

# SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

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| <i>Reference</i>   | AL1   |
| <i>Category</i>  | A. Student and Parent Facing  |
| <i>Name</i>  | <b>Learning Support (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Policy</b>   |
| <i>Purpose</i>   | To clarify our approach to supporting students with special educational needs (alternative learning needs), learning difficulties and disability.                                     |
| <i>Scope</i>   | Students, Staff, Parents  |
| <i>Regulatory or legal requirement addressed by policy</i> | Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2015<br>Equality Act 2010<br>Children and Families Act 2014  |
| <i>Policies referred to</i>                                | Admissions Policy<br>Safeguarding Policy<br>Curriculum Policy<br>SEND Accessibility Plan<br>Anti-bullying Policy<br>Health and Safety Policy<br>Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy |
| <i>Policy owned by</i>                                     | Director of Learning Support  |
| <i>Date effective from</i>                                 | September 2024  |
| <i>Published on website</i>                                | Yes   |

## **Introduction**

- 1.1. Sevenoaks is an inclusive school where the teaching, learning, achievements and attitudes of every student matter.
- 1.2. All students are entitled to an education that enables them to achieve their best and go on to accomplish a successful transition to the next phase of their lives. They will have the tools and confidence to live fulfilling lives as adults – this includes students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- 1.3. The school believes that the community is enriched by its ability to attract a wide variety of students from varied backgrounds and with different talents. Our SEND policy complements this belief and we welcome applicants with learning difficulties or other disabilities to the school.
- 1.4. This policy is intended to address relevant recommendations of the Equality Act 2010, The SEND Code of Practice (2015, updated 2020), the Children and Families Act 2014, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, KCSIE 2024 as well as the guidelines outlined in other relevant policies of the school and other relevant legislation.
- 1.5. The School recognises that students with Special Educational Needs may be more vulnerable to bullying or other kinds of abuse than other students. To ensure that all our students receive equal protection, we give special attention to students who have special educational needs or who are disabled, as well as those who have English as an Additional Language. This includes monitoring through the pastoral systems of the School.
- 1.6. Sevenoaks School is dedicated to being a happy, nurturing environment where all students can flourish.

## **2. Principles and Scope**

- 2.1. The Learning Support Department at Sevenoaks School exists to help all students to achieve their full academic potential, regardless of any specific learning difficulty, special educational need or disability.
- 2.2. The Learning Support Department ensures that a student with SEND will have their needs met through a rigorous programme of identification, assessment, support and review.
- 2.3. According to Section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014, children are considered to have Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability 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 or 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.
- 2.4. The Learning Support Department at Sevenoaks School considers itself to be progressive and research-led.
- 2.5. Members of the Learning Support team are actively encouraged to undertake further training, as appropriate, and cascade information to the rest of the department.
- 2.6. The roles of staff with responsibilities related to the Learning Support department are:
  - The SEN Governor
  - The Deputy Head Academic
  - The Deputy Head Pastoral
  - The Director of Learning Support
  - Teachers who work specifically within the Learning Support department
  - The Exams Manager and Officer
  - The Academic Administrator
  - The school's whole teaching body

## **3. Admissions**

- 3.1. Admission to Sevenoaks School is via a selective entry procedure. The main criteria on which selection is based are:
  - Academic ability
  - Co-curricular potential (sport, music, art, drama etc)

- Personal qualities, allowing a student to contribute to and benefit from what the school has to offer.
- 3.2. Any pre-existing or known special educational needs or disabilities must be declared on the confirmation form. Failure to convey this information could mean the student does not have appropriate access arrangements in place during the Admissions process. It could also mean that the school is not prepared for the applicant's level of need required and might have to reassess its ability to provide for that student going forward.
  - 3.3. We do make reasonable allowances and adjustments for disabilities and/or special educational needs wherever possible within the admissions process.
  - 3.4. Students with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are welcome at Sevenoaks School. However, Sevenoaks School is not a school which is specially organised to make special educational provision for SEND students (Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014), and we do not set out to be a school with specialist expertise or provision in this area. If a student passes the admissions testing, the local authority may identify Sevenoaks School as the most appropriate school for the student and if the student is deemed suitable for the school, they would follow a carefully monitored annual review process with parents, teachers and specialists present. For further information on EHCPs, parents should consult the education authority's Local Offer from the county in which the family's main residence is situated.
  - 3.5. The suitability of the rigorous and academic environment of the School has to be considered for students with disabilities or learning difficulties, as it does for all applicants. The School must feel confident that it will be able to educate and develop the prospective student to the best of their potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the student's peers, so that there is every chance that the student will flourish and emerge a confident, well-educated and well-rounded adult.
  - 3.6. At all times our primary consideration will be the best interest of the child. Thus, if after reasonable adjustments and provision have been made, a child does not reach the standard of the other applicants for the place, or we feel that as a school we do not have, and cannot reasonably have, appropriate resources available to meet the needs of a child, we will not offer a place to that child.

#### **4. Identification**

- 4.1. Before enrolment in the school, parents and teachers of prospective students will be asked to identify any Learning Support needs or Physical Disability through the use of the *Learning Support Questionnaire*. Any Educational Psychologist's report or relevant documentation should be attached to this. These are all reviewed by the Director of Learning Support so that any Access Arrangements can be put in place for the admissions testing.
- 4.2. Once admitted to the school, there will be further screenings which may assist in identifying previously unrecognised learning difficulties. These include MIDYIS tests and LUCID Exact screening in Year 7 and Year 9 which may give an indication of any underlying learning difficulties. Further testing may then take place, with parental consent.
- 4.3. Throughout the academic year, Tutors, Divisional Heads and Subject Teachers are vigilant and look out for indicators of difficulties, including:
  - Underperformance in class or exams
  - Behavioural issues
  - Difficulties with handwriting (speed of handwriting and legibility) and/or reading
  - Verbal/written disparity
  - Social isolation difficulties
  - Organisational problems including missing deadlines

The school's reporting system is also used to highlight possible underperforming students. Each reporting window has an in-house system to allow teachers to flag up concerns with writing or running out of time in tests. If noted, this is fed back to the Director of Learning Support, who will follow up.

- 4.4. At Sevenoaks School, we consider students to have English as an Additional Language (EAL) if it is not their first language and they have not been educated in English for the preceding three years. As Sevenoaks is a selective school, and the students must pass the English exam in order to gain a place, it is not expected that they require particularly specialist teaching, although support is in place.

## **5. Provision**

- 5.1. If a Learning Difficulty is identified, the first steps are informal meetings with a member of the Learning Support department. This is a dedicated team of experienced teachers based in Talbot House.
- 5.2. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is put together for students who are supported by the Learning Support Department, when appropriate. The plan explains to teachers the strengths and difficulties a student has and what they can do to help the student fulfil their potential. IEPs are bespoke and are written in conjunction with the student; parents have input into this too. The IEP is then shared with the teachers who incorporate the information into their lesson planning. The IEP is also stored on iSAMS – the school database system – where staff can access it. IEPs are reviewed between one and three times a year, depending on need.
- 5.3. Informed parental permission is sought at each stage of the process.
- 5.4. Students who have SEND provision have a colour-coded star by their name on iSAMS to indicate there is a document to view.
- 5.5. Having assessed the student's difficulties, an appropriate course of action will be planned. This can be categorised broadly into three waves:

- **Wave 1 support – in lessons and other school contexts**

Quality First Teaching is a whole class teaching model that depends on a wide range of learning methods to be effective. When this is not working on its own, the Learning Support Department offers help and expertise to help resolve difficulties and promote positive solutions for students experiencing barriers to their learning in lessons. We aim for equity, not just equality, so that all students have the ability to flourish.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, every attempt is made to ensure that disabled students benefit from school trips and other activities as much as other students; maximum inclusion remains our policy. The Director of Learning Support can be involved in the Risk Assessment for trips to help ensure that health and safety are secured through reasonable adjustment. In the event that it cannot be, alternative provision might need to be employed.

Teachers are trained to produce SEND friendly resources and lesson plans wherever possible.

- **Wave 2 support – extra group work**

The school provides a Study Skills programme to support all students — it begins in the Lower School and continues with a structured programme administered by tutors and Divisional Heads in the Middle School.

Departments provide support in small groups and individually where needed. There are structured revision classes within departments prior to exams for all year groups and for the IB programme.

There are extension activities provided by all departments to stretch students who are gifted and talented, to help them flourish. In the Sixth Form, the IB Diploma offers many opportunities for students to explore beyond the curriculum through their CAS projects, Extended Essays and Internal Assessments.

In Learning Support, there are various small groups offered, as required, for example – Executive Functions Skills course; drop-in sessions for study skills; touch-typing courses. The Sixth Form run a mentoring scheme and students (or small groups of students) that are identified as potentially benefitting from extra support can be linked with one or more Sixth Form students.

- **Wave 3 support – Individual Assistance**

When a student needs more help than that provided in Wave 1 and 2, the Learning Support Department will offer one-to-one support to cater for their individual learning needs. The frequency of meetings is dependent on the need and ranges from fortnightly to twice weekly. Sessions may involve study skills help including strategies to support their learning; memory; organisation; enhance reading skills; note-taking; essay writing skills; spelling; developing their individual confidence and self-esteem. There is also some subject specific support in Maths, Sciences, Languages and English. All provision is monitored carefully, provided where possible, and allocated according to need. Sixth Form students use their study periods; other students may be taken from one of their timetabled as appropriate.

If more investigation is required, students may be referred to external agencies and/or, where applicable, the Local Authority. Students with significant EAL needs receive support to enhance their fluency in and comprehension of English as well as essay-writing help.

## **6. Review**

- 6.1. Students with EHCPs follow a carefully monitored annual review system with parents, teachers and specialists. IEPs of students with EHCPs are reviewed three times a year, as are those of students without EHCPs but with more complex needs.
- 6.2. The review process will take into consideration the views of the student, parents and teachers, as well as looking at their attainment and progress. Guided by review findings, plans will be modified and a new subsequent review date put in place.

## **7. Access Arrangements in Examinations**

- 7.1. A range of access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, including extra-time, word-processing and rest breaks can be applied for students taking exams, in line with the regulations of exam boards and authorities:
  - the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)
  - Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)
  - the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO)
  - Other exam authorities including SAT US university entrance tests, DELF institute Francaise

The IBO, the JCQ and CIE regularly update and change their guidelines and instructions regarding access arrangements and special considerations. The Director of Learning Support maintains close contact with the Examinations Manager and the Director of IB to monitor these updates.

- 7.2. Sevenoaks employs an Academic Administrator who works between the Learning Support Department and the Exams Office to coordinate access arrangements.
- 7.3. Sevenoaks School Learning Support staff hold appropriate qualifications and can test for some access arrangements, if we have evidence of need. However, a formal diagnosis of specific learning difficulties or disorders will need to be performed by an Educational Psychologist or Psychiatrist, as appropriate.

- 7.4. The school must be involved in the assessment process, regardless of the choice of external specialist – this is because the school is required to show there is evidence of need. Any external assessor, psychiatrist or psychologist must have established contact with the school prior to or as part of the assessment, or the report will not be valid for examination concessions (the Learning Support Department will provide a list of suggested organisations and/or individuals who will make the appropriate and required contact with the school). The signed report must be made available in full to the school and be valid at the time of the examination for which access arrangements are being claimed. Partial or redacted reports are not acceptable for making applications to exam boards. Reports should be submitted to the Learning Support department well in advance of the examination(s) taking place, usually at least one year – different exam authorities have different timescales. It is stated in exam board regulations that while professionals from other organisations may give advice on what they think are appropriate access arrangements, they cannot make the decision for the centre. It is the responsibility of the Director of Learning Support to make appropriate and informed decisions based on exam board regulations and students' normal way of working.
- 7.5. When applying for Access Arrangements for public exams, JCQ, CIE and the IBO require information about the student's normal way of working. They ask for evidence that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning. This is an additional reason for the school to be involved at the beginning of the process when seeking assessment of a current student by an external practitioner.
- 7.6. When a student enters the school with a prior diagnosis, the same evidence needs to be collated for the examining bodies. At GCSE level, reassessment of cognition and learning needs would need to take place by our assessors, as per JCQ regulations, and only UK-based assessments and diagnoses are accepted by some GCSE examination authorities.
- 7.7. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that formal assessment reports and diagnoses are kept up to date; they should liaise with the Learning Support Department to make sure that the appropriate paperwork is in place.
- 7.8. For candidates with physical disabilities, medical needs or mental health issues, special arrangements can only be put in place if recent supporting evidence from a specialist consultant has been provided to the school.
- 7.9. The School recognises that for certain students, typing rather than writing in class and in exams may be the most appropriate method of organising and presenting their work. However, only those students who have had a formal assessment by an external specialist or a member of the Learning Support Department are allowed to type in exams. Exam PCs which meet regulations will be provided for those candidates who require word-processing in their examinations.
- 7.10. (I)GCSE and IB exam boards are clear that the use of word-processing facilities in public exams cannot be granted to candidates purely due to a personal preference for typing or because a candidate can work faster on a keyboard or uses a laptop at home.
- 7.11. Students will only be permitted to use word-processing in examinations (both internal and external) due to one or more of the following difficulties:
- A cognition or learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
  - A medical condition
  - A physical disability
  - A sensory impairment
  - Serious handwriting issues, as evidenced by assessment
- 7.12. Failure to comply with the exam board regulations for applying for access arrangements has the potential to constitute malpractice and may impact the candidates results. This includes putting in place access arrangements / reasonable adjustments that are not supported by appropriate evidence.