

Learning support policy

Disability

Special Educational Needs

EAL and advanced bilingual learners

This policy has been reviewed and updated and will be approved by governors on 6 December.

Action	Policy to be reviewed as required and at least annually		
	Owner	Date	Completed
Review	H Fussner	August 2022	✓
Reported	Education Committee	11 October 2022	x
Approved	Board of Governors	6 December 2022	x

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



Learning Support Policy

1. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all members of the school's student community with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities of a temporary or long-term nature. It also applies to EAL (English as an additional language) and advanced bilingual learners who may require additional support.

2. What this policy is for

2.1 This policy aims to:

- describe how the school aims to promote academic, physical and social access for SEND students within the community.
- describe how the school increases understanding and awareness of SEND issues so as to facilitate early intervention and to de-stigmatise perceptions of SENDs.
- describe the steps that staff should take if they have concerns about a student.
- set out the support and guidance that the school will give to students who have SEND or who are advanced bilingual learners who may need additional support.

2.2 Legal framework

- The Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice (2014)

2.3 Other relevant school policies

- Admissions policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing policy
- Word Processing Policy
- Disability Policy (Specific to Exams)

2.4 Appendices

Appendix 1: Word Processing Policy

3. Content of policy

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1. Introduction

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

1.2 Parents of prospective students 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, particularly during the current building programme. However, we will do all that is reasonable to comply with our legal and moral responsibilities outlined in the Equality Act 2010 to accommodate students who are disabled or who have special educational needs who, through reasonable adjustments, can be catered for appropriately.

2. Aims:

- To recognise and support the needs of all students and prospective students, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- To maintain high expectations and aspirations for students who are disabled or have special educational needs, in terms of academic and social inclusion.
- To work collaboratively with disabled students or those with educational needs, and their parents, to foster academic ambition, self-reflection, independence, and self-advocacy as a means of preparing students as individuals to lead successful and fulfilled lives.
- To nurture understanding of the diverse needs and strengths of the community to ensure a culture in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive.
- To promote creativity, active learning, problem solving and collaborative ways of working.

3. Objectives:

- To identify and provide for students who may be disabled or have special educational needs.
- To apply a whole-school approach to meet each student'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.
- To provide a graduated approach that recognises the individual nature of students' needs.
- To provide information, support and advice for all staff working with disabled students or those with special educational needs.
- To ensure that reasonable adjustments are made so that disabled students are not at a substantial disadvantage to their peers.
- To involve disabled students or those with special educational needs in the planning of their provision.
- To develop and maintain partnership and high levels of engagement with parents.
- To ensure that no student is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, in any area of school life on the basis of their disability or special educational needs.
- To ensure that we take account of disabled students' needs even when that may involve treating a disabled student more favourably than other students.

4. Roles and responsibilities

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

4.2 The Learning Support Coordinator is Hannah Fussner email: Hannah.Fussner@spgs.org
Qualified teacher status: PGCE: English, PG Diploma in teaching students with Specific

Learning Difficulties, PG Certificate in Teaching of English as an Additional Language. The Learning Support Coordinator is a member of the Wellbeing team, alongside the Director of Pastoral Care (DSL), the Director of Senior School, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, the counsellors, and the medical team.

4.3 The advocates on the Senior Management Team are Andrew Ellams, Senior Deputy Head and Director of Studies and Lizzie Beesley, Deputy Head and Director of Pastoral Care.

5. Identifying special educational needs

5.1 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, e.g., ADHD. *Please see the school's **Mental Health and Wellbeing policy** when a student's special educational needs arise from -- or are co-occurring with -- social, mental, or emotional health issues.*

5.2 Within the context of the Equality Act 2010, a student 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.

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

6. A graduated approach to SEN support

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

Prospective 11+ and 16+ students

6.2 Parents are requested to provide, in writing, information about their child's disability or special educational needs on the Admissions documentation.

6.3 On the basis of this information, the learning support coordinator contacts parents to discuss their child'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 students and parents with a known, familiar point of contact with the school.

6.4 Staff who are timetabled to interview prospective students are provided with a summary of a student's needs and are offered advice about how to adapt their approach to best accommodate the student.

6.5 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 up agreed information to share among teaching staff. This will include a description of the student'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, as needed. If appropriate, a visit to the student's school

will be arranged to observe the student and/or to share ideas for best practice.

Current students

6.6 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 student's perceived progress by subject teachers, form tutors, parents, or the students 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.

Gathering information

6.7 At this initial stage, we are mindful to consider factors that do not constitute special educational needs that may be impacting negatively upon a student'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 student.
- The tracking of student 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 student's parents.
- The student'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 student working in the classroom are carried out by the learning support department.
- The student's school reports.

6.8 Findings are discussed by the learning support coordinator with the student's head of year and then shared with the student's form tutor, parents, and the student. Possible next steps are discussed and agreed upon. At this juncture, the student 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 are met by the parents, although in some circumstances assistance may be available.

6.9 Our aim is to involve outside agencies such as educational psychologists as a part of a collaborative process between the school, the student, 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. Please note that the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), have stipulated that a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the school cannot be used to award access arrangements, e.g., extra time.

6.10 If a student and their 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.

Planning and delivering, reviewing, and recording

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

- Further information and advice are shared with subject teachers to help them adapt their teaching in the classroom. As part of this a student 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.

- In addition to the above, a short series of small group workshops or targeted one-to-one sessions is devised in collaboration with the student 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 student's parents and the student's form tutor. The efficacy of the sessions is reviewed with the student and their parents. Feedback after the sessions is passed onto the student's subject teachers. Liaison between the learning support department and subject teachers allows for the monitoring of the progress a student makes in the area targeted by the one-to-one provision, within the context of the classroom.
- If a student 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 student 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 student, also, who has an educational health and care plan. The Personal Plan will include a description of the student'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 students agree to, to help manage their own needs. These are reviewed on a termly basis with the student and in consultation with their parents, with the aim that student becomes 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, the student 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 student's independent management of their time and study habits might also be set up. These are reviewed with the student and their parents, as above, and feedback is given to the student's form tutor, head of year and subject teachers, as appropriate.

Students with statements/EHC plans

6.12 The planning and provision for students 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 students' and their families are at the centre of our procedures. Parents and students meet with the Learning Support department to review the students' 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 student. We aim to ensure that staff are aware of students' needs, are supported and trained in strategies and approaches to support students in meeting their personal targets. We are mindful of the importance of providing students and their families with guidance, advice and signposting to other services to help with the transition from school to their next steps towards further education and adulthood.

7. Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments in examinations

7.1 Appropriate arrangements will be put in place so that a student 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 CIE and 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 student'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 the impact of a disability within the context of the classroom and an on-going need for the requested arrangements
- Individual Education Plan (IEPs).

7.2 Please note that the JCQ have stipulated that a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the school cannot be used to award access arrangements, e.g., extra time.

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

- Students with a specific learning difficulty or social, emotional or mental health need that significantly impacts on the speed, legibility, or the organisation of their handwritten work.
- Students with a medical condition, verified by a medical practitioner on a regular basis to confirm an on-going need.
- Students with a physical disability.
- Students with a sensory impairment.
- Students 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.

7.4 Applications for the use of a word processor in exams are made at the start of the student's GCSE or A-Level courses and must reflect a student's usual method of working in the classroom and in internal assessments and exams. Please see the school's Word Processor Policy (specific to exams) at Appendix 1 for further details.

8. Training and resources

8.1 The Learning Support Coordinator is a part-time post (3 days a week) with an allocated budget for resources. The Second in Department (2 days a week) focuses on the development of staff skills to nurture inclusive classroom practices. Currently the department has 2 days administrative assistance.

8.2 Under the duties of the Equality Act 2010, and in consultation with parents, the school will consider what reasonable adjustments and resources would be appropriate for a disabled student (such as specialist furniture, auxiliary aids, and services). This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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

9. Storing and managing information

9.1 Documents relating to students are stored securely, and in confidence, by the Learning Support Coordinator. Documentation is kept for a minimum of nine years after a student leaves the school.

10. EAL (English as an Additional Language) and advanced bilingual learners

10.1 The school admissions process assumes that students are able readers, speakers, and writers of English. Students 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 students with a need for EAL support

10.2 Year 7 students are screened for literacy and listening skills by the Learning Support Coordinator 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 student'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 literary 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 student and parents, provision in or outside the classroom, is mapped out.

Provision for students with a need for EAL support

10.3 Likely provision for students 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 students who need EAL support

10.4 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 department to target a specific skill. These sessions are timetabled in accordance with the parameters set out for learning support sessions. The students themselves are closely involved in the planning and reviewing of these sessions.

11. Dealing with complaints

11.1 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 student'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 Senior Deputy Head Director of Studies.

12. Review

12.1 Informal monitoring and review of our policies is on-going. The Learning Support Coordinator meets with the Senior Deputy Head, Director of Studies at least twice a term to reflect on the efficacy of strategic planning for students 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 Senior Deputy Head Director of Studies. Governors review and approve this policy annually.

12.2 The Learning Support Coordinator meets with the Wellbeing Team twice a term to review emotional support provision and progress for students in need.

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).