

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

**Sancton Wood School**

## 1 Aims

1.1 The aims of this policy are to promote good practice in our detection and management of special educational needs 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 which 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 children 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 (if your child has a disability, please ask to see our Disability Policy);

2.2.3 are under five and fall within the definition at 2.2.1 or 2.2.2 above or are likely to do so when of compulsory school age if special educational provision was not made for the child.

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 admissions 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.

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:** The School is a mainstream independent school and we 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 provision which we can make for children who appear to have a learning difficulty includes: learning support, additional specialist teaching and referral to an educational psychologist 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 **Screening tests:** The details of screening tests carried out are set out in the Appendix.

4.2 **Outcome of tests:** If the outcome of a test 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 which ought to be assessed without delay, we will ask you to agree to your child being formally assessed by an educational psychologist 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 retained 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:** 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, the cost of which must be borne by the parents. A half-term's notice in writing is required to terminate additional specialist teaching.

4.5 **Learning support:** 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, additional learning support may be provided. Examples of such learning support are set out in the Appendix. Learning support of this kind will be provided at no additional cost. Your child's progress and needs will be monitored and, if necessary, we will recommend a formal assessment if learning support does not appear to be meeting your child's needs.

4.6 **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 (DFE00205-2013) (Code)*, or any substituting or amending code of practice 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.

4.7 **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).

4.8 Where a prospective pupil has an EHC plan, we will consult the parents and, where appropriate, the Local Authority to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC plan can

be delivered by the School. We will co-operate with the Local Authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.

- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 **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 make 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 teacher or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.
- 4.11 **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).
- 4.12 **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO):** has responsibility for:
- 4.12.1 ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of a child's special educational needs;
  - 4.12.2 advising and supporting other staff in the School;
  - 4.12.3 ensuring that appropriate Individual Learning Plans are in place;
  - 4.12.4 ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with special education needs is collected, recorded and updated;
  - 4.12.5 undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice on special educational needs.
- 4.13 **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 instead of remedial teaching or learning support should make arrangements accordingly with the School or outside but must ensure that we are given copies of all advice and reports received.
- 4.14 **External teaching:** Parents may opt for remedial teaching outside the School, provided that the Head is satisfied with your child's safety and travel arrangements and also that the remedial teaching is at times which fit in with the remainder of the curriculum, timetable and community life of the School.
- 4.15 **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.

4.16 **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.

4.17 **Examinations:** Children who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be eligible to apply for extra time to complete assessments. You are asked to liaise with your child's form teacher in good time with respect to 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, remedial 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, 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 paid in respect of your child will be credited to your account.

<b>Authorised by</b>	Tommy Macdonald Milner
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<b>Date</b>	July 2015
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<b>Effective date of the policy</b>	July 2015
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## Appendix      Provision for Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties

1.      **Screening tests:** Screening tests are carried out on admission, the results of which will be reported to you. The tests which we use are not diagnostic tests of a kind which an educational psychologist would carry out, and they are not infallible. The purpose of the tests is to detect circumstances which may need further investigation or a formal assessment. The cost of screening tests is included in the tuition fees.
  
2.      **Learning support:** Where 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 additional learning support is provided. This will be agreed with the parents and may include:
  - Individual Learning Plan
  
  - Small groups