



"Working Together, Learning Forever"

Dear Parent / Guardian

Here is an outline of our identification and referral process for pupils with cognitive, speech and language or social communication needs.

I have tried to break this down into paragraphs to explain each stage, as this is a very lengthy process, both in terms of time and the amount of evidence that needs to be collected.

Should you wish to discuss any of these points in more detail, in relation to your child, please feel free to ring and arrange to make an appointment with me, during school time.

I appreciate that this is a lot of information, that the process is complicated and waiting times for assessments are lengthy. Please be assured that we will always do our very best to support you and your child through any assessment process. We pride ourselves in working closely with parents and putting practical support in place in every classroom, for the benefit of all pupils.

Mrs L Bartlett – ALNCo.

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Referral process for neurodevelopmental and social communication difficulties such as:
Behavioural, Cognitive or Speech and Language concerns,
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD),
Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD),
Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD).

Step one:

Class teachers and parents are able and welcome to raise concerns with ALNCo.

We always advise that parents firstly discuss their concerns with the class teacher, who will be more familiar with the pupil and will already be seeing them on a daily basis.

Before any formal assessment can begin:

- Both home and school need to be in agreement that
 1. there are concerns arising in both settings,
 2. parents and teachers are able to provide evidence to support a referral.

If concerns are only raised and observed at home, then the school will monitor the pupil for half a term and then discuss the situation again with parents/carers, on request.

If concerns are noted from home and school then the following process starts:

- Parents, ALNCo and class teacher will meet,
- A plan may be written for your child, with targets that need to be worked on in class & at home. Putting such targets in place may mean that the situation improves and the causes of the concern(s) are reduced or eradicated.
- This plan will be shared with you and will be monitored for **two terms**, before any other further action is taken, or any other professionals can become involved.

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Step two:

After two terms, we will monitor the progress that your child has made against their targets, and if we feel it appropriate and we can request the support of other professionals.

This could be a referral to an

- Educational Psychologist to assess cognitive/academic ability,
- Speech and Language therapist to assess speech and language needs,
- Behaviour Specialist to support with behavioural issues and suggest techniques which may support your child.

For pupils who are Under 5, a referral can be made directly to Hafan Y Mor, Singleton Hospital, following two terms assessment and observation in school alone; as long as school staff share concerns and have evidence to support a referral.

We always encourage parents of Nursery and Reception pupils to ask for advice and support from your health visitor, as this is a far quicker route to accessing assessment for your child.

It can take up to a further two terms to secure an assessment with these professionals, for pupils over the age of 5, based on the number of other children in the school already waiting for this support and the number of times the professionals are available to visit our school.

Our Behaviour Support Teacher visits on a fortnightly basis.

We tend to be allocated five Educational Psychologist slots per term, for use across the whole school. If a pupil has been assessed by an Educational Psychologist within a two to three year period, they would not normally be accepted for a repeat referral.

Following any assessment, a report and recommendations will be provided by the professional and we will again meet to discuss how these need to be actioned in school and at home.

Recommendations could include a block of targeted support from a specialist service or a school based intervention, such as a co-ordination and motor skills support programme, literacy support programme, behavioural support programme or Speech Link / Language link support.

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How parents will be involved:

Parents will always be involved in the referral process and will need to contribute comments and observations to the referral forms. **We always recommend that parents start to keep a note book of events / behaviours and actions as soon as they raise concerns, as these are key to any referral.** School staff also keep detailed notes on pupils, and these will be used toward a referral form and consultation.

Parents will always be provided with a paper copy of any reports we receive.

What if that isn't enough?

In many cases, this specialist support and advice is enough to guide parents and school in supporting your child and helping them achieve their best. However, sometimes, further advice needs to be sought and other avenues might need to be explored.

If concerns are raised around Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Attention Deficit & Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), then this will need to have been expressly witnessed by either an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist or Behaviour Support Teacher, before any further action can be taken. They will request that this is investigated further as one of their report recommendations.

We will then begin to collect evidence for a referral along what is called the 'Neurodevelopmental Pathway'.

ND Pathways assessment for ASD, ODD or ADHD.

Both Step One and Step Two must be followed before these additional actions are taken.

- On the advice of the professionals, screening questionnaires may be given to class teachers and parents. There needs to be significant agreement in scores between both home and school questionnaires, for us to begin to gather evidence to support an ND referral. Some of the screeners can be scored by ALNCo, others need to be scored externally.
- Detailed evidence from parents and school will be collected. This will involve meetings between ALNCo / parents and ALNCo / class teachers. Each of these meetings will take a whole morning or afternoon per pupil, in order to gain and write up the evidence that is required.

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- The pupil and evidence will then be discussed at an ND Forum slot organised by ALNCo. This is a service based in Hafan Y Mor in Singleton Hospital and slots need to be booked in advance and available are shared between all schools in Swansea. Sessions are held by the lead Speech and Language therapist for the Health Board and and ALN advisory teacher. They will look at all the evidence and decide whether there are enough examples and quality of evidence to make a referral to the ND Pathways team.
- On agreement by ND Forum professionals, paperwork will be completed and submitted to the Neurodevelopmental Pathways Team at Baglan Hospital. Parents will receive a letter to say that the referral has been accepted.
- The advised wait between paperwork being accepted and an assessment appointment being offered to parents, is currently estimated to be 22 months. Assessments usually take place over two to three appointments and observation sessions and are done by a team of medical professionals.

In the meantime, plans to support your child in school will be drawn up between yourselves as parents, class teachers and ALNCo. We can often signpost you towards additional external support groups.

- Please note that school staff are not able to contribute in any way towards DLA applications until a formal diagnosis has been made, and copies of diagnosis documents have been received by school.

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