

THE HAVEN

Operated by the Autistic Girls Network charity — 1196655 (England and Wales), SC054837 (Scotland)

Adaptive Teaching and Differentiation Policy

Specialist online education for neurodivergent young people

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Approved by	Proprietor + Governing Body

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how The Haven adapts teaching and learning to meet the needs of every learner. It applies to all lessons, mentoring sessions, and educational interactions across our online provision.

2. Our position on terminology

The Haven uses the term 'adaptive teaching' in preference to traditional 'differentiation' models that group learners by perceived ability and design separate routes through content. Our approach is more closely aligned with universal design for learning and responsive teaching: making each lesson accessible to every learner from the outset, and adjusting in real time.

3. Our context

Every learner at The Haven is neurodivergent. Adaptive teaching is therefore not an occasional adjustment for a subset of learners. It is the design standard for all teaching. The Haven's educators are themselves neurodivergent, which informs both how they design lessons and how they respond in the moment.

4. Principles

- Lessons are designed to be accessible to every learner from the outset.
- Adjustment is built in, not added on.
- Pace, content, modality and demand are adjustable in real time.
- High expectations apply to every learner, with the supports needed to meet them.
- Adaptive teaching is informed by learner voice, mentor knowledge and assessment data, not by assumption.

- Learner identity, including neurodivergent identity, is respected. Adaptations are not treated as concessions.

5. What this looks like in practice

5.1 Lesson design

- Clear learning intentions, shared in advance.
- Multiple modes of presentation: spoken, visual, written, demonstrated.
- Worked examples and scaffolds available alongside open-ended tasks.
- Tasks that have a low entry threshold and a high ceiling, allowing both access and stretch.
- Predictable structure across the lesson and the platform.
- Materials prepared with readability and accessibility in mind.

5.2 In the session

- Cameras and microphones are not compulsory; chat-based contribution is welcomed.
- Educators check understanding in low-demand ways.
- Sensory and demand load is monitored and adjusted.
- Learners may step away; rejoining is welcomed without comment.
- Educators prioritise relational warmth alongside cognitive challenge.

5.3 Assessment and feedback

- Assessment uses multiple modes to allow learners to demonstrate what they know.
- Feedback is specific, kind, and oriented to next steps.
- Errors are treated as information, not failure.
- Where examination access arrangements apply, these are integrated from early in the assessment journey.

6. Learners with EHCPs and additional needs

Where a learner has an EHCP or other documented additional needs, these inform individual planning under the SEND Policy. The SEND lead works with educators to ensure that adaptive teaching meets the specific provision required, and that progress against EHCP outcomes is monitored.

7. Learners with high prior attainment

Adaptive teaching includes stretch and challenge for learners working above age-expected levels in particular areas. See the Stretch and Challenge Policy.

8. Monitoring

Adaptive teaching is monitored through the Quality Assurance Policy: session observations, learner and parent voice, learner progress data, and reflective supervision. Findings inform staff development and curriculum refinement.

9. Roles and responsibilities

- Head: Strategic oversight of adaptive teaching across the provision.
- Curriculum lead: Coherence of approach across subjects.
- SEND lead: Individual planning and reasonable adjustments.
- Educators: Design and deliver adaptive teaching in their own subject.
- Mentor: Whole-learner view, supporting learner self-awareness about how they learn best.
- Learners and families: Partners in identifying what works.

10. Related documents

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEND Policy
- Stretch and Challenge Policy
- EAL Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Examinations Policy
- Accessibility Plan

11. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head and approved by the Board of Governors.

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