

The Governing Body of Denstone College understands its regulatory responsibilities and will maintain an effective oversight of this policy, by evaluating its effectiveness, and reviewing and implementing change.

POLICY ON LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

INTRODUCTION

1. The following terms are applied in accordance with the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years' (produced by the Departments of Education and Health, January 2015):

A child or young person has **special educational needs** (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child or young person has a **learning difficulty or disability** (LDD) if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or post-16 institutions.

2. Aim: The aim of this policy is to explain the responsibilities we are able to accept, the support we are able to provide and also the responsibilities of parents in relation to pupils who may at any one time experience learning difficulties.

BACKGROUND

3. Learning Difficulties and Independent Schools: A number of pupils in mainstream independent schools such as ours show signs, not always previously apparent, of having a learning difficulty in one or another subject for which suitable educational provision is needed.
4. IQ: Learning difficulties may affect children who have a high IQ equally as those of lower academic ability.
 - The expression "*learning difficulty*" covers a wide variety of conditions and may include dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder and semantic processing difficulty. It may also include those who have problems with their eye-sight or hearing, or who have an autistic disorder.
 - Learning difficulties are sometimes genetic in origin. It is therefore the responsibility of parents to inform the College of, and provide documentation where appropriate

relevant to, any learning difficulty that has at any time affected them or any of their children or close relations.

5. It is the role of the Learning Support Co-ordinator to liaise with teachers, external specialist teachers, educational psychologists and parents as necessary in order to implement this policy. The Learning Support department undertakes to do all that is reasonable to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and learning difficulties. This support is generally paid for by parents.
6. Parents bear the overall responsibility for taking decisions about the management of their child's learning difficulties. Parents who would prefer to have a formal assessment should make arrangements accordingly with the Learning Support Co-ordinator but must ensure that copies are provided of all relevant advice and reports received. It should be noted that, for Access Arrangements applications, JCQ (the Joint Council for Qualifications) require all diagnostic testing to have been conducted by an assessor appointed by the examining centre. As such, scores from assessments commissioned independently by a candidate's family are not submissible as evidence for such access arrangements applications.
7. It is the role of the Director of Teaching & Learning to liaise with the Learning Support Co-ordinator to ensure that adequate whole school training is provided to all staff on meeting the educational needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs / Learning Difficulties, as well as directing staff towards appropriate additional resources, such as external Continuous Professional Development events, as appropriate and relevant to their own role.
8. Comprehensive records, including key documents, are kept on each pupil in the designated filing cabinet in the SCR and on the College management information system (iSAMs). These records are available to parents and teachers. All teachers of pupils with learning difficulties (including SEN) should be familiar with the contents of these records. A list of such pupils is circulated by the Learning Support Co-ordinator at the start of the academic year ("Exam Access Arrangements" and "LDD Register" documents), and updated throughout the year as necessary.

SCREENING

9. Screening: The law imposes on schools a responsibility both for the physical well-being and meeting the educational needs of pupils whilst in the care of the school. For this reason and also as a matter of good practice, we have a system of screening all pupils for learning difficulties. The cost of testing, but not the cost of any subsequent assessment, is included in the termly fees.
 - Each pupil is tested during the Michaelmas term in the 1st and 3rd Form using MidYis, the new Group Reading Test II and a Vernon spelling test.
 - It is important for parents to understand that these are "screening" and not diagnostic tests. They can reveal the need for a formal assessment to be carried out by an

educational psychologist and they are also used to inform teachers of pupil strengths and difficulties.

- A young person's learning difficulties can change over time. Therefore, a pupil may be re-tested at any time if a parent so requests or if staff have cause for concern about his/her progress. Subject teachers will in the first instance raise any relevant concerns or observations regarding a pupil with the Learning Support Co-ordinator, who will liaise further with relevant members of staff and, where necessary, contact parents.
- Testing will be conducted in a classroom environment. They are not competitive and no specific preparation is required or beneficial.

OUTCOME OF SCREENING

10. Recommendation: If a learning difficulty is suspected, parents will be informed with the recommendation of either immediate referral to an educational psychologist or qualified assessor, or a period of extra support teaching within the College followed by further review.
11. Course of Action: In every case the decision as to the course of action will be that of the parent, with advice from the School if required. The following information will also be provided:-
 - The names of one or two educational psychologists or qualified assessors to whom the parents may refer for further advice and/or assessment.
 - The likely cost of the referral which is to be borne by the parents.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

12. Denstone College makes the following educational provision for pupils with mild to moderate learning difficulties:
 - Tuition by a special needs specialist
 - In-class support, including study support lessons (in class or on a one-to-one or small group basis)

Further details of this provision and its cost to parents will be provided during consultations at the appropriate time.

12. Withdrawal: The right is reserved following consultation to require a parent to withdraw a child from the School in any case if, in the opinion of the Headmaster:
 - the child is reported to be in need of assessment or additional or remedial teaching or medication to which a parent does not consent; or
 - the learning difficulties require teaching or medication which, in the opinion of the Headmaster, the School is unable to provide or manage; or

- the pupil has special needs that make it unlikely s/he will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities provided at the School.

Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances would not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. Deposit paid in respect of the child would be credited to the account.

13. Costs: The cost of assessments, professional advice and remedial teaching is payable by parents in addition to normal fees and half a term's notice (or payment of half a term's remedial teaching fees in lieu) is required to terminate additional support. Fees paid for additional or remedial teaching will not be refunded under any circumstances. Specific information about costs and available teaching and support is available from the College upon request.
14. Outside Teaching: Parents may opt for additional support lessons to take place outside the College provided the Head is satisfied with all the arrangements including travel, timing and delivery to the pupil of the remainder of the curriculum.
15. Liability of the School: Unless negligent under the terms of this policy, the College accepts no responsibility to the pupil or parents caused by or arising out of any failure to detect or refer a learning difficulty or other condition or situation of special need.

CURRICULUM

16. All pupils are expected initially to follow the full curriculum, but adaptations to the timetable, support and subjects taken are constantly reviewed by the Learning Support Co-ordinator and changed if the need arises.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

17. Denstone College is guided by the relevant JCQ published guidelines concerning access arrangements for public examinations. Pupils with access arrangements in the junior school are routinely assessed at the College in third form (Year 9), with parents subsequently informed of outcomes and evidence forwarded to the Examinations Officer. Other pupils, identified by parents or colleagues on the teaching staff, can be assessed at any stage, with the Learning Support Co-ordinator responsible for organising such assessments in liaison with parents, who are responsible for payments for such later or further assessments.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

18. A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or 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, pupils for whom English is an additional language will be offered appropriate support.
19. EAL lessons will be offered to overseas students who require help with English in order

to access the College curriculum. Such support is organised and overseen by the EAL Co-ordinator in liaison with other relevant staff. All such students will be assessed upon arrival to establish their standard of English in order to help teachers plan future teaching and learning experiences. EAL lessons can take the place of a Modern Foreign Language in the curriculum of these students, although EAL tuition will be provided at other times should a pupil wish to study an additional foreign language.

20. WELFARE PROVISION FOR PUPILS FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

The College is committed to making appropriate provision for the teaching, learning and pastoral wellbeing of our EAL pupils. The school will ensure that the learning needs of each EAL pupil are identified and fully met and that the qualities they bring to the school are recognised and valued.

The College aims to promote good practice in the management and care of pupils whose first language is not English, by providing them with linguistic support across all areas of the curriculum as required and to provide any welfare support they may need. The EAL department exists to support pupils whose first language is not English. The aim of this department, led by the College's EAL Co-ordinator, is to enable pupils to integrate linguistically, academically and socially into mainstream lessons and school life. Pupils are prepared for any necessary examinations and are supported in their school studies. The aim of the EAL department supports the aim of the school, as stated in the Curriculum Policy: to 'provide a broad and challenging curriculum that enables all pupils to fulfil their academic potential.' The department supports our EAL pupils in their school life and allows them to focus on achieving a high level of English language proficiency.

EAL pupils are usually boarders and the welfare provision in boarding clearly applies to them. They are reminded regularly of how to seek help, who the child protection officer (designated safeguarding lead) and the deputies are. Communication with home is a priority and is enabled by a variety of means.

Integration into the whole College as well as into the boarding community is important and is enabled by involvement in activities, sports, weekend outings, evening social events etc.

21. WELFARE PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH DIFFICULTIES/DISABILITIES.

Much of paragraph 20 also applies; in addition:

- Pupils who receive additional support lessons will not usually be taken out of academic lessons for these; where possible such lessons will be organised during prep, activity or lunch time.
- Subject teachers, parents and pupils are aware of the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which are produced for each pupil receiving additional literacy support lessons. Pupils receive a termly report; copies are sent home and stored within pupil records and documents on iSAMs.

- Pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) are reviewed annually; a copy of this review is kept in the SCR and on iSAMs, along with the pupils' support timetable.