

Reviewed June 2009	N. Gribble
Review date June 2010	N. Gribble

## Special needs policy

### **The SEN team.**

Special needs are addressed by all the staff in the school. As we have small classes and a very child-centred approach to each child, there is no clear distinction between children with special needs who get extra support and everyone else; there is a gradual transition. Likewise, in different subjects and on different days children will need varying amounts of extra support and, as far as possible, the staff try to provide that support both in and out of class. However, over-all responsibility for Special needs in the school is down to the SEN Team. These are Meryl and Martin (English department), Jo and Jenny (SEN support) and Nathan (Maths, CPO and SENCO). The SEN team will make sure the following formal processes are met for each child, where necessary.

### **Types of extra provision.**

Obviously our level of support is restricted by our resources and staff time. When the LEA will provide extra funding we are able to resource a child better. Likewise, in the case of parents who can afford pay for the resources we can hire in further help.

In general, the provision is scaled up according to the level of need.

- i) Extra attention in class from the normal class teachers. This is made possible by our small classes.
- ii) Extra support outside class. This is not formal extra lessons, but most teachers make time for certain students when they are having difficulty.
- iii) Having a classroom assistant in some or all classes.
- iv) Having extra lessons in very small groups or one to one. These are either with Jo or Jenny (SEN Support) or with other key skills teachers.

### **The school special needs register.**

A confidential list of the needs of each child is available to the staff.

Example.

Name	Educational difficulties	Emotional problems
Joe Normal	Within the norm	Low self esteem
Ann Other	Dyslexia, ADD	Easily wound up, other confidential issues

Each term the SEN team will meet to discuss new students and changes to the needs of children within the school.

Though the list is available to all the staff there may be further confidential matters known only to the CPO. These would include such personal issues as abuse. Where there are such issues they will be referred to as in the above example.

Sometimes opinions rather than fact may also be added to the register, and they may be expressed in colloquial terms, which means it should only be used as an informal guide for staff. It is important to add that the personal relationships that staff have with each student mean that such opinions are usually well grounded. Examples of such opinions are:

LPB: lack of parental boundaries

DM: Drug misuse

OCSL: Out of control social life.

NSSDS: Non specific social disparity syndrome

### **English as a second language.**

One specific special need that needs consideration is the incorporation of foreign language speaking students. At Sands is quite common for foreign nationals to join the school with poor English skills. By integration in the school community language skills progress extremely fast. So this can be a need that does not last for long, but while it does interfere with learning it should be supported as any other difficulty.

### **Original assessment.**

Children who apply to join the school spend a whole week in the school before they are offered a place. During the trial week they are assessed for any difficulties that might present, both academic and social, and all their paperwork which comes from their previous schools is read and if necessary discussed by the staff. Usually a child with special needs comes to the school precisely because of those needs, so the problem is already well known and both parents and other professionals are eager to provide a full diagnosis.

As well as being informally assessed in lessons by subject-teachers any child who exhibits possible difficulties will take a Neales comprehension test and a Nelson Maths test.

### **Ongoing assessment.**

All staff are aware of the special needs of each child and with regular feedback, any necessary changes in provision are quickly implemented. For children with severe learning difficulties formal testing takes place termly. This is conducted by Jo or Jenny (SEN Support).

### **Communication amongst staff about children.**

One of the most important parts of our assessment and support of children comes from the constant communication between staff. Tutors feed back to subject teachers, subject teachers feed back to the SEN Team and staff discuss individual students. This is done both informally and during our weekly staff meetings.

### **Tutorial support.**

Each student has a tutor who is responsible for keeping an overview of the child's needs within the school. This is the person a child will go to if he has a problem and also the person who will be approached by other staff if they see problems from their point of view. This support is ongoing and informal but is supplemented by termly tutorials

where each member of staff feeds back to the tutor how a child is doing and this is discussed, at length, with the student. These use a tutorial form (See appendix 1)

**Use of Special Needs tutorial extension form.**

Where a child has recognised learning difficulties, as well as the normal tutorial review which takes place each term they will have an extension form which the tutor will discuss and evaluate at the same time. (See appendix 2)

**Processing LEA Statements.**

Even though we are an independent school we have a number of children with LEA statements and even a few students who have been placed here by the LEA.

Maintaining LEA statements is an important part of the support for a child. Not only does this allow the child free access to external professional help and continued support when they leave the school, it also provides a good opportunity to discuss the child and the help he is getting with an impartial external professional.

More generally we try to foster a good relationship with the LEA as their support through educational psychologists and other professionals is invaluable.

The conclusions from these meetings need to be recorded on the AR form (for under 14) and TAR form (for 14+). See appendix 3

**Special consideration in exams.**

To obtain special consideration for exam students it is necessary to employ an LEA Ed Psych to evaluate what support is appropriate. This is done with the close support of Jo, Jenny and Nathan. It is normally done during the Christmas term of the penultimate year so any special arrangements will stay current until the end of their final year.

**Total Support.**

As learning difficulties often come hand in hand with emotional difficulties we try to support the whole student rather than just providing for their academic needs. In practice this means as much pastoral support and basic 'L and A' as formal learning support. Having the time and patience to care for children who need to overcome their hatred for education is one of our main aims. Welfare concerns leading from or to SEN are also cover more rigorously by our DDA policy document.