


Dear Families,

It has been another purposeful week at Arena, with students continuing to work hard and staff building strong routines to support them. Within the SEND team, we have been meeting families, preparing students for exams, and strengthening the range of interventions we can offer.

Spotlight on Attendance

For the week commencing 26th September, SEND attendance at Arena was 2% higher than the national average. This is a fantastic achievement and shows how much our SEND students enjoy coming to school and being part of our community. Good attendance is crucial for every child. Each day in school provides valuable opportunities to learn, build friendships, and practise routines. Even a small number of absences across the term can lead to gaps in knowledge and confidence. For students with SEND in particular, consistency is key, as being in school every day helps them feel secure, supported, and able to make steady progress. We are proud of the commitment shown by our students and families in keeping attendance high, and we will continue to work closely with you to ensure every child has the best chance to succeed.

SEND	Support	174	School	89.9%
			FFT National	87.9%
			Difference	+2.1% 

Year 7 Progress Evening and Provision Maps

This week, it was wonderful to meet so many Year 7 families during Progress Evening. We officially began handing out Provision Maps log-ins, which will allow you to view your child's One-Page Profile, track interventions, and communicate directly with the SEND team. The remaining year groups will receive their log-ins next week. These will be given to students in person and also posted home for your convenience.

Exam Access Arrangements

Year 11 mock exams begin on 13th October. Next week, all students who are entitled to exam access arrangements will practise using them. This will include how to line up, enter and leave exam rooms, and make the best use of the support available. It is vital that students treat this seriously, so they are fully prepared for the real exams. If you are unsure what your child is entitled to, please contact me directly.

Fresh Start Training

We are pleased to share that four more Teaching Assistants have now been trained to deliver Fresh Start, our phonics-based literacy programme. This means we can offer an additional 20 sessions each week, almost double what we provided before. These sessions are targeted at students who scored below average in their NGRT

assessments. Once resources arrive, sessions will begin straight away so students can receive timely support.

Comic Strips and Social Stories

Next week, our Teaching Assistants will be trained in using Comic Strips and Social Stories, strategies particularly helpful for students with autism. Comic Strips use simple drawings to show conversations or routines step by step, making it easier for students to see what is happening, what others may be thinking, and what response is expected. Social Stories are short, personalised stories that explain social situations in clear, concrete terms such as what to do when lining up for lunch, how to ask for help, or what to expect on a school trip. Both approaches help reduce anxiety, clarify expectations, and allow students to rehearse situations in advance. They are powerful tools for building confidence and independence.

Spotlight on Dyslexia

This week, I delivered training to staff on ADHD. Next week, the Reading Team and I will lead training on dyslexia as part of Dyslexia Awareness Week. Schools cannot diagnose dyslexia, and this is not covered by the NHS. Private assessors can be found via the British Dyslexia Association: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>. However, a formal diagnosis is not needed for us to provide support. At Arena, we offer a range of strategies including Reading Plus, Fresh Start, Ruth Miskin interventions, and a whole-school focus on vocabulary and comprehension. Please also note that a dyslexia diagnosis does not automatically entitle a student to extra time in exams. The British Dyslexia Association has put together helpful resources for families here: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/news/dyslexia-awareness-week-2025>.

Looking Ahead: International Stammering Awareness Day (22nd October)

Later this month, we will mark International Stammering Awareness Day. This is close to my heart, as I have a stammer myself. I will be sharing strategies with staff and students on how best to support those who stammer.

Around 1% of the population are affected, which means we anticipate around 10 students at Arena. For further information, you can visit Stamma, the UK's leading stammering charity. I previously served as a trustee and contributed to their education resources: <https://stamma.org/your-voice/my-tips-supporting-pupils-who-stammer>.

Further Information and Contact

To learn more about SEND support at Arena, please visit: <https://www.corearena.academy/our-academy/send/>

If you have concerns about your child's provision, please use this feedback form: <https://forms.office.com/e/BB9XTeCPF7>

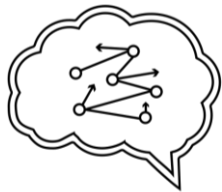
You may also contact my line manager, Mrs Kilroy (Assistant Headteacher, Inclusion and Safeguarding), if you feel your concerns are not being met.

Final Message

Thank you once again for your continued support. Together, we are making sure every student at Arena feels confident, included, and ready to succeed.

Best wishes,
Mr Ahmed
SENDCo, Arena Academy

Facts about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



ADHD is a condition that **affects people's behaviour**



The symptoms can be categorised into **2** types **Inattentiveness** and/or **hyperactivity/impulsiveness**



ADHD is diagnosed more in **boys** than **girls** as girls may mask their symptoms better

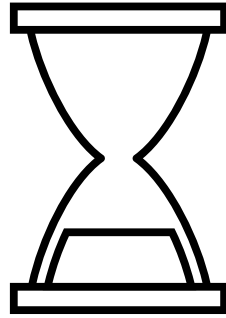


ADHD affects up to **5% of children** and **2% of adults**

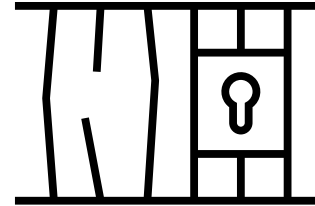
When speaking to parents..



GPs and SENDCo can
make referrals



Waiting time is roughly
2 years



Students with ADHD
are never exempt
from doing
reflections



External charities
and courses are
available

Signs of ADHD

Inattentiveness



Difficulty concentrating
and focusing



Making careless
mistakes with
schoolwork



Appearing
forgetful or losing
things



Appearing to be unable
to listen to or carry out
instructions

Hyperactivity & Impulsiveness



Being unable to sit still
during lesson



Constantly fidgeting
with equipment



Excessive physical
movement

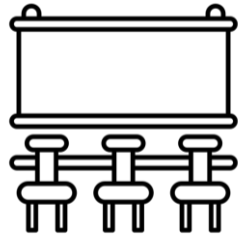


Excessive talking &
interrupting
conversations

How to support those with ADHD



Be understanding that they need support regulating their own behaviour



Minimise distractions in the classroom e.g sensory overload



Allocate them a single desk or seat near you



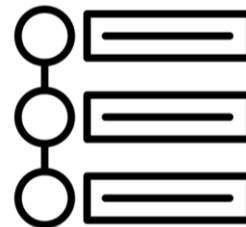
Give designated roles so they have an opportunity to have a movement break



Regularly check for listening & understanding by cold calling or using show-me boards



Provide opportunities for discussions, e.g turn & talk



Write instructions & steps on the board

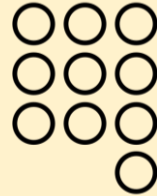


Verbally praise them when following school rules & expectations

Facts about Dyslexia



Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that mainly causes problems with reading, writing and spelling.



Dyslexia affects 10% of the population. It is not influenced by factors like gender, race, or socioeconomic status.



Signs of dyslexia can emerge early in a child's life. For example, in nursery.



Dyslexia is a lifelong problem that can present challenges, but support is available to improve reading and writing skills

Signs of Dyslexia



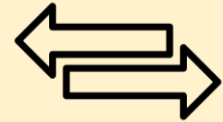
Struggling to recognise and manipulate the sounds in words.



Reading slowly or with frequent pauses and difficulty in recognising familiar words.



Making consistent spelling errors, even with simple or familiar words.



Reversing letters, numbers or symbols (e.g., "b" and "d", "p" and "q", "6" and "9", "x" and "+").



May not understand information when told verbally or when written down.



Find it hard to carry out a sequence of directions.

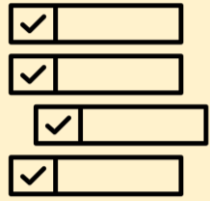


Struggle with planning and organisation.



May have a short attention span due to finding tasks difficult.

How to support a child with Dyslexia in lesson



Provide clear instructions and chunk information into manageable tasks.



Use dual coding in your lessons and worksheets.



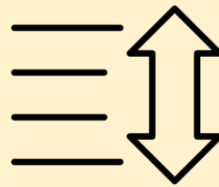
Give students sufficient time when instructed to read.



Develop oral or echo reading routines to boost fluency.



Use assistive technology such as text-to-speech, speech recognition and audiobooks.



When providing texts, space out words and lines.



Provide resources to student beforehand. Print physical texts alongside displaying it on the board.



Adjust seating plan so they are seated next to a student with a stronger reading age.