

SEN at JCoSS: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

My child has a specific learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia.) What support will be available for them?

If your child has a formal diagnosis of a condition which impacts on their learning, you must provide us with a copy of their professional diagnosis report. We will use the recommendations to create a 'Pen Portrait' for your child – this is a summary document which outlines your child's diagnoses, strengths, needs and strategies for success. This is circulated to all adults in school working with your child. In this way we ensure that strategies needed to support your child's learning are put in place consistently across the school.

Although a diagnosis alone does not require us to put additional resources in place for your child, as a school we are required to use our 'best endeavours' to meet the needs of all students. The needs of the majority of students with specific learning difficulties are met by teaching staff, through 'Quality First' teaching. Our capacity to provide additional support for individual students is extremely limited, and we prioritise students with the most complex learning needs and/or are not making adequate progress

How does JCoSS decide whether my child is making "adequate progress?"

We have clear, whole-school systems for monitoring and assessing all students, including those with SEN and additional needs, throughout the year and across the curriculum. Students have a target for each subject, which is the level or grade they are expected to reach based on performance in the SATs/CATs tests carried out in Year 6. Expected progress is determined nationally by the DfE. There are four points throughout the school year at which student progress data is analysed and any students working below expectations are identified. Interventions are put in place for these students, initially by individual subject faculties. If a student continues to work below expected levels, they may receive additional support from the Learning Support faculty.

You can find more information about our 'graduated approach to SEN support' on pages 3 and 4 of our SEND policy: <https://jcoass.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/JCoSS-SEND-Policy-March-2018-Updated-June-2018.pdf>

My child has access arrangements in place at their current/previous school. Will they continue at JCoSS?

We do not put exam access arrangements in place for students in Years 7 and 8, other than those with the most complex needs. In these exceptional circumstances exam access arrangements are agreed in conjunction with the SENCo. It is important that we gather evidence to form our own picture of need, beginning with evidence provided by JCoSS teaching staff. If we have evidence that a child has persistent and significant needs, we will consider whether access arrangements need to be put in place at JCoSS. This is done at the school's discretion and may differ from what was in place in primary school because of the change in setting, and the requirement for secondary schools to comply with strict regulations set by the JCQ, which is an external body. You can find out more about exam access arrangements and reasonable adjustments in our policy:

<https://jcoass.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/JCoSS-Access-Arrangements-and-Reasonable-Adjustment-Policy-updated-October-2018.pdf>

My child uses a laptop at primary school, can they bring it to JCoSS?

Students do not use laptops in Year 7 except in exceptional circumstances. Secondary school presents a number of organisational challenges that do not occur at primary school: students need to carry their laptop from class to class, and take responsibility for printing and organising their work, and charging their laptop for use. In our experience, students usually benefit from concentrating on other elements of transition before adding the further complication of a laptop.

My child is currently at 'SEN Support' and is withdrawn from lessons for intervention. Will JCoSS implement the same level of support as my child currently receives?

Students are only withdrawn from lessons in exceptional circumstances. We will use our 'best endeavours' to support your child as necessary but we will not guarantee that the same level or type of support will be

put in place for them. This is due to the different ways that secondary schools are organised, and to the limitations of our school resources.

My child needs an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). How can they get one?

A child's parents, ideally in conjunction with their current school, can request that the child's home Local Authority initiates an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment. The Local Authority will review the evidence submitted as part of the request and decide whether or not to initiate an assessment. Each Local Authority has a 'parent partnership' team who can offer advice and support for parents around this process. If we agree with parents that a child who transfers to JCoSS in Year 7 needs an EHCP, we will not be able to make this request until they are in Year 8 at the earliest. This is because we need to provide evidence of the range and impact of the strategies that we have put in place for them before the request can be considered. It is therefore far preferable that children needing an EHCP have this in place before leaving primary school. Parents are able to request an assessment independently of a school, for example in instances where there is disagreement about the severity or complexity of a child's needs, in which case the Local Authority will seek information from the school before considering whether or not to initiate an assessment.

My child has an EHCP. Will JCoSS be able to meet their needs?

If your child has an EHCP and you would like them to be considered for a place at JCoSS, the Local Authority which issued their EHCP will initiate a consultation with us in the Autumn term preceding secondary transfer. This is the process by which we are asked to give our view as to our ability to meet a child's needs, and although we do not make the decision, the Local Authority is required to give due consideration to our views. We do not engage with parents directly during this process although we are transparent with them and ensure that they are copied in to communications with the Local Authority. As part of the consultation process, your child's home Local Authority will send us detailed information about your child and we will carefully consider this in determining whether or not we feel able to meet their needs. Responsibility for ensuring that provision is in place for a child rests with their home Local Authority. As the consultation process is based on documents provided by the Local Authority, it is essential that this documentation is fully up to date. Annual Review meetings in Year 5 can be used to ensure that an EHCP accurately reflects a child's current needs and the provision currently in place for them.

My child has an EHCP. What support will they get at JCoSS?

Whilst JCoSS will endeavour to put in place the support outlined in Section F of an EHCP, the responsibility for this lies with the home Local Authority. It is essential that Section F accurately details the provision required to meet the needs of your child. For example, arrangements for Speech and Language therapy after transition to secondary school need to be clearly outlined in order for therapy to continue.

My child currently works with one assistant. Will this continue at JCoSS?

No, 1:1 support is not usually provided by one adult at JCoSS. We take a team approach such that LSAs are organised into year teams and different adults will work with your child across the week. This approach promotes independence by avoiding over-reliance on individual staff members, and ensures some consistency when staff members change role. Many LSAs at JCoSS are graduates seeking work experience with young people before moving onto the next stage of their careers, which leads to frequent staff changes.

My child is struggling with mental health difficulties. How will they be supported at JCoSS?

At primary school, children with mental health needs might be supported by the SENCo or teaching assistant. In a secondary school, aside from students whose mental health needs arise from their SEN, students with mental health needs are supported by the pastoral team rather than by the Learning Support Department. The first point of contact will be your child's form tutor.

I'm worried about my child at break and lunchtime. How will they be supported?

JCoSS has a dedicated playground for Year 7 students only. We do not provide supervision for individual students during these times but there is a safe, quiet space available for SEN students.

I'm really worried about my child's transition to secondary school. How will you help them manage?

There are a number of opportunities to get to know the school before starting in September. Students visit for CATs day one Sunday in the summer term (see below). They also visit with the rest of the year group for an induction day in July, when they will meet their form group and tutor, look around the school, and attend some taster lessons. Students who are the only child at their primary school coming to JCoSS will be invited to a small group afternoon before the Induction Day, so they will be able to recognise some familiar faces on the day. We may invite individual students for additional visits if we think this is necessary.

Does my child have to come for CATs day if they have SEN?

Yes. CATs day is an opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with JCoSS and get to know some staff and students. Although it is a test day, the atmosphere is relaxed. There are no access arrangements for CATs; the purpose of the tests is to ascertain a “raw score” for each child’s attainment level. It is important this reflects their true ability, without assistance.

My child did not get a place in the PSRP. Shall I ask the Local Authority to name JCoSS main school instead?

The level of provision offered by a specialist Autism Resource Provision (ARP) such as the PSRP is far higher than that offered in the main school, which has the same resources as any other mainstream secondary school. Mainschool students **do not** have any access to the facilities of the PSRP, regardless of their needs. If you applied to the PSRP because your child requires the additional level of provision available in an ARP, it is unlikely their needs can be met by the main school. Therefore, if your application to the PSRP was unsuccessful, you should consider applying to other ARPs, rather than applying to the main school.

You may find our letter to parents ‘SEN Applications to JCoSS: PSRP or Main School?’ helpful in explaining the differences between both settings. You can find it here: <https://jcooss.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/SEN-Applications-to-JCoSS-April-2019.pdf>

My child has medical needs but they don’t have an EHCP. How will they be supported?

Students with medical needs are supported by the Student Service team, not the Learning Support faculty. They will ensure your child has an Individual Health Care plan and liaise with you regarding medication etc.

Can I meet with the SENCo/Learning Support team at JCoSS before a place for my child is confirmed?

No. The Learning Support faculty does not have capacity to meet with prospective families.

JCoSS is a Barnet school but my child’s EHCP is maintained by a different Local Authority. Does this make a difference?

The home Local Authority is responsible for the provision outlined in your child’s EHCP. It is important to ensure that the EHCP clearly specifies the provision for therapies such as Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy. Your case officer should advise you as to how the Local Authority intends to deliver this provision in an out-of-borough school; for example, some Local Authority send their therapeutic staff to JCoSS, while others commission independent practitioners to deliver provision on their behalf.