

Hitchin Girls' School

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Policy



This is a Statutory Policy required by all Academies under the Children and Families Act: Section 69 and The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

This is a model Hertfordshire County Council policy adopted by Hitchin Girls' School

Date of issue: September 2023
Trust Board approval: September 2023
Review date: September 2024

Compliance

This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice 0- 25 (June 2014) 3.65 and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools DfE Feb 2013
- SEND Code of Practice Sept 2014 and updated May 2015
- Schools SEN Information Report Regulations (2014)
- Statutory Guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions April 2014 •
Safeguarding Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Teachers' Standards 2012

Section 1

The response to the SEND provision at Hitchin Girls' School is managed by the Assistant Headteacher, Mrs. L. Cole, who may be contacted at the school or directly by email at senco@hgs.herts.sch.uk. Mrs Cole is SENCO, a qualified teacher who holds the National SENCO Award and the Senior Mental Health Lead award. The nominated SEND Trustee is Mrs Mary King who may also be contacted via the school.

The School Setting

Hitchin Girls' School is an inclusive mainstream school, committed to giving every student a broad education and helping to develop their individual talents and abilities to the full, in preparation for the demands of adult life. In doing so, we respect the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of the whole school community. We seek to maintain traditional values in work and behaviour and encourage our students to develop those qualities of character that help them to make a worthwhile contribution to society. We believe that this can best be achieved with the highest expectations within a firm yet flexible, caring environment with frequent contact and close co-operation between parents and the school. As a school, we look to uphold the values of aspiration, perseverance, kindness, respect and positivity in all of our interactions as a community.

At Hitchin Girls' School, every teacher is expected to provide high quality, adaptive teaching to every child or young person in their classes, including those with SEND.

The Learning Support Department aims to ensure that every student, irrespective of age, ability, ethnicity, language and social background fulfils their potential. To assist with a smooth transfer from Year 6 into Year 7, senior staff and the Head of Year meet with primary schools and the SENCO will arrange extra meetings/visits for some SEN students after meeting with primary SENCOs. An initial assessment is produced using information gathered from secondary transfer records, parents and school based assessments. A pupil passport will be created, as appropriate, in conjunction with students and their parents. This will be updated as the student moves through the school, but provides initial information for teaching staff. The department works closely with teaching and pastoral staff to ensure that all students gain full access to the curriculum and to address any difficulties that may hinder the learning process. This is done by giving advice to subject staff and may involve support by Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) in the classroom. Priority for LSA support is given to those students who have an EHCP or sensory/physical need e.g. visual impairment which might need practical support in the classroom and adapted resources. Some literacy, reading and dyslexia support is offered during form period and through bespoke small group teaching. The department runs a homework club at lunchtime where students can ask for support or just have a quiet, supervised place to work. The department also offers morning meet and greet, social skills groups and a key worker scheme for our highest need learners. A Learning Champion scheme operates in the Sixth Form and some of these Learning Champions are trained to support younger students in lessons or as Mentors to support younger students.

Section 2

Aim of the School

Hitchin Girls' School aims to raise the aspirations of and expectations for all young people with or without SEND. We focus on outcomes for all students.

Objectives

1. To identify and provide for all students who have special educational needs, disabilities or additional needs.
2. To work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice (2014)
3. To operate a whole student/whole school approach to the management and provision of support for students with SEND.
4. To provide a SENCO who will work within guidelines set out in other school policies.
5. To provide support and advice for all staff, parents and students.
6. To make referrals to and work with external agencies as required.

Section 3

A Graduated Approach

Students have Special Educational Needs if they have a specific difficulty, which calls for special educational provision which is additional to, or different from, differentiated curriculum plans. The Code of Practice identifies four broad areas of need.

- **Communication and Interaction** This may include students with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who may have difficulty communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them, or they do not understand or use the social rules of communication. The profile of these students is very individual and may change over time. Students with ASD, including Autism, may have difficulty in this area.
- **Cognition and Learning** Support for learning difficulties may be required when students learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Difficulties may cover a wide range of needs including moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) may have difficulties, which affect one or more areas of learning. This area would include Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia.
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties** Students may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties, which will manifest in many different ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These symptoms may reflect underlying mental health issues such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms, which are medically unexplained. Other students may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder (ADD) attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or attachment disorder. At Hitchin Girls' School this may also include students who are Young Carers (e.g. where there is someone in the family with a serious illness or condition).
- **Sensory and/or physical needs** Some students may require special provision or consideration because they have a disability, which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. Some students with visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning or inclusion support.

The purpose of these categories is to help the school ascertain the best support to give to the individual, not to fit a student into a category. At Hitchin Girls' School we consider the needs of the whole student not just their SEND needs.

There are other situations/circumstances which may impact on the progress and attainment of a student. This may include the following, but these areas alone do not necessarily constitute SEND needs.

- Disability
- Attendance and punctuality
- Health and welfare
- EAL (English as an additional language)
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium grant
- Being a Child Looked After or Adopted from Care
- Being the child of a serviceman/woman

Section 4

A Graduated Response to SEND

All teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the students in their class, including where students access support from learning support assistants or specialist staff (COP, July 2014).

- If a concern is raised by a parent, teacher or student, there will be a period of monitoring by subject staff and the Learning Support Department to assess the student's need. All teaching staff are expected to provide high quality teaching which is adapted in order to meet the needs of all students. Subject teachers will be expected to **Assess** the needs of the student, **Plan** an intervention/adaptation, **Do** the intervention/adaptation and then **Review** the outcome. This is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEND. A referral may be made afterwards to the Learning Support Department.
- Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of high quality teaching and that is why, at Hitchin Girls' School, we are committed to ensuring the highest standards of teaching and learning.
- The school will regularly review the quality of teaching for all students, including those at risk of underachieving, by lesson observation, learning walks and data analysis. Staff will have regular CPD opportunities to improve their understanding of the strategies to identify and support vulnerable students and their knowledge of the SEND most frequently encountered.
- The SENCO may arrange for additional intervention or specialist advice after consulting with teaching staff, parents and, where appropriate, the student. If necessary, additional assessments may be conducted in school.
- The school works effectively with many outside agencies and specialist services. After consultation with parents, additional input may be requested.
- Information from a variety of sources is considered before putting a student on the SEND list. This may include information from a previous school, assessment data, concern from a parent or professional or other concern.
- Parents will be consulted during this process.
- Some students may be tested in school by a qualified Access Arrangements Assessor, to ascertain if they are entitled to Access Arrangements for public examinations. This must take place after the start of Y9. If they do qualify, they will automatically be included on the SEN list. Please refer to the Access Arrangement Protocol (see appendices) for further information. Privately commissioned reports can only be used as background information in an application for Access Arrangements. JCQ advises that all Access Arrangements must reflect a student's normal way of working in school.

Section 5

Managing students' needs on the SEND register

On entry to Hitchin Girls' School, all the available information is considered and relevant information will be circulated to all teaching staff and support staff. Once barriers to learning have been identified the teachers will make every reasonable effort to address the need and provide an opportunity for success. Plans will focus on outcomes for the student and how these will be achieved within a specified time. All students' data and progress is effectively monitored and analysed. It is the responsibility of the subject teacher to evidence progress made towards reaching the stated outcome. The SENCO will also have an overview of all students who have an additional need and will monitor their progress through data analysis, lesson observations and reviews with staff, students and parents.

The school will adopt a graduated approach to identified students. The needs of students will be highlighted to teaching staff through pupil passports and additional information on the school data management systems so that their individual needs can be met in the classroom by the subject teachers. Subject teachers will maintain records of progress (including Assess, Plan, Do and Review) and any interventions employed within the department will be centrally recorded.

If, despite high quality teaching and differentiated approach to learning, the student does not make the expected progress or attainment, there is a referral system for further intervention and support. Interventions will be carefully considered and implemented in consultation with parents.

Some students may require advice from specialist agencies. Parents will always be consulted before any referrals to specialist SEND support services are made.

It may also be agreed between school and parents that an application is made for an Education Health Care Plan. This will require a full assessment of their needs. The purpose is to meet the special educational needs of the student, to secure them the best possible outcomes across education, health and social care and, as they get older, prepare them for adulthood.

The list of supported students will be constantly updated – according to current need. It will be reviewed by the SENCO each time there is a progress report for a year group (generally three times per school year). There will be opportunities for parents to discuss their child's needs at parents' evenings and at 1:1 meetings with the SENCO or the assistant SENCO.

The needs of students will be considered on an individual basis. It may be necessary to apply for additional funding to secure appropriate provision or resources. The process for this will be determined by the Local Authority. Parents should also refer to the School Information Report which contains the School Offer published on the school website (see Appendix 1) and also the Local Offer published by the Local Authority: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/the-hertfordshire-local-offer.aspx>.

For some services an Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) form will be completed and signed by the parents and student in order to apply to other agencies for support. If more than one agency is

involved in supporting the student/family, an Early Help Module (EHM) may be instigated and a Team Around the Family (TAF) will be established.

Irrespective of the stage the student is assessed to be at any given time, the school will actively promote continual assessment and review in order to promote improvement in provision for all students.

Section 6

Criteria for exiting the Support Register

Students may be included on the SEND Support Register for a short period of time or for longer, depending on individual need. The academic progress of a student will be reviewed each time there is a progress check, or when an agreed intervention has taken place. If a student is making progress, it may be agreed with parents/carers that the student no longer needs to be included on the Supported Student list.

Section 7

Supporting Students and Families

The local authority has a duty to publish a Local Offer, which will direct parents and carers to support and services which may be available across the local district. A link to this may be found at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/the-hertfordshire-local-offer.aspx>

The SEN Information Report for Hitchin Girls' school may be found at:
<https://www.hgs.herts.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=71>

There are a number of agencies which are able to support families. Please contact the Pastoral Support Team at the school for further information if you wish to access these services.

Admissions to the school are managed by the local authority. Our Admissions Policy may be found at <https://www.hgs.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=Admissions&pid=47>

Students are fully supported at all transition points in their school career. This includes the move from primary to secondary, between key stages and post 16. The school works closely with primary schools and the careers service, both with year group information and individual consultations.

Section 8

Supporting Students 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 young people with medical conditions may be disabled and, where this is the case, the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Some students may also have special educational needs (SEN) and may have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their special educational provision and the SEND Code of Practice (2014) is followed.

Students with medical needs will be assessed on an individual basis and, if need be, a risk assessment may be completed (in the case of temporary mobility difficulties). Reasonable adjustments will be made to daily arrangements but it may not always be possible to access some specialist areas located on upper floors. Alternative arrangements will be made in these cases.

The “Administration of Medicines Policy” is available on the school website and learning Platform.

Section 9

Monitoring and Evaluation of SEND

The school regularly monitors the quality of teaching and learning for all students. This is enabled via performance management and departmental line management. Feedback is invited from staff, parents (at parents’ evenings) and students via Student Voice. The school welcomes feedback at any point in the year and parents may communicate with staff via email or telephone.

Each department has a nominated Trustee and they have an active role in monitoring progress of students and the work of departments and other teams within the school.

The staff at Hitchin Girls’ School are dedicated to continual improvement to give all students the opportunity to achieve their potential. Arrangements for all students are regularly discussed at subject meetings and management meetings so that adjustments may be made to meet the students’ needs. Advice may be sought from the Learning Support Department or external agencies at any time.

Section 10

How is SEND funded at Hitchin Girls’ School?

Most of the funding for the school is via a local funding formula, discussed at local schools forum. Additional allocation for sixth form is made based on a national funding formula.

Schools have an amount identified within their overall budget, called the notional SEN budget. This is not ring-fenced but it is intended for the school to provide high quality and appropriate support from the whole of its budget.

As a part of budget planning, the Board of Trustees and Headteacher establish a clear picture of resources available. They have a strategic approach to meeting SEND needs of students in the context of the total resources available, including those for targeted groups e.g. Pupil Premium.

The local authority may also provide “top-up” funding where the cost of provision exceeds the threshold figure nationally prescribed. This is through either banded EHCP funding or through a successful application for local higher needs funding.

Staff Training

There will be a planned approach to staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) throughout the year. This will include sessions that all staff will be expected to attend and others in which staff will be encouraged to participate. There will be a combination of expert advice from specialists, dissemination of expertise and knowledge from courses attended and sharing good practice. The training needs of staff will be identified by feedback from staff and by lesson observations and learning walks etc. Information to assist staff with their planning for SEND is also available on the staff shared drive.

In order to maintain and develop the high quality of teaching and provision to respond to the strengths and needs of all students, all staff are encouraged to undertake training and development both in school and through training courses by external providers

All teachers and support staff undertake induction on taking up a post at HGS and this includes a meeting with the SENCO to explain systems and structures in place around the school's SEND provision and practice and to discuss the individual needs of students. The SENCO regularly attends local SENCO forums, general and secondary focused, in order to keep updated with local and national updates in SEND. They are also a member of NASEN – a professional organisation which provides support and information.

Section 11

Roles and Responsibilities

The SEND Trustee (Mrs Mary King), together with the Trust Board, Headteacher and SENCO has responsibility to ensure that best endeavours are made to ensure the needs of all students are being met – including students with SEND. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring the SENCO carries out their role in an effective manner. The Trust Board also has to carry out statutory duties as laid out in the Equality Act 2010 and should plan to increase access for disabled students over time. From September 2012, there has been a new requirement to supply auxiliary aids and services for students as part of the reasonable adjustments duty under the Equality Act 2012.

Learning Support Assistants are deployed by the Assistant Headteacher (Mrs L. Cole) and the Assistant SENCO (Miss A. Lennon) who, in turn, are managed by the **Headteacher** (Mr J. Crowther).

The **Designated Senior Person** with responsibility for **Safeguarding** is Mr James Crowther and the **Deputy Designated Senior Persons** are Mrs Tara Batt Corcoran, Mrs Laura Cole, Mr Andrew Jones, Mrs Caroline Hone, Mrs Sally Mills, Mrs Emily Robertson and Mrs Katharine Rowe.

The person responsible for management of **Pupil Premium Grants** is Mrs Ruth Cooper and **Children Looked After funding** is Mrs Laura Cole.

The person with responsibility for managing the school's responsibility for meeting the needs of **students with medical needs** is Mrs Alice Ide.

The **Designated Teacher for Children Looked After** is Mrs Laura Cole.

Section 12

Storing and managing Information

Documents may be stored as electronic images or paper documents. Paper documents are kept in secure, lockable, fireproof cabinets. Access to electronically stored information is restricted to those members of staff who require access via the software security system.

General documents and records are retained until the young person reaches the age of 25 (as recommended by Information and Records Management Society document, "Records Management Toolkit for Schools" February 2016).

At the end of the retention period, documents are securely disposed of via a specialist contractor.

Some records may be passed on to other educational establishments at key transition points or if a student relocates to another school.

Section 13

Reviewing the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SENCO and the SEND Trustee.

Section 14

Accessibility

The Accessibility Plan is regularly reviewed by Trustees. The current focus of the plan is:

- To deliver information more effectively to visual or hearing impaired students and parents.
- To improve accessibility and safety for disabled parents or students with a temporary disability or injury.
- To improve access to all areas of the school for wheelchair/crutch

Adaptations to resources and information are made via a variety of strategies on an individual basis for students, parents and all other adults visiting the site.

Members of staff may be contacted through the use of the school email system or the office telephone, during school hours.

Section 15

Dealing with complaints and compliments

Please refer to the Complaints Policy (appendix 6).

Compliments are recorded centrally and shared with staff through meetings.

Section 16

Bullying

Everyone at Hitchin Girls' School has the right to feel welcome, safe, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community be able to achieve their potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this from happening and obstructs equality of opportunity. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Hitchin Girls' School. It is everyone's responsibility to banish bullying and the Anti-Bullying Policy contains guidelines for doing so. Where bullying exists students must feel confident to activate Hitchin Girls' School Anti-Bullying systems.

We aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied students and help build an anti-bullying ethos in the school. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows or suspects bullying is happening is encouraged to tell a member of staff.

Anti-Bullying is included in our Learning for Life curriculum which deals with this topic in a variety of ways. Hitchin Girls' School has also recognised the need to build resilience in all our students in order to prepare them for adulthood.

Section 17

Appendices

1. Link to School Offer/SEND Information Report
<https://www.hgs.herts.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=317>
2. Link to Local Offer
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/the-hertfordshire-local-offer.aspx
3. Link to Child Protection Policy
<https://www.hgs.herts.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=310>
4. Link to Anti-Bullying Policy
<https://www.hgs.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=Guidelines+%26amp%3B+Policies&pid=13>
5. Link to Complaints Procedure
<https://www.hgs.herts.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=288>
6. How to contact key school staff
<https://www.hgs.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=Contact+Us&pid=35>
7. How to contact local SEN officer - Contact Childrens' Services, Farnham House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2FQ - 0300 123 4043
8. Access Arrangements Protocol – see below

Hitchin Girls' School Access Arrangements Protocols Statement

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- access the assessment;
- show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.*

JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications "Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties." 2019-2020)

Any access arrangements are put in place to support a student's normal way of working in school. There should be a history of support, intervention, monitoring and evidence from class teachers during Key Stage 3, along with SEN information from primary schools before any testing is carried out. This is usually done at the end of Y9 so that the student has the arrangement in place throughout their GCSE courses. Testing is carried out by the qualified Access Arrangements Assessor in school.

Parents are advised to contact the SENCO by email at senco@hgs.herts.sch.uk and discuss any concerns regarding a student's learning disability. The school can then investigate any possible need for Access Arrangements. Private assessments can be used as history of need, but cannot be submitted to JCQ. Only the school's qualified assessor or an assessor such as an Educational Psychologist working on request of, and on behalf of the school, may complete the Form 8 for JCQ Access Arrangements.

Arrangements are reviewed and reapplied for in Y12, if there is evidence that this still the normal way of working for the student; confirm that the adjustment continues to be the candidate's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010; provide evidence from teaching staff that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning.

Students transferring from other schools into our sixth form, who have previously been given access arrangements, should bring with them hand signed, dated copies of the JCQ Form 8 and the previous approval document from the earlier application. This should be given to HGS SENCO as soon as possible after transfer to our sixth form.

Requests for Special Exam Arrangements – seating and rooming

Arrangements to do exams in a smaller exam room, or with other specific seating arrangement, will be decided based on the following guidelines:

1. A request will be considered for students with an anxiety or mental health need where they are accessing designated Tier 3 support. They will require a letter, outlining their need for special exam arrangements, from their Tier 3 support provider (e.g. hospital consultant, CAMHS, NHS psychiatrist). The requested arrangement should also have been their "normal way of working" over time leading up to the examination period. Any such request must be supported by a letter from the SENCO to confirm the need for the access arrangement.
2. Students with other needs, for whom invigilation in a smaller room or specific seating arrangement is considered to be an appropriate and reasonable adjustment and for whom evidence

over time (e.g. consultant's letter) has been collected, will be seated accordingly. Any such request must be supported by a letter from the SENCO to confirm the need for the access arrangement.

3. Any student who has an extenuating circumstance that occurs in the lead up to, or during, the exam period that is likely to impact on their usual exam performance, will be considered under the usual "special consideration" arrangements, with evidence collected by the exams officer who will notify the exam board if JCQ criteria are met.

Cases in categories 1 and 2 will be agreed before mock exams for KS4, and for KS5. The rules are as stated in the current JCQ guidelines "Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments"

Any case that does not fall clearly under any of these categories will be looked at individually and all final decisions will be made by SLG

No special seating arrangements should be put into place for internal exams unless agreed by the SENCO/ Exams Officer so that there is a full audit trail going forward to external exams.

September 2023