

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS: KEY QUESTIONS

How will you know if my child needs extra help?

Identification of SEND pupils occurs through close liaison with primary schools, parents, teachers, support staff and outside agencies. In school if children or young people have significant gaps in terms of their actual progress or access to learning and when this deficit can be ascribed to an identifiable learning need, the child or young person will be placed on the SEND register so that they are able to make greater progress with SEND support, rather than without it. The English department also carries out literacy tests at the beginning of Year 7 and Year 9. We also carefully examine the CATS tests to see if there are areas of difficulty. By defining a child or young person as having SEND does not mean that they will automatically be placed on the SEND register. It may be the case that they do not meet the criteria for this then they will be monitored and, should their progress dictate, they will be placed on the register at some future point.

What should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

Any concerns regarding specific learning difficulties and special educational needs should be directed to Miss Vaughan, Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) (evaughan@wirralgrammarboys.com), or to their Head of Year in the first instance. They will assess if there is an educational need. It may be that once assessed that it is judged that your child may be best supported through the pastoral system or that further referrals or tests are required to outside agencies to see if there is an underlying cause.

How will staff support my child?

Responsibility for supporting your child starts with the subject staff who will employ a range of in class strategies, Quality First teaching (QFT). There are a wide range of available interventions: organisation groups, homework clubs, spelling and handwriting support, modified curriculum, additional literacy, counselling. Some interventions are offered at lunch time or after school. Depending on your child's needs, the school also liaises with outside services, such as educational psychologists, paediatricians, counsellors, hearing and vision support. Person centred planning, which we call our Student Support Sheets, is used in all stages of Special Needs and Mrs Smith (Learning Mentor) and the teaching Assistants work with Miss Vaughan on these.

How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?

All lessons are differentiated for a range of need, including special educational needs. As well as using their own professional knowledge, teachers are supported by the SENDCo to find suitable strategies for all pupils.

How will I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

In every term of each year group, your child's progress is reported to you. This is done via the whole school policy of progress bulletins, an annual full report and an annual parents' evening with appointments with subject staff. Interventions that parents can help with at home can be discussed at parents' evening. On top of this, parents with children on the SEND register will be invited to contribute at review points (depending on the need this will be at least yearly and if not more often than that). Strategies to be used with your child will be discussed at the review points. If any extra concerns come up throughout the school year you are very welcome to contact Miss Vaughan by email.

What support will there be for my child's overall well-being?

Our school has a comprehensive pastoral system which aids the holistic approach of the school. You child will be assigned a House tutor and a Head of Year. The Head of Year, Learning Mentor and Miss Vaughan, in her role as SENDCO, meet once a fortnight to discuss any difficulties that the students are experiencing. This ensures that you child can access quick and appropriate support when issues are identified.

In addition to this, we also have physical and mental health support via the Health Services in School and youth worker, and we provide mental health support from a qualified and extremely experienced psychodynamic therapist. The school also utilises external counsellors along with liaising with other health services, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Educational Psychologists and Vision and Hearing Support.

What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by you?

Our SENDCO works closely with the following outside agencies in order to meet the needs of the pupils on the SEND register: Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHs), The Speech and Language Therapy Service, Occupational Health, Physiotherapy, Hearing Support, Vision Support, Wirral Educational Psychology Service, Special Needs Assessment Team (SENAAT), (external) School councillors, School nurse and Youth worker. As well as these, we also have staff with counsellor training within the school and, when necessary, we access a professional bereavement and loss counsellor. Our Learning Mentor also uses Circle of Friends and Social Story techniques when appropriate.

What training are the staff supporting my child with SEND had or are having?

Miss Vaughan is actively involved in the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination as well as having attended various workshops and courses from a variety related field. Mrs Smith, our Learning Mentor, is a trained counsellor and she has attended relevant training in self-harm, bereavement counselling, autism, and dyslexia. Both continue to attend training so that they can ensure that all practices are following current trends. The school Teaching assistants also have training in specialism and offer daily intervention and support.

How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

Occasionally some conditions which lead to SEND can call for extra risk assessments on school trips, e.g. if a wheelchair is needed. If your child's circumstances call for a teaching assistant or carer then they will also attend **most** trips with your child. The school endeavours to be as fully inclusive as is possible and if it is not possible that a teaching assistant can accompany your child the school will ensure that appropriate staff are trained in your child's individual needs.

How accessible is your school environment?

Lifts are available to all classrooms around the school for wheelchair and other disabilities' access apart from one. There are disabled toilets around the school. For auditory and sight problems, smaller rooms, headphones, exam scribes or readers, laptops, enlarged papers etc are available depending on need. Your child will be assessed at the beginning of his time at school and access arrangements will be part of his Student Support Sheet.

How will you prepare and support my child to join your school?

The school arranges two open evenings every year for prospective parents and pupils. Year 6 students who have gained a place at WGSB are also invited in for an induction day during the summer term of Year 6. We also offer a Family welcome programme which consists of 4 after school sessions for your child and a parent or grandparent. This enables your child to become familiar with the school, meet new friends and allay his fears. Students who are the only student coming from their school as well as students who have already been identified as having additional needs are invited to attend these sessions. We also offer enhanced transitions sessions which are structured according to your child's needs; this could include meeting their teaching, additional tours or attending current Year 7 lessons. Representatives from the school go out to each primary setting to meet the year 6 pupils in small groups.

How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child will receive?

The SEND register comprises of two categories. The highest category of need is represented by students who have an Education, Health and Social Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Need. Some students will have additional needs that require extra support but this support will be at a level below that of an EHCP or Statement. These students will be identified as having SEND Support. Students in this category receive a Student Support Sheet which is person centred and is drawn up and monitored in a similar way to that within an EHCP but which has a lower level of resource attached to it.

In addition to the two categories above that appear on the register, we also have identified groups of children who may require extra support but who do not appear on the register. These are identified and tracked through school systems.

Who can I contact for further information?

General questions surrounding your child's education should be addressed to his Head of Year or Miss Vaughan (SENDCO). If you have any questions, specifically about issues surrounding special educational needs, please feel free to address them to the school Miss Vaughan, via the school number 0151 644 0908 or via email evaughan@wirralgrammarboys.com.

Can staff get extra help from experts outside if they need to? (e.g. advice and training on medical conditions)

If pupils develop or enter the school with disabilities or issues that we have little experience of, the SENDCo liaises with any of the specialist external agencies in our area as well as utilising the school nurse. In some circumstances a pupil's Consultant is also asked to attend review meetings.

How will information about the child be circulated to all members of staff and who will be responsible for that?

If it is a general issue about a child, Heads of Year will generally tell other members of staff, if appropriate, during weekly staff briefings or daily break notices to staff. If it is a special needs issue, information is usually given to staff individually depending on need by the SENDCo.