ULMaS Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Status: Statutory; to be reviewed annually

Delegated to: Education Committee

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Context

- The University of Liverpool Mathematics School (ULMaS) is a small, specialist school for students aged 16 – 19 with strong ability and interest in mathematics and related subjects.
- ULMaS offers 80 places for Year 12 students each year, reaching its maximum capacity of 160 students the year after. Students take A-Level Mathematics, A-Level Further Mathematics, A-Level Physics and a broader academic curriculum covering computing, science, research skills as well as a pastoral curriculum which aims to ensure students are well equipped for a happy and healthy life.
- Students are of above average academic attainment on entry.
- Our students' additional needs have often been masked at earlier stages by their high level of intellectual ability, but because of the increasing challenge of the curriculum at Key Stage 5, and the safe learning climate that the school provides, students' needs and difficulties often become more apparent during their time with us, and we find it necessary to offer support for difficulties which would not have been detected at an earlier stage in education.

1. Values

The school exists to enable children with a strong interest and high potential in the mathematical sciences to achieve global impact through careers in the mathematical sciences.

- Above all else, our priority is to keep the students that we work with safe, be vigilant for any signs that they may be at risk or in difficulty, and prepare them for a happy and healthy future.
- We place great importance in developing mathematical potential, wherever it is found, and removing the barriers that could prevent students from developing that potential.
- We provide an exceptional learning experience that inspires our students to become outstanding mathematical scientists with a well-developed moral purpose and an appreciation of their role in making the world a better place. We seek to recruit to our school students who have the greatest potential in the mathematical sciences, regardless of barriers that may have prevented them demonstrating this in the past.
- We therefore take every reasonable step to ensure fair access to students with SEND or other barriers to learning both during the recruitment and admissions process, and once students join us as members of the school.
- As a school we are an inclusive and broad-minded community which cherishes neurodiversity and welcomes everyone regardless of race, gender, sexuality or disability.

2. Aims

Our long-term aims are:

- To enable gifted students from the North West of England to progress to the most challenging university courses in the world.
- To provide an outstanding mathematical education for students in the Liverpool City Region who might not, otherwise, be able to access high quality A-Level teaching in the mathematical sciences.
- To support STEM education throughout the region through a well-designed and well-implemented outreach programme
- To be imaginative and resourceful in order to ensure that vulnerable or disadvantaged students are given the support and opportunities they need to remove the barriers to their learning and personal development and maximise their independence, personal effectiveness and academic success.
- To ensure that all our staff understand their role in relation to these aims and, in particular, that every teacher is a teacher of every student, including those with SEN.

3. Definition of SEN

- A student is considered to have special educational needs (SEN) if he or she has learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for him or her to learn than most other students of about the same age and mean that they need educational provision which is additional to or different from that made generally for others of the same age.
- Most students' needs are met by high quality provision in the classroom and so are not considered to have Special Educational Needs. At ULMaS, we can help most students overcome the barriers they meet in their learning quickly and easily through our normal teaching but a few will need extra help for some or all of their time in school.
- The 2014 SEND Code of Practice states that "High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching." At ULMaS we therefore seek to ensure that all staff receive high quality, effective training in how to meet the needs of students in our care. Additional support will not be substituted for high quality teaching, though it may support it.
- The process of identifying suitable support for pupils therefore starts with the assumption that if normal classroom provision is of high quality it will meet the needs of most students including those who have been in receipt of SEND provision at earlier stages in their education. Where classroom provision appears not to be of sufficient quality to meet the needs of some pupils, the SENCo and Headteacher will seek to address this through the school's line management, CPD, quality assurance and school improvement processes.
- Where it is felt that a young person may need special educational provision, the code sets out the principle of a graduated response. This acknowledges that a student may need specific support from the school or may need further bespoke support which may include external experts. This approach is designed to focus on individual need and outcomes and raise the aspirations of and expectations for all students with SEN.

4. Objectives for SEND support in ULMaS

Teachers will:

- Make regular assessments of progress for all pupils both formally (in line with the school's assessment system) and informally, on an ongoing basis;
- Identify pupils making less than expected progress;
- Adapt their teaching to address the needs of students identified as making less than expected progress;
- Apply school pastoral support systems to ensure students complete the work set for them to the best of their ability so as to make good progress;
- Give regular feedback to students on their work and seek to cultivate students' reflection and response to this feedback;
- Refer students to the SENCo where they may require provision which is additional to and different from that which is offered through the school's curriculum.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice, 2014;
- Provide a suitably skilled and qualified SENCo;
- Monitor the work of the SENCo and Learning Support Team;
- Provide a clear framework within which the SENCo and SEND provision operate as part of whole school provision for all students;
- Provide suitable funding, staffing and support to enable the SENCo to operate effectively;
- Hold the SENCo and themselves to account for providing effective, value for money support for students which supports the school's strategic aims and meets the school's statutory obligations.

The SENCo and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice, 2014;
- Monitor the academic performance, attendance and social development (as recorded in assessment records, SEND reviews, pastoral notes and informal day to day observations) of students on the SEND register;
- Assess promptly any students who are brought to their attention as possibly having special educational and/or additional needs, and add them to the SEND register as appropriate;
- Seek to integrate students within the whole school ensuring that they access as much of the mainstream curriculum and extra-curricular provision as possible;
- Accommodate the needs of the "whole pupil"; recognising that a student's personal, social and physical development are at least as important as their academic progress;
- Lead an effective team of professionals trained and equipped to meet the needs of our students;
- Administer and oversee access to intervention provision in school ensuring that the objectives for the intervention are clearly stated and students' performance in relation to those objectives is recorded and acted upon;
- Develop monitoring, support and intervention systems which seek to identify poor progress and the causes of poor progress, address these and enable students to succeed within mainstream provision as far as possible;
- Regularly review progress of any students with SEND and to adapt intervention and provision as appropriate, identifying Special Educational and additional needs.

5. Identifying Special Educational Needs

Students will be considered for identification as having special educational needs where they:

- Are consistently making less progress than expected in spite of attending and engaging in high quality lessons and completing the work set;
- Are struggling to engage with learning and may need additional provision in order to help them do so;
- Are identified by their previous school as having special educational needs;
- Are thought to be facing a particular difficulty which could potentially make learning more difficult for them unless additional provision is made (such as, but not limited to: dyslexia, physical disability or a mental health condition)

It should be noted that some students who are affected by a condition such as dyslexia or autism, or a disability, are able to learn effectively and make good progress without additional provision. These students will not normally be considered to have Special Educational Needs.

The SEND register

- The SEND register will record the names and needs of students who experience barriers to learning that the school seeks to address with provision which is additional to and different from that which is offered through the school's normal curriculum.
- There is no statutory obligation to maintain a register of SEN, and this term is not used in the SEND Code of Practice. ULMaS will maintain an SEND register so as to be clear about which students are currently in receipt of provision which is additional to and different from that which is offered through the school's curriculum.
- We will keep records of additional needs and provisions made in order to support any possible future applications for an EHCP.
- The SEND register and accompanying notes will be regularly updated. Staff will be given access to this in an appropriate form in order for them to teach students effectively.
- Students will be routinely removed from the SEND register when and if they no longer have significant needs additional to those of the majority of students in the school. A student's place on the SEND register will be reviewed at least annually but often decisions will be made on a

termly basis following data reviews. Parents will normally be informed of this change before it happens.

6. The School's role and approach in SEND provision

The school takes responsibility for

- Developing the quality and inclusiveness of provision for all students so that most needs are met with normal provision and without the need for additional personalised provision
- Ensuring that, where necessary, additional educational provision enables students to access our curriculum and learn effectively
- Monitoring the impact of this additional provision
- Recording the use of this provision for each student
- Managing access to the provision, so as to ensure that resources are deployed efficiently and effectively and students' experience of the school's normal curriculum is maintained while additional provision is made.

Graduated response to SEND Support

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, 2014, ULMaS follows a graduated response approach of assessment and provision planning, in order to match provision to need. This approach is designed to ensure support is focused on individual needs and personal outcomes.

- Initial Support: normal ad-hoc help in the classroom when a student finds something challenging
- "Wave 1 intervention" School Support; where the awareness of need goes beyond the individual classroom and the SENCo is starting to get involved in provision
- "Wave 2 intervention" School Focused Plan (SFP); where significant additional provision is put in place
- "Wave 3 intervention" Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP); where additional funding supports more significant intervention which is formally reviewed on an annual basis

The Assess-Plan-Do Review cycle.

- All teachers review students' learning and adapt teaching approaches on a lesson-by-lesson basis. During team briefings, team meetings and PPA time teachers review assessments, analyse progress, and make decisions about any adaptations needed to teaching to ensure all students learn well. This is how we enact the *Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle* at the classroom level.
- This process is strengthened by school leaders' scrutiny of progress data at a whole subject/ year group level, scrutiny of records of interventions and scrutiny of students' work. School leaders then consider whether the curricular provision, school ethos, systems and procedures, professional development and staffing are meeting the needs of students, including SEND students. This is how we enact the *Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle* at the school level.
- Once students are successfully referred for curricular adjustment or intervention, the SENCo assesses whether the interventions or other provisions made for an individual student have successfully addressed the difficulties identified. How this assessment is made depends on the nature of the difficulty identified. Where possible the assessment will be independent of the staff who have provided the additional support/ intervention and will use an established measurement structure such as Standardised Reading Age, formal assessment materials (e.g GCE assessment material), attendance information or formal summative assessment data. This is how we enact the *Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle* at the level of an individual student.
- For students who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an EHCP, the *Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle* is further supplemented by reviews held at least once a year between parents/carers, student, SENCo or Higher level Teaching Assistant and any other professionals who work with the student. At these meetings objectives or desired outcomes are reviewed and/or set which aim to address the needs of a student.

Supporting students and their families: the Local Offer

- Information about the City of Liverpool Local Offer is provided for students and their families at: https://fsd.liverpool.gov.uk/kb5/liverpool/fsd/localoffer.page?familychannel=10
- Information about the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton Local Offer is provided for students and their families at: https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=3
- Information about the Borough of Halton Local Offer is provided for students and their families at: https://localoffer.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/
- Information about the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley Local Offer is provided for students and their families at: https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/categories/knowsley-local-offer-send
- Information about the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral Local Offer is provided for students and their families at: https://localofferwirral.org/
- Information about the Metropolitan Borough of St Helens LA Local Offer is provided for students and their families at: https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/send/

7. Contacting school

Students on the school's SEND register and their families are supported by all members of staff but a good first contact for students and their parents/ carers when the school opens will often be the SENCo. The best way to contact school is via reception@liverpoolmathsschool.org or you can contact the SENCo by SENCo@liverpoolmathsschool.org

8. Bullying

- Bullying is taken very seriously at ULMaS and the possibility of vulnerable students becoming victims of bullying is recognised. As part of their responsibilities all members of staff are vigilant to detect any possibility of any student, including students with special educational needs, becoming victims of bullying.
- Establishing and maintaining an inclusive ethos in which everyone is of equal value and mutual respect is paramount. The school's ethos will emphasise the importance of respecting differences and treating others with sensitivity and empathy.
- The effective induction of new students will provide a clear foundation for that ethos, and ensure that students know what to do if they feel unhappy, threatened or anxious.
- The provision of social education for those who are vulnerable or less confident about social rules and human relationships will enable those students to become increasingly confident with social interactions, better able to interpret the behaviour of others and more likely to be fully independent by the time they complete their education with us.
- Monitoring closely students who are identified as being particularly at risk during unstructured parts of the school day, whilst not restricting their opportunities for social interaction

Students or their families or friends who believe that bullying is taking place can report it to the SENCo or any member of staff. Our website includes contact information.

9. Admissions

- The school's Admissions Policy is published on our website https://liverpoolmathsschool.org/policies/
- Students whose EHCP names the school will be given a school place. Other students will be required to meet the admissions criteria published in the Admissions Policy.
- The admissions process is competitive but students with SEND will not be disadvantaged in the process; students who need access arrangements or other reasonable adjustments as part of this process will be fully accommodated.
- A key purpose for the school is to broaden access to high quality provision in the mathematical sciences at A-Level and beyond, and students with SEND are a group we are particularly keen to

include in this, particularly where our specialised curriculum offer and small school environment meets their needs and aspirations well.

10. Accessibility including access arrangements for examinations

All classrooms, office and circulation spaces in school are physically accessible to wheelchair users and people with limited mobility. Vehicle access (but not parking) is possible via Back Bedford Street, and parking for Disabled Badge holders is immediately adjacent to the school in Mulberry Place.

ICT provision will include the necessary reasonable adjustments to enable use by students with sensory or mobility difficulties. Printed and published materials will, where necessary, be adapted for the needs of students with visual impairment.

A small number of students experience difficulties which could affect their ability to access examinations and assessments.

- We attempt to identify these students at an early stage through transition from their previous school, however, it will normally be necessary to repeat the assessment process which is required to provide evidence of need in line with JCQ regulations. Please see https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration for more details.
- If it becomes apparent during a students' time at ULMaS that they may need Access Arrangements which are not yet in place then we will investigate this, arrange the necessary assessments and put in place the necessary arrangements as quickly as possible, in line with the relevant JCQ and awarding body regulations. These arrangements should reflect the student's normal way of working in school and will be used routinely for in school and external assessments in order to give students fair access to assessment, and never to give them an unfair advantage.
- The concerns of students and their parents/ carers will always be listened to, but any recommendation for Access Arrangements and consideration for the necessary assessments to evidence need must come from a member of staff who has well founded concerns about a student's ability to fully access assessments.

11. Liaison with outside agencies

- Specialists from within school and external agencies are asked for advice as and when necessary to further identify a student's needs. These may include dyslexia teachers, Speech and Language therapist, family support worker, educational psychologist, CAMHS, Autism teams etc. Within the constraints of the funding available we will seek to grow the capacity of the school to provide specialist help for students without having to bring external agencies in.
- When the evidence reviewed in the *Assess* stage of the cycle suggests that the school is unable to meet the needs of a student with our existing provision then the SENCo will consult with the relevant Local Authority and seek advice about how the student's needs can best be met. This negotiation is likely to form part of the Annual Review cycle and so will involve parents/ carers and representatives of the local authority. The resources required to meet the student's needs will be established as part of this process, as will any additional financial or other support that the LA is to provide.

12. Supporting Students at school with medical conditions

- The school recognises that students at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education. Some students with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the school will comply with its duties under the equality Act 2010.
- Some students with medical conditions may also have SEND and may have an EHCP which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their educational provision. The SEND Code of

Practice 2014 is followed in these cases, and we will liaise with outside agencies in order to support the student as well as possible.

- The school has limited resources but will seek to find ways to support students with particular needs wherever this is practically possible.
- School staff will never diagnose medical, ophthalmological, cognitive or mental health conditions. Where diagnosis of such conditions has been made by a suitably qualified professional we will make use of this information in guiding how we best accommodate a student's needs.
- Where students have concerns about the accessibility of their assessments or study materials because of visual or other problems they are encouraged to speak to the SENCo or the exams team and we will try to find a way to solve the problem.

13. Monitoring and evaluation of SEND

- The school will review curricular provision at least annually and a key part of this will be to review whether the curriculum and the way it is delivered meets the needs of students with SEN. We will also consider whether staff have sufficient training and expertise to be able to meet SEND students' needs in the mainstream classroom and in any additional provision we make.
- The performance of students with special educational needs will be scrutinised closely as part of the school's data analysis and work scrutiny processes.
- Student and parental feedback is gathered via parental and student questionnaires, meetings with students and parents/ carers on an ongoing basis.

14. Training and deployment of resources

Training for members of staff

- It is our policy to provide professional development for members of staff in order to help them best meet the needs of our students.
- We will provide CPD for all members of staff with the following aims:
- To ensure the school is developing the capacity needed to deliver its curriculum effectively;
- To ensure the needs of students currently in school and expected to be joining the school can be adequately met;
- To develop professional effectiveness of staff members, keeping them up to date with relevant significant research findings and providing them with skills that help them to maximise the progress of our students;
- To enable members of staff to have a sense of growing mastery in their skills and confidence in their ability to meet the needs of different students

Deployment of Teaching Assistants and other Paraprofessionals

- It is our policy to ensure that, in almost all cases, staff supporting students' learning in the classroom are experts in the curriculum being taught. Where we employ teaching assistants to work with our students on mathematics, physics and computer science they will need to have a high level of knowledge and skill in these areas. It is, unfortunately, highly unlikely that people with this level of skill can be employed at the hourly rates typically used in EHCP funding provision. We will therefore prioritise quality over quantity in the provision of expert curricular help and use the funding we have to make high quality, well focused provision which meets the needs of students rather than employing low cost but ineffective support for our students.
- We recognise a valuable role for counsellors, advisors and guidance workers who can support our students outside the delivery of the formal curriculum, and enable them to be well prepared for lessons and personal study. Often, their key role will be to help students to learn to work and learn independently: they will be succeeding in their work when the student is becoming less reliant upon them.
- We also recognise that some students have disabilities that require them to have physical/ manual assistance in the classroom and around school. In this case, medical expertise and/or

the ability to offer practical assistance will be more important than the academic knowledge of the paraprofessional member of staff supporting the student.

Deployment of ICT Resources and other enabling equipment

- The school notes that the ICT resources and other equipment can often be an effective way to enable students to develop their independence and become more effective in their learning. Where funding allows, we will provide equipment and software which we believe will help to meet students' special educational needs, address their disabilities, improve their learning or facilitate increased independence.

15. Roles and responsibilities

SEND Coordinator (SENCo)

The school's SENCo will be line-managed by a member of the leadership team. They are responsible for

- Transition and induction arrangements for new students known to have SEN
- Planning and implementing the additional provision made for students with SEN
- Monitoring students' performance (both those with SEND and those whose progress suggests there may be an underlying issue which requires provision over and above that normally made) and implementing the plan, do, review cycle
- Providing advice and training to teachers and other staff to help them meet the needs of students with SEN
- Liaising with parents and agencies outside school to ensure that students with SEND are well provided for

Our policy is that the SENCo will be a teacher who knows our students and teaches them one of our subjects so that they are familiar with the difficulties the individual students experience in lessons and in school generally. They may not have the national SENCo qualification and they may not be legally obliged to study for it because of our status as a 16-19 specialist school, but we will support their CPD wherever possible.

Headteacher

The Headteacher oversees the way the school delivers education to all students. Part of this responsibility includes line management of the SENCo, oversight of the SEND Policy, and development of the curriculum and school systems to ensure the needs of all students, including those with SEN, are met.

SEND Governor/ Trustee

The SEND Governor/ Trustee will be a critical friend in the development and application of SEND policy, and help the Board of Trustees to ensure the school is meeting its statutory obligations with respect to SEND. They should also provide a route of communication between parents and the school in relation to how the school develops its provision for students with SEN.

Teachers

All teachers are employed to provide expert teaching for all students, including those with SEN. They are responsible for ensuring that all students are taught well, assessed accurately and that their teaching is designed to meet the needs of all students. Where teachers have concerns about students' progress in learning or their ability to access assessments they are expected to liaise with the SENCo to find a solution.

Teaching Assistants

Where deployed, teaching assistants are responsible for assisting teachers in maximising student progress. They should help students to think and explain their thinking (developing student's metacognitive skills). They should help students to understand the feedback that teachers have

given and help to ensure that students respond to it. They should prompt students to listen to and follow teachers' instructions and be careful to avoid becoming an unwitting barrier to learning by dominating the student's attention or restricting the communication between teacher and student. Teaching assistants should always seek to maximise students' independence: they are doing their job most effectively when the student is moving rapidly towards needing less assistance.

Pastoral Team

Pastoral Managers and Counsellors have an important role in ensuring that students are cared for outside lessons and prepared for learning when they arrive at lessons. A good understanding of SEND is therefore crucial for them and they will be supported through professional development opportunities to ensure they know how best to support students with those needs.

The designated teacher with specific safeguarding responsibility

In line with our safeguarding policy we will ensure that the school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is well trained and effective.

All staff members will be trained in Child Protection and will know that any concerns about the welfare or wellbeing of a student with SEND should be communicated directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their deputy. It is the responsibility of the DSL to investigate the concerns and address any need quickly and effectively.

16. Complaints

Parents/ carers, colleagues, students or other stakeholders with concerns or complaints should find that all members of staff listen to their concerns and respond reasonably. In the case of concerns relating to the school's SEND provision the best person to contact in the first instance will be the SENCo or the Headteacher. The school's complaints policy is on the policies page of the school website.

17. Related policies

This policy links to the follow policies:

- The ULMaS Behaviour Policy
- The ULMaS Admissions Policy
- The ULMaS Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
- The ULMaS Equal Opportunities Policy

18. Glossary of abbreviations

CAMHS: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead

EHCP: Education, Health and Care Plan

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

LA: Local Authority

NASENCo: National Award for SEN Coordination

SENCo: Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SEND: Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

SFP: School Focused Plan

ULMaS: University of Liverpool Mathematics School