



Policy Last Reviewed: August 2024 by TJB/LEH/ES
Next Review completed: August 2025 by TJB/LEH/ES

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

VISION

Denstone College is an inclusive school across its full age range (4-18) and we strive to support all children to enable them to make the best possible progress and to achieve high performance. To accomplish these aims we offer a broad and balanced curriculum supported by high quality teaching. We aim to provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, starting from our first contacts with parents when a child enters the school. We aim to identify additional needs as early as possible and offer a range of provision according to these needs.

INTRODUCTION

1. The following terms are applied in accordance with the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years' (produced by the Departments of Education and Health, January 2015):

A pupil has Special Educational Needs (SEN) where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special education provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to students of the same age. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer students will require such support. (CoP, 2015, 6.15)

Every school is required to identify and address the SEN of the students that they support. (CoP, 2015, 6.2) The quality of teaching for students with SEN, and the progress made by students, should be a core part of the school's performance management arrangements and its approach to professional development for all teaching and support staff. (CoP, 2015, 6.4) Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class, including where students access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. (CoP, 2015, 6.36)

Denstone College, as an independent school, is not bound to follow the SEND Code of Practice, but operates with close regard to it to promote best practice.

2. Aim: The aim of this policy is to explain the responsibilities we are able to accept, the support we are able to provide and also the responsibilities of parents in relation to pupils who may at any one time experience learning difficulties.

BACKGROUND

3. Special Educational Needs and Independent Schools: A number of pupils in mainstream independent schools such as ours show signs, not always previously apparent, of having a learning difficulty or disability leading to a special educational need in one or another subject for which suitable educational provision is needed.
4. IQ: special educational needs may be relevant to children who have a high IQ equally as those of lower academic ability.
 - The expression "*special educational need*" covers a wide variety of needs stemming from conditions including dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder and semantic processing difficulty. It may also include those who have problems with their eye-sight or hearing, or who are on the Autistic Spectrum.
 - Learning difficulties are sometimes genetic in origin. It is therefore the responsibility of parents to inform the College of, and provide documentation where appropriate relevant to, any learning difficulty and associated special educational need that has at any time affected them or any of their children or close relations.
5. It is the role of the Head of Learning Support (the College) and Head of learning Support (The Prep) to liaise with teachers, external specialist teachers, educational psychologists and parents as necessary in order to implement this policy. The Learning Support department undertakes to do all that is reasonable to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This support is generally paid for by parents.
6. Parents bear the overall responsibility for taking decisions about the management of their child's learning difficulties. Parents who would prefer to have a formal assessment should make arrangements accordingly with the Head of Learning Support in The Prep or the Head of Learning Support in the College but must ensure that copies are provided of all relevant advice and reports received. It should be noted that, for Access Arrangements applications, JCQ (the Joint Council for Qualifications) require all diagnostic testing to have been conducted by a qualified Educational Psychologist, an assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, or an Access Arrangement Assessor who has successfully completed a Level 7 postgraduate course (or equivalent). All assessors must have an established relationship with the centre. As such, scores from assessments commissioned independently by a candidate's family are not submissible as evidence for such access arrangements applications.
7. It is the role of the Assistant Head (Staff Development, Teaching & Learning) to liaise with the Head of Learning Support to ensure that adequate College training is provided to all staff on meeting the educational needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs, as well as directing

staff towards appropriate additional resources, such as external Continuous Professional Development events, as appropriate and relevant to their own role. The Head of Prep fulfils this role in The Prep.

8. Comprehensive records, including key documents, are securely kept on each pupil in the designated filing cabinet in the Learning Support Centre (Office in The Prep) and on the College management information system (iSAMS) or (Teams in The Prep). These records are available to parents and teachers. All teachers of pupils with learning difficulties (including SEN) should be familiar with the contents of these records. A list of such pupils is circulated by the Head of Learning Support at the start of the academic year (“Exam Access Arrangements” and “SEN Register” documents), and updated throughout the year as necessary. An equivalent list is compiled and circulated by the Head of Learning Support (Prep Division) for class teachers involved with the Prep.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9. All matters relating to Special Educational Needs provision are the responsibility of the Head of Learning Support (in the College) and the Head of Learning Support (Prep Division), including oversight of the educational and welfare needs of any pupils with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) at the College. The Head of Learning Support is supported by the Head of Prep in the Prep Division in this task. The Governing Body is responsible for maintaining a general oversight of the school's Learning Support provision.
10. The Head of Learning Support (Prep Division) is responsible for:
 - Managing all matters relating to Special Educational Needs in the Prep Division
 - Assessing individual pupils when necessary
 - Screening pupils entering Year 3 and any new pupils entering Main Prep.
 - Co-ordinating and monitoring Learning Support provision within the Prep Division
 - Maintaining and distributing relevant SEN lists
 - Supporting and advising all Prep Division staff on SEN matters
 - Liaising with appropriate external agencies and the Head of Learning Support (Main School) as required
11. The Head of Learning Support at The Prep is responsible for Special Educational Needs Matters in relation to Reception pupils in liaison with the Head of Prep and the Reception teacher.
12. All teaching staff across all areas of the College are responsible for meeting the Special Educational Needs of pupils.

SCREENING

13. Screening: The law imposes on schools a responsibility both for the physical well-being and meeting the educational needs of pupils whilst in the care of the school. For this reason and also as a matter of good practice, we have a system of screening pupils for learning difficulties. Please note the results of the screening do not give a formal diagnosis of Dyslexia

but an indication of dyslexic traits (should these be present). The cost of the screening tests, but not the cost of any subsequent assessment, is included in the termly fees.

- Each pupil is currently tested during the Michaelmas term in the 1st form and new 3rd Form pupils using MidYis. Pupils entering the Prep Division are screened using Dyslexia Screener.
- It is important for parents to understand that these are “screening” and not diagnostic tests. They can reveal the need for a formal assessment to be carried out by an Educational Psychologist or an appropriately qualified assessor and they are also used to inform teachers of pupil strengths and the areas of difficulty within their learning profile.
- A young person’s special educational needs can change over time. Therefore, a pupil may be re-tested at any time if a parent so requests or if staff have cause for concern about his/her progress. Subject teachers will, in the first instance, raise any relevant concerns or observations regarding a pupil with the Head of Learning Support (Main School) or Head of Learning Support (Prep), who will liaise further with relevant members of staff and, where necessary, contact parents.
- Testing will be conducted in a classroom environment. They are not competitive and no specific preparation is required or beneficial.
- Pupils with access arrangements prior to Year 9 will be required to have a reassessment of their needs so that an up-to-date picture of needs is obtained to inform formal examination requirements.

OUTCOME OF SCREENING

14. Recommendation: If a learning difficulty is suspected, parents will be informed with the recommendation of either immediate referral to an educational psychologist or qualified assessor, or a period of extra support teaching within the College and The Prep followed by further review.
15. Course of Action: In every case the decision as to the course of action will be that of the parent, with advice from the School if required. The following information will also be provided:-
 - The names of one or two educational psychologists or qualified assessors to whom the parents may refer for further advice and/or assessment.
 - The likely cost of the referral which is to be borne by the parents.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT THE COLLEGE.

16. Denstone College makes the following educational provision for pupils with mild to moderate learning difficulties:

- Tuition in Learning Support Centre by literacy and numeracy support teachers
- Study skills/prep support lessons with support staff (1 to 1 or in a small group)
- Booster groups held by departmental teachers

Further details of this provision and its cost to parents will be provided during consultations at the appropriate time.

17. Withdrawal: The right is reserved following consultation to require a parent to withdraw a child from the School in any case if, in the opinion of the Head:

- the child is reported to be in need of assessment or additional or remedial teaching or medication to which a parent does not consent; or
- the learning difficulties require teaching or medication which, in the opinion of the Head, the School is unable to provide or manage; or
- the pupil has special needs that make it unlikely s/he will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities provided at the School.

Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances would not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. Deposit paid in respect of the child would be credited to the account.

18. Costs: The cost of exam arrangement and diagnostic assessments, professional advice and specialist intervention is payable by parents in addition to normal fees and half a term's notice (or payment of half a term's specialist teaching fees in lieu) is required to terminate additional support. Fees paid for additional or specialist intervention will not be refunded under any circumstances. Specific information about costs and available teaching and support is available from the College upon request. Specialist support lessons are reviewed on an annual basis and parents must give written permission for support lessons to be timetabled in the new academic year.

19. Outside Teaching: Parents may opt for additional support lessons to take place outside the College provided the Head is satisfied with all the arrangements including travel, timing and delivery to the pupil of the remainder of the curriculum. Learning Support lessons form part of the special educational needs offering at Denstone and are not planned for boosting pupils' examination grades or additional tuition outside of supporting difficulties within a pupils' learning profile.

20. Liability of the School: Unless negligent under the terms of this policy, the College accepts no responsibility to the pupil or parents caused by or arising out of any failure to detect or refer a learning difficulty or other condition or situation of special need.

CURRICULUM

21. Pupils are expected initially to follow the full curriculum in most cases, but adaptations

to the timetable, support and subjects taken are constantly reviewed by the Head of Learning Support and changed if the need arises. The Head of Prep is responsible for monitoring such adaptations in the Prep.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

22. Denstone College is guided by the relevant JCQ published guidelines concerning access arrangements for public examinations. Pupils with access arrangements in the Lower school are routinely assessed at the College from Third Form (Year 9) onwards. Costs relating to the completion of a Form 8 application are borne by parents. Other pupils, identified by parents or colleagues on the teaching staff, can be assessed at any stage, with the Learning Support Co-ordinator responsible for organising such assessments in liaison with parents, who are responsible for payments for such later or further assessments.

ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

23. Any existing learning difficulties or disabilities are taken into account at the application stage. Parents are asked to include on the registration form any relevant information, and educational psychologist's / specialist assessor report where appropriate. With entrance examinations now replaced by CAT4 assessments there is no longer a need for access arrangements to be provided for these tests.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

24. 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, pupils for whom English is an additional language will be offered appropriate support.

25. EAL lessons will be offered to overseas students who require help with English in order to access the College curriculum. Such support is organised and overseen by the EAL Co-ordinator in liaison with other relevant staff. All such students will be assessed upon arrival to establish their standard of English in order to help teachers plan future teaching and learning experiences. EAL lessons can take the place of a Modern Foreign Language in the curriculum of these students, although EAL tuition will be provided at other times should a pupil wish to study an additional foreign language.

26. WELFARE PROVISION FOR PUPILS FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

The College is committed to making appropriate provision for the teaching, learning and pastoral wellbeing of our EAL pupils. The school will ensure that the learning needs of each EAL pupil are identified and fully met and that the qualities they bring to the school are recognised and valued.

The College aims to promote good practice in the management and care of pupils whose first language is not English, by providing them with linguistic support across all areas of the curriculum as required and to provide any welfare support they may need. The EAL department exists to support pupils whose first language is not English. The aim of this department, led by the College's EAL Co-ordinator, is to enable pupils to integrate linguistically, academically and socially into mainstream lessons and school life. Pupils are prepared for any necessary examinations and are supported in their school studies. The aim of the EAL department supports the aim of the school, as stated in the Curriculum Policy: to 'provide a broad and challenging curriculum that enables all pupils to fulfil their academic potential.' The department supports our EAL pupils in their school life and allows them to focus on achieving a high level of English language proficiency.

EAL pupils are usually boarders and the welfare provision in boarding clearly applies to them. They are reminded regularly of how to seek help, who the child protection officer (designated safeguarding lead) and the deputies are. Communication with home is a priority and is enabled by a variety of means.

Integration into the whole College as well as into the boarding community is important and is enabled by involvement in activities, sports, weekend outings, evening social events etc.

27. WELFARE PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

Much of paragraph 20 also applies; in addition:

- Pupils who receive additional support lessons will not usually be taken out of academic lessons for these; where possible such lessons will be organised during prep, activity or lunch time.
- Subject teachers, parents and pupils are aware of the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which are produced for each pupil with a diagnostic report in place and where this report has been shared with the Head of Learning Support (the College). Teachers of these pupils receive a report and adopt the suggested supportive teaching strategies in the document to support pupils in the classroom; copies are stored within pupil records and documents on iSAMS.
- Pupils who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are reviewed annually; a copy of this review is kept in the secure files in the Learning Support Centre and on iSAMS, along with the pupils' support timetable. As part of this process a financial breakdown of income received and expenditure relating to specific support and educational provision is made available to the relevant funding Local Authority.

28. LEARNING SUPPORT PROVISION AT THE PREP.

The school's system for regularly observing, assessing and recording the progress of all pupils is used to identify those who are not progressing satisfactorily and who may have additional needs. We aim to use a four-part cycle, known as the graduated approach and follow the process: - assess, plan, do, review. We place

emphasis on the 'DO' part of the cycle and ensure that we are carrying out what has been planned and have allowed enough time for it to have an impact.

The school's system includes reference to information provided by:

- Concerns raised by staff or parents
- Dyslexia screening on entrance to Main Prep
- Learning support internal assessments
- External assessments, reports and plans
- School assessments and standardized results

Based on the school's observations and assessment data and following a discussion between the class teacher, Head of Learning Support and parent, the child will be given support at the appropriate stage:

- Differentiation- differentiate work as appropriate in class
- Booster groups - additional support on specific areas
- Additional Support 1:1 with a TA
- Additional Support 1:1 with specialist i.e. dyslexia teacher, O.T., speech therapist
- Education Health Care plan

STAGES OF LEARNING SUPPORT

Concern List

Differentiation

In order to make progress a child may require differentiation from the plans for the whole class. The differentiation may involve modifying learning objectives, teaching styles and access strategies. Under these circumstances, a child's needs will be provided for within the whole class planning frameworks. Small group work may also take place where pupils need similar support. This is carried out by the class teacher or a teaching assistant.

Booster Group

If the teachers feel that more intervention is necessary the pupil may attend a small booster group, led by the teachers or teaching assistants. Generally, the groups will work on phonics, reading, spelling or times tables, but obviously other areas are also addressed depending on the pupil's needs.

Monitoring of progress will be carried out by the class teacher in consultation with the Head of Learning Support.

Pupils on the Concern List and Booster Group List only, are not on the Learning Support List and will not have a Pupil Passport.

Learning Support List

Stage 1: 1:1 Support/Small groups with a teaching assistant

Provision at this level always includes the involvement of specialist services. A variety of support can be offered by these services, such as advice to the school about targets and strategies, specialised assessment or some direct work with the child. The specialist services will always contribute to the planning, monitoring and reviewing of the child's progress.

An assessment may be requested by parents, pupils or teachers. A qualified assessor will conduct the testing. Results of the tests will be circulated to parents and teachers and an appointment will be made with parents to discuss findings and future needs. This assessment will be funded by the parents.

Support at this stage can be 1:1 support or small group work with pupils requiring similar support. Many of these pupils will also attend booster groups. Sometimes it is more appropriate for pupils to receive support in class, therefore the teaching assistant will support in class, alongside the teacher.

Stage 2: Specialist Tuition

Some pupils will require specialist support. These sessions are taught individually by a specialist trained member of staff and are funded by the parents.

Stage 3: Education Health Care Plan (E.H.C.P.)

For a pupil who has lifelong or significant difficulties, they may undergo a Statutory Assessment process. This will occur where the complexity of need or a lack of clarity around the needs of the pupil are such, that a multi-agency approach to assessing that need, to planning provision and identifying resources, is required. The application for an E.H.C.P will combine information from a variety of sources.

All pupils on the Learning Support List will have an Individual Pupil Passport. This will outline the pupil's needs and support given. These will be updated twice a year (or when appropriate) by the Head of Learning Support, in conjunction with the class teacher and teaching assistants, and shared with the parents.

The process for support at The Prep is a graduated approach as seen below and pupils can move up and down depending on their needs at any given time.

