

Norwich Steiner School

Special Educational Needs Policy

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1. The Law governing Special Educational Needs Provision

The governing bodies of county, voluntary and grant-maintained schools (including Local Education Authority-maintained and grant-maintained special schools) are required to publish information about their SEN policy. The specific requirements on coverage are laid down in The Education (Special Educational Needs) (Information) Regulations 1994, and formal guidance was set out in the DfES circular 6/94.

2. Norwich Steiner School's obligation within the Law

As an independent school we are currently under no obligation to follow the DfES Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. However, our SEN Policy will as far as possible respect its recommendations for the following reasons:

- Common Good Practice;
- To make working with the Local Education Authorities (LEA) more straightforward (procedures for statements, etc.);
- To simplify the transfer of pupils from Norwich Steiner School to Special Schools should that be required;
- For future consistency, for as a future Free School, the same SEN Codes of Practice will govern Norwich Steiner School as LEA maintained schools.

However, aspects of the DfES Code of Practice which require schools to ensure children with Statements of Special Educational Needs have full access to the National Curriculum and that children's progress should be evaluated against standards set out in that curriculum are in direct conflict with the aims of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum offered at this school, and so cannot currently be incorporated into this policy.

3. Definition of Special Educational Needs

A pupil has special educational needs if they have a **learning difficulty**, which calls for **special educational provision** to be made for them.

A pupil has a **learning difficulty** if they:

- a) Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of the same age/class; or
- b) Have a disability that prevents or hinders the pupil from making use of educational facilities provided for pupils in that age group in the school

Special educational provision means:

Educational provision, which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision generally made for other pupils of the same age.

4. Aims and Objectives of Norwich Steiner School's SEN policy

This policy aims to support all members of staff in providing a positive, whole-class approach towards the learning and progress of pupils with SEN.

All teachers are teachers of pupils with SEN. Teaching and supporting such pupils is therefore a whole school responsibility requiring a whole school response.

Meeting the needs of pupils with SEN requires a partnership between all those involved, Local Education Authorities, the school, parents/carers, pupils and agencies involved with SEN pupils.

The school SENCo is **Jeremy Nowell**.

The school aims to ensure that:

- Pupils with SEN are identified as early as possible and that their needs are met
- Admissions of new children with SEN into existing classes takes account of the existing constellation of children, so that no one class or teacher is overburdened with children with learning difficulties
- Procedures are in place to ensure the SEN policy is followed and that parents and teachers communicate in a way which supports effective implementation of that policy
- Appropriate resources are developed or obtained for supporting children with SEN
- Pupils with SEN or learning difficulties are integrated as fully as possible into the life of the school
- Wherever possible, full use is made of supporting agencies outside the school.
- Children with learning difficulties should be supported in such a way that their self esteem and self confidence can be maintained or restored
- Learning difficulties are identified in a way which benefits the development of the whole child; thus a child who is very able academically, but who demonstrates movement or coordination difficulties may also need special educational provision in order to allow them to develop their full potential and allow them to fully access the broad curriculum.

5. How Objectives will be achieved - A Graduated response

In line with the DfES SEN Code of Practice Norwich Steiner School uses a *graduated response* to pupils with SEN. The DfES SEN Code of Practice refers to two stages:

- a) **School Action** and
- b) **School Action Plus**

a) **School Action**

The triggers for school action could be:

- A teacher's concern about a pupil's behaviour or learning abilities.
- Parent(s) concern about a pupil's behaviour or learning abilities
- The results of a class screening

Procedure for School Action:

1. As a consequence of the above triggers a pupil may be referred to the relevant teaching team for attention (Early Years, Lower School), where the following may occur:
 - a. A Child study may be carried out, collating all staff experience of the child – academic abilities, music, art, movement to gain a picture of the whole child;
 - b. A meeting with the parents to involve them in discussions and seek their views and input.
2. Once completed, the above will help staff to decide on the most effective intervention, which may involve:
 - a. A consistent approach agreed by all staff involved in the form of an IEP
 - b. Individual assessment organized by school, involving external Steiner SEN specialist
 - c. Individual learning support lessons

b) **School Action Plus**

Usually pupils will be placed on School Action Plus when, as a result of School Action (1 & 2) being implemented and reviewed, that not enough progress is made and therefore, more expert help is needed.

School Action Plus will involve one or more of the following:

- GP
- Educational Psychologist
- Child Psychologist
- Child Psychiatrist
- Social Services
- LEA (e.g. in the case of a school or parental referral/request for statutory assessment)
- External Special Needs expert or therapist
- Other

6. Coordination of SEN Provision

Until August 2012, the responsibility for ensuring implementation of the Special Educational Needs policy will remain shared between kindergarten teachers, class teachers, the School Administrator and learning support staff. In the interim and whilst recruitment to backfill current subject teaching responsibilities is undertaken, the newly appointed SENCO, Jeremy Nowell, is taking on specific SENCO duties.

These include:

- Coordination of staff involved with key roles in SEN provision and support;

- Involvement in admissions of any child to kindergarten or school who may have special educational needs;
- Involvement in coordination and liaison between kindergarten & school, where the child concerned is currently in kindergarten and the parents wish the child to progress through to the school.
- Attendance of Steiner SEN training course “Align for Learning” and providing in house training to colleagues.

In the interim, whilst the formal SENCO role develops, the class/kindergarten teachers share responsibility for liaising with the parents, maintaining appropriate child records, contributing to statements and ensuring the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy.

The School Administrator continues to support liaison between external agencies and the teaching staff, helps to collate the appropriate paperwork for SEN statement requests and reviews.

7. SEN provision within the school

The school aim is for all children to have Independent Educational Plans (IEPs) and is moving towards developing these across the school, so that all teachers have an involvement in developing IEP's for children they teach, whether for subject or main lessons.

The school currently employs the services, for approximately 2 visits per year, of an external SEN specialist with experience of Steiner School provision. This person carries out various screening tests to help identify children with learning difficulties and advises staff on appropriate educational activities to rectify or support learning difficulties.

Children with genuine learning difficulties seem unable to make good progress and keep pace with their peers without extra lessons separate to the whole class group. Currently the school's resources are inadequate to provide extra lessons unless parents are able to pay a contribution in addition to the standard school fees towards the extra cost.

The School recognises that this could discriminate against children from poorer families and so if a family agrees to the need for their child to participate in extra lessons but can demonstrate lack of funds to contribute to the cost, our concessions policy applies so that children from poorer families are not disadvantaged.

Extra lessons offered are to a high quality of teaching by experienced and committed members of staff. Regular review meetings are held with the parents to keep them informed and the member of staff takes the lead on developing the Individual Educational Plan, so that the educational challenge they face within the whole class is complementary to the learning they do within their extra lessons.

8. Admissions policy

Norwich Steiner School considers all children as having individual needs and aims to meet these needs as best as possible taking into consideration the child's age, developmental stage and other circumstances.

As part of the Admissions Process any new child will be admitted for a trial period during which staff will consider whether this setting is best placed to cater for a child's requirements positively and fully.

The Admissions policy ensures children with SEN will not currently be accepted when:

1. Norwich Steiner School is unsuitable for a child's age, ability or special educational needs.
2. The child's attendance would be incompatible with the efficient education of the children already placed in our school.
3. We do not have the resources to meet their needs, including considerations of health and safety.

Previous experience has also demonstrated that the curriculum offered by Steiner schools can be particularly beneficial to particular types of learning difficulty, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia. Equally children on the Autistic spectrum may do less well than expected in Steiner settings because the curriculum has a very strong social and emotional element to it which is harder for these children to access, and so socially and emotionally, they can become more distant from others in their peer groups as time progresses.

The class size is also important, as children with learning difficulties, such as ADD or ADHD, may be more noticeable and have a much greater impact in very small classes than within larger groups of children.