



Learning Support Policy

Pupils learn best when they feel valued and their achievements are recognised; this calls for a flexible approach. Challenge and success for all can be achieved by appropriate differentiation.

The Disability Discriminations Act subsumed into the 2010 Equality Act, states that a person is disabled if he/she has an impairment that has a substantial, long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out day to day activities.

Introduction

Learning Difficulty: A child has a learning difficulty within the meaning of the Education Act 1996 (s.312 (2)) if s/he has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age, or a disability which prevents him/her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of that age.

English as a Second or Additional Language: The Special Educational Code of Practice for Wales (5:16) states 'Lack of competence in either English or Welsh must not be equated with learning difficulties as understood in this Code'; however, children who are being educated in a language other than their mother tongue may need additional support in accessing the curriculum.

Aim: The aim of this policy is to explain the responsibilities which the School is able to accept and the support the School is able to provide, as well as to explain the responsibilities of parents in relation to pupils who may at any time experience learning difficulties.

Background

Learning Difficulties and Independent Schools: A number of pupils in mainstream independent schools such as Rougemont may at any stage show signs of having a learning difficulty for which suitable educational provision is needed.

IQ: Learning difficulties may affect children across the whole range of academic ability.

The expression 'learning difficulty' covers a wide range of conditions, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder and NVLD. It may also include those who have problems with eyesight or hearing, or who have an autistic spectrum disorder and pupils with medical conditions such as epilepsy, which will have an effect on their learning.

Learning difficulties are sometimes genetic in origin. Parents are therefore asked to inform the school in general terms of any learning difficulty that has at any time affected a member of the family.

Any accidents or illnesses which may impact on the child's learning should also be communicated to the school.

Assessment of Possible Learning Difficulties

The law imposes on schools a responsibility for both the physical well-being and the educational needs of pupils whilst in the care of the school. The LDC will undertake assessments of pupils before admission if they are known to be experiencing difficulties with learning, or at any stage of their time at school if teachers, parents or pupils themselves identify such difficulties.

LDC teachers have specialist qualifications in psychometric testing and will make recommendations to parents, pupils and teachers about appropriate ways to develop and support the learning of pupils who are assessed. Sometimes a recommendation may be made for a further Occupational Therapist, Optometrist or GP.



A pupil's learning needs can change over time. Therefore, pupils may be re-tested if there is cause for concern. Testing is conducted in a classroom environment. Pupils are reassured that they will not pass or fail these tests: they are to help discover what will work best for them in school. No specific preparation is required for the tests.

In the Junior School Laura Hallas is doing an initial screening for SLD for every child in Year 3.

Outcome of Assessment

Report to parents: The outcome of assessments will be reported to parents who will be welcome to discuss the results with a member of the Learning Development Centre (LDC) staff and/or the pupil's teachers or tutors.

Recommendation: If a learning difficulty is identified, the school will either recommend a referral for further assessment (e.g. to an Educational Psychologist) or a specified period of further monitoring followed by a further review, or a programme of specialist teaching, or strategies for learning.

Course of Action: In every case, the decision as to the course of action will be that of the parent, with advice from the school if required. If applicable, the school will also provide details of how to arrange an Educational Psychologist's assessment and the likely cost of such assessment, so that parents can make the appropriate arrangements.

Special Educational Provision

The school has a Learning Development Centre (LDC) which offers specialist teaching for those with SEN (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, Autistic Spectrum conditions or difficulties with aspects of learning such as social integration, anger or anxiety). The head of this department acts as SENCO. Pupils with learning difficulties - physical or cognitive - will have their needs assessed and monitored and may be offered support if the HoD considers that such support would be beneficial. The school will work with parents, and with external agencies where appropriate, to determine suitable provision. If at any stage the school finds itself unable to meet the child's changing needs, recommendations will be made for alternative educational provision.

Withdrawal: The right is reserved, following consultation, to require parents to withdraw a child from the school if, in the opinion of the Head, any of the following apply:

- a) the pupil is reported to be in need of assessment or additional or remedial teaching or medication to which the parent does not consent;
- b) the pupil's learning difficulties require teaching or medication which the school is unable to manage;
- c) the pupil has special needs which cannot be met effectively in the context of the mainstream education and facilities provided by the school.

The 'Parent Contract' requires parents to give a full term's notice on or before the first day of the term in which the pupil is withdrawn.

Costs: The cost of specialist teaching in the Learning Development Centre (LDC) is payable by parents in addition to the normal fees. There is no charge for other work undertaken by the LDC, such as assessments, consultations and pastoral care of pupils with SEN.

Outside educational interventions: Parents may provide for specialist teaching or therapy outside the school, provided the Head is satisfied with all the arrangements, including travel, timing and delivery to the pupil of the remainder of the curriculum.



Exam Access Arrangements

The Joint Council for Qualification issues an annual document detailing the procedures for arrangements for exams for pupils who may need provision that is in addition to what is normally available. Access Arrangements include the allowance of extra time, a prompter, separate invigilation, a reader or the use of a laptop.

For pupils with medical conditions, a letter from a medical practitioner is required to demonstrate the need for Exam Access Arrangements.

Many of the Access Arrangements can be granted by the Exams Officer without the need for an application to the exam boards, provided that the school has the appropriate evidence of need. However, in order to be allowed extra time, candidates are normally required to have an up-to-date assessment by an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher whose report confirms the need for extra time, and subject teachers are also required to provide evidence of the provision and use of extra time in class. The LDC staff undertake assessments of pupils for Exam Access Arrangements, write the reports and collate the required evidence to support applications for extra time. (Some pupils with specific learning difficulties are able to do their exams under normal conditions – it does not necessarily follow that a pupil with SpLD will need EAA.)

Practice and Procedures

If a member of staff suspects that an individual may have a learning difficulty, s/he should inform the class or form tutor and monitor the child for about two weeks, detailing aspects of work which cause concern. Then s/he should consult the Learning Development Centre (LDC) and inform senior tutors. The LDC will carry out initial assessment or observation. Results will be reported to parents, form or class tutors, and the appropriate senior tutor. The pupil will either be referred to an Educational Psychologist or a recommendation will be made for further monitoring and support, or for specialist teaching or appropriate therapy.

If a pupil is found to have a specific learning difficulty, the LDC will circulate guidelines to colleagues, detailing the specialist provision for this pupil, if any, and appropriate classroom strategies.

Assessment, Monitoring, Reporting and Recording

Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Assessing pupils on admission (including liaison with previous school)
- Collating all information on a pupil and keeping records on file up-to-date
- Distributing relevant information to all staff
- Setting and monitoring individual action plans with pupils and parents, in consultation with form tutors and other staff where necessary
- Supporting Form Tutors in the target-setting and monitoring process where there are a number of pupils with specific learning difficulties in their group.

Form Tutors are responsible for:

- Monitoring of pupil performance academically and socially
- Regular checks on the effective use of the pupil organiser
- Liaising with Heads of Year
- Supporting pupils by offering advice, guidance or liaison with other staff as necessary

Subject/Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Liaising with Form Tutors and Heads of Year and alerting them to difficulties being encountered by individuals
- Modifying the demands of class work or homework as necessary to allow for individuals' specific needs



Learning Development Centre staff (including the SENCO) are responsible for:

- Devising appropriate teaching programmes for pupils with SEN within the LDC, after appropriate assessment
- Delivering specialist teaching for such programmes after discussion with parents (and with the pupils as appropriate)
- Advising parents on procedures for those requiring extra time allowance in external written examinations
- Liaising with other staff, particularly in offering suggestions for supporting pupils with SEN in the classroom
- Offering advice and guidance to pupils, parents and colleagues on different aspects of learning difficulties, including personal organisation
- Screening where a learning difficulty is suspected and reporting the outcome to parents and staff
- Reception staff are responsible for the safe-keeping of medicines to be taken in school (unless the pupil is responsible for themselves)
- The recording of medication taken during the school day
- Liaising with other staff and outside agencies where appropriate

All staff are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with their pupils' particular difficulties and appropriate means of supporting them
- Keeping records of meetings with pupils or parents where targets are set or programmes agreed, as well as reviews of such targets or programmes and circulating these as necessary.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of strategies used to support pupils with specific learning difficulties, adapting or changing them as necessary
- Remembering that where pupils are receiving additional help, either by withdrawal or in the classroom, reference should be made to this in the half-yearly written reports and half-termly assessments, and that where appropriate, comment should be made about progress in relation to any action plans and targets
- Liaison with parents, mostly at parents' evening, but also via the Organisers (e.g. to alert parents to non-appearance of homework); sometimes a formal meeting will be needed, in which case Heads of Year or Form Tutors will be involved
- Ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties are given as many opportunities as possible to show their strengths in class
- Maintaining an awareness that dyslexic and other specific learning difficulties which have been largely remedied can resurface at any time, particularly when a pupil is under stress (exam time being most likely)
- Considering features such as print size and clarity, page layout, the reading demands of texts and the contrast between background and print in selecting, producing and photocopying written materials
- Ensuring that writing on whiteboards is clear, legible and visible to all pupils
- Ensuring that spoken instruction is audible and clear

All pupils are encouraged to be increasingly responsible for:

- Organisation of work, mostly through the effective use of the Organiser
- Alerting teachers to any difficulties they may have, either temporary or permanent.
- Asking for help from staff if they have problems with aspects of learning
- Ensuring that they have everything necessary for effective revision (including making up for work missed)
- Setting achievable targets for themselves and reviewing their progress

Parents are responsible for:

- Keeping the school informed of any illness, accident or other circumstance which may impact on their children's learning, including the need for administration of medication or the wearing of glasses or hearing aids
- Supporting teaching programmes in general and working with teachers to implement the recommendations of reports by outside agencies, e.g. educational psychologists, occupational therapists, and speech and language therapists

Staff cannot be responsible for ensuring that pupils wear glasses and/or hearing aids; however, they will endeavour to encourage pupils to do so in line with detailed guidance supplied by parents



Curriculum Organisation

Schemes of work, lesson plans, programmes of study and homework should:

- contain clearly stated aims and objectives
- suggest tasks and activities which will enable pupils with a wide range of abilities to experience success
- contain activities which are matched to pupils' differing paces and styles of learning, interests, capabilities and previous experience
- Allow activities to be broken down into a series of small and achievable steps for pupils who have learning difficulties
- Encourage the development of metacognition – the pupils' awareness of how they learn and which strategies work best for them
- Allow time for reflection, and promote the transfer of skills or techniques learnt in one subject to other subject areas and the linking of new knowledge to previous learning across the curriculum

Timetabling

In order for pupils to attend lessons in the Learning Development Centre (LDC), they usually have to miss other lessons. Some lessons take place before and after school, and priority for these slots is given to those in Years 10 and 11.

- a) The decision for a pupil to 'drop' a subject is only taken after very careful consideration. Parents are made aware of the implications of such a decision. It is made by the Head of School or Director of Studies after consultation with Heads of Year, the parents, the pupil, colleagues in the LDC and the subject area involved. Dropping a subject may mean that the subject cannot be resumed.
- b) Pupils attending the LDC will be absent from one to six lessons fortnightly, the lessons missed being the ones deemed to be least prejudicial to their overall progress whilst at the same time being compatible with timetabling constraints. This means that they may miss, for example, one out of two music lessons. In this example, the music teacher will decide on what work it is fair to expect of the pupil. Photocopies may be provided of the work missed. The pupil will be given clear guidelines. S/he may be expected to take the exams, but, if so, will be reassured that performance will not be expected to be in line with that of those who have been able to attend every lesson.
- c) Where possible, pupils are withdrawn from both or all lessons of a particular subject, in order to minimize organizational difficulties, the need to 'catch up' and to reduce the pressures on the pupil. If for example, a pupil is withdrawn from four lessons of a subject but only requires two LDC lessons, he or she will be set work by LDC teachers to do under supervision in the LDC in the remaining lessons.



Addendum to Learning Support Policy

Suggested classroom strategies for pupils with learning difficulties

(These are generally appropriate, but may need to be modified to suit individuals)

- a) Consider seating: this is particularly relevant to those with visual or hearing difficulties and those for whom concentration is a problem.
- b) Make expectations for behaviour quite clear.
- c) Ensure pupils are aware that their difficulties are known. This may need to be done subtly with older pupils. It also needs to be done at intervals, so that they know their problems have not been forgotten.
- d) Encourage them to use their strengths. For many this will be in oral contributions; it may also be other areas such as artwork or general knowledge.
- e) Make sure that they have understood what is required. Keep instructions short, simple and in the correct sequence. It may be necessary to break tasks down into smaller, more manageable parts. Oral reinforcement of written directions (or *vice versa*) may be necessary.
- f) Allow extra time for **thinking**, as well as for all activities involving reading and writing. Encourage pupils to set time targets for completion of work.
- g) Allow alternative ways to record class work, such as diagrams, note form or mind maps. Tape recording may need to be considered.
- h) If possible, provide photocopies to ease the load for those who have problems with copying or dictation. Allow access to a willing friend's book where appropriate.
- i) Consider the need for differentiated work where applicable.
- j) **Avoid putting a pupil 'on the spot'; be particularly sensitive about asking dyslexic pupils to read aloud, and be aware of weaknesses in working memory and speed of information processing.**
- k) Special arrangements for homework may be necessary; allow extra time for completion or accept a reduced output from pupils with slow information processing speeds or writing difficulties. Check that homework has been correctly recorded.
- l) **Check at regular intervals that enough information is recorded for revision to be possible.**
- m) Provide lists of key words for each subject and/or for topics covered in a particular term.
- n) **Make sure pupils know that progress made has been noticed. Use rewards where appropriate to raise self-esteem.**
- o) Liaise with Form Tutor, Heads of Year and other subject teachers (as well as the LDC where appropriate) to discuss how best to help a particular pupil and to discuss progress.