents and carers, staff and relevant professionals.

This policy sets out our approach to identifying and supporting students with SEND, removing barriers to learning and participation, and reviewing the effectiveness of provision.

The policy reflects the following legislation and statutory guidance, including subsequent amendments:

- Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years, January 2015.
- Equality Act 2010.
- School Admissions Code 2021.

Our approach to ordinarily available provision is informed by the Kent Mainstream Core Standards.

This policy should be read alongside the school's SEN Information Report, Accessibility Plan, Behaviour Policy, Equalities Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Homework Policy and Complaints Policy.

The school will seek and consider the views of students, parents and carers, staff and governors when reviewing this policy. The policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where changes in legislation, guidance or school practice require it.

2. Definition of special educational needs

A child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision.

For a child of compulsory school age or a young person, this means that they:

- Have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- Have a disability that prevents or hinders them from using facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

For students of this age, special educational provision means educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that generally made for others of the same age in mainstream settings.

A student does not have special educational needs solely because the language used at home differs from the language in which they are taught.

The SEND Code of Practice identifies four broad areas of need:

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

These areas support assessment and planning; they are not fixed categories. Students may have needs across more than one area, and their needs may change over time. Support will be based on an assessment of the individual student's needs and the barriers they experience.

3. Definition of disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

“Substantial” means more than minor or trivial. “Long-term” means that the effects have lasted, or are likely to last, at least 12 months, or are likely to last for the rest of the person's life. Recurring or fluctuating effects may also meet this definition.

Some students with special educational needs also have a disability. However, a student may have a disability without having SEN, or have SEN without meeting the definition of disability.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled students to prevent substantial disadvantage. The need for reasonable adjustments will be considered whether or not a student has SEN or an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Our approach will focus on each student's individual circumstances, access to learning and participation, rather than making assumptions based on a diagnosis.

3.1 Provision for students with SEND

The Abbey School supports students with needs across the four broad areas identified in the SEND Code of Practice:

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

Students may have needs across more than one area. Provision is planned according to each student's individual needs, strengths and barriers to learning and participation.

Support includes adaptive classroom teaching, reasonable adjustments and targeted interventions, informed by the Kent Mainstream Core Standards. Some students require more specialist provision, including support through the school's Specialist Resource Provision where a place has been allocated.

The school supports students receiving SEN support and students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). For students with an EHCP, we work with the Local Authority and relevant professionals to implement the provision specified in the plan and review its effectiveness.

The Local Authority determines the school named in an EHCP through the statutory consultation process, taking account of parental or young person preferences and the relevant legal requirements. Where The Abbey School is named in a final EHCP, the school must admit the student.

Admission arrangements for students without an EHCP follow the school's published admissions policy and applicable legislation. Students will not be discriminated against because of their SEN or disability.

3.2 Identification and assessment of students with SEND

The Abbey School identifies additional needs through ongoing assessment, classroom observation, information from previous settings, and discussions with students, parents and carers.

All students' progress is tracked termly, supported by termly assessments throughout the academic year. Two formal data collection points provide information for reports to parents and carers. Where appropriate, further assessments may explore reading, spelling or other aspects of learning.

Staff consider attainment alongside communication, independence, emotional wellbeing, attendance and participation. Concerns raised by students or families are considered alongside school evidence.

Where a student is making less than expected progress, staff review their teaching, the support already provided and possible barriers to learning. Slow progress or low attainment does not automatically mean that a student has SEN. Equally, attainment in line with age expectations does not rule out additional needs.

Where SEN is identified, the school uses the graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do and Review. Support is recorded, agreed outcomes are identified and a review date is established. Further advice or assessment is sought where appropriate.

Support is based on identified need and does not depend on a student having a formal diagnosis or an EHCP.

4. Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

The school evaluates provision through students' progress towards agreed outcomes, assessment information, classroom evidence, participation and feedback from students, parents and carers.

Provision maps and individual support arrangements are reviewed at agreed assessment and review points. Reviews consider whether support has been delivered as planned, its impact and any changes required. Where support is not effective, the school adjusts its approach and considers whether specialist advice is needed.

For students with an EHCP, ongoing monitoring informs the statutory annual review. This considers progress towards outcomes, the effectiveness of provision and whether changes to the plan are required. Concerns about changing needs are addressed promptly rather than being deferred until the annual review.

Governors receive an annual overview of SEND provision and its impact, with individual students' confidentiality protected.

5. Teaching and support for students with SEND

Classroom teaching

High-quality teaching and appropriate adaptations form the foundation of our SEND provision. Subject teachers retain responsibility for the learning and progress of every student in their classes, including students supported by teaching assistants or specialist staff.

Teachers use information about students' needs to adapt explanations, tasks, resources and classroom routines. Relevant advice from internal assessments, external professionals and EHCPs is incorporated into teaching and support.

Additional provision may include small-group teaching, individual tuition, mentoring or targeted interventions. These approaches are selected according to assessed need and reviewed for their impact. Support aims to develop students' skills, confidence and independence.

The quality and accessibility of teaching are monitored through the school's teaching and learning arrangements, informed by the Teachers' Standards.

Resources and funding

The school allocates resources to SEND provision through its overall budget, including the identified notional SEN budget. This is not a separate fund or a fixed allocation for each student.

Under current funding arrangements, mainstream schools are expected to contribute up to £6,000 per student per year towards the additional costs of provision for students with high needs, above the cost of basic educational provision.

Funding thresholds do not determine whether a student has SEN and do not replace the school's duties to support students or make reasonable adjustments.

Participation in school life

Students with SEND are included in the school's clubs, trips and wider activities. The school plans reasonable adjustments and appropriate support to remove barriers to participation.

Where an activity presents additional risks, planning considers the individual student's needs, appropriate staffing, accessibility and proportionate risk management. The school works with students and families to identify arrangements that support safe participation.

Emotional wellbeing and social development

The school supports emotional wellbeing, resilience and social development through PSHE, tutor time, everyday interactions and targeted support.

Depending on assessed need, support may include:

- Mentoring, targeted interventions and individual support.
- Access to appropriate pastoral spaces.
- Support through the Personal Education Centre (PEC), with individually planned provision and clear review arrangements.
- Advice and support through the Community of Schools.
- Referral to relevant early help, health or mental health services, using current referral pathways.

Where individual timetables are used, their purpose, intended outcomes and review arrangements are clearly recorded.

Leadership and staff development

SEND provision is coordinated by the Assistant Principal and SENCo, Mrs Frorath, who is a qualified teacher and holds the National Award for SEN Coordination.

The school's professional development programme includes SEND training informed by students' current needs and those of future cohorts. Teaching and support staff receive relevant updates throughout the academic year.

The SEN department provides advice and a drop-in system to help staff adapt teaching and support individual students.

Where specialist equipment or facilities are recommended, the school considers how these can be secured through purchase, loan or relevant specialist services. Advice on complex communication needs and assistive technology may be sought from the Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology Service.

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6. Working with parents, carers and students

The Abbey School recognises parents and carers as partners in understanding students' needs and evaluating support. Students are supported to express their views and contribute to decisions in ways appropriate to their age, understanding and communication needs.

All parents and carers are invited to parents' evenings and receive reports on attainment, attitudes to learning and targets twice a year. Additional discussions can be arranged where concerns arise.

Students may receive catch-up support without being identified as having SEN. Such support is recorded and evaluated. Where SEN is identified and special educational provision is made, parents and carers are informed and involved in planning.

For students receiving SEN support, the school will arrange discussions with parents and carers at least three times each year to review progress, agree outcomes and consider changes to support. These discussions may be coordinated with existing meetings where sufficient time is available.

Parents, carers and students with an EHCP are supported to contribute to the annual review. Relevant professionals are invited in accordance with statutory requirements, and advice and information gathered for the review are circulated prior to the meeting.

Information is shared in accessible formats, and communication arrangements are adapted where needed to enable meaningful participation.

7. Complaints procedure

The Abbey School is committed to working with students, parents and carers to resolve concerns about SEND provision promptly and constructively.

In the first instance, parents and carers are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the relevant teacher, pastoral member of staff or SENCo. The school will help families identify the most appropriate person to contact.

Where concerns remain unresolved, a formal complaint may be made through the school's published Complaints Policy. This explains the stages of the procedure, response timescales and arrangements for escalation. Families are not required to approach every member of staff before making a formal complaint. Reasonable adjustments will be made where needed to enable access to the complaints process.

Following completion of the school's complaints procedure, concerns about how the complaint was handled may be referred to the Department for Education, in accordance with its published remit and guidance.

Local Authority decisions and provision

Appeals against certain Local Authority decisions about EHC needs assessments and EHCPs follow a separate statutory process. This includes decisions not to assess, not to issue a plan, and disputes about specified educational sections of a plan. The school cannot overturn these decisions but will provide relevant evidence and cooperate with the statutory process.

Complaints about the Local Authority's actions or failure to secure provision should be directed through the appropriate Local Authority complaints route. This does not prevent the school from investigating concerns about its own actions or provision.

Independent disagreement resolution or mediation may help resolve some SEND disputes. These services do not replace statutory rights of appeal. Families should seek advice about the applicable procedures and deadlines.

Disability discrimination

Claims of disability discrimination by the school may be made to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). These are separate from appeals against Local Authority decisions and do not depend on a student having an EHCP.

Claims normally need to be submitted within six months of the alleged discrimination. Families should not delay seeking advice while a school complaint is being considered.

Information, Advice and Support Kent can provide impartial information about complaints, mediation and appeal routes.

8. Support services and professional partnerships

The Abbey School works with relevant services and organisations to strengthen provision for students with SEND. Depending on individual needs and current service arrangements, these may include:

- The Community of Schools, for advice, collaboration and access to support.
- Local Authority SEND and inclusion services.
- Educational psychology, specialist teaching, therapy and health services.
- The Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology Service, where specialist advice or assessment is appropriate.
- Professional networks, including nasen and local SENCo forums.

The school also signposts families to independent information and support services, including IASK and Kent PACT.

Referrals are considered according to assessed need and the relevant service's criteria. Students, parents and carers are involved in discussions, and consent is sought where required.

9. Support for parents, carers and young people

Information Advice and Support Kent

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support about SEND for children and young people aged 0 to 25 and their parents and carers.

The service helps families understand their rights, participate in decisions and access information about educational support, EHC needs assessments, EHCPs and resolving disagreements.

- Helpline: 03000 413000
- Email: iask@kent.gov.uk
- Website: <https://www.iask.org.uk/>

Kent Parents and Carers Together

Kent Parents and Carers Together (Kent PACT) is Kent's parent carer forum for families of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities.

The forum gathers families' views and works with education, health and Local Authority services to influence improvements in local provision.

- Website: <https://kentpactnew2022.co.uk/>

The school can help families access this information where internet access, language or other communication barriers make this difficult.

10. Transition arrangements

The Abbey School plans transitions with students, parents and carers, previous or receiving settings and relevant professionals. Arrangements reflect each student's needs, strengths, aspirations and concerns.

Transition into the school

The school liaises with primary schools and other previous settings to gather information about learning needs, successful strategies, existing provision and relevant professional advice.

The Year 6 to Year 7 transition programme includes transition activities, liaison with feeder schools and opportunities for discussion with families. Additional preparation is arranged where needed, such as individual visits, visual information, meetings with key staff or familiarisation with routines and support spaces.

For students joining at other times, transition arrangements are planned according to their circumstances and needs.

Transitions within the school

Staff consider support needed when students change classes, teachers, year groups or courses. Relevant information is shared with receiving staff, and students are helped to understand changes in expectations, routines and available support.

Preparation for adulthood and onward transition

Students are supported to explore appropriate education, training and employment pathways. Planning takes account of their interests, aspirations, qualifications and support needs.

For students with an EHCP, annual reviews from Year 9 onwards include preparation for adulthood. This considers further education and employment, independence, participation in the community and health.

At Key Stage 4, students receive support with post-16 choices and transition planning. At Key Stage 5, tutors and relevant staff support progression to further or higher education, training or employment. The enrichment programme also supports the development of skills for independent living.

With appropriate information-sharing arrangements, the school provides receiving settings with information about students' needs, effective strategies and provision. Where appropriate, additional visits or liaison meetings support continuity.

11. Kent SEND Local Offer

Kent County Council's SEND Local Offer provides information about education, health and social care services, eligibility, support for families and preparation for adulthood.

The school signposts families to the Local Offer and can assist those who need help accessing or understanding the information.

Kent SEND Local Offer:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/about-the-send-local-offer>

Examination access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

The Abbey School follows the current Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments regulations and relevant awarding body requirements. This section should be read alongside the school's Examinations Policy and Word Processor Policy.

Purpose and eligibility

Access arrangements enable students with disabilities, learning difficulties or other eligible needs to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills without unnecessary barriers.

Arrangements must:

- Respond to the student's individual needs.
- Meet the relevant JCQ or awarding body criteria.
- Preserve the assessment objectives and integrity of the qualification.
- Avoid giving an unfair advantage.

A diagnosis, such as dyslexia, autism or ADHD, or the existence of an EHCP, does not automatically entitle a student to a particular arrangement. Decisions consider the impact of their difficulties, the assessment demands and the required supporting evidence.

Arrangements will normally reflect the student's established way of working in school. Different arrangements may be appropriate for different subjects or assessment components.

Temporary injuries or newly arising conditions are considered under the relevant regulations; an established history of using an arrangement may not be possible in these circumstances.

Arrangements that may be considered

Depending on individual need and the applicable rules, arrangements may include:

- Supervised rest breaks.
- Extra time.
- A reader, computer reader or permitted examination reading pen.
- A scribe or speech recognition technology.
- A word processor.

- A prompter.
- Modified papers or permitted changes to paper colour or presentation.
- Alternative rooming arrangements.
- A live speaker for eligible recorded components.
- An alternative examination site.

This list is not exhaustive. Each arrangement has its own conditions and restrictions. Bilingual translation dictionaries are considered separately under the applicable language-related eligibility rules.

Evidence and decision making

The SENCo coordinates identification and evidence gathering, working with subject teachers, the school-appointed assessor and the examinations officer.

Evidence may include:

- Teacher observations and examples of classroom work.
- Records from internal assessments and mock examinations.
- Relevant professional or medical information.
- Assessment results from the school-appointed assessor.
- Information about arrangements used at a previous setting.

The appropriate JCQ documentation is completed where required, including Form 8 for relevant learning difficulties or Form 9 for relevant communication, medical or sensory needs. Previous arrangements and privately obtained reports are considered alongside current school evidence and the applicable criteria.

Not all arrangements require an online application. Where approval is required, the school obtains it through the appropriate process and retains the required evidence for inspection.

Implementation and review

Students are supported to practise using agreed arrangements in relevant school assessments. Staff monitor their use and effectiveness and review them when needs or assessment demands change.

Students and parents or carers are informed of decisions and can raise questions with the SENCo. Concerns are addressed through the school's published procedures.

Access arrangements are distinct from special consideration, which concerns eligible adverse circumstances affecting a student at the time of an assessment.