



## **LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY – SENIOR SCHOOL (YEARS 7 TO 13)**

### **Introduction**

Dulwich College wishes to encourage all pupils to be confident, well-motivated learners in order that they can achieve their full academic potential.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure all pupils, including those with SEN and/or disabilities, can access a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated according to their needs.
- To ensure a robust system where all staff are involved in the identification, assessment of, and individualised provision for any pupil with SEN, learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- To provide appropriate support for teachers enabling them to meet the learning needs of all pupils.

### **Definition**

The College is committed to providing equal access for all pupils to the curriculum and to ensuring that all pupils with specific educational needs and/or disabilities are identified and supported. This policy is mindful of the recommendations made in the following government legislation:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years (2015)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Equality Act (2010)

### **Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability**

A child or young person has SEN if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- a) has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools (SEND Code of Practice, 2015).

While the College is an academically selective school, we recognise that specific learning difficulties/differences (e.g. dyslexia) can affect children of all cognitive abilities. We realise that while some

of our pupils may not have a special educational need as defined by the SEND Code of Practice, these pupils may nevertheless be hindered from fulfilling their potential without tailored recognition of their needs.

### Categories of Special Educational Need

The College recognises the four main categories of special educational need identified in the SEND Code of Practice (2015). It is worth noting there is some overlap and we recognise that pupils rarely fit into one category. For this reason, the support that we offer often spans more than one of these categories:

- **Communication and interaction** – this includes pupils on the autistic spectrum as well as pupils with, for example, expressive and receptive language difficulties;
- **Cognition and learning** – this includes pupils with specific learning difficulties, for example dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder;
- **Social, emotional and mental health** – this includes pupils who suffer from, for example, anxiety;
- **Physical and sensory needs** – this includes pupils with a physical disability, visual or hearing impairment, and may include pupils on the autistic spectrum.

### The Admissions Process

All prospective pupils are assessed equally on the basis of examinations for entry into Year 7 or Year 9.

Relevant reports from Educational Psychologists or Individual Education Plans are requested to assist in planning any special arrangements during the admissions assessments, such as extra time and / or the use of a word processor. Access arrangements will be provided for a candidate with a physical disability where there is evidence that support is required to allow him to participate fully and fairly in the entrance procedure.

The Learning Support Department works closely with the Registrar during the admissions process to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place.

(See Admissions Policy for further details).

If a pupil with an existing diagnosis and / or Educational Psychologist's report is offered a place in the Senior School (Years 7 to 13), the Learning Support department will liaise with the feeder school prior to the pupil entering the College to ensure that the pupil is appropriately supported in his transition between schools. The pupil will meet individually with a Learning Support teacher in the first few weeks of his time at the College to determine what level of support will be offered, and his parents will be contacted to discuss any recommended provision.

## **Education, Health and Care Plans**

Dulwich College will support pupils with EHC Plans whom the College feels will be able to benefit from the academic education it provides. The pupils must be able to pass the assessment criteria once appropriate access arrangements have been put in place, and where the College can provide for the pupil's needs by making reasonable adjustments.

## **The Screening Process**

All pupils in Year 7 and all new pupils in Year 9 are screened for specific learning difficulties in the Michaelmas Term. The screening tests are carried out and analysed by members of the Learning Support Department.

The assessments are used as part of the College's monitoring and tracking of individual progress. They provide the College with a picture of a pupil's learning profile and help to identify any possible areas of difficulty.

Where the screening process indicates a possible area of difficulty for a pupil, a member of the Learning Support Department will contact parents to discuss appropriate next steps. Parents will be fully involved in any decisions made. These might include:

- Monitoring the pupil's academic progress for an agreed period of time (usually a term), before further discussion;
- Recommending that the pupil learns to touch-type, with a view to using a word processor for longer written pieces of work and / or tests and examinations;
- Carrying out further testing within school to rule out any underlying difficulties, for example with phonological processing;
- Referral to an Educational Psychologist for a full assessment;
- Recommending that the pupil attends individual learning support lessons with a member of the department.

In addition to the screening process, pupils from any year group may be referred to the Learning Support Department at any time of the year by a teacher or a parent.

## **Educational Psychologist Assessments**

In line with the regulations set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), an assessment should only be carried out by an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Assessor who has an established relationship with the centre. Prior to assessment, the College must have provided background information to the assessor, such that the College and the assessor are working together to ensure a joined up and consistent process.

The College holds a list of assessors with whom we have established relationships; therefore any parent wishing to pursue an assessment should contact the Learning Support Department first. Please be aware that, in line with JCQ regulations, the College may not be able to accept reports carried out by assessors with whom an established relationship does not exist.

Usually assessors will carry out their assessments in College, during the College day. Assessments normally take around two hours and parents may wish to come into College to discuss the findings with the assessor on the same day. The costs of such assessments are payable by parents and the report will be sent to them initially. The College then requires a copy of the report from parents in order to implement the recommendations. There is no extra charge for individual Learning Support lessons that may subsequently be offered to a pupil.

## **Access Arrangements for Examinations**

### ***Exam board regulations***

The regulations for access arrangements for public examinations are determined by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and other relevant awarding bodies such as Cambridge International Examinations (CIE).

The regulations are designed to ensure that no candidate is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to his or her peers as a result of a specific need or learning difficulty and, equally, that no candidate is unreasonably advantaged by the provision of an access arrangement for which significant evidence of need is not apparent.

In order to justify the requirement for a specific access arrangement, evidence has to be presented to demonstrate how a candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled if the arrangement were not in place. The arrangement must be the pupil's normal way of working and appropriate to his needs.

As an Examinations Centre, the College is required to ensure that any adjustments are based upon evidence of need. Permitting access arrangements which are not supported by appropriate evidence constitutes malpractice by the Centre and could, ultimately, lead to the recall of examination certificates.

### ***Access arrangements for pupils identified prior to arrival at the College***

It is important to recognise that examination access arrangements awarded at previous schools are not automatically carried forward and do not guarantee eligibility for access arrangements at Dulwich College. All pupils who arrive with external reports, including those who have had access arrangements put in place for admissions examinations, must be aware that the College will in most cases request that pupils be reassessed in the Middle School by one of our recommended Educational Psychologists. They should also be aware that, in line with JCQ regulations, no assessment carried out prior to the start of Year 9 can be used to apply for access arrangement in public examinations (including those carried out by our recommended EPs).

Whilst external reports undertaken prior to a pupil's arrival at Dulwich College do not provide automatic evidence of need for access arrangements at GCSE and A Level, they do form an important part of a pupil's history of need and provision and should, therefore, be submitted to the Head of Learning Support as soon as possible.

In formal testing and examinations, attention will be paid to the performance of pupils with specific needs or learning difficulties; this, along with feedback from teachers, enables the College to identify and build up a picture of need for any pupil who may require access arrangements to be put in place for public examinations. The College's assessment, monitoring and tracking systems allow the College to make a reasoned decision based on our experience of a pupil, in time for the start of their GCSE and A Level courses.

### ***Access arrangements for pupils identified during their time at the College***

If a pupil's performance in school suggests that he may require specific access arrangements to be made for public examinations, the views of subject teachers and evidence of performance in school will be collated in order to demonstrate a clear picture of need. Parents will then be contacted and testing will be carried out by a member of the Learning Support team.

If a learning difficulty is suspected, parents will be advised to arrange for an assessment to be carried out by one of our recommended Educational Psychologists. JCQ regulations state that there should be an established working relationship between the external assessor and the College. Prior to assessment, the College must have provided background information to the external assessor, such that the College and the assessor are working together to ensure a joined up and consistent process.

Any parent wishing to pursue an external assessment should contact the Learning Support Department first for a briefing on how the process works and for a list of recommended assessors where there is an established and trusted working relationship with Dulwich College. Please be aware that, in line with JCQ regulations, the College may not be able to accept reports carried out by assessors with whom such a relationship does not exist.

Whilst background and contextual information that may help the College to establish a picture of need is welcome, and we carefully consider the recommendations made in all assessment reports, please note that decisions regarding access arrangements rest solely with the College. Where recommendations made in privately commissioned assessments are not accepted by the College, a written rationale will be communicated to parents.

### **Deadlines**

Given the importance of building up a picture of need over a period of time, the Learning Support Department stresses that more than one term is normally needed for us to make a final decision regarding access arrangements.

The JCQ deadline for the processing of access arrangements by schools is 21st February prior to a series of public examinations (e.g. 21st February 2019 for GCSE or A Level examinations in summer 2019), except in cases of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the deadline.

Final decisions about access arrangements for internal and public examinations rest entirely with the College in its capacity as an Examination Centre.

### **Word processors**

Please refer to the College's Policy on the Use of Laptops and Word Processors for further information about the use of word processors in class and in examinations.

### **The Learning Support Register**

Upon receipt of the written report from an Educational Psychologist or other external agency, the following procedure is implemented:

- The pupil is added to the Learning Support Register, which is circulated to all members of staff. This is updated throughout the year and pupils new to the register are discussed at staff meetings. The register is kept on iSAMS.
- The Register includes a learning profile for the pupil, which is constructed using the information in the specialist's report. This outlines any specific difficulties, the pupil's strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations to help staff understand the pupil's profile and his areas of need. It also outlines reasonable adjustments and strategies that teachers can use during their lessons to ensure that barriers to learning are overcome and each pupil achieves to the best of his ability.
- Tutors, Heads of Year and subject teachers are kept informed of any changes or updates to a pupil's profile.

### **Learning Support Lessons**

The College subscribes to the central tenet of the SEND Code of Practice (2015), namely that 'high quality [classroom] teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN'.

However, we do recognise that some pupils with SEN may require extra support outside the classroom in order to ensure that they achieve to the best of their ability. For this reason, where appropriate, pupils with identified SEN may be offered a regular individual lesson with a member of the Learning Support Department. We recognise that some pupils may require support throughout their time in the Senior School, whilst others may require support for a limited period. Learning Support lessons are offered without any extra charge.

As far as possible, once it is established that a pupil will take up the offer of individual Learning Support lessons, a fixed time is allocated each week. These lessons aim to:

- enable pupils with a learning difference to grow in confidence and overcome barriers to learning;
- promote independence;
- help pupils fulfil their academic potential.

Lessons are tailored to individual needs and will cover some or all of the following areas:

- reading comprehension
- spelling, punctuation and grammar
- vocabulary building
- written expression
- numeracy
- subject-specific support
- organisation
- study, revision and exam skills
- working memory
- social skills

### **Communication with Parents**

The Learning Support department liaises closely with parents to ensure a joined-up approach to pupils' support. A pupil's Learning Support teacher can be contacted by email at any time, and will be present at Parents' Evenings. The teacher will write a report for each pupil who receives support at the same time as subject reports are written.

*Policy date: September 2018*

*Due for review: September 2019*