

7 February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

We are nearing the end of my first half term in post and I felt it was a pertinent time to make contact to address directly some of the concerns being raised by parents and to outline some of the strategic planning taking place.

### **Communication**

I have received a high volume of communication from parents of students with SEND raising individual complaints, concerns, frustrations and requests for urgent action. It is an unsettling time and you will, understandably, have many questions regarding how the school intend to meet the needs of your child. It is very important that your voice be heard, but this needs to be done in a time and resource efficient manner which enables the important work of supporting young people with SEND in school to take priority. With an inclusion register of over 380 students in a school of 1400 pupils it is right that I triage the support provided. A founding principle of our school culture has to be the premise that the most vulnerable and in need are supported first where resource is limited.

As such I have put in place a triaging system:

#### **For pastoral difficulties...**

...The Tutor is the first point of contact.

They can use the 'One-page Profile' and information from BromCom to help put strategies in place to address the issue.

*If the query is not resolved, the Tutor may make contact with the student's Keyworker/LSA, if they have one.*

Actions taken, up to this point, will be identified and logged before referring to HOY.

If the HOY is unable to resolve the issue, they will refer the young person to the *Student Support Team* triage system for the consideration and allocation of an appropriate support pathway.

#### **For learning difficulties...**

...The Subject Teacher is the first point of contact.  
*Tutors will forward any queries of this nature to the subject teacher.*

They can use the One-page Profile, assessment data from BromCom and their own reasonable adjustments to explore the difficulty in accessing lessons and take first steps to resolve issues.

If the identified support strategies are not effective, and there is no progress made after two cycles (e.g. 2 half terms), the teacher will meet with the *Head of Curriculum* subject before considering a referral to the SEN triage system.

SEND students on the register at 'Targeted' level who are consistently working below age-related expectations over time will be assessed for intervention.

It is necessary for a Graduated Response to be demonstrated *at each step* in both of these protocols before progression on to the next.

If your child has a SEN Key worker in place, then please access this opportunity for contact too (all students with Key Workers should have already received communication).

If your child has an EHCP, or has a learning profile in which there is little to no progress being made, then they will be prioritised for communication by Lynne Childs, Deputy SENCO and myself.

### **Strategic developments**

Strong partnership between support in the home and support at school is the foundation for success.

**Current progress** includes planned opportunities for parent/carer involvement and information-sharing:

SEND Information Evening: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 6.00 -7.30 pm.

SEND Parent Coffee Morning (Ed Psych present): *ADHD Focus* Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 9.30-10.30 am

SEND Parent Coffee Morning (Ed Psych present): *Autism Focus* Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 9.30-10.30 am

SEND Parent Coffee Morning (Ed Psych present): *Literacy Difficulties Focus* Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 9.30-10.30 am

I be presenting at the *Year 11 Exams Evening on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February* on preparing your SEND young person for exams and supporting them to use exams concessions effectively.

Please also take the time to complete the *SEND Parent Questionnaire* by following this link.

<https://form.jotform.com/230363454375052>

Your views are an integral part of the improvement journey.

SEND provision within a school is a 'golden thread' that runs through everything. It is an integrated element of all the work of teachers, leaders, and support staff. It should be seen as part of the culture of a school and embedded as such. Taking care of young people with SEND is therefore the responsibility of all staff and a key element of this work is making reasonable adjustments.

**Current progress** in this area involves reasonable adjustments to the behaviour policy and recovery room provision, direct work with students who are struggling to engage with education, and bespoke planning for the highest need students. One-page profiles are all being updated and SEND interim reviews are taking place for students with EHCP provisions.

There is a very real need to overhaul systems and procedures relating to SEND, to create a new staffing structure with associated accountabilities and develop a robust, achievable and coherent action plan.

**Current progress** involves the internal promotion of Lynne Childs to Deputy SENCO and Patina Douglas as formalised SEND Assessor. New appointments at Higher Level Teaching

#### **Huish Episcopi Academy**

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Assistant and Teaching Assistant level to increase capacity will also be occurring in the next phase. Staff training is booked in at staff meetings next term and on the next INSET days.

Recording systems at the Academy have been disjointed. There isn't one centralised system for recording individual students needs to track the development of need across pastoral, behaviour, safeguarding and SEND.

**Current progress** in this area involves beginning to work with Pastoral and Safeguarding to outline graduated responses across all areas in a systematic protocol. A new system is currently being developed to store centralised documents in ways that promote information sharing but limit access to sensitive data.

My key areas of responsibility are students at risk of permanent exclusion; supporting behaviour management particularly around unmet need and relational behaviour management techniques; assessing and supporting young people who are Emotionally-based school avoidant; reviewing those with Educational Health Care Plans and Looked After Children.

**Current progress** in this area includes diarising EHCP Annual reviews, creating a new system for 'assessment of unmet need' for students at risk of exclusion, working on bespoke support packages and ensuring that appropriate reasonable adjustments are in place.

### **Next Steps**

The SEND team have spent the last 5 weeks reviewing and moderating one-page profiles. This is to ensure that high quality support strategies are shared with teachers to support them to meet the needs of SEND learners in the classroom. This is not an inconsiderable undertaking. All students will have a new profile with targets linked to the school values which will be emailed home within the next few weeks.

If your child has an EHCP then they will have an 'interim review' before a meeting is set with you for an EHCP annual review. You will be receiving an email about this shortly.

SEND reviews will be added to the pastoral program and will form part of the parent contact you receive in the future.

### **Exams Access Arrangements**

I have appointed a SEND Assessor, Patina Douglas, [pdouglas@hea.ac.uk](mailto:pdouglas@hea.ac.uk) whose responsibility is to share information regarding exams access arrangements so that parents are kept informed. The first priority is to contact all parents of those students who have achieved concessions, or are being investigated for concessions, to share this information with parents. I can see the level of frustration around the communication regarding concessions and have therefore prioritised this action.

### **ADHD / Autism Pathway**

There have been an unprecedented number of referrals for Autism and ADHD diagnosis. Until this term this referral process at Huish Episcopi Academy has not been appropriately followed. This has resulted in over 70 students on a waiting list, many of whom have not been referred. The referral process is lengthy and requires time to assess robustly. If your child has already been referred there will now be a mandatory pre-assessment before the referral is submitted. If a young person does not meet the school-based threshold they will not be referred into the

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NHS pathway. Processing current referrals will take time, therefore we have closed the referral system until this work is complete.

If your child is on the waiting list and have already been referred, you will receive email confirmation of this from Sophie King, SEND coordinator. If your child has been prioritised via moderation then you will be contacted to state that your child is awaiting a referral in the next term. If you do not receive direct communication around this it means that your young person is awaiting pre-assessment.

I am determined to support young people with SEND at Huish Episcopi to achieve their full potential and I thank you for your support and patience as this work progresses.

Yours sincerely

**Fran Horsford**  
**Assistant Principal/ SENCO**

