



# Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

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## Revision History

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## Introduction

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Hermitage Academy and Sixth Form College is part of the North East Learning Trust and has high expectations of students and staff. We believe students have the right to expect a first-class education, delivered by teachers who are committed to making learning challenging and rewarding.

Ours is a caring community, one based on mutual respect, a school where students feel safe and supported throughout their time with us. The emphasis on good behaviour means that lessons are taught in an ordered and encouraging learning environment. Students are treated as individuals, and we recognise and celebrate their different abilities.

At Hermitage Academy, we support and value the abilities of all our students. It is our duty to provide equal opportunities for every person in our care and a safe and fully equipped learning environment which caters to the needs of every student as an individual. We are committed to inclusion within the school curriculum and participation in all aspects of school life.

### **Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

In this policy, 'special educational needs' refers to a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision.

The SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) states the following:

- a) A child or young person has SEN if they have learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
- b) A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
  - has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
  - has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others at the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions.
- c) For children aged two or more, special education provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For children under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.
- d) A child under compulsory school age who falls within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.
- e) Post-16 institutions often use the term learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD).

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The term SEND is used in this Code across the 0-25 age range but includes LDD.

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 will be taught.

## **Definition of disabled children and young people**

Many children and young people who have SEN may 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’.

This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. 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 SEND definition.

### **1. Aims and objectives**

#### **Aims**

We aim to provide every student with access to a broad and balanced curriculum in accordance with the guidance in the SEND Code of Practice.

Our aims are:

- To ensure that all students with SEND (i.e., Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia etc) have their needs identified to support academic progression and continued good physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- To ensure that every student is protected from harm and neglect and that every effort is being made to enable them to learn and grow independently.
- To ensure all students can access a balanced curriculum, differentiated where appropriate.
- To ensure that all students with SEND can fully access the curriculum by providing extra support or additional resources where appropriate and by removing their barriers to learning.
- To enable students to achieve their best and to become confident individuals living fulfilling lives and make a successful transition into the next phase of their education/adulthood, whether into employment, further education or higher education or training.
- To provide support and advice for all staff working with students with SEND.

#### **Objectives:**

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- Identify the needs of students with SEND as early as possible. This is most effectively done by gathering information from parents, Local Authority, health and care services, and any agency working with the student prior to their entry into the Academy.
- Monitor the progress of all students to aid the identification of students with SEND.
- Continuous monitoring of those students with SEND by their teachers will help to ensure that they can reach their full potential.
- Make appropriate provision to overcome all barriers to learning and ensure students with SEND have full access to a broad and balance curriculum. This will be co-ordinated by the SENCO and will be carefully monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure that individual targets are being met and all students' needs are catered for.
- Work with parents/carers to gain a better understanding of their child/children and involve them in all stages of their child/children's education. This includes supporting them in terms of understanding SEND procedures and practices, providing regular reports on their child/children's progress, and providing information, where necessary, on the provisions for students within the school, the effectiveness of the SEND policy and the school's SEND work.
- Work with outside agencies and support the work of external agencies when the students' needs cannot be met by the school alone.
- Create an environment where students feel safe to voice their opinions of their own needs.

## 2. Responsibility for the coordination of SEND provision

The person responsible for overseeing the provision for students with SEND is the Headteacher.

The person co-ordinating the day-to-day provision of education for students with SEND is the SENCO Andrea Charlton. She can be contacted at School on 0191 388 7161.

## 3. Arrangements for coordinating SEND provision

The SENCO will hold details of all students on the SEND register. The team will inform staff with relevant information for individual student, as well as developing SEND Support Plans to monitor progress of students with SEND.

### All staff can access:

- The Academy SEND Policy.
- A copy of the full SEND Register
- Guidance on identification in the Code of Practice (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and students and students with Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plans.
- Information on individual student's special educational need, including SEND and Individual Needs plans with outcomes set.
- Practical advice, teaching strategies, and information about types of special educational needs and disabilities.
- Information on the staff IT system on individual students and their special needs and requirements.

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This information is made accessible to all staff and, where necessary, in a clear summary version to aid the effective co-ordination of the school's SEND provision. In this way, every staff member will have complete and up-to-date information about all students with special educational needs and disabilities and their requirements, which will enable them to provide for the individual needs of all students, helping to remove barriers in the classroom.

#### 4. Admission arrangements

The admission arrangements for all students are in accordance with national legislation, including the Equality Act 2010. This includes students with any level of SEND, those with EHC plans and those without.

The SENCO will gather all SEND paperwork and relevant information SENCO from the primary school (where appropriate) and any agencies working with the student as soon as possible. A meeting may be set up with parent/carer to aid the smooth transition of the pupil and discuss arrangements to be made as well as any other important information relating to the individual needs of the pupil. Where face to face meetings are not possible, contact will be made via telephone and/or email to ensure that there is a good understanding of why type of provision required.

Where possible the school will do its best to ensure that the necessary provisions and preparations are made prior to the start of the school year. The student will be closely monitored in terms of academic progress and pastorally from the start to ensure that all the appropriate provisions are in place so that no student is at a disadvantage to their peers due to a learning difficulty or physical disability.

#### 5. Identification of pupil needs

Hermitage Academy will assess students to identify any previously unidentified SEND when they enter the school.

#### A Graduated Approach

##### Classroom teachers

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who may have SEND. Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class:

- a) Any students who are falling significantly outside of the range of expected academic achievement in line with predicted performance indicators and grade boundaries will be monitored.
- b) Once a student has been identified as *possibly* having SEND, they will be closely monitored by staff to gauge their level of learning and possible difficulties.
- c) The student's class teacher will take steps to provide differentiated learning opportunities that will aid the student's academic progression and enable the teacher to better understand the provision and teaching style that needs to be applied.

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- d) The SENCO will be consulted as needed for support and advice and may wish to observe the pupil in class.
- e) Through (b) and (d) it can be determined which level of provision the student will need going forward.
- f) If a student has recently been removed from the SEND list, they may also fall into this category as continued monitoring will be necessary as part of the Individual Needs Register.
- g) Parents/carers will be informed of any concerns and the details of the school action in place. Parents/carers are encouraged to share information and knowledge with the Academy.
- h) Concerns by teachers and/or parents/carers will be investigated. Students will only be placed on the SEND register once the need is confirmed.
- i) Progress meetings are used to monitor and assess the progress being made by the student. The frequency of these meetings is dependent on the individual needs and progress being made.

### **Additional in-school support**

- a) This recognises students who are identified as requiring additional and different help, as well as the regular differentiated curriculum.
- b) Class teachers collaborate with the SENCO on evidence gathering and identification.
- c) Once the SENCO has been notified, an assessment will be undertaken through reviewing the evidence of identification supplied by the teacher and/or through observation and/or against formal criteria. With this knowledge, the SENCO can help with planning for future in-school support. Action that has already been taken is reviewed and altered in line with the new findings.

### **Single category SEND support**

Where a student has been identified as having SEND, a four-part cycle to remove barriers to learning and to put effective special educational provision in place. All teachers work closely with the SENCO to identify and make provision. This is an evidenced based approach to making provision and the expectation is that staff working with students with special educational needs will have sufficient knowledge and skills to make a difference. Consultation with parents/carers and pupil is essential throughout the process.

### **Assess**

Our SENCO and class teachers will work together to analyse needs using a range of sources, including the school's approach to pupil progress, attainment, and behaviour. Consultation is key, and it may be necessary to consult widely both in school, with the student, with parents/carers and with external support services to get the best picture of needs. Establishing close links with those responsible for assessment and home school links is also important to us here at Hermitage. The assessment should be reviewed regularly.

### **Plan**

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This is when the school decides to provide SEND support. Parents/carers are formally notified and invited to a planning meeting along with the student. Interventions and support are provided in consultation with the parents/carers, pupil, SENCO, and class teachers. The expected progress, development and behaviour are agreed, and a date for review set. In this planning phase, we identify the gaps in the child's learning and current provision, and what is expected in terms of results following any provision.

## **Do**

This involves providing effective support and interventions with regular feedback to students, parents/carers, and staff about progress. Our SENCO will support teachers in any further assessment and provide coaching and mentoring in all aspects of curriculum modification.

## **Review**

Progress is reviewed on a termly basis. Review meetings with parents/carers and students occur three times a year. Baseline data and outcomes will guide the review and this information is communicated to parents/carers via school reports and any gaps can be identified and planned for.

## **Referral for statutory assessment**

Those students who continue to have significant difficulties will be referred for Statutory Assessment. EHC Plans cover the needs of 0-25-year-olds. The single plan will be supported by a new single assessment that involves professionals from all relevant services. SENDCOs can expect to be involved in contributing to the development and implementation of EHC Plans from then onwards.

The application of the EHC Plan will combine information from a variety of sources including:

- Parents/carers
- Teachers
- SENCO
- Pastoral/Support staff
- Educational Psychologist
- Other professionals.

Information will be gathered relating to the current provision provided, action points that have been taken, and the preliminary outcomes of targets set.

## **Personal budgets**

The SENCO is involved in contributing to the development and implementation of EHC Plans. Personal budgets were introduced by the DfE from 2014 for families of children and young people who are eligible for an EHC Plan. SENCOs and Headteachers will have key roles to play in partnership planning with families, so that budget expenditure used in school context is educationally appropriate. As a school, we will be producing Costed Provision maps to ensure that all parents/carers whose child has an EHC Plan know where their child's money is being spent.

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## 6. Access to the curriculum, information, and associated services

Students with SEND will be given access to the curriculum through the specialist SEND provision provided by the school as is necessary, as far as possible in line with the needs of the individual.

The systems at Hermitage Academy provide, in the main, for students with SEND to be educated alongside their peers in a mainstream classroom. However, the systems also allow for other flexible arrangements to be made for support of students for individual or small group work such as literacy and numeracy withdrawal support in small groups, in class support for the highest levels of need, one-to-one help with regulating feelings and anxieties, recognizing and interpreting feelings and moods in themselves and others and, less intensive respite provision from stressful periods in the day for those students struggling with various aspects of the school day.

The Academy's curriculum is regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Local Academy Council to ensure that it is accessible to students of all levels and abilities and supports the learning and progress of all students as individuals. This includes learning outside the classroom.

It is our aim to ensure that all resources and SEND provisions are being used effectively and efficiently within the school setting to support the taught curriculum, and enables students to reach their full potential by:

- Keeping staff fully informed of the special educational needs of any students in their charge, including sharing reports, medical reports, and teacher feedback where appropriate
- Providing regular training and learning opportunities for staff in all departments about
- SEND and SEND teaching. Staff should be up to date with teaching methods which will aid the progress of all students including those with SEND
- Making use of all class facilities and space
- Using support effectively to ensure that the curriculum is differentiated and accessible
- Making sure that individual or group tuition is available where it is felt that students would benefit from this provision
- Setting appropriate individual targets that motivate students to do their best, and
- celebrating achievements at all levels.

## 7. Inclusion of students with SEND

The Headteacher, SENCO and Special Interest Governor oversees Hermitage Academy's policy for SEND and is responsible for ensuring that it is implemented effectively throughout the school.

We aim to optimise opportunities for participation and achievement across all areas of school activity (social, curricular, physical) by:

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- Providing a balanced curriculum for all students both in and outside of the classroom,
- including play and interaction at breaks and lunchtime, and extending to extra-curricular activities, day trips and residential visits
- Practicing differentiated teaching methods that suit the needs of individual students
- Promoting an inclusive ethos throughout the school and encouraging social responsibility and understanding amongst all students.

## **8. Evaluating and success of provision**

To make consistent progress in relation to SEND provision, the school encourages feedback from staff, parents/carers, and students throughout the year. Surveys are regularly put out to students and parents/carers, encouraging participation and engagement. The analysis of results can inform change to our systems/procedures, making staff aware of issues raised by students and parents/carers.

## **9. Support students at school with medical conditions including temporary or long-term disabilities**

Hermitage Academy recognises that students at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including educational visits and Physical Education (PE). Some children with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. In these instances, Hermitage has made adjustments to the school site so that it is almost entirely wheelchair accessible (see accessibility plan for more detail), we provide laptops for any student with a short- or long-term disability who is unable to write. As well as this, we also provide exam access arrangements for those in school who require support in assessments, formally from year 10 onwards, and in anticipation of those students who will require them in future through years 7 to 9. In addition, we also have a range of compulsory CPD sessions for all staff throughout the year which focus on SEND, equality, safeguarding and child protection to ensure the utmost care of every student attending.

Some students may also have special educational needs or disabilities and may have an EHC Plan which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their special educational provision. Further advice and guidance is included within the Trust's Policy for Supporting Students with Medical Conditions.

## **10. Complaints procedure**

A parent/carer with any concerns regarding the provision in place for their child, they should make an appointment to meet with the SENCO in the first instance. Should concerns continue then a parent/carer should make an appointment to discuss these with the Headteacher. If a parent/carer has a complaint, then please follow the school's complaints procedure on the website.

## **11. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

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We aim to keep all staff up to date with relevant training and developments in teaching practice in relation to the needs of students with SEND.

As well as the above, staff also access external courses which are relevant to their subject area, teaching and learning in general, specialist teaching etc.

The SENCO attends relevant courses and facilitates relevant SEND focussed training opportunities for all staff.

We recognise the need to train all our staff on SEND issues. The SENCO ensures that the training opportunities are matched to the school's development priorities and those identified by individuals through the appraisal process.

Hermitage Academy operates a CPD Programme for all staff, covering a wide range of areas and topics including inclusive teaching through the development of knowledge and understanding of difficulties faced by individual students. These sessions are designed to improve the teaching and learning.

## **12. Links to support services and Durham Local Authority's SEND Offer**

Hermitage Academy has support from several external agencies. Regular visits are made by the Sensory Support Service, Education Psychologist and School Nurse to name but a few.

These services aid the inclusion of students with SEND or help families deal with the needs of their children at home.

Sharing knowledge and information with our support services is key to the effective and successful SEND provision within our School. Any one of the support services may raise concerns about a pupil. This will then be brought to the attention of the SENCO and the pupil's parents/carers. The school will instigate early help, through the Single Assessment process and will initiate a Team Around the Family when it is felt appropriate.

For more support and guidance on SEND for parents and families, you can access Durham's local SEND offer here: –

[www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer)

## **13. Working in partnership with parents/carers**

The school believes that a close working relationship with parents/carers is vital to ensure:

- a) Early and accurate identification and assessment of SEND, leading to the correct intervention and provision
- b) Continuing social and academic progress of students with SEND
- c) Personal and academic targets are set and met effectively

The school welcomes feedback from parents/carers and parents/carers can make an appointment to speak to the SENCO throughout the year.

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Parents/carers are kept up to date with students' progress through interim reports, parent/carer consultation evenings, annual reports, and individual contact where necessary.

In cases where more frequent regular contact with parents/carers is necessary, this will be arranged based on the individual pupil's needs. If necessary, the SENCO can also signpost parents/carers of students with SEND to the Local Authority Parent Partnership Service where specific advice, guidance and support may be required.

If an assessment or referral indicates that a pupil has additional learning needs, the parents/carers and the pupil will always be consulted with regards to future provision. Parents/carers are invited to attend any meetings with external agencies regarding their child and are kept up to date and consulted on any points of action drawn up in regard to the provision for their child.

#### **14. Transition Arrangements and Links with other schools**

Individual transition arrangements/plans are put in place where necessary to facilitate orientation and ensure a smooth transition. During year 6 we contact all feeder schools for Hermitage to establish which SEND pupils we are due to be receiving in year 7. From there, we liaise with the teachers, SENCOs, parents/carers, and pupils themselves to find out what their needs are, set up enhanced transition visits and make sure that all that can and should be in place at the start of year 7 is put in place. In addition, we also work with our year 10 and 11 students on transition post-16. For any students who we suspect may need more support going forward to ensure success and avoid NEET status, we employ the help and guidance from the One Point service who assist in making sure all students have a clear plan and are supported, along with their families, into further education or training.

In addition, Hermitage Academy is also part of the North East Learning Trust. This enables Academies within the multi-academy trust to share resources, advice, training and development activities and expertise.

#### **15. Links with other agencies and voluntary organisations**

The school invites and seeks advice and support from external agencies in the identification and assessment of, and provision for, SEND. The SENCO and the pastoral team are the designated persons responsible for liaising with the following:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Social Services
- Speech and Language Service
- Language and Learning Support Service
- CAMHS
- Specialist Outreach Services
- School Health Service

Representatives from agencies and voluntary organisations are invited to meetings throughout the year to discuss SEND provision and progress, and to keep staff up to date with legislation.

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In cases where a student is under observation or a cause for concern, focussed meetings or a TAF may be arranged with parents/carers and appropriate agencies invited.

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