



LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES POLICY WHOLE SCHOOL

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Learning Difficulty & Disabilities Policy

1. Policy aims

- 1.1 This document states the aims, principles and strategies for addressing the needs of girls with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) in both the Preparatory school and Senior school that comprise Kent College.

2. Fundamental principles

- 2.1 In accordance with the 2010 Equality Act, a girl with specific needs, including those with a recognised disability should, as far as possible with reasonable adjustments, have her needs met to enable her to participate in all parts of school life, including curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 2.2 The specific needs of girls will normally be met within mainstream activities or settings but additional support will be offered in cases where this is required as a reasonable adjustment.
- 2.3 Parents will have access to the Additional Education Needs ("AEN") policy and have the opportunity to liaise with AEN staff and contribute to planned provision.
- 2.4 The AEN department is committed to assessing the needs and progress of girls, and specifically monitoring the impact of provision on progress.

3. Definitions:

- 3.1 This policy takes into account the revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disability 0-25 years 2015. The code refers to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations. The regulations associated with the Children and Families Act 2014 are:
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
 - The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets and Direct Payments) Regulations, Section 49
 - The Order setting out transitional arrangements, Section 137
- 3.2 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:

- 3.3 a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
(b) 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 in schools within the area of the local education authority
(c) are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.

3.4 Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

3.5 Categories of Special Educational Need:

The new Code does not assume that there are hard and fast categories of special educational need, but recognises those children's needs and requirements fall into four broad areas:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Behaviour, emotional and social development
- Sensory and/or physical

3.6 Definition of a Disability, according to the Equality Act 2010, Section 6 (1):

A person has a disability if—

- (a) the person has a physical or mental impairment, and
- (b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3.7 This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more young people than many realise: 'long term' is defined as a 'year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

Where a child or young person requires special educational provision over and above the adjustments, aids and services required by the Equality Act 2010 they will be additionally covered by the SEN definition.

3.8 The term learning difficulties and disabilities has been used in this policy to reflect the school's compliance and commitment to the relevant legislation above.

3.9 Pupils are not regarded as having learning difficulties solely because their language, or form of the home language, is different from that in which they are taught. Identifying and assessing SEN for pupils whose first language is not English requires particular care and we will look carefully at all aspects of a pupil's performance in different areas of learning and development or subjects to establish whether lack of progress is due to limitations in their command of English or if it arises from a SEN or disability. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN.

3.10 Special education provision means:

(a) for children of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area

(b) for children under two, educational provision of any kind.

- 3.11 Kent College will have due regard for the Special Needs Code of Practice when carrying out its duties towards all girls with special educational needs, and ensure that parents are notified when SEN provision is being made for their child.

3.12 Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Department:

In this context, the term is AEN is used to refer collectively to learning support and English as an Additional Language ("EAL") staff. Note that details pertaining to EAL practices are included in a separate EAL policy.

4. Admission arrangements for girls with specific needs

- 4.1 The School will admit girls who have LDD providing that:
- a girl meets the level required by the School's Entrance examinations when reasonable adjustments have been made
 - the Senior Leadership Team ("SLT"), following consultation with the AEN department, are confident that with a reasonable level of additional support, the girl can access the curriculum as it is delivered by subject teachers
- 4.2 *In the event of a girl possessing a Statement or EHC Plan, the placement recommendations of the last Annual Review will be taken into account.*

5. Arrangements for partnership with parents

- 5.1 Parents should be fully involved in decisions relating to their daughter's specific needs. Contact, by letter, telephone, email and in person is actively encouraged and maintained between departments responsible for learning support and the parents of girls with specific needs, in order that parents may be fully involved in the arrangements made for their daughter. Records are kept of discussions with parents and carers, when they occur.

Introduction of Pupil Educational Plans (PEPS) PEPS are replacing Individual Education Plans (IEPs). AEN teachers will negotiate the targets and objectives of the PEPs with girls and parents as appropriate, and will then communicate these targets together with subject specific strategies with subject staff during INSET at the start of each term. This will be a termly process.

Arrangements for considering complaints - Complaints should be addressed in the first instance to the (Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator) SENCo (Prep and Senior). If the problem is unresolved after this the parents will be referred to the Head for further discussion and the Dealing with Parental Complaints policy.

6. Links with outside agencies

The school works with outside agencies such as educational psychologists, occupational therapists, behavioural consultants and health/ social services as appropriate. The AEN department can make referrals and/ or advise parents where to locate suitable external agents (such as Educational Psychologists, Occupational therapists etc.), and can accommodate their appointments on the school premises but the particulars are at the parents' discretion. Under ordinary circumstances, any costs that are incurred through related referrals are chargeable to parents following liaison with them.

7. Responsibility of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will appoint a Governor with responsibility for Learning Support. He or she will meet regularly with the SENCO to review and discuss current provision. Periodic reports will be made on the provision in the school to the Education Committee and the Governing Body as a whole.

8. Identification of LDD & Screening – We are committed to the early identification of any barriers to learning through an on-going schedule of screening programmes and diagnostic tests which we are able to administer and analyse internally. Upon confirmed entrance, relevant records and documentation pertaining to known learning difficulties are requested. The specific screening package used is to be reviewed regularly and replaced or changed as deemed necessary.

8.1 Screening schedule - The proposed schedule to commence from September 2015 is as follows:

Prep Year 4 plus any new girls to the school in years 5 and 6– Lucid LASS (8 – 11 Years)

Senior Year 7 - Lucid LASS (11 – 15 Years)

8.1.2 Formal screening is not planned in the Early Years Setting. Identification of LDD in this setting is based on teacher observations. Teachers are requested to complete an SEN Referral Form which is forwarded to the SENCo. The SENCo will, in the first instance, observe the girl in an appropriate lesson context and seek further information from the class teacher.

8.2 In the event of a girl missing the scheduled screening procedures through absence, or entry midway through an academic year, an alternative screening appointment will be arranged as part of our commitment to the early identification of potential barriers to learning.

- Using progress data - A variety of other input will be used to monitor progress which might lead to the identification of additional educational needs, such as tracking data which is significantly below average. Tracking data is collected at various points in the Prep and Senior schools using (Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring systems) InCAS, MidYis, Yellis and Alis.

- Qualitative observations and liaison with other parties - In addition, evidence from qualitative observations by subject staff & parents and that presented by external agencies will also contribute to the on-going monitoring and screening of girls. Subject staff have a variety of channels of communication to express any concerns and seek advice, including weekly staff briefings/ meetings and termly progress meetings.

9. Provision for all girls with specific needs

- 9.1 **Types of provision** - Provision is tailored to girls' specific needs through a number of measures and practices, including the differentiation of classroom practices and/ or programme of study, the option of having a mentor assigned and arranging 1:1 sessions which focus on an identified need. Emotional support is offered through the pastoral responsibilities of form tutors, mentors (where relevant) and the AEN staff who can offer advice and reassurance about LDD to students. Following liaison with parents, girls are invited to attend 1:1 sessions in cases where a specific learning need has been identified which is likely to be supported by the 1:1 provision that is available internally; in circumstances in which this is not the case, the SENCO will seek advice from or make a referral to a suitable external agency. All of the provision aims to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 9.2 **Departmental Approach** - While the AEN department recognise the recommendation to offer a graduated approach as set out in The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014/ the revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disability 0-25 years; we aim to offer a fluid approach to provision which does not necessarily follow discrete levels of provision. The level of support and specific recommendations and actions that are implemented, are based on the changing individual needs identified by the AEN department and/ or external agencies, in-keeping with the wider school aim to offer bespoke education. Therefore, a girl does not have to go through the process of differentiated teaching in order to be referred to an external agent; this decision is based on the individual needs of the girls and accompanying circumstances to best support the girl at any given time.
- 9.3 **Facilitating compliance to make reasonable adjustments** - Records of girls with LDD, including those acquired through screening/ assessment, is shared with subject staff with accompanying recommended reasonable adjustments to practice in the classroom. This information is distributed to subject staff at the start of the academic year, while also being available on the school database (PASS). A Register of SEN will be maintained by the SENCO (discreet Prep and Senior School registers) – this will be updated bi-weekly and communicated to all teaching staff. The SENCO offers weekly updates on notable data, progress or recommendations during staff briefings/ meetings. In addition the AEN department is committed to offering internal inset to subject staff as a means of facilitating compliance with reasonable adjustments. A staff reference library is available.
- 9.4 **Reasonable adjustments** – These are extremely varied and are subject to the specific needs of the learner & the LDD presenting a barrier to learning, but some examples are provided *for the purposes of illustration*:

- A girl has dyslexia - staff are advised to offer handouts which can be highlighted, rather than prolonged note-taking which is more demanding and time-consuming for the girl.
- Girls with a limited working memory capacity - staff are advised to avoid elaborate instructions as these are difficult to process and interpret. Staff might also be asked to be mindful that tasks which involve reading comprehension will take the girl longer, so this should be incorporated into planning rather than putting pressure on the girl to "keep up".
- In the case of a girl having a hearing impairment, staff should arrange a seating plan so that the learner has a clear line of vision to the teacher so that communication is not disrupted, while instructing the teacher to look forwards (rather than at a whiteboard for instance) when addressing girls.

9.5 **Access Arrangements for Examinations** – In accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), the AEN department review girls' specific needs in order to make arrangements for them to access examinations in-keeping with the duty to make reasonable adjustments. An illustrative summary of relevant access arrangements is detailed below:

- 9.5.1 The use of a word processing facility in examinations is available, subject to students meeting the criteria laid down by JCQ, and following a review of need by members of the AEN department. Where laptop use is granted, students will need to sign a laptop user agreement and will be required to use their own laptop for day to day work but will be allocated a school laptop for use in external examinations.
- 9.5.2 Extra time is granted to girls when an assessment has been carried out by a suitably qualified person, such as an Educational Psychologist or Specialist teacher, which produces a standardised score of 85 or below on a measure of literacy, such as reading or writing speed. This combined with examples of evidence of need, are used to support an application for this access arrangement.
- 9.5.3 Girls with Attention Deficit Disorders ("ADD") or related disorders are entitled to complete examinations in isolation if there is sufficient evidence of need.
- *Note that Ability and Attainment assessments can be carried out internally and are not chargeable to parents. Applications for access arrangements are based on the expertise and discretion of the AEN department.
- 9.5.4 Subject staff are expected to maintain a termly record of the use of access arrangements by those girls for whom eligibility has been granted. This is to be collected and collated by the SENCO for JCQ inspection as requested.
- 9.5.5 A signed Data Protection Notice will be maintained for each girl who is granted an access arrangement, as required by the JCQ Access Arrangement regulations, in order for her data to be shared with relevant parties to facilitate and validate her access arrangement/s.

9.5.6 Access arrangement information and paperwork will be maintained by the SENCO, as required by the JCQ regulations. The information will be made available by the SENCO for inspection purposes, when such inspections occur.

9.6 **Measuring progress to inform practice** – Pupil education plans (PEPs) are produced for girls who are receiving 1:1 learning support. PEPs are discussed with girls when they are drawn up, so that girls know what their objectives are, and their input can be taken into account. Correspondence with parents during school progress reports should refer to relevant targets and progress pertaining to their daughter's PEP. AEN staff meet to identify tangible targets that can be drawn up and can be subjected to review on a termly basis, while making every effort to ensure targets lend themselves to establishing progress in a measurable way. This can be achieved in a number of ways, such as conducting surveys with subject staff, girl self-appraisal or staff appraisal including the use of rating scales or repeat screening assessments to compare performance (see appendix a). Staff are informed about targets and notable progress through updates and meetings; the senior school incorporates this into (termly) progress meetings.

10. Extra-curricular activities

10.1 The AEN department contributes to extra-curricular activities within the school, while offering the opportunity for girls to develop academic/life skills. These are subject to change but the following examples may be offered, following suitable staff training and a need having been identified:

Reading club
Comprehension booster club (reading comprehension)
Games club (problem solving)
Spelling club
Auditory memory Club
Visual memory Club
Socialisation/ Social Skills Club (prep and Senior)
Left-handers Club
Handwriting Club (Prep)
Sensory Circuits (prep and senior)

11. Resources

A range of ICT software and paper based resources are used to screen, assess and support students; an illustrative summary is detailed below:

- Lucid LASS – Literacy screening software (8-11years; 11-15years)
- Lucid RECALL – Standardised processing assessment software
- Lucid LADS+ – Literacy screening software (16+)
- WRAT 4 – Wide Range Achievement Test – Standardised literacy assessment battery
- WRIT – Wide Range Intelligence Test – Standardised Intelligence assessment battery
- Lucid Exact – Standardised literacy assessment software

- Lucid Memory Booster – Game based software to help students develop memory abilities
- Lucid Comprehension Booster - Game based software to help students develop reading comprehension abilities
- Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome software/ questionnaires
- Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome coloured overlays
- Audio books
- Internet-based video tuition to support literacy
- Alpha to Omega Multi-sensory Programme – Supports dyslexic students through systematic progress through tasks.
- Examination reading Pens (JCQ approved)
- Clever Fingers
- Language for Learning
- Black Sheep resources
- Social Stories
- Circle of Friends

12. The role of the SENCO

The SENCO is responsible for:

- The day to day operation of the school's LDD policy
- Liaising with and advising teachers and other school employees where appropriate
- Co-ordinating provision for girls
- Managing the work of Teaching Assistants as necessary
- Maintaining records and profiles as appropriate
- Liaising with parents of girls with specific needs
- Liaising with external agencies and other schools
- Ensuring and maintaining confidentiality at all times
- Keeping up to date with relevant legislation and procedures, including providing advice about necessary access arrangements & arranging supporting evidence
- Line-managing AEN staff
- Line-managing Gifted and Talented co-ordinator
- Contributing effectively to ensure that there is a positive ethos towards diverse learning needs as the school's intake is diverse.
- Developing and maintaining a close working relationship between Senior School learning support staff and those in the Prep School
- Maintaining links with other SENCO and learning support staff from other schools and services
- On-going CPD, and where appropriate, disseminating information to subject staff

13. Permanent Staff

SENCO – Mrs H Levett BA Hons, PGCE Leeds, MA York, Cert Nat Sci (OU); PG Dip SEND; NASCO; RQTU (Educational Ability/ Attainment), CPT3A
 Dyslexia Specialist Teacher - Mrs Liz Hawker BS Hons, MPhil CCET
 EAL Specialist –Mr Peter Talbot BA Hons CETLA
 Maths/ Science Support – Prep and Senior - Mr R Kruschandl BA Hons, PGCE

Learning Support - Key Stage 1 - Ms Jane Dinwiddie
Learning Support (dyspraxia) – prep and senior – Mrs Carmel Sutton

In addition to the permanent staff outlined here, part-time Maths, Science and literacy tutors are employed on a flexible basis.

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