

SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

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Learning Support Policy Document for those with Special Educational Needs (Alternative Learning Needs), Learning Difficulties and Disability

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Learning Support Policy Document for those with Special Educational Needs (Alternative Learning Needs), Learning Difficulties and Disability

1. Related Policies

- SENDA Accessibility Plan;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Admissions Policy
- Gifted and Talented Provision
- Teaching and Learning Guide

Date implemented: January 2012

Date of last review: September 2014; January 2015

SENDA Responsible Person: Helen Tebay, Pastoral Deputy

SEN co-ordinator: Alison Maynard, Head of Learning Support

SEN Governor: Eliza Ecclestone

Relevant definitions:

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

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

(Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, August 2014)

Children and young people may have a disability under the *Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 and 2005*:

"Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

According to the Disability Act 2005 disabilities include: mobility difficulties, visual or hearing impairment, severe disfigurements, mental health conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, learning disabilities and difficulties, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, MS. Long term is defined as "a year or more" and substantial is "more than minor or trivial"

2. Objectives and Aims

We offer support and expertise to the whole school to help resolve difficulties and promote positive solutions for pupils experiencing barriers to their learning. We aim to follow a graduated approach of **Assess, Plan, Do and Review** as recommended by the SENDA Code of Practice 2014 to ensure that students have the best care possible. We employ a range of strategies to achieve this including:

- Identification and assessment of individual needs
- Designing individual learning programmes involving students in the decision-making process
- Advising and working with colleagues (academic and pastoral)
- Liaising with external agencies, feeder schools and universities
- Communicating with parents
- Tracking the progress of students we support

We are committed to equal opportunities and although not compulsory for independent schools, we believe it is good practice to show due regard in our work, policy and procedures to SENDA 2001 and to SEND 2014. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments for students with disability and Learning Difficulties in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

ASSESSMENT

3. ASSESSMENT - Transition and Admissions

The School believes that the community is enriched by its ability to attract a wide variety of pupils from varied backgrounds and with varied talents. Our policy on special needs fully complements this belief. We welcome applicants with learning difficulties, or other disabilities, to the school.

Admission to Sevenoaks School is via a selective entry procedure in which we choose those we judge the most able candidates of those applying to us. The main criteria on which selection is based are:

- academic ability
- co-curricular potential (sport, music, art, drama, etc)
- personal qualities, allowing a pupil to contribute to and benefit from what the school has to offer.

We will consider an application and in our selection make appropriate allowances and adjustments for disability and/or special educational needs where reasonably possible, although we do not set out to be a school with specialist expertise or provision in this area. We have reasonable provision for wheelchair access throughout the campus.

The suitability of the competitive and demanding working environment of the School has to be considered for pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties, as indeed it does for all applicants. The School must feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of his or her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful school career and emerge a confident, well-educated and well-rounded adult. These criteria should continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the School.

Before admission to the School, parents and teachers of prospective students will be asked to identify any Learning Support needs or Physical Disability through the use of a Learning Support Questionnaire. Any Educational Psychologist's report or relevant documentation should be attached to this. The Head of Learning Support interviews prospective candidates *and their parents* to the school alongside the Admissions department when relevant.

At all times our primary consideration will be the best interests of the child. Thus, if after reasonable adjustments and provision have been made, a child does not reach the standard of the other applicants for the place, or we feel that as a school we do not have, and cannot reasonably have appropriate resources available to meet the needs of a child, we will not offer a place to that child.

Any enquiries related to admissions should be addressed to the Sixth Form Registrar(at 16) or the Registrar (for admission at 11 or 13).

ASSESSMENT at school

4. Identification, Assessment and Monitoring of Individual Needs

Screening

Once admitted to the school there will be further screening for any spLDs :

- A spelling screening test (WRAT 3) during Year 7, and a further one during Year 9 may identify any underlying dyslexic-type difficulties.
- The MidYIS tests in Year 9 may also identify students with alternative needs.
- The Cambridge Aptitude test in Year 11 is used to further cross-reference and check for a spikey profile which may indicate unusual weaknesses.
- A screening test at the beginning of Year 12 for students with English as an Additional Language to identify need for EAL support.
- Close contact is maintained throughout the school with tutors, Divisional Heads and subject teachers with particular reference to a checklist which includes:
 - Underperformance in class or exams
 - Behavioural issues
 - Attention problems

- Slow writing
- Verbal/written disparity
- Social isolation issues
- MidYis performances which are contradictory/concerning
- Organisational issues including missing deadlines

The report system is also used to pick up on possible issues with the students underperforming highlighted by Divisional Heads from grades and reports at the end of each grade period.

Assessment by Specialist staff

Once highlighted as having a possible difficulty, the first steps are informal meetings with members of the LS department after consultation with tutor and parents. This may involve brief assessments such as SDMT testing, DASH assessment, or spelling screening. If necessary, a student without an existing Educational Psychologist's report or other relevant report may be tested within the school by our Specialist Teacher (HGS), referred to the School Counsellor or Medical Centre and where it is required, referred to an outside agency. The school retains lists of Educational and Clinical Psychologists and uses the local CAMHs service when appropriate. Sally Kemp, Educational Psychologist, visits the school to assess students on campus when required and charges the parents for this service. We have a good relationship with the Surrey and Kent Visual Impairment Departments and they come in to school to assess our provision annually, free of charge. (See flow chart of School's response Appendix 2)

PLANNING and DOING

5. Sharing Information on students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Once identified as having a need for targeted provision, the student will be registered on the Staff Portal under the Learning Support tab with the type of difficulty and strategies to help clearly labelled and accessible to staff. They will be highlighted on staff lists on iSAMS and any student receiving support will also appear on the report system, so that the help they receive and their difficulties are clearly identified. IEP's are sent electronically within the first half-term of the year to all teachers of students receiving learning support with the main challenges they face and a few key strategies for supporting them clearly outlined.

Staff have both formal and informal meetings with the Learning Support staff at break times.

The Head of Learning Support attends Heads of Department meetings and occasionally the Pastoral Committee when appropriate. There is an annual Departmental Review to feed back to the SMT. The LS Governor visits the department annually.

6. Provision for those with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Wave 1 support – in the classroom

Within the classroom all learners should be enabled to work to the best of their ability and this should involve a range of teaching strategies employed by the individual subject teacher to enhance the learning of the student with SEND and to remove any barriers to their achievement.

To this end the Learning Support teachers will provide support to teachers and give guidance as to strategies and classroom management to best support alternative learners within the classroom. A range of tailored strategies is available on the Learning Support portal, and on iSAMs and the IEPs which are sent to teachers should allow them to understand the difficulties faced by students and help them to tailor their teaching accordingly. This includes advice from experts such as the Visual Impairment advisors who monitor our visually impaired students.

The learning support team provides INSET and CPD to departments and to staff-meetings to highlight needs and update colleagues on good practice. This occurs at the beginning of every year to the full staff meeting and then to individual departments. There are frequent meetings about individual students with the staff who teach them at break times.

Extra-time, Word-processing and other access arrangements are allowed for students for classroom work, practical work, field trips and in exams in line with the regulations of the public exam boards. AJM maintains close contact. Karen Henry the examinations officer monitors this carefully with help from the IB co-ordinator and the Examinations co-ordinator.

In line with the Children and Families' Act, the Disability Act and the Equality Act every attempt is made to ensure that disabled pupils benefit from school trips and activities as much as other pupils and maximum inclusion remains our policy. However, sometimes it is necessary to offer an alternative activity, for example in sport certain students do tennis or sailing rather than rugby. Discussions between parents, the School and pupils will take place to ensure that activities are practicable and that any adaptations are reasonable.

Wave 2 support – extra group support

The school provides a Study Skills programme to support all students which begins in the Lower School and continues with a structured programme administered by tutors and Divisional Heads in the Middle School and Upper School. Tutors also reinforce this and follow up on individuals.

Individual departments provide support in small groups and individually where needed. There is a handwriting club run currently by PH in the English Dept. and targeted spelling programmes, alongside essay-writing help for year 11s. There are structured revision classes within all departments prior to exams for all year groups and for the GCSE and IB programmes.

DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT

When there is a need for extra support for a group of individuals in a class, we occasionally provide teacher help in class. We have appointed learning support coordinators in all faculties who are responsible for identifying areas of need and classes where more support is needed.

PEER MENTORING

Since 2012 we have also initiated an academic peer mentoring scheme involving some 40 students which pairs Sixth Form students with Middle and Lower School students to support learning.

HOMEWORK CLUB

Some students who need guided help with homework have been attending Homework Club since September 2014 run in the LS Department.

In 2014/15 we introduced a programme of Directional Movement Systems (DMS) with the Sevenoaks Physiotherapists, which provides group based mat activities to support students with coordination problems and dyspraxia as well as hypermobility. We intend to extend this provision when LS staff are trained in Summer 2015.

Wave 3 support- individual support

When a student needs more individual help than that provided in Wave 1 and 2, the Learning Support Department will offer one-to-one help weekly and sometimes twice weekly to cater for their individual learning needs. This may involve study skills help, strategies to support their learning, memory, organisation, enhanced reading skills, note-taking, essay writing skills and developing their individual confidence and self-esteem. Some students will receive specialist dyslexic or dyspraxic support according to their difficulties. This is monitored carefully and provided while needed, with specific desired outcomes discussed with parents, tutors and the students themselves. Currently students are withdrawn from occasional System of Belief lessons, Critical Thinking, 10 ideas lessons or PSD in the Lower and Middle School; the Upper School use their free lessons. Some one-to-one help is offered before/after school and in lunchtimes.

If more help is required with assessment or support, students may be referred to External agencies. (See below)

Students with EAL needs will receive weekly support to enhance their fluency in and comprehension of English as well as essay-writing help.

REVIEW

Monitoring

Once identified as having a Learning Support need or a disability, students are carefully monitored to ensure that they are having full access to the curriculum and any barriers to learning are being removed. The monitoring takes different forms:

- Within the usual curriculum, recording and reporting progress
- Monitoring by Learning Support staff

Within the usual curriculum, students are carefully monitored by teaching and pastoral staff through on-going assessment for learning, regular marking and the report system, which occurs half-termly. The students with SEN or disability are highlighted on the report system, and tutors feed back to the LS department with concerns or significant progress.

Divisional Heads report back to the LS department with the results of reports and highlight any individuals who are underperforming. Divisional Heads and LS staff look carefully at the results of termly and half-termly grades to ensure that those who are receiving support are progressing, and to pick up other students who are seen to be struggling. Success is also conveyed. Parents' evenings are another forum for monitoring and these occur annually.

The Learning Support teacher keeps a regular record of lessons given and progress made, including samples of work and grades. They also write reports on the system and monitor the grades and reports, feeding back to teachers and tutors as appropriate. After mocks, end of year examinations and public examinations, the results are carefully looked at and published in the Learning Support Department annual review.

7. **Transition to Higher Education:**

The Learning Support department and tutors keep close contact with the Higher Education Department and when advising on further education and universities, SEND needs are taken into account and students encouraged to declare difficulties and disabilities. AJM makes application for access arrangements on behalf of students such as extra time and WP for university entrance tests, American universities and SAT tests.

8. **Staffing**

Currently the School has one full-time teacher and four part-time teachers, including a Specialist Dyslexia teacher and an EAL specialist working in the Learning Support Department. There is a part time member of staff who gives help with science subjects, and with language and study skills. We have part-time administrative help with a secretary in Claridge House. There are four Learning Support representatives in Faculties: - Maths, Languages, English and Sciences.

However, Learning Support is a **school-wide responsibility** and all subject teachers, academic and pastoral colleagues are involved in the day to day provision of support and good practice to allow all learners to reach their maximum potential.

The pupil support is co-ordinated by the Head of Learning Support, and the Pastoral Head oversees the provision. The Head Of LS attends Heads of Department meetings twice termly and the Pastoral Committee when appropriate. There is an annual Departmental Review to feed back to the SMT.

Learning Support staff are encouraged to attend training courses to keep up to date.

9. **Links with external agencies**

When necessary, students may be recommended to external specialist bodies to give the extra support they need. This may involve Educational Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Counsellors, the School Counsellor and LEAs for pupils with statements or EHCs. We recommend optometrists and touch-typing courses where relevant.

The School has traditionally had very good relations with the Visual Impairment specialists at Surrey and Kent County Councils. Some of our students have been referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health service CAMHs in Tunbridge Wells.

10. **Contact with Parents**

The Learning Support Department maintains close contact with parents at all times and in line with the new Children and Families Act 2014 the importance of involving parents in decision making is fully acknowledged. Before IEPs are written, there is a discussion process with parents (and the students) to ensure that the right information is given to teachers. Parents are always consulted before formal assessments for learning difficulties. This may take the form of telephone conversations, emails and letters and ideally face to face meetings. More formally parents will receive notice of their child's progress and the help they receive via the report system and Learning Support teachers attend parents' evenings. When necessary, parents are encouraged to come in to school for discussion with the relevant support teacher.

There will be formal annual review of all statemented pupils or those with an EHC which involves parents.

Any queries on this policy should be addressed to AJM Head of Learning Support.

Alison Maynard

February 2015

FLOW CHART OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING SUPPORT

