



DOROTHY  
STRINGER  
SCHOOL

EDUCATION FOR LIFE

# Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

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[www.dorothy-stringer.co.uk](http://www.dorothy-stringer.co.uk)

# Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEN/D) Policy Dorothy Stringer School

## Aims and Vision

Our SEN/D policy aims to:

- Set out how our school will support and make provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN/D)
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEN/D

Dorothy Stringer School will do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any student who has additional needs and that those needs are made known to all. The school recognises that parents and carers hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of meeting these.

The school will use its best endeavours to ensure that teachers and support staff in the school are able to identify, provide and include those students who have additional needs. We will provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students that allows them all the opportunity to achieve their potential.

The school will have regard to the SEN Code of Practice (2014) and Equality Act (2010) when carrying out its duties toward all students with additional needs and will maintain a close relationship and dialogue with parents, carers and students alike regarding their care and provision.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy and information report is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEN/D) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEN and disabilities
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the SEN information report
- The 2010 Equality Act, which sets out the obligation to make reasonable adjustment to any procedure, criterion or practice that would disadvantage a person with a disability (defined as a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities).

# Compliance

This policy complies with the statutory requirements laid out in the **SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (January 2015)** and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools DfE Feb 2013
- Statutory Guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (April 2014)
- Dorothy Stringer School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Dorothy Stringer School Equality Report and Accessibility Plan
- Dorothy Stringer School Annual SEN Report
- Dorothy Stringer Exam Policy
- Joint Council For Qualifications Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties (Access arrangements and Reasonable adjustments)
- Teacher Standards 2012 (DfE)
- Brighton and Hove Special Educational needs and disabilities guide for professionals (2018)

## Definitions

### Special Educational Needs

A student has SEN and will be added to the SEN register if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Students are understood to have a learning difficulty or disability if:

- Their progress is significantly below their peers, despite consistent school experience and with strong evidence of assess/plan/do/review cycles using evidence-based intervention
- Their is on a clear diagnostic pathway / being assessed by an outside agency or specialist e.g. Seaside View Child development Centre, CAMHS
- Their has an appropriately diagnosed condition which impacts upon learning academically or socially
- Their specific needs and ability to make progress is so impaired that the school plans bespoke support costing £6K+ and the child has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP).

### Disability

Students are understood to have a disability if:

- they have 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
- they have mental or physical impairments which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out day-to-day activities, which does not fall under the definition of SEN, above

## **Who is responsible for the implementation of this policy?**

### **The SENCO will:**

- Work with the headteacher and SEN/D governors to determine the strategic development of the SEN/D policy and provision in the school
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEN/D policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN/D, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that pupils with SEN/D receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN/D support
- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Ensure the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEN/D up to date

### **The SEN/D governors will:**

- Help to raise awareness of SEN/D issues at governing board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEN/D and disability provision within the school and update the governing board on this
- Work with the headteacher and SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEN/D policy and provision in the school

### **The Headteacher will:**

- Work with the SENCO and SEN/D governors to determine the strategic development of the SEN/D policy and provision within the school
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEN/D and/or a disability

### **Form Tutors and Subject teachers are responsible for:**

- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEN/D policy

## Scope

The SEND Code of Practice (2014) identifies **4 broad categories of need**:

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

Identifying 'behaviour' as a need is no longer an acceptable way of describing a child or young person's additional need. Any concerns relating to child or young person's behaviour will be described as an underlying response to a recognised (or clearly hypothesised) need.

These four broad areas give an overview of the range of needs that should be planned for. The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a student into a category. At Dorothy Stringer, we identify the needs of students by considering the needs of the whole child, which will include not just the additional needs of the child or young person, but their holistic needs (e.g. social; emotional; physical; sensory) and these needs may be met in a variety of ways.

Many children need some short-term additional support within each of these categories to help them meet their potential. We do not categorise these children as having additional needs and we believe it is important that these are not automatically perceived as such.

## Identification, Assessment and Provision for students with SEN/D

Through ongoing support and regular opportunities for professional development and dialogue, every teacher will follow Quality First Teaching principles (a style of teaching that emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils in a class) to know, understand and engage all students as effectively as possible in their learning. In conjunction with the whole school team, including teaching assistants, learning mentors and form tutors, all students are given focused feedback to enable them to make progress and reduce the barriers to their learning.

Teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all students and identify those whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap
- Shows inconsistencies across the taught curriculum

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

When deciding whether special educational provision is required, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil 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.

We follow the “assess, plan, do review” cycle for support, set out in the SEND Code of Practice.

- **Assessing needs:** where a teacher, student or parent/carer is concerned that the student may have SEN/D or where learning patterns or behaviour is communicating possible unmet needs arising from SEN/D.
- **Plan:** working in partnership with the student, parents/carers to identify what is needed and how this will be reviewed and monitored
- **Do:** implementing support (see Tiers of Support, below).
- **Review:** working in partnership with students and parents/carers to assess the effectiveness of provision that has been put in place.

## Supporting Students moving between phases and preparing for adulthood

A systematic approach to identifying students with additional needs between the school and primary colleagues has been developed to include:

- Comprehensive transition process between our school and our partner Primary schools and sixth form colleges and further education providers
- Liaison with outside agencies and professionals surrounding the students moving into Year 7
- Contextual information shared by both parent/carers and the student’s previous primary or junior school.
- Enhanced transition visits arranged for children stating in year 7.
- Liaison with colleges to arrange additional taster days and opportunities for year 11 students and their parent/carers to meet with college staff

The results of this assessment process are used to:

- Identify students who should be entered onto our provision map / WAVE (see Behaviour Policy)
- Identify students who might take part in an evidence-based intervention, appropriate to their needs
- Inform all departments across the school about the student’s additional needs
- Support teaching staff in delivering an appropriate curriculum offer, accessible for all students
- Identify students whom the Support Department will work alongside
- Liaise with outside agencies where appropriate
- Enable ongoing screening to identify that students have made at least expected progress and are meeting age-related expectations
- Arrange access arrangements for examinations for those identified students from Year 9 onwards who meet the thresholds set out by the JCQ guidelines.

## Consulting, supporting and involving students and parent/carers

- We follow an approach of ‘nothing about me, without me’ when working with our students in the SEN/D register. We will give them an opportunity to talk about the provision they receive and be part of the conversation on how we provide support for them in class and during withdrawal sessions to help and support them become more effective, independent learners
- We host student voice meetings to gain feedback from our students on their experience at school in the classroom and the support they receive through intervention, mentoring or in-class support to reflect on and improve, where necessary, our approach to support.
- Dorothy Stringer has an ‘Open Door’ policy for parent/carers of students. They are encouraged to contact the school immediately if they have any concerns and someone will always discuss this with them. Many difficulties that arise can be resolved through discussion. Parent/carers will be informed by either email or telephone of any concerns the school has about their child, either academic or behavioural.
- Parent/carers and students can find information about wider SEN/D services throughout the city via Brighton & Hove Local Authority’s ‘Local Offer’. A link to this is on the school website.
- The school has a statutory requirement to provide an annual SEN Information Report; Regulation 51, Part 3, section 69(3)(a) of the Act which is available on our school website
- The school has many links with other agencies to support the family and pupil. The school is happy to discuss these services as a child’s needs become apparent or diagnosed and we work closely with services to plan a coordinated approach. One example of these agencies or service is BHISS and the Autistic Spectrum Condition specialist teachers and family workers who support both families and our school to meet the needs of children on the autistic spectrum.
- Before seeking an independent educational psychology assessment, please see appendix two.

## Our approach to teaching students with SEN/D

At Dorothy Stringer teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress of all students in their class, including those with SEN/D needs. Our School applies a graduated response to meeting the additional needs of our students. Initially, we identify and support students in subject lessons before identifying if intervention or specialist expertise is required. When a student is identified as having additional need(s), the school will intervene as outlined below. Support is first realised at a subject teacher level (quality first teaching) with advice and guidance given by the support department via our individual student provision maps with individualised strategies and support information. This information is shared with parent/carers via the Stringer Learning Gateway (SLG).

The school uses a process of family and/or teacher referral which initiates a school system to collate and review the observations and interventions already made by subject teachers and form tutors. This helps us consider current in-class provision and support whilst helping match available additional needs provision to each student’s profile of need. We record the steps taken to meet the needs of our individual students and if a student transfers to our school from a Primary or other Secondary school, representatives of the Head Teacher (SENCo and/or Inclusion lead) will meet colleagues from the student’s current school to consider any statutory or non-statutory advice.

## Supporting students at school with medical conditions

- The school recognises that students at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. Some students with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and statutory guidance *Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions* (September 2014)
- Some students with medical conditions may also have special educational needs (SEN) and may have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their special educational provision. The SEN Code of Practice (2014) is followed in meeting the needs of these children
- Students at school with medical conditions have an Individual Health Care plan agreed with parent/carers, school staff and medical professionals

## Tiers of Support

### SEN Support

Class teachers continues to take major responsibility for the student. The SENCO / INCo / Assistant SENCo will organise and oversee additional support, e.g. individual or small group work with a teacher or support assistant as necessary and within the operational capacity of the department. Strategies and advice are shared with the student's subject teachers via the electronic provision map so that everyone is working to common targets. Outside agencies may become involved and a written support plan drawn up so that everyone agrees and is working to common targets. Parents and carers are included, informed and encouraged to support work going on in school. Additional information and reports, where appropriate, are shared with staff via the 'linked documents' section of the provision map.

### Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

If an EHCP is supporting a child or young person and their family it will secure the Local Authority's involvement in overseeing the additional need provision made for the student by the school.

### Annual review of an EHCP

All EHC Plans will be reviewed at least annually with the parents and carers, the student, the LA and the school to consider whether any amendments need to be made. The annual review should focus on what the child has achieved as well as on difficulties that need to be resolved. The annual review held in Year 9 and Year 11 will be particularly significant in preparing for the student's transition to GCSEs or other qualifications and employment, the further education sector, work-based training, higher education and adult life.

### Disability (where the disability does not fall under SEN)

Provision and support is overseen by the school and complemented by regular support from the local authority and NHS as appropriate.



## Provision Map

- This is part of the Stringer Learning Gateway (SLG) and is our method of sharing information with both parents/carers and staff on the profile of need and the strategies or interventions that are currently provided for a student. The library section is used to securely store documents relating to students that might include their EHC plan, reports from other professional or supporting information that is pertinent to the support and provision for a student. Where necessary, the contact e-mail of a support department colleague is published on the provision map so both parents/carers and staff can make direct contact with the staff member.
- The information is also shared with the student's subject teachers. Support and guidance is given to teaching and support staff to understand how support and intervention can be managed and delivered in classrooms and how this might be complemented by input from outside agencies. The content and strategies contained with the provision map are regularly reviewed and updated.

## Additional Intervention Provision

- The school has developed comprehensive, graduated and evidence-based intervention provision.
- All Year 7, 8 and 9 students are screened at least annually through reading, writing and spelling assessments
- Interventions are planned according to the current needs of students within the school.
- The intervention provision is not only monitored termly but is also formally reviewed annually when we look at the effectiveness of the interventions in students' progress measures (have the students in the interventions made at least expected progress?) and adjust the interventions accordingly

## Adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment

The school has undertaken modification to the estate to enable all students to access a broad and balanced curriculum offer.

We take seriously our duty under the 2010 Equality to anticipate the barriers to accessibility that may arise from a range of disabilities and to make reasonable adjustments where possible that will avoid the need for these to be individually requested. Our school accessibility plan can be located in our 'Equality policy and accessibility plan' available on our public website

### Physical environment:

- Due to the staired access to all Science classrooms we have created an accessible Science room that enables student wheelchair users to access science.
- We are continually reviewing our accessibility plan and policies to accommodate disabilities beyond those relating to the use of wheelchairs, for example those with sensory or mental health needs.
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc.

### **Learning environment:**

- Differentiating our curriculum to ensure all pupils are able to access it, for example, by grouping, 1:1 work, teaching style, content of the lesson, etc.
- Adapting our resources and staffing
- Differentiating our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.
- Expertise and training of staff
- Our school has a SENCo, INCo and Assistant SENCo to oversee the provision and care of our students with SEN/D needs and profiles
- We have our own Specialist Literacy teacher who has a Diploma in Sp.Ld (Dyslexia) and is AMBDA registered. Additionally, we have a qualified teacher who holds a post-graduate certificate in Autism and who is our Autism champion and works closely with the SENCo, assistant SENCo and our ASC / social communication difficulty cohort of students
- We have a team of learning mentors, grade 5 who are responsible for the support and production of adapted work for our visually impaired and blind students and a team of teaching assistant who have receive training in a wide range of areas including Sp.Ld (Dyslexia etc.), Autism and social communication difficulties, speech and language support and provision, cerebral visual impairment, hearing and visual impairments and Attachment aware support for students.
- Our grade 3 TAs work solely with students across all 5 year groups in a range of different subjects to support the students and the teacher in enabling students to access and make progress in the learning planned by our specialist subject teachers.
- Our support staff work closely with the Educational Psychologist who works with the school and has supported the review and training of a suite of evidence-based social, emotional and mental health focused interventions and approaches such as emotion coaching.

### **Social, emotional and mental health adaptations:**

- The pathway for supporting children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties involves our team comprising of the INCo, learning mentors, emotional wellbeing and pastoral staff. These students are identified through observations, parent/carer, student or staff concerns. Planning is usually individualised but we do also offer some group interventions. All interventions, either within school or signposting to off-site provision, is overseen by our weekly panel meetings, chaired by the Assistant Head/SENCo and attended by the INCO, appropriate key stage pastoral team and, whenever possible, our EP, School nurse and DASH worker
- We aim to make the school an accessible environment for students with SEMH needs, through our pastoral manager system, whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing (see appendix 1), attachment-focused approach to behaviour and regular staff training.

## Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN/D provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEN/D by:

- Reviewing students' individual progress each term with a publish report to parent/carers
- Review the impact of interventions using pre and post assessments to determine the impact and next steps
- Listen to our student cohorts both informally and through student voice sessions reflecting on their support and provision
- The SENCo and other senior staff review the support and progress made by our students with SEN/D at regular intervals using assessments and 4matrix to analyse progress and attainment data
- Holding annual reviews for students with EHC plans inviting the students, their parent/carers and other connected professionals to reflect and report on the progress they have made.

### Enabling pupils with SEN/D to engage in activities available to those in the school who do not have SEN/D

- All students are encouraged to take part in all aspects of extra-curricular activities including sport, drama, art and music clubs
- All students are encouraged to go on our residential trip(s) both locally, nationally and internationally
- No student is ever directly excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEN or disability and the school will make reasonable adjustment to overcome potential barriers to arising from a student's SEN or Disability.
- All students whose education, health and care (EHC) plans name the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated

### Working with other agencies

Our school welcomes and supports the work of local authority and other supportive agencies who help with meeting our students SEN/D needs and supporting their families.

We work closely with the following agencies;

- [Amaze](#)
- [BHISS - Brighton & Hove Inclusion Support Service](#)
- [Drugs Alcohol and Sexual Health \(DASH\) worker](#)
- [Diabetes Outreach service](#)
- [EMAS \(Ethnic Minority Achievement Service\)](#)
- [Fostering / Adoption Team](#)
- [Front Door for Families](#)
- Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Adviser
- [Occupational Therapy](#)
- [Oncology Outreach Service](#)
- [RU-ok? \(Youth Offending Service\)](#)
- [School Nurse Service](#)
- [Seaside View Child Development Centre](#)
- [Speech and Language Service \(Therapists and Specialist Language teachers\)](#)
- [Social Services](#)

## Support for emotional health and wellbeing (DfE Mental Health and behaviour in Schools 2018)

Our school's approach to mental health and behaviour is part of a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. This is paired with an individualised graduated response (assess / plan / do / review) when the behavioural issues might be a result of educational, mental health, other needs or vulnerabilities. We aim to offer the earliest possible intervention.

- Please see appendix 1: Students emotional health and wellbeing
- Please read our **Dorothy Stringer Panel Guidance and Threshold document** that exemplifies our aims and approaches to supporting our students' emotional health and wellbeing

### Contact details for raising concerns

For any queries or concerns about anything to do with your child's learning, behavioural or emotional needs that may be having an effect upon your child, please speak to your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance. These staff may arrange a further meeting with the SENCo or INCo to discuss issues and plan to resolve them.

If you wish to discuss support and provision for your child, please contact Paul Watson, Rob Allen or Matt Hillier, Head Teacher. The governor for SEN/D can be contacted via the Clerk to Governors or Headteacher's PA (01273 852222).

Should you need to raise a complaint at any stage, please contact the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors, making clear that you are making a formal complaint. Further information is available in the Dorothy Stringer Complaints Policy.

### The local authority local offer

Our contribution to the local offer is here: [Dorothy Stringer High School \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](http://DorothyStringerHighSchool.brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Our local authorities local offer is published here: [Special educational needs and disabilities \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](http://SpecialEducationalNeedsandDisabilities.brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Appendix 1 Students' Emotional and mental health and wellbeing

Appendix 2: School approach to Private and independent Educational Psychology reports

# Appendix 1

## **Students' Mental Health** (DFE Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools 2018)

To be read alongside our Emotional Health and Wellbeing Panel threshold and guidance document (appendix 2)

Dorothy Stringer's approach to mental health is part of a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. This is paired with an individualised, graduated response (assess / plan / do / review) when the behavioural or presenting issues might be a result of educational, mental health, other needs or vulnerabilities. We aim to offer the earliest possible intervention.

### **School role:**

- Prevention: safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely; improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population and equipping pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the stress of everyday life effectively. This will include teaching students about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.
- Identification: recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible
- Early support
- Access to specialist support

### **Risk and protective factors**

We understand that there are a range of risk factors for poor mental health:

- Adverse parental, familial and contextual circumstances are identified risk factors
- Socio-economic disadvantage is another identified risk factor
- We know that where children have certain types of SEN/D there is an increased likelihood of mental health problems. Children with ASC or learning difficulties are significantly more likely to have conditions such as anxiety.
- Children in need / Children on Child Protection plans; looked-after and previously looked after children are more likely to have SEN and to experience the challenge of SEMH issues than their peers

Where children experience a range of emotional and behavioural problems outside the normal range for their age they might be described as experiencing mental health problems or disorders. Mental health professionals have classified these as:

- Emotional disorders (e.g. phobias / anxiety)
- Conduct disorders: (defiance; anti-social behaviour)
- Hyperkinetic disorders (disturbance of activity and attention)
- Developmental disorders (delay in acquiring certain skills e.g. speech / social skills primarily affecting children with autism and pervasive developmental disorders)
- Attachment disorders (e.g. children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired because of an extremely abnormal pattern of attachment to parents or major caregivers)
- Trauma disorders (PTSD / persistent periods of abuse or neglect)
- Other mental health problems including eating, habit, somatic and psychotic disorders

At Dorothy Stringer we understand that as social disadvantage and the number of stressful life events accumulate for people, more **protective factors** are needed to act as counterbalance and to enable children to be resilient when they encounter problems or challenges. Our whole school approach centres on Dorothy Stringer being a secondary attachment figure - a safe and affirming place for students where they feel able to trust and talk openly with adults about their problems.

### **Identifying possible mental health problems**

Negative experiences and distressing life events can affect mental health in a way that can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour / emotional state which can be an indication of an underlying problem:

This can include:

- Emotional state (fearful, withdrawn, low self-esteem)
- Behaviour (aggressive or oppositional; body rocking ..)
- Interpersonal behaviours (indiscriminate contact or affection-seeking, over-friendliness or excessive clinginess; demonstrating excessive 'good' behaviour to prevent disapproval; failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed; coercive controlling behaviour; or lack of ability to understand or recognise emotions)

The balance between risk and protective factors is most likely to be disrupted when difficult events happen in pupil lives. These include:

- Loss or separation (death; parental separation; parental health; loss of friendships; family conflict (having to live elsewhere); being taken into care or adopted; deployment of parents in armed forces)
- Life changes (birth of a sibling; moving house or changing schools; transitions)
- Traumatic experiences (abuse; neglect; domestic violence; bullying; violence; accidents or injuries)
- Other traumatic incidents (eg natural disaster or terrorist attack)

### **Identification and measurement tools**

Where there are concerns about behaviour/emotional regulation, we will instigate an assessment process to determine whether there are any underlying factors such as undiagnosed learning or speech and language difficulties, child protection concerns or mental health problems

- Effective use of data (changes in patterns of attainment or attendance or behaviour)
- Effective pastoral system (at least one member of staff knows every pupil well, recognises signs and there is a structure through which staff can escalate the issue and take decisions about what to do next)
- Engagement with and possible deployment of advisory teachers and/or other professionals from BHISS and allied services
- Assess / Plan / Do / Review process

## Appendix 2

### Independent educational psychology assessments:

Parent/carers sometimes choose to have their children assessed by an educational psychologist. The school recognises that some parents/carers make considerable sacrifices to finance this, as a result of long NHS waiting lists and/or concerns about unmet needs where a child is not visibly struggling at school. Nevertheless, it is recommended that parents/carers seek advice from the school before going down this route and keep in mind the following:

- Through the local authority we are provided with clear and agreed guidance on how to proceed with assessments and diagnosis of any additional need.
- The school will take into account independent educational psychology assessments by a suitably qualified professional, only where that professional has the accredited training, experience, competence, continuing professional development and understanding of the educational context.
- For some conditions, where subsequent NHS support may be required, independent educational psychologist are required to have followed NICE guidelines for diagnosis to be confirmed.
- While the school will not refuse to accept the outcome of an assessment from a suitably qualified professional without sound reasons, support provided will be based upon evidence-based assessments of the child's needs and not solely based on the report's recommendations. We have finite resources which we need to distribute equitably, based on need, in line with our poverty-proofing obligations.
- In some cases (e.g. students with a Specific Learning Difference (Sp.Ld) that does not impact on their learning in comparison with their peers), additional individual support may not be required. It may be that the wider approach of the school and commitment to Quality First Teaching principles can meet the student's needs or that reasonable adjustments to address specific barriers are adequate, in combination with the student's better understanding of their own specific difficulties and learning style as a result of their assessment.
- All assessments for students from year 7 to year 11 are informed by our in-school provision, centre assessments and guided by external policy documents, such as the Joint Council for Qualifications guidance on the confirmation of any access arrangements for public exams such as GCSEs.