



THE FOREST ACADEMY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) INFORMATION REPORT

Frequently asked questions:

1. How will the school know if my child needs additional help and how will the school share information with me?
2. How will the school involve me as a parent and my child in meeting our SEND needs and in general school life?
3. What different kinds of support are available to children with SEND?
4. How will the school know how well my child is doing and how will they inform me about this?
5. How is the school accessible to children with SEND?
6. Have any staff received specialist training in SEND?
7. How will the school ensure that my child will be included in all activities at school, after school clubs and on school trips?
8. How will the school support my child to change classes and/or move on to a new school when they reach the appropriate stage(s)?
9. What support and training within the school is available to parents and carers?
10. Who should I contact if I have any questions or concerns about my child's SEND?



Aim

At The Forest Academy, we recognise that some students may require additional support and/or resources to reach their full academic, personal and social potential. The Inclusion department works closely with the Senior Leadership Team, Head of Years, Head of Departments, Parents/Carers and external agencies in responding to pupils' educational needs and providing pathways to success.

This SEND Information describes the arrangements we make that are 'additional and 'different' for pupils with SEND. This information outlines the support and provisions pupils with SEN can expect at The Forest Academy.

An overview of the school

The Forest Academy is a mixed academy for students aged 11-16, committed to excellence for all and to improving the life chances of every student across the ability spectrum, irrespective of background or religion. We provide a learning environment that challenges, supports and inspires, where all students are entitled to a consistently high-quality experience within a harmonious community. 'The Forest Academy is a good school that has improved rapidly since it was opened in January 2012, there is a positive atmosphere in and around the school' (OFSTED Sept 2013); 'pupils are self-assured, polite and speak warmly about being part of this school community and the good support they receive from their teachers' (OFSTED Dec 2017). We are a smaller than average sized secondary school with 576 students and are part of the Beacon Multi Academy Trust. The proportion of students with special educational needs is just below the national average.

The approach to teaching children and young people with SEND.

The Forest Academy strives to ensure that all students are fully included in school life and at the end of their experience at The Forest Academy students have the skills and qualifications that will allow them to progress and fulfil their ambitions. Helping students to overcome the barriers that may stand in the way is approached in a number of different ways. These include:

- Withdrawal from mainstream lessons for group or individual support
- In class support
- Mentoring
- After and before school support (homework support and revision sessions)
- Through a differentiated curriculum

A number of different factors are considered when the nature of the support is being decided including:

- The nature of the need
- The impact of withdrawal from mainstream lessons
- Support from parents



- The ability of a student to access lessons independently
- The number of hours of support that are likely to be needed.

The principle of early intervention when removing barriers to learning is followed and as a result the majority of intervention takes place during Year 7. Where this is successful and the need for support has been reduced, the level of intervention typically reduces further up the school. The Forest Academy recognises that students can become reliant on support as a habit rather than out of need and that as part of students' development, they must be challenged not just academically but also with regard to their approach to learning. It is of utmost importance that we are preparing students to make the next step by equipping them with social skills, resilience and not only academic achievements. Where staff feel that in class support is not in the best interest of a student and that the student needs to move towards becoming more independent, it will be withdrawn.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will the school know if my child needs additional help and how will the school share information with me?

Identifying children's additional needs

The Forest Academy identifies students who have additional needs in a number of ways and at a number of different times during the school year. The principle of early intervention underpins the approach taken at The Forest Academy, this works alongside the emphasis on Quality First Teaching which involves all teachers and Teaching Assistants having a responsibility to identify and support all students. The responsibility of staff for identification of students is supported through student focused meetings including weekly Link worker meetings and termly meetings with Heads of each year group. Parents/carers are involved in any assessments as the impact school life has on home must be taken into consideration when looking at possible steps to take, at The Forest Academy we take the view that the support and involvement of parents is often essential if significant progress is going to be made. Termly mentor meetings with tutors are regular opportunity for parents to discuss concerns regarding progress or possible SEND. Parents can also contact tutors, Heads of year or the SENCO at any time during the year to arrange a meeting. Progress of students is assessed through monitoring of academic levels, reading ages, friendship groups, behaviour in class and behaviour around the school site. All of these indicators can prompt a member of staff to begin further investigation. This can include assessments carried out by the school staff or outside agencies that support the school.



Transition

Special Educational Needs (SEN) staff work with primary colleagues to ensure a positive transition and to ensure that the provision for students on arrival is timely and effective. At the beginning of Year 7, all students are assessed using the LASS Lucid assessment. This battery of 8 computer-based assessments allows staff to identify which students may be in need of additional support and helps identifying what the nature of the students need is. Tutors are given this information to discuss with parents at the first meeting in the first term.

Staff Concerns

Where form tutors or teaching staff have concerns regarding the progress (academic or social) of students, they contact the Inclusion (SEND and English as an Additional Language) team directly or through the students' Head of Year.

2. How will the school involve parents/carers and our child in meeting our SEND needs and in general school life?

Planning Support

- Planning and review meetings
- Advice on how to support learning at home
- Regular contact between home and school, e.g. home/school book, email, text and phone calls.
- Coffee mornings
- Mentor meetings with tutors
- Annual parents evening
- Individual pupil-teacher conversations
- Contacted by mentors and link workers

3. What different kinds of support are available to children with SEND?

Range of SEN provided.

- Curriculum adaptations/differentiation
- Individual and group support for students with literacy difficulties
- Individual and group support for students with numeracy difficulties
- Support for students whose behaviour is challenging
- Support for the Visually Impaired
- Specified individual support
- Support for health needs
- Grouping of pupils



- Specialist teaching groups
- Social and emotional support (individual and group)
- Support during unstructured time
- Support for students with social communication difficulties
- Mentoring
- Counselling

Range of support available to my child

Teaching staff are aware of the need to adapt the curriculum and differentiate schemes of work, lessons and tasks depending on the learning needs of the students they teach. Support is personalised, where groups of students have similar needs they may receive support as part of a group.

The primary method used for social skills development is through the involvement of students in activities in the Inclusion Centre at break and lunch times, here staff support students in developing friendships and developing their social skills during unstructured time. The school provides access to counsellors in the school, students can self-refer, parents can refer and any member of staff can refer a student with all referrals going through Heads of Year. Teaching staff are aware of the need to adapt the curriculum and differentiate schemes of work, lessons and tasks depending on the students they teach. In exceptional circumstances a new curriculum may be considered where this is key for the students in reducing their barriers to learning and progressing successfully. Parents should consider whether the curriculum on offer is correct for their child before deciding on a school. During break, lunch, before school and after school support is provided not only to help students with academic work but also to help students with feeling settled in school and help them in managing any concerns that may be barriers to them enjoying and achieving during their school day.

Interventions

Interventions are specific, targeted, structured, 1:1 or small group lessons that involves withdrawal from normal timetabled lessons.

Withdrawal from mainstream lessons for small group or 1:1 lessons only takes place where staff are confident that the withdrawal lesson is having significantly greater impact on the progress of the student than compared to their progress in a mainstream lesson. The expectation is that at least twice expected progress is made in withdrawal lessons for them to be justified. The school currently runs withdrawal lessons for Lexia (literacy/reading computer-based program), the Lit Program (focused on developing literacy skills through reciprocal teaching methods) and numeracy lessons (topic focused short term/6-8 hours interventions led by a maths teacher), handwriting interventions (focused on the speed of handwriting and legibility). Nurture groups are run in year 7 and social skills groups where the need exists.



If students have been identified as in need of additional support or in need of further assessment, parents are informed and the opportunity to discuss the nature of the support in detail is offered.

Working with external professionals and agencies

The Forest Academy works with health and social care organisations including voluntary organisations to access services that we feel can be of benefit to our students. We recognise that parents know their children best but also that professionals outside of the school can provide expertise in different contexts and that it is important to involve people with this experience. Students who are looked after by the local authority are given specific consideration and support.

Where the SENCo feels additional support is required, with the consent of the student and parent/carer, a referral will be made to Redbridge Specialist Education and Training Support Service (SEaTSS).

SEaTSS offer a wide range of support, advice and training opportunities for schools and settings to enable them to deliver high quality support for individual children to ensure that the people who work with them and their families are equipped to understand and meet their individual needs.

SEaTSS is made up of 4 teams that will support -

- Team 1 - Autism/Social Communication/Social Emotional Mental Health
- Team 2 – General learning difficulties (GLD), including medical syndromes, Language and Communication needs
- Team 3 – Physical and complex needs, Specific literacy difficulties (SPLD)
- Team 4 – Sensory needs (including Vision and hearing)

The referrer and appropriate settings, schools or professionals will be contacted following the referral to agree support packages and to create individual support plans.

Further assessment

Where the school want the needs of a student clarified or if there is a complexity in the assessment of students' needs, the schools will request an assessment by the school's educational psychologist (EP). In this case, written consent is required from parents. Reports from the EP are sent to parents and the way forward is discussed with parents.

Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)

If the school feel that an EHCP may be required, they will begin the process with an assessment by the school's Educational Psychologist. Parents are invited to meet with the EP and SENCo to discuss the process and their part in the process. The SEN and Disabilities



(SEND) team knows that parental support and involvement in their children's learning is important, endeavour to keep parents informed and are happy to meet with parents at convenient times.

4. How will the school know how well my child is doing and how will they inform me about this?

Termly reviews

Heads of Year meet with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) each term. Progress of all students is reviewed and students are identified for additional support based on the academic progress they are making and how well they are included in the school community. Parents receive termly reports from the school and can contact the school if they have concerns regarding the progress of their child (see below).

Measuring progress and the effectiveness of support

Progress of all students is measured against their starting point and compared to the progress of students nationally. In interventions, the indicators used will depend on needs of the student. All students will have levels of progress and reading ages monitored by the SENCo. If reading is a concern an assessment that allows staff to pinpoint where the specific need is will be administered allowing staff to identify what type of intervention is required. All assessments used will allow standardised scores to be obtained and progress to be monitored. Feedback from students is also used to monitor the effectiveness of additional support. If emotional or social development is the purpose of the additional support standard assessments are used where these can be administered (the Boxall profile for example) and supported with reports from staff and the student's opinion gathered. Extracurricular activities and clubs are available to all students, these are supported by Inclusion staff where students with SEND require support to ensure they can be included.

Partnerships with parents

Communication with parents and pupils also provides information with regard to how well the support is being received and how parents and pupils feel about the way that support is provided. This information is gathered through formal and informal meetings with parents and pupils, questionnaires and group discussions. Inclusion staff strive to ensure that open and regular communication with parents and pupils takes place, through this we can identify any difficulties (including potential bullying), reduce anxieties, communicate how well your child is doing at school (including achievements and progress in many forms) and ensure that the focus is on enjoying their learning.



5. How is the school accessible to children with SEND?

The school site is not fully accessible for wheel chair users. Where students have temporary mobility needs arrangements are made to ensure that they do not miss lessons or work from lessons if they are not able to attend. The Inclusion Centre in the school is an area specifically for SEND students. The area is maintained by staff as nurturing and quiet environment where students feel safe and is understood by students as an area that they can seek support. The area is used by students from years 7-11.

6. Have any staff received specialist training in SEND?

The SENCO has completed the National Qualification for SEN Coordinators and has a Masters in Special and Inclusive Education.

Training is provided to staff on a weekly basis and when required, e.g. if a new student enters the school not all staff may be familiar with the SEN of this student and how to include this student. In some circumstances training is offered to targeted staff and, in some circumstances, essential training is provided to all staff.

SEND staff support all colleagues across the school by providing advice, strategies and working with teachers in the classroom. Members of the SEND team have been involved in the following external training over the last 12 months:

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Training (Redbridge Emotional Wellbeing Team).
- Hearing Impairment Training for Mainstream (Redbridge SEaTSS)
- Visual Impairment Training for Mainstream (Redbridge SEaTSS)
- Hand writing and fine motor skills (Redbridge SEaTSS)
- Social and Communication Needs training - Practical strategies to support learning in mainstream (Redbridge SEaTSS)
- Autism Training (Redbridge SEaTSS)
- Exam Invigilator - Reader and Scribe Training (JCQ requirements)
- Psychometric Testing and Exam Access Arrangements (Real Training).

7. How will the school ensure that my child will be included in all activities at school, after school clubs and on school trips?

The Forest Academy ensures that all students attending The Forest Academy are offered the chance to participate in school activities. Only where activities are advised against by medical professionals or it is not possible to ensure the health and safety requirements can be met, will students not be offered places on activities. In this case the school will look at how partial participation may be possible.



8. How will the school support my child to change classes and/or move on to a new school when they reach the appropriate stage(s)?

Primary to secondary transition

Ensuring that students' transition to us successfully in year 7 is very important to us. The work begins with SEND staff going to primary schools during the spring term of year 6. Visits are arranged to the school and a transition group is established made up of students from different primary schools. By the time the students arrive at the start of year 7, they are already familiar with the school and feel confident. This transition work allows us to make sure that your child makes a positive start to secondary school. Staff from across the school do a lot of work with local primary schools, a variety of activities such as hosting primary events and taster lessons are provided that support students in making a smooth transition.

Key stage 3 to 4 transition

When students with SEND move from year 9 to year 10 their transition is supported by Connexions advisors in addition to the SEND staff at The Forest Academy. The Connexions advisors help how their choices will help them in progressing towards a possible career or in developing an interest. Students also receive 1:1 meetings with senior leaders who oversee transition choices for all students. After year 11 Connexions advisors and The Forest Academy staff support SEND students in making the right choice at the end of year 11. Many of our students choose to stay on at The Beacon Academy Trust and enter the Beal Sixth Form. Wherever students apply; staff support with the application process, arrange visits and ensure that students are well informed so they can make the right choice. Parents are involved throughout the process. Here students also receive 1:1 meetings with senior leaders who oversee transition choices for all students.

Life after 6th form

At the end of students' school experience, whether students want to enter the world of full-time work, study or other types of training, we work with students to ensure that they are prepared for the next step. For some SEND students (and non-SEND students) preparation for this may have included life skills or employability qualifications that will have set them up to make the next step. The long-term goal we have for our SEND students is for them to become independent adults with the skills and confidence necessary to make a positive contribution to their community and the ability to succeed in the workplace.



9. What support and training within the school is available to parents and carers?

- Coffee mornings with parents
- Link Workers (Staff work closely with SEND students and parents to ensure that parents are well informed and the barriers to learning that students experience are reduced, removed or managed)
- Support and advice from outside agencies that work with the school

10. Who should I contact if I have any questions or concerns about my child's SEND?

Parents can contact their children's Tutor or Head of Year at the school via the main reception. To visit The Forest Academy at a time that is convenient to you please email or call us asking to arrange a visit.

Telephone: **020 8500 4266**

Email: [**admin@theforestacademy.co.uk**](mailto:admin@theforestacademy.co.uk)

Address: **The Forest Academy, Harbourn Road, Ilford, Essex IG6 3TN**

Alternatively, you can contact the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (Salma Miah) on SMiah@theforestacademy.co.uk or the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Inclusion (Cormac O'Neill) on the above number or via email on C.O'Neill@theforestacademy.co.uk