

# Learning support policy

Disability

Special Educational Needs

EAL and advanced bilingual learners

Action	Policy to be reviewed as required and at least annually		
	Owner	Date	Completed
Review	H Fussner	September 2016	✓
Reported	Education Committee	September 2016	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	December 2016	✓

To be published on the following:	
Staff Portal	✓
School website	✓



## **Introduction**

St Paul's Girls' School ('the School') is committed to equal opportunities for all. We value the positive contribution to the school community made by pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. We are committed to the right of all our pupils to social, educational and physical access to life at school.

Parents of prospective pupils should refer to the School's Admissions policy. Admission to the School is by academic selection. As some areas of the school site have architecturally historic status, our facilities for the disabled are limited. However, we will do all that is reasonable to comply with our legal and moral responsibilities outlined in the Equality Act 2010 to accommodate pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs who, through reasonable adjustments, can be catered for appropriately.

## **Aims**

- To recognise and support the needs of all pupils and prospective pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- To maintain high expectations and aspirations for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, in terms of academic and social inclusion.
- To work collaboratively with disabled pupils or those with educational needs, and their parents, to foster academic ambition, reflection, independence and personal agency as a means of preparing pupils as individuals to lead successful and fulfilled lives.
- To develop pupils' respect for everyone in the community acknowledging the particular needs of young people growing up in a contemporary society.
- To support the acquisition of excellent study habits, which together with an enquiring mind form the basis of a life-long love of learning.

## **Objectives**

1. To identify and provide for pupils who may be disabled or have special educational needs.
2. To apply a whole-school approach to meet each pupil's needs in reference both to the guidelines provided by the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and to the duties under the Equality Act 2010.
3. To provide a graduated approach that recognises the individual nature of pupils' needs.
4. To provide information, support and advice for all staff working with disabled pupils or those with special educational needs.
5. To ensure that reasonable adjustments are made so that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage to their peers.
6. To involve disabled pupils or those with special educational needs in the planning of their provision.
7. To develop and maintain partnership and high levels of engagement with parents.
8. To ensure that no pupil is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, in any area of school life on the basis of her disability or special educational needs.
9. To ensure that we take account of disabled pupils' needs even when that may involve treating a disabled pupil more favourably than other pupils.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The governing body seeks to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress and that the provision made for disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is adequate and secure.

The Learning Support Coordinator is Hannah Fussner  
Qualified teacher status: PGCE: English, PG Diploma in teaching pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties, PG Certificate in Teaching of English as an Additional Language.  
Contact details: email: [Hannah.Fussner@spgs.org](mailto:Hannah.Fussner@spgs.org)

The advocates on the Senior Leadership Team are Andrew Ellams, Deputy Head Director of Studies and, Su Wijeratna, Deputy Head Director of Pastoral Care and Designated Person for Child Protection.

## **Identifying special educational needs**

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2014) we identify four broad categories of need:

- Communication and interaction, e.g. dyslexia and the autism spectrum.
- Cognition and learning, e.g. specific learning difficulties such as dyspraxia.
- Sensory and/or physical e.g. visual or hearing impairment, cerebral palsy.
- Social, mental and emotional health. *Please see the School's Mental health and Wellbeing policy when a pupil's special educational needs arise from – or are co-occurring with – social, mental or emotional health issues.*

Within the context of the Equality Act 2010, a pupil is 'disabled' if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term (i.e. is lasting or is likely to last for at least 12 months) adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

We understand that each of the above four categories represent a spectrum of need. Some pupil's needs may involve more than one of these areas. We are mindful to consider always the whole child and not to consider pupils only in terms of their special educational needs. Likewise, we understand that a disability alone does not necessarily constitute a special educational need.

## **A graduated approach to SEN support**

We seek to identify and manage pupils' needs in a timely manner engaging with pupils and their parents from the start.

### ***Prospective 11+ and 16+ pupils:***

- Parents are requested to provide, in writing, information about their daughter's disability or special educational needs on the admissions documentation.
- On the basis of this information, the Learning Support Coordinator contacts parents to discuss their daughter's needs and to agree appropriate accommodations before each of the stages of the admissions process (e.g. the 11+ computer assessment, the admissions exam, and the interview). This can include extra time, enlarged papers, access to a computer etc. Educational health and care plans (EHCPs), educational psychologist or specialist reports are requested, as appropriate, to help with planning. The child's primary school's learning support departments may also be contacted for advice. The Learning Support Coordinator oversees, and when appropriate invigilates, the first two 11+ admissions stages and the 16+ exam to provide pupils and parents with a known, familiar point of contact with the school.
- Staff who are timetabled to interview prospective pupils are provided with a summary of a pupil's needs and are offered advice about how to adapt their approach to best accommodate the pupil.
- On acceptance of an offer, a meeting is set up in the summer term, with the child and their parents to discuss their needs more fully and to draw agreed information to share among teaching staff. This will include a description of the pupil's needs from their own perspective, examples of classroom practice that they have found helpful in the past, and things that they are going to do to help manage their own needs. Contact will be made with their current SENCO or learning support department to build a fuller picture of their history of need within the school context. If appropriate, a visit to the pupil's school will be arranged to observe the pupil and/or to share ideas for best practice.

### ***Current pupils***

The School is committed to the role of well-informed, personalised teaching in the classroom. If in the course of this, concerns are raised regarding a pupil's perceived progress by subject teachers, form tutors, parents, or the pupils themselves, a process of information gathering, assessing and planning, is carried out to help support subject teachers adapt their teaching in the classroom, and to consider whether support outside the classroom might be appropriate. Outcomes from this are reviewed and recorded to inform future practice.

## **1. Gathering information**

At this initial stage, we are mindful to consider factors that do not constitute special educational needs that may be impacting negatively upon a pupil's progress e.g. attendance and punctuality, health and welfare, English as an additional language, being a looked-after child. We consider a range of sources to paint a picture of a child's needs and to identify possible barriers to learning:

- Teachers' assessments and experiences of the pupil.
- The tracking of pupil progress by subject departments, the Director of Studies and the head of year.
- The individual's development in comparison to her peers.
- The views and experiences of the pupil's parents.
- The pupil's own views.
- The form tutor's views.
- Year 7 screening is carried out by the learning support department that focuses on literacy skills and fine motor control (handwriting).
- Observations of the pupil working in the classroom are carried out by the learning support department.
- The pupil's school reports.

Findings are discussed by the Learning Support Coordinator with the pupil's head of year and then shared with the pupil's form tutor, parents, and the pupil. Possible next steps are discussed and agreed upon. At this juncture pupils might be referred to an outside agency for further specialist assessment (e.g. an educational psychologist or specialist teacher, an occupational therapist or a speech and language therapist). The cost of such assessments will usually be met by the parents.

Our aim is to involve outside agencies such as educational psychologists as a part of a collaborative process between the School, the pupil, and their family. Parents are requested to inform the School before any privately commissioned specialist reports are carried out, as it is important that the School contributes to the process of the assessment. If a pupil and her family are considering the US as a possible location for Higher Education it is important that they inform the assessor of this as it may affect their choice of assessment materials.

## **2. Planning and delivering, reviewing and recording**

Planning evolves out of discussions with the pupils and their parents in consultation with the pupil's subject teachers and form tutor. There are three main pathways of provision:

1. Further information and advice is shared with subject teachers to help them adapt their teaching in the classroom. As part of this a pupil might be encouraged to attend subject office hours to address a particular subject specific need. This is monitored by the Learning Support Coordinator through discussion and observations with teachers.
2. In addition to the above, a short series of targeted one-to-one sessions is devised in collaboration with the pupil and the Learning Support department. These sessions are planned with a specific outcome in view and with an agreed means of review and measurement. An outline of these sessions is given to the pupil's parents and the pupil's form tutor. The efficacy of the sessions is reviewed with the pupils and their parents. Feedback after the sessions is passed onto the pupil's subject teachers. Liaison between the learning support department and subject teachers allows for the monitoring of the progress a pupil makes in the area targeted by the one-to-one provision, within the context of the classroom.
3. If a pupil is assessed by an outside specialist and a special educational need which is deemed to have a significant impact on her learning is identified, a pupil is placed on the special educational needs register. An Individual Educational Plan (Personal Plan) is drawn up to share information and advice with teachers. This documentation will be set up for any pupil, also, who has an educational health and care plan. The IEP (Personal Plan) will include a description of the pupil's needs from their own perspective, examples of classroom practice that they have found helpful in the past, teaching and learning ideas arising from specialist assessments so that a clear range of strategies to support classroom differentiation is provided, as well as targets that pupils agree to, to help manage their own needs. These are reviewed on a termly basis with the pupil and in consultation with their parents, with the aim that pupils become

increasingly able as their own advocates and that teachers are informed sufficiently to adapt their teaching to provide personalised support in the classroom. In addition to personalised teaching in the classroom, pupils may have a short series of one-to-one sessions with the learning support department targeted at a specific outcome, as above. Drop-in sessions to support a pupil's independent management of her time and study habits might also be set up. These are reviewed with pupils and their parents, as above, and feedback is given to the pupil's form tutor, head of year and subject teachers, as appropriate.

**Pupils with statements/EHC plans:** The planning and provision for pupils with statements or EHC plans is rooted in the same graduated approach outlined above, with the understanding that the support that is needed is likely to be more complex. With reference to the SEND Code of Practice (2014), the views and aspirations of pupils' and their families are at the centre of our procedures. Parents and pupils meet with the Learning Support department to review the pupil's progress every term and, in collaboration with relevant staff, personal targets are agreed upon. These are monitored by relevant teachers and the Learning Support Coordinator. This information is fed into an Annual Review held every 12 months, which in turn will inform the Local Authority's continuation, emendation or cessation of the EHC according to the needs of the pupil. We aim to ensure that staff are aware of pupils' needs, are supported and trained in strategies and approaches to support pupils in meeting their personal targets. We are mindful of the importance of providing pupils and their families with guidance, advice and sign-posting to other services to help with the transition from school to their next steps towards further education and adulthood.

### **Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments in examinations**

Appropriate arrangements will be put in place so that a pupil is not disadvantaged due to disability and/or special educational needs in the context of in-school assessments and exams. For public examinations, the School adheres to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations regarding access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. The School is required to make available for inspection documentation that constitutes a compelling, clear and detailed picture of a pupil's current needs and must provide evidence that the arrangements requested relate to their "normal method of working." This evidence can include:

- standardised scores from specialist assessments
- samples of internal exam papers or in-class tests carried out with these same arrangements.
- Observations from subject teachers that confirm an on-going need for the requested arrangements.

The School will consider providing access to a word processor in exams, with the spell check facility switched off, for pupils for whom it would be specifically appropriate, and for whom it is their usual method of working. For example:

- Pupils with a specific learning difficulty that significantly impacts on the speed, legibility or the organisation of their handwritten work.
- Pupils with a medical condition, verified by a medical practitioner on a regular basis to confirm an on-going need.
- Pupils with a physical disability.
- Pupils with a sensory impairment.
- Pupils with an extensive history, well-documented by her subject teachers, of difficulties with legibility under timed conditions, despite intervention to address handwriting skills and exam technique.

Applications for the use of a word processor in exams are made at the start of the pupil's GCSE or A Level courses, and must reflect a pupil's usual method of working in the classroom and in internal assessments and exams.

### **Training and resources**

The Learning Support Coordinator is a part time post (3 days a week) with an allocated budget for resources.

Under the duties of the Equality Act 2010, and in consultation with parents, the School will consider what reasonable adjustments for a disabled pupil, which may include the provision of auxiliary aids and services, would be appropriate. This will be considered on a case by case basis.

Training needs of staff are identified through the shared planning stage of the provision cycle and as requests made by staff. The Learning Support Coordinator, in consultation with heads of year and the Director of Studies, may also suggest training with potential prospective pupils in mind. Funding comes from the school budget for staff training.

### **Storing and managing information**

Documents relating to pupils are stored securely, and in confidence, by the Learning Support Coordinator. Documentation is kept for nine years after a pupil leaves the school.

### **EAL (English as an Additional Language) and advanced bilingual learners**

The School's admissions process assumes that pupils are able readers, speakers and writers of English. Pupils at the School who have English as an additional language are monitored to ensure early identification of difficulties that may arise from the demands of the range of academic registers that are required of specific subjects, both in speaking and writing activities.

#### **Identifying pupils with a need for EAL support**

Year 7 pupils are screened for literacy and listening skills by the learning support coordinator early in the autumn term. Feedback from this screening is given to the head of English, the head of Year 7 and form tutors. If the screening identifies a potential need, more information is gathered from subject teachers. Typically, a pupil's writing can suggest a limited vocabulary, simple sentence structure, a lack of knowledge of the conventions of a given academic register, or a narrow range of independent reading of English texts which, in turn, can lead to limited knowledge of British cultural traditions in art and literature, in comparison to their peers. In consultation with the pupil and parents, provision in or outside the classroom, is mapped out.

#### **Likely provision for pupils needing support for EAL**

- Identifying and practising conventions of a given academic register (both spoken and written) at the word, sentence and text level.
- Help in identifying and using different types of speech used by the school community in different settings.
- Short courses to look at key cultural 'tags' in Western literature and art.
- Short courses to extend independent reading and the discussion of literary texts.

#### **Monitoring pupils who need EAL support**

Close liaison is maintained between the English department and the Learning Support Coordinator to monitor the progress of EAL and advanced bilingual learners. The Learning Support Coordinator carries out observations in subject lessons and liaises with teachers for ideas to support the development of spoken and written English in the context of the classroom. If appropriate, these observations may also lead to a short-term course of one-to-one sessions with the Learning Support Coordinator to target a specific skill. These sessions are timetabled in accordance to the parameters set out for learning support sessions. The pupils themselves are closely involved in the planning and reviewing of these sessions.

### **Dealing with complaints**

The School's Complaints policy outlines arrangements for parents to raise concerns or difficulties. In the first instance any concerns about a matter relating to a pupil's disability or special educational need should be referred to the tutor or the head of year who will liaise with the Learning Support Coordinator. If appropriate, the matter will be referred to the Director of Studies.

## **Review**

Informal monitoring and review of our policies is on-going. The Learning Support Coordinator meets with the Director of Studies at least twice a term to reflect on the efficacy of strategic planning for pupils with disability and/or special educational needs. There is an annual evaluation and review of policies and procedures led by the Learning Support Coordinator and the Director of Studies. Governors review and approve this policy annually.

## **Availability of this policy**

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website <http://spgs.org/school-policies> or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.