ACHIEVE BEYOND SCHOOLS

ABS

Questions & answers

Who are you?

We are a small, independent special school for pupils with SEND and associated social and emotional needs.

Are there any new ones opening?

We plan to increase Stafford's age range from 5–16, across two sites by September 2027.

What does a 'special school' mean?

It means everything we do is about meeting the special needs of all our pupils. Our team of experts are committed to improving pupils' social skills, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, and academic achievement.

What curriculum do you teach?

Pupils study a wide range of subjects. All subjects are planned to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum content and are taught discretely. Teaching is carefully designed to engage pupils' interests and are taught as interactively and physically as possible.

How long are lessons?

Lesson lengths vary from 30–40 minutes, depending on your child's age and the subjects taught.

Where are your schools?

We currently operate one school, ABS Stafford, for pupils aged 5–13.

How many pupils are in the school?

Our registration is for 18 pupils.

What types of special educational needs do your pupils have?

Our pupils have education, health, and care (EHC) plans for their special, educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and associated social and emotional needs. Pupils sometimes also have moderate learning difficulties (MLD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and autism spectrum condition (ASC).

Which therapies do you offer?

Where necessary, pupils can have access to psychotherapy, in the form of art and play, speech and language, and occupational therapy.

Are your teachers qualified?

Yes, as well as qualifying teachers working towards qualified teacher status (QTS).

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Do you provide lunches?

The school provide pupils breakfast, breaktime snacks and a packed lunch if required. Occasionally and with consent, we provide pupils a hot lunch i.e. Christmas dinner.

How many lessons are in a day?

The day is like a typical school day. There are 6 sessions per day, 'chunked', throughout the day. These exclude breaks, lunch and clubs.

What are the timings of the school day?

Mondays to Thursdays from 8:55–14:30 and 8:55–13:30 on a Friday.

How are pupils assessed?

Pupils' progress is continually reviewed through formative teacher assessment and summarised at assessment points throughout the academic year.

Do you offer clubs?

A range of extra-curricular clubs are provided at the end of the school day, and regular educational trips enhance the curriculum further. We call this enrichment.

Do you do Year 6 SATs?

Pupils don't sit SATs due to their needs however, we can make arrangements for these to be completed in agreement with the pupil's family. We are mindful of tests and the stress that these can cause our unique cohort of pupils.

Do you provide placements with one-to-one support?

No, as our classes average 4 pupils with 2 adults. Of course, some pupils need different levels of support at different times, and some may need more intensive support on a temporary basis, but we do not offer placements to pupils who need continuous personalised, one-to-one support.

Do pupils have to wear school uniform?

Yes, all pupils are expected to wear uniform. This includes an ABS school jumper and/or t-shirt (provided free of charge), black trousers/jogging bottoms/skirt, and black shoes/trainers. Excess jewellery is not permitted, and the wearing of hats, caps and hoods inside school is not allowed.

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Will my child be physically restrained?

Only as a last resort and when it is necessary to keep everybody safe. We do not physically intervene with pupils as a behaviour management strategy. All adults are professionally trained in positive handling.

Will my child be suspended whenever their behaviour is particularly challenging?

No, we expect pupils to be in school every day and treat each day as a fresh start. We make use of suspension (of one or two days) in extreme cases, and only if it is likely to be effective (i.e. lead to non-repetition of the reason for the suspension).

Do you provide temporary placements?

No, and we are not an alternative provider (AP) or pupil referral unit (PRU).

Will my child go on trips? How will they be kept safe?

Yes, we think it is extremely important that all pupils enjoy opportunities to go on trips, to play in local parks and to participate in a range of enriching experiences. We risk assess every pupil and every activity and ensure that the staff-to-pupil ratio supports out-of-school experiences. This keeps pupils as safe as possible.

Can my child bring their mobile phone or other devices to school?

Mobile phones, and any devices that connect to the internet such as tablets and smartwatches, are not allowed in all our schools. All pupils' devices must be handed it at the office where they are stored securely until pupils leave at the end of the school day.

Are there opportunities to meet leaders, teachers and support staff?

Yes. In addition to at-least weekly phone calls from your child's teacher, we hold three open days for family days throughout the year and regular workshops and drop-ins.

May I visit your schools for a look around?

If we have received a consultation from your child's local authority's SEND team, you will be invited to visit as part of the admissions process.

Is transport to and from school provided?

Some of our pupils are transported to school by their local authority. This is something families apply for through their local authority's SEND transport team and is the responsibility of the local authority.