



Altrincham Grammar School for Girls

BRIGHT FUTURES EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Altrincham Grammar School for Girls

Cavendish Road, Bowdon,
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Dear parents,

I would like to update you on the various procedures we follow in school to ensure that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified and supported effectively in the classroom and in internal and external examinations. Further detail can be found in the SEND Information report which can be accessed here: <https://aggs.bright-futures.co.uk/parents-carers/send/>

Identification of SEND

It is often the case that we are provided with information about a student's SEND on transition. This information is shared by primary schools on entry into Year 7 (or secondary schools if a late joiner), and pupils may have received access arrangements and reasonable adjustments in the school entrance examination.

In the case where a student's SEND is picked up later, we use data monitoring, information and/or concerns raised by teachers, parents and pupils and screening or symptom identification tools to decide whether a pupil should be referred for further assessment. Where a student has a Trafford GP, referrals go to the TASC pathway for an autism assessment, the TCAS pathway for an ADHD assessment or the SENDIAS team for concerns about specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Detailed information provided by school, parents and students is collated by the SENDCo to support any referral but does not guarantee that the referral will be accepted for further assessment. Further information about the Trafford Local Offer can be found here:

<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/localoffer.page?newlocalofferchannel=0>

Where a student does not have a Trafford GP, the referral pathways will be different depending upon where the student's GP is based. In some cases, such as Manchester, it may be the GP rather than school who requests a referral for an assessment.

Referrals

The waiting times for NHS assessment can be lengthy. The current waiting time for an autism assessment is approximately 18 months. Due to high demand, the local authority can no longer offer dyslexia assessments on request; full commercial rates will be charged for any assessment and the first step is always to offer advice on quality first teaching and reasonable adjustments within the classroom before any assessment is considered. It is the persistence of difficulties when adjustments have been made that may suggest further investigation is required.

At AGGS, we understand that parents may find these waiting times unacceptable and may seek to go elsewhere to pursue an assessment which leads to a diagnosis. However, we do expect that any qualified professional who is appointed by parents engages in full consultation with the school SENDCo to get a picture of need and that this is reflected in any report that is received. School involvement in the assessment process is often a necessary condition for access arrangements to meet JCQ criteria (see below).



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Access Arrangements and reasonable adjustments

AGGS, alongside every other examination centre, is obliged to work within the rules and regulations of the Joint Council for Qualifications and Assessments (JCQ), which publishes a document on Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments every year offering detailed guidance about the type of adjustments that can be made and the evidence upon which any decisions about access arrangements must be made. A failure to comply with the regulations by, for example, permitting access arrangements within the centre that are not supported by appropriate evidence, has the potential to be deemed malpractice which can result in disqualification of the student's results.

Any access arrangements or reasonable adjustments should reflect the usual support given to the student in school and will ideally be based on a picture of need that has been built up since their entry to school. Where a late diagnosis has been made, access arrangements will be applied as soon as is practicable; any arrangement made must not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a student and must be supported by evidence of the significant impact that the learning difficulty or disability has on teaching and learning, as evidenced by current teachers, as well as by reports from other professionals. The evidence on which any decision about access arrangements is made is kept on file and can be requested by an inspector at any time for the GCE and GCSE examinations.

Pastoral system

If you have concerns about your child's progress or wellbeing, the first step is to contact the senior tutor for their year group. If following some initial investigations, it is decided that there may be underlying difficulties which need further assessment, the SENDCo may then be brought in, and a referral initiated if it is deemed appropriate based on the evidence. Any recommendations made in a report received by school will be considered and where they match the picture of need, they will be shared with teachers via an access to learning plan. These strategies will be reviewed, and new strategies applied if concerns about progress persist.

Yours faithfully,

Ann Hughes
Special educational needs and EAL coordinator

Principal: Ms S Gill