

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

(including provision for students with Specific Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities and students with English as an Additional Language)

### AIMS

We aim for all students to achieve their individual potential and become confident individuals living fulfilling lives.

Members of staff are encouraged in establishing a positive whole school attitude towards the learning and progress of all students. The measures outlined in this policy are in addition to the differentiation provided by teachers as part of their normal lesson preparation and delivery.

The aim of this policy is to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (2005), Children and Families Act (2014) and the Equality Act (2010). It follows guidance issued by the Independent Schools Council and is designed to reflect the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015). This policy is reviewed annually and is amended as necessary, in light of changes in legislation, the adoption of new initiatives, or the publication of government/inspection reports. A copy is available on the school website.

### KEY TERMS (SEND Code of Practice, 2015)

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

**Disability:** many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘... a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. ‘Long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’.

**Reasonable Adjustments:** adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.

### ADMISSION

Admission to St Helen and St Katharine is in accordance with the school’s Admission Policy. All students with sufficient aptitude will be considered for a place at the school. The school supports students with a wide range of SEN and regularly reviews and evaluates the breadth and impact of the support it can offer or access. In assessing a prospective student, the school will consider each case on an individual basis and will make reasonable adjustments to the admission process, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to prevent individuals being put at a substantial disadvantage. Admissions will inform the Head of Learning Support (LS) of any SEN information on registration in advance of a student joining the school. Where students apply with medical, psychiatric or educational psychology reports, parents and students are invited to discuss this with the Head of Learning Support to agree the best options for their daughter.

The school recognises that students may have difficulties in areas of communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health issues or sensory and physical needs.

Where a student joins the school with an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan (previously a statement of special educational needs), and the school is named in the EHC plan, the school will take responsibility for the day to day provision for the student, whilst the Local Authority (LA) will take legal and financial responsibility.

Should the LA decline to name the school in an EHC plan, parents may make their own arrangements to apply for a place at the school in line with the school's admissions policy and the processes outlined above, provided that the LA is satisfied that the school is suitable.

## **DISCLOSURE**

When applying for a place, parents are asked to set out the nature and extent of special needs on the application form. In order for the school to consider reasonable adjustments for individual students, full disclosure by parents of any medical reports, educational psychology or psychiatric assessments, or any other relevant information in advance of application is essential. In cases of doubt, parents should consult the school well in advance of an application. The Head of Section, Headmistress or Head of Learning Support may request a meeting with the parents in advance of the entrance examination. Subject to this, the school will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

Students will not be disadvantaged because of a stated special need. If parents do not disclose or deliberately withhold relevant information (of which they were already aware) until after accepting a place, the school may be unable to make adjustments that are sufficient to adequately cater for the student's needs. In such a case, the school reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, if the student has already joined the school, to ask the parents to withdraw the child.

## **PRINCIPLES OF SEN PROVISION**

The School undertakes to ensure that:

- The school has a named Head of Learning Support who will be responsible for the day to day operation of the SEN Policy.
- Gubernatorial oversight of SEN is provided by the Education Committee who annually review the SEN policy and receive termly updates on SEN as part of reporting to the main body of Governors.
- Appropriate funds are used to enable the school to fulfil its duties to those students with SEN.
- On admission to the school, assessment procedures will be used to assess the individual needs of all students in accordance with statutory requirements and that, on transfer, this information will be passed on in line with data protection regulation.
- The entrance procedures are fully accessible to students with special educational needs.
- Action is taken to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place using a graduated approach: assess, plan, do, review. Students with SEN are monitored carefully to match interventions and ensure that they can access the curriculum appropriately.
- Parents of SEN students have access to staff responsible for special educational needs; in the first instance by contacting the relevant Head of Section and then the Head of Learning Support.
- The Head of Section will monitor appropriate classroom teaching and individual student needs within and outside the classroom.

- We ensure that other schools and colleges to which students may transfer know their Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties. Information will be transferred in line with data protection regulation.
- Advice on I/GCSE and post 16 courses is available to all students and that the school is committed to developing in every young person the values, skills and behaviours they need to get on in life.
- The school's discipline policy acknowledges its legal duties under the Equality Act (2010) in respect of safeguarding of students with special educational needs.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to support students with SEN and recognises that students may have difficulties in areas of communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health issues or sensory and physical needs. The majority of girls at St Helen's have needs relating to specific learning difficulties, such as mild dyslexia or dyspraxia. These girls may need support with maths, literacy or study skills through the learning support department. Lessons are offered one to one, or in small groups on a weekly basis and needs are reviewed half termly. In addition, the school supports a small number of girls with mild ASD, (including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism), anxiety and depression, AD(H)D, visual and hearing impairments, and physical disabilities. The school does not provide a designated classroom assistant for an individual student.

#### **THE ROLE OF THE HEAD OF LEARNING SUPPORT**

- Co-ordinate 1:1 and small group teaching with the support of the Learning Support Teacher.
- Keep up to date with changes in legislation and guidance from relevant bodies, such as The Independent Schools Inspectorate, The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and The SpLD assessments Standards Committee (SASC).
- Complete educational assessments in line with guidance from professional assessor bodies (PATOSS/BDA or Dyslexia Action).
- Liaise with the Examination Officer and Heads of Section in relation to examination entries and arrangements.
- Liaise with and advise fellow teachers, parents, external agencies and governors, and discuss teaching strategies where necessary.
- Identify and encourage appropriate SEN training for staff involved with SEN students
- Manage and update the staff SEN resource library both in the staff room and electronically on the school's shared drive.
- Play a key role in the organisation and application of SEN provision and in the maintenance of the Learning Support Register.
- Regularly update and maintain the Learning Support Register with updated information on students with SEN and appropriate advice on teaching within the classroom. This will be emailed to staff when new information is added with a reminder that staff should annotate/mark books as appropriate.
- Make appropriate use of teachers and facilities from outside the school, including support services; these may include health and social services and voluntary organisations.
- Manage, review and update SEN teaching resources.

Parents of students with SEN will have all the usual opportunities to access school staff. In addition, they have the opportunity for involvement in the identification, assessment, monitoring and review of their child's progress with the Head of Learning Support. Parents who have specific concerns about

SEN provision for their child should also liaise, in the first place, with the Head of Section and then the Head of Learning Support.

The LS department is supported by the Director of Staff, who takes the leadership responsibility for SEN. Pastoral and medical support for students with SEN is delivered through the school's pastoral and medical structures led by Heads of Section, the Director of Students and the School Nurse.

The LS department works within the cyclical framework outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015): assess, plan, do and review.

### **ASSESS**

The school aims to identify SEN needs at the earliest point and make effective provision to improve long-term outcomes for the child or young person. Early identification, assessment and provision is very important for the following reasons:

- it can minimise the difficulties that can be encountered when intervention and provision occur;
- it can maximise the likely positive response of the child;
- it can allow for a temporary learning difficulty to be overcome and for future learning to be unaffected.

Referral to the Head of Learning Support, via the Head of Section, can come from a multitude of sources, e.g.

- subject teacher's request;
- student self request;
- parental request;
- management request;
- GP request;
- information from previous school (e.g. primary school or secondary school);
- admissions testing of Year 5, 6 and 7 students and late entrants;
- diagnostic tests; MidYIS (Year 7), ALIS (L6);
- review of student's progress in conjunction with Heads of Section.

In addition, whole year screening takes place in Year 5 and Year 7, and screening of new entrants takes place in Y6, 9 and 12. The Head of Learning Support collates screening data.

Where a student has been referred to the Head of Learning Support, or where screening data highlights a possible difficulty, the following process takes place (see appendix 1):

- A record of this is added to the SEN register.
- Head of Learning Support gathers information from Heads of Section, teaching staff and form tutors.
- Head of Learning Support may then have an early discussion with parents and student.
- Progress will be monitored carefully and following this there will be a discussion with student, parents and Head of Learning Support/Head of Section regarding desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment. The views and wishes of the student and their parents inform next steps which may consist of continuing to monitor progress; advice given to teachers and/or support lessons with the Head of Learning Support; the commissioning of diagnostic assessments carried out by the Head of Learning Support (this is a charged service (see

appendix 2)) or referral to an external professional. Records are given to parents alongside, where necessary, information regarding diagnostic assessment report options. Parents are also provided with contact details of the local authority's Information, Advice and Support Service.

- Where a parent decides to undertake an assessment report with an external professional, prior communication with the school is essential. The school may not be able to accept reports that have been commissioned by professionals who have not had prior contact with the school. The Head of Learning Support is able to provide a list of assessors well known to the school.

## PLAN

- Where it is decided to provide a student with SEN support, the Head of Learning Support meets again with student and parents to discuss outcomes and agree support strategies. These may include, for example: advice given to teachers and/or support lessons with the LS Department; the use of auxiliary aids or exam access arrangements. A student profile outlining tailored support strategies and targets is created and parents receive a copy.
- A clear date for reviewing progress is agreed.
- All staff that work with the student will be informed of their needs and support strategies, in line with any recommendations in a Specialist Teacher's Assessment Report, or Educational Psychologist's Report. This takes place via the Learning Support Register and internal communications system.
- The support is selected to meet the needs of the individual student. Those students who attend regular learning support sessions will have targets set by the LS Department in addition to those set by teaching staff.

## DO

The school's approach to provision recognises that there is a continuum of SEN and that the majority of students with SEN have their needs met by the school, occasionally with the help of outside agencies and other specialists.

- The Learning Support Register lists those girls with SEN, stating the reasons and giving teaching recommendations.
- Staff are informed of where to find individual differentiation strategies on the Learning Support Register.
- New entrants with SEN, or those that are newly identified as having SEN, are added to the Learning Support Register. Staff, Heads of Section and, in some cases, the School Nurse are informed of these additions via the internal communications system.
- Form Tutors consider support strategies to inform ongoing pastoral discussion with students.
- Girls may need some extra individual or small group support and may attend weekly lessons with the LS Department.
- Reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, will be put in place for disabled students to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.
- Examination access arrangements, such as extra time, separate invigilation, or use of a laptop, will be put in place for disabled students:
  - i. where they are at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled
  - ii. where it can be demonstrated that it is their normal way of working in advance of an examination series

- This is carried out by the Head of Learning Support and Exams Officer in line with regulations issued by exam boards and the Joint Council for Qualifications. Where access arrangements involve the use of a laptop, students must meet the conditions of the Laptop Policy. Where students require separate invigilation for examinations, the school is only able to implement this arrangement at the recommendation of a suitably qualified specialist or medical consultant. Rooms used for this purpose are located within the body of the main school. Every effort is made to minimise noise, whilst day to day lessons continue to operate. In order to implement exam access arrangements for long term conditions, the school requires reasonable notice from parents and external professionals. The school may be unable to process a late and/or unreasonable request for access arrangements (see Appendix 1).
- The existence of a medical diagnosis or a physical disability in itself does not imply that the candidate in question has special educational needs.

## **REVIEW**

- The effectiveness of the support and interventions is reviewed by the Head of Learning Support in conjunction with staff, Heads of Section and the Director of Students.
- Student profiles and targets are reviewed annually.
- Academic progress of those students with SEN is recorded for analysis on a spreadsheet by the Head of Learning Support.
- Progress in study skills amongst students is monitored using 'rainbow forms' which collate teacher concerns.
- Staff assessment of the skills progress of students on the SEN register is included in the review process where relevant to the individual student.
- In light of a student's progress and development, support is reviewed in consultation with subject teachers, parents and students.

## **ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)**

The School uses reports submitted in the registration process, performance in the entrance examination and benchmarking assessments to identify students in this category. Progress of EAL students is carefully monitored by their tutor and subject staff. Any concerns will be referred to the Head of Section and Head of Learning Support.

If language difficulties are in any way hindering a student's progress then appropriate support is offered and organised by the Head of Learning Support. Their progress is then monitored in the same way as SEN students.

## **EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PLANS**

Where, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress, the school or parents should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment. If appropriate, the LA arranges an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan and arranges, monitors and reviews the provision. All reviews of an EHC plan will include a focus on preparing for adulthood, including employment, independent living and participation in society. This will include links with employers and help raising aspirations and developing career plans. N. B. This stage is only applicable for around two per cent of children and parental/LA involvement is required.

## **PARENTAL LIAISON AND INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are informed so that they can fully understand the measures the school is taking - this is particularly important during assessment and subsequent reviews. Where a parent expresses concerns about a student's progress in a specific area, these views are taken into consideration and targets are reviewed.

In addition a student with SEN involving an EHC plan will have plans reviewed regularly. Parents' and students' views are invited and valued as a contribution to the review process. Parents are always asked to give their consent to consultation with relevant health professionals and other agencies.

## **DATA PROTECTION**

Confidential information is stored in line with data protection and is only shared with those that need to see it. It will be stored securely for as long as necessary, after which time it will be destroyed. Where information is requested by external agencies or in school transfer, parents and student are asked to agree to the sharing of data in writing, confirming contact names, addresses, postcodes and email addresses. Where SEN data is shared externally electronically, documents are password protected unless otherwise requested. Data shared sent through the postal service is sent via special delivery.

## **LINKS WITH ABINGDON SCHOOL**

Relevant information on student SEN requirement is shared between St Helen's and Abingdon School to inform teaching and learning, and examination provision where appropriate. This is done in line with data protection regulation.

## **GOVERNOR SCRUTINY OF IMPLEMENTATION**

This takes place through Governor visits to departments and lessons, Governor Committee and involvement in the annual policy review.

**Person responsible for review:**

**Audience:**

**Policy last reviewed**

**Next review due:**

**Director of Staff**

**Staff/Parents**

**Lent 2020**

**Lent 2021**

**Appendix 1  
Referral Process**

- 1. Teacher/parent/student concerns to Head of Section**
  - ⇒ **Monitor**
  - ⇒ **Referral to Head of Learning Support, leads to 2**
- 2. Information gathering**
  - ⇒ **Monitor**
  - ⇒ **Parents contacted and screening recommended, leads to 3**
- 3. Screening**
  - ⇒ **Monitor**
  - ⇒ **Assessment and report commissioned, leads to 4**
- 4. Assessment report**
  - ⇒ **Monitor**
  - ⇒ **Support agreed with parents and student. Where appropriate, exam access arrangements put in place and an online application made (no later than 5 February 2021 for students with external exams in 2020, or before any updated JCQ deadlines).**

**Late Requests for Access Arrangements**

The school is unable to process requests for access arrangements for long-term conditions less than 15 working days before the candidate's first exam. Requests for assessments cannot be processed less than 25 working days before a candidate's first exam. Special circumstances may be considered.



## **Appendix 2**

### **Diagnostic Assessment: Advice for Parents**

St Helen and St Katharine School adopts an all-round approach to students' progress. Where concerns persist despite support and intervention by tutors and subject teachers, the Head of Learning Support may recommend a diagnostic assessment to parents. Diagnostic assessment may lead to further intervention and/or the implementation of exam access arrangements. Access Arrangements can only be implemented where a student meets the criteria set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The Head of Learning Support may not be able to judge whether students will meet this criteria prior to assessment.

The provision of diagnostic assessment by an in-house Specialist Teacher Assessor is recommended as best practice by the JCQ. Parents continue to have the choice of commissioning an assessment with an external Specialist Teacher Assessor or Educational Psychologist; however prior communication with the school is essential. The school may not be able to accept reports that have been commissioned by professionals that have not had prior contact with the school, or who provide assessment data that the school does not recognise. Unreliable assessment data also cannot be used.

St Helen and St Katharine's Head of Learning Support, Mrs Deborah Cobbing, is a qualified Specialist Teacher Assessor listed on the SpLd Assessment Standards Committee website: <http://www.sasc.org.uk/Assessors.aspx>. She holds a current SpLd Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) and full membership of The Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS). The school is only able to offer assessment at the advice of the Head of Learning Support and provision may be limited, dependent upon level of demand.

The school is unable to offer a full diagnostic assessment. The Head of Learning Support will be able to recommend external professionals that can carry out such a report, should this be requested.

Further information on Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision for parents is available from the Local Authority's Information, Advice and Support Service:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/education-and-learning/special-educational-needs-and-disability-local-offer/information-advice-and-support-parents-and-children-about-sen/sendias-oxfordshire>

#### **Assessment for Access Arrangement**

**£250**

The Access Arrangement Assessment considers the student's background and history, collating information from the student, parents and teachers. Within this context the assessment presents the findings of tests of attainment and tests of cognitive abilities. Some tests are carried out on the computer; others are conducted by the Head of Learning Support. This assessment may identify features of a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD). In such cases, it can serve as evidence for exam access arrangements, such as extra time. Students who are assessed before the start of year 9, will need a reassessment (see below) in order to meet JCQ regulations for exam access arrangements. The Assessment for Access Arrangement is not a full diagnostic assessment. Parents should note that universities have their own systems for awarding access arrangements and some may require a full diagnostic assessment.

#### **Reassessment**

**£100**

This assessment is only available to girls who have already had a qualifying assessment or who join St Helen's in Lower Sixth with an external assessment report, but without a hand signed form 8. In such cases, the school is able to offer an updated assessment and form 8 in order to process an application for access arrangements.