

Neurodiversity and SEND Policy (Senior School)

Reviewed by Ferdinand Doepel and Martyna Sobczak-Roberts

Date: September 2025

Date of Next review: September 2026

STATEMENT OF VALUES

Enabling all pupils to participate in the full range of school life and activities, and to succeed to their individual potential, forms the underlying principle upon which our provision of support for learning is based and is a core part of Wimbledon High School and the GDST's values.

Our school is committed to creating a positive learning environment which promotes a belief in what may be possible and a view of ability that is flexible, not fixed. This whole-school ethos reflects the value we place on diversity and respect accorded to all individuals. Support for a variety of needs is a collective whole-school responsibility – all teachers are teachers of pupils with individual needs.

MISSION STATEMENT

Stepping in: we aim for every girl to feel known, supported, confident and able to shine at Wimbledon High.

Striding out: we aim for every girl to leave us prepared to shape the society in which she lives and works.

This policy operates within a wider national and local policy framework, which includes:

The Education Act 1996

The Equality Act 2010

The Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Regulations 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 2015

GDST Inclusion Policy

Wimbledon High School Access Arrangements Policy

GDST Equal Opportunities (Education) Policy

GDST Accessibility Strategy

GDST and Wimbledon High School Admissions Policies

GDST Exclusion Policy

Wimbledon High School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Wimbledon High School Behaviour Policy

Wimbledon High School Anti-Bullying Policy

Wimbledon High School Teaching and Learning Policy

This policy and the school's SEND provision are informed by the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2020.

The policy will be reviewed every year by the Head of Neurodiversity and SENCo and Assistant Head Academic, informed by consultation with other staff, parents and pupils.
Next review: September 2025

POLICY AIMS

- To outline the school's objectives in supporting students with learning differences, including neurodivergence, and how these objectives will be achieved within the available resources, facilities, and the Head's discretion.
- To define the role of the Head of Neurodiversity in overseeing learning support provision.
- To ensure that neurodivergent students and those with learning differences are fully integrated into the school's life, accessing a broad, balanced, and relevant education.
- To promote a learning environment where all students, regardless of their needs, feel valued, fostering a strong sense of self-esteem and belonging within the school community.

- To encourage parental involvement in their child's educational journey and to make full use of external support agencies where appropriate.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve these aims, we have set the following objectives:

1. Early Identification and Intervention

Neurodivergent students and those with other specific learning needs are identified as early as possible. We follow clear procedures to ensure their needs are met promptly, working collaboratively with teachers, the pastoral team, safeguarding team and the Neurodiversity Department.

Staff Awareness and Training

We ensure that all staff members, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of students with individual needs. Teachers are supported through ongoing professional development, training, and access to resources to meet these students' needs effectively.

2. Provision of Resources

Appropriate resources are allocated to support neurodivergent students and those with specific learning needs. These resources are available throughout the school, ensuring that every student can access the curriculum fully and meaningfully.

3. Inclusive Teaching and Learning

High-quality, inclusive teaching is at the heart of our approach. We ensure that all students benefit from 'Quality First' teaching practices (SEND Code of Practice, 2020), grounded in accessibility, challenge, and personalized learning that is reflective and adaptive.

4. Tracking and Personalization

We closely monitor students' academic and personal progress, identifying successes, gaps, and areas of concern. Where additional support is needed,

interventions are personalized to meet the unique needs of the student, ensuring their holistic development.

5. SEND Systems and Escalation

Our Neurodiversity/SEND systems provide mechanisms for escalating support where necessary. The expertise of the Neurodiversity/SEND Department, external specialists, and teaching staff ensures the introduction of effective strategies tailored to the student's individual needs.

6. Whole-School Responsibility for Neurodiversity

Provision for neurodivergent students and those with learning differences is integrated across the entire school. All staff members share responsibility for creating an inclusive environment, with neurodiversity being a standing agenda item in department and year group meetings.

7. Empowering Students

We actively seek the views of neurodivergent students and those with other disabilities, ensuring their voices are heard and their input is valued in the decision-making process. Students are encouraged to participate in their learning journey, developing the strategies and skills necessary for their success.

8. Collaboration with Families and External Agencies

Parents play a key role in supporting their child's education, and we are committed to working in partnership with them. When necessary, we collaborate with external agencies to ensure that all students have access to the full range of support available.

9. Life SEND Register

Our SEND register is regularly updated to reflect the evolving needs of students, ensuring that staff remain informed of each student's current learning profile. This register is informed by the knowledge of specialist professionals, parents, and students themselves. By embracing these aims and objectives, Wimbledon High School ensures that neurodivergent students and those with specific needs are supported to thrive in an environment that values individuality, promotes academic and personal growth, and fosters lifelong learning.

DEFINITIONS

Disability is defined under the Equality Act 2010. A person has a disability if s/he “has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

Special Educational Needs are defined in the Children and Families Act 2014:

20(1) A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

20(2) A child of compulsory school age or young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- (b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions”

Trust schools are broadly selective and will have a relatively small proportion of pupils who would be considered to have special educational needs as defined by the Act.

Nevertheless, we recognise that there will be a proportion of pupils who will be hindered in accessing the full curriculum and fulfilling their potential without tailored recognition of their differences and individual provision, which is usually a natural feature of high-quality teaching and personalised learning in the classroom. These pupils, whilst not considered as having ‘special educational needs’, will also come under the umbrella of the school’s wider neurodiversity provision.

Children are not regarded as having a learning difference solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) is the designation used by the GDST for pupils who do not have SEN as defined by the act but are nevertheless hindered in accessing the full curriculum and fulfilling their potential without tailored recognition of their needs and individual provision.

Pupils may have either a disability or SEN/ALN or both. Not every pupil with differences will qualify as disabled under the statutory definition; this will depend on the severity or extent of their needs.

Children may have a disability/SEN/ALN either throughout or at any time during their school career and may have SEN/ALN in one or in many areas of the curriculum.

Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has learning differences or disabilities. However, they may be an indicator of a range of learning differences or disabilities. Equally, it should not be assumed that attainment in line with chronological age means that there is no learning difference or disability. Some learning differences and disabilities occur across the range of cognitive ability and left unaddressed, may lead to frustration, which may manifest itself as disaffection, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

At Wimbledon High School a significant number of students who receive a form of additional support are identified as **neurodivergent**.

Neurodiversity refers to the different ways a person's brain processes information. Neurodiversity is an umbrella term used to describe a number of these variations. It is estimated that around 1 in 7 people in the UK have some kind of neuro difference (NHS Cambridge University Hospitals, NHS Foundation Trust, 2024).

Most common types of neurodiversity:

Autism, or Autism Spectrum Conditions

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADD: Attention Deficit Disorder

Dyscalculia

Dyslexia

Dyspraxia, or Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Head of Neurodiversity and SENCo for whole school (HoND/SENCo): Martyna Sobczak-Roberts

Head of Neurodiversity and SENCo for Junior School: Rhona Carther (please refer to Junior School Policy for information)

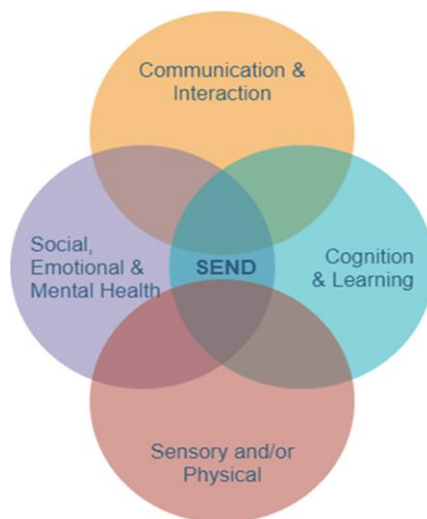
The role of teaching and non-teaching staff

All teaching and non-teaching staff in GDST schools are expected to provide teaching and learning opportunities for pupils which maximise their access to the curriculum and enable them to reach their potential. This will involve:

- Being fully aware of the school's procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with learning differences;
- Being aware of which pupils in the school have learning differences as appropriate;
- As practitioners usually responsible for working with a child on a daily basis, adapting their teaching to take account of individual needs;
- Assessing and monitoring the progress of pupils with educational differences and providing relevant information for the HoN and JSHoN;
- Raising concerns about pupils with possible educational differences with the HoN and JSHoN.

SEND at Wimbledon High School:

WHS's SEND policies and provisions are informed by the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2015. The SEND Code of Practice recognises four broad 'Areas of Need' to support Identification and Provision:



Communication and interaction

- Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication.
- Children and young people with Autist Spectrum Conditions, are likely to have particular differences with social interaction. They may also experience challenges with language, communication, imagination and sensory sensitivities, which can impact on how they relate to others and their environment.

Cognition and learning

- Support for learning differences may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation.
- Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia/developmental coordination disorder (DCD).

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

- Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or

physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or attachment disorder.

Sensory and/or physical needs

- Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties.
- Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

For many students Special Educational Needs and/or Disability are identified in Primary school and will initially be shared by the school's SENCO and the student's family with our admissions team to support their transition to Wimbledon High School. **Parents must make sure that the accurate picture of their child's needs is communicated with the school to ensure that the school can make reasonable adjustments.**

For some students, these needs may develop later during their time with us. At Wimbledon High, we are committed to building strong relationships with our students, parents, and families, and we have systems in place to ensure that support is provided in practice.

For students moving up from Wimbledon High Junior School, SENCOs from both sites hold handover meetings to ensure a smooth transition.

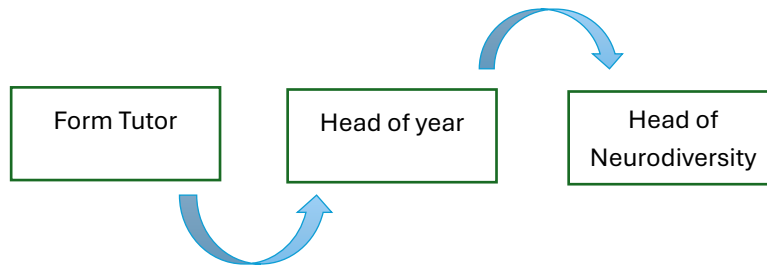
Effort is made to ensure that girls with specific learning, medical or sensory differences are not disadvantaged in entrance examinations and procedures.

Therefore, parents are requested to provide, in writing, information about their child's disability or special educational needs on the Admissions documentation ensuring all necessary plans are ready for the 11+ and 16+ exams and for students' first day.

- **Identification at Admission:** If information has been passed on from parents or the previous school, the HoND may decide to carry out further assessment to decide how the school can meet the specific needs of the child.
- **Identification through Screening:** Cohort or whole class testing may raise concerns about a pupil's learning, where problems have not been previously identified. Some cognitive learning differences are identified in baseline assessments such as LUCID applied at the beginning of year 7, 9 and 12; MidYIS applied in year 7, ALIS applied in year 12.
- The HoND then gathers information from staff and may decide to carry out further assessment to determine how the school can meet the specific needs of the child.
- **Identification through Teacher Concerns:** Class and subject teachers make regular assessments of progress for their pupils. Where pupils make less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances, the first response is to take a graduated approach to personalising learning in order to target areas of weakness through quality first teaching. Where progress continues to be less than expected the class or subject teacher will work with the HoND/SENDCo to assess the pupil.
- **Identification through parent or pupil concern:** The school recognises that parents and the pupils themselves have a unique perspective on their learning. WHS will listen to, and address concerns raised directly by parents and pupils themselves. The first response should be to adopt the graduated approach as detailed above, moving to involvement with the HoN if difficulties persist.
- **Emotional, social and mental health difficulties:** These are likely to be identified and addressed through the school's pastoral system – tutors, year group heads, school nurse and counsellor. All staff should be alert to changes in attitude and behaviour which may indicate such difficulties and involve pastoral staff and the HoND. Where difficulties are long-lasting or severe the school will consider whether the pupil might have learning differences and require additional support.

EAL pupils: Care needs to be taken to ensure that lack of competence in English is not equated with learning differences. At the same time, when children who have English as an additional language make slow progress, an in-depth assessment may be needed to ascertain whether their language status is the only reason for this; or whether they also have learning difficulties.

- **Identification through referral and escalation**



The first point of contact for students and parents is the tutor. They gather the initial concerns and alert the Head of Year.

Heads of Year oversee students' holistic development and wellbeing. They evaluate students' achievements and progress across the curriculum, identifying and addressing any gaps in attainment. They work closely with parents and families to discuss the introduction of additional support or adaptations and actively seek feedback. Regular communication with Assistant Heads and other Senior Leaders when relevant ensures information is shared, concerns are addressed, and successes are recorded. Heads of Year also meet frequently with the HoND/SENCO to review concerns, assess student barriers, and discuss support strategies.

Concerns can be escalated to the HoND/SENDCo at any point, who will assess students' needs, identify barriers to learning, and liaise with teachers, Heads of Year, and specialist professionals as necessary. This may involve diagnostic screenings, classroom observations, or one-on-one work with the student. If a Special Educational Need is identified, the student will be added to the school's Learning Differences/SEND Register. Parents are key partners in this process and will be informed of the support and provisions implemented.

How is Neurodiversity/SEND Provision determined?

The Graduated Approach

At Wimbledon High School, we implement a graduated approach to inclusion, ensuring that support evolves to meet the changing needs of our students. This approach follows the "Assess, Plan, Do, Review" cycle, as recommended by the SEND Code of Practice (2020). We recognise that students' needs may shift over time, and we continually adapt and evaluate our provision to ensure it aligns with these developments in practice.

ND/SEND referral that triggers the internal assessment cycle:
ASSESS, PLAN, DO, REVIEW



Neurodiversity and SEND Watch List	Neurodiversity and SEND register/SEN Support	SEND register/SEN support
Students who may present with learning differences and therefore are monitored by key professionals in the school. Watch list is reviewed and updated regularly by HON/SENCO and HOY.	Students Under Assessment Students who present with persistent learning differences in one (or more) following areas of their functioning: Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Social Emotional and Mental Health, Physical and Sensory).	Students with recognised learning differences and disabilities. Learners with evidence-based exam access arrangements. Students with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
There is an indication of a learning difference or need based on: - Records from previous schools or nurseries including IEPs if appropriate; - Student had a form of access arrangements in Primary School, but no formal assessment was completed - Outcome of baseline assessment e.g. CATS, LUCID, MidYIS; - Feedback from subject teachers or HODs - Pastoral data: attendance, punctuality, organisation, attitude to learning, etc. - Safeguarding concerns - Mental health needs - An inadequate or insufficient response to the academic or pastoral interventions implemented. - Progress against National Literacy / Numeracy Frameworks;	Following the initial period of monitoring and evidence gathering (one-three terms) it becomes more evident that the student may have a learning difference and therefore needs specific support. HOY makes a formal referral to Head of ND/SENCO which triggers the assessment processes. - HoND/SENDCo carries out relevant in-class observations - HoND/SENDCo collates relevant information and data including detailed feedback from teachers - HoND/SENDCo meets with the student - HoND/SENDCo and HOY meets with the parents - HoND/SENDCo drafts an advisory note for teachers including the description of student's presentation in school and proposed adaptations to teaching personalised for the specific needs of the child. In some cases, it is advisable for a more detailed	The SEND register includes all girls who have formally recognised need or difficulty (formal diagnosis). The SEND register should include the girls who receive a form of access arrangement. - All pupils on SEND register have an advisory note which is regularly updated with the new and relevant information. - HoND/SENDCo regularly liaises with HOYs regarding the performance of students on the register. They jointly decide if the strategies in place are sufficient, or the students would benefit from an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and more robust provision. - The students who have specific diagnosis and their learning differences are met via the universal level of support (quality

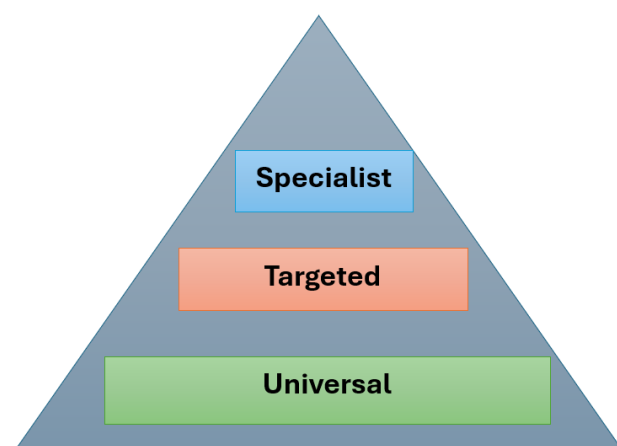
- Tracking data across time and subjects; - Health checks and or medical information; - Teachers' monitoring – observation and class assessment; - Reports / academic review procedures; - Evidence of Need - Work samples; - Writing analyses; - Students' own concerns; - Conversations with parents/carers - Advice of other professionals.	assessment by an Educational Psychologist/Specialist Teacher Assessor or other specialist to be carried out. There may be occasions when a school-based assessment will not be adequate for the needs of a particular student. In these cases, any cost is borne by parents*. - HoND/SENDCo advises the parents accordingly and supports the assessment process by gathering the relevant evidence and liaising with the external professionals involved. - When the outcome of the assessment becomes known, the HoND/SENDCo calls a planning meeting with parents and the HOY to discuss how the needs of the student will be met going forward. - HoND/SENDCo updates the relevant systems and advises subjects teachers accordingly.	first teaching/adaptive teaching and/or access arrangements) would not require ILP. Those girls perform in line with the underlying potential and grade predictions. Those girls would have developed effective strategies that are consistently applied to manage their individual needs in school. All pupils who receive a type of Access Arrangement have the AA file with all the relevant evidence (e.g. professional reports, relevant assessments data, feedback from teachers, etc) ready for inspection.
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* If the school recommends an external, independent professional, it is done in good faith, based on past assessments. WHS accepts no responsibility for their opinions nor does the school receive any financial benefit from recommending their services.

How is the Neurodiversity and SEND provision delivered at Wimbledon High School?

Students identified as having special educational needs or disabilities within the GDST framework may face difficulties fully engaging with the curriculum and reaching their potential without appropriate recognition and support. It is important to emphasise that this support does not involve separate coaching or removing the child from the expertise of their teachers. At Wimbledon High School, all necessary support is provided within the classroom by the teaching staff, ensuring the child remains fully engaged in their learning environment.

The SEND support is provided through a three-tiered approach:



- **Universal provision**

At the universal level, all pupils will receive high-quality teaching tailored to their individual needs. Details of each student's requirements are shared with subject teachers, enabling adaptive teaching. This adjustment is the initial response for pupils with Neurodiversity and SEND in the ongoing cycle of planning, assessment, and evaluation that considers the abilities, aptitudes, and interests of all students.

- **Targeted Provision**

Should a student not make the expected progress within the universal arrangements; it may be appropriate to consider applying short-term **targeted adaptations and interventions** for their specific academic and/or non-academic needs (mentoring, check-ins with HoND/SENCO, subject specific small group interventions, sensory equipment, etc.).

A few girls who present with more complex needs which may affect multiple aspects of their functioning in school will have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). HoND/SENDCo drafts an ILP based on the information gathered and organises pupil's centred planning meeting with the student and her parents to discuss the specific learning differences, the desired (SMART) outcomes of the plan and the relevant provision.

The ILP is reviewed twice a year taking the views of the student and her family into account. HoND/SENDCo should request the relevant feedback and data prior to the review meeting to establish what progress was made towards the ILP outcomes.

If the student she would benefit from a form of a relevant professional input (Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, etc.) the HoND/SENDCo may advise parents to engage external professionals or agencies. HoND/SENDCo will liaise with parents and

external professionals to make sure that the school has clear understanding of the relevant therapy goals and recommendations.

- **Specialist Provision**

Occasionally, additional support assessment and provisions may be sought, and a more targeted programme developed to support the individual needs of the student. If a student needs additional support beyond what is offered through available resources, the school, in consultation with the parents, may consider applying for an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). The HoND/SENDCo will oversee the application process and work closely with the Local Authority and other professionals involved. Specialist support is provided for students with the most complex needs.

The Local Authority (LA) can be requested to carry out an EHC assessment by a parent, a pupil (if over 16), a member of school staff or other relevant professional (e.g. a doctor). If the school makes the request, parents should be consulted before any action is taken. The LA then has 6 weeks in which to decide whether to carry out the assessment. To inform its decision the LA will expect to see evidence of the action taken by the school as part of SEN support.

Access Arrangements

The school makes every effort to ensure that appropriate Access Arrangements are in place for students taking external examinations. This is the responsibility of the HoND/SENDCo in liaison with the Examinations Officer.

For public examinations, the school adheres to CIE and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations regarding access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. The school is required to make documentation that constitutes a compelling, clear, and detailed picture of a student's current needs available for inspection and must provide evidence that the arrangements requested relate to their “normal method of working”. This evidence can include:

- standardised scores from specialist assessments
- samples of internal exam papers or in-class tests carried out with these same 6 arrangements.
- observations from subject teachers that confirm the impact of a disability within the context of the classroom and an on-going need for the requested arrangements
- Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Please note that the JCQ have stipulated that a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the school cannot be used to award access arrangements, e.g., extra time.

Medical Needs and Accessibility

- There is a full-time Nurse on site who can provide advice and support regarding the individual needs of some pupils as appropriate.
- Disabled toilet facilities are available and some ramped access.

INSET and Support/Professional Development of Staff

GDST has an excellent programme of INSET and support for SENDCOs and full use is made of this.

The HoND/SENDCo provides an induction session for all newly appointed teachers. A similar session for PGCE students on placement in the school.

The HoND/SENDCo provides other INSET for staff as required and informal advice for teachers and parents on a frequent basis.

Links with outside agencies

Liaison with external support services takes place as necessary.

The HoND/SENDCo holds contact details for relevant agencies and organisations in the area to which referrals can be made.

Particular attention is paid to the needs of pupils with SEND at points of transition between schools and to a further or higher education institution. Information is given by the HoND/SENDCo concerning DSA applications and UCAS personal statements as required.

Parents

The relationship between the school and parents has a crucial bearing on the progress of pupils, particularly those with SEND/ALN. We actively seek to work with parents as partners and value their contribution. Teachers, Head of Neurodiversity, the pastoral and other staff all have an important role in developing positive and constructive relationships with parents.

- The SEND Policy is available on the school's website and parents are welcome to comment on SEND/ALN provision at any time.

- The school offers parents regular information evenings, including sessions which specifically address how to support their child academically and emotionally.
- The school seeks to engage parents of pupils with SEND/ALN at an early stage – ideally prior to admission – in order to get a full picture of the pupil’s needs and make suitable provision.
- Parents of pupils identified as having learning differences will be informed immediately.
- Decisions regarding provision, monitoring and review will be made in consultation with parents.

Complaints

The school works, wherever possible, in partnership with parents to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting pupils’ needs. If a parent has a concern about SEND/ALN provision, in the first instance, they should raise the matter with the Head of Neurodiversity/SENDCo, tutor or Head of Year. If a parent wishes to make a complaint, they should refer the matter to the Head of the Senior School. All complaints are taken seriously and are heard through the GDST’s Complaints Procedure.