

PARENTS' FORUM (SEN)
RACHEL OWENS - HEADMISTRESS
TRACY MEDHURST - ACADEMIC SUPPORT SPECIALIST
THURSDAY 10 MAY 2018

1. Presentation to Parents on the SEN process (attached)

2. Presentation on Tips for Students & Parents (attached)

3. Subtlety of Questions which may be challenging to SEN students

3.1. How does the College support SEN students for exam questions?

3.2. The English department has been working hard with students on the subtleties of exam questions and this is hoped to translate to other subjects. Also used in History, Geography etc. (RCFO)

3.3. Agreed, this is extremely challenging – would recommend lots of practise using a familiar topic e.g. football to familiarise them with the differences in questions. Maths questions have become increasingly 'wordy' recently which means that a relatively easy question can become very difficult for SEN students. The Department is working on training students to find the maths in the question (highlighting/crossing out) and emphasising the importance of showing working out (TEM).

4. Revision

4.1. Are students being taught revisions strategies?

4.2. Yes – by individual teachers. Our main general recommendation is short sessions of 25 minutes revision maximum with breaks and rewards. Use of visuals vitally important - vs 'neat notes! (TEM).

5. Does the SEN department provide Mental Health Support?

5.1. The College provides strong mental support for students with HoYs, Group Tutors, DH & AH Pastoral, Counselling & Chaplaincy but this is not the remit within the SEN department. Information about mental health support is also available on Firefly (RCFO).

6. Identifying SEN Students

- 6.1. The College should be the first point of contact if SEN becomes apparent, rather than using an outside Education Psychologist, as the Examination Boards only accept internal referrals.
- 6.2. Exam concessions have changed recently and they are not necessarily given 'across the board' i.e. could just be permitted for History & English papers. The criteria is extremely rigid with the Exam Boards and it is better for internal support who work closely with students than using an outside source. For concessions to be granted, we must prove it is 'the normal way of working', which can only be evidenced by the teachers over time.

7. Regulations for SEN

- 7.1. *How do the regulators keep an eye on the school – is there a quota for number of SEN applications?*
- 7.2. There is no quota, but there are 2 inspections per year whereby students are listed and their files reviewed for evidence (via emails and a personal visit). A high number of late applications can trigger an emergency inspection. We also keep a close eye on SEN students and will check if the extra-time allowed is not used - it might then be removed (TEM).

8. Demand for SEN

- 8.1. *There appears to be an increasing demand for SEN support – how do you cope?*
- 8.2. There is a high level of demand but the SEN department manages through a coordinated effort with subject teachers throughout the school.

9. SEN Process

- 9.1. *What is the process when a student is cited as having SEN?*
- 9.2. Recorded on central record in Support Register and Access Arrangement lists. The teachers will annotate their mark book with SEN requirement. Usually a requirement is set up within a 6-8 week rotation so that support is in place by the following term. Report cards are double-checked. (TEM)
- 9.3. Subject teachers now receive more SEN training and they are much more aware and better able to help students (RCFO).
- 9.4. Yes, there is deliberate emphasis on the classroom experience rather than individual SEN lessons. Therefore, coordination and training of subject teachers is vital to make 'every teacher a SEN teacher'. Much has changed over the last few years! (TEM).

10. Staff Support

- 10.1.** *There is some concern that there are disparities between staff on the support given to students?*
- 10.2.** It would be naive to deny that there are some differences between staff and support provision, but all must be aware of this in order to meet the regulations. All of our teaching staff are well trained, but I accept that some take this on board more than others; continued work is done on this. (RCFO).
- 10.3.** Yes, we are aware of this and training continues! (TEM).

11. Extra Time

- 11.1.** *At what point should a student start to receive training for extra 25% time?*
- 11.2.** The Third Year is the recommended time to start training; below this the student is usually too young. However, if a parent asks for training and the student already has extra time allowance we will offer a lesson in-house.

12. Mental Health

- 12.1.** *Mental Health is an increasing issue for the young with so much social media etc. In some cases, SEN (i.e. dropping grades) could be a reflection of mental health issues and therefore intertwined.*
- 12.2.** Mental health concerns are monitored very carefully by pastoral staff (Tutor, HoY) and we do not wait to react these issues. We would encourage parents to get in contact with any concerns as soon as possible but essentially, this is a separation between learning needs and pastoral issues. TEM is not a mental health councillor and the pastoral team should be contacted regarding mental health issues in the first instance (RCFO).

13. SGC Website

- 13.1.** *Information on SEN appears to be out of date!*
- 13.2.** If this is the case, we will redress as soon as possible – thank you for informing us of this! (RCFO).
- 13.3.** When will the guide to each subject be available on your website?
- 13.4.** I will ask the HoDs to provide this as soon as possible. (Soapbox).

If there are any further concerns or questions which have not been raised at tonight's Forum, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Rachel Owens by email: headmistress@stgeorgesweybridge.com or Ms Tracy Medhurst: tmedhurst@stgeorgesweybridge.com.