

Westminster Tutors



Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
2024-2025

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The Definition of SEND.....	1
3. Legislation and Regulation	1
4. Principles Underlying Practice	1
5. Identifying Special Educational Needs	3
6. Categorisation of Students.....	3
7. The Graduated Approach.....	4
8. Responsibility for SEND.....	5
9. Provision for Students with SEND	5
10. Management and Roles	9
11. Document Retention.....	10
12. Complaints	10

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Westminster Tutors has a proud history of supporting students with a broad range of differences, whether neurological, learning-related, or due to physical or mental health issues. In many ways, the college is a unique place for students with more complex needs and atypicality to thrive. Predominantly one-to-one tuition, a friendly, relaxed, and mature atmosphere, tailored and bespoke timetables, individualised support and the expertise of experienced leaders and teachers all contribute to an environment that enables every student to thrive and reach their potential.
- 1.2 While this policy outlines the college's approach to Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND), including how it meets its legal duties and responsibilities, it forms a holistic part of the broader offering. It should be seen in the light of the other policies. It should be read in conjunction with the Admissions, Curriculum, Equality, Safeguarding & Child Protection policies and those relating to Behaviour, including online safety.

2. The Definition of SEND

- 2.1 A young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability, which calls for special educational provisions to be made for them. Young people with SEND may also 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'. Young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEND, but a significant overlap exists between disabled young people and those with SEND. Where a disabled young person requires special educational provisions will also be covered by the SEND definition. (Code of Practice)

3. Legislation and Regulation

- 3.1 This policy has regard to:
 - [The Equality Act 2010.](#)
 - [The Children and Families Act 2014.](#)
 - [SEND and Disability Code of Practice, 0-25 years.](#)
 - [The General Data Protection Regulation 2016 \(GDPR\).](#)

4. Principles Underlying Practice

- 4.1 The Code of Practice describes the principles that should be observed by all professionals working with young people who have SEND. The college aims to:
 - To meet the requirements of The Equality Act 2010.
 - To meet the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice.

- To make the college compliant with all other relevant legislation and guidance.
- To set out the processes for admissions, exams, timetabling, tuition, mentoring and social activities for SEND students.
- To adopt an inclusive approach that emphasises equity over equality.
- To adapt to individual students' needs, including academic and pastoral curriculums.
- To Building the college's provision around the most disadvantaged will benefit all, based on the principle that works for them.
- To prioritise students' voices in all decisions.
- To give all stakeholders, including parents/guardians, teachers and non-teaching staff, a voice in decision-making.
- Where possible, adopt a holistic approach to need that does not pathologise difference (i.e., by adopting a social rather than medical model of disability).
- To celebrate diversity and not seek to establish normative values that may discriminate against those with differences.

4.2 The college takes a positive and professional whole-college approach to students with SEND.

4.3 Students with SEND are the shared responsibility of all staff. All staff are expected to understand and be aware of the impact of specific learning profiles on teaching and learning.

4.4 To ensure the needs of students with SEND are addressed, the Pastoral Support Team will:

- Identify and assess students with SEND, and where necessary, refer them for further assessment by other professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers, and Therapists.
- Develop and monitor support measures where a need is identified.
- Develop and update the SEND Register and ensure that these are circulated amongst teaching staff.
- Work closely with teaching staff to ensure confidential communication on students' learning needs and progress.
- Teach students according to their specific needs, recognising their strengths and learning needs to promote the achievement of their academic potential.
- Communicate effectively with parents/guardians on the learning needs of students, provide a learning plan for those students on the SEND register, and ensure that these are circulated to the staff of specific students.
- Collate evidence to support applications for additional funding and examination access arrangements.

5. Identifying Special Educational Needs

- 5.1 Early identification of students' needs is the key to unlocking the potential of students with special educational needs. Westminster Tutors adopts a graduated approach to ensure that students who do not develop age-appropriate knowledge and skills or fall behind their peers are identified as early as possible.
- 5.2 In attempts to understand the learning needs of students, we apply the four broad categories of need, as set out in the SEND and Disability Code of Practice:

Communication and interaction need	Cognition and learning needs	Social, emotional, and mental health needs	Sensory and/or physical needs
Students who have trouble with speech, language, and communication.	Students who learn slower than their peers or have difficulties acquiring skills in a specific area, such as literacy. This includes students with moderate and severe learning difficulties, requiring support in all curriculum areas and participation in college life in general.	Students' needs may be manifested in different ways, such as becoming withdrawn or displaying challenging behaviour. These may include being disruptive or self-harming. Students with difficulty paying attention or forming attachments with adults also fall into this category.	Students who require special educational provisions because they have a disability that prevents them from accessing the educational facilities that are generally available.

6. Categorisation of Students

- 6.1 At Westminster Tutors, we use a simple categorisation of students, which helps provide a consistent and understood language:
- **Wave One:** Universal support.
 - **Wave Two:** Targeted support.
 - **Wave Three:** Specialist support.

Wave 1 Universal Support	Wave 2 Targeted Support	Wave 3 Specialist Support
<p>We firmly believe that students' needs are best met in the classroom and that, therefore, every teacher is responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all students they teach, including those with SEND. At this universal level, we train teachers to deliver high-quality teaching differentiated for individual students. We review the progress of all students at least three times per year and make rapid adjustments to support strategies and, where necessary, teachers' understanding of the needs of the individual students they teach. In addition, we talk to students and their parents/guardians to gain as complete an understanding of their learning needs as possible.</p>	<p>We provide targeted support when we consider it appropriate to make additional short-term special educational provisions to remove or reduce any obstacle to a student's learning or to help them catch up when termly data analysis shows they have fallen behind their peers. Such specific, targeted one-to-one or small group interventions may be run outside the classroom and limited to several weeks to minimise disruption to the regular curriculum.</p>	<p>We provide specialist support when we consider it necessary to seek specialist advice and regular long-term support from a specialist professional outside the college to plan for the best possible learning outcomes for those students who fail to progress despite high-quality teaching and targeted intervention. This may include assessment and/or support from an Educational Psychologist, an Assistant Educational Psychologist, a Speech and Language Therapist, Specialist Dyslexia Teacher, Specialist Sensory Advisory Teacher (for students with hearing or visual impairments), an Occupational Therapist, a Physiotherapist, Therapeutic Learning Mentor, an Arts Psychotherapist, a Psychotherapist, or a Counsellor. This is not an exhaustive list.</p>

7. The Graduated Approach

- 7.1 The college's approach to identifying and supporting SEND is informed by the SEND Code of Practice, which recommends a graduated response to students who may be underachieving based on a continuous assessment, planning and review process. The college will make reasonable adjustments to remove learning barriers or increase access to all aspects of college life, including academic and social activities.
- 7.2 The first response to existing SEND or possible SEND is high-quality teaching in subject lessons, using differentiated teaching strategies to target specific difficulties. Teachers use the college's data and any available information regarding existing SEND to fully understand progress and individual needs. Sources of information might include:
- Baseline data (e.g., previous school reports and GCSE and/or A level results).
 - Educational Psychologist (EP) or Specialist Teacher reports.
 - Information from previous colleges for new students.
 - Discussions with parents/guardians.
 - Observations in lessons.
 - In-class assessments.
 - Discussions with the pastoral support team.

- 7.3 Subject teachers will implement strategies in response to the picture of need and then review outcomes within a reasonable time frame. Where students have not made progress despite this approach, the cycle will begin again but may incorporate further specific interventions such as:
- Additional assessment by the SENCo.
 - Targeted one-to-one or small group sessions with the SENCo or a mentor to help with literacy, comprehension, study skills, writing skills, or revision techniques.
 - Mentoring sessions.
 - The SENCo or their mentor may observe lessons and offer advice regarding additional strategies in subject lessons.
- 7.4 The student's progress will be reviewed following these specific interventions. If the desired progress has not been made, the level of support may increase to include liaison with outside agencies such as:
- Education or Clinical Psychologist or Psychiatric Assessment.
 - Full Specialist Teacher assessment.
 - CAMHS or AMHS involvement.
 - EHCP request.
 - GP review.
- 7.5 The process of applying new strategies and reviewing progress will continue using all the information gathered at this stage.

8. Responsibility for SEND

- 8.1 The SEND Code of Practice makes explicit that teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class, including where students access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. All subject staff must be aware of a student's specific needs and be prepared to differentiate work appropriately about the advice included in the Personalised Learning Plan. The SENCo works closely with students and parents/guardians when reviewing targets and assessing the effectiveness of strategies/interventions. In cases with a complex need (including students with an Education Health and Care Plan), reviews may need to include outside agencies/specialists.

9. Provision for Students with SEND

- 9.1 As per the Curriculum Policy and the introduction of this policy, the college adopts an inclusive approach for all students, and every student has a bespoke and tailored educational programme. The following briefly summarises how that programme is adapted to SEND students. It is important to note that the following list is not exhaustive and that the college will respond to each student's circumstances individually.

Academic Tutors

- 9.2 Every student has an academic tutor. SEND students will be assigned an academic tutor who is suitably qualified and experienced to support students with more complex needs. Academic tutors are the first point of contact for parents/guardians and coordinate those working with the student, including teachers, external professionals, and mentors.

Mentoring

- 9.3 As per the admissions process, mentoring is an essential aspect of the college's ability to meet the needs of SEND students. While individual subject teachers can adapt curriculum delivery to the needs of a SEND student, and personal tutors oversee the coordination of resources, students with SEND will need additional support to work on interlinked study skills and pastoral issues.
- 9.4 It is important to note that mentors may not be qualified to support students with medical and psychological support, i.e., they are not qualified counsellors or therapists. Their support mainly focuses on developing study skills such as organisation and planning and helps develop active and independent learning skills. They can also discuss, again in an academic fashion, the importance of lifestyle and diet, sleep, and exercise. While they may also be friendly and supportive voices and able to listen to students should they wish to discuss aspects of, for example, mental health, there are strict limits on the help and support they give.
- 9.5 All students with diagnoses of mental health conditions are required to receive external psychological support from a suitably trained and qualified professional, e.g., a therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist, as a condition of enrolment.

Timetabling

- 9.6 The college builds bespoke timetables for each student, including adapting attendance to certain days or times of the week. Individual study sessions can be integrated into timetables, and social activities can be scaffolded so that students with social anxiety, for instance, can gradually build their confidence and participation.
- 9.7 Students with SEND will be allowed increased flexibility regarding their timetabled provision. For instance, there may be an understanding that some, or even all, lessons are taken remotely based on the understanding that in-person attendance will be a crucial target. Equally, lessons may be timetabled later in the day, and it may be that students are not required to complete study sessions on-site.

This flexibility will be based on the understanding that full provision should be the aim but that scaffolded support may be needed for the student to access all the college's facilities and activities.

Academic Curriculum

9.8 There is no specific difference between the academic curriculum for students with or without SEND. The college policy is that all students should aim to become independent and active learners and that academic excellence is a core ethos for all students. To achieve academic success, SEND students may require additional support, specifically through their pastoral mentors, and coordination and guidance from the SENCo and other senior leaders.

Risk Assessments

9.9 As per the college Risk Assessment Policy, students with SEND will require specific risk assessments, such as sports participation and fire evacuations. Students with safeguarding issues will also require a safeguarding and child protection risk assessment, which will help gauge need and ensure that issues are effectively communicated to all stakeholders, including teaching staff and administrators.

Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)

9.10 The Examinations Officer is a qualified internal assessor. Therefore, they undertake internal assessments.

9.11 Should the Examinations Officer be unable to assess any students for EAA, the college can recommend a PATOSS-qualified assessor previously used by the college for assessments.

9.12 The college has no specific relationship with external psychological providers but can list various educational and psychological practices with which we have previously worked.

9.13 Following the current JCQ guidelines, historical EAAs can usually be carried over to Westminster Tutors if we are supplied with the relevant paperwork. This includes:

- Evidence of medical or school assessment of need (e.g., a diagnostic assessment)
- The relevant forms and paperwork to support the granting of the EAA, including a Form 8 or Centre Letter as applicable.
- A picture of the need from the previous school provided by us over the enrolment period.

9.14 Should these conditions apply, the SENCo will write a Centre Letter stating the reasons for continuing the EAA, including that the picture of need is current and evidenced.

- 9.15 As mentioned above, should issues be raised about a student without historical EAA, the college will internally assess for need or provide external medical supporting information to grant EAA. Full details of the EAA requirements include [Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#).

Pastoral & Extracurricular Activities

- 9.16 All SEND students are encouraged and supported to access various pastoral and extracurricular activities and events. As the college's approach is individualised and bespoke, how to support access, including via reasonable adjustments, will depend on the individual student and may include a range of factors, such as mental health and safeguarding concerns.
- 9.17 Therefore, the following is a summary of examples of how the college may approach the following:

RSHE and PSHCE

- 9.18 The RSHE lead will liaise with the SENCo about the planned sessions and whether any specific concerns, risks or reasonable adjustments are required for the SEND students. These may include making sure that material is age- and experience-appropriate and that the student is informed of any particularly sensitive topics under discussion. Access to RSHE and PSHCE will form part of the safeguarding risk assessment process.
- 9.19 Students covered by EHCPs, for instance, autistic students, may need some RSHE and PSHCE sessions covered either individually by mentors or personal tutors or in small, carefully chosen groups.

Sports & Exercise, Activities & Outings

- 9.20 As with PSHCE, individualised programmes for sports and exercise may be required, and risk assessments will be necessary to ensure that students are safe and supported in those activities. All SEND students will be encouraged and supported to participate in weekly gym sessions, if appropriate, and after consultation with the students and parents/guardians. Students should also address being healthy and active in their mentoring sessions.

Careers Education, Information & Guidance (CEIAG) and UCAS

- 9.21 As with all the college provisions, UCAS and careers advice and guidance are tailored to the individual, and provision is often one-to-one. The college CEIAG Policy sets out how SEND needs are explicitly met.

10. Management and Roles

10.1 All colleges have duties under the Equality Act 2010, not only to ensure that 'reasonable adjustments' are made for students already attending the college but also to consider what might be needed to ensure that future students with a disability are not disadvantaged. The Senior Management Team, led by the Head, should regularly review how expertise and resources used to address SEND can be used to build the quality of whole-college provision as part of their approach to college improvement. To ensure best practice, the SENCo is an experienced, qualified teacher.

Class and Subject Teachers

10.2 Responsible for the progress of students with SEND.

The SENCo

10.3 The SENCo is responsible for operating the SEND Policy and coordinating provisions made for students with SEND.

10.4 The SENCo provides professional guidance to colleagues to secure high-quality teaching for students with SEND and works closely with students, parents/guardians, and other professionals to ensure students with SEND receive appropriate support.

10.5 The SENCo plays an essential role with the Head and proprietor in determining the strategic development of the SEND Policy and provision within the college to raise the achievements of students with SEND.

10.6 In compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, the SENCo is also responsible for the following:

- About each registered student the SENCo considers may have special educational needs, inform the parents/guardians of the student that this may be the case as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- About each of the registered students who have special educational needs:
 - Identifying the student's special educational needs and coordinating the making of special educational provision that meets those needs.
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of any special educational provision made.
 - Securing relevant services for the student where necessary.
 - Ensuring the records of the student's special educational needs and the special educational provision made is maintained and updated.
 - Liaising with and providing information to the parents/guardian of the student regularly about that student's special educational needs and the special educational provision made.

- Ensuring that where the student transfers to another college or educational institution, the educational provision made is conveyed to the appropriate authority or the proprietor of that college or institution.
- Promoting the student’s inclusion in the college community and access to the college’s curriculum, facilities, and social activities.
- Selecting, supervising, and training learning support assistants who work with students with special educational needs.
- Advising teachers at the college about differentiated teaching methods appropriate for individual students with special educational needs.
- Contributing to in-service training for teachers at the college to assist them in carrying out necessary tasks to meet the needs of students with special educational needs.
- Prepare and review the information required by law to be published concerning special educational needs provision.

The Principal

10.7 The Principal acts as the SENCo and is responsible for the strategic planning and day-to-day delivery of SEND provision.

11. Document Retention

11.1 We must keep SEND documents for a specified time following legislation; please see the Data Retention Policy for specific guidelines.

12. Complaints

12.1 All complaints should be dealt with via the college’s agreed complaint procedure.

Ownership and consultation	
Document author (name)	Sean Doherty, Principal
Audience	
Audience	Principal, college staff, parents, and students
Version control	
Implementation date	September 2024
Review date	September 2025