



Neurodiversity at Nidderdale High School

Nidderdale High School is a neurodiverse community. This means that our students, staff, parents and other partners, as well as being brought together from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, also bring together many learning styles, levels of previous academic attainment and ways of processing the world.

“Neurodiversity is the diversity of human brains and minds, the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species.” (Nick Walker, <https://autisticuk.org/neurodiversity/>, 2022)

At Nidderdale High School we believe that there is no ‘normal’ or ‘ideal’ type of brain, learning style or way of processing the world, in much the same way as we do not believe that there is a ‘normal’ or ‘ideal’ culture, religion, race or gender. We recognise that our learners, staff and wider community can all contribute to the school and develop themselves in a wide variety of wonderful ways.

Underlying this ethos is the belief that we need to enable all learners to thrive, by finding ways in which they can learn, by celebrating their talents and strengths and supporting their needs. This document aims to illustrate the processes that we use to support our diverse range of learners to thrive and develop.



Transition from Primary School

All students who are identified to us by their parents or their primary school as requiring additional support are invited to take part in extended transition opportunities in the summer term of Year 6. All students in Year 6 will be visited at their primary school by a member of the Nidderdale High School staff, during the summer term, who will speak to them and their teachers about their hopes and concerns about moving to secondary school.

Literacy Screening in Key Stage 3

Students with dyslexia and challenges around learning to read, write and spell come to us with a wide variety of needs, successes and prior attainment. For that reason, there is not a 'one size fits all' approach when it comes to supporting these students. The diagram below shows the support that is available for students who need support to continue to acquire literacy skills:

Annual Literacy Screening:

All students in Key Stage 3 undertake annual literacy screening. This indicates to us the level at which young people are working in relation to key literacy skills (reading and spelling)



Review of Screening Results:

Results of literacy screening tests are reviewed by the SENCo. Intervention is planned according to the results of these screening tests:



Students attaining a standardised score of 84 or below in reading and /or spelling:

Students are enrolled into the Catch Up Literacy Programme for at least a 12 week period during the following academic year. Teaching staff will be made aware of the need to support subject specific literacy skills in each subject area. Students may have a Learning Plan which lays out their individual strengths and needs. Parents are invited to contribute to this plan. All staff will be aware of this plan. Learning Plans will be reviewed at least termly.

If the Catch Up Literacy Programme is found not to be suitable for a young person the Learning Support Team will suggest an appropriate alternative.

Students attaining a standardised score of 85 or above in reading and spelling:

Students at the lower end of average may benefit from additional opportunities to read with an adult and will be invited to join a Guided Reading group or to read with a Year 10 Reading Mentor in school each week.

Teaching staff will be made aware of the young people who do not need literacy intervention but equally do not have fully proficient literacy skills so that they can support the development of subject specific literacy skills in each subject area.

Parents are invited to speak to the Learning Support team if they need further information.

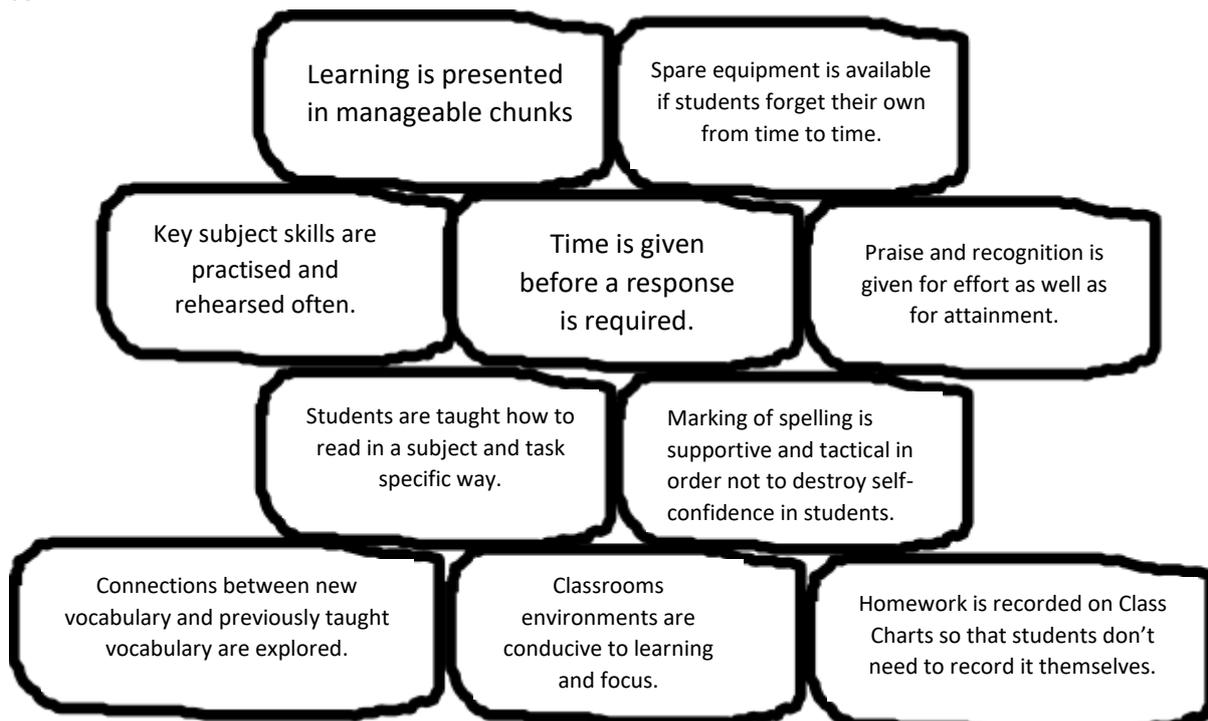
What is a 'standardised score'?

In any year group, the difference between the ages of two individual young people can be up to 12 months. The older students are sometimes at an advantage as they will have an additional year's vocabulary and literacy experience compared to a younger child. For this reason, older pupils can often achieve higher scores than younger pupils in tests of reading and spelling due to the natural fluctuations that their ages have produced. To ensure fairness to all pupils, we use screening tests where scores are age optimised – this means that pupils' ages are taken into account by comparing pupils with others of exactly the same age in a nationally representative sample, rather than comparing them against the other young people in their year groups.

What if a student is identified as having challenges acquiring literacy skills, but has standardised literacy scores within the average range?

It is important to remember that dyslexia is a symptom and not a cause. The identification of dyslexia shows that a person has a weakness in an area of working memory, phonemic awareness, recall of facts, numerical calculations, etc. A diagnosis of dyslexia does not offer any insight into **why** a person has a weakness in this area. These weaknesses could be caused by any or all from a wide variety of causes including genetic factors, physical conditions, issues which rendered them unable to learn phonics alongside their peers in their early schooling – such as deafness, behavioural challenges, autism, living overseas, etc. and social emotional and mental health challenges, including anxiety, which may reduce the cognitive function available to perform and develop literacy skills over time.

Some students with dyslexic traits have excellent literacy skills but need support in other areas, such as personal organisation, motivation, etc. whilst some find literacy skills persistently difficult to master. For this reason there is no 'one size fits all' approach that we can take. Instead, subject staff will utilise a range of strategies to support students with their specific dyslexic traits. A sample of the strategies available to staff are listed below. The most appropriate strategy for a student will depend on the subject being taught and the type of learning being done within the lesson. Teachers will use their professional judgement to provide the right support at the right time, including strategies such as:



What about handwriting?

Legible handwriting is a challenging skill to master for some young people. If students need support with this, we use the MSL Handwriting Rescue Scheme.

Students completing this intervention spend 20 minutes per week in school with a trained member of staff and complete daily ten minutes exercises at home.

What about word processing?

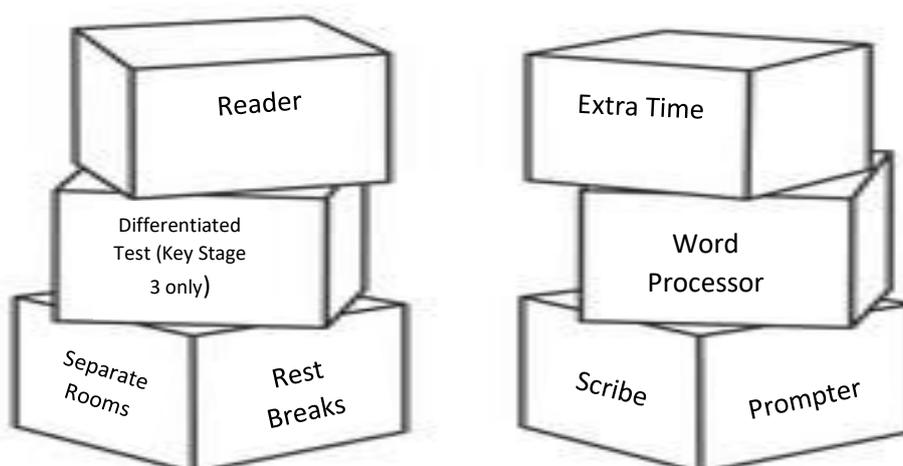
For some students, legible handwriting may not be achievable for reasons relating to physical needs, autism or vision difficulties, etc. These students may benefit instead from learning to touch type so that they can word process text rather than handwriting it. We use the BBC Dance Mat Programme for this. Students can access this from home or at school.

Some students may also benefit from using a word processor rather than handwriting for a variety of other reasons. These students can also access the BBC Dance Mat Programme. These students are encouraged to use a school laptop in lessons for extended pieces of writing so that they build up the skills that they need to word process text proficiently.

Eventually, students for whom the use of a laptop is their normal way of working in lessons may be eligible to use a laptop to word process some of their GCSE examinations in Year 11.

Assessment Support

To ensure that all students have a fair chance to demonstrate their knowledge in formal assessments we have a variety of tools available to support students in assessments and external examinations. Teachers will work with the SENCo to decide the right support tools for each student. The range of support tools available to students is shown below:



Teaching staff work with the students and the SENCo to find the combination of support strategies which most suit a student's needs.

Visual Stress and Colour Blindness

Some students are diagnosed with visual stress conditions such as Irlen Syndrome. This commonly occurs alongside dyslexic traits in students. For students with a diagnosis of visual stress we can provide paper and exercise books in their required colour, as well as plastic overlays which students can use to support their reading in class.

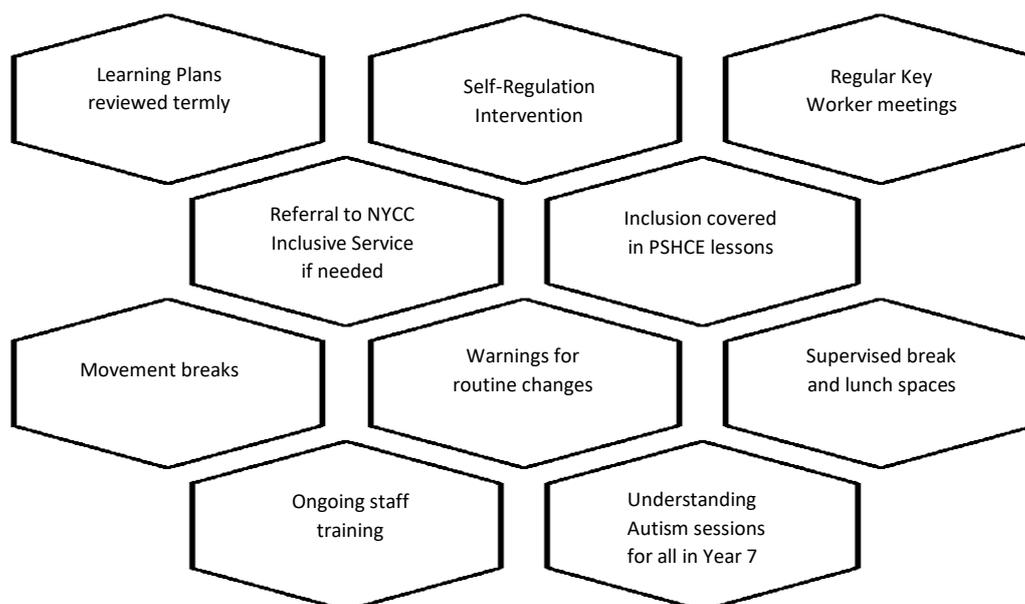
Some students wear glasses with lenses which are tinted with the most preferential colour for the student. School readily accepts the wearing of these spectacles once parents have provided these.

Once a preferred colour is identified for students diagnosed with visual stress, internal and external assessments can be provided which are printed on the preferred colour.

If a student is diagnosed as colour blind parents are asked to contact the SENCo to advise of this. Students will be given support where colours are an integral part of the curriculum, such as in map reading in Geography lessons. Students will also be given formal support during any external assessments where colour perception is an integral part of answering a specific question.

Communication and Interaction Needs

Some students with needs in this area may have a diagnosis of Autism, or they may have the traits of Autism but no formal diagnosis. Students experience these types of need on a spectrum, with some students needing only limited amounts of support whilst other need a range of interventions. Some of the support strategies used to develop skills in this area are below:



Speech, Language and Communication Needs

We can refer students to a speech and language therapist, with parental permission, if there are concerns about the clarity of a young person's speech or the effectiveness with which they communicate. The first step in this is to assess the needs of the young person using an assessment tool provided by the speech and language therapy team at Harrogate Hospital.

Physical Needs and Disabilities

Where students have a diagnosis relating to a medical condition, we will work with parents and the medical professionals involved with a young person to create a care plan which suits their needs.

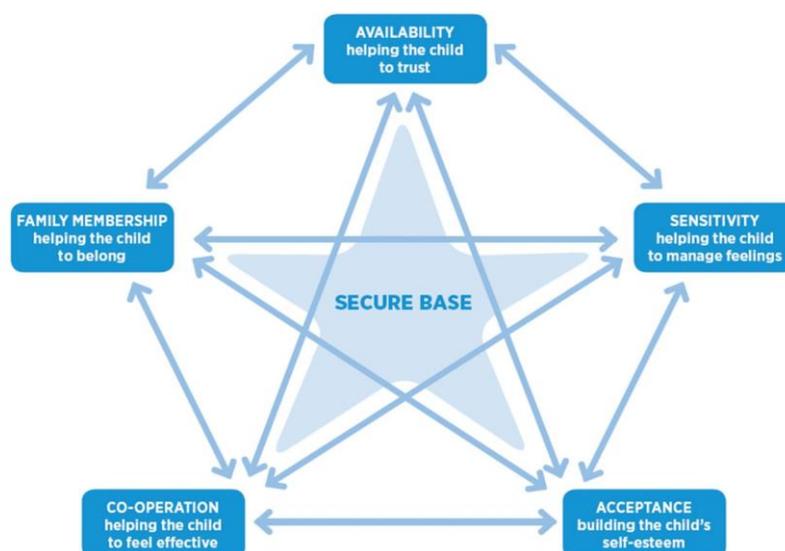
Parents are involved in the care planning process and will meet with the SENCo to discuss the needs of a young person in the first instance.

Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs

Our students transition through a range of stages as they develop into teenagers and then young adults. This can be a challenging time for any young person. Our Pastoral Team, alongside our teachers of Personal, Social and Health Education, SENCo, teachers and form tutors offer a range of support strategies which are available to all students – this is known as 'Universal Provision'. However, some students need more than this. When this happens Learning Plans can be put in place and referrals to external agencies can be made as necessary.

We base our approach to supporting young people with 'SEMH' needs around the 'Secure Base Model' by Gillian Schofield:

The Secure Base model



Process Map for Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs

All young people may need guidance, support or advice at times. At these times they can speak to the SENCO, Pastoral Team, form tutors or subject teachers as well as any other staff member in school. This is part of our universal provision and is open to any and all young people in the school.

A member of staff becomes aware of a safeguarding matter:

The staff member will follow separate safeguarding guidance.

A staff member becomes aware of a pastoral concern (bullying, out of school related issues, feeling nervous, illness, etc.)

The staff member will either deal with the issue or refer the young person to the relevant Pastoral Officer.

A staff member becomes aware of a concern about a student in a specific subject or area.

The staff member will either deal with the concern, or speak to or refer the young person to the relevant subject teacher or subject lead.

Can the Pastoral Officer or staff member resolve the concern?

No

The Pastoral Officer or staff member will refer the issue to whoever is the most appropriate of Senior Pastoral Lead or SENCO.

On the date that a referral to the Senior Pastoral Lead or SENCO is made a short note will be added in the student's school file which notes what the issue is, who is going to deal with it, the date, what the next steps are and when it will be reviewed.

The Pastoral Manager or SENCO will ensure that the agreed next steps are completed.

Yes

This is part of the universal provision in school and no further action is required. A record will be kept by the staff member which details what the concern was and how it was resolved.

On the agreed date for review, the Senior Pastoral Lead or SENCO will review the effectiveness of the measures put in place.

Where support measures need to stay in place in the long term (longer than 2 terms):

Students who require support which is additional to or different from the 'Universal Provision' (which is available to all learners) for longer than two academic terms are usually then formally recognised as having special educational needs. Parents will be informed of this and the student's record will be updated. This will also indicate to the local authority that a student has special educational needs.

When a student is originally identified formally as having special educational needs in a different school, this status will remain with them at Nidderdale High School until such a time as they no longer need support which is additional to or different from the 'Universal Provision' which is available to all learners.

Students who are formally identified as having special educational needs are often referred to as having a 'K Code' as this is the code that the local authority use to alert a school to a child who has already been formally recognised as having special educational needs.

Once support has been in place for a young person for more than two terms, a formal Learning Plan will be created which details the support that they need, the review schedule for this and any progress that they make.

Applications for an Education, Health and Care Plan:

When at least two cycles of support have been provided for a learner and the decision has been made to formally identify them as having special educational needs, consideration may be given to a request to the local authority for statutory assessment. This will be discussed with parents and the following may be taken into account:

The level and type of support that the student needs.

The history of need.

The wishes of parents.

The wishes of the student.

Feedback from teaching and support staff.

Input from any external agency working with the student.

Requests for a statutory assessment by the local authority will always be discussed with parents and applications will only be made through collaboration with parents.

External Advice For Parents & Carers

SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service) is a confidential and impartial information, advice and support service on issues related to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

It is free, easy to access and confidential. SENDIASS can help children, parents and young people take part in decisions that affect their lives.

SENDIASS offer information, advice and support to:

- Children and young people (up to 25 years) with SEND
- Parents and carers of children with SEND
- Practitioners (who might support children, young people or parents to access our service)

Parents or young people can contact SENDIASS using the contact details on the website below:

<https://sendiassnorthyorkshire.co.uk/>

Key Contacts in school for SEND related queries:

Year 7 & 8 Pastoral Officer – Sarah Beard

sarah.beard@nidderdale.n-yorks.sch.uk

Contact for: day to day concerns about young people in Year 7 or year 8

Key Stage 4 learning Manager – Jan Ashton

jan.ashton@nidderdale.n-yorks.sch.uk

Contact for: day to day concerns about young people in Years 9 to 11

Senior Pastoral Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead – Anneliese Walker

anneliese.walker@nidderdale.n-yorks.sch.uk

Contact for: safeguarding concerns relating to any young person in the school

Special Educational Needs Coordinator – Jenn Blunstone

jenny.blunstone@nidderdale.n-yorks.sch.uk

Contact for: any issues relating to special educational needs

Head Teacher – Kath Jordan

admin@nidderdale.n-yorks.sch.uk

Contact for: all concerns that cannot be addressed by the people listed above.

For all queries relating to Special Educational Needs you can use our dedicated email address:

send@nidderdale.n-yorks.sch.uk

You will immediately receive a message in reply which tells you when you can expect a response to your query. If your query is urgent (for example, relating to a safeguarding issue or other emergency) then please email one of the people listed above so that they can respond to your query more urgently, or telephone the school reception on 01423 711246.

Other sources of support and information:

The Education Endowment Foundation – An independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. They do this by supporting schools to improve teaching and learning through better use of evidence

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk>

Our school website – Our website contains practical information such as our policies, term dates and information about our curriculum.

<http://nidderdale.n-yorks.sch.uk/>

The National Autistic Society - The UK's leading charity for people on the autistic spectrum and their families. Since 1962, they have been providing support, guidance and advice, as well as campaigning for improved rights, services and opportunities to help create a society that works for autistic people.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/>

The British Dyslexia Association – A charity representing dyslexic people since 1972.

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

The NHS Website – despite dyslexia not being recognised as a medical condition, there is lots of information on the NHS website that you may be interested to read.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia/>

The Dyspraxia Foundation – An organisation committed to raising awareness about dyspraxia.

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/about-dyspraxia/>

The Zarach Project – supports families living with poverty by providing practicalities such as beds and food.

<https://zarach.org/priorities/>