



WESTMINSTER
SCHOOL

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY

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WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) incorporating the Access Arrangements 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)
- Data Protection Act 2018 which implements the General Data Protection Regulation.

DEFINITION

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, 2014)

GOVERNANCE AND 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.

Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas is the member of the Governing Body “with specific oversight of the School’s arrangements for SEN and disability”.

The Senior Management Committee, through the Deputy Head (Academic), regularly reviews how expertise and resources used to address SEND can be used to build the quality of whole-School provision as part of the approach to School improvement.

To ensure best practice, the SENCO / Head of Learning Development is 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 are to be observed by all professionals working with children and young people who have SEN and / or disabilities.

The School aims to:

- Focus on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning.
- Identify early the special educational needs of young people.
- Make high quality provision to meet the needs of young people and to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Take into account the views of young people and their families.
- Enable young people and their parents to participate in decision-making.
- Collaborate with partners in education, health and social care where appropriate.
- Ensure that appropriate resources are available for pupils with temporary or long-term special needs.
- 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 Learning Development Department will:

- Identify and assess pupils with SEND, and where necessary, refer for further assessment by other professionals such as educational psychologists, specialist teachers and therapists.
- Develop and monitor support measures where a need is identified.
- Work in close liaison with pastoral and teaching staff to ensure confidential communication on learning needs and the progress of pupils.
- Teach pupils according to their specific needs, recognising their particular strengths and learning needs to promote achievement of their academic potential.
- Communicate effectively with parents / guardians on the learning needs of pupils and provide a termly report on those pupils seen regularly.
- Collate evidence to support applications for access arrangements in external examinations.

IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS

Admissions

The School's "Admissions and Awards Policy" 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.

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

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 SENDs. Extra time is available for those pupils who have been granted it.

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 SENCO / Study Skills Coordinator works closely with the Admissions team to make decisions about any access arrangements requested for entrance exams (Internal tests at 11+, Challenge, 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 examinations (see *Access Arrangements for Examinations* below 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, 2014)

When pupils arrive at the School, the Learning Development Department looks at any evidence provided by the family and / or previous school. In addition, all pupils arriving in the Fifth Form (Year 9) sit the MidYIS baseline and LUCID tests which are used for diagnostic purposes, and are also screened during the first half term in the School. 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 examinations, order sheets and reports. The SENCO / Head of Learning Development works closely with Housemasters.

If a teacher has a concern about a pupil, they should contact the pupil's Housemaster. The Housemaster may then 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 SENCO / Head of Learning Development. Parents may also request a referral through the Housemaster and a pupil may self-refer.

Where examination concessions may be appropriate, further assessment is carried out. See *Access Arrangements for Examinations* below 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, 2014).

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

- Study Skills information available to pupils and teachers via the intranet
- An “Introduction to Study Skills” lesson for all Year 9 classes
- Weekly 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 examination 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 Learning Development 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 to be prepared to differentiate work appropriately with particular regard to the advice included in the Study Skills Profiles. 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 Learning Development Department contributes to the CPD offered within the School to enable teachers to fulfil these responsibilities.

Learning Development 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 examination reflection exercises. The Learning Development Department has full access to a range of data collected by the School, both summative (e.g.: test and examination results) and formative (e.g.: order sheets and end-of-term reports). School reports and Parents’ Evenings provide formal regular feedback, while emails, telephone calls and meetings are used as often as required. The Learning Development 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 the Remove (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 AND FUNDING

The Department is currently staffed by one full-time and two part-time, specialist teachers (1.6 full-time equivalent). No charge is made to parents for in-house Learning Development 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 2019-2020)

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) sets out the regulations that all schools are required to follow when considering exam concessions for public examinations. 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 examinations.

Details of the evidence required for the most frequently requested examination 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 examinations. This allows time for further evidence to be gathered should that be necessary.

From September 2021, all applicants must satisfy the new JCQ guidelines for awarding access arrangements.

Evidence needed to make a request to use a word processor for examinations 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:

- very slow and / or illegible handwriting;
- a physical disability or medical condition;
- 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 (see below) will need to be submitted. Pupils will usually only be considered eligible for extra time if they have either:

- At least two standard scores of 84 or below relating to two different areas relating to speed of processing

or

- One below average standardised score of 84 or below and one low average standardised score (85-89) in two different areas of 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.

The assessment report should be carried out by a specialist assessor and should be dated no earlier than:

- The start of Year 5 for the ISEB Pre-test
- The start of Year 9 for Sixth Form Entry

On arrival at Westminster

All pupils arriving at Westminster will be carefully monitored throughout their first year, and concessions agreed for entrance examinations (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 examination concessions arrives at Westminster, the Learning Development Department will assess any continuing need and update the evidence as set out below. Examination concessions agreed for entrance examinations 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 examinations, the head of Learning Development should be informed. Should a detailed diagnostic assessment be required, *this will need to be commissioned by the School.*

Word Processing

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

- Very slow and / or illegible handwriting
- A physical disability or medical condition
- Significant difficulties planning and organising their written work by hand.

Any pupil who has been allowed a word processor in the entrance examinations 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 examinations.

During examinations, all candidates will be expected to use the word processor supplied by the centre (School) with the spelling and grammar check deactivated.

New concerns may be raised at any stage by teachers, parents or the pupils themselves. Samples of handwriting would normally be collected, with internal examinations 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 Learning Development Department.

A pupil is not permitted to use a laptop for preps, tests or examinations because it is their preferred way of working; pupils must either have permission from the Study Skills Coordinator and satisfy at least one of the criteria above, or have explicit permission from a teacher for a particular piece of work to be typed.

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 examinations. 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, as published in the 2021-22 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 Head of Learning Development, the Head of Examinations and the Director of Teaching and Learning, 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. A fully completed Form 8, signed and dated, may roll forward from GCSE to GCE if the candidate meets the current JCQ criteria for 25% as published in the 2021-22 regulations.

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.