

Learning Support Policy

Independent Boarding and Day School for Boys and Girls

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Learning Support Policy

1. Legislative Context

The policy has regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0 – 25 years) 2014. As an independent school, The Royal Hospital School has no statutory duty to comply with the guidance. Its ethos of effective inclusive practice and supporting SEN pupils with care and consideration, however, does inform the School's Learning Support Policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Disability and Discrimination Policy and the School's Admission Policy, as well as the policy for Reasonable Adjustments.

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability

Definition of Special Educational Needs

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 them. In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, a child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age;
- have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Children will 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. The School's support for those children whose first language is not English is set out in the School's EAL Policy.

Definition of Disability

A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

Not all pupils who have SEN are disabled. Not all disabled pupils have SEN.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission lists impairments including:

- Moderate and severe learning difficulties
- Dyslexia, dyspraxia, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder
- Sensory impairments
- Fluctuating medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy)
- Mental health conditions and personality disorders

3. Introduction

The Learning Support Policy sets out the measures that are taken to ensure inclusion throughout The Royal Hospital School for all pupils with learning support needs. The term Learning Support is used within the School to incorporate all pupils known to or attending the Learning Support Department. The nature of the learning need will vary from pupil to pupil as outlined below:

- Some pupils will have a formally diagnosed learning disability or difficulty as defined by the Equality Act 2010 which necessitates a special educational provision. In some cases pupils are identified as having a learning difficulty which requires Access Arrangements in examinations. These pupils are identified as having a special educational need.
- Not all pupils with learning support needs at the School will have a formally diagnosed special educational need or a disability as defined by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0 – 25 years) 2014. Some pupils will have been formally assessed; however, their assessment scores lie within the normal range and are not statistically significant enough to warrant access arrangements in examinations or to be termed as having a special educational need. However, they may be experiencing barriers to their learning and will benefit from support for their learning needs.
- 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.
- Parents or teachers may have concerns about the learning needs of some pupils, who may not have had a formal assessment, but still require learning support to develop their literacy, numeracy, study or revision skills.
- Some pupils will have been identified with a learning support need because they are making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

The aims of The Royal Hospital School's Learning Support Policy

- To outline the procedures for identifying and assessing pupils with learning support needs.
- To provide the most appropriate support for pupils with learning support needs.
- To ensure that there is support and training available for teachers to meet the learning support needs of pupils within the classroom.
- To encourage teachers to recognise their roles and responsibilities regarding the education of pupils with learning support needs.
- To demonstrate how access arrangements for public examinations can meet the particular needs of an individual pupil with special educational needs or learning disability without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
- To identify how the School works effectively in partnership with parents in supporting pupils with learning support needs.
- To demonstrate the mechanisms for monitoring the progress of pupils with learning support needs.

4. Admission

The Royal Hospital School is academically selective and welcomes pupils who can make the most of the opportunities offered and can flourish in its caring environment. Treating every child as an individual is important. The School will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and The Disability Discrimination Act 2005, in order to accommodate the needs of applicants who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately. Please refer to the School's Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

The Royal Hospital School's selection policy is described in its Admissions Policy. Applications from all who have the ability and aptitude to access an academic curriculum are welcome. However, parents of children with Learning Support or Special Educational Needs should discuss their child's requirements with the School before they sit the entrance examination so that adequate provision can be made for them on the day. Parents should provide a copy of any educational psychologist, specialist assessor or medical report so that the School is fully informed of the pupil's needs and special arrangements can be made, if required. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide this information and not that of the previous school. Failure to supply this information will prevent the School from providing appropriate support for the child's needs.

Disclosure

Parents will be requested to provide the School with copies of the child's latest medical report, educational psychologist's report and any other information regarding the child's disability.

If, following the offer of the place, it is discovered that the School has not received full disclosure of information relating to the child's disability and the School is not able to make reasonable adjustments for those disabilities, then the School may withdraw the offer of a place, or ask the parents to withdraw a child who is already a pupil

5. Identification and Assessment

The Royal Hospital School aims to identify pupils with Learning Support needs at the earliest opportunity. The identification of pupils can come from a multitude of sources:

- Referral reports from parents, outside agencies or former schools submitted at the time of application.
- The medical report of each pupil.
- MidYis and ALIS test results.
- Internal tests conducted by the Learning Support Department
- Educational assessments conducted by the Learning Support Department
- Attendance, where appropriate at Academic Review Meetings where pupils who are making less than expected progress, given their age and individual circumstances, are identified.
- Concern expressed by teachers and tutors.

- The School's reporting systems: interim reports, end of term reports and internal examination results.
- From parents who share their current concerns or a history of need.
- From pupils themselves who recognise a difficulty or challenge and who seek advice from tutors and the Learning Support Department directly.

Parents of incoming pupils with identified Special Educational or Learning Support needs are encouraged to meet with the Head of Learning Support, Mrs Burge, who is also the School's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (or "SENCO"), prior to entry to The Royal Hospital School and to share educational assessment reports, specialist reports or medical reports so the School is fully informed of the pupil's needs. Any pupil entering the school with an existing Educational and Health Care Plan (EHC) may also be invited to meet with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) to establish the barriers to the educational provision at the School. If reasonable provision needs to be put in place, they will be discussed thoroughly with parents, including adjustments that can reasonably be made to the curricular and co-curricular activities before the child becomes a pupil at The Royal Hospital School. Please refer to the Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

On entry to the School all pupils are assessed using MidYIS tests in Years 7 to 9 and the ALIS test in Year 12. Additional screening may be conducted by the Learning Support Department with pupils whose MidYIS and ALIS results may indicate a possible learning difficulty. This may be indicated by a pupil's uneven profile in the results or a weak result in a specific component. Additionally pupils entering the School with an identified learning support need are also screened by the Learning Support Department. The screening includes an assessment of a pupil's reading and comprehension attainment, spelling and writing speed. Results are discussed with the Deputy Head (Academic) and any indication in under-achievement in these baseline assessments is followed up by communication with parents with recommendations for appropriate support and provision.

In some instances the School may recommend an educational assessment carried out by the Head of Learning Support or a formal diagnostic assessment by an educational psychologist or a specialist assessor. In the case of a diagnostic assessment by an educational psychologist or a specialist assessor advice will be given on appropriate specialists and the cost of the assessment is borne by the parents.

In some instances, a concern about a pupil may be raised by a tutor, a teacher, a parent, a pupil or through the School's reporting systems: interim reports, end of term reports and internal examination results. These concerns will be referred to the Learning Support Department which will take the following action:

- Collate information from teaching staff.
- Discuss possible difficulties with the pupil.
- Suggest activities or strategies to be used by teachers in the classroom. Progress will be closely monitored and reviewed.
- Liaise with parents to discuss intervention and possible further assessment and diagnostic testing.

A list of all pupils with learning support needs is collated and distributed by the Learning Support Department. The list has a profile of the learning needs of each pupil, key outcomes of educational assessments access arrangements, difficulties encountered and how these may affect classroom and academic performance. All teachers have access to this list on both Firefly and iSAMS, the School's information management system; it is regularly updated in response to updated assessments or changing needs. Additionally in iSAMS teachers have access to educational assessments.

6. Learning Support Provision

As a consequence of discussions between tutors, Head of Learning Support, pupils and parents one or more provisions would be put in place to meet the needs of the individual pupil which might include:

- Lessons in the Learning Support Department provided either in small groups or individually to target specific needs. This may include support with literacy, numeracy, revision or study skills or subject specific support.
- Occasional "drop in" sessions to target a specific difficulty. In some cases a pupil may need a one off session or possibly a couple of sessions during the course of a term to target a specific learning area e.g. formulating a glossary of subject specific terms or support with essay planning.
- Daily supported prep sessions for Years 7 and 8 supervised by the Learning Support Department for pupils who may benefit from additional help and guidance.
- The Learning Support Department providing suggestions for support and teaching strategies, including specific strategies for certain pupils; these are available to all staff in iSAMS and Firefly, the School's intranet.
- The Head of Learning Support working closely with departments to ensure that the needs of pupils are known and met. Teachers are advised on the best way to assist pupils with learning needs in the day to day environment of the classroom. The progress of the pupil is closely monitored.
- Appropriate access arrangements in public and internal examinations for pupils with a formally diagnosed learning difficulty or disability.
- Pupils who have regular Learning Support lessons have individualised Learning Support Plans; these plans are monitored and reviewed termly.

Lessons are arranged in a way that minimises disruption to the curriculum. Lessons are arranged during study sessions, lunchtimes, break times, before school or during lesson time. Pupils are not withdrawn from English or Mathematics. As the School operates a two week timetable, pupils are not withdrawn from the same subject in two consecutive weeks. Learning Support lessons are a minimum of 35 minutes long, but may be extended to accommodate the needs of the individual pupil.

7. Learning Support Department

The Learning Support Department is located in a central position adjacent to the library and is staffed by two experienced and appropriately qualified teachers who deliver individual and group support to pupils with a variety of learning needs. The members of the Department:

- Attend weekly Learning Support Department meetings.
- Conduct screening to gain a profile of a pupil's current attainment and ability.
- Conduct tests to monitor and track the progress of pupils with learning support needs.
- Set and review targets for pupils attending regular lessons in the Learning Support Department.
- Maintain accurate records of pupils' learning activities and outcomes.
- Complete Interim and End of Term Reports.
- Participate in professional development opportunities.
- Contribute to the objectives set out in the annual departmental development plan.
- Liaise with tutors and teachers about the progress of pupils with learning support needs.
- Make visits to classes to see at first hand the provision for pupils with learning support needs in mainstream classes

The Head of Learning Support coordinates monitors and evaluates the work of the Department. Working closely with members of the Senior Management Team and reporting to the Deputy Head (Academic), she plays a key role in determining the strategic development of the Learning Support policy and provision in School in order to cater for the individual requirements of pupils with learning support needs. She will liaise closely with the pupil's teaching staff, tutors, family and where appropriate, with specialist assessors and educational psychologists. She attends regular external training in order to remain current with the latest duties in the role.

The Royal Hospital School is committed to the training and professional development of members of staff, and all new staff receive training by the Learning Support Department as part of the September induction programme. All teachers are teachers of pupils with learning support needs and in order to support staff, the Learning Support Department offers training and advice on strategies to support pupils with learning support needs:

- To raise awareness of the needs of pupils with learning support needs.
- To develop an understanding of the different types of learning difficulties and disabilities.
- To enable teachers to differentiate within the curriculum and to take into account the pupils' learning difficulties.
- To discuss the needs of individual pupil's learning support needs.
- To enable teachers to have a clear understanding of access arrangements.
- To enable teachers to gain an understanding of professional educational assessments and reports.

8. Partnership with Parents

The School believes that a good partnership with parents is essential. The School recognises, encourages and values the participation of parents in the process of identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of their child's needs. Parents are encouraged to feel that they can approach the School about any concerns they may have about their child's progress. They receive regular information about their child's progress and are encouraged to support the arrangements that are in place.

10. Access Arrangements:

10.1 Internal Examinations

In internal examinations The Royal Hospital School will provide arrangements that are similar to those required for public examinations for those pupils who have learning support needs or a learning difficulty or disability. However, if the School makes concessions for internal examinations, this does not guarantee that the examination boards will award concessions for public examinations.

Special arrangements are not made for informal classroom - based tests, but teachers are required to be sensitive to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

10.2 Public Examinations

The Royal Hospital School prepares pupils to sit public examinations. In some instances pupils, who have a learning difficulty or disability, may be eligible for access arrangements in accordance with the regulations and guidance set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications in its publication "Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments". Access arrangements allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access assessments to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessments. Access arrangements include extra time, word processing, the use of a reader and scribe and supervised rest breaks.

Candidates who may require special arrangements in public examinations will be required to have a formal assessment. For the purposes of determining access arrangements, such as extra time, a reader or a scribe, for GCSE and GCE examinations an assessment will be conducted in School by the Head of Learning Support, a specialist assessor, who has the appropriate qualifications and the required level of competence. There will be no charge for such access arrangement assessments. In the case of GCSE examinations the assessment will be carried out from Year 9 onwards and, for GCE examinations at the start of Year 12. The School is under no obligation to accept either, privately commissioned reports, or those from external professionals, for the purposes of determining access arrangements. In some instances a fuller assessment of a pupil's cognitive abilities may be beneficial and the School can suggest appropriately qualified educational psychologists and external professionals who have an established reputation with the School; the cost of these assessments to be borne by the parents. It is important for parents to inform the Learning Support Department if they require an educational assessment for their child.

If the assessment identifies that a pupil is eligible for access arrangements, the arrangement can only be awarded if the School is able to paint a picture of the normal way of working for the candidate, demonstrating the need for the specific access arrangement. Access arrangements should be processed at the beginning of examination courses. The Learning Support Department coordinates the gathering of evidence to support the application, making teachers, parents and pupils aware of the process involved.

In order for access arrangements to be awarded at universities, some institutions now require a full adult assessment by an appropriately qualified psychologist or specialist assessor holding a Practising Certificate. Such an assessment may be used as evidence to support an application to the pupil's LEA for a Disabled Student's Allowance, a financial grant. Such an assessment is applicable for pupils of 16 years and over. The School can suggest appropriately qualified specialists to carry out such assessments; the cost of the assessment is borne by the parents.

The Learning Support Department, working in close partnership with the School's Examination Officer, processes and submits applications for pupils who meet the criteria for access arrangements for public examinations as specified by the Joint Council for Qualifications.

11. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the learning needs of pupils takes place on a regular basis throughout the school year in the following ways:

- Scrutiny of performance in prep, tests and examinations.
- Monitoring of Attainment and Challenge Grades in Interim, Exam and Full Reports.
- Attendance at Academic Review Meetings when appropriate.
- Tracking the progress of pupils on the Learning Support list as measured by Attainment and Challenge Grades in Interim, Exam and Full Reports
- The setting and evaluating of measurable targets for those who receive individual lessons.
- Judgements made by teachers about the progress of pupils in individual subject areas.
- Tutors liaising with the Learning Support Department about individual pupil progress.
- Regular meetings in the Learning Support Department to share good practice and discuss pupils' progress and concerns.

12. Alternative arrangements

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:

- your child is in need of a formal assessment, remedial teaching, learning support or medication to which you do not consent; and / or
- 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
- your child's learning difficulties require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Headmaster, the School is unable to provide, manage or arrange;
and / or
- 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.

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.

Financial: Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances will not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. The deposit paid in respect of your child will be credited to your account.

13. Associated documents

This document should be read in conjunction with the following associated policies: School's Admission Policy, Reasonable Adjustments Policy, Learning Support Policy, and Anti-Bullying policy Accessibility Plan and the Equal Opportunities Policy (Staff).