

## **Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties Policy**

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**Withington Girls' School**

**September 2018**

## **Definitions**

The following definitions should be noted when reading this policy:

- 1.1 Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.
- 1.2 Children have a learning difficulty if they:
  - 1.2.1 have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
  - 1.2.2 have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions (if your child has a disability, please ask to see our Disability policy);
  - 1.2.3 are under five and fall within the definition at 1.2.1 or 1.2.2 above or are likely to do so when of compulsory school age if special educational provision was not made for the child.

## **Background**

This policy is designed to provide a framework to manage SEN and LDD in both the Junior and Senior School. The Policy for English as an Additional Language is included with this policy; however it should be noted that the School recognises that a child should not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the *language or (form of language) in which she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home* (section 20 (4) Children and Families Act 2014). However, children for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support provided they meet the School's academic criteria.

The provision for support of SEN and LDD within the context of Withington Girls' School aims to encourage all girls to achieve academically in line with their ability, to thrive socially and in extra-curricular activities in order to fulfil their potential. The School aims to promote inclusion and access to the curriculum, whilst embracing diversity and caring for the needs of each individual.

## **Aims and Objectives of Special Educational Needs Provision**

- To contribute to an environment in which all pupils are intellectually challenged through academic study, stimulated through extra-curricular activities, and encouraged to achieve their best throughout the Junior and Senior Schools.
- To develop procedures and practices, which will enable the identification, assessment and subsequent monitoring of the needs of individual pupils.
- To establish ways to facilitate the monitoring, evaluation and review of SEN and LDD provision, and to link this, as far as possible, to other assessment and reporting on pupils.
- To provide in-service training for staff through the means of both inside and outside agencies, in order to encourage awareness and respect for individual differences and varying ways of learning. It is aimed to encourage all staff to take responsibility for contributing to the

education of children with SEN and LDD, and to continue to develop differentiated approaches to meet those needs.

- To keep staff informed and updated concerning developments in this area.
- To involve parents of pupils with SEN or LDD and to encourage them to assume partnership with the School in the education of their children.
- To report to parents on the implementation of the Special Educational Needs Policy.
- To build up effective links with outside bodies to enhance the quality of the provision.

### **Learning Support Staff**

The Head of Learning Support is Sarah Rigby. She is supported in this role by Anna Godwin, Debbie Odeyinde and Bernadette O’Neal. Kathryn Burrows takes special responsibility for the Junior School.

### **Arrangements for co-ordinating SEN/LDD provision**

The Head and Governors of the School have an overview of the SEN/LDD provision; there is a nominated Governor who liaises with the Head of Learning Support on a regular basis.

#### **The Head of Learning Support is responsible for:**

- Liaising with the Head, Deputy Head, Director of Studies, the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, the Head of the Junior School, Heads of Department, Heads of Year and Form Tutors and the School Nurse, as appropriate, both formally and informally.
- The day-to-day operation of the School's SEN policy.
- Reporting on SEN/LDD issues regularly in staff meetings and Heads of Department meetings.
- Overseeing records of students with SEN and LDD, making appropriate use of ICT facilities.
- Ensuring that up-to-date SEN or LDD records are placed on a girl’s personal file.
- Monitoring, evaluation, review and amendment of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in consultation with parents, Form Tutor and any interested member(s) of staff.
- Liaising with the Heads of English and Mathematics regarding arrangements for entrance examinations.
- Liaising with external contacts and support services.
- Contributing to in-service training of staff.
- Monitoring continuing professional development of all members of the SEN Department, including personal regular attendance at national conferences.
- Liaising with parents of children with SEN or LDD.
- Liaising with the Examinations Officers and monitoring provision of extra time for internal and public examinations for SEN and LDD pupils where necessary.
- Liaising with SENCOs/Heads of Learning Support from other schools.
- Updating related policies where appropriate.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of SEN and LDD provision at regular intervals.

#### **All teaching staff are responsible for:**

- Being aware of SEN and LDD pupils' individual needs.
- Ensuring that they have appropriate and up-to date knowledge, implementing suitable strategies in the classroom and positively reinforcing SEN and LDD pupils in this context.
- Liaising with Learning Support staff to identify areas of difficulty in their subject areas and agreeing appropriate targets with the Head of Learning Support.

### **Admission arrangements**

Admission to Withington Girls' School is selective, based on:

- Entrance Examination
- Interview
- Feeder School Report

Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that the Admissions procedure is accessible to those with SEN or LDD. Provision will be planned in consultation with the parents.

Candidates sit papers in English (Comprehension and Essay), Mathematics (Mechanical and Problem-solving) and a Verbal Reasoning Test. All papers aim to uncover potential rather than merely to measure attainment. The papers are numerically marked, but specific strengths and weaknesses are often identified on an individual basis (e.g. problems with timing, an ability to apply principles or to make connections). The scripts are marked blind, and any indication of SEN or LDD informs subsequent review and discussion of results. If any candidate is identified as having SEN or LDD at this stage, the Head of Learning Support is involved and provision planned.

Further details are contained in the Admissions Policy.

### **Specialist provision and contacts**

Learning Support Staff maintain up-to-date records regarding professional bodies from which they may seek information and advice, and which may also be of assistance in the cases of individual pupils. Parents are encouraged to avail themselves of this information.

### **Identification, Assessment and Provision**

Identification and assessment are undertaken as swiftly as possible, following the obligations regarding the responsibilities of schools stated in the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years*.

- Learning Support Staff liaise with colleagues from the Junior School and from external primary schools in identifying those pupils who are already identified as having Special Educational Needs prior to entry into the Junior and Senior Schools.
- Parents are required to indicate on the Application Form for admission to the School if their daughter has a special educational need or any learning difficulties.
- A member of the Learning Support team scrutinises the essays from the entrance examination of incoming Third Formers during the summer term prior to their entry into the school in order to identify potential issues.
- Other assessment procedures (e.g. professionally assessed standardised test in Year 7, MidYIS and ALIS tests) are employed to detect further candidates for SEN/LDD provision.

- Subject teachers inform Learning Support Staff of concerns regarding individual pupils.
- School monitoring, such as occasioned by written reports, SchoolBase records, pupil profiling, or PSHCE sessions on study skills, may highlight problems.
- Concerns formulated by parents or pupils, through meetings, letters or profiling may help identify areas to be addressed.
- If a parent or teacher expresses any concern that a girl may have a LDD or SEN, the Head of Learning Support will be informed immediately. The Form Tutor or Head of Year will then obtain further information for discussion with the Head of Learning Support. If necessary, informal assessments will be carried out by a member of the Learning Support staff (e.g. spelling tests, GL assessment Dyslexia screening).
- If the informal assessments indicate that there may be an issue, the Head of Learning Support will inform the parents of this so that the parents can decide whether to seek a formal assessment outside school. A written copy of any outside report must be made available to the School and will be kept on the girl's personal file and the Head of Learning Support's file. Professional Assessments may be required by the examination boards to support requests for additional time.
- The Head of Learning Support will communicate openly with parents as soon as a concern is expressed so that School and the parents can work through the matter together.
- Once pupils' SEN or LDD have been identified and assessed, parents are informed of the issue by the Head of Learning Support and a strategy is devised to take suitable action to assist the pupils' development. An appropriate record is kept and an IEP drawn up for certain pupils. Pupils contribute to the regular review of their progress that is undertaken. Teaching staff have access to the profiles of the SEN or LDD of the pupils involved.

It must be noted that it is the right of the School and the parents, under section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ask the local authority to make an assessment with a view to an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan being drawn up. It is also the right of the parents, but not the School, to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if the local authority refuse to make an assessment. The School will consult with the parents in this regard and where, appropriate, the local authority to ensure the provision in the EHC plan can be delivered by the School. We will co-operate with the local authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.

Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHC plan will need to be charged to the local authority if the authority is responsible for the fees and our school is named in Section I of the EHC plan. In all other circumstances charges will be made directly to parents unless the additional services can be considered to be a "reasonable adjustment" where no charge will be made, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Access to the curriculum**

It is expected that all pupils with SEN and LDD should have full access to the curriculum, and benefit from the full range of extra-curricular activities, which represent a major catalyst for the self-expression and development of students. All pupils are taught within mainstream classes, where skilful differentiation should ensure that all pupils are catered for. Additional 1:1 support and extra support groups targeted at a range of needs are organised by the Learning Support Department.

If, after making all reasonable adjustments and exhausting all appropriate strategies, the School is unable to meet the child's needs, the School may, following consultation with the parents, require them to withdraw the pupil from the School. In this situation, the fees in lieu of notice will not be charged in such circumstances and the deposit will be credited to the account.

- 1.3 **Welfare needs:** The School recognises that pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties may be at risk of being bullied. The School has an anti-bullying policy which makes it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously. If parents are concerned about their child's welfare they can approach the pupil's form teacher or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.
- 1.4 Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of pupils with a special educational need or disability creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The School is mindful in particular that:
  - assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's special educational need or disability without further exploration;
  - pupils with a special education need or disability can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
  - there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required;
  - any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in the School's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures.

**Disability:** The School recognises that some pupils with special education needs or learning difficulties may also have a disability. Pupils and parents are referred to the School's Equal Opportunities for Pupils policy. The School will make all reasonable adjustments in order to afford opportunity to disabled pupils. However if, despite such adjustments, the School is unable to provide adequately for the pupil's needs, the School may decline to offer a place to a pupil or request you withdraw your child from the School.

### **Resources of the department**

The School allocates a budget to the Learning Support Department to enable it to run efficiently and to enjoy specialist resources where necessary. ICT equipment and relevant publications will be included in this. The department will try to provide resources from within School but there may be occasions where outside assistance is required, for example to assess the girl, in which case parents will pay any fees directly to the outside agency.

### **Staff development**

- Learning Support Staff attend appropriate development sessions and courses.
- In turn, the Learning Support Staff provide or arrange for development for other teaching staff through meetings, CPD activities and in other appropriate contexts.

## **Review and evaluation**

The Learning Support Staff review the SEN Policy and provision at regular intervals, drawing up developmental plans in order continually to increase the impact and effectiveness of this aspect of the School's educational and social role.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Last reviewed September 2018