

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SENIOR SCHOOL)

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1. OUTLINE OF LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN THE SENIOR SCHOOL

Learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and special educational needs (SEN) are of varying kinds and intensity. They may be temporary or permanent. The school is committed to an inclusive approach to learning and promotes full access to a broad and balanced curriculum; enabling pupils to reach their full potential. Most pupil needs will be met by the school in the normal course of school activity. Some may require additional support, or the school may recommend a consultation with a specialist. The school works in close partnership with pupils and parents; where appropriate, outside agencies are consulted to support the needs of individual pupils.

The school endeavours to monitor and promote the social, personal and cognitive development of every pupil, and this includes the needs of pupils in the following specific areas:

| Nature of Need | Line of Responsibility |
|--|--|
| Social, Emotional, Mental Health & Wellbeing e.g. eating disorders, anxiety | Form Tutor - Head of Year - Head of Section - Head Mistress Youth Mental Health First Aiders - Pastoral team - includes Head of Sections, HOY, School Nurse, Head of PSHE and E-Safety Officer. |
| Physical disability or illness - excluding visual and auditory impairment | School Nurse - Head of Section - Head Mistress |
| Specific learning difficulties/neurodiversities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dyslexia/dyspraxia • hearing/visual impairment • AD(H)D/ASC | Head of Learning Support ¹ - Head of Middle School/Upper School/Sixth Form ² /Director of Studies - Head Mistress |

¹ The Head of Learning Support is “SENCO” for the Senior School

² Heads of Section

All teachers share the responsibility for identifying and responding to the needs of all their pupils. Every teacher has an inclusive approach to learning with high expectations of every pupil. Every teacher is asked to anticipate individual learning needs and help pupils overcome barriers to learning.

The School shows due regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2014) and the Equality Act (2010), with reasonable adjustments being made on a case-by-case basis. Whilst we have experience at supporting neurodiversity, not all pupils receiving support have an identified/diagnosed need. As a highly academic and selective school with a rigorous academic nature to the entrance procedures, the nature of learning difficulties at this school are mostly 'borderline' cases and less complex needs. The vast majority of these pupils have a difficulty with learning or learning difficulties as opposed to a special educational need or disability. Pupils' needs are mostly met through High Quality Teaching, appropriately differentiated. All pupils are able to follow the same curriculum, though some additional help, or assessment by a specialist may be required at times.

Definition of Special Educational Needs from (The SEND Code of Practice 2014):

'A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her'.

A pupil has a special educational need if she:

- a) has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*
- b) has a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of the facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.*

A child must satisfy the definition of disability, as described in Part 6 of the Children and Families Act.

All teaching staff are informed of learning difficulties, disabilities and special educational needs as they arise via: the SIMS database; the LDD support list in the shared area (TEAMS); regular updates distributed by email and staff meetings. Both general and subject-specific guidance is given to enable those needs to be met as far as possible within the usual classroom setting. Self-help is actively encouraged, particularly as the pupils are generally able enough to develop their own learning strategies. Any intervention is tailored to the needs of the individual and personalised strategies are given to support the development of independent learning skills.

The Graduated Response

Early intervention increases the chance of a positive outcome for pupils. Essentially, there is a graduated response to meet the needs of learners with LDD/SEN or in response to a concern of a potential underlying difficulty:

| | |
|--|---|
| Stage 1: Monitoring | Low-level monitoring. |
| | High quality teaching and personalised learning through differentiation in the classroom. |
| | Occasionally one-to-one or small group support. |
| Stage 2: Diagnosis and/or In- school provision | Consultation by Specialist Assessor or other outside agencies. |
| | Formal diagnosis - placement on LDD register. |
| | Differentiation in the classroom using identified strategies. |
| | Extra support- advice or targeted intervention by Learning Support. |
| | Evidenced based interventions often on a one-to-one basis. |
| Stage 3: Highly Specialised | Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan; |
| | Highly specialised intensive intervention with internal and/or external specialist providing support. |

The graduated response offers access to additional learning programmes and resources to support the development of key skills and strategies for independent learning when assessment indicates that the pupil is not making the expected progress or there is (potentially) an underlying difficulty. A pupil can move between the different stages and can move on/off the LDD monitoring or support lists throughout their schooling.

In rare and exceptional situations where a significant, severe and sustained need arises where resources and interventions available are insufficient or inappropriate to meet a pupil's needs, a request may be made from school, or by a parent/carer, to the local authority for a child to have a statutory assessment of their difficulties. An Educational Health and Care Plan is a legal document that determines the specialist provision for a child. The Learning Support Department, in consultation with parents, would approach the local authority to enter into such a multi-disciplinary assessment process.

Pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Those pupils who enter the school with an EHCP, will have access to all arrangements for pupils outlined in the graduated approach and, in addition to this, will have:

- short-term personalised targets in a student plan/individual education plan;
- strategies outlined to help them address these targets;
- regular reviews of targets;
- a statutory Annual Review of their Plan in conjunction with the LEA and support services.

The school would approach their needs in a positive manner, and seek to make all reasonable adjustments on a case-by-case basis. The pupil and their parent(s) would be given opportunities to participate in decision making regarding their support.

2. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF LDD/SEN PUPILS

Social, Emotional, Mental Health and Wellbeing:

Form Tutors, teachers or parents will alert the relevant Head of Section to the nature of the problem.

Please refer to the Wellbeing Policy for specific details regarding this particular need. The pastoral team includes Head of Sections, HOY, School Nurse, Head of PSHE and Digital Safety Co-ordinator.

Physical Disability or Illness:

This may be known on entrance to the school from the report from the previous school, or from the information requested from parents by the school.

Parents, the school nurse or the teacher will become aware of a problem and will consult the relevant Head of Section or the Head Mistress.

Advice can be given about speech therapy, vision and hearing tests.

Specific Learning Difficulties:

These are identified by the following methods:

- admissions procedures
- reports from junior schools
- information given by parents
- expression of concern from teaching staff or parent(s)
- screening of all new entrants
- under-performance in tests or examinations
- progress reports
- advice from the school counsellor
- an educational/clinical psychologist's report
- entrants to the Sixth Form are asked if they have any history of specific learning difficulty or any access arrangement in public examinations by the Head of Section (Sixth Form).

The Head of Learning Support collects information from all relevant sources and assesses how the matter should be addressed.

Note: Screening in Year 7 takes the form of:

1. Lucid Lass Screener: a computer-based assessment that identifies potential underlying signs of learning difficulties
2. A questionnaire to help identify learning difficulties, including the possibility of Convergence Insufficiency.
3. Screening for dyspraxia by the P.E. department.

Results are looked at in conjunction with MIDYIS results. This is reviewed with the relevant Pastoral Head of Section, who may feed in pastoral or academic concerns, to see if there is general under-achievement in relation to peers, or specific under-achievement in key areas. Comments from staff are also taken into consideration. Screening in later years makes use of an age appropriate screener.

English as an Additional Language:

'A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she will be taught.' The SEND Code of Practice 2014. EAL is therefore not a learning difficulty, disability or special educational need.

Information about EAL is requested from parents on entrance to the school so that any pupil needing additional educational support can be identified at an early stage.

All pupils, as a part of the School's entrance procedure, sit examination papers which include written English, both comprehension and creative writing, and thus their ability to understand and use the language fluently is tested. However, if problems are perceived then or later, outside tuition to improve literacy levels may be suggested to parents. The School recognises that an EAL pupil may have dual exceptionality and also have LDDs/SENs.

The line of responsibility for English as an Additional Language is: Form Tutor - Head of Section- Director of Studies - Head Mistress.

High Performance Provision

The School recognises that LDD/SEN pupils may also have dual exceptionality and be high performers. Please refer to the High Performance Provision Policy (Senior) for further information.

3. METHODS OF ADDRESSING LDD/SEN

1. Concern expressed by any member of staff or parent(s), or a pupil is identified as "at risk" on screening tests;
2. Head of Learning Support collates all evidence and monitors progress;
3. Head of Section advised, parent(s) contacted and an assessment by the school's specialist assessor, an educational psychologist or other specialist may be recommended, usually followed by a short one-to-one course in learning strategies;
4. Teaching staff advised of LDD/SEN as they arise via: the SIMS database; the LDD support list in the shared area (TEAMS); regular updates distributed by email. Heads of Department give guidance on how to address these in their subject area;
5. Parents' involvement at any stage of the process is welcomed. Communication is usually with the Head of Learning Support or the Head of Section.

The Examinations Officer is kept informed of any pupils who require access arrangements such as the use of a WP, supervised rest break or the provision of extra time in public examinations. (For more information see section 5 under 'Public Examinations'.)

Review of Progress and Record Keeping

The continued monitoring of pupils to aid identification, and the continued progress of pupils with LDD/SEN, is the responsibility of all staff.

The Head of Learning Support adds details of pupils with LDDs/SENs to the SIMS database on the school network. The Registrar and the SIMS Manager add information of a medical

nature. The Head of Sections add/keep information regarding Social, Emotional, Mental Health & Wellbeing needs. This information is regularly updated.

Discussions with parents are recorded.

The School is committed to working in partnership with pupils and their parents, to ensure an active role and effective approach is undertaken. Parents are informed of concerns and recommendations to enable the school to support their daughter. Pupil and parental views are ascertained during this process.

The progress of each pupil is under constant review, both informally and formally. Individual pupils are often seen for an informal personal review with the Head of Learning Support. The Head of Learning Support liaises with relevant Heads of Sections (Middle, Upper, Sixth) to assess the progress of pupils with LDDs/SENs and plan appropriate action. Monitoring of progress continues to take place throughout the year. Individual teachers, Heads of Department, Heads of Year and Heads of Sections also review progress of all pupils with LDDs/SENs to ensure that their needs are being met.

Additional support lessons are arranged on site to support pupils to fulfil their potential. Staff are informed if pupils are withdrawn from lessons. Parents and pupils are consulted in the process.

For those pupils with a diagnosed underlying learning difficulty, at the end of an intervention offered by specialist teachers, an Individual Education Plan is developed outlining the progress that has been made with relevant personalised targets; advice is given to teachers, where relevant. Parents are informed of the pupil's progress and an outline of targets to support their daughter are given. The content of each course is recorded on SIMS. Advice on appropriate teaching strategies, where necessary, is placed on SIMS and distributed to relevant staff.

The Head of Learning Support is required to liaise with all relevant pupils, parents and members of staff, to ensure that all important information is passed on and that the pupils' progress is reviewed. There is regular email contact with Heads of Sections about individual pupils' progress and those causing concern.

General overview: Form Tutor and Head of Section.

School reports and examinations are scrutinised with regard to the pupils' LDD/SEN. Progress is assessed with these in mind. Any pupils who are a cause for concern are reported to the Head of Learning Support. Critical comments about presentation, spelling, organisation and concentration should not be made in reports on pupils with a specific learning difficulty.

Annual Parents' Evenings provide a forum for discussion with all teachers.

Any matter causing concern can be raised directly by parents with the Head of Section or the Head of Learning Support at any time.

4. DEFINITION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Learning Support Department provides identified pupils with personalised programmes to develop skills and strengths whilst addressing areas for development.

The Head of Learning Support is Margaret Christodoulou BA (Hons), MA, PGCE, Post-Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy, ATS (British Dyslexia Association), ADG (Dyslexia Guild),

Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements (CPT3A), Registered Qualified Test User (British Psychological Society).

This role is designed to co-ordinate and oversee the working of the LDD/SEN Policy regarding specific learning difficulties (as defined above) and visual and hearing impairment within the senior school. She should also ensure that staff are kept up-to-date as far as possible with any relevant advances in these fields, particularly as they relate to individual pupils. The identification of learning difficulties and provision of advice on what can be done to help meet the needs of those with LDDs/SENs, combined with continuity of care, are the key areas of responsibility.

Occasionally, other teachers may be asked to provide targeted support either at school or at home.

5. EXAMINATIONS

Entrance Examinations:

Special arrangements for candidates with LDDs/SENs are possible if notice is given well in advance of the examination. The assessment process will take account of LDDs/SENs if relevant information has been given to the school. All requests must be supported by:

- A report from an Educational Psychologist, Qualified Specialist Teacher or specialist Medical Practitioner, written within two years of the date of the entrance examination.
- Evidence of history of need and confirmation of the applicant's normal way of working (the applicant's school will be contacted directly for this information).

All the evidence provided is reviewed by the Head of Learning Support. Arrangements for the entrance examination will subsequently be confirmed with parents by the Registrar. In putting access arrangements in place, the School complies with the Equality Act 2010 and with the JCQ Regulations. Assessments by Educational Psychologists, qualified Specialist Assessors and specialist Medical Practitioners must demonstrate in quantitative measures that the candidate meets JCQ criteria for access arrangements.

The granting of an Access Arrangement/Reasonable Adjustments for the school's entrance examination papers cannot be taken as a guarantee of the award, by the public examination boards, of such an Access Arrangement for GCSE, A level or other public examinations. The school is subject to regulations dictated by the JCQ and CIE, and is required to follow a process of evidence gathering which may or may not lead to a successful application for access arrangements in public examinations.

Public Examinations:

Procedures laid down by The Joint Council for General Qualifications are followed. Cambridge International Examinations regulations are also followed, where relevant, for specific examinations.

There are a range of access arrangements/reasonable adjustments that must be considered and thoroughly exhausted before extra time can be considered, or trialed, prior to an application being made. Access arrangements such as the provision of rest breaks, word processing, extra time etc. can be applied for and/or awarded if the school has clear justification and evidence of the following:

1. A report from a specialist assessor either employed within the school, or with whom the school has an established relationship, diagnosing a learning difficulty with

below/low national average scores on specific standardised tests; two or more scores in different areas of speed of working are required in these cases;

2. The JCQ explicitly prohibits schools from accepting privately commissioned assessments carried out without prior consultation with the centre;
3. Where a candidate has a substantial impairment, such as a disability, complex need or access need, confirmation of the disability is required from an appropriate specialist (the need must remain current). This is supplementary supporting evidence and does not automatically permit the implementation of access arrangements;
4. A compelling case showing a detailed history of need on a day-to-day and subject-by-subject basis within school, which remains current;
5. A history of provision of that arrangement within school on a day-to-day and subject-by-subject basis;
6. Any arrangements put in place must reflect the pupil's normal way of working within the school setting e.g. in the classroom; internal exams;
7. Evidence showing subject specialist teachers have been involved in ascertaining the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact teaching and learning on a subject-by-subject basis;
8. To maintain access arrangements from GCSE to GCE qualifications, there must be evidence of a continuing need and the candidate must continue to meet the published criteria on a subject-by-subject basis

N. B. Access Arrangements cannot be granted when they will directly affect the performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment.

The use of a WP is only allowed if it is approved and established as the candidate's normal way of working in school. Any WP used must be wiped clean before use to ensure that no unfair advantage can be gained. No checkers such as spell-checkers are allowed unless the candidate qualifies for this arrangement. In line with regulations, personally owned WPs cannot be used in the following conditions: examinations, timed work, non-examination assessments, coursework or controlled assessments. Please see the School's Policy on Laptop Use Criteria and WP Use in Public Exams for further information.

Pupils are given instructions on the procedures for those with access arrangements by the Examinations Officer at the beginning of the examination period. They are also given advice about how to use their access arrangement by the Head of Learning Support. Any advice on the use of IT equipment is provided by the IT Services Team.

Internal Examinations:

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments may be made for those pupils with LDDs/SENs where this is thought to be necessary, and there is clear evidence of need. Decisions will be taken on an individual basis and with regard to JCQ and CIE regulations for public examinations so that an appropriate history of need, normal way of working and history of provision can be evidenced for public examination candidates.

WPs may be used if this is the pupil's normal way of working and agreed by the Head of Learning Support. Please see the School's Policy on Laptop Use Criteria and WP Use in Public Exams for further information.

Predicted grades for GCSE and GCE Level examinations will take pupils' needs into account.

N.B. Parents of pupils with visual or hearing impairment should arrange for up to date assessments of their needs before embarking on examination courses. This will help to

determine what measures, if any, should be taken to ensure that their daughter's needs are met in advance of public examinations.

As in all lessons, those with a hearing or visual difficulty should sit in the place best suited to their needs in all examinations.

6. PHYSICAL ACCESS

Accessibility is provided through a range of resources, methods and adaptations. Please see the Accessibility Policy.

Wheelchair access to most parts of the building and facilities can be achieved. The Gateway building is fully accessible.

Notes:

- Lifts have been installed to allow for independent access to areas of the first floor of the main school building.
- Biometric or swipe-card access to most doors is possible for those in wheelchairs.
- Cloakroom facilities are provided.
- Parking for the disabled is available.
- Wheel-chair accessible WCs are provided in the Sports Hall; on the ground floor and first floor of the Arts Centre and in the Gateway building.

It is the school's policy that all disabled pupils and staff should have as much physical access to the school facilities and curriculum as possible. Participation in extra-curricular activities will be encouraged. The disabled person's needs, whether of a temporary or permanent nature, will be considered on an individual basis and met, as long as reasonable adjustments can be made in order to accommodate them.

7. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

The School believes in developing strong partnerships with parents by formal and informal methods of communication as outlined above. It recognises the importance of the pupil being supported at home as well as at school for a pupil to achieve their true potential.

The Head of Learning Support liaises with parents on matters related to LDD/SEN provision throughout the year.

8. PUPILS

The School believes in seeking the personal involvement of the pupil in her own progress. It is hoped that the sensitive and helpful approach to LDDs/SENs encouraged in the school will enable pupils to feel that their needs are recognised and supported without stigma. It is regarded as important that pupils recognise their own needs and become actively involved in learning strategies to help themselves, both for their own personal development and to enhance their self-esteem. A pupil can refer themselves if they have any concerns about their progress/learning.

Continuity of care is very much at the forefront of the school policy towards those with LDDs/SENs.

Sixth form students may be advised to contact the Learning Support Department of their intended university destination or to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances when they go on to further education if their difficulty makes this appropriate.

9. OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Occasionally a pupil may require the support of more specialist services/provision. These external specialists can provide targeted and highly specialised support to contribute to removing barriers to learning and participation. The School maintains a list of recommended specialist providers with whom we have an established relationship e.g. Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapist, Behavioural Optometrist, Orthoptist. Parents may wish to refer their child for assessment following internal screening, on the school's recommendation.

If a parent elects to independently commission a report from an external specialist (e.g. Educational/Clinical Psychologist), we recommend that the specialist liaises directly with the school well in advance of any assessments. This will ensure an holistic picture is provided to support the individual pupil.

10. DATA PROTECTION

It is recognised that some of the information gathered and stored will be special category data pursuant to Data Protection Act 2018. In any event, the information is personal information and the School complies with its data protection legal obligations in this regard including the safe-keeping and sharing of such information.

11. COMPLAINTS

Any complaints about provision for those with LDD/SEN can be made using the parental complaints procedure.

Links to other Policies and Documents:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Wellbeing Policy (Senior)
- Accessibility Plan
- High Performance Provision Policy (Senior)
- Digital Safety Policy
- Laptop Use Criteria and WP Use in Public Exams