Notre Dame SEND Vision Statement

Rooted in our ethos of "Sharing the love and goodness of God with everyone"

At Notre Dame, we believe every student is **unique, valued, and capable of success**, echoing our Hallmark that **we honour the dignity and sacredness of each person**. Our vision for SEND is built on the belief that diversity is a strength, and that through high-quality, inclusive teaching, every learner can thrive — academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

We want every child to **believe that they can be successful at Notre Dame**, to **feel that they are valued**, and to know that **they matter**, make valuable contributions, and have a **positive impact on our school community**. We are committed to the principle that **all students can access the mainstream classroom with the right support**, and that **every learner can achieve their individual potential**. We believe every child should be supported to develop aspirations for their future and to believe that **they can succeed and lead a meaningful life beyond school**, living out the words of **St Julie Billiart**: *"Teach them what they need to know for life."*

Our goal is to ensure that every student leaves Notre Dame **equipped for a fulfilling post-16 pathway**, with the confidence, skills, and independence they need. In doing so, **we develop holistic learning communities which educate for life**. Many of our students with SEND go on to:

- **Study A Levels or vocational qualifications** in our Sixth Form
- Attend **local colleges**
- Begin **apprenticeships** (e.g., childcare, construction, digital media)
- Move into **supported employment or training**

We aim to ensure every child leaves Notre Dame **ready for the next stage of life** — confident, skilled, and independent. Many go on to join our **Sixth Form**, where they continue learning in a **familiar and ambitious environment**. We start thinking about the future **early**, including **college visits in Year 10**, to help students **dream big and plan well**.

Knowing our students well is at the heart of this vision — it is embedded deeply into the culture of our school. This begins with our **SEND transition programme** before Year 7 — where students and families **visit the school over multiple days**, build relationships, and **share important information** so that support is in place from the start.

We provide a **nurturing and inclusive environment with high expectations**, where students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are **understood, supported, and fully included** in every aspect of school life. This includes access to a wide range of **extra-curricular opportunities**, like our **British Sign Language (BSL) club**, where all students can connect, build skills, and celebrate communication in all its forms.

SEND is a Shared Responsibility

At Notre Dame, we recognise that **SEND is a shared responsibility**. It is not the role of one individual or department — it is the collective responsibility of every adult in school. From teachers and LSAs to support staff and senior leaders, we are **united in our commitment to inclusion, dignity, and aspiration for every learner**.

Relational practice underpins all that we do: building strong, respectful relationships with students is the foundation for trust, learning, and progress.

We **put classroom practice first**, ensuring that the most effective strategies are embedded in every lesson. This is supported by a strong programme of **professional development** that equips staff with the knowledge, confidence, and consistency to meet the needs of students with SEND. Our CPD offer is linked directly to practice, ensuring it is purposeful, relevant, and sustainable.

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1. Curriculum

At Notre Dame, **every student has the right to a broad and balanced curriculum**, no matter their ability or additional needs. Our curriculum vision is simple: **an ambitious offer, open to all**.

- All students are placed on the **GCSE pathway**, with appropriate scaffolding and support.
- Teaching and learning are **planned through the eyes of students with the greatest barriers**, ensuring lessons are inclusive by design.
- **All students learn a Modern Foreign Language**, as part of our commitment to cognitive development, global understanding, and equal access.
- High expectations are maintained for all students, with scaffolding, not reduction, guiding how we close gaps.
- Additional curriculum pathways provide further support where needed:

Aspire Pathway: Aspire is a literacy intervention that helps to support our most vulnerable leaners. It provides intervention to support increasing fluency and confidence with literacy, oracy and personal development. This is an alternative pathway for students who require a more tailored approach to Modern Foreign Languages. Students on the Aspire Pathway continue to learn a language, Spanish, alongside a greater emphasis on **functional language use, literacy development, and speech and language support.** We have identified a need to develop the Literacy intervention within Aspire so that students are able to practice and build on their proficiency with comprehension, analysis and written responses, including sentence structure (writing fundamentals). This will help increase their confidence with transferable skills that can be used to support learning across subjects. We are keen to continue using personal development to **prepare students for adulthood,** increase confidence with oracy and a valuable opportunity for pre teaching of vocabulary.

    - **Literacy Sets in English**: For students working a key stage behind, focusing on foundational reading and writing.
    - **Nurture Set in Maths**: A smaller-group model for students needing additional scaffolding in numeracy.

Grouping decisions are flexible and student-centred, based on what is right for each learner. We do not stream or fix learners by prior attainment alone — we create the right balance of challenge, support, and opportunity.

Alongside the academic curriculum, we offer a rich programme of **extra-curricular opportunities**, open and accessible to all. These include:

- Sports, music, drama, creative arts
- STEM and language clubs
- Trips, enrichment events, and residentials
- Student leadership and volunteering opportunities

We actively support students with SEND to attend:

- **Walking them to clubs**
- **Liaising with families**
- **Providing a trusted adult** during the first few sessions

Our **Sixth Form mentors younger students** through **Game Changers** — a programme supporting **social communication** and **positive relationships**.

At Sports Day, we run the **St Julie Games** — an **inclusive sports event** designed for students with SEND to **take part, succeed**, and be **celebrated**.

Participation in these activities is actively promoted for students with SEND, helping to build confidence, belonging, and life skills.

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2. Wave 1 – Ordinary Available Teaching

Inclusive, ordinary available teaching is the **first step in responding to SEND**. At Notre Dame, we ensure that **every teacher is a teacher of SEND**, and that all staff deliver a **consistent, inclusive classroom experience**.

We embed our **SEND 10 Strategies** into every lesson:

1. Clear routines at the start of the lesson
2. Explicit instruction, including clear timings
3. Circulating the room and prompting
4. Use of a noise level indicator
5. Thinking time before student responses
6. Scaffolding and task breakdown
7. Dual coding (verbal + visual combined)
8. Example on the board for reference
9. “I do, we do, you do” modelling

10. Think, pair, share activities

These strategies create a predictable and supportive environment. Where these are not enough to meet individual needs, we provide targeted support through our **Wave 2 interventions**.

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3. Early Identification and Holistic Understanding

Early identification is key. We use a wide range of internal and external tools to build a full understanding of each student's needs — academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

We work closely with:

- Classroom teachers, using observations, feedback, and progress data
- Families, whose insights are critical to understanding the whole child
- Students themselves, ensuring their voice is central to all planning
- Specialist assessments and screening tools, where appropriate

Identification is an evolving process that adapts with each student's journey through school.

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4. Wave 2 – Targeted, Evidence-Based Intervention

When Wave 1 support is not sufficient, we offer **short-term, structured interventions** that directly address identified barriers to learning.

Foundational Knowledge

Early analysis of **transition data** and the use of **screening tools** (reading age assessments, Birmingham Toolkit and baseline numeracy assessment) helps to identify students with gaps in foundational knowledge which we work alongside teaching staff to close quickly.

The curriculum model allows for **small nurture groups in English and Maths** which provide structured, small-group support that enables pupils to **rebuild core skills and confidence**.

Teachers also routinely identify gaps in handwriting through their day-to-day classroom practice and refer students to the SEND team where weaknesses in handwriting are a barrier. Teachers ensure that students are provided with printed copies of core knowledge and key content so they can continue to access the curriculum while their handwriting improves.

The Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (SCAS) is used to monitor students' **mental health** and identify gaps in the foundational skills needed for **emotional regulation and wellbeing**. The screener helps staff understand areas such as anxiety, coping strategies and emotional resilience that may act as barriers to learning.

Interventions that take place outside the classroom are:

- Delivered by trained LSAs and specialist staff
- Focused on skill-building, communication, emotional regulation, and access to learning
- Primarily delivered in **The Ark**, our SEND intervention hub

- Supported through **The Lodge** during unstructured social times for students requiring additional nurture

Examples of Wave 2 interventions include:

- Fresh Start
- Dyslexia Gold
- Language for Behaviour and Emotions
- Zones of Regulation and 5-Point Scale
- Growth Mindset and Mighty Minds
- Game Changers and Circle of Friends
- Typing Support
- Write Start
- Social Stories
- Times table boosters

All interventions follow the **Assess–Plan–Do–Review** cycle to measure impact and inform next steps.

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5. Targeted LSA Support through the STEP Programme

LSA deployment is managed through our **STEP Programme** (*Support – Teach – Empower – Progress*), which ensures that LSA time is used effectively, responsively, and with clear purpose.

The STEP Programme is aligned with the **7 recommendations for effective use of teaching assistants** (EEF), including:

- Supporting student independence
- Targeting gaps through structured intervention
- Improving engagement, not just task completion
- Liaising closely with teachers
- Deploying support based on needs, not routines
- Monitoring impact
- Ensuring clear planning and review

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6. Wave 3 – Specialist and Multi-Agency Support

Where students have complex, persistent needs, we work closely with external agencies to deliver Wave 3 provision. This may include:

- Educational Psychology

- Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
- Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy
- CAMHS, MHST, and paediatric services
- EHCP Needs Assessments and Reviews

Wave 3 provision is designed for students requiring **coordinated, multi-agency support** beyond school-based provision alone.

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7. Inclusion Through Compassionate Partnership

Our SEND provision is built on strong, trusting relationships with:

- Students, whose voice and experiences shape their support
- Families, who are active and valued partners
- Staff, who implement personalised approaches with care and consistency
- External professionals, whose expertise enriches and strengthens provision

Relational practice is our foundation — students must feel **safe, heard, and respected**.
Student voice is central. We gather student voice in **SEND reviews**, and use it to:

- **Identify strengths**
- **Build self-esteem**
- **Plan support** that fits the individual

"All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential."

(SEND Code of Practice, 2015)