



SEDBERGH SCHOOL

# Learning Support Policy

*September 2017*

# **Learning Support Department**

## **Aims**

Sedbergh School values the contribution that every pupil can make and is committed to ensuring the best possible progress for all of pupils. The Learning Support department seeks to remove barriers to learning in order to raise the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities. Learning support aims to help pupils to acquire and develop the necessary learning skills and confidence to cope with their mainstream subjects, and to achieve their potential in exams.

The Learning Support department works in partnership with curriculum areas and boarding houses, as Sedbergh School believes that provision for pupils with SEND is a matter for the School as a whole and the responsibility of all teaching staff.

Learning Support teachers possess skills and knowledge in diagnosed learning difficulties, but also more general matters of teaching and learning, study skills and exam techniques which means the department can be helpful and available to increasingly wide range of pupils.

## **Definition of Special Educational Needs**

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.
- Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age.

Approximately 20% of the School population has diagnosed special educational needs, including Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, ADD, language processing delay and Asperger's Syndrome.

## **Education and Health Care Plans**

Special educational needs policy and provision has been subject to recent reforms. Statements of special educational needs have been replaced by Education and Health Care plans. EHCPs are for pupils with significant learning needs/disabilities, and state an entitlement to additional support from a teaching assistant, paid for by a local education authority. The plans are reviewed annually and require input from outside professionals. There is a legal obligation to ensure the School meets the needs of pupils with EHC plans.

## **Assessment of need**

Pupils with diagnosed needs should have information transferred to the School regarding those needs prior to them starting at Sedbergh. The School recognises specialist teacher, educational and clinical psychology, speech and language therapy and medical consultant's reports.

If pupils display difficulties, subject teachers can contact the Learning Support department with their concerns. After gathering information it may be appropriate to consider pursuing outside agency assessment, which will vary according to the nature of the difficulties displayed. Parental consent is required before pupils are referred for assessment. The department can refer pupils to an Educational Psychologist or a suitable qualified specialist assessor for:

- Short assessment for access arrangements
- Full assessment for diagnostic purposes
- Full assessment aged 16+ for DSA (Disabled Student Allowance) at University

Assessments take place in School, using a 'centre appointed assessor' which ensures consistency and is the best practice recommended by the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications). It is also more convenient for families as the arrangements are taken care of during term time, and the fee can be added to the school bill. Referrals can take time, as can the completion of the report (up to 3 months for a full report).

## **Liaison with Subject Teachers**

A list of pupils with special educational needs called the Learning Support Register is updated throughout the academic year, and is accessible to all colleagues on iSAMS. A coloured star system is in place to indicate the level of need and access arrangements in exams.

Information and guidance about teaching and learning strategies for specific needs is provided by the Head of Department. It is the subject teacher's responsibility to ensure they know the needs of the pupils in their classes. Teachers are required to identify those in their classes who have special educational needs and are encouraged to adapt their practice in light of the information provided. Consideration is given to comments made in reports in order to reassure parents that their children's needs are understood and taken into account.

Timetable changes to result in Learning Support lessons are carefully considered, and justified on the basis of evidence of significant difficulties/underachievement that requires further investigation of an underlying learning difficulty or a diagnosis of need.

## **Learning Support Lesson Arrangements**

Learning Support lessons incur an additional charge and are a formal subject entered into a pupil's timetable. Reports are written where only class effort is graded, as a working at grade is not possible to judge and prep is not set.

### **Middle School**

#### *Year 9*

In Year 9, pupils with special educational needs have usually been identified and their timetable planned for before the start of term as paperwork has been received from parents stating they are requesting learning support lessons and agree to the additional charge incurred. Usually pupils with LS needs will not study a second modern foreign language. For pupils with significant learning needs, it can be appropriate for them not to study any foreign languages and do European Studies as another option. If a year 9 pupil is found to be struggling or the School was not made aware of pre-existing difficulties, they may drop a foreign

language, which can only be authorised by the Head of year 9 in conjunction with consultation with the Head of MFL and agreement by parents. It is obviously crucial to aim to keep the class sizes in Learning Support small, but we are unable to guarantee 1:1 teaching. The focus of the twice weekly lessons is developing literacy skills through approaches such as Lexia and developing revision and learning skills.

### *Years 10 and 11*

Learning Support lessons are available in the place of one GCSE option subject. As with year 9, most pupils are already known to the department, but there may be occasions when pupils start out studying four options and reduce to three if experiencing difficulties, or are new to the School. Again, evidence of a special educational need is required. The focus of the lessons, which increase to 3 per week, is on consolidating and revising work done in GCSE subjects and continuing to develop independent learning skills. Again, 1:1 input is not possible, as small groups of up to 5 are common.

### **Sixth form**

There are pupils who join the School in the sixth form with a diagnosed special educational need. Sixth form pupils can book one-off lessons in place of a study period. If more regular input is requested, the lesson can be added to the timetable and a further charge is levied. Sixth form pupils are encouraged to access learning support independently. 6<sup>th</sup> form lessons are 1:1.

### **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

Where pupils have a special educational need in their first language, the School will require the same standard of outside agency assessment / evidence, translated into English. International pupils who had access arrangements in their home countries will be required to have a test in the UK, with a specific specialist who is qualified to do so.

## **Prep Support**

Prep support takes place three evenings a week, where the Learning Support rooms are opened as a drop-in service, with staff in attendance to provide clarification and advice, Monday to Wednesday 7.30pm – 9pm. A record of attendance is kept and there is no additional charge for this provision.

## **Exam Access Arrangements**

Access arrangements are a key part of the School's Special Educational Needs provision. Access arrangements are only provided when specific information is in place. In accordance with JCQ regulations, any pupil who has not been tested from year 9 or above will require an up-to-date assessment. Access arrangements should be the pupil's 'normal way of working' and records are kept in preparation for JCQ inspection during exam season in the Summer Term. Each candidate must sign a data protection form allowing the information from their assessment to be viewed by the JCQ.

Information about access arrangements is shared with all teaching staff and updated as assessments take place. Access arrangements are to be provided as much as possible in tests, and relies on the teaching team to liaise with learning support to request support of readers, scribes and computers on a secure exams log in, so pupils can be fairly assessed. A separate plan is devised by the Head of Learning Support for all internal exams, GCSE, AS and A Level mocks and for the public exams in the summer to ensure that support is provided.

## **Links with Parents**

The department aims to keep parents of the pupils receiving learning support lessons informed about lesson content and progress. This is by regular emails, in interim and full reports and attendance at parents' meetings.

Parents frequently contact the department for advice about their children and regular and reassuring communication is something that the department recognises as crucial.

## **INSET**

Opportunity is given for the department to lead whole School INSET on topics pertinent to the Special Educational Needs of the pupils currently in School.

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