



WESTMINSTER  
SCHOOL

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

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## WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

### **POLICY ON EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) incorporating the Policy on Access Arrangement for Examinations**

#### **Introduction**

This policy has regard to the following:

- The Equality Act 2010 (replacing a range of previous legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act)
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The SEND Code of Practice 2014 (Department for Education)
- The Data Protection Act 1998 (This will be replaced by the Data Protection Bill which implements the General Data Protection Regulation which comes into force on 25 May 2018)

Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND):

*A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. Children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.*

*(SEND Code of Practice)*

#### **Governance & Management**

All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010, not only to ensure that ‘reasonable adjustments’ are made for pupils already attending the school, but also to consider what might be needed to ensure that any future pupils with a disability are not disadvantaged. As detailed in the SEND Code of Practice, Judith Mayhew Jonas has been appointed as the school governor ‘with specific oversight of the School’s arrangements for SEN and disability’ The Senior Management Committee, through the Deputy Head (Academic) should regularly review how expertise and resources used to address SEND can be used to build the quality of whole-School provision as part of their approach to school improvement.

To ensure best practice, the SENCO/Study Skills Co-ordinator at Westminster School should be an experienced, qualified teacher with relevant specialist qualifications (such as a Diploma in Specific Learning Difficulties).

#### **Principles underlying practice**

The SEND Code of Practice describes the principles that should be observed by all professionals working with children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Westminster School aims to:

- a) focus on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning
- b) identify early the special educational needs of young people

- c) make high quality provision to meet the needs of young people and to ensure equality of opportunity
- d) take into account the views of young people and their families
- e) enable young people and their parents to participate in decision-making
- f) collaborate with partners in education, health and social care where appropriate
- g) ensure that appropriate resources are available for pupils with temporary or long-term special needs
- h) provide support for teachers to meet the learning needs of all pupils

Westminster takes a sympathetic and professional whole-School approach to pupils with SEND.

Pupils with SEND are the shared responsibility of all staff. All staff are expected to have an understanding and awareness of the impact of specific learning profiles on teaching and learning.

To ensure the needs of pupils with SEND are addressed, the Study Skills Department (SSD) will:

- a) identify and assess pupils with SEND, and where necessary, refer for further assessment by other professionals such as educational psychologists, specialist teachers and therapists.
- b) develop and monitor support measures where a need is identified
- c) work in close liaison with House and teaching staff to ensure confidential communication on learning needs and progress of pupils
- d) teach pupils according to their specific needs recognising their particular strengths and learning needs to promote achievement of their academic potential
- e) communicate effectively with parents/guardians on the learning needs of pupils and provide a termly report on those pupils seen regularly
- f) collate evidence to support applications for access arrangements in external exams

## **Identification and Assessment of pupils**

### **Admissions**

Westminster School's 'Policy on Admissions' sets out the 'pre-conditions' required for selection. All decisions relating to SEND matters are made with regard to the provision of reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

Parents and/or prep schools should inform the admissions department about a candidate's particular needs, providing any reports from suitably qualified professionals as are available.

The ISEB Common Pre-Test is designed to be accessible to candidates with a range of special educational needs. Extra time will be available from October 2018.

Any pupil taking the Common Pre-Test who has a recognised special educational need will automatically be interviewed as part of the selection process.

The expectation is that all candidates sit the Common Pre-Test.

The Study Skills Co-ordinator (SENCO) works closely with the Admissions team to make decisions about any access arrangements requested for entrance exams (Internal tests at 11+, Challenge, Common Entrance and Sixth Form Entry). The regulations set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) are used to determine whether or not a prospective pupil at 13+ or 16+ should be allowed any concessions in the entrance exams (See Section 8 for more detail).

Where possible/appropriate, transition arrangements are made for pupils needing significant support with SEND matters in collaboration with the family, the feeder school and any outside agencies involved.

### **Assessment**

*Schools should assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry, building on information from previous settings and key stages where appropriate. At the same time,*

*schools should consider evidence that a pupil may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and, if so, what reasonable adjustments may need to be made for them.*

*N.B. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN.*  
(SEND Code of Practice)

When pupils arrive at the School, the Study Skills Department looks at any evidence provided by the family and/or previous school. In addition, all pupils arriving in the 5<sup>th</sup> form (Year 9) sit the MidYIS baseline test which is used as a diagnostic test, and are also screened during the first half term. Monitoring continues throughout a pupil's time at Westminster using information gathered from a variety of sources including feedback from teachers, parents and the pupils themselves, as well as from exams and reports. The Study Skills Co-ordinator works closely with Housemasters.

If the Housemaster or a teacher has a concern about a pupil, they should use the Westminster School intranet online referral procedure to trigger the collation of feedback from all the other teachers prior to a review of the case by the Study Skills Coordinator. Parents may also request a referral through the Housemaster and a pupil may self-refer.

Where exam concessions may be appropriate, further assessment is carried out. See Section 8 for more information.

### **SEND Support**

Westminster School aims for a whole-School approach where 'high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN.

*"Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support."*

(SEND Code of Practice)

The Study Skills department provides information and support on SEND matters for departments as well as individual teachers to reduce barriers to learning. In addition, the Study Skills Department offers a graduated approach with a universal offer of:

- a) Study Skills information available to pupils and teachers via the intranet
- b) An 'Introduction to Study Skills' lesson for all Year 9 classes
- c) Monthly drop-in sessions

A series of themed workshops are also offered, sometimes targeting particular pupils where concerns have been raised. Where appropriate, Housemasters can use the referral system to request short-term interventions for particular pupils. Regular one-to one support is usually only offered where there is a formal diagnosis of a specific learning difference/ disability and will be tailored to individual needs. In such cases (including all pupils where exam concessions have been agreed) a Study Skills Profile is written, detailing a pupil's strengths and weaknesses alongside 'suggested strategies'. These Profiles are available on-line to all teachers working with a particular pupil. The wording of the Study Skills Profiles is agreed with the pupil involved and is reviewed as appropriate, and at least annually.

The School's policy is not to remove pupils from lessons for Study Skills support and so in the Lower School (Years 9 – 11) pupils are seen before School, at lunchtime or after School.

The SEND Code of Practice makes it explicit that 'Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.' All subject staff are required to be aware of a pupil's specific needs and be prepared to differentiate work appropriately with particular regard to the advice included in the Study Skills Profiles (available on the Intranet). All subject staff are expected to be aware of the needs of the pupils they teach who have Study Skills Profiles and to take steps to plan and deliver their teaching in an effective and appropriate manner. The Study Skills Department contributes to the CPD offered within the school to enable teachers to fulfil these responsibilities.

Study Skills support usually involves agreeing targets with pupils. These are reviewed frequently, often on a weekly basis where support is intensive. Pupils are encouraged to be self-reflective and targeted pupils are expected to complete regular exam reflection exercises. The Study Skills Department has full access to a range of data collected by the School, both summative (e.g. test and exam results) and formative (e.g. order sheets, end of term reports). School reports and Parents' Evenings provide formal regular feedback while emails, phone calls and meetings are used as often as required. The Study Skills Department works closely with Housemasters, who in turn have close contact not only with pupils, but also with parents. In cases where there is a complex need (including pupils who have a Statement of Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan) reviews may need to include outside agencies/specialists.

### **Transition to Higher Education**

Almost all pupils who leave Westminster School at the end of Year 13 go on to study at university. As the name suggests, a key aim for the Department is to encourage effective study skills and independent learning – essential attributes for all successful learners and a good preparation for Higher Education. Where appropriate, the Study Skills Department provides information and guidance about applications for Disabled Student Allowance.

### **Resources/funding**

The Department is currently staffed by 1 full-time and two part-time, specialist teachers (1.6 full-time equivalent). No charge is made to parents for in-house Study Skills support but a charge may be made where an outside agency is involved (excepting pupils who receive a bursary). This includes payment for diagnostic cognitive assessments commissioned by the School.

The spending of any income received for pupils with a Statement of Educational Need or Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan is planned on an individual basis with input from all concerned. Details are recorded and shared with the relevant local authority.

### **Access Arrangements for Examinations**

#### **Introduction**

*"The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties."*

*(JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2017-2018)*

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) sets out the regulations that all schools are required to follow when considering exam concessions for public exams. Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' while ensuring that no pupil is given an 'unfair advantage'.

### **Pupils applying to the school**

#### **Introduction**

At Westminster, the JCQ requirements are also used to determine whether or not a prospective pupil should be allowed any concessions in the entrance exams.

Details of the evidence required for the most frequently requested exam concessions are listed below. Please note that evidence should be submitted by the end of October in the academic year leading up to the entrance exams. This allows time for further evidence to be gathered should that be necessary.

#### **Evidence needed to make a request a word processor for exams requiring extended writing**

Written evidence from the school and a diagnostic assessment report from a suitably-qualified professional detailing why using a word processor is appropriate to the pupil's needs. Most commonly these are:

- a) very slow and/or illegible handwriting;
- b) a physical disability or medical condition;
- c) significant problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand.

Using a word processor should be an established way of working for that pupil.

#### Evidence needed to make a request for extra time (up to a maximum of 25%)

An assessment report (carried out in Year 7 or 8 by a specialist assessor) will need to be submitted. Please note that pupils will usually only be considered eligible for extra time if they have at least one standard score of 84 or below relating to *speed of processing*. A covering letter from the school will also be required to confirm that extra time is being offered to the pupil as a result of a *substantial and long term impairment* which has been shown to affect speed of working.

#### **On arrival at Westminster**

All pupils arriving at Westminster will be carefully monitored throughout their first year, and concessions agreed for entrance exams (use of a word processor and/or extra time) will not automatically transfer. Additional testing and the collection of evidence will be required to establish a continuing need.

#### **For all new pupils arriving at Westminster**

##### General

When any pupil who has previously been awarded exam concessions arrives at Westminster, the Study Skills Department will assess any continuing need and update the evidence as set out below. Exam concessions agreed for entrance exams will not automatically transfer. All pupils are carefully monitored throughout their time at Westminster but should any pupil or parent have concerns about performance in exams, the Study Skills Co-ordinator should be informed. Should a detailed diagnostic assessment be required, *this will need to be commissioned by the school*.

##### Word Processing

Westminster School requires clear evidence of need before the use of a word processor in public exams can be agreed. 'Need' in this instance would most commonly be:

- a) very slow and/or illegible handwriting
- b) a physical disability or medical condition

Any pupil who has been allowed a word processor in the entrance exams will need to undergo a handwriting and typing test in their first term to determine whether this remains appropriate to their needs. Should this be the case, the pupil will also need to show that word processing remains their 'normal way of working' (where appropriate) in class, for prep and for internal exams.

During examinations all candidates will be expected to use the word processor supplied by the centre (school).

New concerns may be raised at any stage by teachers, parents or the pupils themselves. Samples of handwriting would normally be collected, with internal exams providing a realistic example of what a pupil can manage when under time constraints. Where concerns remain, a handwriting assessment and typing test will be carried out by the Study Skills Department.

##### Extra time

Pupils who have previously been eligible for extra time will have below average processing scores which can be shown to have a '*substantial adverse effect on speed of working*'. In order for any extra time to be agreed at Westminster, it will be necessary to collect evidence of need, including the monitoring of internal exams. In addition, the school will commission an assessment to be carried out by the school's approved assessor. Please note that there can be no guarantee that any resulting test scores will be sufficient to fulfil JCQ regulations.

##### Other concessions

JCQ regulations provide details of a range of possible adjustments, such as prompts or supervised rest breaks (suitable for pupils with Attention Deficit Disorder) and modified papers (suitable for pupils with visual impairments). Cases are considered on an individual basis and evidence collected as detailed in the regulations.

Decisions are agreed jointly by the Study Skills Coordinator, the Head of Examinations and the Deputy Head (Academic), by the end of January of a given academic year.

### **Pupils continuing to the Sixth Form**

A re-submission of application is required for any current Westminster pupil moving into the Sixth Form where there is continuing evidence of the need for extra time. This *may* require an updated assessment.

### **Higher Education**

Regulations for higher education are different from those concerning secondary education. For higher education, a full diagnostic assessment would be required once the pupil reaches 16 (or older). Where a Sixth Form pupil requires a new assessment for A level/Pre-U studies at Westminster, parents may want to consider having a full diagnostic assessment. Any diagnostic assessment needs to be undertaken by the organisation approved and commissioned by the school.