



**NORTHGATE**  
*High School*

# Special Educational Needs Policy

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

**Review period:** Annual

**Review by:** Mr A Bluck

**Date Reviewed:** May 2026

**Next Review:** May 2027

# Learning Support – Special Educational Needs Policy and Local Offer

## 1. Definition of Special Educational Needs

- 1.1 Students have special educational needs if they have a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special educational provision* to be made for them.
- 1.2 Students have a *learning difficulty* if they:
  - have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age which has resulted in a diagnosis by an educational psychologist or medical professional
  - have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age
- 1.3 Students must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they are taught.
- 1.4 This policy is developed in accordance with the Children and Families Act March 2014 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice updated Feb 2015, and Suffolk Local Authority guidance.
- 1.5 Northgate High School recognises that the Special Needs provision within the school is the responsibility of all colleagues and high quality, adapted teaching is the aim of the whole school.

## 2. Objectives

- 2.1 To provide all students, irrespective of the nature of their educational needs, with a culture and ethos in which all are valued equally.
- 2.2 To provide the appropriate support needed by those students who may experience learning, physical, sensory or emotional difficulties at some time in their school career, to map provision and ensure sustainability, recognising the limitations of the mainstream environment.
- 2.3 To prepare students towards as much independence as possible.
- 2.4 To make arrangements for the early identification and subsequent provision required for students with special needs.
- 2.5 To ensure that the special educational needs of students are met with the fullest possible access to the curriculum and that they make the best possible progress.
- 2.6 To foster links with parents and provide information and advice services throughout their child's school career.
- 2.7 To encourage purposeful and positive links with outside agencies and the wider community.
- 2.8 To promote the sharing of information and best use of available data to encourage planning and inclusion of students of all abilities.
- 2.9 To monitor and track vulnerable groups of students, sharing information and planning appropriate intervention when necessary.
- 2.10 To promote the professional development of staff with regard to their expertise in dealing with students with special educational needs.
- 2.11 To ensure that the views of the student and parent are collected and taken into account when planning educational experience.

## 3. Assistant Headteacher – Learning Support

- 3.1 The postholder has achieved the National Award for SEN Coordination and oversees the progress of students with special educational needs, language needs and social and emotional issues, through transition to post 16 and works to:
  - Inspire staff and students to hold an aspirational view of education and develop a cohesive whole school approach to providing high quality teaching and learning for all learners, ensuring accessibility.
  - Lead SEND policy and implementation across the whole school, with oversight of the provision to meet the needs of all students on the SEND register in the school.
  - Liaise with the Local Authority through special needs network meetings, forums and communications to ensure that the school is at the forefront of national and local developments in SEND policy.
  - Build on, and support, current initiatives to fully engage parents and carers and gain their support in the school's undertaking to establish purposeful and relevant learning for all students.

- Monitor and evaluate the quality of education for students with SEND through robust quality assurance processes including learning walks, work audits, student and parent perception surveys, and interviews.
- Take the lead in coordinating appropriate and relevant training for all staff on ensuring the teaching and learning needs of all students are met.
- Collaborate and liaise with the Deputy Headteachers Student Behaviour & Wellbeing and Teaching & Learning in designing, implementing and evaluating cost-effective curriculum approaches that cater to the needs of students with SEND.
- Maintain and further develop links with agencies and support services beyond the school that support the attendance and learning needs of all students in the school.
- Hold oversight of the Equalities agenda, ensuring equalities objectives are met, and facilitating the work being undertaken to support this.
- Work closely with subject leaders to support their work in achieving successful opportunities to improve the learning outcomes of students with SEND across all curriculum areas.
- Work in partnership with the SENDCO by undertaking aspects of the SENDCO role and support the work of the Foundation Learning and EAL teaching teams to ensure high quality outcomes for our learners.
- Work closely in liaison with the Assistant Headteacher Progress, to consider relevant data collection, target student support, measure impact and review provision with specific emphasis on the outcomes of students with additional needs. Work closely with the Exams Officer to ensure the provision of access arrangements for all external and formal examination series for all students.
- Lead action research that engages members of staff in improving the effectiveness and quality of provision for students with additional needs.
- Develop an effective system for tracking, monitoring and supporting the excellent attendance of students at school. Oversee our system for integrating new students who join Northgate as in-year transfers into the school, monitoring and supporting their progress when they first join Northgate.
- To foster the inclusion of students with special and additional needs into the life and culture of the school.
- Take responsibility for Children in Care – act as the Designated CiC Teacher and ensure the EPEP process is in place and provision delivered effectively.
- Work in close liaison with the Assistant Headteacher Progress and Head of Years on planning appropriate and affordable interventions and curriculum opportunities that support the progress of both students with additional needs, and students with barriers to attendance.
- The postholder advises on Foundation Learning within the English and Learning Support Departments at KS3 and KS4.
- He/she ensures the provision of an appropriately broad, balanced and relevant and differentiated curriculum for students working within Foundation Learning courses, in accordance with the curricular policies of the school.
- To assist the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Manager by acting as DDSL safeguarding.
- To work with the Headteacher to ensure that the school is presented positively to parents and carers and our wider community, and to respond promptly to concerns when they arise.
- To develop positive links with our wider community, to ensure that our students have access to a wide range of specialist support, intervention and educational opportunities.

## **4. SENDCO (f/t) / Assistant SENDCO (p/t)**

**4.1** The postholder co-ordinates, alongside the Assistant Headteacher, the school's provision for students with special education needs and has the following duties:

- He/She supports and encourages curriculum leaders and all staff in curriculum development.
- Along with the Assistant Headteacher, liaises with curriculum leaders over timetabling and grouping of students with SEN.
- Alongside the Assistant Headteacher, provides support across all curriculum areas with reference to accessibility of materials, readability levels and through support teaching to link special needs practice to mainstream provision.
- Ensure High Needs Tariff, and other available funding, is secured for the effective deployment of resources to support the teaching and learning that is required to meet student learning needs.
- Liaise with the Local Authority through special needs network meetings, forums and communications to ensure that the school is at the forefront of national and local developments in SEND policy.

- Jointly, acts as the link for colleagues to the services and resources available within the Authority and Children and Young People's Services to support students with special educational needs.
- Assists with the induction and professional development of staff within the department, and performance management procedures within a nationally agreed framework.
- Jointly, oversees the deployment and reviews the impact of teaching assistants.
- Coordinates the development of school-based strategies for the identification of pupils/students with special educational needs within the framework of national and school policies.
- Provides school-based assessment of needs and coordinates the school's response.
- Jointly monitors the progress of students with special educational needs.
- He/she leads in raising standards of student attainment and achievement in learning within the Foundation Learning provision and monitors and supports student progress by making use of data systems.
- He/she supports the agenda of raising aspirations, promoting high achievement and meeting the learning needs of individuals and groups of students and plans in partnership with curriculum areas especially English and Maths in order to ensure high quality provision of learning experiences and close gaps in attainment.
- Appropriate schemes of work, resources, marking policies and learning and teaching strategies for Foundation Learning courses are developed by the post holder.
- Fosters the inclusion of students with special needs into the life and culture of the school.
- Liaises with Primary, Post 16 and specialist providers and assists in the effective transfer of students to ensure continuity of provision and continuous progress.
- Ensures the school keeps the records of all students with SEN up to date and dissemination of information is effective and efficient.
- Works closely with the Assistant Headteacher to ensure that examination access information is consistent with Joint Council for Qualifications protocols and applied.
- Liaises with outside agencies as appropriate and lead on the Annual Review process for each student with an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Maintains and develops home/school links.
- Is aware of the Local Offer and provision within it and is able to work with other professionals to provide a supportive role to families to ensure students with SEN receive appropriate support.
- Together with the Assistant Headteacher, coordinates the school's termly High Tariff Needs Funding return, submitting the response to the LA.
- With the Assistant Headteacher, is responsible to the Headteacher and Principal Finance Officer for the oversight of the allocation of resources.

## **5. Teachers of Foundation Learning/EAL or teaching assistants who volunteer to deliver small group intervention**

- The postholders work with the Assistant Headteacher and SENDCOs to deliver appropriate schemes of work and interventions to promote literacy and numeracy with foundation learners with specific, moderate and other learning barriers, including acquiring English as an additional language, to promote students' progress, addressing specific learning needs.
- They maintain accurate records of progress and report on progress as part of whole school systems.
- They work alongside the SENDCOs in delivering specific interventions and promote effective differentiation, sharing good practice amongst colleagues and supporting access in classrooms.

## **6. Administrative Support Officer**

- The post holder ensures the efficient and effective administration of the Learning Support Department by identifying, establishing and maintaining appropriate systems and procedures.
- He/She co-ordinates all clerical and administrative support relating to the functioning of the Assistant Headteacher Progress/SENDCO role, the collection of paperwork and data for HNF, Performance Review, Annual Review and parent liaison.
- He/she acts as a first point of contact for agencies, teachers, parents and students contacting the Learning Support department and triages issues to relevant professionals.

- He/she collates evidence relating to examination access, health and safety requirements, personal care rotas and room timetables.
- He/she assists with the management of the Student Passport process, and supports the administration of all matters within the department which are not directly related to teaching and learning but which ensure effective provision; invitations, information dissemination, letters, record of communications.
- The postholder informs students re appointments for specialist interventions, memos staff, fields telephone messages and ensures information is passed on to relevant colleagues.
- He/She ensures that records are maintained.
- He/she maintains departmental resources i.e. stationery and laptop security.
- He/she attends a weekly meeting with Teaching Assistant team leaders and supports follow up actions.

## **7. Clerical Assistant**

**7.1** Updates records, attaches One Page Student Passport to management systems, disseminates paperwork to staff, ensures collation of returns, copying and ensuring smooth communications either electronically or by paper copy, files and assists with the collation of Annual Review information, arranges appointments for Annual Reviews and appropriate correspondence, and works to support the Administrative Support Officer in all clerical duties.

## **8. Teaching Assistant Team Leader**

**8.1** Three teams of teaching assistants are led by team leaders who channel issues, disseminate information, provide a liaison point and communicate directly with the Assistant Headteacher around the day to day running of the Learning Support Department and information relating to barriers of progress for all students. Team leaders, administrative support officer and the Assistant Headteacher meet weekly and these minutes are shared when appropriate.

**8.2** Each teaching assistant and team leader is a keyworker for a group of students. Keyworkers are the first point of contact for teachers, parents and students in communicating issues around progress and access, providing support and intervention to address these. They will develop expertise in specialist interventions and be deployed to address any barriers as they arise.

## **9. Higher Level Teaching Assistant – Children in Care and SEN IAG**

**9.1** This is a specialist role. The postholder has responsibility for information, advice and guidance to students and students vulnerable to low engagement and participation in training and education including those with SEN, pupil premium students and children in care. The post holder liaises with higher education and training providers, the Head of Careers, the Early Help NEET prevention team and social worker support and arranges appropriate intervention – visits, interviews, parental communication and similar.

**9.2** To support this role, the postholder is a keyworker for children in care, attends PEP meetings and CIC Review meetings and liaises day to day with teachers about the progress of students in care or who have been in care in the past. He/she updates the CLA tracker on a monthly basis or as necessary, ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of and supporting educational targets.

**9.3** The postholder works as a team leader for teaching assistants. He/she liaises with the teaching assistant team to promote the progress of their keyworkees, liaising with them about Student Passport, communication, issues of concern and acting as conduit to the Assistant Headteacher as defined above.

**9.4** In addition, the postholder assists with the dissemination of examination papers for those with access arrangements during external examination periods and liaises closely with the administrative support officer, the examinations team.

## **10. TA with attachment to the Sixth Form**

**10.1** The postholder(s) work to the Head of Sixth Form and Assistant Heads of Sixth Form and liaise closely with the Assistant Headteacher Learning Support to co-ordinate support for students with special educational needs aged 16-19. He/she/they collect transfer information, collect evidence to support examination access applications, liaise with teachers of students around access, attend Open Events and meetings relevant to sixth form student needs. He/she/they liaise with classroom teachers (see p9), assess the level of support required, maintain records and communicate with parents and students. He/she/they attend Annual Reviews when appropriate and complete appropriate records. The postholder(s) ensure that the Student Passport for sixth form students are up to date and information to teaching colleagues is complete.

## **11. Admission Arrangements**

**11.1** The year prior to transfer to Northgate, the Assistant Headteachers, SENDCO and Head of Year for year 6/7, liaise

with all the main feeder primary schools. The purpose of these visits is to make contact with the students and assess provision needs prior to the provision mapping process. For some individuals, additional visits are arranged if this is felt to be appropriate. The SENDCO will if possible, attend the Annual Review of EHCP year 6 students who live within catchment, to discuss the appropriate provision for the students when they transfer to Northgate.

## 12. Transfer Arrangements

12.1 If a student is known to have special educational needs when they arrive at the school, the Assistant Headteacher, SENDCO, Head of Years and subject leaders will:

- use information from the primary school to provide an appropriate curriculum for the student and focus attention on action to support the student within the class
- ensure that ongoing observation and assessment provides feedback about the student's achievements to inform future planning of the student's learning
- ensure opportunities for the student to show what they know, understand and can do
- involve the student in planning and agreeing targets to meet their needs, where possible and appropriate (Student Passport, Review).
- involve parents in developing a joint learning approach at home and in school (Student Passport, Review).

## 13. Accessibility – please see policy

## 14. Staffing

14.1 Teaching Assistants (TAs) **in addition** to HLTAs

- 2023-24 – 3 team leaders (Including 1 HLTA), 9 TAs full time, 12 part time TAs.
- 2024-25 – 3 team leaders (including 1 HLTA), 5 TAs fulltime, 16 part time TAs
- 2025-26 – 3 team leaders (including 1 HLTA), 10 TAs fulltime, 10 part time TAs

**The Teaching Assistant team continues to be developed and trained to deliver expert, high impact but flexible proactive progress support and the key focus is on providing high quality teaching where additional impact is made through additional intervention.**

14.2 A range of interventions are offered by the Learning Support team including:

- Morning tutorial intervention programme
- Lunchtime clubs when possible and appropriate
- EAL language teaching
- ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) programme
- Speech and Language intervention
- Braille support
- Homework Club
- Break time cover
- Personal care as necessary (pursuant to contract)
- Personal feeding as necessary (pursuant to contract)
- Foundation learning teaching
- Beat Dyslexia
- Accelerated Reader
- Catch up Literacy
- Specialist Education Service work
- Handwriting
- Maths interventon
- Phonics

## **15. Identification, Assessment and Provision**

**15.1** Provision for students with special educational needs is a matter for the school as a whole. In addition to the governing body, the school's Headteacher, SENDCO and learning support team, all other members of staff have important responsibilities.

*All teachers are teachers of students with special educational needs.*

**15.2** Teaching students with an additional need is a whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response. However, the appropriate level of response will be discussed primarily by the Assistant Headteacher for Learning Support/SENDCO to aid staff planning and will be disseminated accordingly. All teachers work to ensure shared good practice relating to inclusion of and differentiation for students with SEN and EAL students. The progress and attainment of these groups is monitored by the Assistant Headteacher Learning Support, Head of Years and Heads of Subject/Department and formally assessed at key data analysis points. However, these points are reached as part of a continuous cycle of assess, plan, do, review that takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the students. The majority of students will learn and progress within these arrangements. However, for students with special educational needs, there may be a need to provide an enhanced level of provision to narrow gaps in achievement.

## **16. High Quality Teaching**

– see teaching and learning key principles and behaviour for learning key principles.

## **17. First layer of identification at Northgate High School - Teacher Support (LN, EBP, Attendance, Medical and EAL)**

**17.1** Northgate High School uses a 'Teacher Support' flexible identification of students who are underachieving. This tier of identification gives clear direction to teachers about who needs support, for what reason and provides some guidance on what form the intervention will take and what the outcome should be. It clearly recognises the part played by teachers in ensuring that teaching and learning strategies are appropriate and support is offered in the classroom by the teacher to ensure progress. Good teaching is at the heart of progress and support for students.

**17.2** Teachers may conclude that the strategies they are currently using with a student are not resulting in the student learning as effectively as possible. Data analysis points formalise this process. In these circumstances, they will consult the Progress and Pastoral teams to consider further options. The starting point will always be a review of the strategies being used in the classroom and the way in which these might be developed. Teachers will make use of the guidance provided in the Suffolk Mainstream Inclusion Framework to support their work with students.

**17.3** The key test of the need for identification at teacher support level is evidence that current rates of progress are inadequate. Adequate progress can be defined in a number of ways for example, progress which:

- narrows the attainment gap between the student's peers
- is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers
- matches or betters the student's previous rate of progress.

**17.4** Interventions at this level aim to:

- provide differentiated access, strategies and resources, to improve progress (TS - learning need)
- ensure improvements in self-help, social or personal skills (TS - emotional, behavioural, pastoral)
- lead to improvements in the student's attendance (TS - attendance)
- lead to appropriate provision in the face of temporary medical need (TS – medical).

## **18. English as an additional language**

**18.1** The identification and assessment of the additional support for young people whose first language is not English requires particular care. Where there is uncertainty about an individual, the school will look carefully at all aspects of a student's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of the language that is used there or arise from special educational needs. This group are identified as a vulnerable group. A home-school liaison officer helps to foster links with the Bangladeshi community and the EAL Coordinator focuses support on the EAL group.

- Interventions at this level are identified as TS – EAL

## 19. School Support Category and Education, Health and Care Plan

- 19.1** School Support Category (K) is characterized by a diagnosed learning, medical or mental health need and the involvement of external services such as special needs advisory teachers, educational psychologists, Child and Family Pathways (IDT or CAMHS) Paediatrician or other. A request for help from external services is likely to follow a decision taken by the SENDCO and colleagues, in consultation with parents, at a review of the child's Student Passport or at a data analysis point. Please see Appendix Three for notes on NDD referrals.
- 19.2** The triggers for *School Support* could be that, despite receiving teacher support, the student:
- continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a sustained period suggesting a need for investigation of a learning barrier
  - has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with their own learning or that of the class group, despite having an individualised support identification or a diagnosed mental health issue
  - has sensory, medical or physical needs requiring additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits, providing direct intervention to the student or advice to the staff, by a specialist service
  - has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.
- 19.3** Interventions that this wave accesses include but are not diagnosed by:
- Access to TA support in lessons
  - Bespoke timetable
  - Small group teaching for literacy and numeracy – foundation learning at KS3 or KS4
  - Student Passport
  - Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)
  - Individual Health Plan (IHP)
  - Suffolk Personal Support Framework (SPSF)
  - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for under 14s (CAMHS)
  - ELSA programme
  - Physiotherapy
  - Speech and Language programme
  - Occupational therapy
  - Specialist Education Services
  - Time out card.
  - Teachers will make use of the guidance provided in the Suffolk Mainstream Inclusion Framework to support their work with students.
- 19.4** Northgate High School uses a Student Passport to co-ordinate support, involve parents and students and communicate with teachers and assistants. All students at School Support or EHCP level will have a Student Passport. The Student Passport will set out strategies for supporting the student's progress. Delivery of the Student Passport will remain the responsibility of subject teachers and those delivering interventions. If the SENDCO and the external specialist consider that the information gathered regarding the student is insufficient, then more detailed advice may be sought from other outside professionals with parental consent.

## 20. School request for statutory assessment

- 20.1** For students with the highest need, the help given by schools through School Support may not be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate progress. It will then be necessary for the school, in consultation with the parents and any external agencies already involved, to consider whether to ask the Local Authority (LA) to initiate a statutory assessment. Where a request for a statutory assessment is made to a LA, the student will have demonstrated significant cause for concern and the school will provide written evidence to the LA detailing:
- the school's action
  - records of regular reviews and their outcomes
  - the student's health including the student's medical history where relevant
  - attainment levels in literacy and mathematics

- educational and other assessments, for example from an advisory specialist support teacher
- views of the student, parent or carer
- involvement of other professionals
- any involvement by the social services or education welfare service.

**20.2** When the LA receives a request for a statutory assessment, it must decide within six weeks whether to carry out such an assessment.

## **21. The Education Health and Care Plan**

**21.1** This is a legal document which outlines the duties around the student's education. EHCPs will outline education and health support around children and young people and their families and will run from age 2 to 25 unless the young person attends higher education at age 18, when they will cease.

It will include:

- the student's name, address and date of birth
- details of all of the student's special needs
- the special educational provision necessary to meet the student's special educational needs
- the type and name of the school where the provision is to be made
- relevant non-educational needs of the child
- information on non-educational provision

## **22. Annual Review of an Education Health and Care Plan**

**22.1** Plans will be reviewed at least annually with the parents, the student, the LA and the school to consider whether any amendments need to be made to the description of the student's needs or to the special educational provision specified. 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 will be particularly significant in preparing for the student's transition to employment, the further education sector, work-based training, higher education and adult life and will involve the Integrated team. The aim of the annual review in year 9 and subsequent years is to review the young person's EHCP and draw up and review the Transition Plan. From Year 9 onwards, an additional 'Moving into Adulthood' form will be completed and returned to Family Services to support onward provision planning.

**22.2** The EHCP will be reviewed at a formal Annual Review and parents will have the opportunity to meet with the Assistant Headteacher/SENDSCO at other points in the school year.

**22.3** Nature of intervention for this wave: The Assistant Headteacher/SENDSCO and the student's subject teachers should decide on the action needed to help the student to progress in the light of their earlier assessment. This might be: -

- to provide different learning materials or special equipment
- to introduce some group or individual intervention, whilst balancing this demand within the limitations of the mainstream setting
- to undertake staff development and training aimed at introducing more effective strategies
- access to LA support services for one-off occasional advice on strategies or equipment or for staff training

## **23. Student Passport– a non-statutory student passport**

**23.1** Strategies employed to enable the student to progress are set out within a Student Passport. This includes information about:

- The nature of the special educational needs of the student
- Suggestions for the teaching strategies that could be used in the classroom
- The intervention provision to be put in place
- Data – to include reading age, maths age and benchmarks in maths and English
- EHCP outcomes (if the student has an EHCP).

**23.2** It will present a 'passport' for the student who will play an intrinsic part in its compilation. It gives a holistic view of the learning and emotional/social needs of an individual to enable access arrangements to be made and approaches to be differentiated by subject teachers.

**23.3** The Student Passport will only record that which is additional to or different from the curriculum provision. The Student Passport will be reviewed at least twice a year and shared with parents. The Student Passport is used to support only students with an EHCP or those at School Support level; however, in some circumstances, it may be appropriate for a student at TS level to have a passport too.

## **24. SEN and Sixth Form**

**24.1** In the Sixth Form, transfer arrangements are made as soon as GCSE results are known and a place has been offered and accepted at Northgate High School under the admission criteria advertised. The same subject grade/level criteria will apply to those who have an SEN as those who do not, in order to determine the appropriateness of the course and best support students moving forward. Additional courses will not be put in place or offered to specially cater for students with SEN post 16. However, additional support to access the courses on offer will include:

- access to Sixth Form TA for advice and meetings as necessary to discuss academic and pastoral concerns.
- Access to TA support to promote Sixth Form learning and progress, encouraging the development of independence, unless the physical needs of the student require additional support for them to demonstrate their ability.
- Regular meetings as above, Annual Reviews as part of yearly cycle as previously described.

## **25. Personal budgets**

**25.1** All families with an approved Education, Health Care Plan will have a legal right to request a personal budget from the Local Authority, if they choose. Parents can directly buy in the support identified in the plan. Parents will be given a choice of whether to take control of the personal budget by agencies managing the funds on their behalf or, where appropriate, by receiving direct payments, if they are suitable, to purchase and manage the provision themselves. Any queries regarding this choice will be directed to the Local Authority in the first instance.

**25.2** Local offer – The Local Authorities Offer is viewable on the LA website.

**25.3** Northgate High School Local Offer is outlined in this policy which is published on the school website.

**For policies relating to exam access needs, please see appendix one and appendix two.**

## **26. Complaints procedure**

**26.1** We hope that parents will feel able to discuss and problems with the Learning Support Department in the first instance. However, all parents are entitled to access a complaints procedure. Please refer to the Northgate website for information on how to pursue a complaint against Northgate High School or the LA website for information about how to pursue a complaint against the Local Authority.

Review of Policy - This policy will be reviewed annually – Next review May 2027

# Appendix One – Exams Access Arrangement Policy

Access arrangements are examination arrangements for students with special education needs, disabilities or temporary injuries. 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.'

Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements. This depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs or a diagnosis alone do not entitle a student to access arrangements.

'Reasonable adjustments' are made when a candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include:

- Education, Health and Care Plan and other individual need
- The effectiveness of the provision
- The cost of the adjustment
- The likely impact of the adjustment on the candidate and others.

If the cost or timeframe is unreasonable, or if the adjustment affects the security or integrity of the assessment it will not be made because it will not be reasonable.

For all public examinations, Joint Council for Qualifications(JCQ) Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustments Regulations are applied. These are accessible at this link; <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>

Failure to comply with these regulations may constitute malpractice and this will affect a candidate's and a whole centre's results.

Decisions to apply for access arrangements will be made based on the following criteria:

- Existence of an EHCP
- Flagging of student need by teachers, SENDCO and normal way of working at home and at school
- Portfolio of evidence of need compiled by the SENDCO to support application including teacher feedback and evidence of work
- Assessment of learning need by a JCQ recognised, certified practitioner.

## 1. Responsibilities

**1.1** The Assistant Headteacher and SENDCO are responsible for leading on access arrangements and will ensure that:

- Liaison with parents, students and external assessors has taken place
- All Form 8 and other relevant paperwork is complete
- External assessment is undertaken by a professional and is compliant to JCQ regulations
- Evidence of need is determined and portfolio of all required documentation is up to date
- Access arrangements online are made in a timely manner and comply correctly
- Liaison with examination officer to ensure access arrangements are applied correctly
- Liaison with Heads of Department and teaching staff to ensure that they know which students are entitled to access arrangements, that these should correspond to the students' normal way of working and that access arrangements are made for internal assessments and mock examinations.

**1.2** The **Examination Officer** is responsible for the practical application of access arrangements in public examinations. This will involve:

- Being aware of the students eligible for access arrangements and any particular conditions
- Putting access arrangements in place according to the regulations
- Making practical arrangements eg for extra rooms, extra invigilation.

**1.3** **Heads of Department** and **teaching staff** will support the SENDCO in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements. This involves:

- Being aware of which students are eligible for access arrangements
- Ensuring that access arrangements are made for these students in internal tests and mock examinations

- Collaborating with the SENDCO to provide evidence of students' normal way of working.
- Providing the SENDCO with a portfolio of evidence (internal assessment and classwork) and written statements describing barriers to learning and the need for reasonable adjustment.

**1.4** **Parents** of students from Year 9 who feel that their child should be assessed for access arrangements due to learning difficulties should contact the SENDCO as early as possible, for further advice, bearing in mind that access arrangements are only made for students who have difficulties which amount to a substantial impairment and which meet the thresholds of JCQ qualification. Applications from private assessors are not accepted by Northgate High School as JCQ certification must be in place.

**Exam access arrangements are finalised at the end of the Autumn Term prior to terminal public examination – only emergency arrangements will be considered after this (e.g. a broken wrist).**

## 2. Types of access arrangements

**2.1** These depend on student need and normal working practice alongside current JCQ regulations. This means that different arrangement may be allowed in different examinations and SENDCOs are required to consider need on a subject by subject basis. Arrangements most commonly used include:

- 25% extra time
- Use of a word processor – see appendix two
- Application for a reader and/or scribe depending on need
- Supervised rest breaks
- Colour blindness – colour naming as per JCQ regulations
- Bilingual translation dictionary.

Details of thresholds can be found in the JCQ regulations for each session.

**2.2** Temporary access arrangements and applications for special consideration can be made in certain circumstances. These arrangements can be processed as the need arises. An example could be a Year 11 student who has broken a wrist and must be given access arrangements but who is not given an unfair advantage. Appropriate documentation must be held by the centre.

## 3. Evidence required

**3.1** The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a 'limitation going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people.' Any arrangement or reasonable adjustment we consider has to be evidenced with the extent and type of evidence required depending on the nature of the access arrangement. The most common request is for extra time or an smaller room.

**3.2** In order to award extra time of up to 25% and/or separate room for **learning difficulties** the school must assess the needs of the student based on the EHCP confirming the disability or an assessment by a specialist assessor confirming 2 standardised scores below 84 for speed or reading, or reading comprehension or speed or writing or cognitive processing measures which have a substantial and long term adverse effect on speed of working. The report must be presented in a Form 8 with Section C hand signed and dated by the assessor. In addition, the school is required to collate a portfolio of evidence of the normal way of working for the candidate, clearly demonstrating the need for extra time.

**3.3** For difficulties relating to **sensory, physical, mental or emotional needs**, so as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENDCO must produce a detailed evidence pack which:

- Confirms that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties accessing and processing information and is disabled under the definition of the Equalities Act 2010
- Includes evidence of the candidate's difficulties and how they impact on teaching and learning in the classroom
- Shows the involvement of teaching staff in determining the need for extra time of up to 25% or an alternative arrangement
- Confirms that without the application of alternative arrangements, the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage
- Confirms that this is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability.

This detailed information will be supported by, for example:

- A letter from IDT, clinical psychologist or hospital consultant; or

- A Speech and Language Therapist report; or
- Evidence from a LA Psychological Service or Sensory Impairment Service; or
- An EHCP which confirms the candidate's disability.

**3.4** **A doctor's letter is not regarded as sufficient evidence for extra time or an alternative arrangement** because it does not confirm a specific diagnosis that falls within the special consideration remit. Other arrangements, eg seating position within the examination hall may be discussed with the Examinations Officer to help alleviate anxiety.

## **4. The application process**

**4.1** Students on the SEN register will automatically be considered for assessment for access arrangement by the SENDCO who will have established a picture of need and normal way of working which meets the JCQ access thresholds in Years 7-9. The SENDCO will select students to be assessed. A student may self refer or be referred by a parent or teacher but must be supported by evidence from teachers to. In normal circumstances, assessment will be made before the start of the GCSE or A level course.

**4.2** In all cases, the following steps will be followed to ensure compliance:

- Teachers may flag students to the SENDCO with evidence of need
- SENDCO will collate information and assess threshold compliance
- JCQ Form 8 will be completed by the SENDCO
- Assessment will take place
- The assessor will sign and date Form 8 Section B making recommendations for access arrangements
- The student will be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access Arrangements Online, complying with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- SENDCO will make an online application for access arrangements to the JCQ and must be processed and approved no later than the JCQ published deadline
- Students, parents, teachers and the Examinations Officer will be notified of the outcome and implications for school work and assessments
- Evidence will be stored on file for inspection by the JCQ inspector, including the original Form 8, signed Data Protection Notice, confirmation of approval of the access arrangements and portfolio of evidence of need/normal way of working
- This must be in hard copy and available on request.

## **5. Use of externally commissioned reports**

**5.1** Parents have the right to seek further diagnostic assessments for their children. However, the organisation or individual performing the assessment must have prior contact with the school to gather background information. A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation cannot be used to award access arrangements and external assessors must have a thorough and up to date understanding of the JCQ regulations. In order for a report to be used for an application for access arrangements it must evidence the student's disability as giving 'limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people.' The report must state the student's disability must be 'substantial and long term.'

**5.2** It is always at the discretion of the SENDCO as to whether the recommendations contained within the report are followed. The decision will be made based on whether the recommendations fit with the picture of need already established within the centre and the student's normal way of working and comply with JCQ regulations and thresholds.

## Appendix Two – Statement for the use of a word processor during exams

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations and guidance of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

**Reviewed by:** Adam Bluck, Assistant Headteacher

**Date of next review:** May 2027

Northgate High School values good handwriting and imposes high standards on presentation of work, and expects that most students will handwrite in exams. However, there are exceptional circumstances, as identified by the school, where students may benefit from using a word processor and in these cases the school will allow use of a word processor for note-making in class, for homework, and for internal and public examinations.

Students with access to word processors in exams are allowed to do so in order that barriers to assessment are removed for disabled candidates, preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The school will allow students to use word processors in exams when they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The student has a specific learning difficulty/disability (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASD) and the use of a word processor is both appropriate to their needs and reflects their normal way of working
- The student has a physical difficulty/medical condition such (such as hypermobility/juvenile arthritis) and the use of a word processor is both appropriate to their needs and reflects their normal way of working
- The student has a sensory impairment (such as vision or hearing impairment) and the use of a word processor is both appropriate to their needs and reflects their normal way of working
- The student has very poor handwriting and would lose marks due to the examiner finding his/her answers illegible; and, after substantial intervention, has laptop use as normal working practice.

This use of a word processor also extends to the use of electronic brailers.

Students permitted to use word processors in public exams (ie GCSEs, BTEC, Cambridge Nationals) must have been using a word processor as their normal way of working for classes, homework, internal tests and internal exams.

It is not school policy to provide a word processor for a student solely on the basis that they prefer to type or that they can work faster on a keyboard because they use a laptop at home.

A student may also use a word processor on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury.

Students who have permission to use a word processor in class are able to borrow a laptop from the Learning Support Department if one is not available in the curriculum area. The school will provide word processors with spelling and grammar checkers and predictive text facility removed for use in internal exams and public exams. These word processors are not able to connect to the internet.

The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course. Students are subsequently aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and controlled assessments/coursework.

The need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject by subject basis. Students who have permission to use a word processor in exams do not have to use it in all exams, e.g. they may opt to use it in subjects with extended writing demands only. The provision will be agreed with the SENDCO during mock/practice exams.

The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

Where possible, students using word processors in external exams are internally accommodated together in a smaller room within the school

## Appendix Three – NDD referrals

Due to an overwhelming demand on services, there is currently a substantial wait for students under 18 to be assessed for neurodivergence through the Suffolk pathway. The impact of the rise in referral requests is also felt at school level where the majority of requests for professional contribution are received. Information about the NDD Pathway can be found at the following link <https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing/autism-adhd-and-neurodevelopment/the-east-west-suffolk-ndd-pathway>

### 1. Contributing to assessment

- 1.1 The school will usually only be able to contribute to a clinical referral if the student is at TS or School Support category and known to be experiencing difficulties in school.
- 1.2 The school will not begin observations or consultations with staff until Part One of the referral form is received from parents/carers or guardians.
- 1.3 The school aims to complete the referral process within six weeks of receipt of Part One of the referral form.
- 1.4 The school reserves the right to refuse contribution to an NDD referral if there is insufficient evidence available to write a report.
- 1.5 The school is only able to contribute to referrals for students under the age of 18.

### 2. Following diagnosis

- 2.1 The school will review report recommendations with students and families to ensure the right support is in place; reasonable adjustments will be agreed where necessary.
- 2.2 Teachers will be alerted when a student receives a new diagnosis and they will receive an updated Student Passport in due course.

### 3. Private diagnosis

- 3.1 The school will carefully consider diagnostic reports that have not come from an NHS or NHS approved service and may choose to adopt recommendations.
- 3.2 The credentials of private clinicians will be scrutinised.
- 3.3 The school reserves the right to refuse to accept private NDD diagnosis reports.

## Appendix Four – Visual Sensitivity (IRLENS)

The school's approach for students with regard to Scotopic Sensitivity (commonly referred to as Irlens) is to ensure that students are building a strategy that they can use in later life and which will offer the greatest refinement for their needs.

Coloured paper has sometimes been used as a best fit to students' visual sensitivity, however, this is not considered the best strategy for life, nor the best match to the students' visual needs. No coloured paper can ever match the specificity from the visual diagnostic test as well as glasses or overlays, nor does this build a strategy that is life enabling. Research lead by the Irlen Syndrome Foundation has shown that coloured paper is not usually the most effective way to support visual stress.

**The school will not provide coloured paper or exercise books unless specifically stated in a child's EHCP.**

Children who benefit from colour based support often need a very specific tint to reduce their symptoms. A blue sheet, cream worksheet, or any single fixed colour will not meet every child's needs. Coloured overlays, however, come in a wide range of shades and can be swapped easily to find which one helps the child most. A coloured overlay sits directly over the text, changing how the light reaches the eyes. This can reduce distortions and strain more reliably than simply printing on coloured paper, which affects the background but does not provide the same degree of visual filtering. Children can use their overlay in any lesson, on any worksheet, in any book, and at home. This helps them build a consistent strategy they can use independently throughout their schooling and later life.

The best possible strategy for students with significant visual disturbance remains glasses with that particular colour match. We will always encourage parents and carers to use this approach as the most life-enabling strategy. In lieu of glasses, the school can provide a 'best fit' coloured overlay to support students in lessons and at home.