

## Neurodiversity (SEND) Policy 2023/24

### Statement of Values

- The Learning Support Department offers support to neurodivergent and disabled pupils who require 'reasonable adjustments,' (Equality Act 2010), to access the curriculum at Box Hill School.
- Differentiation and 'reasonable adjustments' for neurodivergent and disabled pupils is the responsibility of all staff who work at the school.
- The Learning Support Department provides advice to school staff in the form of individual advice, whole school INSET training and attendance at departmental meetings to support differentiation and inclusion for neurodivergent pupils.
- Box Hill School is committed to offering a positive learning environment and achieving aspirational educational outcomes for neurodivergent and disabled pupils.

### Definition of SEND

A pupil is neurodivergent if s/he has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age or has a disability which prevents or hinders him/her from making use of facilities generally provided for others of the same age at school or in post-16 educational settings.

A pupil may not be regarded as having a learning difficulty because their first language is different from the language in which they will be taught.

### The SEND Code Of Practice; 0-25 years (January 2015)

The SEND Code of Practice sets out statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support neurodivergent and disabled children and young people. Box Hill School has regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice when working with neurodivergent and disabled pupils.

The Learning Support Department seeks to ensure that pupils, their parents, and relevant members of the pastoral and academic staff are involved in discussions and decisions about the nature of provision offered.

The department follows the principles of the SEND Code of Practice and adopts a pupil centred **Assess → Plan → Do → Review** approach to the planning of learning interventions.

### Safeguarding

All staff in the Learning Support Department receive regular safeguarding training and work within the policy, procedures and guidelines put in place by the school.

### **The Learning Support Department's Objectives**

- To provide a safe and nurturing setting in which pupils can reach their academic potential.
- To provide a combination of appropriate, differentiated support and individualised teaching to neurodivergent and disabled pupils and enable them to become confident, independent learners.
- To work with Academic and Pastoral Staff to track the progress of neurodivergent and disabled pupils and to identify others who may require additional support.
- To support pupil well-being and provide emotional and social support within the 1:1 sessions offered in the department.
- To liaise with staff throughout the school and share information and strategies to support the learning of neurodivergent and disabled pupils.
- To liaise with parents and relevant professional agencies to identify pupils with additional learning needs and plan strategies and differentiation to support them in school.

### **The Learning Support Department**

The Learning Support Department consists of a full-time Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), a part-time Deputy SENCO, six Specialist Teachers, a Speech and Language Therapist and two Teaching Assistants. Most staff in the department work part-time.

- Specialist Teachers within the department offer 1:1 lessons to support literacy, maths, organisational difficulties, study skills, social skills and receptive or expressive language needs.
- The Specialist Teachers and Speech and Language Therapist assess and prepare highly individualised programmes of work and meet with parents to discuss the progress of the pupils they support. They prepare individual Pupil Passports which are shared with the pupil, their parents and school staff. Pupil Passports contain information about learning strengths and challenges, recommended support strategies and are reviewed and updated in February and July each year.
- The SENCO is responsible for the day to day running of the department and works with the Deputy SENCO and Heads of Year to monitor the progress and identification of neurodivergent and disabled pupils.
- The SENCO is responsible for the applications made to exam boards for Access Arrangements, (extra time, readers etc,) for pupils taking G.C.E, G.C.S.E and International Baccalaureate Exams. She works alongside the school's Examinations Officer to ensure the correct allocation of Access Arrangements for those pupils who have an entitlement.

- The Deputy SENCO is responsible for the identification and administration of pupils requiring Access Arrangements in their public exams: G.C.S.E., G.C.E., and International Baccalaureate. She also works alongside the school's Exams Officer to manage the provision of Access Arrangements for end of year exams.
- The Teaching Assistants provide support to neurodivergent and disabled pupils in the classroom setting and work at the direction of the subject teachers and the SENCO.
- The Learning Support Department has access to a wide range of teaching, learning and assessment materials and is situated in Weatherall Cottage. The cottage is divided into nine individual classrooms. Some teachers are issued with a laptop; where this is not the case, classrooms are equipped with a desktop computer.

## **The Process of Referrals to the Learning Support Department**

Pupils are referred to the department via a variety of routes:

- At transition: some pupils arrive at the school with reports from Educational Psychologists, Paediatricians, Specialist Assessors, Occupational Therapists and/or Speech & Language therapists and having received support during their primary education. 1:1 support is offered for these pupils on entry to Box Hill School subject to the recommendations made within the reports.
- The Learning Support Department carries out screening tests in Year 7 and 9; pupils are identified as requiring support following analysis of the screening results.
- Working with the Academic Heads of Year, the SENCO monitors pupils whose progress is not as expected. These pupils may be referred to the department for an assessment to consider whether they may have an underlying learning need.
- Pupils entering the Department via any of the above routes may be assessed to ascertain their current attainments in reading comprehension, single word reading, free-writing, and spelling. Following assessment, information and strategies to support learning are shared with staff.
- Parents who have a concern about their child's learning may request an assessment to be carried out by the SENCO with a view to providing information about the pupil's strengths and learning challenges, and to subsequently identify a plan for intervention. Sometimes a recommendation for an additional professional assessment is made to parents. Any such referrals will be made in partnership with the parents and pupils.
- Social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH); the SENCO meets regularly with the Pastoral Support Team which comprises the Deputy Head Pastoral, Assistant Head Pastoral, Lead Nurse, Sixth Form Pastoral Lead and Heads of Year. The aim of the meeting is to identify, monitor and offer timely support for pupils within the school who experience SEMH needs.

## **Pupils with English as an Additional Language**

- Where there is concern about the progress of pupils with English as an Additional Language, (EAL), the department will seek information from teaching staff, parents, and the pupils themselves about the previous history of need before planning learning interventions.
- The Learning Support Department takes steps to ensure that a lack of competence in English is not misrepresented as a learning difference.
- The Learning Support Department has developed a process for identifying neurodivergent EAL learners. This process will be established during the current academic year.

- Where required, a first language assessment may be requested to identify learning differences in a pupil's first language.

The Learning Support Department works closely with staff, parents and additional professionals. The results of assessments are shared with parents/guardians. Following an assessment, the SENCO or Specialist Teacher liaises with parents and subsequently shares information with relevant teaching and support staff.

## **Learning Support Provision**

The Learning Support Department provides individually tailored interventions for neurodivergent and disabled pupils, and occasionally for those pupils who may need a short boost in certain skill areas to increase their confidence.

A Pupil Passport is produced for all pupils who attend the Department. This outlines their specific needs, strengths, areas of difficulty, and any reasonable adjustments necessary to access the curriculum in the classroom and examinations. It includes pupils' own comments about how best to support them in the classroom. Pupil Passports are available to all staff on the school intranet.

Pupil Passports and learning targets are reviewed bi-annually and shared with parents at each review.

Progress and targets are reviewed at meetings with parents in the Spring Term (Years 11 and 13) or Summer Term (Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12). Parents/guardians and pupils are asked to participate in the setting of targets so that all parties agree with and understand the learning aims.

The Learning Support Department offers a multi-sensory approach to learning. Teaching programmes are tailored to suit pupils' individual needs using a wide variety of strategies and resources to support teaching. Learning Support may involve developing study skills techniques to support weaknesses in working memory, speed of processing and organisational difficulties. Multi-sensory working supports pupils to access and reinforce learning and each pupil is encouraged to explore and develop their preferred personal learning style.

- Learning Support lessons are 55 minutes long.
- Lessons for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 take place during non-core lessons, and in rotation, to minimise disruption to the curriculum.
- Lessons in Years 10 to 13 are most likely to take place during study support lessons, PSHE (when the curriculum content is not compulsory), PE or an activity.
- Learning Support Teachers establish a two-week timetable so that pupils do not miss the same lesson or activity in two consecutive weeks.

**Lessons in the Learning Support Department are chargeable.**

## **Supporting Neurodivergent and Disabled Pupils in the Classroom**

Making 'reasonable adjustments' for neurodivergent and disabled pupils is the responsibility of all staff who work at Box Hill School. Teaching staff are expected to plan lessons which are accessible to all pupils. Teaching staff have access to Pupil Passports, individual pupil information and requirements for Access Arrangements via the SharePoint and staff intranet.

The Teaching Assistants (TAs) in the Department support neurodivergent and disabled pupils, as well as assisting with general class differentiation and access to the curriculum. TAs work closely with teaching staff to meet the needs of neurodivergent and disabled pupils.

Specialist Teachers in the Learning Support department liaise with subject teachers to share information and strategies about the pupils with whom they are working and to request information about normal way of working in class as evidence for Access Arrangements for GCSE, GCE and IB exams.

### **Pupils with Education Health and Care Plans**

Pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may be accommodated. Where this is the case, review meetings are held at the school, chaired by the SENCO and attended by the pupil, staff from Box Hill, parents and the relevant outside agencies in line with the requirements set out in the SEND Code of Practice.

### **Access Arrangements for Public Examinations**

- Neurodivergent and disabled pupils may be entitled to additional time and other *reasonable adjustments*, such as a reader, scribe or prompt, in public examinations (GCSE, GCE and IB).
- Pupils are assessed in line with the current Joint Council for Qualifications, (JCQ), and International Baccalaureate, (IB), regulations.
- Those who are assessed for Access Arrangements and meet the published criteria, are required to sign a Data Protection Form giving permission for the school to share their personal data with JCQ and the IB prior to applications to the exam boards being made.
- For information about the use of word processors in exams, please see Box Hill School's Word Processor Policy (Exams).
- JCQ regulations do not permit schools to use Educational Psychology reports as the sole evidence for applications; the school's Specialist Assessors are required to carry out the testing and reporting.
- Once a pupil is identified as having an entitlement to Access Arrangements, they will be offered for all school-based exams and for classroom tests where possible.
- Box Hill School shares official records of the Access Arrangements in place for pupils with other post 16 settings as required. This is to ensure that pupils continue to receive the Access Arrangements to which they are entitled.

### **IB Diploma**

- The school is compliant with the IB Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures (28/08/18).
- IB pupils are assessed in line with the current Assessment Procedures recommendations and requests for Inclusive Assessment Arrangements are submitted using the required forms and within the published deadline which is 15 November for the May exam session and 15 May for the November session.

### **Internal and Public Examinations**

- Pupils in years 7- 9 who have a history of need and entitlement in line with the JCQ regulations will receive additional time in internal school examinations as appropriate.
- Pupils in Year 10 and 11 are assessed for Access Arrangements based on their normal way of working in school for tests and exams. The individual Access Arrangements are in place for the Year 10 exams, Year 11 Mock exams and the GCSE exams.
- In line with JCQ requirements, Access Arrangements are 'rolled over' from Year 11 into the Sixth Form.
- Where pupils have no history of need for Access Arrangements, but are deemed to require them, a referral is made to the Learning Support Department either by a member of the teaching staff, a Head of Year or a parent. One of the Specialist Assessors within the department will then arrange for testing of the pupil to take place to ascertain whether they meet the criteria for Access Arrangements set out in the JCQ document entitled Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustments.

### **Prospective Pupils**

- The SENCo works with the Admissions Team to oversee the applications process for neurodiverse and disabled pupils.
- Pupils who require additional time or any other special arrangement when sitting the entry tests to the school are asked to provide details of these arrangements and discuss them with the Registrar prior to the test date.
- A copy of an existing professional assessment report, or endorsement from the candidate's current school must be provided for arrangements to be accommodated.

### **Referrals to Outside Agencies and Professionals**

- For pupils requiring Speech and Language Therapy, assessments and teaching sessions with the school's Speech Therapist can be arranged. Sessions are held in Weatherall Cottage; the therapist is a part-time member of the department.
- Referrals to Occupational Therapy and Educational Psychology and other external agencies can be supported by the Department. When required, the Learning Support Department works closely with outside agency professionals to share relevant information, plan and realise relevant support for pupils.
- If the school and parents agree that a request should be made to initiate a statutory assessment of a pupil's needs, the SENCO works with the pupil, parents, teaching

staff and other relevant agencies to complete the statutory paperwork within the required timescale and in line with current GDPR regulations.

### **Use of Laptops, Personal Devices and Assistive Technology**

- Where appropriate, the Department encourages pupils to use laptops when this has been recommended following an EP, OT or other report.
- Homework can be word-processed.
- Pupils may bring in personal laptops or devices by agreement with the Learning Support Department.
- Pupils using laptops in lessons are expected to adhere to the conditions of laptop use outlined in the school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
- The department is establishing the use of computer readers and speech to text software as a resource to support learning independence.
- 'Exam Pens,' or reading pens can be offered to support pupils with reading difficulties requiring the decoding of the occasional word rather than whole sections of text.
- Provision of a word processor is offered in tests and exams when it is the 'normal way of working' for a pupil.

### **Record Keeping**

- The Department stores confidential files and information in locked filing cabinets and adheres to the school's Data Protection Policy for the disposal of information once pupils have left the school.
- Copies of reports, assessments and correspondence are stored electronically or in hard copy in the Learning Support Department.
- The Learning Support teachers keep a folder for each pupil they teach. This houses current Pupil Passports, IEPs, lesson plans, work and test scores. These folders are stored in the Learning Support Department teaching rooms which are locked out of school hours.
- Department meetings are held to discuss matters pertaining to the running of the Department and individual pupils.
- Time is also given to discuss and share best practice. Meetings are recorded and distributed to the members of the department and line management.

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