

Hitchin Girls' School SEN Information Report **(School Offer September 2021)**

1. How does the school know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

We use information from previous schools, together with specialist reports and information from parents at transfer. There is regular analysis of data throughout the school year and subject teachers or parents may contact the SENCO with concerns about a student. Subject staff are supported by the SENCO, Head of Learning Support Department. Parents and students can speak to the SENCO, Mrs Laura Cole, or email (senco@hgs.herts.sch.uk)

2. How will school staff support my child?

Students' needs are best met through quality first teaching, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014. Teaching staff have training and guidance on specific strategies to support students with their learning. The SENCO and Learning Support Assistants will support students with an EHCP or exceptional sensory/ physical need, and provide strategies for identified SEN need. Where necessary, the SENCO will seek advice from outside agencies or advisors, through County Support. Where appropriate, students will have a pupil passport written in conjunction with pupils and parents in order to ensure staff are aware of particular individual needs in more detail.

All students are supported by their Form Tutor and Head of Year. The Pastoral Team at HGS is well known to students and may be approached at breaks and lunchtime, if students need advice or wish to talk.

3. How will I know how my child is doing?

Quality first teaching and high aspirations for all ensure that all students are stretched and challenged. Students at HGS receive termly progress checks, which are sent out to parents. If these show that a student is not making expected progress, teachers will review learning with the student. Contact may be made with parents and strategies will be suggested to help the student. Learning Support and Pastoral may be involved, depending on the need. Students on an EHCP will be involved in an annual review with parents and the SENCO. All parents/ carers can contact the SENCO, subject staff and pastoral staff via the school email.

4. How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

At HGS we believe that lessons should be inclusive. Subject teachers address the needs of students through a cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review, as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice 2014. This means they understand students' diverse needs, plan appropriate curriculum lessons, teach in a way that enables differentiation according to the needs of the student and constantly review students' learning to ensure progress. Students' needs are addressed through differentiated lessons, the use of assistive technology, specialist support, adapted materials and group work delivered under the direction of the subject teacher. Some students are offered interventions by the Learning Support Department, for example reading support, mentoring, homework club, maths small group support, emotional/friendship skills group and dyslexia support. These are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ascertain the impact on student progress.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

Students have access to pastoral support via their Form Tutor, Head of Year and the Pastoral Team. Where necessary, we may refer to external agencies through the Local Offer.

There are trained First Aid staff in the school who may work with individual students who have a medical condition. All staff are made aware of medical information for students they teach, where it is necessary for them to be informed.

All staff at the school have up-to-date safeguarding training. There is a designated team for safeguarding procedures, under the guidance of the Head Teacher.

Staff are also trained in Mental Health First Aid and weekly well-being sessions take place during registration time.

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

Expertise at the school is increased through staff training. We are able to access a number of specialists through the local DSPL (Delivering Specialist Provision Locally) and the Local Authority. This might include support for Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Speech and Language support, support for bereavement, medical, emotional health or other services identified on an individual basis.

7. What training have the staff, supporting children and young people with SEND, had or are having?

Staff within the Learning Support Department regularly attend training courses. Following a course, they will share this training with the rest of the department and other staff to address specific needs. All teaching staff receive regular on-going training and advice from the Learning Support Department to develop their practice to further support students in the classroom. Mrs Cole is working towards the National SENCO Award.

8. How will you help me to support my child's learning?

There are regular Parents' Consultation Evenings throughout the school year. The SENCO will be available by appointment at each of these. Subject staff will contact parents if there is anything that can be done at home to support the students with their learning. Some web-based interventions are offered and parents are notified if these can be continued at home. Parents/ carers are able to request a meeting with the SENCO at any time.

9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's education?

The SENCO, subject staff, pastoral support staff, form tutors and heads of year will contact parents/ carers if there are concerns about a student's learning or well-being. Parents/ carers are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns about their child's education. Parent governors take a full part in the governance of the school. A regular questionnaire to parents enables the school to understand the views of parents and to take these into account in decision making.

10. How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

All activities, including trips and clubs, are inclusive. A representative group of students forms the school council. Their views are most important and they take a full part in school life. In addition, student Learning Leaders contribute to the teaching and learning in the school. Students with SEND needs are always represented in student groups.

11. How accessible is the school environment?

Access arrangements are supported within school. Assistive technology or practical assistance is made available according to need.

Due to the age and design of the school, the buildings are not fully accessible to students with long-term mobility difficulties. Where possible, the school will make reasonable adjustments if students on roll has a temporary need. Lifts have been fitted in the newer parts of the school and can be used by students as necessary.

In the summer term of 2018, an autism audit was carried out by Learning Support. The school now has autism friendly signage, which is beneficial to all students and staff. Visual prompts such as stair edges have been repainted.

12. Who can I contact for further information?

Contact the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), Mrs Cole
senco@hgs.herts.sch.uk.

13. How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?

HGS works extensively with primary feeder schools. Staff speak with all year 6 teachers and also primary SENCOs as required to pass on information directly. On Secondary Transfer Day in July, Y6 students will spend a day at HGS and parents are invited for the evening. Additional visits may be arranged for individual students. The first few days for Y7 at HGS involve induction and orientation activities.

If a student transfers from or to another secondary school, there will be an exchange of information and transfer arrangements are agreed.

Students transferring to HGS in the Sixth Form have induction days and taster lessons. Information is shared with other schools within the consortium if a student has lessons at one of the other consortium schools.

We work closely with the careers service and FE colleges such as North Herts College and Shuttleworth College to ensure students' needs are met when they start college courses, post 16. The Sixth Form team work closely with students prior to transfer to university and the SENCO will provide information and support to the disability support team at chosen universities if needed.

14. How are the school's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?

There are various funding options available when an intervention is required to address a specific educational need or an exceptional need. Students with an EHCP are prioritised with support. Students with a physical or sensory disability may also receive practical support and adapted resources, assistive technology etc. If additional support is required, the SENCO will work with parents to write for local higher needs funding as appropriate. This is an external panel who decide whether it is appropriate to grant the requested funding.

15. How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?

We aim to give students the support they need to become resilient, independent learners to allow them to move onto the next steps as independent young people or adults. Support in school is allocated and monitored on a needs basis by the SENCO.

16. How can I find information about the local authority's Local Offer of services and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disability?

The Local Offer can be found at www.hertsdirect.org/localoffer