



Practical guide to educational needs support

SECONDARY STUDENTS

This comprehensive **manual** provides **secondary teachers and educational support staff with practical tools and strategies** for supporting students with special educational needs across Years 7-13. Whether you are identifying early warning signs, implementing classroom adaptations, or preparing students for university, this guide offers evidence-based approaches that work in school settings.

From quick assessment protocols to subject-specific adaptations, you will find everything needed to create an inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive. The focus is on practical implementation, with ready-to-use templates, clear action flows, and specific strategies tailored to the British curriculum context.



CORE PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

INCLUSION FIRST

Every student has the **fundamental right to learn alongside their peers in the mainstream classroom.**

This principle drives all our decisions and interventions.



EARLY DETECTION

Systematic **monitoring of changes in behaviour, academic performance, or social relationships** enables timely intervention and support.

COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

Form tutors, SENCOs, educational psychologists, and families must maintain **constant communication and shared responsibility.**



EVIDENCE-BASED FLEXIBILITY

Continuously evaluate what works. Successful strategies are maintained and refined; ineffective approaches are adjusted or replaced.

These four pillars form the foundation of effective SEN support in secondary education. They ensure that interventions are both proactive and responsive, creating an environment where students with diverse needs can access the curriculum successfully.

The key is maintaining this balance between consistency in approach and flexibility in implementation, always guided by what the evidence tells us about individual student progress.



QUICK ASSESSMENT GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



SUDDEN DROP IN GRADES

Complete a concern form immediately and notify the form tutor. Document specific subjects affected and any patterns observed.



ATTENTION / IMPULSIVITY ISSUES

Observe behaviour across different contexts - lessons, break times, group work. Note triggers and successful management strategies.



EXAM ANXIETY

Discuss concerns with form tutor and SENCO. Consider mock exam observations and stress management strategies.



SOCIAL ISOLATION

Implement sociogram activities or tutor group exercises to understand peer relationships and identify intervention points.



WRITING DIFFICULTIES

Refer for comprehensive handwriting assessment if writing is consistently slow, illegible, or causing distress.



SUBJECT-SPECIFIC CURRICULUM ADAPTATIONS

ENGLISH LITERATURE & LANGUAGE

- Audiobooks for text access.
- Voice recognition software for essays.
- Sentence starters and writing frames.
- Graphic organizers for analysis.

MATHEMATICS

- Scientific calculators permitted.
- Visual aids and manipulatives.
- Real-world problem contexts.
- Step-by-step method cards.

SCIENCES

- Detailed diagram worksheets.
- Guided practical investigations.
- Alternative assessment formats.
- Concept mapping tools.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- Digital flashcards for vocabulary.
- Emphasis on oral assessment.
- Model phrases and structures.
- Cultural immersion activities.

HUMANITIES (HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY)

- Visual timelines and maps.
- Summary sheets for key concepts.
- Specialised glossaries.
- Documentary alternatives to reading.





CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

QUICK REFERENCE

ADHD SUPPORT

Provide concise, step-by-step instructions. Seat students near the teacher but away from distractions. Implement movement breaks and fidget tools.

- Break cards for sensory breaks.
- Clear visual timetables.
- Positive reinforcement systems.

DYSLEXIA ADAPTATIONS

Use clear fonts (e.g., Arial, Comic Sans) and high-contrast materials. Allow extra processing time and provide coloured overlays or paper.

- Text-to-speech software.
- Spelling aids and dictionaries.
- Alternative recording methods.

DYSCALCULIA SUPPORT

Employ visual representations and concrete manipulatives. Focus on conceptual understanding before procedural skills.

- Number lines and grids.
- Calculator access when appropriate.
- Real-world mathematical contexts.

ANXIETY/DEPRESSION SUPPORT

Provide predictable routines and advance notice of changes. Establish a trusted adult contact and safe spaces for regulation.

- Flexible deadlines when needed.
- Mindfulness and breathing techniques.
- Regular check-ins.

AUTISM SPECTRUM SUPPORT

Create visual schedules and prepare students for transitions. Use literal, concrete language and provide processing time.

- Social stories for challenging situations.
- Sensory considerations.
- Structured peer interactions.

**These strategies can be adapted and combined based on individual student profiles. Remember that many students may present with multiple needs, requiring a flexible, holistic approach to support.*



PARENT PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES

01

ESTABLISH STRUCTURED ROUTINES

Create **consistent study and rest schedules**. Predictable routines reduce anxiety and improve focus for students with additional needs.

02

OPTIMISE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Designate a **quiet, distraction-free study space**. Ensure adequate lighting and comfortable seating arrangements.

03

CELEBRATE EFFORT OVER RESULTS

Focus **praise on persistence, strategy use, and improvement rather than just grades**. This builds resilience and motivation.

04

PRIORITISE SLEEP HYGIENE

Maintain **regular bedtime routines**. Quality sleep is essential for cognitive function and emotional regulation.

05

MAINTAIN POSITIVE SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Regular, **constructive dialogue** with teachers builds trust and ensures consistency between home and school support.

Effective home-school partnerships are built on **mutual respect and shared goals**. Parents bring invaluable insights about their child's strengths, interests, and effective strategies. Schools provide expertise in curriculum demands and peer dynamics. When these perspectives combine effectively, students receive consistent, comprehensive support that maximises their potential for success.



ESSENTIAL TEMPLATES AND DOCUMENTATION

CONCERN FORM

Standardised template for documenting **early warning signs and initial observations**. Includes behaviour patterns, academic changes, and contextual factors.

SIMPLIFIED IEP

Individual Education Plan with SMART objectives, clear success criteria, and regular review schedules. Focuses on achievable, measurable outcomes.

PARENT SUPPORT SHEET

Concise **guide for families with practical strategies**, contact information, and resources for supporting learning at home.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS CHECKLIST

Comprehensive checklist ensuring compliance with exam board requirements for students needing assessment accommodations.





Rapid response action flow

1

Stage 1: Detection

Teacher Identifies Concern Complete concern form with specific observations, dates, and contexts. Forward to form tutor.

Stage 2: Verification

Tutor Review - Gather additional observations from other teachers. Confirm patterns and rule out temporary factors like illness or home circumstances.

2

Stage 3: Assessment

3

SENCO Evaluation - Apply appropriate screening tools or refer to educational psychologist. Determine level of need and intervention required.

Stage 4: Planning

Support Plan Creation - Develop IEP or adaptation plan in consultation with family. Set clear, measurable objectives with review dates.

4

Stage 5: Review

5

Termly Evaluation - Assess progress against objectives. Adjust strategies based on evidence of effectiveness and student feedback.