

Doncaster Junior Chess Club – Inclusion

Chess is a game which should be open to all, regardless of race, gender, nationality, or any other circumstances. At Doncaster Junior Chess Club, we endeavour to ensure that all juniors, from all backgrounds, are able to join and thrive in our club. As coaches, we pledge to work tirelessly to ensure that our club is a safe space where all are able to enjoy this beautiful game and forge friendships with peers that could last a lifetime. If you, or someone you know, has any concerns about any incidents relating to inclusion at our club, please inform the staff as soon as possible. Racism, misogyny, and any other forms of discrimination will not be tolerated.

Special Education Needs

Regrettably for a child with SEN, they may find some clubs either not well suited to their individual need or staff unable to adapt. This situation, whilst it may be unavoidable in some cases, is restricting for young people and ultimately leaves them with less choices and opportunities for hobbies. With that in mind, I am hopeful that our chess club will represent a wonderfully inclusive environment where individual's needs are met. Please read the following FAQs to decide whether you'd like to get in touch:

[Will my child's individual needs be understood and adapted to?](#)

Our head coach – Sean McDonald – is a current teacher in a primary school setting and has experience working with all children, including those with SEN. To help ensure that your child's needs are met, there will be opportunity for you to privately discuss them with Sean, who will feedback to other supporting adults, and hopefully find a way to ensure that your child gets to enjoy the club as much as anyone else. As the club is not a large operation, we may struggle to meet some needs but vow to work with you to find solutions wherever possible.

[My child's needs can relate to behaviour. Is this something that can be accommodated?](#)

Behaviour at the club is managed by holding high expectations, building relationships built on mutual respect, and treating pupils in a fair, kind, and understanding manner. Shouting or other such negative methods are not employed as children rarely respond positively. Pupils will find the club to be a calm, safe environment and most will thrive in this setting.

Sometimes children (including those with SEN) can reach what can be referred to as a “crisis mode” and this is something which our head coach understands from his current role in primary education. In this event, calm behaviour is used and the child will not be scolded or treated in an unfair, or demeaning manner. If this is something which your child has experienced, it will likely be beneficial to discuss this beforehand with the staff at the club, and possibly share an SEN plan from their school setting which may have de-escalation strategies in place.

With regret, due to the lack of resources and limited insurance by this small club, it may be that we are unable to accommodate a pupil who poses a risk to themselves or others. This is in part due to the venue’s limitations (fire doors may lead to the wider public) and due to the lack of staff to care for all the pupils. That being said, we will do all we reasonably can to avoid a situation in which a pupil’s individual need cannot be accommodated, including potentially inviting yourself or another parent/carer to stay with your child through the club and assume responsibility for them.

I want my child to be involved in the club, but their need necessitates a supporting adult in an engaging manner such as a 1:1. Is there a way for my child to still attend?

Truthfully, we are unable to provide such support with the very limited resources we have available. We operate with a very small number of volunteers and while we would love to be able to accommodate your child with our own resources, I cannot see this being a possibility. However, if you (or another responsible adult) are able to attend sessions to provide such support, we would welcome you!

Summary

The key message to take away is that we really hope to be able to support all children in getting to enjoy chess and enjoy the other benefits of this club. Please do get in touch if you have any questions or concerns, and we will work together to try to find solutions.