



SEND Frequently Asked Questions



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our SEND FAQs. This document is written to give some information about how we at Testbourne Community School identify, plan for and meet the needs of students who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). It is intended to complement our SEND Policy and Information Report, which is available on our website, and to serve as a starting point for parents and carers who may wish to contact us.

Our SEND provision, like all maintained schools nationally, is in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice. We understand the vital importance of high-quality teaching and learning in the context of inclusive provision for all students, as the basis for meeting the range of needs within a mainstream setting. Every teacher is a teacher of SEND, and we all work closely to ensure that the child is at the heart of our decisions. We know that it can be confusing for parents to navigate the changing educational landscape and we hope that some of the information in this booklet is helpful.

This document was last updated in February 2024 following our third annual SEND Information Evening. If there are any questions not covered in this booklet, or you would like to talk to us about any other query relating to SEND, please contact us on our dedicated email address send@testbourne.school.

The SEND Department at Testbourne Community School



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What educational needs do you support at Testbourne Community School?

Within the school, we support students with diagnosed SEND or undiagnosed, potential or suspected SEND; looked after and previously looked after students; Forces and previously Forces children; disadvantaged children; students for whom English is a second language and in fact any child who may need support.

We have a range of staff involved in supporting students, and the most important staff members are the classroom teachers who see the students the most and know them the best. We also place great emphasis on the child's tutor who can support every day during tutor time. Our pastoral and SEND teams work very closely together, as we need a bespoke approach to dealing with students – no two children are exactly alike, so we look at their needs and what support could help.

What do you mean by SEND?

Students with SEND have significantly greater difficulty in learning than others of the same age, or a physical or mental impairment with substantial and long-term effects. Students with SEND need provision that is additional to or different from others. The purpose of this is to remove the effects of the impairment and achieve equity with students of the same age. This is taken from the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

Within SEND there are four broad areas of need and of course students can have needs in more than one area.

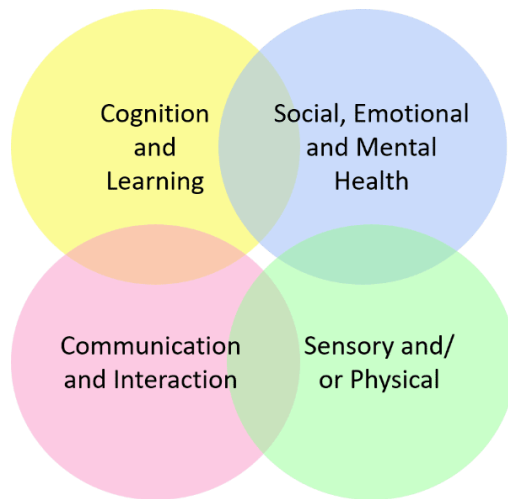
The areas of need are:

- **Cognition and Learning**, e.g. Specific learning difficulties - like dyslexia - and moderate learning difficulties
- **Communication and Interaction**, which includes all speech, language and communication needs, and all autistic spectrum disorders
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties** which includes Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



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- **Physical disabilities, sensory difficulties and medical conditions,** including visual and hearing impairments



How do you identify needs?

Many students come to us with a pre-existing diagnosis of a learning need or disability or have had a learning need identified at their primary school.

We will assess each student's current skills and levels of attainment through lessons, which will build on previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. Class teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all students and identify those whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, social needs.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a student is recorded as having SEND. Equally, attaining in-line (or indeed above) chronological age or attainment of same-age peers should not lead to an assumption of no SEND; for example, some children and young people with autism are exceptionally high functioning in particular areas but have difficulty in others. Sometimes a student may excel in the majority of areas but struggle with one, or may struggle with particular concepts, but not others, within the same subject. It is important to remember that SEND refers to substantial and long-term effects.

When deciding whether special educational provision is required, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the student and their parents. We will use this to determine whether or not additional support is needed and if it is, to determine the support that is required and whether we can provide it by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional would be more appropriate.



We will continually assess the needs and the provision for students with SEND to ensure they have the appropriate level of support. Students needs change over time, and as they develop more strategies and teachers find appropriate ways of supporting them, they may have different levels of in-class and out of class support.

What happens if the school or the parents suspect a child has SEND?

If a learning need is identified or suspected, we will have an early discussion with the student and their parents when identifying whether they need special educational provision. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty;
- We take into account the parents' concerns;
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child;
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are;
- Everyone is clear about the types of support that can be offered and the limitations of this support.

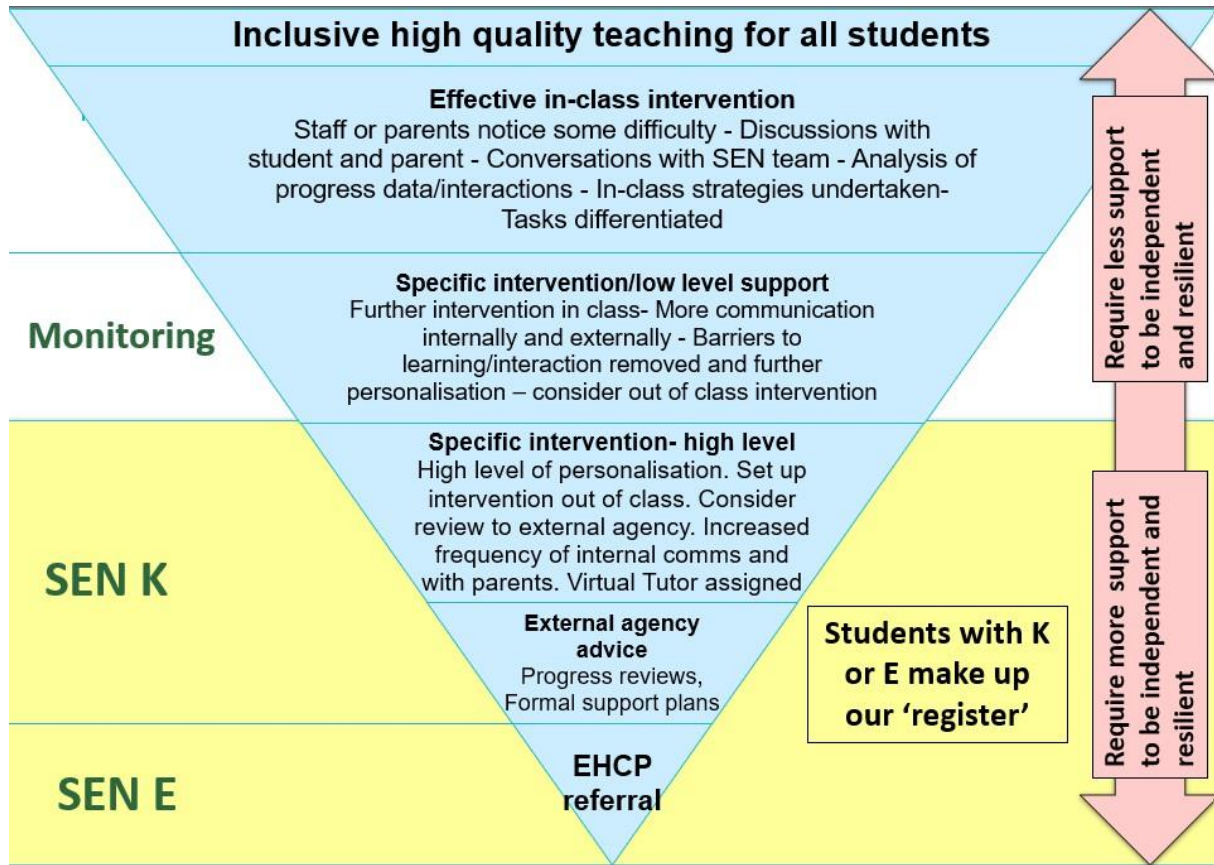
Notes of these early discussions will be added to the student's record and given to their parents. At this early stage, students are on our SEND monitoring list, and we begin trying strategies to help the student progress and become more independent. If more intense support is required, we will notify parents that we are adding that student to our core SEND register, which is a list of students who require more support in order to achieve success independently. We will also notify parents if students have progressed, and are now able to work without this intense support, meaning they will be removed from the core SEND register. They will, however, remain on our SEND monitoring list, and will continue to have strategies in place that the class teachers will refer to.

All students with SEND needs are given support regardless of whether they are on the core SEND register, as the vast majority of SEND support is given in lessons by class teachers.



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This diagram shows the levels of support and is useful for visualising the levels of support in school. The shaded yellow areas indicate the student is on our core SEND register.



What is an EHCP? Do I need to apply for one?

An EHCP stands for Educational Health and Care Plan and is a legal document covering what must be in place for a child in education, up to the age of 25 years. The vast majority of children have their needs met within the mainstream school setting and without the need for an EHCP, but in some cases, schools will apply for an EHCP in order to access a small amount of additional high needs funding and unlock some of the additional support services (for example, a speech therapist).

Only a very small number of children need an EHCP and they are usually those children who may have been placed in a specialist setting some years ago when spaces were not as pressured as they are currently. EHCPs typically stipulate the amount and frequency of the intervention a child should have, and targets for when progress should be made. EHCPs are reviewed yearly, and as the child matures, the EHCP is modified to reflect the increase in independence needed as preparation towards adulthood. We have just over 20 EHCPs in our school, and in almost every case the students access all their normal lessons although they may spend a little more time having support in the SEND Hub.



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If we find that a student is struggling in school despite a large number of measures we have tried over a significant period of time, we may apply for an EHCP. It is important that we detail all the strategies we have tried and their impact, in order to demonstrate that we need the increased level of funding and support that an EHCP entails. We will of course be in frequent contact with parents at this stage.

Parents themselves can apply for an EHCP, and so long as the child is in full time education and is under 25 years old. Hampshire aim to make a decision whether or not to assess for EHCPs within 6 weeks of the application, and the process of assessment should be fully completed within 20 weeks.

How do I get my child tested, or diagnosed with a learning need?

In order for parents to get a diagnosis of learning disabilities or SEND for their child they will need to contact a medical practitioner, such as their GP or CAMHS. We are unable to test for conditions such as autism or ADHD in school. However, it is not necessary for students to have a diagnosis in order for us to support them. Many parents seek a diagnosis as it can be helpful when seeking support and understanding more about their child's needs. We know that no two students are alike, and so although a diagnosis may be helpful, it does not tell us all we need to know about a child.

We can carry out dyslexia screening, but parents should be aware that dyslexia screening is completed in Primary school as one of the main indicators is difficulty when beginning to read. Dyslexia organisations can test for dyslexia, but again a diagnosis is not needed for our school to support children with dyslexic traits.

How do you record which children have SEND?

Although schools are not required to hold a list of students who have SEND, most schools do use such a list, to help with monitoring support and ensuring progress. This register of students lists both the difficulties the child has, alongside specific strategies that teachers and SEND staff need to do to ensure equity for those students. These strategies are anything that is additional to or separate from the inclusive high-quality teaching that all students receive.

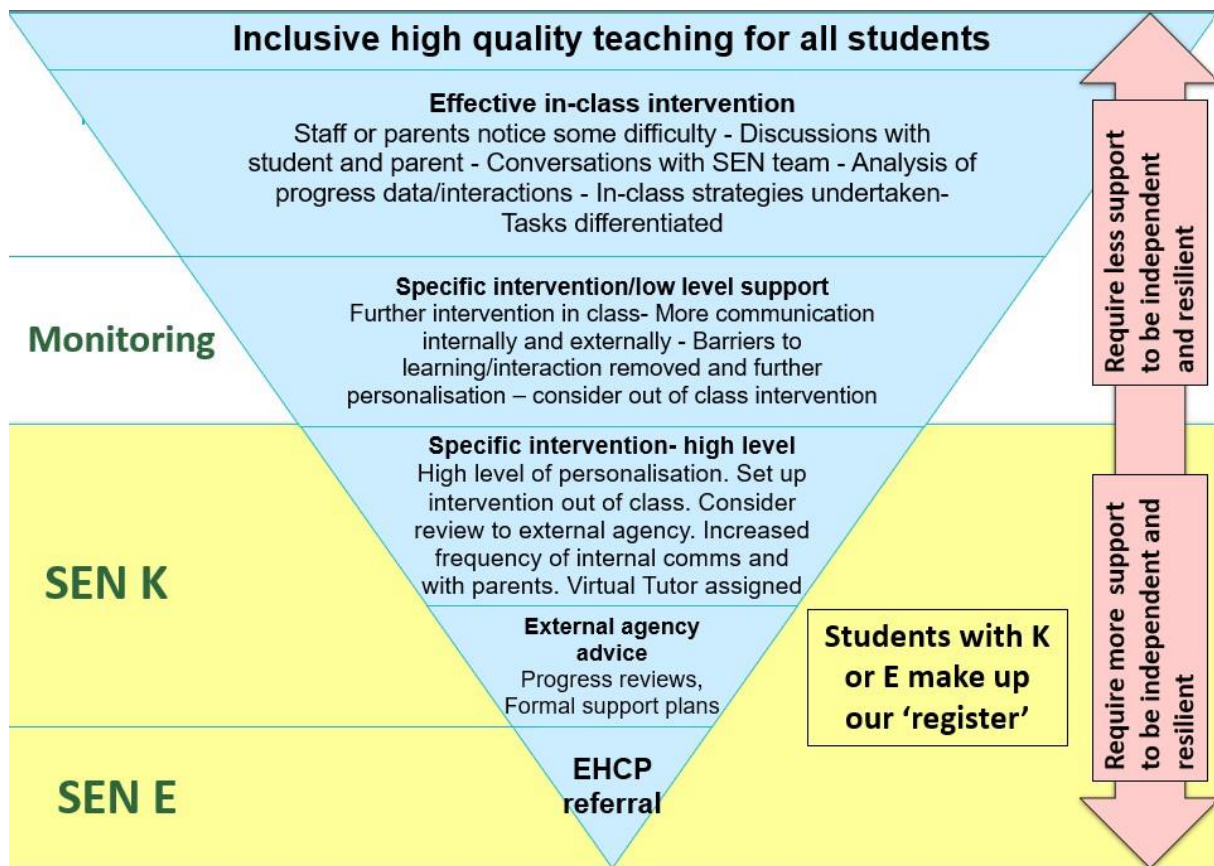
We record all students who require this support on staff registers, and this includes students who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). We call this the core SEND register. In addition, we track students who may potentially have a need and who need some low-level support, on a monitoring list. All students on the monitoring and the core lists have strategies and support linked to the staff register, and our aim is always to increase the child's independence, resilience and confidence, so that they are able to progress without high levels of intervention from the class teacher and other staff. This is achieved over time by giving the child strategies to increase their learning behaviours (both academic and socially) and how to cope with challenges. They learn over time how to overcome difficulties and make progress, using strategies shown and tried in class and outside of class.



Does my child remain on the SEND register the whole time they are at school?

Your child may be removed from our core SEND register if they are able to make progress independently with less intervention from adults. However, it is important to note that if your child needs support they will receive this regardless of if they are on the core SEND register or not. Students needs change over time, and as they mature, so it is important we review the level of support they receive from their class teachers. Even students with EHCPs have the level of intense support reduced over time, as one of the main aims for all our students is to become more independent and resilient as they move towards adulthood.

The following diagram shows the levels of support and is useful for visualising the levels of support in school. The shaded yellow areas indicate the student is on our core SEND register.



As a general guide, we add students to the core SEND register if over a period the strategies tried by the class teachers, the SEND staff, and pastoral staff have not been successful in achieving our aim to remove the effects of the child’s impairment. When we are successful in finding the bespoke approach that achieves equity for that child, it may be appropriate to move the child to the monitoring list, as they no longer need such intense support. As you can see from the information above, this



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does not mean the student loses any of the adaptations that we have put in place to help them learn, so they still receive SEND support from their teachers and/or other staff, and will continue to do so.

What do you do to ensure SEND students are supported?

Effective in-class teaching is the primary strategy for ensuring progress of all students, including those with SEND. Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the students in their class and work will be suitably differentiated to ensure accessibility for all.

We may make adaptations to ensure all students' needs are met in the classroom. These interventions could include:

- Differentiating our curriculum to ensure all students can access it, for example, by scaffolding the content and modelling how to complete each step;
- Adapting our staffing resources, for example, teachers or other staff completing a quiet check-in at various points of the lesson;
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables and larger font;
- Differentiating our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, word banks, etc;
- Giving alternatives to working practices, such as allowing students to record work using speech to text software, or to complete written work standing up;
- Using strategies to help students focus, for example, quiet fidget toys, placemats, or different areas of the room.

For students who require support outside the classroom, for example students with SEMH needs, we take a bespoke approach, looking at the child and what would help support them to make progress with their mental health. Support includes strategies such as communication cards, quiet spaces, ELSA support and daily check ins with an adult to set-up or review the day. A great deal of this work overlaps with the pastoral support in school, and we liaise with the pastoral staff regularly to ensure the child's needs are met.

In accordance with the child's need, we may also provide other interventions, for example:

- Catch up literacy, such as paired reading, or phonics teaching;
- Catch up numeracy, such as telling the time, or using money;
- Additional support in a lesson, as well as the teacher, perhaps from a teaching assistant or learning coach;
- Pastoral support using their tutor or Head of Year;
- Social skills support, such as Comic strip conversations, Social stories, or Talkabout;
- Break time and lunchtime supervision and/or support;
- Homework support at lunchtimes or after school;
- An ELSA intervention, from 6 to 12 weeks, from an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant;



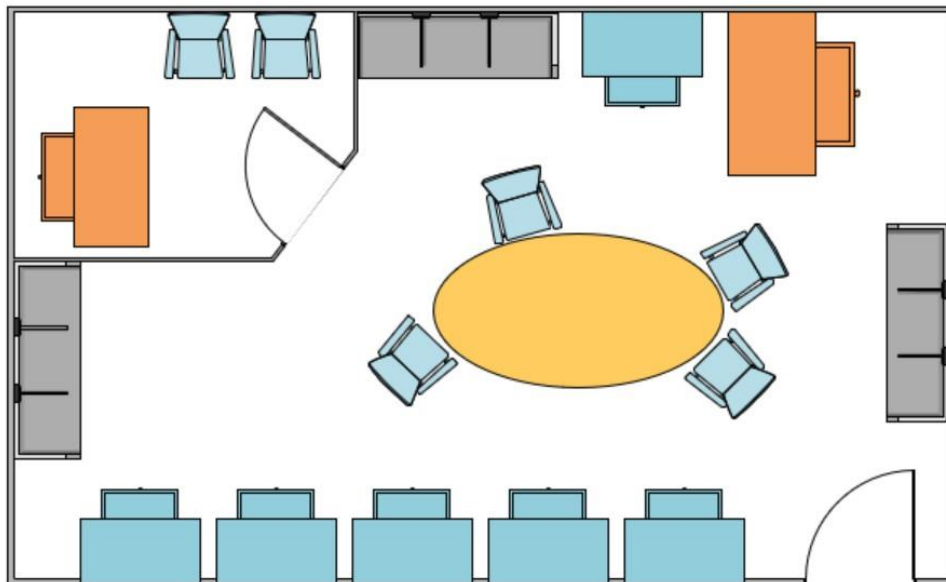
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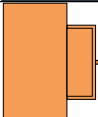


- Support through external agencies such as the Educational Psychologist, or a Speech and Language Therapist.

What is the SEND Hub?

All our students are taught in the main school in their normal classrooms with other students. However, we recognise that there are times when SEND students will need a separate space to work, or receive an out-of-class intervention. These will be for a short period of time. This is in a separate area of the school, called the SEND Hub. This is a quiet and focused room that we use for short-term interventions and students who need a space to re-set. There are 6 spaces for students to work on computers and a central area for written work. In addition, a separate office provides a private area for meetings or 1:1 intervention. Students are only in the Hub for short periods of time during the day or over a period of a few weeks, as we support them to succeed in lessons with the specialist teachers.

A map of the SEND hub:



Key	
	Seating
	Desks with computers for students
	Desks with computers for staff
	Storage, including books and laptops
	Table



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The Hub is run by our SEND staff, who will ensure students are able to complete their work in a quiet and purposeful way. This quiet space is intended for infrequent use, as we know that the best way for children to learn and make progress is in the classroom with the specialist teachers.

Are there any other options available other than the Hub for students who need to focus in a quiet space?

Students are supported to be in class and learning with their specialist teacher. We often find that the quietest spaces around the school are in class, as the Hub is often busy with students and staff entering and leaving. Providing a calm and productive atmosphere so that children can focus is a priority across the school. We invite you to come in for a tour if you would like to see our classes in action – we hold tours for existing parents during the year (the last opportunity was in January 2024). If your child is finding noise levels in class are too high please contact your child's teacher to discuss: it could be that moving them to a different part of the room or using ear plugs (such as Loops) resolve the issue.

Ultimately children need to be in class being taught by a specialist teacher. When they are in alternative spaces, they lose the input of the specialist and fall behind in their learning.

Are there any plans to expand the Hub or have alternative areas for students to access?

Learning at mainstream Secondary schools needs to be in class with the specialist teachers, as there is no substitute for the expertise and variety that this learning provides. We only use the Hub as a temporary adjustment for students to help them access learning in their classrooms. If students are struggling in certain lessons or at specific times, we increase the support in order to help them continue their learning without having to be excluded from lessons.

Who reviews progress of SEND students? What about when a student's needs change?

As students mature and change over time, their needs and the level of support they need changes. We also work hard to develop student's independence and resilience. We encourage students to develop their strategies for learning and become successful at using the tools we give them.

We follow the graduated approach and the four-part cycle of assess, plan, do, review. If we do not already have information on the child (for example, from their primary school), the assess stage involves the SENDCo, the SEND team, and teachers of the child. The teachers and the SEND team will work with the SENDCo to carry out an analysis of the student's needs. This will draw on:

- The teacher's assessment and experience of the student;
- Their previous progress and attainment and behaviour;



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- Other teachers' assessments, where relevant;
- Observations of the students learning by the SEND team;
- Non-academic indicators, such as resilience, independence and self-regulation;
- The individual's development in comparison to their peers and national data;
- The views and experience of parents;
- The student's own views;
- Advice from external support services, if relevant.

The plan stage involves the SENDCo and the SEND team writing a summary of the child's needs, and all teachers and support staff who work with the student are made aware of this plan. This plan includes the support provided alongside teaching strategies or approaches that are required.

The do stage involves teachers and SEND staff implementing the plan, and ensuring they provide the adaptations listed in the plan.

The review stage takes place regularly, where the SEND team, led by the SENDCo, look at the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact. This review will draw on the items listed in the plan stage. After the review, the assess stage is repeated.

The plan is called the 'One Page Profile' and is attached to the child's file so that it is accessed by all teachers. Any additional notes are kept electronically with the One Page Profile.

How do you manage behaviour for SEND children?

The school recognises its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to provide adjustments for students with a protected characteristic. Where appropriate adjustments have been provided, SEND children are expected to behave like all other children. We provide extensive support for children and these adjustments are designed to assist children in meeting our expectations. All poor behaviour must have a consequence. This is to maintain good order in the school and to ensure that all children, irrespective of need, can learn in a safe and happy environment without disruption. It is also to help children learn they must take responsibility for their actions which in turn helps better prepare them for adulthood.

Our expectations do not change for children with SEND but we may differentiate how we deliver messages or our consequences to support children with SEND. For example, a child with ADHD may be given movement breaks during a reflection consequence or a child with ASC may be allowed to complete reflection in a quiet supportive space if they are unable to cope with the reflection room.

As well as implementing a consequence, we work closely with families to try to establish the triggers for behaviours and will make any reasonable adjustments to help prevent these.



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Special needs or disabilities do not provide children with an excuse for their behaviours. We will support them, however, to learn how to regulate and behave in ways which are not detrimental to themselves or others. You can find more detail in our behaviour for learning policy which can be found in the policies section of our website: [Policies - Testbourne Community School](#).

How do you ensure smooth transition between secondary school and college?

We will share information with the school, college, or other setting to which the student is moving. We will agree with parents and students which information will be shared as part of this. The SENDCo will work with the college when the student is in Year 11, through the Head of Year 11.

Preparing for adulthood is a key part of the annual review process for all our students with EHCPs from the beginning of KS4.

How do you ensure smooth transition between primary and secondary school?

The SENDCo and Assistant SENDCo play a key role in students' transition from primary to secondary school. In collaboration with the Head of Year 7/Transition lead, and the SENDCo from the relevant primary school, our SENDCo and Assistant SENDCo will seek to make the transition from Primary school to Secondary school as smooth as possible.

Some students may have additional meetings to which parents are invited, and in this case the primary school is responsible for notifying the parent of the meeting. Prospective parents can contact us through transition@testbourne.school or send@testbourne.school.

Why isn't SEND provision at secondary school similar to primary school?

At primary school, SEND provision typically relies on lots of 1:1 time with SEND staff taking students out of the classroom for intervention. As you can appreciate, in a busy secondary school with many different specialist teachers, taking students out of class results in lost learning time. We also invest heavily in our teaching staff, making sure they are all teachers of SEND. The classroom teachers are the ones who see the students the most and know them best, so our SEND team support students and teachers in class in a range of ways. We work with each student as individuals, and encourage resilience and independence, so our SEND staff are there to mentor and guide students in class, and support them to overcome their needs. Typical support from our SEND staff in class includes strategies such as:

- circulating between students who need support, checking they are on task and giving them prompts where necessary;



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- ensuring students use the help strategies provided by the teacher such as word banks or knowledge organisers;
- talking through problems with the student to re-set their focus.

What support do you provide for tests and assessments in class?

In class tests and assessments are handled by the classroom teacher, but the teacher can request additional support from the SEND team. Students can be given extra time if needed. Teachers will monitor this to report on a student's normal way of working. Evidence that the teacher has tried different approaches to help students in tests and assessments is required when the student gets to Year 11 and their GCSE examinations. Strategies the classroom teacher may try include:

- Giving students a separate room to complete a test (such as an office or the Hub)
- Reading for the student (or asking a member of the SEND team to read for them)
- Prompting the student to focus in class by seating them at the front next to the teacher.

This is not an exhaustive list, and depending on the subject and the assessment, the teacher may try alternative strategies.

What are Access Arrangements, and when might my child be assessed for Access Arrangements for their GCSE exams?

It should be noted that to ensure that children do not receive an unfair advantage over their peers, access arrangements are very tightly controlled and monitored by the exam boards and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Access Arrangements (AA) are non-standard arrangements approved before the examinations take place to enable candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access exams and assessments. The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The Examination boards will not consider applications in respect of long-term conditions that are submitted only weeks before the exams. It is essential, therefore, that parents inform us of existing circumstances that might justify Access Arrangements as soon as possible before their child is in Year 11.

We ask all teachers to monitor students and the effectiveness of any arrangements and this will provide grounds for their implementation at GCSE level. When applying for Access Arrangements we are obliged to work within the framework laid down by the JCQ. Non-compliance with the JCQ regulations is considered malpractice, which has potentially severe consequences for all our students.



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The JCQ specify that *normal way of working* is a priority when considering awarding an Access Arrangement to a student. Therefore, whilst we will accept a private report from an educational psychologist and/or letter from a GP or other professional, we will not automatically award an Access Arrangement based upon it. It will trigger an internal investigation into the normal way of working for that student. To clarify: an independent report on its own is not a guarantee that a student will receive the Access Arrangements.

When looking at any student's needs, the school must always consider granting Supervised Rest Breaks before making a request for Extra Time, as the former will often be a more appropriate response. Extra time can never be given if there is any possibility that the student would thereby be given an unfair advantage over other students.

If students are routinely using extra time in their internal assessments, have a history of need, and we have tried rest breaks and they are not working for that student, we will use an external Specialist Assessor to complete Assessment for external Access Arrangements on the student to determine their substantial disadvantage.

In order to maintain the credibility of GCSE and GCE qualifications, the JCQ defines the parameters as to what constitutes a 'substantial disadvantage'. They have defined eligibility for up to 25% extra time. The Specialist Assessor's report must confirm that the student has:

- two below average standardised scores of 84 or less; or
- one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89).

In either scenario, the two standardised scores must relate to two different areas of speed of working as below:

- speed of reading and speed of writing; or
- speed of reading and cognitive processing/fluency; or
- speed of writing and cognitive processing/fluency; or
- two different areas of cognitive processing/fluency; which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working.

There are many other factors relating to Access Arrangements, and more details are given to parents in the Year 11 information evening and in Year 10. Parents can also read details on the JCQ website here: jcq.org.uk

Can students with SEND participate in the full curriculum, including the extra-curricular activities?

All students are supported to access the full curriculum offer at Testbourne. In the very rare occasions when students are removed from lessons this is for a short period of time and with a carefully planned intervention. Students with specific needs are supported to make sure they can access all lessons, such as being given extra time to navigate the corridors if they have mobility issues, or given reassurance and frequent check-ins if they struggle with anxiety.



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All of our extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all our students, including any before- and after-school clubs. All students are encouraged to go on our residential trips, participate in sports day, audition for school plays, become prefects or members of school council, and take part in any aspect of school life.

No student is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEND including any disability. It is common practice for a Learning Coach or Teaching Assistant to support with trips to facilitate greater accessibility for students with significant needs.

What support do you provide for students who have English as an Additional Language (EAL)?

We work closely with Hampshire County Council to support our learners with EAL. It is important to note that students who have EAL do not necessarily have SEND. If students are struggling with the English language please contact us and we will work with you to support.

How do we communicate with you?

For any general enquiries, please use the email address send@testbourne.school. The SEND team talk daily, meet as a team fortnightly, have monthly 1:1 meetings, and have no hierarchy to our communication. When you contact us, please remember staff are in lessons for the majority of their day and planning and assessment takes significant time. Please allow at least 2 working days for a response.

Who works in the SEND department at Testbourne?

We have a number of staff who work in the SEND department, including the SENDCo and Strategic SEND Lead, Mrs Geraldine Gray, who is also one of the Assistant Headteachers and a Science teacher. Supporting her is the Assistant SENDCo Mrs Clare Sykes, who handles much of the day-to-day running of the SEND department. We also have a Senior Teaching Assistant, several Learning Coaches and a number of Teaching Assistants. Many of the staff have specific training in certain areas (e.g. primary teaching, ELSA support, Mental health training, etc.)

All of the staff meet regularly and have time to pass on concerns, as well as dedicated time to support students both inside and outside of class. Our team are passionate about helping students succeed and if you think you would like to join us as a Teaching Assistant or Learning Coach please watch out for vacancies on our website or contact us on recruitment@testbourne.school.

What training do your staff receive?

We know that all teachers are teachers of SEND, and we spend a great deal of time on training and discussing students with SEND to ensure all teachers are confident



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in supporting students so that they thrive with us. Our training revisits aspects of SEND frequently, and we make use of external agencies and best practice to ensure we do the utmost for the students in our care. Our training and information dissemination takes place in a range of meetings and briefings throughout the school year, and includes reference to the [SEND code of practice](#), The National Association for Special Educational Needs ([nasen](#)) and the best practice research published by the Education Endowment Foundation ([EEF](#)).



Department
for Education



Education
Endowment
Foundation

SEND staff have been trained in specialist training according to their intervention support, for example, ELSA or Phonics. Teaching staff have been trained in responsive teaching, which focuses on methods of assessing each individual student throughout the lesson and differentiating teaching in order to address misconceptions.

Teaching staff regularly receive training in specific aspects of SEND, for example, low working memory, autism, dyslexia, ADHD etc. The training takes place regularly throughout the year, and key aspects of SEND are highlighted to staff and saved centrally so that all staff can access. We work with a large number of external organisations, both inside and outside of Hampshire, as well as partner schools, to ensure our knowledge and training is up to date and relevant. We place great emphasis on looking at the latest research to ensure we are taking account of advances in scientific understanding.

We also work with trainers who are themselves neurodivergent, so that they can talk about the aspects of school they found difficult and help us further reflect on aspects that may help students in school.

What external agencies and organisations do you work with?

We primarily work with Hampshire SEND and you can find out more about Hampshire's Local Offer here: [Family Information and Services Hub | Hampshire's Local Offer for Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities](#).

We take advantage of a wealth of information from SEND organisations, some of which are shown below.



Testbourne Community School



If you would like to find out more about SEND

Our website has some additional information, including our SEND policy and information report, and links to external help for parents, including the Hampshire Local Offer and Hampshire SENDIASS. You can also attend our annual SEND information evenings, the second of which was recorded in 2023 and is available on our website.

