



Westminster Tutors

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY &

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

Introduction

It is a core aspect of the Westminster Tutors ethos that educational and welfare provision is always adapted to the needs of the individual student. This means that the college has distinct strengths in providing for pupils with many Special Educational Needs (SENs), including Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs, including dyslexia & dyspraxia), autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), a range of medical conditions and less severe mental health and behavioural difficulties. Students with SENs may also be defined as having a disability, defined in the Equality Act 2010, and the term SEND covers all students having special education needs and/or disabilities. While this policy covers some aspects of disability, particularly as related to SENs, the college's core provision for students with disabilities, including fair admission procedures and increasing access to the curriculum, is set out in the Westminster Tutors Equality Policy.

This policy outlines the college's academic support procedures in particular for students with SpLDs, ASDs and for students who have English as an additional language (EAL). The college also recognises that it is not uncommon for students who have learning difficulties/SENs to be gifted in particular areas. This policy should therefore be read and implemented in conjunction with the Westminster Tutors Gifted and Talented Policy.

Because of the small size of the college and our individual tutoring system, Westminster Tutors is in a strong position to take a more proactive, more explicit, and more involved approach to supporting and improving the performance of students with SENDs and a sizeable proportion of our full-time student population (around 50%) enrol with the college for this reason. Westminster Tutors is therefore committed to maintaining and improving its provision for such students, as set out below.

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) & Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)

We recognise the need to identify and care for pupils with learning difficulties, whether they have been diagnosed with dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism spectrum disorder or any other condition. Some students may be entitled to extra time, the use of a laptop, or additional access arrangements in public examinations. Westminster Tutors therefore has a responsibility to identify such students' needs and make the appropriate arrangements for them in GCSE, AS, A level and mock examinations, as well as providing appropriate guidance to enable progression

to higher education. The college therefore collates information from the students' parents, their previous school, external agencies, and their tutors.

1. General Remarks

The college has staff with particular SpLD & ASD roles. Their tasks are to:

- identify specific learning difficulties
- liaise with parents and staff
- keep records of the students' needs and provisions made for them
- make appropriate arrangements with the examining bodies

The Principal acts as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the college, and members of staff with responsibilities for supporting students with Specific Learning Difficulties are:

- The Principal (the SENCO)
- The Directors of Studies, especially the DoS with increased responsibility for SEND
- The Examinations Officer

In addition all subject tutors need to be alert to students showing signs of difficulty so that, at any stage of their time at Westminster Tutors, they can be referred to the Principal to assess whether further help or assessment may be required.

2. Identification of Learning Difficulties

The Role of the Principal/ SENCO

When prospective students or parents consider joining Westminster Tutors, specific enquiries are made during the admissions process. When a pupil with learning difficulties joins the college the Principal should:

- check if there are copies of assessments, carried out by educational psychologists or other specialists, which need to be given to the college by parents/ the student's former school
- add any known information to the student's file
- following discussion with the prospective student and parents, agree an appropriate plan for their educational and welfare provision and communicate this to the Directors of Studies (who also act as Personal Tutors), subject tutors, and administrative staff as required
- perform basic diagnostic tests and/or refer students on to educational psychologists, OTs, SLTs, or other health professionals if a special need is indicated.

3. Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties

The Role of the Principal/ SENCO

The Principal/ SENCO is the main point of contact when considering the students' academic needs, and is responsible for:

- ensuring that the academic curriculum, PSHCE, SRE, sport, enrichment classes and college activities are devised to meet individual students' needs appropriately
- liaising with students' parents/ carers, writing and/or telephoning and/or meeting them to discuss their children (the Directors of Studies can also fulfil these roles in the absence of the Principal)
- liaising with students' Personal Tutors (one of the Directors of Studies) and their subject tutors
- liaising with the Examinations Officer, educational psychologists, health professionals and other external agencies, parents and subject tutors to discuss special provision and ensure that all documentation of students' entitlements is up to date, particularly in the run-up to public examinations, and before the onward transition to higher education
- developing and updating resources which give guidance on teaching students with learning difficulties, including SpLD, and arranging INSET where appropriate
- perform basic diagnostic tests and/ or referring students on to educational psychologists or OTs if deemed necessary
- where students have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or EHCP and have been placed at the College by a local authority, the Principal is responsible for liaising with the placing authority, drawing up an IEP in line with the Statement of Special Educational Needs or EHCP, and holding Annual Reviews as required

The Role of the Examinations Officer

- liaise with Principal/ SENCO/ DoSs to check any special needs
- contact the examining bodies in good time before examinations to request and make arrangements for the use of laptops and any other special provisions
- arrange suitable spaces for candidates using laptops and ensure printed scripts are submitted with the appropriate paperwork according to the regulations
- make arrangements for candidates with extra time

A student may use a laptop in public examinations if

- the requirements of the examining bodies are met and the Principal/ Head of Centre is satisfied that it is the student's normal method of working
- the laptop is provided by the college after the Examinations Officer and administrative staff have ensured that the student does not have access to forbidden facilities such as the internet or spell check
- subject staff have agreed that the student will benefit from using one
- the student and parents accept that not all subjects are suited to use of a laptop, particularly practicals and examinations for which answers need to be written in small spaces in an answer booklet

The Role of Personal Tutors

Each full-time student is appointed a Personal Tutor, who is either the Principal or one of the Directors of Studies. At Westminster Tutors the Personal Tutor plays an important role in providing a daily point of contact for students, their parents, subject tutors and administrative staff. Personal Tutors are responsible for monitoring progress, setting targets, ensuring study and homework programmes are followed, and supporting the student's welfare.

In the case of students with learning difficulties, both the frequency and the length of personal tutorials may be increased, according to the kind of support and encouragement the student requires. Additional sessions may also be arranged on an ad hoc basis if the student is experiencing additional difficulties (eg to help a dyspraxic student devise a clear and practical revision plan for the holidays). Personal Tutors are also often best placed to identify whether the student is having difficulties with particular study skills such as essay writing, managing study time and exam skills, and may therefore recommend additional study skills or other support sessions are arranged.

The Role of Subject Tutors

Teachers should pass on any information derived from parents or students. In particular, teachers should recommend students to the Principal if they notice possible indications of learning difficulty (*see Appendix 1*).

Tutors should also follow guidelines for teaching students with learning difficulties (including SpLDs) (*see Appendix 2*), and should make use of resources in the Principal's or Directors of Studies' offices.

4. Provision for Students with Autism

While all the above provisions apply equally to those students diagnosed on the autism spectrum, the Principal and Directors of Studies are aware of the likely need to offer especially high levels of support to those students diagnosed on the autism spectrum – students with ASD may also suffer from anxiety, depression or other mental health issues. This support may be detailed in Individual Education Plans, should they be required resulting from an EHCP or at the parents' request, and will regardless involve:

- An awareness of the need to include students on the autism spectrum in the full life of the college. Inclusion, rather than integration, means that students with ASDs will be expected to participate fully in the life of the school, and reasonable provision will be made in order that they may do so (e.g. with individualised sports or prepared PSHCE sessions).
- A highly flexible and consistently supportive approach, based on accentuating positives rather than focussing on negatives e.g. by not concentrating on atypical social behaviour
- An understanding that the voice of the young person with autism must be central to the decision making process

Given the potential complexities of educating those with autism, the school will undertake annual staff forums for all tutors teaching ASD students, in order to develop best practice and share effective pedagogy. In addition, detailed teaching advice ('Autism Spectrum Teaching

Advice') is circulated to all staff, with links to additional resources (Appendix 3). Staff can also request online teaching courses, as supplied by the National Autistic Society.

5. Records of special needs (including exam access arrangements)

The Role of the Principal/ SENCO (Supported by the Directors of Studies)

- Contact parents to request past assessments when the college has not yet been given these
- Keep a copy of all assessments in the student's file
- Maintain a separate exams access file for each candidate, which will include details of the access arrangements granted; a printout of the access arrangements online application (as well as any additional paper-based applications); an original JCQ Form 8 signed by the head of centre and assessing educational psychologist/assessor; any more detailed picture of need information; educational psychologists' report(s); further evidence of a medical/psychological condition; SSEN or EHCP; signed centre letter if required instead of educational psychologist's assessment; student's data consent form
- Give copies of assessments and/or educational plans which have been agreed with students and parents to the Examinations Officer, personal/ subject tutors and other members of staff if required.

The Role of the Examinations Officer

- Record and update lists of candidates granted special arrangements
- Act as point of liaison between Principal/ SENCO, subject tutors and invigilators to ensure that each student is granted the correct access arrangements in each exam they sit at the centre

The Role of the Ed Psych Practice & Marilyn Pain, internal assessor

- Westminster Tutors has worked in partnership with The Ed Psych Practice since its establishment in 2010, and specifically the Principal/ SENCO Virginia Maguire has worked in conjunction with the Lead Educational Psychologist and Director, Priya Dhingra, who is readily available to advise in a consultative capacity. Details of the practice, its educational psychologists and other practitioners can be found here <http://www.theedpsych.com/consultants>
- Where the college believes a student requires a full diagnostic assessment for special educational needs, and when a student with complex needs requires an updated assessment either for JCQ, higher education or DSA purposes, the family are referred to the Ed Psych Practice
- All educational psychologists working with The Ed Psych Practice are fully certified and HCPC registered, and hence qualified to complete JCQ Form 8 Section C
- In addition, students who have a pre-existing diagnostic report but require minimal additional testing to qualify for extra time as per the JCQ exam regulations September 2017-August 2018, can also be referred to our in-house assessor, Marilyn Pain, a PATOSS qualified assessor. Marilyn's full qualifications are available to parents on request.

6. English as an Additional Language

The needs of EAL students are fully met by the college, with programmes of study being devised to meet their individual needs. The Principal/SENCO has expertise in this field and is responsible for level testing and needs analysis.

Students will either take an English GCSE at KS4 or IELTS in the sixth form according to their background and goals, and all students will be supported to ensure that they meet minimum linguistic requirements (a C/4 or above in GCSE or 6.0 or higher in IELTS) before making the transition to further or higher education. Where students have met minimum standards but need to develop their English skills to be successful in their studies, an individualised programme of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English study skills will be devised.

Very small classes or one-to-one teaching allow the students' subject tutors to grade their language according to students' individual needs, and these needs will be taken into careful consideration when placing students with particular tutors or in particular groups. Subject tutors are encouraged to develop English language and literacy skills in conjunction with the teaching of their subjects. Ongoing monitoring of students' EAL needs will be supervised by the Principal/ SENCO who will advise students, parents and guardians on additional EAL classes which will be incorporated into their timetables according to their needs and levels.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1

Possible indications of SpLD

- Unusual and/or inconsistent spelling (syllables omitted, odd letter groupings)
- Inaccurate copying from the board and/or recording of homework assignments
- Writing inappropriately short answers
- Performing better orally than on paper
- Forgetting punctuation and spelling in an effort to write fast or fully
- Poor handwriting and presentation (many crossings out)
- Odd use of space on the page
- Slow/ inaccurate reading
- Poor memory for names etc. after reading
- Computational ability in mathematics worse than understanding of concepts
- Weakness in writing foreign languages and in learning vocabulary

Appendix 2

Guidelines for teaching students with SpLD

- Be sympathetic, encourage, praise
- Provide introduction to session at the start, aim for structure presentation and sum up points at end

- Use different coloured board pens and/ or rule lines between sections of notes
- Break up sessions to allow for information processing
- Provide clear handouts in advance of session
 - a) Leave spaces for detail
 - b) Use visual as well as verbal information, e.g. charts, concrete examples, images
 - c) Preferably use coloured paper
 - d) Font 12 +
 - e) An unjustified right edge
- Give glossaries of subject-specific vocabulary
- Draw attention to terms that may be easily confused
- Put learning materials on the Google Drive
- Provide key texts on reading lists
- Provide questions to guide reading
- Offer samples of written work etc.
- Give explicit criteria

Students with extra time or laptop concessions in public examinations must have practice with these in the run up to these examinations in mocks/timed work.

Appendix 3

Autism Spectrum Teaching Advice (as given to the tutors)

In general, teaching strategies that work for those on the autism spectrum will work with all learners i.e. constructivist techniques based on scaffolding of learning. The only additional teaching provision that seems to apply to all students on the spectrum is that, in general, they will need more time to complete tasks. All the information below is subject to the overall rule that a good teacher will be able to adapt their methods to any learner's needs. As they say, teach the person, not the label, and remember that everyone with autism is different. Please also remember that teacher attitude is fundamental to a student's success: it is essential that expectations are kept high and that you teach to strengths, rather than focus on weaknesses.

Autism Spectrum Conditions

Autism is a developmental disorder. A diagnosis will require the exhibition of repetitive and/or narrow interests and difficulties with social communication, social interaction and social imagination (the 'triad of impairments'). In addition there are often associated sensory issues e.g. phonological processing difficulties.

Language/ Labelling

In the United States the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) has moved over to a broad diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), removing all the other sub categories. However in the UK it is still possible to receive a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, although that will probably change some time during 2018 with the publication of ICD-11. These are the traditional categories of autism:

Asperger's Syndrome – IQ at least average and no language delay
 High Functioning Autism – IQ at least average but language delay

Classic or Kanner's Autism – Below average IQ and language delay
(+ others such as PDD-NOS)

To remove stigma the terms Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) or 'on the spectrum' are frequently used. Please find out from your student their preferred term, assuming you need to use one at all.

Psychological Theories of Autism

Autism is a predominantly inherited genetic condition. As yet diagnosis is multi-disciplinary and is based on observations and questionnaires – there are no biological tests.

There are various psychological theories to explain the condition, perhaps the most important of which is the 'high systemising and low empathy' theory developed by Simon Baron-Cohen. This describes those with autism as having very strong systemising tendencies (e.g. enjoying long lists of facts) and low empathy. Empathy is split into two: cognitive, the ability to read someone else's body language, and affective, the ability to respond appropriately to another's emotions (usually unconsciously rather than consciously, which may be sympathy). The majority of those diagnosed as on the spectrum will have difficulties with reading body language, and tone of voice, and many will also have low affective empathy. This should not be confused with a lack of morality – many people with autism have strict moral codes.

Some other potential issues or difficulties of those on the spectrum:

- Anxiety – can be caused by change, unexpected events or sensory issues (excess noise/light) etc. Temple Grandin said she usually felt like a 'prey animal' in social situations.
- Disorganisation (executive functioning) – from difficulty planning essays and homework to losing track of time during an activity to messy or unfiled notes
- Distraction – may have difficulty staying on task
- 'Islets of ability' (weak central coherence) – potential difficulties linking pieces of knowledge together to form a coherent whole
- Pragmatic language difficulties – often write very formally, difficulty adjusting tone
- Difficulties with abstract thought – e.g. with time, unable to conceive how far away exams are and what has to be done
- Literal thinking/black and white thinking – may have difficulties seeing shades of grey. Can lead to an enjoyment of puns (surprise at something meaning two things at the same time).
- 'Monotropism' – prefer to concentrate on one thing at a time, difficulty multi-tasking – can cause anxiety
- Processing issues – potentially with language or numbers or both, often auditory/phonological
- Associated disorders – prone to depression, often as a consequence of feeling different, undervalued, not able to do things well or insecurity about their status or future

Corresponding Strengths:

- Visual learners – often work very well with mind maps, pictures, tables, charts etc.
- Respond extremely well to positive reinforcement and high expectations
- Often very sensitive, reflective and thoughtful as they grow to understand the

complexities of their condition

- Often very strong systemisers – can be extremely methodical and good on detail
- Will often want to understand every aspect of a subject – become experts in a field
- Are able to fully focus on a task, once initiated
- Find real satisfaction in completion of tasks, and, in general, doing well
- Ambitious and competitive – often very keen to prove themselves

Teaching/Learning Suggestions

1) Environment

- Check with students on how they prefer the room to be set out – desk position, light levels, temperature etc. Facing the students away from windows and doors can be better.
- Try and find out how the student concentrates at different times of the day and (if possible) alter the teaching methods to adapt to their concentration levels. Monitor food and water consumption – maybe allowing time for a, suggested, quick snack or glass of water.
- Allow for slightly longer breaks during a longer lesson, probably at about 45 minute intervals.
- Allow them to, or suggest that they, get up and move around if they are starting to flag.

2) Lesson Planning

- Give each student a course overview, ideally visual e.g. a year calendar print out with key dates (exams, mocks, assessments, holidays etc.)
- Go through the syllabus to check the student understands what will be required of them at every stage of the course
- Allow extra time for the introduction and plenary: make absolutely clear what the targets are for that lesson and sum up at the end of every lesson what you have covered.
- Some students with an ASC may have difficulty with abstractions, allow extra time for the comprehension stage of learning
- Allow extra time for a student to set up and pack up for each lesson and make sure they know what they are doing next and where they are going. Try to start and finish lessons on time – lateness and overrunning may cause anxiety. Also, if you miss a lesson, explain clearly why (within reason!).

3) Learning Strategies

- Talk more slowly and clearly – even up to half your normal speed (but without sounding patronising!)
- Students with an ASC are often visual learners (although this aspect can be overplayed). Mind-maps, tables, drawings, diagrams, interactive websites, apps etc. are all useful resources. Example: student learning themes of poems with coloured symbols.
- Multi-modality often helps – the student may like to read the text while you read it out loud, or use subtitles while they watch a video. Reinforcing material in several modes also helps it 'sink in'.
- Students with an ASC are often very strong rote-learners. Strong systemising

tendencies mean any learning which has a clear methodology to it - acronyms, mnemonics and other memorising techniques - are often enjoyed. An example is attributing numbers or letters to key information: for vocabulary lists, having 1 as essential, 2 as important and 3 as 'luxury' words. This can also be colour coded. Positive reinforcement can come from stressing this aspect of learning, especially if there are other core difficulties.

- Active learning can be a difficulty. A more passive approach can work well for key material – e.g. using one main text book; handing out extremely clear, and comprehensive, notes; writing word lists/key terms/formulas to be learnt etc. If active learning is being promoted, then be very clear on which resources should be used (e.g. a list of websites or text books) and how research should be carried out.
- Put a special emphasis on time keeping:
 1. Ask the student to use a clock/watch/kitchen timer for their homework
 2. Be very clear on how long should be spent on homework (as below). Likewise in exams, how long for each question (e.g. minute/mark). If you have time make an exam timing breakdown to be learnt – although they may have a prompter.
- Students with ASCs can have difficulties, or idiosyncracies, with memorising. Do constant little quizzes and formative assessments. Maybe put tests into their calendar e.g. retest a subject after 1 day, then 1 week, then 1 month, then after 3 months.
- As said above, ASC students may have difficulties with 'common sense questions', often as they have so-called islets of ability (and knowledge) and may not make connections that seem obvious e.g. science questions relying on basic knowledge of farming etc. Tutors may need to establish the connections between (seemingly to them) unrelated topics. Always establish first principles – don't assume prior knowledge.
- Model answers and exemplar essays are really helpful in showing a student the levels to be expected. Likewise, using examiners' reports or official feedback taps into a tendency to want to know precisely what is expected of them. The quicker the return of marked work the better – ASC students may be particularly anxious to know what their grade or score was, and to understand how it was marked.
- Likewise, students may want to have a systemised answer in place for a type of question e.g. for a how or why question. A rote-learned first line or, for example, a rule to always end the introduction with a thesis statement may be helpful, at least initially. However, be wary that those kinds of rules may be taken extremely literally, and be challenging to unlearn.

4) Notetaking

- Notes should be particularly visual, and clear. Maybe set aside part of one lesson towards the beginning of each term or topic to work on the notes together. Likewise, use exemplar notes, or help build a template (the broad template for reading and notetaking I use is the SQ3R method). ASC students will often have additional help with study skills, but please help them individualise their methods to your subject.
- Some ASC students prefer working on the computer (hand writing can be poor or slow), but they may be distracted by formatting: the need to get it exactly right. To get around this you might like to try sharing the notes on Google Drive and then working on them together in class on your respective computers – you correcting the less important aspects of their notes as they go along.
- Please allow students to record audio/visuals of the lessons e.g. photograph the board and then write the notes up later if that is their preferred method.

5) Homework

- Should ideally be as clear and specific as possible: please check that the student has understood exactly what the task is.
- It is also best practice to estimate how long a student should take on the homework – tied in with using a timer – and ask them to record how long it actually took. I have found that many ASC students underestimate how long a task will take – my rule of thumb is for them to double their estimated time.
- Also write down precisely how much is expected in page or word count (allowing for a literal interpretation) and whether the limit is exact or approximate.
- Please avoid general, open-ended, tasks (e.g. summarise a chapter or research a topic) if you haven't made it absolutely clear how they should do that.
- Common sense assumptions generally shouldn't be made e.g. 'make notes on page 23-27' of the textbook might be interpreted as including everything on those pages, even if the topic doesn't start until half way down the page.
- As with all students, please make sure the student has written their homework into their online diary: you can be working on your lesson records while they do so.
- Please also allow for differentiation of homework: perhaps have an A and B homework – one which has to be done, and then an extra task if that is completed. Alternatively allow them to choose the difficulty of their task, similar to the chilli colour strategy used at primary level.

6) Behaviour

- Be relentlessly patient and positive, but establish clear rules and boundaries. Allow for inappropriate behaviour, but find time, if possible, to correct and explain if you find something particularly distressing or distracting. However, do not focus on atypical behaviour. Please relate all instances of challenging behaviour to me (Joe) - I will likely have an individual behaviour strategy for each student. An ASC student may be extremely sensitive about perceived criticism of their behaviour: please be very careful not to impose normative standards but to explain and discuss problem behaviour and agree together on how and why it should be changed.

All the above are only suggestions: please develop your own strategies based on the individual needs of the student and then share whatever works on the email threads. Thank you!

Joe Mattei, January 2018

Useful Resources

Books

Introductions

Autism & Asperger's Syndrome: The Facts, Simon Baron-Cohen

The Autistic Spectrum, Lorna Wing

The Autistic Brain, by Temple Grandin

Mindblindness, by Simon Baron-Cohen

History/General

Neurotribes, by Steve Silberman

In a Different Key: The Story of Autism, by John Donvan

Other

The Reason I Jump: one boy's voice from the silence of autism, Naoki Higashada

Thinking in Pictures, Temple Grandin (also a good biopic starring Clare Danes)

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, by Mark Haddon

Freaks, Geeks & Asperger's Syndrome, by Luke Jackson (young writer with Asperger's)

The Siege, Clara Claiborne Park

An Anthropologist on Mars, Oliver Sacks (some sections on autism)

Websites/Organisations

Top Ten Websites as recommended by parents:

<http://eden2.org/top-10-autism-websites-recommended-by-parents/>

The National Autistic Society

<http://www.autism.org.uk/>

(Specific teaching strategies:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/classroom.aspx>)

The Autism Research Centre

<https://www.autismresearchcentre.com/>

Youtube Channel: The Wrong Planet

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UICKxouDa9669Kej7vcbyoRnA>

see also videos by Uta Frith

Special Needs Jungle – very helpful forum for special needs in general

<https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/>

Film/TV

Numerous documentaries and TV series address autism, including:

The A-Word

Chris Packham documentary on BBC very insightful: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09b1zbb>

SEND/EAL Policy Updated VM & JM January 2018