

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

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**Queen's College, Taunton**

January 2017 V1

## **Introduction: Whole College Policy – Statement of Aims**

We aim to provide the structure for a pupil-centred process that engages pupil, family/carers, school and other professionals in planning for and implementing high quality, needs led provision that is consistent across Queen's College. This is to ensure that all the students who have been offered a place here are able to access opportunities for learning and social development achieving maximum progress, fulfilling their potential and achieving well-being. Our policy shows regard for the revised Code of Practice 2015.

## **Roles and Responsibilities within Queen's College**

- The named governor with responsibility for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is Mrs Janet Walden.
- The Senior Management team is responsible for reviewing the SEND Policy and ensuring appropriate provision is in place to implement the Code of Practice.
- SENCo and Head of Learning Development in the Senior School – Mrs. Amanda Free BA Ed (Hons); DipSp.Ed (VI); PGCPSE/E801 Difficulties in Literacy Development; AMBDA
- SENCo and Head of Learning Development in the Junior School – Mrs Shirley Neale Cert. Ed; RSA SpLD; AMBDA
- SENCo in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the Pre-Prep – Mrs Gill Harrison B.Ed (Hons); RSA Dip SPELD

We adopt a common approach and shared rationale to Special Educational Needs. We create developmentally appropriate specific policies within the Highgrove Nursery, Nursery school, Pre-Prep, Junior School and Senior School to complement the curriculum and needs at each stage.

### **1. Aims**

- 1.1 The aims of this policy are to promote good practice in our detection and management of special educational needs and disabilities and to explain the support we can provide for children who have learning difficulties and the co-operation we will need from parents.
- 1.2 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format, if required.

### **2. "Special educational needs" and "learning difficulty"**

- 2.1 Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for them.
- 2.2 Children have a learning difficulty if they:
  - 2.2.1 have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
  - 2.2.2 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);

- 2.3 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, children for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support provided they meet the School's academic criteria. Please refer to the School's policy for pupils with English as an additional language.
- 2.4 A child who finds a particular subject difficult does not necessarily have a "learning difficulty" in the legal sense of that expression; there will often be disparities in the speed with which children learn, in their skill at solving problems and in their general acumen. A variety of support options is available within departments and these are usually 1:1 at lunchtimes or after school.
- 2.5 The expression "learning difficulty" covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems, which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The expression may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing or who have an autistic spectrum disorder.
- 2.6 Learning difficulties may affect children who have a high IQ and academic ability as well as those of lower IQ and ability. Sometimes a child's learning difficulty becomes apparent for the first time at the age of 11+ or older, when the educational pressures tend to increase.

### 3. **Policy statement**

- 3.1 **The School:** Queen's College Senior School is a mainstream independent school with high academic standards, which accepts boys and girls from the age of eleven years. Pupils are tested in Year 7 using MIDYIS, Accelerated Reader and the Vernon Spelling Test. Pupils are retested every September to monitor their reading and spelling ages. New pupils are tested upon entry, whatever their year group, using these tests. Yellis is used in Year 10 and Alys in Year 12. Pupils who achieve below average scores on reading and spelling may be assessed further to determine whether they could be at risk of having a learning difficulty. From September 2017, we will carry out screening tests on each new pupil, in order to detect signs of learning difficulties, where apparent from the test results.
- 3.2 **Provision:** The provisions which we can make for children who appear to have a learning difficulty includes: small group support, additional specialist teaching, and referral to an educational psychologist or other outside agency for a formal assessment.
- 3.3 **Consultation:** We will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents about their child's learning difficulties and to ensure that teachers are given any necessary information about a child's learning difficulties and that teaching practices are appropriate.

### 4. **Implementation and procedures**

- 4.1 **Testing:** If a pupil is deemed to be at risk of having a learning difficulty (from previously administered tests, concerns from teachers, pupils or you) we will carry out further testing, the results of which will be reported to you. No test is infallible but provides a reflection of the pupil's performance on the day of testing. Diagnostic testing by specialist teachers at the school is charged at the usual cost of a 1:1 support lesson. The purpose of the tests is to detect circumstances which may need further investigation or a formal assessment.

- 4.2 **Outcome of tests:** If the outcome of testing is indicative of a learning difficulty, or any other circumstances give us reason to think that your child may have a learning difficulty, we will report and consult with you as necessary and make recommendations.
- 4.3 **Formal assessment:** If the test results indicate that your child may have a learning difficulty, we may ask you to agree to your child being formally assessed by an educational psychologist or other outside agency and we will ask you to agree to follow his / her recommendations unless there are persuasive reasons to the contrary. You may consult an educational psychologist suggested by the School, or one of your own choice. The cost in either case must be borne by the parents.
- 4.4 **Additional specialist teaching:** As an alternative, and if justified by the test results, we may suggest a course of additional specialist teaching by a qualified specialist on a one-to-one basis in school. This would normally be either one or two periods of 38 minutes per week in term time. 1:1 specialist teaching lessons are charged per lesson as published on the fees schedule. .
- 4.5 **A term's notice in writing:** is required to terminate additional specialist teaching.
- 4.6 **Learning development lessons:** If the test results indicate that there may be a learning difficulty but the circumstances are not such as to indicate an immediate formal assessment or a course of additional specialist teaching, we may suggest that your child gives up one of the normal curriculum subjects. It may be possible for them to attend a small learning development group which will concentrate on developing skills such as generating ideas, planning for writing, learning subject specific spellings etc. Alternatively, paired reading may be recommended. Your child's progress and needs will be monitored and, if necessary, we will recommend a formal assessment if learning development lessons do not appear to be meeting your child's needs.
- 4.7 **Code of Practice:** Our approach to the detection and management of learning difficulties will be guided by the *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years* (DFE - 0000205-2013), Department for Education (DfE), July 2014, or any substituting or amending code of practice (May 2015) issued from time to time by the Department for Education (DfE). In general, our approach will be cautious so as not unnecessarily to run the risk of a child being labelled "dyslexic" when a later assessment might result in a different explanation for the difficulty.
- 4.8 **Education Health and Care plans (EHC plan):** Parents and the School have the right under section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ask the local authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC plan. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right. If the local authority refuses to make an assessment, the parents (but not the School) have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Health Education and Social Care).
- 4.9 If we feel that the provision cannot be reasonably delivered by the school, we reserve the right to decline admission at this stage. If a child with an EHC plan is admitted to the school, we will co-operate with the local authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.
- 4.10 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.

4.11 **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 tutor or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.

4.12 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:

4.12.1 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;

4.12.2 pupils with a special education need or disability can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and

4.12.3 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.

4.13 **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 Disability 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 (see 5.1 below).

4.14 **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO):** Mrs Amanda Free is the Senior School's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (**SENCO**). She has responsibility for:

4.14.1 ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of a child's special educational needs;

4.14.2 advising and supporting other staff in the School;

4.14.3 ensuring that appropriate pupil passports are in place;

4.14.4 ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with special education needs is collected, recorded and updated;

4.14.5 undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice on special educational needs.

4.15 **Responsibility:** Parents bear the overall responsibility for taking decisions about the management of their child's learning difficulties. A parent who would prefer to have a formal assessment should make arrangements accordingly with the School or outside but must ensure that we are given copies of all advice and reports received. If the formal assessment is related to exam access arrangements, this must be arranged in conjunction

with the School SENCO. The SENCO reserves the right to make the final decision regarding appropriate exam access arrangements with due regard to the pupil's history of need and normal way of working.

- 4.16 **External teaching:** Parents may opt for additional specialist teaching outside the School, provided that the Head Teacher is satisfied with your child's safety and travel arrangements and also that the additional specialist teaching is at times which fit in with the remainder of the curriculum, timetable and community life of the School.
- 4.17 **Information:** Because dyslexia and some other learning difficulties are often inherited, we need to know at the outset if you (either parent) or your children or close relations have been affected by a learning difficulty at any time. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. You must also provide us with a copy of any report or recommendations which have been made in relation to special educational needs at your child's previous school or elsewhere within the last 12 months.
- 4.18 **Concerns:** We need to know immediately if your child's progress or behaviour causes you concern so that we can devise and agree a strategy with you and carry it out.
- 4.19 **Examinations:** Children who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be eligible to apply for extra time or other exam access arrangements to complete internal examinations and public examinations. You are asked to liaise with the SENCO in good time with respect to this. A letter is sent to all parents of pupils in Year 9 to remind you of this.

## 5. **Alternative arrangements**

- 5.1 **Withdrawal:** We reserve the right, following consultation with you, to ask or require you to withdraw your child from the School if, in our opinion after **making all reasonable adjustments and exhausting appropriate strategies:**
- 5.1.1 your child is in need of a formal assessment, additional specialist teaching, learning support or medication to which you do not consent; and / or
  - 5.1.2 you have withheld information from the School which, had the information been provided, would have made a significant difference to the School's management of your child's learning difficulties; and / or
  - 5.1.3 your child's learning difficulties require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Head Teacher, the School is unable to provide, manage or arrange;
  - 5.1.4 your child has special educational needs that make it unlikely he / she will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities which we provide.
- 5.2 **Alternative placement:** In any of these circumstances we will do what is reasonable to help you to find an alternative placement which will provide your child with the necessary level of teaching and support.
- 5.3 **Financial:** Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances will not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. The deposit would be refunded without interest less any outstanding balance of the account.

<b>Effective date of the policy</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2017
<b>Policy Author</b>	Amanda Free – Senior School Head of Learning Development
<b>Circulation</b>	Governors / teaching staff / all staff / parents / pupils [on request]

<b>Authorised by</b>	Board of Governors
<b>Signed</b>	Mark Edwards, <b>Chair of Governors</b>
<b>Date</b>	23rd March 2017