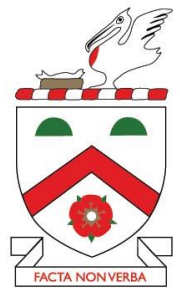


# FRED LONGWORTH HIGH SCHOOL



December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

This letter and information is aimed specifically at parents and carers of children with SEND needs or suspected SEND needs.

If your child has a SEND need, Mrs Waring and the SEND team in school will do everything that they can to support your child; however, you need to be aware that our services are becoming increasingly stretched due to the exponential rise in requests for support. This is not just a problem experienced here at Fred Longworth High School but schools nationally.

Mrs Waring will endeavour to respond to parent communications within 48 hours; however, we are running what is essentially a triage system and prioritizing cases so there may be a delay in responding to you. We hope this letter helps you to understand the system and the support that the school does provide. Before contacting school regarding a SEND query, please respect the fact that there may be a delay before you receive a response.

## **Seeking specific diagnosis and working with or without a diagnosis.**

### **ASD, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia**

Some parents contact us assuming that we can diagnose specific learning conditions such as ADHD and ASD. This is simply not the case. Only a paediatrician, referred to you by a GP can provide a formal diagnosis. If you suspect that your child has these traits, in the first instance you need to go to your GP to initiate the diagnosis process. School will then be contacted to provide evidence to support a diagnosis. If you do suspect that your child falls into this category, please inform us of your concerns and we will alert teaching staff to these concerns.

Our staff are adept at supporting children with ASD and ADHD traits. We continually train staff on the range of approaches they can use in the classroom to support students. All staff have an extensive SEND Handbook which outlines the strategies to be used. Regardless of whether or not your child has a formal diagnosis, these strategies are rooted in good teaching and consistency. We do not need a formal diagnosis to do the right thing.

For students with a formal ADHD diagnosis, Mrs Waring and the team run small self-help groups for students, this is to help them understand their condition better and to provide them with strategies to help them cope with situations more effectively. We also work closely with the NHS Mental Health Support Team and a referral be made to develop strategies around worry management, low mood and anxiety.

Communication across our staff also plays an important part in alerting staff to children who are presenting with difficulties. Each morning we hold a daily briefing for Heads of Year and Senior Staff to discuss children who may be struggling in school. We also hold weekly whole-staff briefings and

during these staff are also alerted to children presenting with specific challenges and how teaching staff can support them. Children's learning difficulties are always recorded on our management information system. This is crucial information which staff access and utilise to plan their lessons.

### **Dyslexic Screener**

We can only partially help to identify students who may have conditions such as dyslexia. If parents and school suspect there are traits the SEND team are able to conduct a Dyslexic Screener, but this is not a full diagnostic assessment; it is a screener. This means its purpose is to identify children who are having difficulties that are often linked with dyslexia. It will inform us if your child needs further investigation. The results from the screener are not intended to give firm evidence that dyslexia is present at this stage. When we believe a child is showing dyslexic traits and staff are alerted, the handbook illustrates the support that a classroom teacher can put in place. However, as a school we cannot provide a formal diagnosis. If you are seeking a formal diagnosis for dyslexia, dyscalculia, or dyspraxia you would need to arrange this privately.

### **Private Diagnosis'**

If you choose to go down the private route for a diagnosis, please think carefully about the company that you select. Please seek to use a company that does a thorough investigation of your child including observations within the school environment and face to face appointments. We will work with closely with the company.

Also, for information if you have a private diagnosis for ADHD and decide to medicate your child, you will not be eligible for free NHS prescriptions. You still have to go through the whole diagnosis process with the NHS to be able to access NHS free prescriptions.

If your child has been prescribed any form of medication to help manage their condition and behaviours throughout the day, please ensure that your child has been medicated at the appropriate time in the morning before school. When children come to school unmedicated, it can subsequently present challenges for them during the day. Please let us know if your child has not taken their medication so staff can be aware and support.

### **Educational Health and Care Pathway**

#### **Graduated Approach**

The vast majority of our students who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) will not need a referral to the EHC Pathway because their needs can be met through the provision made through our Graduated Approach to SEND (please see the flow chart below). Only students requiring exceptional support and additional school funding will need a referral to the Education, Health and Care (EHC) Pathway. The EHCP process is complex as applications are externally assessed and approved. It can take a couple of months to prepare the documentation and gather the evidence for the application.

### **Support from a Learning Coach (Teaching Assistant)**

Many children come to us from primary school where the class has been supported extensively by a Teaching Assistant. We have over 250 students on our SEND register and a small team of Learning Coaches. Part of the secondary school journey is about building independence but if your child has an EHCP they will have access to a Learning Coach in some of their lessons if support is required.

### **Reading with your child**

A lot of children on our SEND register may struggle with weak literacy skills. The only way to improve this is for your child to read more. Your child's interim report intentionally informs you of your child's reading age. If your child has a reading age below their chronological age, they are going to struggle to access the curriculum. Our weakest readers (identified as readers with a reading age of 7 or 8) are supported in school and are involved in a specific staff-led reading programme to boost their literacy skills. The Reading Plus programme utilised by our English department for students in Years 7 and Year 8 also boosts student literacy. Parents can support their child by ensuring that their child completes their Reading Plus homework.

If your child does have a reading age below their chronological age, the best thing that you can do to support your child is to read with them for approximately 15 minutes each night. This is proven to boost confidence, self-esteem and their literacy skills. Encourage your child to read out-loud and ask them questions about what they have read to check their understanding. If this becomes a regular routine, it will improve your child's reading ability.

### **Strong Routines and Behaviours for Learning**

Children benefit when there are clear routines, consistency and boundaries both in school and at home. Regardless of any need, we would be failing children if we did not impose a consequence after they have done something wrong in school; however, when appropriate we do make reasonable adjustments to our behaviour policy. I wrote to parents recently to explain some of the new routines and systems we have put in place in school to ensure a calm and consistent learning environment. When a child has misbehaved in school and we have imposed a sanction, it is important that parents follow this up consistently at home as well. Children only thrive in school when there is a consistent approach between school and home. If this is not the case, children receive mixed messages which in turn does nothing to help improve their behaviour. Mrs Waring is looking to put in place workshops and support groups for parents which will explain the importance of consistency and routines.

I hope this letter helps to clarify certain processes and systems. Further information can be found on our school website under Inclusion. Please understand, we are doing our very best for your child, working in partnership with you we can support your child.

Yours sincerely



Mr P Davies

Headteacher

## Graduated Response to SEND – Generic Flowchart

Assess, Plan, Do, Review at each stage

### Inclusive Quality First Teaching

#### Effective Inclusive Classrooms

Teacher notices some difficulty  
Analyse tracking data  
Have conversation with SENCO  
Consider Checklists/audits of current provision.  
Differentiate tasks as appropriate  
Discuss with pupil and parents/carers

#### Specific intervention /Low level support

Think about removing barriers to achievement and personalisation  
Discuss in Progress Meetings

#### Specific intervention/high level support

Personalisation  
Consider referral to external agency

#### External Agency

Act on advice  
Discuss progress at Review Meetings

#### Gather evidence for EHC Referral

Tracking data  
All About Me  
EHC Assessment Reports  
Costed Provision Map

#### EHC Referral

Exceptional support  
Applicable to FEW pupils

Lots of additional support  
Applicable to SOME pupils

Some additional support  
Applicable to SOME pupils

No additional support  
Applicable to ALL pupils