

DISABILITY AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

PRIMARY PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

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1. Introduction

Albemarle College makes provision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in line with current legislative requirements. This policy is drafted in accordance with the requirements of *The Equality Act 2010* and the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0-25 years) 2015*.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following college policies:

- **Exams Policy**
- **Admissions Policy**
- **Equality Policy**
- **Safeguarding Policy**
- **Behaviour & Conduct of Students Policy**
- **Complaints Policy**

This policy underpins the statutory duty not to discriminate against disabled young people and to make reasonable adjustments for them, together with supporting students with medical conditions (*DfE, 2015*).

2. Aims and Objectives

The College aims to:

- ensure that the special educational needs of students are identified, assessed and provided for;
- create an environment that meets the special educational needs of each student;
- ensure that all students have full access to all elements of the college curriculum;
- ensure that parents are supported and able to play their part in supporting their child's education;
- ensure that our students have a voice in the process;
- ensure that any vulnerable students and their parents know how to make a complaint if the need arises.

3. Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

A child or young person may have a special educational need or disability (SEND) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provisions to be made for them. A learning difficulty or disability can be defined as:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others the same age
- a disability which prevents or hinders the ability to make use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or post-16 institutions

Many 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 children and young people with long-term physical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Increasingly, it also covers those diagnosed with mental health conditions. Young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN; however, where a child requires special educational provisions over and above the adjustments, aids and services required by *The Equality Act 2010*, they will additionally be covered by the SEND definition.

4. Student Admissions

Admission to the College is by interview with one of the Principals, through which prospective students will be judged solely on their capacity to meet the College’s admissions criteria, as set out in the [Admissions Policy](#). No candidate will be refused admission solely as a result of his or her disability, based on the demands of *The Equality Act 2010*.

If a prospective student is known to have some form of SEND, this should be indicated to the Admissions Manager at the time of application. Parents are also asked to provide supporting evidence in the form of an Educational Psychologist’s report or a medical report. Similarly, if a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), parents should provide the College with a copy of such documentation.

The College will take all reasonable steps to avoid putting a student at any disadvantage during the admissions process without justification. However, the College has a right to evaluate risks, and given the structure of its premises, it may be unsuitable for students with more severe physical difficulties, even if some accommodations can be made. Similarly, the College may not have the requisite expertise to assist with more complex learning difficulties. Under such circumstances, it will be reasonable to advise parents that the College is unsuitable.

5. Identification, Assessment and Provision

Provision for students with SEND is a matter for the College as a whole. All staff have a responsibility in terms of SEN provision and the teaching of such students has college-wide importance.

The delivery of every class and every subject requires a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation which 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, it may be that a greater level of provision is required to support and enhance their learning abilities.

It is the responsibility and duty of the college to provide high quality teaching, differentiated for individual students, and the latter is the first step in responding to a student who may have SEN.

The College's Director of Studies and SENCo, Ashley Richardson, who has a Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA), is responsible for the assessment and implementation of access arrangements for SEND students.

The College's approach to continuing assessment allows opportunities for the identification of students who may have special educational needs. Teachers must work closely in liaison with the SENCo to consider all information gathered from within the College, incorporating student progress alongside national and other relevant data.

The College will measure student progress using:

- any information provided by previous schools / colleges
- evidence from teachers' observations and assessments
- standardised screening or assessment tools

6. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

The identification and assessment of the special educational needs of young people whose first language is not English requires particular care. In situations where there is uncertainty about an individual, the College will carefully consider all aspects of a student's performance across different subjects in order to establish whether the problems faced in the classroom are caused by limitations in their command of English or rather are borne of special educational needs. Any associated access arrangements are overseen by the SENCo and Examinations Officer.

For students whose command of English requires development and enhancement in order to meet the demands of their academic programme, suitable support will be offered in the form of EFL or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) lessons. These sessions typically take place as part of a small group and aim to specifically target the needs of non-native English speakers whilst paying particular attention to the requisite demands of the IELTS examination.

7. Medical and Mental Health Conditions

The College recognises that not all students with medical and mental health conditions will have a disability or special educational needs. Students with long-term and complex conditions may require ongoing support, medicines or care in order to aid the management of their condition and/or wellbeing, whilst others may require monitoring and interventions in emergency circumstances. It is important to note that a student's health needs may change over time in ways that cannot always be predicted, sometimes resulting in extended periods of absence.

In order to support students with medical and mental health conditions, the College recognises the importance of regular communication with parents/guardians, alongside seeking advice from healthcare professionals, and the value of the student's own views. The social and emotional implications associated with such conditions are handled

sensitively by the College, as it is recognised that students may be self-conscious about their condition; some may be vulnerable to bullying or emotional disorders such as anxiety or depression. Pastoral support is readily available for students through contact with the Welfare Officer, Personal Tutors and Curriculum Managers.

Both short-term and frequent absences, including those for appointments connected with a student's condition, are managed on a case-by-case basis. Limitation of the impact on the student's educational attainment, emotional and general wellbeing is paramount. For certain conditions, when the student undertakes activities of an extra-curricular nature or when attending College trips, risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure that all activities are appropriate and adequately supported (these will involve parents/guardians and students, where necessary). The College aims to ensure that all activities provided are as inclusive as possible.

8. Education, Health and Care Plan

Students with more complex educational needs will receive support through their EHCP. In these cases, the College will liaise closely with the local authority, who retains legal and financial responsibility for ensuring that the provision specified in the student's EHCP is made, as well as the parents/guardians to ensure that the plan is well-suited to enable the student to have the best opportunity for success at the College. In the current academic year (2022-23), the College does not have any students with an active Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

9. The Role of the SENCo

The appointed person for SEND is Ashley Richardson (Director of Studies). In collaboration with the Principals/Curriculum Managers and Examinations Officer, he is responsible for the strategic development and implementation of SEND policy and provision within the College in order to ensure the achievement of students with special educational needs. The key responsibilities of the SENCo include:

- liaising with, advising and guiding teachers and Personal Tutors;
- undertaking in-service assessments of potential SEND students;
- liaising with the Examinations Officer to ensure that suitable Access Arrangements are in place;

- liaising with the Welfare Officer with regards to SEND students who are experiencing challenges;
- co-ordinating provisions and managing responses to students with SEND;
- managing and maintaining records for SEND students;
- liaising with parents of students with SEND;
- contributing to the in-service training and development of all staff;
- managing the range of resources, both human and material, to enable appropriate provisions to be made for students with SEND;
- liaising with external agencies including: Local Education Authority, educational psychology services, health and social services, and voluntary bodies (where applicable);
- monitoring and evaluating the SEND provision and reporting to the Principals/Curriculum Managers.

10. Record Keeping, Monitoring and Referrals

The College will record the steps taken to meet the students' individual needs and the SENCo will maintain records which include:

- information from parents;
- information from formative and summative assessments at the College (held on the College database);
- feedback from teachers;
- EHCPs, Educational Psychologist's reports or medical reports;
- reports from previous schools / colleges on academic progress and attainment (held on the College database).

The College maintains a list of students entitled to access arrangements which includes the names of all students about whom concerns have been raised and whose progress is being monitored. Such records ensure that these students' needs are kept under review and their inclusion informs teaching staff that their progress is, or has been, a cause for concern.

Students are included on the Access Arrangements list when the College has reliable evidence to support the existence of additional learning needs. Identification may be established in the form of:

- an Educational Psychologist's Report, or report by another suitably qualified professional, requested and submitted at the time of registration at the College;
- a statement of concern raised by one or more of a student's teachers;
- a statement or comment raised by a parent.

The student's circumstances are reviewed by Curriculum Managers, together with subject teachers. In some cases, based on College advice and support, parents may need to involve outside agencies, where necessary, to provide further support in the assessment of their child's special educational needs. External agencies may include:

- Educational Psychologist (Health Care and Professions Council 'HCPC' registered)
- GP
- Counselling services
- Paediatrician
- Speech Therapist
- Occupational Therapist

The outcome of such assessment may indicate a need which falls under one of the four areas contained within the current SEND Code of Practice:

- Communication and Interaction (e.g. autistic spectrum conditions)
- Cognition and Learning (e.g. dyslexia)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (e.g. ADHD)
- Physical and/or Sensory needs (e.g. hearing impairment)

External reports are conducted at the family's expense and will provide a more detailed assessment which, when shared with the College, then inform teaching staff. These external reports may also recommend access arrangements for public examinations; however, the qualifications of the report author(s) must satisfy Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) requirements, such as psychologists being HCPC registered, if the report is to be directly used as part of the necessary evidence for exam access arrangements. Each case will be considered on an individual basis, as a detailed picture of need must be established to include College assessments, monitoring and subject teacher feedback. After a diagnosis has been substantiated, the student will be added

to the Access Arrangements students list and teaching staff are then provided with an updated list ahead of monthly mock examinations.

If no significant difficulty is diagnosed or suspected, the student's progress will be monitored nonetheless. Parents/guardians are, of course, always at liberty to commission an Educational Psychologist's Report. The outcome of all assessments, both internal and external, should be discussed with parents/guardians by the Principals/Curriculum Managers.

11. Access Arrangements

The Principals/Curriculum Managers should, in conjunction with the SENCo and Examinations Officer, ensure that all necessary assessments for special examination arrangements are duly carried out and recorded in accordance with the relevant regulations, such as the JCQ Form 8 or Centre Delegated File Note.

Access Arrangements guidelines are updated annually by the JCQ and the SENCo attends an official training session to ensure that the College is able to comply with the most up-to-date regulations. A copy of the current regulations can be requested from the Examinations Officer by parents, guardians or students. It is important to recognise that a diagnosis of SEND no longer automatically qualifies a student for exam access arrangements. The College must compile a history of the student's special educational needs and the support they receive, including information about the student's normal ways of working, which is routinely monitored by the SENCo and subject teachers.

Current access arrangements recommended by the JCQ include: supervised rest breaks, 25% extra time, a prompter and the use of a word processor. There are specific requirements, which may change annually, for each access arrangement. Some access arrangements, such as extra time, have to be formally applied for using the Access Arrangements Online portal. Students are required to sign a data protection form to acknowledge and agree that information is shared with exam boards when necessary.

12. Support and Differentiation

The College aims to offer a range of strategies tailored to the individual needs of SEND students which will enable them to participate as fully as possible in a broad and

balanced curriculum. The College aims to provide a positive and supportive learning environment which incorporates approaches that are particularly appropriate to students with special educational needs, but from which all students will benefit:

- use of multi-sensory learning materials and teaching methods;
- teaching of study skills;
- appropriate use of IT and assistive technology;
- one-to-one tuition or support where necessary;
- a clear role for parents and appropriate outside agencies.

The College aims to support students with special educational needs in order that they can cope in a mainstream classroom setting, maintaining good progress and becoming independent learners (as far as is possible).

Key aspects of support offered by the College are as follows:

- individual study support (aided by Personal Tutors);
- group support (through the ULS and GLS programmes);
- Welfare support and guidance;
- small class sizes (no more than 8 students per class).

The College shares expertise in teaching methods in order to facilitate differentiation within the classroom which will enhance the SEN student's learning and access to the curriculum. This sharing is achieved through regular departmental observations and peer feedback, and in conjunction with Staff Induction training involving external agencies.

13. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Staff

The College provides relevant training through in-house expertise and the involvement of external agencies to ensure that levels of staff awareness of SEND issues are regularly updated and enhanced.

14. Complaints

The College takes complaints very seriously and follows due procedure as set out in the [Complaints Policy](#).