

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	Head of Learning Support	September 2023	✓
Approved	Compliance Group/High Mistress	November 2023	✓

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 (2015)

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 (SEND). 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 SEND students.
- To maintain high expectations and aspirations for SEND students in terms of academic and social inclusion.
- To work collaboratively with SEND students and their parents, to foster their strengths and 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 school culture in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive.
- To promote staff and students' creativity, active learning, problem solving and the use of collaborative ways of working.

3. Objectives:

- To identify and provide for the needs of SEND students.
- 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 2015 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 SEND students.
- To ensure that reasonable adjustments are made so that SEND students are not at a substantial disadvantage to their peers.
- To involve SEND students 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 SEND.
- To ensure that we take account of SEND students' needs even when that may involve treating a SEND 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 SEND students is appropriate to their needs.

4.2 The Head of Learning Support 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 Head of Learning Support 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 Leadership 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 (2015) 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, emotional and mental health, e.g., anxiety associated with 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 SEND on the Admissions documentation.

6.3 On the basis of this information, the Head of Learning Support 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 SENCo may also be contacted for advice. The Head of Learning Support 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 is called an Individualised Education Plan (IEP). 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 a referral can be made to the Learning Support Department. This might be from a subject teacher, form tutor, school counsellor, parents, or the students themselves. This will initiate a process of information gathering, assessing, and planning, which 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 SEND that may be impacting negatively upon a student's progress e.g., attendance and punctuality, health and welfare, English as an additional language, or 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. These can typically include:

- Teachers' assessments and experiences of the student.
- The tracking of student progress by subject departments.
- The views and experiences of the student's parents.
- The student's own views.
- The form tutor's views.
- Year 7 screening
- Observations of the student working in the classroom
- The student's school reports.
- Consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Director of Pastoral Care and the Head of Section.

6.8 Findings are discussed by the Head of Learning Support with the student's head of year and then shared with the student's form tutor, and the student's parents. Possible next steps are discussed and agreed upon. This might include training of subject teachers to help them support the student in lessons or a short course of lessons for the student with the Learning Support Department targeting a specific skill. 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), stipulate that the school must have a working relationship with the assessor. The assessor must make contact with the school before the assessment is carried out to gather background information and/or fill out JCQ access arrangement documentation (e.g., Form 8).

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 specialist input, the student's subject teachers or form tutor, as appropriate. 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 Head of Learning Support 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 Individualised Education Plan (IEP) 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 Individualised Education 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. In some instances, a student will be set up with a staff mentor who will check-in with the student on a regular basis to review the week and plan for upcoming events or tasks. These interventions 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 (2015), 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 Head of Learning Support. 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
- Individualised Education Plans (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 Head of Learning Support 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. A Specialist Teacher (3 days a week) works 1:1 with lower school students and assists with exams administration.

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 Head of Learning Support, 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 Head of Learning Support. Documentation is kept for Date of birth plus up to 35 years (allowing for special extensions to statutory limitation period) 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 Head of Learning Support 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 Head of Learning Support to monitor the progress of EAL and advanced bilingual learners. The Head of Learning Support 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 Head of Learning Support. 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 Head of Learning Support 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 a biennial evaluation and review of the policy and procedures led by the Head of Learning Support and the Senior Deputy Head Director of Studies. Compliance Group and the High Mistress review and approve this policy biennially.

12.2 The Head of Learning Support 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](#) or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel:0207 603 2288).