

Notre Dame School

Learning Support and Special Educational Needs &/or Disabilities (LS/SEND) Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

In the spirit of Saint Jeanne de Lestonnac, our founder:

We are all educators ...

Accompanying young people in their efforts to build their lives for today and tomorrow.

These words embody our Mission.

Notre Dame is a Roman Catholic Independent School with a strong ecumenical tradition, respecting the faiths and cultures of all members of our community.

Our mission is built on a 400 year tradition, strengthened by the presence of the Sisters of the Company of Mary Our Lady.

We believe that fulfilment comes through the recognition of nurturing of individual potential in all areas of endeavour:

- By emphasising personal, moral and spiritual development, based on Gospel values, enabling each member to become a valued participant in the life of the community.
- By striving for personal academic excellence, offering learning experiences which will challenge each pupil.
- By providing wide-ranging opportunities, seeking to identify and develop talents in artistic, cultural and sporting pursuits.
- By fostering a strong relationship between family and school.

In this way we seek to prepare young women for their role as responsible citizens of the wider world, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

This policy is mindful of the principles set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, in particular the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0 -25 Years. However, it should be noted that independent schools are not required to have regard to the Code. Independent School Standards Regulations note that the school must ensure that the teaching provided meets the differing needs of pupils and that all pupils learn and make progress according to their ability.

It should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Accessibility Plan

Equal Opportunities

Admissions

Curriculum and Assessment

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

Complaints

Examination Access Arrangements

School Profile

Notre Dame is a girls' only academic school, offering a wide-ranging education in a warm, friendly and supportive atmosphere. It is a Roman Catholic school which welcomes girls and families of all faiths and none.

The Preparatory Department takes girls from Nursery age to 11 years. Boys are accepted up to Reception. Entry to the department is non-selective but is suitable for pupils with an average or above average academic ability. Class sizes are small and there are Teaching Assistants in Reception, Years 1 and 2. The upper primary years are geared to preparation for entry into the Senior Department by selective entrance test at age eleven. Generally, all the Preparatory school pupils who sit the examination achieve a place at the Senior School.

Notre Dame Senior Department is an academic setting, and as such will be a suitable school for pupils of 'average' to 'well above average' intellect. This would normally be categorised as above 100 in age standardised tests, and would relate to intelligence quotient (IQ). The school provides an education matched to the needs of pupils of multi-ability above that benchmark, with differentiation and support for all pupils, including those who are able, gifted and talented and those who are average, and including support where necessary for pupils with learning difficulties, special educational needs and / or disabilities, or English as an Additional Language (EAL). It does not, however, provide for pupils who are unable to undertake the full curriculum, or who do not have the potential to sit the full range of GCSE qualifications. This is measured by the standardised testing on application for a senior place at Year 6 or for occasional places. The 'value added' is high, and most girls will achieve a grade above national expectations for pupils of their ability. There is not provision for pupils who need one-to-one support within the classroom. Many pupils go on to higher education and university after Notre Dame Sixth Form.

Learning Support (LS) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at Notre Dame

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty &/or disability (LDD) which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age.

All staff of the Learning Support Department work with pupils, teachers and parents to enable pupils requiring extra help to learn and develop to their fullest potential. Tutors have a specialist qualification in Specific Learning Difficulties or are subject specialist teachers of Mathematics. Specialist tutoring can also be provided for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Staffing

Notre Dame has a Learning Support Department headed by **Mrs Anna Biggs-Davison** in the Preparatory School and **Miss Jude Price** in the Senior School. However, responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people is shared, led by the Head Teacher of the Preparatory School, Headmistress in the Senior School and including all staff at Notre Dame. A team of Teaching Assistants (TAs) works in the Pre-Preparatory classes supporting children's learning. Learning Support tutors across the school have specialist qualifications in teaching students with a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) and/or EAL, or will have an English or Mathematics subject specialism.

All staff and assistants are encouraged to attend relevant professional development courses. In addition, in-service training takes place within school. As appropriate, the school liaises with external professionals, advisory teachers and other agencies providing advice, assessment and support.

Roles and Responsibilities

Class / Subject Teachers will:

- Provide high quality, differentiated lessons
- Personalise strategies as necessary with particular attention to those pupils at risk of underachieving
- Be committed to the achievement of all pupils including those with LDD / SEND
- Be aware of any LDD / SEND amongst pupils taught (refer to Learning Support registers, individual Pupil Profiles and pupil reports held on the intranet)
- Have a knowledge of the most common types of SpLD and helpful classroom support strategies
- Liaise with learning support tutors
- Be proactive in providing for any known barriers that might impede pupils' educational development and progress
- Maintain records tracking pupil progress
- Review individual responses to any personalised support and make adjustments as necessary

Learning Support Tutors will:

- Provide 1:1 weekly tutored lessons in English / EAL &/or Mathematics
- Provide study skills tuition as necessary
- Maintain learning support plans noting targets and learning outcomes
- Liaise with class / subject teachers
- Maintain records tracking pupil progress
- Review progress with parents termly
- Provide annual reports on students

Head of Learning Support (HoLS) / SENCo is responsible for:

- The assessment and identification of pupils with LDD / SEND in collaboration with other staff
- Co-ordinating provision for pupils with LDD / SEND
- Regularly liaising with, and advising, fellow teachers
- Liaising with parents of children with LDD / SEND
- The monitoring of LDD / SEND pupil progress
- Conducting termly review meetings and annual EHCP Reviews
- Overseeing the records on all children with LDD / SEND including
 - maintaining the LS / SEND register
 - considering the results and recommendations of professional reports and liaising with parents regarding findings
 - oversight of the production of Learning Support Plans (Senior) and Individual Education Plans (Prep) and reports to parents
 - maintaining the records and evidence for Examination Access Arrangements for all Learning Support / SEND pupils
 - applying for / maintaining Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Participating in, and contributing to, the in-service training of staff
- Managing the LS / SEND resource budgets
- Providing regular information to the Head Teachers and governing body on assessment and provision for children with LDD / SEND

Learning Support Aims

The school aims to ensure that all pupils enjoy a broad and balanced education that meets individual needs. The majority of pupils progress and achieve success within the general school arrangements, however, some pupils will be identified as having LDD / SEN.

The school is committed to:

- Early identification and intervention to ensure that pupils who have difficulties learning receive the help they need as soon as possible
- A personalised education that brings out the best in every pupil and recognises learning differences as well as difficulties
- Removing barriers to learning by embedding inclusive practice in every setting
- Raising expectations and achievement by developing teachers' skills and strategies for meeting the needs of all children including those with LDD / SEN and focussing on their progress
- A partnership approach with both parents and external professionals

Identification

A number of different ways are used to identify children who may have LDD / SEN

- Class/subject teacher or parental expression of concern
- School assessments of literacy, mathematics or skills
- Further screening / testing as necessary
- External specialist / agency professional assessment

Provision

Targeted Support:

If progress is giving cause for concern, targeted support may be provided in small groups. Support for the Read Write Inc programme in Pre-Prep is provided by TAs as necessary. In the Prep Department Reading Support groups are run by the Prep Librarian. Other small support groups are set up as needed e.g. maths surgery. In the Senior School, certain pupils are enrolled onto the Accelerated Reader programme and monitored by the Senior Librarian. Regular Maths TLC groups are held and other small group support / study / revision sessions arranged as necessary.

LS Monitoring:

The progress of all pupils is monitored carefully and regularly throughout the school. Each class/subject teacher maintains records of both formative judgements and subject tests. If it is felt that a pupil is showing signs of having LDD/SEN the situation is initially monitored. The class teacher will inform or seek advice from the Head of Learning Support and will discuss difficulties with the pupil's parents. Some individualised help within the normal curriculum framework will be provided by the class/subject teacher, exploring methods of increased differentiation or personalised strategies to meet the needs of the pupil. Progress will be monitored and reviewed.

In addition, in the Prep Department, the Learning Support tutors track the development of literacy skills via standardised single word read reading, prose reading and spelling tests. In Year 9 of the Senior School the Lucid Exact software suite is used to check speed of reading and writing skills in order to highlight those pupils for whom Examination Access Arrangements may be appropriate.

If this help has not resulted in the pupil making satisfactory progress, it may be decided to offer additional support to the pupil through specialised tutoring.

Learning Support Tutoring:

With parental agreement, tutoring can be provided for pupils who, it is felt, could make accelerated progress with additional support. This will enable them to more easily access the curriculum and attain the expected level of the majority of peers. Such pupils are offered individual one-to-one tuition from a specialist Learning Support tutor (this support is optional and chargeable). Some parents may choose to provide extra support for their child by engaging an external tutor; the school will liaise with such tutors as desired by the parents. For those with individual support in school, a Learning Support Plan is drawn up which includes details of the termly or six-monthly targets set for the pupil, when the plan is to be reviewed and will also record outcomes. Where there are external professional reports in place, such as an Educational Psychology assessment, recommendations and strategies from the report will be interwoven throughout any Learning Support, as well as into class/subject teaching.

Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP):

Support through an EHCP is provided for pupils whose difficulties mean that they are denied access to the curriculum and, to enable progress, specialist provision is required.

If all professionals involved in supporting a pupil are in agreement with the school and parents that the pupil has SEND which cannot be met through school Learning Support, an EHCP may be applied for. An evidence-based referral to the LEA SEND Panel to request a statutory assessment for an EHCP follows.

If the request for an EHCP is successful, the parent or school is provided with additional funding to meet the child's needs. This funding is generally used to provide a specified number of hours per week of support from a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) and, if necessary, certain specialist equipment. In the Prep School, the LSA may work with the pupil in the classroom under the direction of the class teacher to achieve the requirements of the EHCP. Some specialist teaching by the LSA may require withdrawal for short sessions and some time may be spent on collecting and preparing resources. In the Senior School, funding for additional hours would usually involve a Teaching Assistant supporting the adaptation of teaching and learning resources, rather than in-class support. EHCPs are formally reviewed on an annual basis.

On rare occasions it may be found that the provision made by the school is not enabling satisfactory progress by a pupil and the pupil is unable to fulfil her potential in this setting. The school does not have the specialist staffing to support the more serious developmental, emotional/social or cognitive difficulties. If it is felt that, despite best efforts, the school cannot adequately meet the pupil's needs, parents can be asked to find a more suitable school placement.

Examination Access Arrangements

The school will ensure that students who have a recognised difficulty and/or disability will have access to appropriate adjustments for examinations. This will enable them to achieve to their maximum potential and on an equal footing with their peers.

Please refer to separate policy for further detail.

Glossary:

Learning Difficulty &/or Disability (LDD)

In UK education services, the term 'learning difficulty' includes children who have 'specific learning difficulties', for example dyslexia, but who do not have a significant general impairment of intelligence. A 'learning disability' is generally viewed as more serious with a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills, and a reduced ability to cope independently which starts before adulthood with lasting effects on development.

Specific learning difficulty (SpLD)

Specific Learning Difficulties affect the way information is learned and processed. They are neurological rather than psychological, usually hereditary and occur independently of intelligence. They include, but are not limited to, dyslexia, dyspraxia (or developmental co-ordination disorder), dyscalculia and attention deficit disorder. Learning support at Notre Dame is typically provided for pupils with mild SpLD.

Equality Act 2010

In England the Act applies to all maintained and independent schools. The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, in the way it provides education for pupils, in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities. Schools are expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled pupils.

Equality Act 2010 Disability Definition

A person is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means 12 months or more.

Equality Act 2010 JCQ Examination Access Arrangements

Reasonable adjustments must be made for candidates who experience persistent and significant difficulties, to enable them to access assessments, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage. The arrangement must be the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and appropriate to their needs.

Abbreviations Used

EAL	English as an Additional Language
HoLS	Head of Learning Support
LS	Learning Support
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
LDD	Learning Difficulties &/or Disabilities
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs &/or Disabilities
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
TA	Teaching Assistant