



**St George's**  
School Edgbaston

# UPPER SCHOOL SEND PROVISION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Revised: September 2023



Welcome to St George's Upper School. We are delighted to welcome you into our community.

Transitioning into a new school can be an anxious time for both parents and their children. With this in mind we have provided you with our most frequently asked questions in order to support you with some of the queries you may have.

### **What Staff are in the Inclusion Department?**

Jenny Shaw	Co - Head and line manager of St George's SEND provision
Joanna Love	Upper School SENCo
Luke Nicholls	Assistant Head for Pastoral Care
Hazel Hughes	Specialist Teacher for Dyslexia
Iman Merali	Speech and Language Therapist
Vicky Jones	School Nurse
Victoria Henning	Year 7 Transition Class Teacher
Rosie Newman	Year 8 Transition Class Teacher
Wendy Nash	SEND Administrator and intervention support
Andrew Guest	Mentor
Ronnie Wood	Sixth Form Mentor
Denise Wood	SEND Admissions

Our active, qualified SENCo, Joanna Love, and our Specialist Teacher for Dyslexia, Hazel Hughes ensure a high quality of provision is in place for pupils with additional needs. They work with Jenny Shaw to provide/deliver essential training for staff on both quality first teaching strategies, as well as meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice; they support the integration of pupils into the day-to-day curriculum, as well as carefully planning and delivering individual and group interventions. Our SENCOs are responsible for both Individual Provision Plans and Class Provision Plans. They provide invaluable assessment information and support the Senior Leadership Team to monitor the progress of pupils with SEND.

## **Specialist Teacher for Dyslexia**

Our SpLD teacher, Hazel Hughes, can carry out assessments and provide recommendations that will be added to your child's Individual Provision Plan. These recommendations may involve 1:1 sessions or group interventions.

She also assesses our pupils for Access Arrangements.

She works with individuals and groups who have specific cognition and learning needs. If this is an area of need on your child's EHCP these sessions will be included in your child's funded provision; if your child does not have an EHCP and requires this provision, it will be added to your termly bill. Please note: we offer SpLD support for students in Years 7 – 11; this resource does not stretch to our Sixth Form.

Hazel maintains her assessment practitioner's certification, and attends regular training to support her role as SpLD Teacher. She works closely with her counterpart from the Lower School to share expertise on complex cases, and they provide each other with professional mentoring and support.

## **Speech and Language Therapy**

We have a full-time onsite speech and language therapist; she delivers 1:1 therapy and support for our pupils that hold Educational Health Care Plans across both Upper and Lower School. She can also provide assessments and reports for our wider school community, and sometimes has the capacity to extend the offer of direct therapy to pupils without an EHCP.

She coordinates our social groups and oversees the incorporation of pupils' speech, language and communication targets into both Individual Provision Plans and classroom provision.

Our speech and language therapist provides training for staff in order to deliver specific interventions, as well as best practice in the classroom and wider school context.

She also attends supervision and regular CPD training opportunities to ensure she is best placed to support staff and provide up to date interventions and training, informed by latest advice.

If your child holds an EHCP where speech, language and communication is detailed as an area of need, they will receive an annual speech and language assessment, report and recommendations, as well as ongoing individual and/or group

interventions. Please note: we offer SALT support for students in Years 7 – 11; this resource does not stretch to our Sixth Form.

### **School Nurse**

Our School Nurse is a qualified nurse who maintains her registration under the NMC. She works closely with many of our pupils and their families, and is integral to ensuring that all pupils with medical conditions have their needs known and met. She manages the School's medical needs provision, produces medical alert cards, care plans and provides training for staff.

She is also one of the School's Mental Health Leads and a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Mentors**

Our Mentors provide support for our pupils social, emotional and mental health needs. They work in the main with our pupils with EHCPs, but do provide support to identified pupils in our wider school community. The Mentors have allocated pupils on their individual caseloads, but are not available on demand. We always have a Mentor on duty, and information about pupils is shared between the team so that pupils can be supported if their designated mentor is not available. Any child that requires mentoring will have a weekly session allocated on their timetable to enable this to take place during school hours.

The Mentors are timetabled into our Think Tank provision, where they support pupils with pre and post tutoring, subject specific tasks and homework. They also deliver many of our interventions under the guidance of our SENCo, SpLD teacher or Speech and Language Therapist.

We have a qualified counsellor; if your child needs this support, we can arrange a referral via the school nurse. This provision comes with an additional charge.

### **SEND Administrator**

Our SEND Administrator supports the SENCo with administrative tasks. You will have contact with her over matters relating to your child's SEND provision during their time at St George's. This is typically when we need to gather information from you, support access to the school for visiting professionals, or to organise EHCP review meetings.

## **Training**

St George's has many pupils of varying ability and need. In order to ensure the needs of all learners are catered for we invest in a wide range of both in house and external training. We genuinely believe in providing our staff with an excellent 'tool kit' to provide greater depth of understanding of the pupils we work with; staff training ensures a depth of pedagogy essential to quality first teaching.

All of our staff are Autism Level 1 trained, the majority of our Academic staff are Autism Level 2 trained and we have eight staff who are Autism Level 3 trained (Lead Practitioners).

Whilst our SENCo and other key staff have attended regular in depth training to enable them to support the variety of needs present in our student body, other whole staff training has included (but is not limited to): mental health awareness, practical strategies for supporting students' mental health, emotion coaching, Zones of Regulation, Attachment, ADHD, building relationships, Access Arrangements, supporting dyslexic learners, supporting pupils with speech, language and communication needs within the classroom.

## **External Professionals**

We often work closely with external professionals (such as educational psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, the Communication and Autism Team, the Hearing Impairment Service etc), and aim to implement their recommendations both in the classroom and the wider school setting.

Sometimes a pupil may be struggling to make progress despite our in-school interventions; we may feel that such a pupil would benefit from the input of a specific professional, e.g. an educational psychologist. In these cases, the school will contact you (and your local authority if your child holds an EHCP) to commission an assessment and report; the recommendations of which will then be used to support your child in school or to inform next steps.

## **Why do you expect parents to pay for professionals' assessments and reports?**

In the maintained sector each pupil has a 'notional budget' of £6000 allocated to meet their additional needs, with the LA providing 'top up' funding for children with a higher level of need. Top up funding is allocated through the CRISP process; Independent schools do not have access to CRISP.

The Independent School sector does not receive the notional budget or top up funding, and some of the provision your child requires may be beyond our core offer; therefore, you need to be aware that you may be charged additional fees to meet your child's needs appropriately.

Traditionally pupils access places in St George's Upper School through an entrance exam in Year 7 (pupils in other year bands are invited to attend assessment taster days) and through the provision of information which confirms the child can manage both our academic and social curriculum, which is still the expectation. The school will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act; however, in the case of Independent schools, many adjustments carry a cost which is not included in the school fees for the mainstream cohort (core offer).

Our SEND Information Report is available on our website and details which interventions and support form part of our core offer (available to all), and which are beyond (not available to all).

If your child holds an EHCP we will work with your local authority to ensure that they commission professionals reports from within their own services. The local authority, not parents, will be responsible for these costs.

### **What is the Think Tank?**

When a pupil has a full timetable there is no 'good time' for interventions to be delivered. Missing curriculum lessons puts pupils at a disadvantage, and we believe no child should miss unstructured times, such as break and lunch, due to interventions.

After many years of negotiating times to deliver interventions with staff, pupils and parents (and never pleasing everybody!) we decided to review how interventions and support were delivered. It was simply not possible to provide intervention in lessons pupils liked the least, struggled most in, or that parents thought were least relevant – this varied widely in each circumstance. It was time to set out a clear offer and develop a provision that would not only enable pupils to access interventions, but provide time for pupils to boost their knowledge in subjects they struggle most in, as well as time to complete some homework.

### **The Think Tank is available to all pupils who have SEND.**

How much time will my child spend in Think Tank and what lessons will they miss?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 who require intervention will attend the Think Tank instead of French or PSHE. This provides 1 – 3 lessons per week for us to ensure that your child's special educational needs are supported.

The majority of our Years 9 – 11 pupils will take nine GCSEs; however, this allows no time for interventions and, for some pupils, is simply too overwhelming a number of subjects to access. By agreement with School, you and your child, it may be that your child takes a reduced number of options; typically, seven or eight. Reducing their timetable by one subject provides your child with three hours per week in the Think Tank; and six hours for two subjects.

### **What is the Transition Class and can my child access it?**

As a selective entrance mainstream school, our students are above average and our curriculum moves at a fast pace. This can be inaccessible for some students.

We have a Transition Class in Year 7 and Year 8; this is available to students with and without EHCPs that may need a slower transition into secondary school and who are working below expectation for their year band. We combine best practice from the primary school model with subject specialist teaching. Students in these Transition classes are supported by a consistent LSA across the curriculum.

Many of the students in our Transition Class have 'spikey profiles' and, if they are working at or above expectation for their year band in a specific area, they will join their wider cohort for Maths, English and Science. This is decided through subject specific base line testing over the first half term each year; this also enables provide peers from the wider cohort who would benefit from a slower pace in these subjects, access to the 7C& 8C core curriculum.

By Year 9, students move into form groups with the rest of their cohort, are following a timetable, including core and options subjects, and moving from room to room and teacher to teacher for all subjects.

### **Will my child be able to take their chosen options?**

That depends on the needs of your child and the courses they choose. If it is in their best interests, then yes. We will be guided by the subject teachers and our knowledge of your child. If the subject is an area of weakness or is weighted in a way we know your child will struggle to achieve, we would not allocate it as an option.

The majority of pupils take English Language, Maths and Double Science (which is a combination of physics, chemistry and biology) GCSEs, as well as a combination of

option subjects. Most students will take a full GCSE pathway; however, some may take a combination of GCSE, Functional Skills (in the core) and BTECs, others may take Functional Skills in the core and/or solely BTEC options.

Our pupils are asked to pick their option subjects in Year 8; we may write to you indicating the number of options your child has been given, with a review date. Whilst we want all children to achieve their full potential, we may have concerns that they will struggle with the number of options they have been allocated, or their suitability to sit the subject. We will review your child's progress at the end of each term, and may look to remove their weakest subject.

### **Will my child receive 1:1 support?**

We have a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) in each of the core subjects, but not in all others. LSAs are there to provide targeted support for our students with EHCPs in the first instance. For the majority of pupils our smaller class sizes and quality first teaching are enough. If your child does require ongoing 1:1 support in any lessons, especially if they are drawing on the resource of the class support to the detriment of other pupils, we will contact you to discuss, as continuous 1:1 will be chargeable.

Some of our pupils with EHCPs may have some funded hours for teaching assistant support. This will have been agreed through local authority consultation, and will be in place in specified lessons only. If you and/or the School feel your child needs more support, this will be addressed through the annual review process.

### **Will my child be set by ability?**

Pupils in Year 7 are allocated sets in English, Maths and Science (core subjects) following a settling in period in the first few weeks of September. Pupils are in sets for core subjects from Year 7 – 11. Sets are not fixed, and pupils can move up or down depending on pupil progress and teacher assessment.

For all other subjects in Key Stage 3, pupils will move in their form group which is mixed ability. In Key Stage 4, option subjects (beyond the core) are mixed ability.

### **How many are in each year band and what are your class sizes?**

Currently our year bands have between 45 and 60 pupils and students are typically split into four form groups. Class sizes average twelve pupils in KS3 and for core subject in KS4; option subjects currently vary from three to fourteen – if more than sixteen pupils want to study a particular subject, we will divide them across two classes.

## **Break and Lunchtime**

We cannot provide adult supervision to monitor what your child eats at break and lunch time. We have a daily staff supervision rota and therefore cannot provide consistent support outdoors or in the Dining Hall.

For some pupils the lunch hall can prove overwhelming. To support this, we allow some of our pupils to attend the first or last lunch sitting as a fixed time (we have a lunch rota that changes weekly); this is by agreement between the school, parents and the pupil. We do not have alternative rooms for eating lunch, nor can we provide supervision for your child to eat lunch before or after other students are in the Dining Hall.

If your child has a specific food allergy or medical need, you should liaise with our School Nurse and she will ensure you get support from our Kitchen staff to meet their dietary requirements. Our School Nurse has links with the NHS support team for children with eating disorders, and will draw up support plans with you and the NHS if this is an area of need for your child.

Whilst we encourage all pupils to have a school dinner, by agreement, some pupils do bring packed lunches. We encourage all pupils to bring a bottle of water – please ensure any bottles are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Pupils can bring in their own healthy snacks for breaktime, or they can purchase snacks from our canteen. If you are sending in a snack, we have a policy that they should not bring crisps, chocolate, fizzy/sugary drinks or products that contain nuts.

If your child is bringing money into school to purchase a snack, please ensure it is kept in a labelled wallet or purse. Pupils are responsible for looking after their own money. It is helpful if your child has experience of handling money and receiving change; if this is not a skill your child has yet acquired, please provide your child with opportunities to practice these skills in real life contexts.

## **Unstructured Time and Extra-Curricular**

We have a variety of lunchtime clubs that are open to all. Pupils can access the clubs for as little or often as they choose. Our clubs include arts and crafts, computing, sports and games. There is also the library for pupils who prefer a quiet space.

We have a wealth of after school clubs and attendance is open to all. There may be one or two after school activities that your child may not be able to access as they are practice opportunities for pupils who represent the school externally e.g. sports teams

and the school band. Your child will be able to audition for a place in our teams and our band, but must be able to perform at the expected level.

### **How can I communicate with the school?**

Letters, newsletters, emails, Parentmail (text) and the School website are our standard forms of communication.

For any pastoral concerns or queries, your first port of call is your child's Form Tutor. You can also contact their Head of Year who will be happy to support.

For any academic concerns or queries, your first port of call is the subject teacher. Their Head of Department will also be happy to support.

For any concerns or queries specific to your child's SEND you should contact our SEND Administrator who will ensure your communication gets to the member of the Inclusion Department who is best placed to support you.

As staff are timetabled and have other commitments in their working day, we aim to have responded to you within 48 hours. Please note, any communications sent outside of working hours, such as weekends and holiday periods, will be responded to within 48 hours of the next working day.

We do not offer home/school diaries or daily communication – if our staff are busy delivering lessons or with lesson planning and preparation, they are not in a position to provide daily feedback to parents too!

### **How will I know if my child is making progress?**

You will be invited to a 'settling in' meeting within the first half term of your child entering our setting; there is also a Parents Evening each year for all year bands.

You will also be invited in to our termly SEND Coffee Mornings; this is a good chance to have an informal chat with the Inclusion Department.

We provide a termly report that details your child's academic progress and attitudes to learning.

The School will review your child's IPP termly and you will receive a copy that details their progress towards targets and any new targets.

If your child has an EHCP we will review this annually. Should you or we have any particular concerns, we may carry out a further review of provision and/or placement.

## **Does my child have to do assessments and exams?**

Yes. Assessment is key to understanding pupils progress and planning their next steps.

We aim to ensure pupils know their assessment schedules in advance, but there will be some assessments that take place at the end of a curriculum module.

## **Will my child have Access Arrangements?**

Access Arrangements are special arrangements that can be applied for and allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access public examinations. Access Arrangements are reasonable adjustments as defined by the Equality Act (2010) and are specific to the individual. Applications must be based upon a rigorous evaluation of need and are heavily regulated by the JCQ and the Exam Boards themselves. Access Arrangements must be based upon identified need and normal way of working.

Any pupil with a special educational need or disability may be eligible for access arrangements but there is no automatic entitlement to access arrangements for a student who is disabled or experiencing special educational needs. Each application has to be made on its own merit.

A pupil does not necessarily have to have a diagnosed learning difficulty to be allowed an access arrangement, however there must be evidence of need and normal way of working, in addition to other criteria such as below average performance in certain skills.

Our specialist teacher is a qualified Access Arrangements assessor and is aware of pupils with special educational needs in school. She formally assesses pupils at the end of the spring term/start of the summer term in Year 9.

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

Good attendance and punctuality are essential. We expect all pupils to arrive on time every day and achieve 100% attendance. The Government has set a minimum attendance expectation of 95%. If attendance and punctuality become a concern, you will be contacted by your child's Form Tutor in the first instance, and their Head of Year should we not see an improvement.

We will do all we can to support good attendance and punctuality, so you must inform us if there are any issues or concerns affecting your child's ability to come to school.

We do not offer support or education in the home setting and do not have the infrastructure or resources to support students who, for whatever reason, have persistent or prolonged absences from school.

## **Supporting Independence**

Your child will be provided with a timetable. We encourage parents to keep a copy of this so that you can look at it together to ensure they have the books and equipment they need each day. The night before is advisable as mornings can be fraught!

You will also receive termly subject overviews; these should help you to support your child's learning.

Your child should know if they have a food allergy. Our food options are labelled for allergens, but we rely on pupils making sensible choices with regards to the food on offer.

There is limited time between lessons, so we would advise you to ensure that your child can dress and undress quickly so that lessons, such as PE, do not become stressful.

We encourage all pupils to go to the toilet before school and during breaks; if your child does need the toilet during lesson time, please encourage them to let the teacher know. We do not want any child getting into difficulties for fear of asking to go to the toilet. If this might be a problem for your child, please let us know and we can provide them with support to manage.

Uniform, shoes, coats, bags, sports kit, pencil cases etc should be clearly labelled. Any items left in school that cannot be identified will go into lost property. Unclaimed items go into our second-hand sale or to the charity shop at the end of each term.

For obvious reasons we would advise against any items of monetary value being brought into school. The school will not be responsible for the loss of, or damage to, students' personal possessions.

Your child must hand their phone into their Form Tutor each morning, and they will be returned at the end of the school day. If your child is not an independent traveller, we advise you to leave phones at home.

Your child must remember to bring and hand in any homework set. If your child is struggling with this we will contact you to see how we can support.

## **Sixth Form**

There is no automatic entrance into our Sixth Form. Students must apply for a place when they are in Year 11.

If your child holds an EHCP your local authority will consult with us for placement; they will ask for your child's preferences for Sixth Form settings over the course of Year 11, and we would always encourage parents to indicate more than one setting to avoid appropriate placement not being allocated. You should talk to the SENCo about Sixth Form placements in your child's Year 10 and Year 11 annual reviews. Your local authority's SENDIASS and Post 16 teams are best placed to advise you about provision beyond the St George's setting.

We offer a wide range of A-Level courses, and also have a small number of Level 3 BTEC courses available; most of our students will take three A-Levels, some will do a combination of A-Level and BTEC.

We do not currently offer any certification below Level 3 qualifications and, due to the nature of the courses combined with 15 hours of independent study, you should be content that your child will manage independently within our setting.

If we feel we do not have a relevant certification pathway, or your child will require resources we do not have available, we would not offer a place in our Sixth Form.