

# St Helen's School

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

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June 2022



## **I Aims**

- 1.1 The aims of this policy are
  - 1.1.1 to promote good practice in the School's detection and management of special educational needs; and
  - 1.1.2 to explain the support the School can provide for children who have learning difficulties and the co-operation it 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 or mainstream post-16 institutions (if your child has a disability, please refer to the School's 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 she 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 Equal Opportunity Policy.
- 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:** St. Helen's School is an academic independent school for pupils from the age of three years. The School carries out screening tests on each pupil at certain stages through the School, in order to detect signs of learning difficulties, where apparent from the test results.
- 3.2 **Provision:** The provision the School is able to make for children who appear to have a learning difficulty includes learning support, additional specialist teaching and testing in some cases, and referral to an educational psychologist for a formal assessment.
- 3.3 **Consultation:** The School 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 test:** Throughout their time at School, including in the EYFS, pupils' progress is monitored closely and any observations about learning needs are raised with the relevant Individual Needs Co-ordinator who works with teachers, parents, the Head of Prep and the Head of Individual Needs to ensure appropriate support is in place (e.g. Home School Link). Pupils will be screened from Years 3 to 11, the results of which will be reported to parents if there is cause for concern. The tests which are used 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.
- 4.2 **Outcome of tests:** If the outcome of a test or any other circumstances give the School reason to think a child may have a learning difficulty, the School will report and consult with parents as necessary and make recommendations. These may include further specialist testing within the School. The cost of these tests is included in the tuition fees.
- 4.3 **Formal assessment:** If the test results indicate that a child may have a learning difficulty which ought to be assessed without delay, the School will ask parents to agree to their child being formally assessed by an educational psychologist and will request that his / her recommendations are followed unless there are persuasive reasons to the contrary. Parents may consult an educational psychologist recommended by the School, or one of their own choice. The cost in either case must be borne by the parents.
- 4.4 **Learning support:** If the test results indicate that there may be a learning difficulty, but the circumstances are not such as to indicate the need for an immediate formal assessment or a course of additional specialist teaching, the School may suggest that a child attends a learning support group which will concentrate on developing skills such as phonics, spelling, maths and handwriting. Learning support of this kind will be provided at no additional cost. A child's progress and needs will be monitored and, if necessary, the School will recommend a formal assessment if learning support does not appear to be meeting the child's needs.
- 4.5 **Code of Practice:** The School's 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, January 2015) (**Code**) or any substituting or amending Code of Practice issued from time to time by the

Department for Education (DfE). In general, the School's 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.

- 4.6 **Education Health and Care Plans (EHC plan):** Parents and the School have the right under s 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).
- 4.7 Where a prospective pupil has an EHC plan, the School 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. The School will co-operate with the Local Authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.
- 4.8 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 the 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.
- 4.9 **English as an Additional Language (EAL):** Given the nature of its entrance procedures, all of which require proficiency in English, the School does not provide specific EAL support. A great many pupils speak another language at home, but they would consider English to be their first language. The School does, however, provide paired reading opportunities to support reluctant readers. Should the need for greater EAL support be identified, the School will provide support to meet the needs of a pupil on an individual basis and in consultation with the Parents.
- 4.10 **Welfare needs:** The School recognises that pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties could be especially vulnerable to abuse or bullying. Therefore, the School actively monitors their welfare in line with the School's safeguarding responsibilities. Any safeguarding concerns are referred to Children's Service, as outlined in our Pupil Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies 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 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 that the pupil be withdrawn from the School (see 5.1 below).
- 4.12 **Head of Individual Needs:** The Head of Individual Needs co-ordinates the School's special educational needs provision. She 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 Student Profiles 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 ensuring that annual reviews of pupils with statements/EHC plans are carried out if necessary.
- 4.13 undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice on special educational needs.
- 4.14 **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 additional specialist teaching or learning support should make arrangements accordingly with the School or outside but must ensure that the School is given copies of all advice and reports received.
- 4.15 **External teaching:** Parents may opt for additional specialist teaching outside the School, provided that the Headmistress is satisfied with the 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.
- 4.16 **Information:** Because dyslexia and some other learning difficulties are often inherited, the School needs to know at the outset if either parent or their other 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. Parents must also provide the School with a copy of any report or recommendations which have been made in relation to special educational needs at their child's previous school or elsewhere within the last 12 months.
- 4.17 **Concerns:** The School needs to know immediately if a child's progress or behaviour causes concern so that it can devise and agree a strategy with Parents and carry it out.
- 4.18 **Examinations:** Children who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be eligible to apply for access arrangements to complete internal examinations and public examinations. Parents are asked to liaise with the Head of Individual Needs in good time with respect to this.

## 5 Alternative arrangements

- 5.1 **Withdrawal:** The School reserves the right, following consultation with parents, to ask or require the withdrawal of a child from the School if, in the School's opinion after **making all reasonable adjustments and exhausting appropriate strategies:**
- 5.1.1 a child is in need of a formal assessment, additional specialist teaching, learning support or medication to which parents do not consent; and / or
  - 5.1.2 parents have withheld information from the School which, had the information been provided, would have made a significant difference to the School's management of their child's learning difficulties; and / or
  - 5.1.3 a child's learning difficulties require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Headmistress, the School is unable to provide, manage or arrange;

5.1.4 a child has special educational needs that make it unlikely she will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities that the School provides.

5.2 **Alternative placement:** In any of these circumstances the School will do what is reasonable to help parents find an alternative placement which will provide their 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 a child will be credited to their parents' account.

## 6 **Review**

6.1 This policy will be reviewed by Deputy Head Pastoral on an annual basis or as changes to legislation require.

## **Appendix I**

### **St Helen's School Individual Needs**

#### **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

St Helen's endeavours to make available inclusive provision to ensure that all our pupils, including those pupils identified with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can enjoy and benefit from a broad and balanced education which enables them to achieve their full potential.

Our Head of Individual Needs is Ms Judit Halmagyi.

We are committed to narrowing the attainment gap between SEND and non-SEND students and offer a range of personalised learning interventions/opportunities to support this. We are very proud of all our students and their achievements. This document aims to provide detail about our provision for individual needs. In some areas this is known as the 'Local Offer'.

#### **How does the School identify SEND?**

A young person has Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision. If the impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, it may amount to a disability.

If your child is identified as having a SEND, we will inform you and place them onto the Individual Needs register. The Individual Needs register is kept in school and provides our staff with support strategies for individual students.

Students with a SEND are identified throughout the school using information provided by previous educational settings, by parents and/or through teacher observation. If an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is in place the Local Educational Authority will be involved throughout the transition process. We offer a range of support during transition to help students become accustomed to the new faces and the change of environment before starting with us in September. An electronic transfer of student data occurs on the 1st September; this includes a student's SEND status.

We carry out screening tests in Years 3-11 and, in the Prep School, there is additional annual baseline testing. These tests allow us to identify students who require further intervention for literacy and numeracy, or who may have some learning needs in these areas.

If you are concerned about your child's educational needs, please raise your concerns with your child's form tutor in the first instance. If you still require further guidance, please contact the school's Head of Individual Needs.

#### **How will St Helen's support my child?**

At St Helen's we use a graduated approach to meeting an individual student's needs.

For the majority of students, high quality classroom teaching will fulfil their learning needs. Some students may require the curriculum to be slightly adapted or differentiated in order for them to access the curriculum and make progress. These students will not be on the Individual Needs register. Teachers will differentiate the curriculum on a regular basis as a usual way of working.

Some students may require small group or one-to-one intervention from a member of the individual needs team to bridge a learning gap or to develop strategies to overcome a particular need. These students will be identified on the register as 'SEN support'.

For a few students with more complex needs they may require more intensive and long-term support in order to thrive at school. These students will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which will set out clearly what provision the student needs to achieve at school. These students are on our Individual Needs register and are also monitored by the local educational authority SEND team.

### **Support and interventions offered**

Differentiated teaching and learning  
Paired Reading  
Mentoring  
Ideas sent home on supporting visual/auditory memory

We hold regular training sessions for staff on different areas of SEND and all staff have access to information and strategies to best help students with SEND.

The Individual Needs Department also offers **individualised, short-term** booster sessions for students. Every student in school, from Year 3 to 13, has access to these sessions if needed. The sessions are run in **small groups**, usually 4-6 students per group, or on a one-to-one basis and focus on different areas of the students' needs.

#### Types of support sessions:

Numeracy Intervention  
Reading comprehension group  
Spelling skills group  
Writing group  
Revision and study skills group  
Organisation Skills group  
Confidence and self-esteem group

### **Does St Helen's liaise with other agencies?**

At St Helen's we feel that having as much information as possible about a student is key when supporting them. We regularly liaise with a range of external agencies and we will follow guidance given when possible. We will always seek your consent before referring your child to an outside agency. We do encourage parents to allow agencies to share information with a key member of staff at school. We liaise with a number of agencies including:

Educational Psychology Service  
Sensory Support Service (Hearing and Visual)  
Occupational Therapy – NHS  
Speech and Language Service - NHS

### **How will St Helen's support my child's overall wellbeing?**

Here at St Helen's we recognise that for some children, school is not always an easy experience. Children occasionally face social and emotional challenges which can impede on their learning; for these more vulnerable children our involvement might need to be intensified.

This involvement can include mentoring by the student's class tutor, a member of the pastoral team, a member of the Individual Needs Team or the school's confidential listener.



We welcome any student in need, and always maintain a secure and supportive working relationship with parents and carers.

### **How can I be involved?**

At St Helen's we aim to work in cooperation with parents and students to create the best outcomes for individual students. All parents of students at St Helen's are updated regularly on their child's progress. We encourage all parents to contact your daughter's form tutor or Head of Year in the first instance if you have any concerns.

If your child is placed on the Individual Needs register at SEN Support level, we will write a short Student Profile with the help of your daughter. The profile is a person-centred thinking tool that provides a way to capture who each pupil is and how staff can best support them – as far as is possible on one page. The student profiles will be shared with your daughter's teachers. You will also have the opportunity to contribute to the contents of the profile.

Your child's class teacher will inform you if your daughter receives any one-to-one or small group support. Towards the end of the sessions you will have the opportunity to discuss your daughter's progress and next steps with the subject teacher.

For some students who have an EHCP, we hold an Annual Review of the EHCP which is monitored by the Local Education Authority.

We endeavour to keep parents informed of any changes and adjustments to support arrangements when necessary.

The Individual Needs Team works closely with students that are identified as having SEND. We offer a wide range of support and interventions and have a diverse range of strengths, areas of expertise, interests and personalities.

If you have any concerns with regards to the SEND provision offered at St Helen's, please do contact Ms Judit Halmagyi on (01923) 843259 or email [Judit.halmagyi@sthelens.london](mailto:Judit.halmagyi@sthelens.london).

## Appendix 2

### **More detail on Individual Needs in EYFS and Years 1-2**

. This document outlines the support and interventions available to all students in EYFS and Years 1-2, including those who have SEND. You should read this information in addition to the whole school information on Individual Needs. In some areas this is known as the 'Local Offer'.

#### **Access to a supportive environment**

- Extensive and consistent use of visual support both in and out of the class to support understanding and facilitate access to the school environment and learning.
- Use of interactive whiteboards.
- Visual timetables displayed in each classroom.
- Provision of resources to enhance independent learning, including multi-sensory resources.
- Provision of resources to support physical needs, such as pencil grips.
- Work differentiated so that all children can access the curriculum and can learn at an appropriate level.
- Teaching Assistant support in class.
- Extensive book-banded reading materials appropriate to the child's level.

#### **Strategies to enhance self-esteem/promote emotional well-being:**

- JIGSAW and circle time activities.
- Regular liaison between staff at staff briefings.
- Collaboration and communication with all external professionals involved with children as appropriate.
- Open door policy for parents.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants who know the pupils are in the lunch hall and playgrounds.

#### **Arrangement for further support, reinforcement activities:**

- A Home School Link will be set up to further support a pupil where necessary. This will involve activities sent home and regular communication with parents/carers on how they can further support their child.
- Reading support in class and extra reading or support sent home via a Home School Link, if necessary.
- 1:1 interventions programme with the Teaching Assistant to support if necessary.

#### **Access to medical interventions:**

- Regular meetings between Head of Prep and the School Nurse.
- Wide range of support staff and teachers trained in First Aid
- Staff training in the administration of support and/ or medication for Anaphylaxis, Asthma management and EpiPen use
- Photographs of the child and the details of her condition and required medication displayed in the staffroom and first aid area
- Accompany individual children who have emergency medication when their class moves around school.
- Staff will be trained by a specialised teacher of the deaf to support any children with a hearing impairment
- Individual protocols for children with significant medical needs

**Engagement with parents/carers/previous setting – Liaison/communication with parents:**

- In the EYFS, parents are aware of their child's Teacher and Assistant Teacher.
- Staff visit nurseries and previous settings before children start in the EYFS.
- Transition meetings between staff.
- 'Move-up mornings' before the start of the new academic year.
- Opportunities for parents to meet the teacher at the start of the academic year
- Open door policy for parents to meet class teacher or member of senior management team
- Regular progress meetings between parents/carers and class teacher

**Arrangement for specialist expertise in and outside school:**

- Early identification of needs requiring referral to external professionals
- Regular communication and information sharing with an extensive range of external agencies
- Sharing of professional reports with parents

**Arrangement for Speech and Language and Communication Needs:**

- Staff will carefully explain new words and ideas, and check pupils have understood.
- Pupils are encouraged to ask questions when they do not understand.

**Appendix 3**

**More detail on Individual Needs in Years 3–6**

This document outlines the support and interventions available to all students in Year 3-6, including those who have SEND. You should read this information in addition to the whole school information on Individual Needs. In some areas this is known as the 'Local Offer'.

**Provision to facilitate/support access to the curriculum/independent learning:**

- Small group support in class from teacher or TA
- Small group and individual support from specialist teachers in addition to classwork.
- Facilitating access to learning through the appropriate differentiation of tasks and activities
- Extensive use of visual support
- Exercise books with different coloured pages to reduce visual stress
- Provision of individual/visual timetables and checklists
- Provision of sand timers where appropriate
- Individual targets
- Scaffolding e.g. writing frames, story maps
- Additional resources if appropriate

**Access to a supportive environment – IT facilities/equipment/ resources:**

- Extensive and consistent use of visual support both in and out of the class to support understanding and facilitate access to the school environment and learning
- Use of interactive whiteboards
- Regular access to computers
- Provision of resources to enhance independent learning including printing onto coloured paper to reduce visual stress, easy grip writing tools and multi-sensory resources.
- Printing out of instructions/slides if needed

- Supportive computer programmes

**Strategies to support/develop Mathematics:**

- Targeted small group support outside of class
- Withdrawal of individual pupils for additional Mathematics support
- Use of support resources such as Cuisenaire rods
- Provision of tabletop resources to ensure that learning is multi-sensory and practical
- Specialist teachers to give targeted support

**Strategies to support/develop literacy including reading:**

- Small group reading support in class through guided reading and individual reading
- Reading support outside of class, such as extra reading or support programmes.
- Additional small group literacy support from Teaching Assistant in class
- Differentiated activities
- Handwriting development programme implemented through KS2
- Use of book-banded reading materials appropriate to the child's level.

**Strategies to support/modify behaviour:**

- Consistent school wide implementation of the school's behaviour policy
- Wide range of pastoral support to support children's behaviour in and beyond the classroom
- Behaviour management charts
- Supported behaviour management programme from Prep Acting Assistant Head
- Access to an on-site confidential listener
- Clear guidelines of rewards and sanctions.

**Strategies to enhance self-esteem/promote emotional well-being:**

- Circle Time
- Regular liaison between staff
- Collaboration and communication with all external professionals involved with children as appropriate
- Open door policy for parents

**Support/supervision at unstructured times of the day including personal care:**

- Teachers and Teaching Assistants who know the pupils are in the lunch hall and playgrounds
- Access to the Sunshine Room at lunch break and time with the room supervisor if necessary.

**Strategies/programmes to support Physical needs:**

- Provision of support resources such as pencil grips
- Staff will be trained by a specialised teacher of the deaf to support children with a hearing impairment
- Teaching Assistant support for pupils with physical needs
- Subject specific vocabulary and ideas sent home with the child in advance of the lessons to aid understanding.

**Access to medical interventions:**

- Regular meetings between the Head of Prep School and the School Nurse.
- Wide range of support staff and teachers trained in First Aid
- Staff training in the administration of support and/ or medication for Anaphylaxis, Asthma management and Epipen use
- Photographs of the child and the details of her condition and required medication displayed in the staffroom and first aid area
- Individual protocols for children with significant medical needs

**Planning and assessment:**

- Class provision maps
- Individual targets
- Differentiated learning activities
- Multi-sensory opportunities
- Incorporation into planning of any advice or guidance provided by external professionals supporting individual pupils.

**Engagement with parents/carers – Liaison/communication with parents:**

- Opportunities to meet the teacher at the start of the academic year
- Open door policy for parents to meet class teacher or senior management
- Regular progress meetings between parents/carers and class teacher

**Arrangement for specialist expertise in and outside school:**

- Early identification of needs requiring referral to external professionals
- Regular communication and information sharing with an extensive range of external agencies
- Sharing of professional reports with parents

**Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the ‘additional and different’ arrangements – on progress and outcomes for pupils with SEN:**

- Teacher and Teaching Assistant observations
- Pupil interviews
- Analysing data through the school tracking system
- Regular meetings with parents/carers to review child's progress

<b>Authorised by</b>	Resolution of the Council of Governors
<b>Date</b>	July 2022
<b>Effective date of the policy</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2022
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	July 2023