

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

2025/26

Aims and ethos

Our SEND policy aims to:

1. Set out how our school will support and make provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
2. Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEND

Our overriding aim is to enable all of our students, across the age and ability range, to achieve their potential both academically and personally; to achieve an all-round education; to be given equal opportunities to develop their talents and abilities to the full. This applies every bit as much to those who may have a learning difficulty or a disability as it does to everyone else.

Achieving these aims is a collective responsibility shared by all Rochester Independent College (RIC) staff. Being aware of the special educational needs and disabilities that some of our students may have and addressing these in a positive and effective way rests on a whole-College approach in which all teaching staff take responsibility for meeting the individual needs of all students. Our teaching staff are committed to, and experienced in, providing a classroom environment which enhances the learning opportunities of all students.

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities often have a uniquely valuable perspective on their own needs. Wherever possible, students are encouraged to contribute to the assessment of their needs and of the techniques and approaches that they would find most helpful.

As a College, we are proud of the fact that our track record with those of our students who have special educational needs and disabilities has been consistently strong over many years. Many have achieved considerable academic success; and the feedback from the students and their parents/guardians has been that they have found the staff helpful and supportive; they have gained the self-belief, study skills, enjoyment of academic work and qualifications necessary to enable them to progress to the next stage of their education.



Legislation and Guidance

The approach of this policy is based on the recommendations within the following legislation:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014 (updated September 2024))
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

The policy aims to ensure that:

- all RIC staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities with reference the SEND Code of Practice
- all RIC staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities as directed in the Regulatory Requirements of the Independent Schools Inspectorate ISI Inspection Framework November 2024
- all staff are aware of the specific needs of the students they encounter within College
- all students have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- a supportive ethos whereby staff, parents/guardians, students and outside agencies work together according to individual needs, be created at the College

RIC will ensure that these objectives can be met by providing staff with clarity as to expectations in the following areas:

- identification
- assessment and record keeping
- differentiation (including teaching and learning styles and strategies)

Roles and responsibilities for coordination of the SEND Policy

At RIC we support all students to enable them to maximise their educational outcomes. High quality teaching is fundamental and it is equally vital that all teachers at RIC are confident and proficient in the teaching of SEND students. It is equally important that all staff are aware of the specific needs of their students. There will be occasions where some SEND students will require additional support in order for them to achieve and exceed their targets. On these occasions the SENDCO will plan and co-ordinate the action to be taken.

The SEND Coordinators

RIC have two SENDCOs; Leighton Bright (leighton.bright@rochester-college.org.uk) and Ian Duxbury (ian.duxbury@rochester-college.org.uk)

They will:



- Work with the Principal and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND, including those who have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and high quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEND support
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- Liaise with pupils' previous provider of education to develop an understanding of the needs of the pupil prior to starting at Rochester Independent College.
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure pupils and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- Work with the Principal and governing board to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Ensure the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up to date

The SEND Governor

The SEND Governor is Paul Ludlow (paul.ludlow@dukeseducation.com)

The SEND governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND and disability provision within the school and update the governing board on this
- Work with the Principal and SENDCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school

The Principal

The Principal is Alistair Brownlow (Alistair.brownlow@rochester-college.org.uk)

The Principal will:

- Work with the SENDCO and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school



- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEND.

Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working with the SENDCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy

SEND Definitions

A pupil has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

Following the Children and Families Act 2014 the previous SEND classifications School Action and School Action Plus have been combined and categorised as School Support.

School Support

The student is identified as SEND when their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to students of the same age. Normally higher quality teaching to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer students will require such support.

Due to the extremely small class sizes at RIC we do not use codes to identify students; additional information is provided on our SEND Registers via the school management information system iSAMS.



Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan

A statutory document which is sought by College or parent/guardian when, despite the College having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the needs of the SEND student, the student has not made expected progress. In order to achieve an EHC a specialist assessment is carried out by the Local Authority using a range of relevant specialists (e.g. Speech Therapists or Educational Psychologists). Should this assessment prove the need an EHC will be built in conjunction with the student, parents/guardians and the Local Authority, in order that the necessary special education provision be provided for the student.

Identification, assessment and review

It is estimated that, at some stage in their College career, approximately 20% of all students will exhibit a SEND to some degree. The SEND Code of Practice 2014 (updated September 2024) sets out four broad areas of need. RIC caters for all students who experience any of these needs and will direct parents/guardians to further support in addition to that which we are able to provide within the classroom should these needs impact severely on the learning of the student.

Communication and interaction

This may include students with speech, language and communication needs or those students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who may have particular difficulties with social interaction.

Cognition and learning

This may include those students working at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriately differentiated and tailored teaching. This may include students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Social/emotional and mental health difficulties

Students may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. This may include mental health difficulties, such as anxiety, depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms which are not medically explained. Other students might have disorders such as Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or attachment disorder.

Sensory and/or physical needs

Some students have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities provided. This will include those with visual, hearing or physical impairments.

RIC also recognises that other factors, although not considered as a special educational need may impact on a student's progress and attainment:



- Disability/Medically diagnosed condition
- attendance and punctuality
- health and welfare
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- being a looked-after child
- being a child separated from parents/guardians
- often, behavioural needs are viewed as an underlying response to a need which we will be able to recognise and identify clearly, once a student is known to us

At RIC the following methods of SEND identification are employed:

- close liaison with primary school or previous educational setting
- attendance at any multi agency/EHCP reviews or other meetings
- prior and ongoing learning results/achievements
- specialist reports from specific assessments/screening assessments eg Dyslexia/Dyscalculia
- significant disparity between subject tests and progress
- progress significantly below expected levels (using national data)
- communication with individual students
- concerns raised by teachers
- concerns raised by parents/guardians
- information received from external agencies
- attendance information and statistics
- monitoring of student progress by SENCO and Senior Team

All students are given a cognitive ability test soon after they join the college. In the Lower School, Years 7-9 complete the Middle Years Indicator System (MIDYIS), and Years 10 & 11 complete the Year Eleven Indicator System (YELLIS). In Sixth Form, all students complete the A-Level Information System (ALIS). The SENDCO uses these tests to help identify those students who may require additional support. Class teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all pupils and identify those whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, social needs.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEND.



When deciding whether special educational provision is required, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

Evidence of a suspected learning difficulty not previously identified may come to light during a student's time at RIC. Where this is the case, it will be discussed with parents/guardians.

Provision in examinations

Internal examinations

Students with SEND in any year group will generally receive the same consideration in internal examinations as they would in a public examination, e.g. allocation of extra time, use of a laptop or provision of a scribe and/or reader as appropriate.

Special arrangements in public examinations

Applications for special arrangements in public examinations are made by RIC's SENDCO as early as possible in the academic year and well in advance of the deadline set by the examination boards.

In applying for such arrangements the College will support the request with documentary evidence submitted by the SENDCO and College's Assessment Officer, who may require additional support from teaching staff to create a 'picture of need'. Special arrangements commonly include additional time allowances, the provision of technical support, e.g. computer, separate room or the use of a scribe or reader.

Staff and Staff training

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all of the students in their classes, including students with SEND. High quality teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who have or may have SEND. Additional support and intervention cannot compensate for a lack of Quality First Teaching (QFT); RIC regularly and carefully reviews the quality for all its students, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving teachers' understanding of strategies through in-service training (INSET), to identify and support vulnerable students, and enhance their knowledge of SEND most frequently encountered.

All staff in our educational environment have already had, or will have, training associated with SEND. It is imperative in the current climate that all members of staff are aware of key changes in this arena. All staff, both new and existing, are contractually obliged to attend the RIC Inset programme which includes SEND training. Specific sessions regarding Dyslexia,



Autism and Exam Access Arrangements are also available for staff. The College SENDCO is responsible for ensuring that all members of staff are adhering to the SEND policy.

Provision for Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

While independent schools are not legally obliged to accept pupils with EHCPs, Rochester Independent College is committed to promoting inclusive education where possible and appropriate, in line with its ethos, values and available resources.

Consideration of Applicants with EHCPs

In line with our Admissions Policy, parents or guardians of children with an EHCP are encouraged to discuss their child's needs with the school at the earliest opportunity, together with giving access to current reports, together with the child's current EHCP plan. This allows the school to consider whether it is able to meet the child's needs, and whether appropriate provision and reasonable adjustments can be made within the school's existing resources.

The school retains discretion over admissions decisions and will take into account:

- Whether the school can reasonably meet the child's educational, social, and health needs as outlined in the EHCP
- Whether admitting the child would be compatible with the provision of efficient education for other pupils
- Whether the required support or adjustments are practicable within the school's resources and facilities

Admission of a pupil with an EHCP is at the discretion of the Principal, following a thorough review of the EHCP by the SENCOs, consultation with parents/carers and, where applicable, the local authority.

Provision and Support

If a child with an EHCP is admitted, Rochester Independent College will work collaboratively with the family and relevant professionals to provide the support outlined in the child's EHCP. Examples of this support (whilst not exhaustive) are detailed below:

- Differentiated classroom teaching
- Reasonable adjustments to support access to the curriculum and school environment
- Access to therapists or external specialists
- Implementation of agreed outcomes and strategies from the EHCP



Access and payment for specialist services, such as Occupational Therapy (OT) or Speech and Language (SALT) provision will incur additional fees, which must be paid by the relevant Local Authority or parents. In the unlikely event that a student requires extensive 1 - 1 support, this again must be funded by the Local Authority or by the parent. Social, Emotional and Mental Health support can be provided by the College Counsellors, where appropriate, without additional cost.

Communication and Review

The school will maintain regular contact with parents and, where appropriate, the local authority to monitor the child's progress. The SENDCo will coordinate, support and oversee implementation of the EHCP provisions. The school will chair Annual Reviews of the EHCP and will participate in any multidisciplinary meetings relating to the pupil's education, where feasible.

Limitations and Responsibilities

As an independent school, Rochester Independent College operates within its own financial and staffing structures. While every effort is made to accommodate a wide range of needs, the school may not be suitable for all pupils with EHCPs, particularly where highly specialist or intensive provision is required.

Where continued attendance is no longer in the best interests of the pupil or school community, this will be discussed openly with the family and appropriate steps taken to support transition to an alternative setting

Right to appeal

Admission to the school is always at the discretion of the Principal. If parents would like to appeal the decision, they can do so by contacting the Governors. Their contact details can be found on the school website at <https://rochester-college.org.uk/ric-governance>

Related policies

- Admissions Policy
- Accessibility Policy and Plan
- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour Policy

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