

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2023 -2024

St Albans Independent College

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1. Aims and objectives

Our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy aims to:

- Make sure our College fully implements national legislation and guidance regarding students with SEND
- Set out how our College will:
 - Support and make provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities
 - Provide students with SEND access to all aspects of College life so they can engage in the activities of the College alongside students who do not have SEND
 - Help students with SEND fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best
 - Help students with SEND become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
 - Help students with SEND make a successful transition into adulthood
 - Communicate with students with SEND and their parents or carers and involve them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the student
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for students with SEND
- Communicate with, and involve, students with SEND and their parents or carers in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the student
- Make sure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff

2. Vision and values

- At St Albans Independent College we recognise that all our students have learning needs. We work towards a model in which we regularly revisit the assess, plan, do, review cycle in our half termly mentoring meetings. We work closely as a team to ensure that the best use is made of our team of Teaching Assistants alongside our highly qualified staff to ensure the best learning outcomes for all our students, whatever their learning needs may be. We account not just for educational needs and disabilities, but also work closely to monitor the wellbeing of all our students so that they are engaged and receptive in the learning process. We also encourage a three way dialogue between our students, their parents and ourselves which enables students to develop a better understanding of the ways in which they learn and perform best. By valuing our students and their parents' feedback we aim to provide a safe learning environment where each young person can be understood for the individual they are.
- Students are provided with support in and out of the classroom, with a number of interventions in place to provide additional support. Examples of these include:
 - Supervised support to study study session to help students develop the skills to learn independently, and to support families in the process.
 - A Preparation for Adulthood course to help students gain independent living skills.
 - Additional group or individual sessions where appropriate.
 - Challenging courses and additional extension activities for our most able students e.g. the algebra award
- At the College we will provide all students with access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- We are committed to making sure all our students have the chance to thrive and supporting them to meet their full potential.
- We are focused on creating an inclusive environment, where provision is tailored to the needs and abilities of students, no matter how varied.
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3. Legislation and guidance Framework

This is based on the statutory [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#) and the following legislation:

- [Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), which sets out Colleges' responsibilities for students with SEND
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out local authorities' and Colleges' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN coordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out the College's duties to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out the College's responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes having a disability) and those who don't share it
- The [Schools Admissions Code](#), which sets out the College's obligation to admit all students whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the College, and its duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special educational needs

4. Inclusion and equal opportunities

At our College we strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all students, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all students the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the College environment to make sure that students with SEND are included in all aspects of College life.

5. Definitions

5.1 Special educational needs

A student has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a **learning difficulty or disability** if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

5.2 Disability

Students are considered to have a **disability** if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

The College will make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

5.3 The 4 areas of need

The needs of students with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Students can have needs that cut across more than 1 area, and their needs may change over time.

Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the student's particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

AREA OF NEED	
Communication and interaction	<p>Students with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or do not understand or use the social rules of communication.</p> <p>Students who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.</p>
Cognition and learning	<p>Students with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific learning difficulties, which impact 1 or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia• Moderate learning difficulties• Severe learning difficulties• Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where students are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment
Social, emotional and mental health	<p>These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Students may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder• Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder• Suffered adverse childhood experiences <p>These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the student becoming withdrawn or isolated.</p>
Sensory and/or physical	<p>Students with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided.</p> <p>Students may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment• A physical impairment <p>These students may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.</p>

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The SENCO

The SENCO at our College is Nicola Logan

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They will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEN and then liaise with them about the student's needs and any provision made
- Work with the Principal to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the College
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual students with SEN, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that students with SEN receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support and differentiated teaching methods appropriate for individual students
- Advise on the deployment of the College's delegated budget and other resources to meet students' needs effectively
- Be a point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA) and its support services, and work with external agencies to ensure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the student and their parents are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned
- When a student moves to a different school or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a student's SEN and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution in a timely manner
- Work with the Principal to make sure the College meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Make sure the College keeps its records of all students with SEND up to date and accurate
- With the Principal, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the College's plan for continuous professional development
- With the Principal, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the College offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- Prepare and review information for inclusion in updates to this policy
- With the Principal and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the College's identification of SEN, both within the College and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.2 The Principal

The Principal will:

- Co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer
- Do all it can to make sure that every student with SEND gets the support they need
- Make sure that students with SEND engage in the activities of the College alongside students who don't have SEND

- Inform parents when the College is making special educational provision for their child
- Make sure that the College has arrangements in place to support any students with medical conditions
- Provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND
- Provide annual reports for parents on their child's progress
- Record accurately and keep up to date the provision made for students with SEND
- Publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and the College's accessibility plans
- Make sure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the College and that the key responsibilities of the role are set out, and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out
- Determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of students with SEND
- Make sure that all students from year 10 until year 13 are provided with independent careers advice
- Work with the SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the College
- Work with the SENCO to make sure the College meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for students with SEND, and their progress
- Have responsibility for monitoring the College's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual students
- Make sure that the SENCO has enough time to carry out their duties
- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of students on the SEND register
- Advise the LA when a student needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review
- With the SENCO, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the College's plan for continuous professional development
- With the SENCO, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the College offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- With the SENCO and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the College's identification of SEN, both within the College and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.3 Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is differentiated to meet student needs through a graduated approach
- The progress and development of every student in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENCO to review each student's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy
- Communicating with parents regularly to:

- o Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
- o Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
- o Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the student and the College
- o Listen to the parents' concerns and agree their aspirations for the student

6.4 Parents or carers

Parents or carers should inform the College if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

Parents or carers of a student on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the student's SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. They will be:

- Invited to termly meetings to review the provision that is in place for their child
- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEN support outside College and any changes in the student's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with College staff, agree their aspirations for the student
- Given annual reports on the student's progress

The College will take into account the views of the parent or carer in any decisions made about the student.

6.5 The student

Students will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the student:

- Explaining what their strengths and difficulties are
- Contributing to setting targets or outcomes
- Attending review meetings
- Giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions

The student's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

7. Our approach to SEND support

7.1 Identifying students with SEND and assessing their needs

We will assess each student's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the College, using national baseline testing. This will build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. We will also consider any evidence that the student may have a disability and if so, what reasonable adjustments the College may need to make.

Class teachers will regularly assess the progress of all students and identify any whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better their previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, wider development or social needs.

When teachers identify an area where a student is making slow progress, they will target the student's area of weakness with differentiated, high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve, the teacher will raise the issue with the SENCO to have an initial discussion about whether this lack of progress may be due to a special educational need. Where necessary they will, in consultation with the student's parents or carers, consider consulting an external specialist.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a student is recorded as having SEN.

Potential short-term causes of impact on behaviour or performance will be considered, such as bullying or bereavement. Staff will also take particular care in identifying and assessing SEN for students whose first language is not English.

When deciding whether the student needs special educational provision, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the student and their parents. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

If a student is joining the College, and:

- Their previous setting has already identified that they have SEN
- They are known to external agencies
- They have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

then the College will work in a multi-agency way to make sure we get relevant information before the student starts at College, so support can be put in place as early as possible.

7.2 Consulting and involving students and parents

The College will put the student and their parents at the heart of all decisions made about special educational provision.

When we are aiming to identify whether a student needs special education provision, we will have an early discussion with the student and their parents. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty
- We take into account any concerns the parents have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

Notes of these early discussions will be added to the student's record and given to their parents.

We will formally notify parents if it is decided that a student will receive special educational provision.

7.3 The graduated approach to SEN support

Once a student has been identified as having SEN, we will take action to remove any barriers to learning, and put effective special educational provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

1. Assess

The student's class teacher and the SENCO will carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs. The views of the student and their parents will be taken into account. The College may also seek advice from external support services.

The assessment will be reviewed regularly to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the student's need. For many students, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

2. Plan

In consultation with the parents and the student, the teacher and the SENCO will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes, and a clear date for review.

All staff who work with the student will be made aware of the student's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed. This information will be recorded on our management information system, iSAMS and on Provision Map. For students with an EHC Plan, key student Information will be made accessible to staff in a student passport and in their Learning Support Plans.

Parents will be fully aware of the planned support and interventions, and may be asked to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

3. Do

The student's class or subject teacher retains overall responsibility for their progress.

Where the plan involves group or 1-to-1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the student. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.

The SENCO will support the teacher in further assessing the student's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on how to implement support effectively.

4. Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the student's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

We will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents and students
- The level of progress the student has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the student

The teacher and the SENCO will revise the outcomes and support in light of the student's progress and development, and in consultation with the student and their parents.

7.4 Levels of support

College-based SEN provision

Students receiving SEN provision will be placed on the College's SEND register. These students have needs that can be met by the College through the graduated approach. Where the student's needs cannot be adequately met with in-house expertise, staff will consider involving an external specialist as soon as possible.

The provision for these students is funded through the College's notional SEND budget.

On the census these students will be marked with the code K.

Education, health and care (EHC) plan

Students who need more support than is available through the College's College-based SEN provision may be entitled to an EHC plan. The plan is a legal document that describes the needs of the student, the provision that will be put in place, and the outcomes sought.

The provision for these students will be funded from the College's notional SEND budget, and potentially from the LA (from the high-level needs funding block of the dedicated Colleges grant).

On the census these students will be marked with the code E.

7.5 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for students with SEN by:

- Tracking students' progress, including by using provision maps
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEN support

- Using student questionnaires
- Monitoring by the SENCO
- Holding annual reviews for students with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from the student and their parents

8. Expertise and training of staff

Training will regularly be provided to teaching and support staff. The Principal and the SENCO will continuously monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the College's plan for continuous professional development.

9. Links with external professional agencies

The College recognises that it won't be able to meet all the needs of every student. Whenever necessary the College will work with external support services such as:

- Speech and language therapists
- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- General practitioners or paediatricians
- College nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services
- Services for Young People

10. Admission and accessibility arrangements

10.1 Admission arrangements

- Your arrangements for the admission of prospective students with a disability and prospective students with SEN
- How you make sure that all prospective students whose EHC plan names the College will be admitted before any other places are allocated
- An explanation of how your oversubscription criteria avoid unfairly disadvantaging prospective students with a disability or special educational needs

10.2 Accessibility arrangements

- The steps you have taken to prevent disabled students from being treated less favourably than other students
- The facilities you provide to help disabled students access your College, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services
- How to find your College's accessibility plan. It should cover how you will:
 - o Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
 - o Improve the physical environment to enable disabled students to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services you provide
 - o Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

11. Complaints about SEND provision

Where parents have concerns about our College's SEND provision, they should first raise their concerns informally with the mentor, the SENCO or the College Principal. We will try to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve their concerns, parents are welcome to submit their complaint formally.

Formal complaints about SEND provision in our College should be made to the mentor, SENCO or College Principal in the first instance. They will be handled in line with the College's complaints policy.

If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the College's response, they can escalate the complaint. In some circumstances, this right also applies to the student themselves.

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEN Code of Practice](#).

To find out about disagreement resolution and mediation services in our local area, [\[insert link to your local authorities' disagreement resolution and mediation services\]](#). You can request mediation by contacting [\[insert contact details for requesting mediation\]](#).

12. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

12.1 Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our SEND policy. We will do this by evaluating whether or not we are meeting our objectives set out in section 1.

We will evaluate how effective our SEND provision is with regards to:

- All staff's awareness of students with SEND at the start of the autumn term
- How early students are identified as having SEND
- Students' progress and attainment once they have been identified as having SEND
- Whether students with SEND feel safe, valued and included in the College community
- Comments and feedback from students and their parents

12.2 Monitoring the policy

This policy will be reviewed by the SENCO and the College Principal each year. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.

13. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents:

- The local offer
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting students with medical conditions policy
- Attendance policy
- Safeguarding / child protection policy
- Complaints policy

Approved by:	Nicky Logan - Assistant Principal	Date: 1st March 2024
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