

SEND & EAL Policy

A policy to provide particulars of the educational and welfare provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and pupils for whom English is an additional language.

NMS Standard 3:

Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

3.1 Boarders are not discriminated against, paying particular regard to the legally protected characteristics and requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. In addition, boarders are not discriminated against because of their cultural background, linguistic background, special educational needs, or academic or sporting ability (the list is not intended to be all encompassing, the key factor is protecting boarders from discrimination). These factors are taken into account in the care of boarders, so that care is sensitive to different needs and an inclusive environment is promoted within the school.

At Queen Margaret's we are committed to providing an inclusive, and accessible, curriculum for all of our pupils, enabling them to make the most of the opportunities a Queen Margaret's education can offer. Treating girls as individuals is important and we welcome pupils with special educational needs and disabilities providing that we are able to provide them with the support that they require.

The SEND Code of practice (2015) defines that children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them and if they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age or have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools in the area. Queen Margaret's School recognises that a special educational need can take on a wide range of forms, whether a learning difficulty, medical or welfare issue, and adopts a holistic approach to supporting girls.

Application Process

Queen Margaret's School is committed to early identification of special educational needs and adopts a graduated response to meeting special educational needs. Parents of girls with identified special educational needs and disabilities are advised to discuss their daughter's requirements with us before they sit the entrance examination to ensure that appropriate provision is made for the entrance examination and that we would subsequently be able to provide the appropriate support to their daughter should they be offered and accept a place at Queen Margaret's. Parents are asked to forward a copy of reports such as those carried out by an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist or other relevant medical professional. Prior to the entrance examination, the Progress, Achievement and Student Support Coordinator will liaise with the Admissions Officer and prospective parents and pupils regarding the needs of girls applying to Queen Margaret's with special educational needs or disabilities. All girls sitting the Queen Margaret's entry examination will complete the Ann Arbor Dyslexia screening test as part of the application process. Parents are informed that their daughters will take this screening test and the results will not in any way affect the offer of a place but instead will help inform appropriate provision should a girl take up a place at Queen Margaret's.

On Entry

Girls who have an already identified special educational need are placed on the Queen Margaret's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities register and commence support as soon as they enter the school. Further, all new girls to Queen Margaret's undertake standardised baseline assessments in reading accuracy, spelling, reading comprehension speed, reading comprehension accuracy, typing speed and handwriting speed. These assessment findings are used alongside the Ann Arbor Dyslexia screening to identify girls, who do not have an already identified special educational need or disability, but who may

benefit from support. Parents of girls identified at this stage are informed of the findings and support is offered to their daughter. Every girl with a special educational need or disability requires special and individual consideration and provision. The Progress, Achievement and Student Support Department will discuss with parents the nature of support we can provide and the adjustments we can reasonably make.

Teaching, Monitoring and Review

Pupils identified with learning difficulties are offered individual lessons with a specialist teacher. These lessons are free of charge and take place outside of a pupil's other commitments. Further assessment can be carried out within the department alongside liaison with teaching staff to identify those areas requiring support. The Progress, Achievement and Student Support Department works closely with the pupil, her teachers and parents to help her overcome any barriers her difficulties present. An individual learning plan is prepared with each pupil that details the difficulties they face, how these may impact upon their learning in the classroom and identifies strategies to help both teaching staff and the pupil in overcoming these difficulties. A pupil's individual learning plan is available for all staff to inform their planning and teaching. Access arrangements are detailed on the individual learning plan to allow staff to make reasonable adjustments to internal tests and classwork for all girls in every year group who are eligible for such arrangements. This enables pupils to establish their normal way of working and complements their history of need and support when making an application for access arrangements for public examinations. The Progress, Achievement and Student Support Department operates an 'open door' policy for referrals at any stage of a girl's school career. In addition, all girls in Year III (Year 9) and Lower Sixth (Year 12) repeat the baseline assessments to ensure that appropriate provision is made available to girls before commencing their GCSE courses or A Level courses.

Access Arrangements for Public Examinations

Examination access arrangements allow candidates with a special educational need, disability or temporary injury to access the assessment and to demonstrate their knowledge without changing the demands, or the integrity, of the assessment. The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 would be at a substantial disadvantage compared to a candidate who is not disabled; access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with this duty under the Equality Act 2010.

For a pupil to be awarded access arrangements in public examinations it is necessary to demonstrate that she has "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities". (This reflects the language of the Equality Act, 2010). An individual with a diagnosis of dyslexia or any other disability is not automatically entitled to examination access arrangements such as extra time or any other special arrangement. In order for a pupil to be awarded any sort of access arrangement in public examinations it must be possible for the school to demonstrate both that they are disabled under the terminology of the Equality Act 2010 and that they have a 'history of need', evidence of the pupil's normal way of working and in most cases this must be supported by assessment data, the results of which must satisfy the JCQ regulations. In accordance with the current JCQ regulations, parents of girls receiving support from the Progress, Achievement and Student Support Department are offered the opportunity for their daughter to be formally assessed for access arrangements by the in-school specialist assessor. This assessment must take place after the start of year 9. If, alongside evidence of need and normal way of working, the results of this assessment suggest a girl is eligible for access arrangements, then a formal application will be made. The in-school specialist assessor works closely with the school examinations officer in processing applications for access arrangements.

In accordance with the current JCQ regulations, on transition to the Lower Sixth, a pupil's access arrangements are reviewed. Evidence is gathered as to her requirements and normal way of working at this stage of her education and if appropriate, a new application for access arrangements is made. A Lower Sixth Transition Plan is placed on file as documentation to support the updated access arrangements.

Appointment of Assessors

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to appoint assessors, check the qualifications of those assessing candidates and satisfy themselves that a professional does have the required level of competence and training (JCQ 7.3.1/7.3.2.) Further, in accordance with JCQ 7.3.5, the assessor will ideally be employed within the centre. The Queen Margaret's Progress, Achievement and Student Support Coordinator is a PATOSS Assessment Practising Certificate holder and qualified specialist assessor and has been approved by the Head of Centre as being suitably qualified to carry out assessments. A copy of her Practising Certificate is held by

the Examinations Officer and additionally is placed in each girl's access arrangements file. The expiry of the certificate is checked annually by the school Senior Leadership Team who, in turn, fully support the Progress, Achievement and Student Support Coordinator in the 3 yearly renewal process and facilitate access to the appropriate CPD and training.

Other Adjustments

Depending upon pupil need it may be possible for other adjustments to be made. These are dependent upon the presence of individual need and appropriate supporting evidence held on file but can include provision such as a reader, smaller or separate invigilation and supervised rest breaks. If it is appropriate to a pupil's need, then it can be possible to arrange for students to use laptop computers in classes. The student will bring their own laptop to school and use in classes that are deemed appropriate. Evidence is collected of students' work for the purposes of supporting a request to have laptop use in exams. Queen Margaret's School has laptops for exam use which comply with exam board regulations.

English as a Second Language

In order to manage the academic and social demands of Queen Margaret's School, pupils must have a basic level of competence in English. For GCSE courses and above they should be 'Independent Users' (B1-B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The Head of EAL assesses the English language skills of all non-native English speakers when they arrive at Queen Margaret's and, where appropriate, tuition is provided. The in-school specialist assessor will assess the eligibility of students for whom English is a second language for examination access arrangements such as the use of a bilingual dictionary. English as a second language does not automatically qualify a student for examination access arrangements and each student is assessed against the criteria set out in the current JCQ regulations.

Communication

Awareness of the learning needs of pupils is of paramount importance in the classroom and all teaching staff are kept up to date on the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The Progress, Achievement and Student Support Department works closely with a pupil's academic teachers to fully support pupils. The Progress, Achievement and Student Support Department also works closely with the Health and Wellbeing Centre, pastoral staff, house staff and external agencies as appropriate.

Physical Accessibility

We recognise that some children with special education needs may also have physical disabilities. Parents and prospective parents of a child with a physical disability can obtain copies of Queen Margaret's School's Accessibility Plan and Disability Policy. This shows the ways in which we plan to make our buildings progressively more accessible to disabled pupils, parents and visitors.

Progress, Achievement and Student Support (PASS) Coordinator and SENDCO Head of English for Academic Purposes and English as an Additional Language (EAP/EAL).

Claire Sheard
Senior Deputy Head
January 2024

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Appendix A: The Legal Framework

Legislation

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) provides statutory guidance relating to the policy, practice and provision for students aged 0-25 years with special educational needs and disabilities. It pays due regard to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations. The regulations associated with the Children and Families Act 2014 are:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
- The Children and Families Act 2014 (Transitional and Saving Provisions) (No 2) Order 2014

The definition of special educational needs set out in The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) is that a 'child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.' Further, 'a child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or 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. For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers.

Particularly relevant to the pupil support department at Queen Margaret's is The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) chapter 6, Schools, and the key requirements to ensure:

Every school is required to identify and address the SEN of the pupils that they support. All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled children and young people. They **must** make reasonable adjustments to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.

Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place.