

Altrincham Grammar School For Girls

Special Educational Needs and Disability SEN Information Report



Altrincham Grammar
School for Girls
Bright Futures EDUCATIONAL TRUST

The intention of Trafford's local offer is to improve choice and transparency for families. All schools and academies in Trafford are expected to identify and support pupils with special educational needs to make the best possible progress. Schools are supported to be as inclusive as possible and wherever possible, the needs of pupils with a Special Educational Need are met in a mainstream setting, where families want this to happen. Trafford's Graduated Approach provides guidance on expectations of what should usually be available within school's resources.

1. What kinds of special educational needs does the school provide for?

Altrincham Grammar School for Girls (AGGS) is a mainstream school. Where AGGS is considered the most appropriate school for a student with a special educational need (SEN), particularly in terms of academic ability and attainment, we aim to ensure that strategies and support are in place to enable that student to access the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities to the fullest extent possible, and to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Teaching staff at AGGS have experience of providing for a range of special educational needs including:

- cognition and learning needs such as dyslexia
- communication and interaction needs such as high-functioning autism (Asperger's syndrome)
- sensory or physical needs including visual or hearing impairment and a variety of medical conditions
- social, emotional and mental health needs.

Parents/ carers are encouraged to contact the school to discuss individual student needs. Contact details are provided below (No 15).

2. How does the school know if children/ young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child/young person may have special educational needs?

Some students may already have a statement/education, health and care plan (EHCP) or have been identified as needing SEN support by their previous educational setting, usually a primary school or another secondary school, in which case the information will be sent to us on transfer. Where this is not the case, the school has effective procedures in place to identify and support students with special educational needs.

The progress of all students is monitored by teaching staff using a variety of data. If their progress is causing concern, then the senior tutor will contact parents/carers to discuss next steps.

When a student is falling substantially behind their peers in terms of progress, or facing significant barriers to learning, and where their difficulties can be ascribed to an identifiable learning need, the student will be placed on the SEN register so that they are able to make greater progress with SEN support.

They will have an Access to Learning Plan (or strategies support sheet) which identifies the needs of the student and the strategies and interventions to be used to support their progress. This will be regularly reviewed with the student and with parents/carers. The student will be removed from the SEN register when/if they no longer need the additional support.

Any teacher, parent or pupil concerns regarding Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) or other learning needs can be directed to Mrs Hughes, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). She will make an initial assessment of the students' difficulties, using information provided by teaching staff and standardised screening tests in the first instance. It may be that once tested, it is judged that the student may be best supported through the pastoral system or alternatively, that further referrals to outside agencies, or specialist assessments, are required to diagnose the underlying cause. Teaching and learning strategies and additional interventions can then be put in place according to individual need and will be regularly reviewed.

3. How will both you and I know how my child/young person is doing?

School communicates regularly with parents/carers about the progress of each student. This is done via an interim report, a full report and parents' evening appointments with subject staff as a matter of whole school policy. Interventions that parents/carers can help with at home can be discussed at parents' evening. In addition, parents/carers with a student on SEN support will be invited to discuss progress and to assess the effectiveness of interventions at review meetings and/or by telephone contact. Should any extra concerns come up throughout the school year, a list of available contacts is provided below (No 15).

4. How will the curriculum be matched to my child/young person's needs?

Students will, first and foremost, be supported in class by high quality teaching. All lessons are differentiated for a range of needs, including special educational needs. As well as using their own professional expertise, teachers are supported by the SENCO and outside specialist

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support services to find suitable strategies for students with SEN. Needs and additional interventions are communicated to staff by means of Access to Learning Plans and bespoke training sessions.

5. How will school staff support my child/young person?

There are a wide range of available interventions: differentiated teaching and learning strategies; guided reading (English support); some interventions offered at lunch time or after school such as sixth form mentors for literacy and subject revision sessions; spelling support such as WordShark5; the application of rest breaks and extra time for tests and assessments where this is identified as a need. The school liaises with outside services, such as Trafford Sensory Impairment Support Services (TSISS) and specialist teachers for the hearing and/or visually impaired are invited to deliver training sessions to ensure that school staff are professionally informed about the best strategies to assist progress. The Bright Futures Educational Trust's Educational Psychology Service (EPSO) have regular contact with school, providing the expertise of fully qualified psychologists; they deliver whole staff training as well as supporting both staff and students individually as required.

6. How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child/young person will receive?

The SEN register comprises of two categories. The highest category of need is those students who have a statement or, from September 2014 an Education, Health and Social Care Plan (EHCP)* These students require additional support, for which extra funding may be available. Decisions about the support required by the individual student will be taken at review meetings to which the SENCO, parents/carers, student, outside agencies and other named individuals will be invited.

Some students will have additional needs that require extra support but this support will be at a level below that of an EHCP. These students will be identified as receiving 'SEN Support'**and they form the second category of students whom we place on the SEN register. Students in this category will have an Access to Learning Plan which summarises their needs to teachers as well as identifying strategies that can usefully be adopted in the classroom. These strategies will be regularly reviewed.

In addition to the two categories above that appear on the SEN register, we also have students who may require monitoring and/or assessing before it is decided whether they will require SEN support. Parents/carers will always be informed of the outcome of any screening tests and/or specialist assessment.

*Educational Health and Care Plans have replaced statements since September 2014

** SEN support replaces School Action and School Action Plus from September 2014

7. How will my child/young person be included in activities outside the classroom including physical activities and school trips?

The school endeavours to be as inclusive as possible. All off-site activities are risk assessed to protect the health and safety of participants. There are times when an additional risk assessment may be required for an individual student with SEN, to allow them to participate in physical activities or a school day trip/residential visit. In such circumstances the school, parent/carer and the student can assist in this process and school will liaise with the appropriate specialist support services. On occasion, it may be necessary for a specialist support assistant to accompany the student on a trip or to support their participation in physical activities. In the unlikely event that it is considered unsafe for an individual to take part in an activity, alternative provision will be made.

8. What support will there be for my child/young person's overall wellbeing?

Altrincham Grammar School for Girls considers student wellbeing to be of the utmost importance, and there is a strong and dedicated pastoral team to support and guide students throughout the school.

Every student in Years 7-11 has a form tutor, an assistant senior tutor and a senior tutor; in the sixth form, each student has a form tutor, a senior tutor and the head of sixth form. In addition, the pastoral team is supported by the lead senior tutor, the SENCO, the pastoral assistant and the sixth form administrative team. The school also has access to the school nurse and employs a Relate Counsellor and a 42nd Street Counsellor.

Termly monitoring with form tutors provides an opportunity for all students to raise any issues they wish to discuss. Furthermore, sixth form students can self-refer, in confidence, to the BFET educational psychologist should they need help and advice about anxiety, examination stress and/or depression. In recent years, Mindfulness has been introduced into the school curriculum and is delivered by trained staff. There is also a team of trained anti-bullying peer group ambassadors who run a lunchtime drop-in TV lounge and a team of student wellbeing ambassadors, coordinated by Miss A Wright, lead senior tutor.

Further details can be found on the school website.

9. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

Both the SENCO and the Pastoral Team work with a range of services to ensure the needs of all students, including those with SEN, are met.

These include:

Healthy Young Minds in Trafford

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42nd Street
Talk, Listen, Change
School Nurse
Education Welfare Service
Trafford Sensory Impairment Support Service
Trafford SEN Advisory Service (SENAS)
Trafford Emotional Resilience Network (TERN)
School examinations officer (examination access arrangements)
School pastoral mentors

The school works closely with its Bright Futures Educational Trust (BFET) partners and has access to the SEN expertise of Melland High School as well as to the BFET Educational Psychology Service (EPSO) (see above no. 5).

10. What training have the staff supporting children/young people with SEND had?

Mrs A Hughes, the school SENCO, has gained the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination. She has attended workshops and courses on a variety of related fields, including dyslexia, self-harm, examination access arrangements and the new Code of Practice (2014). She also attends the local secondary SENCO forum and biannual BFET SEN support meetings. Mrs Hughes has previous experience of working with students with a broad range of abilities and a range of special educational needs in several mainstream schools and as a home tutor for the Complementary Education Service in Sefton. In addition, she has experience of delivering support for KS3 literacy and teaching students learning English is an additional language (EAL learners).

All new staff attend an induction programme which includes sessions on inclusion and SEN, delivered by the SENCO. The EPSO team also deliver regular training to the pastoral team and/or to all staff on a range of topics including autism, emotional boundaries, sleep hygiene and anxiety. Other training may be delivered by specialists as and when the need arises.

11. How accessible is the school environment?

The school has been adapted for access by wheelchair users. Lifts are provided to ensure upper floor classrooms can be accessed by all students, including those with a physical disability or mobility difficulties. There are disabled toilet facilities. EVAC Chairs are provided for emergency situations where pupils need to get downstairs without use of their wheelchair/crutches. Other reasonable adjustments such as the provision of specialist equipment or preferred seating within the classroom are organised on an individual basis according to need.

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12. How are parents and young people themselves involved in the school?

There is close liaison between the school and all parents/carers. Parents/carers of students with SEN are invited to attend review meetings and to attend meetings with professionals from outside agencies, as well as having regular communication with the SENCO and the other teaching members of staff.

The students receiving SEN Support or with an EHCP will be invited to meet with the SENCO and to make their needs and learning preferences known to teaching staff via their Access to Learning Plan. They will be encouraged to attend all meetings with outside agencies and support services.

13. How do you involve other agencies in meeting the needs of children/young people with SEND and in supporting families?

We work closely with a range of agencies and will involve the appropriate services as and when it is required. This will always be in consultation with parents/carers where the student is under 16 years of age. Services we work with include: health, social care, Local Authority Support Services such as Trafford SEN Advisory Service (SENAS) and Healthy Young Minds, voluntary organisations, charities, as well as the staff who are part of the BFET Educational Psychology Service. Agencies may be invited to observe, meet, and assess/report/give advice on the individual student so that appropriate strategies and interventions may be put in place to support students and their families. Representatives from specialist support services will also be invited to attend review meetings for pupils/students with SEN and to deliver training sessions to teaching staff.

14. How will the school prepare and support my child/young person to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?

The school has effective procedures in place to ensure a smooth transition between primary and secondary school. Every year there is an open evening for prospective pupils in Year 5 and their parents/carers, during which initial contact can be made with the SENCO. Year 6 pupils who have accepted the offer of a place at AGGS are invited to attend an induction day during the summer term where they spend a day with their form group and form tutor and participate in taster lessons. In addition, AGGS teaching staff arrange visits to each primary setting to meet the Year 6 pupils in small groups and to discuss any individual special educational needs with the class teacher or school SENCO. In some cases, it may be possible for the SENCO to arrange a private tour of the school for a student with SEN, and their parent/carer, to ease transition. An induction evening in the first half term of Year 7 provides a further opportunity for all parents/carers to meet teaching staff, including form

tutors.

Throughout the school, all students are supported to make the right choices regarding the next phase of their education by form tutors, assistant senior tutors, senior tutors, a higher education co-ordinator ~~as well as~~ and the Connexions service. The school works closely with the Connexions Careers Service and students can arrange to see the Careers (Connexions) Adviser during the school day. From year 9 onwards, the Connexions Adviser will provide impartial guidance to ensure students make informed and appropriate decisions about subject choices and post 16/post 18 options, and he/she may attend annual review meetings at the request of parents/carers and/or students.

When a student leaves AGGS, all relevant documentation will be passed on to the new provider, including details about any provision for SEN and information about examination access arrangements, with the student's (or parent's) consent.

15. Who can I contact for further information?

The first point of contact for any queries regarding a student at the school would be the assistant senior tutor or the senior tutor who can be contacted either by telephone 0161 912 5912 or email admin@aggs.bfet.uk or pastoral@aggs.bfet.uk. If you wish to speak to the SENCO, Mrs Hughes, you can contact her on the school telephone number 0161 912 5912 or email admin@aggs.bfet.uk. For any queries about admission to the school please contact the Admissions Secretary, Mrs Sullivan.

16. What other support is available?

Find out more about the local offer of support which is available for disabled children and young people and those who have SEN on the Trafford Service Directory www.trafford.gov.uk/servicedirectory or by contacting the Family Information Service:

Telephone: 0161 912 1053 Monday to Friday, 8.30am until 5pm

Email: fis@trafford.gov.uk

Twitter: @traffordfis

Facebook: www.facebook.com/traffordfis