

Additional Learning Needs Policy

Audience	All stakeholders – staff, students, trustees, parents/carers and visitors
Status/review cycle	Non-Statutory/Annual
Current review	May 2026
Next review	May 2027
Review committee	Operational Development
Staff lead	Jorja Bullock, Director of Additional Learning Needs and Kate Parsons, Assistant Principal – Student Services
Trustee lead	N/A

1. Introduction and Ethos

Esher Sixth Form College is committed to creating a culture of high expectations and outstanding achievement. We are specialists in sixth form education, dedicated to ensuring that all students, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (referred to as Additional Learning Needs), are full, valued, and active members of our College community.

We recognise our students as young adults and place a strong emphasis on personal responsibility, mutual respect, and positive contribution. In line with this, the College takes a proactive, whole-College approach to accessibility. We use our 'best endeavours' to identify and remove barriers to learning, ensuring the college is accessible to all.

Our approach to supporting Additional Learning Needs is rooted in the College's values:

- **Inclusivity:** We actively embrace diversity, ensuring every community member is valued, respected, and provided with equal opportunities for growth, participation, and success. This means designing our environments and Quality First Teaching practices to be inherently accessible, minimising the need for separate adjustments wherever possible.
- **Community:** We cultivate a vibrant community characterised by collaboration and mutual support where everyone contributes to our collective and individual successes, fostering a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose. We work as a team—linking students, parents/carers, teachers, and learning mentors—to create an environment where everyone can thrive.
- **Empowerment:** We champion autonomy and aspiration, empowering every individual to actively shape their educational and professional paths to achieve their full potential. We support students in taking ownership of their learning, actively listening to their voices about the barriers they face, and equipping them with the tools and independence needed for their future pathways.

2: Identification and the Graduated Approach

The College views identification as a collaborative partnership to understand how the learning environment can be adjusted, rather than purely generating diagnostic labels. The purpose of identifying needs is to determine the actions the College can take to remove barriers to student achievement.

The College uses the Graduated Approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review). This cycle allows us to refine our understanding of the barriers a student faces and adapt our environment so they can achieve their full potential.

- **Assess:** Students can self-declare additional learning needs, disabilities, or previous Exam Access Arrangements at the application and enrolment stage. Additionally, students can make themselves known or be referred by their teachers at any point during their course.
- **Plan:** If targeted adjustments are required, the ALN team, teaching staff, and the student will agree on the strategies to address the barrier.
- **Do:** The subject teacher remains fully responsible and accountable for the student's day-to-day progress and development within the classroom, including where students access targeted support or assistive technology. Teachers are responsible for maintaining an inclusive learning environment.
- **Review:** The effectiveness of the adjustments and their impact on the student's progress will be reviewed at appropriate points based on need. This review focuses on building autonomy and independence and on evaluating whether the environment has been successfully adapted or whether further adjustments are required. This feeds directly back into the next assessment phase, creating a continuous loop of support.

Students can engage with this process at any stage of their journey—including admissions interviews, enrolment, or via an internal teacher referral upon commencement of their course.

3. Provision and Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are practical changes the College makes to remove or reduce a substantial disadvantage experienced by disabled students (as defined by the Equality Act) in accessing learning, College services or participating in College life.

In determining what is reasonable, the College will take account of the likely effectiveness of the adjustment, and the resources available to the College (including staffing, timetabling and cost) as well as any significant impact on other members of the College community.

To ensure compliance with our statutory 'best endeavours' duty, the College provides a tiered framework of support designed to remove barriers and foster student autonomy. We offer universal and targeted adjustments to create an accessible learning environment.

Universal Provision: Quality First Teaching

The foundation of our support is a whole-College approach rooted in Quality First Teaching. Subject teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress of all students in their classes. Lessons are proactively planned to address potential areas of difficulty and to minimise barriers to achievement. This is achieved through the use of accessible materials and inclusive classroom strategies that reduce cognitive load, such as explicit instruction, scaffolding, retrieval practice, and promoting metacognition.

Targeted Support: The Additional Learning Needs Offer

Where a student requires support that is 'additional to or different from' universal provision, the ALN Centre offers targeted interventions to build academic skill and independence:

- **ALN Study Hub:** We are open daily for 'drop-in' support where a Learning Mentor is always available. Weekly sessions are delivered in the ALN Study Hub covering themes such as weekly planning, revision techniques, how to use your Exam Access Arrangements and support in applying for DSA at University

- **Group Support:** Following teacher referral, students can attend a short course of timetabled group sessions focused on improving time management, organisational strategies, revision techniques, or self-refer to a range of one-off sessions.
- **Quiet Zone:** Students who require a low-arousal area can use our ALN quiet zone to work or decompress during their free periods.

Specialist Support and Assistive Technology

We prioritise the use of assistive technology to empower students to bypass environmental barriers and establish their normal way of working:

- **Assistive Software:** Tools such as Read&Write software and reading pens are available to promote independent learning. Students requiring a reader or scribe are actively encouraged to utilise these technological solutions.
- **Equipment Loans:** Laptops are available across the College on a 3-hour loan basis, and students are welcome to bring their own personal laptops for classroom use and self-study.
- **Centre Facilities:** The ALN Centre is equipped with PCs, a scanner, a printer, and a photocopier for student use during private study time

4. EHCP & High-Needs Provision

Esher Sixth Form College is committed to fostering a collaborative environment where students with complex needs or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are fully included and supported to achieve individual success. Students with an EHCP require a more coordinated, statutory level of provision, which the College delivers alongside Local Authorities to ensure environmental and structural barriers are addressed.

EHCP Admissions, Consultations and Support

- **Application:** Students with an EHCP apply for a place through the general admissions process via the College website and are required to achieve the standard College entry criteria set out in the Admissions Policy.
- **Local Authority Consultation:** Alongside this, the College must be formally consulted on all EHCP applications by the relevant Local Authority. The final placement decision is dependent on the Local Authority completing this consultation, as directed by the SEND Code of Practice 2015, by 31 March of the relevant year.
- **Communication:** The College can only communicate with parents and carers regarding individual adjustments and needs upon the successful completion of this formal Local Authority consultation.
- **Disclosure:** It is vital that applicants disclose their EHCP during the admissions process. In the event that a student enrolls without disclosing an EHCP, the College cannot guarantee that appropriate statutory support and adjustments will be in place for the start of the course.
- **Dedicated Mentor Support:** To ensure continuity of support and remove systemic barriers, students with an EHCP are assigned a dedicated Learning Mentor. The mentor will work with the student for the duration of their time at Esher Sixth Form College for up to one hour on a weekly basis.
- **The Local Offer:** In accordance with statutory requirements, the College publishes its Local Offer - SEN Information Report on the College website. This report is reviewed and updated annually in partnership with Surrey County Council

5. Exam Access Arrangements

Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) are pre-examination adjustments that allow students with substantial and long-term difficulties to demonstrate their knowledge and skills without being unfairly disadvantaged by the assessment format.

Regulation and Deadlines

- The Director of Additional Learning Needs is responsible for the formal application process for Exam Access Arrangements, which are strictly regulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).
- **Application Deadlines:** To meet external examination board requirements, all Exam Access Arrangements must be processed and applied for by the College by early March of a student's 6.2 (second) year. To facilitate this, the College has an internal deadline of 18 December to allow time to make the application with the evidence requirements as set out below, and to allow time to ensure that the Exam Access Arrangements are the student's 'normal way of working'.
- **Late Disclosures:** While every effort will be made to accommodate late disclosures, Exam Access Arrangements cannot be guaranteed past 18 December due to the substantial processing and administrative time and paperwork required by external boards.

Exam Access Arrangements and the "Normal Way of Working"

- **Classroom Evidence:** In accordance with JCQ regulations, Exam Access Arrangements cannot be granted based on a diagnosis alone. Subject teachers must provide evidence confirming that the adjustment reflects the student's 'normal way of working' in lessons.
- **Student Engagement:** It is expected that students actively engage with any targeted support and utilise their extra time during classroom assessments to help build this mandatory, continued evidence of need. If a student fails to engage with the process, or does not disclose previous documents, arrangements cannot be implemented.
- **Historical Evidence:** It is the responsibility of students and their parents/carers to provide the College with appropriate supporting evidence from their GCSE examinations (such as completed and signed Forms 8 and 9) so that these arrangements can be 'rolled forward' where regulations allow. The College strongly advises parents and carers to read the official JCQ Guidance for Parents and Carers. [Guidance for parents, carers and students about access arrangements – Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

Dyslexia and External Reports

- **Dyslexia:** For the purpose of awarding Access Arrangements, the College does not accept diagnostic reports from external assessors with whom we do not have an established working relationship. Parents and carers wishing to seek a private diagnosis for dyslexia are advised to contact the ALN department first to obtain details of approved external assessors.
- **Other Conditions:** The College will accept diagnostic reports from qualified professionals detailing other medical or neurodivergent conditions (such as ADHD, ASD, OCD). Although a specialist, e.g. a medical consultant, may recommend specific access arrangements, it is the Director of Additional Learning Needs who will determine the arrangements for the candidate's examinations using their professional judgement based on their knowledge of the candidate's disability, the candidate's normal way of working in timed assessments and comments and observations from teaching staff.

- **CAMHS/NHS waiting lists.** Due to the current length of time to gain a diagnosis. The Director of Additional Learning Needs can, in exceptional circumstances, accept a CAMHS/NHS Trust referral confirmation/acceptance letter agreeing to formally assess / showing that the student on the list is to be screened and/or is likely to receive a formal diagnosis. However, in order to produce a ‘compelling picture of need’ within Part 1 of Form 9, there will be a greater reliance on centre-based evidence, such as comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff.

Screening and Internal Referrals

- **The Teacher Referral Process:** If a subject teacher notices a student is facing persistent barriers to learning despite Quality First Teaching adjustments, they can initiate an Additional Learning Needs Referral via the college database.
- **Holistic Review:** Once all of the student’s subject teachers have contributed, the ALN team will review the collective evidence to determine the most effective next steps.
- **In-House Specialist Assessment:** Based on this evidence, the student may be offered a targeted series of sessions with a Learning Mentor or be referred internally for a formal assessment with the College’s in-house specialist assessors.
- **Result:** The formal diagnostic data gathered by the specialist assessors, combined with the evidence of the student’s normal way of working in class, will be used by the Director of Additional Learning Needs to make a final decision on Exam Access Arrangements

6. Preparing for Higher Education, Training, and Employment

Esher Sixth Form College champions autonomy and aspiration. We recognise our students as young adults, and our ultimate goal is to equip them with the tools, skills, and independence needed to shape their own paths beyond their time at Esher

- Additional Learning Needs provision is explicitly designed to prepare students for a smooth transition into adulthood, including higher education, apprenticeships, further training, or employment.
- Our focus is on reducing reliance on human prompts, ensuring students establish independent ways of working that they can take with them to university or the workplace.
- The ALN team works collaboratively with the College’s Progression Guidance department to provide clear information and support regarding transitions, including advising students on how to apply for Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA) for university.

EHCP Annual Reviews and Transition Planning

- **Focus on Adulthood:** For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), statutory Annual Reviews are used as an active transition planning tool. In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, these reviews focus explicitly on preparing for adulthood, including independent living, higher education, and career aspirations.