

Learning Support Policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed as required and at least biennially		
	Owner	Date	Completed
Review	Head of Learning Support and SENDCO	September 2025	✓
Approved	Education Committee	7 October 2025	✓
Next Review		Autumn 2027	

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 (SEND) 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 destigmatise perceptions of SEND.
- describe the steps that staff should take if they have concerns about a student.
- set out the support and guidance that the school aims to 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, updated September 2024)

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 At the heart of St Paul's Girls' School (the school) is a culture of inclusion. Provision for students with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) is a matter for the school as a whole. All teachers are expected to be able to teach all students, and teaching such students is a whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response.

1.2 The school is committed to equal opportunities for all. We value the positive contribution to the school community made by SEND students. We are committed to the right of all our students to social, educational and physical access to life at school.

1.3 Parents of prospective students should refer to the school's **Admissions policy**. Admission to the school is by careful selection, including academic assessment. As some of our buildings have architecturally historic status, access to our facilities for those with disabilities is limited in some areas of the school site. However, we aim to do all that is reasonable to comply with our legal and moral responsibilities outlined in the Equality Act 2010 to accommodate students with disabilities or who have special educational needs who, through reasonable adjustments, can be catered for appropriately.

2. Aims:

- To work with academic departments to ensure inclusive teaching is embedded across the school
- 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, ensuring 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 2024 and to the duties under the Equality Act 2010. The school will have regard to the SEND Code of Practice in exercising its functions and aims to meet its duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments so that students with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage
- 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.

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/SENDCO is suitably qualified.

4.3 The advocates on the Senior Leadership Team are the Director of Studies, Director of Pastoral Care and Director of Safeguarding.

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, 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 students' needs may involve more than one of these areas. We are mindful always to 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 SEND support

6.1 We seek to identify and manage students' needs in a timely manner engaging with students and their parents from the start. In line with the Children and Families Act 2014, the school aims to use its best endeavours to secure special educational provision required by a student's needs.

Prospective 11+ and 16+ students

6.2 Parents must share any relevant medical or specialist reports (e.g. educational psychology, OT, SALT) at the point of registration so that appropriate access arrangements can be considered for entrance assessments and interviews. Reports help the school to plan proportionate, reasonable adjustments (e.g. large-print papers, use of a computer, supervised rest breaks). Adjustments granted for entrance assessments will be reviewed on entry and do not, of themselves, determine access arrangements in public examinations, which must meet awarding-body regulations.

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 assessment, 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 prospective student's feeder school's SENDCO 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. Where relevant information about a known SEND is withheld, the school may review the suitability of the offer. In rare cases, and after reasonable adjustments have been explored, the school may determine that the student's needs cannot be met within our provision.

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 preceding entry with the student and their parents, to discuss their needs more fully and to draw up agreed information to share among teaching staff. This is called an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). This aims to 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 may be made with their current SENDCO 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 feeder school may 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, inclusive teaching in the classroom. If in the course of this, concerns are raised regarding a student's perceived progress by subject teachers, form tutors, school counsellors, parents or the students themselves, a process of information gathering, assessing and planning is carried out to help support subject teachers in adapting 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. Learning walks are carried out by the Learning Support team to ensure all students are accessing the curriculum.

6.7 All new students are screened on entry using standardised assessments and teacher diagnostics to establish a baseline profile. Thereafter, any teacher, tutor, Head of Year, student or parent may raise a concern via our referral route to Learning Support. Referrals are triaged and may lead to observation, further screening (e.g. dyslexia/dyscalculia screeners), or signposting for specialist assessment where indicated.

Gathering information

6.8 At this initial stage, we are mindful to consider factors that do not constitute special educational needs that may be impacting 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 student'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 Director of Studies and the Head of Year
- The individual's development in comparison to their peers, in school and nationally
- The views and experiences of the student's parents
- The student's own views
- The form tutor's views
- Year 7 screening carried out by the learning support department
- Observations of the student working in the classroom, carried out by the learning support department
- The student's school reports
- Consultation with the Director of Safeguarding, the Director of Pastoral Care and the Head of Year and/or Head of Section.

6.9 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, parents, and the student. 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 the school's in-house assessor or an outside agency for further specialist assessment (e.g. an educational psychologist, occupational therapist or speech and language therapist). The cost of such external assessments is usually met by the parents, although in some circumstances assistance may be available.

6.10 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. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has stipulated that a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the school cannot be used to award access arrangement for public exams.

6.11 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

6.12 Planning evolves out of discussions with the student and their parents in consultation with specialist input, the student's subject teachers and form tutor. The school maintains a SEND Register. Students are recorded either as diagnosed (formal identification) or monitor (emerging profile/traits and classroom adjustments). The register, with key classroom strategies, is available to teaching staff and reviewed routinely.

6.13 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 may be encouraged to attend subject additional support '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 tailored to the individual students and can focus on supporting areas such as organisation, management of their own learning and revision strategies. It is expected that sessions will be set for a specific amount of time, and the efficacy of the sessions is reviewed with the student, relevant teachers and 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 is identified and deemed to have a significant impact on their learning, a student is placed on the special educational needs register. Additionally, if an internal assessment identifies a requirement for access arrangements, the student is also added to the special needs register. Where a significant and persistent impact on learning is evidenced, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) will be created. The student and parents may contribute information towards the IEP. The IEP is then shared with teachers. This documentation will also be set up for any student who has an educational health and care plan (EHCP). These are reviewed as necessary, with the aim that the student becomes increasingly able as her own advocate and that teachers are informed sufficiently to adapt their teaching to provide inclusive teaching and personalised support where necessary.
- In addition to inclusive 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 may also be set up. These are reviewed with the student and their parents, as above. In some instances, a student may be set up with a staff mentor who may 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. Impact is monitored through teacher reports, attainment/effort data, work sampling and pupil and parent feedback. The Learning Support Department review this evidence each term with Heads of Year and teaching staff and updates targets and strategies accordingly. Findings inform staff training and the SEND development plan.

Students with EHCPs

6.14 The planning and provision for students with EHCPs is rooted in the same graduated approach outlined above, with the understanding that the support 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 student's progress every term and, in collaboration with relevant staff, personal targets are agreed upon. These are monitored by relevant teachers, Learning Mentors and the Head of Learning Support. This information is fed into an Annual Review held every 12 months, which in turn may inform the Local Authority's continuation, emendation or cessation of the EHCP according to the needs of the student. We aim to ensure that staff are aware of students' needs and 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 SEND needs in the context of in-school assessments and exams. For public examinations, the school adheres to Cambridge International Education (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 SEND needs within the context of the classroom and an ongoing need for the requested arrangements
- IEPs
- EHCPs.

7.2 It is important to note that the JCQ has 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. For public examinations, the school follows JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments in full. Access arrangements are based on evidence of need and a student's normal way of working and require centre-held documentation and, where relevant, awarding-body approval. The Head of Centre, the Examinations Officer and the SENDCO share responsibility for compliance.

7.3 The school may 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 ongoing need
- Students with a physical disability
- Students with a sensory impairment
- Students with an extensive history, well documented by their 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) for further details. Decisions must reflect the student's established classroom practice and be supported by classwork, internal assessments, and teacher observations. Permission is confirmed at the start of GCSE/A Level courses following handwriting/processing reviews and maintained through continued classroom use.

8. Training and resources

8.1 The Head of Learning Support is a full-time post with an allocated budget for resources. The Second in Department (2 days a week) is our in-house assessor who, in addition to carrying out assessments, focuses on the early identification of needs and the development of staff skills to nurture inclusive classroom practices. A specialist teacher (3 days a week) focusses on transition years between primary and secondary. Learning Mentors funded by the LEA, work with students with EHCPs.

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 Director of Studies, may also suggest training with 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 up to 35 years from date of birth (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 to support the student's progress in the classroom and in the wider life of the school.

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 academic departments 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. Where a concern relates specifically to SEND provision, parents should first contact the Head of Learning Support; if unresolved, the matter may be escalated in line with the School's Complaints Policy.

12. Review

12.1 Informal monitoring and review of our policies is ongoing. The Head of Learning Support meets with the 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 review of the policy and procedures led by the Head of Learning Support and the Director of Safeguarding. Governors review and approve this policy biennially.

12.2 The Head of Learning Support meets with the Wellbeing Team regularly 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). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.