



## ST. EDWARD'S OXFORD

### LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

#### Policy Statement

St Edward's is an inclusive school that recognises that pupils will have learning challenges for a variety of reasons and this fundamental understanding is accepted and valued by all staff. Effective teaching should be at the heart of all support for all pupils. A number of pupils accepted into St Edward's each year will have a profile of learning strengths and weaknesses that require us to make reasonable adjustments to ensure, as far as possible, barriers to learning and achievement are removed.

It is our overriding aim to encourage all of our pupils to be self-regulating learners and so the Learning Development Department works very closely with *all* staff to support *all* pupils in their capacity as an advisory body. The following are available:

- coaching for individual pupils to aid their metacognitive skills, which underpin their learning
- to provide information and advice to subject teachers, tutors and Housemasters and Housemistresses and also to communicate closely with parents.
- departmental or individual bespoke training to aid professional development
- liaison with outside professionals
- liaison with prep schools

The pupils categorised as SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) are primarily those who have an additional need, when compared to their peers. This is most likely to be a reasonable adjustment made to ensure they have full access to lessons, and exams (such as extra time). A pupil with the following learning needs or disabilities may or may not have a SEND:

- Pupils with physical difficulties such as hearing and visual impairment
- Pupils with a mild specific learning difficulty (SpLD) such as dyslexia or dyspraxia and those with a medical diagnosis of ADHD or an ASD
- Pupils who suffer from a Mental Health illness

These pupils may have been pre-identified before entry or during their time at St Edward's. It is the intention of the school that this identification is purely to enable everyone to support the pupil effectively and for that pupil to be aware of their own learning strengths and weaknesses and the challenges they may face.

The normal way of working within the School is for all pupils, regardless of learning difference, to be supported in the classroom through effective teaching. However, there are situations where additional individual coaching can be a very powerful means of aiding an individual's levels of metacognition; leading to more effective study strategies for the pupil. This support may mean a pupil attending one or more lessons per week with a LD teacher. Within the Sixth Form this will be during a study period and in the lower school during lunchtime break or around sport times where possible. (A copy of the school's disability policy is contained in Appendix 3o).

## **Practice**

An important feature of our practice is that we do not encourage segregation of pupils who may require additional coaching by organising many 1-1 withdrawal sessions. Our aim is to avoid 'learned helplessness' that can be quite deeply embedded by the time a pupil is 13, particularly if that pupil has received a significant amount of 1-1 support. Our experience is very much that the successful pupils are those who are good self-regulators and know the right questions to ask.

If a pupil does have an identified SEND, or indeed is failing to progress, then LD can be a useful and effective addition to the excellent pastoral and academic care delivered to every pupil in the school via the House and tutor/teacher structure. This is likely to mean that a pupil with a specific processing difficulty, for instance, will need extra time both in the classroom for completing some tasks; in school timed-tests; for prep tasks as well as eventually in external assessments as an Access Arrangement.

It may be that one or more individual coaching sessions with a Learning Development (LD) teacher can be very productive. These will only occur after conversations with the pupil, appropriate teacher, HoD, tutor and/or HM. Most importantly it will only be effective if the pupil is engaged with the process. This may mean one session or more. Very rarely do pupils see LD teachers for prolonged periods and when they do it is in response to the pupil who has identified a need for additional support beyond the classroom.

## **Identification**

Due to the classroom, tutoring and pastoral layers of support and information it would be rare for a pupil to move through St Edward's and not feel supported. We do not over identify mild difficulties if the pupils are continuing to make expected or better progress. Our screening process, though, can give us information on the progress already made by some pupils with a history of need and also to highlight some weaknesses in literacy and processing that may have been hidden. In particular, it is known that some high achieving pupils may have a SpLD, for instance, that has been 'hidden' due to their innate abilities and self-supporting strategies. It may be that these strategies start to break down under the pressure of GCSE, A Level or IB study. We will endeavour to assess and identify pupils in this category, most likely from self-referral and tutor/HM discussions. Parents will also be informed and can of course provide important background information.

Initial screening assessments take place in the Shell year. The following areas of cognition and attainment are assessed during screening:

- Literacy – reading accuracy, reading comprehension, reading comprehension speed, spelling, visual processing speed, writing and typing speed

It may be that a pupil arrives at St Edward's with a history of need and this will be reviewed. At present no pupil in the school has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC).

Around 25-30% of a new Shell cohort arrive with some history of need and/or earlier assessment of a SpLD and/or SEND. Apart from access arrangements (see below) the vast majority of these pupils will need no additional support during their time here. Information will be kept on these pupils, however, for awareness. Around 15% of each year group usually require extra time for GCSE/IGCSE.

## **Referrals**

The Learning Development Department operates an 'open door' policy. The HoD is very happy for any pupil in the school to make an appointment to discuss any concerns they may have, as it is important for the pupil that they are involved in their learning and decision making. This

process may lead to some specific coaching sessions with an LD teacher on an individual basis or indeed further assessment.

In addition, subject teachers, tutors and HMs are also encouraged to seek the advice of the LD department, initially through the HoD. It may be that one or more individual coaching sessions with a Learning Development (LD) teacher can be very productive. These will only occur after conversations with the pupil, appropriate teacher, HoD, tutor and/or HM. Most importantly it will only be effective if the pupil is engaged with the process. This may mean one session or more. Very rarely do pupils see LD teachers for prolonged periods and when they do it is in response to the pupil who has identified a need for additional support beyond the classroom.

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools, and therefore teachers, are required to make “Reasonable Adjustments” within the classroom if a pupil does have an identified SEND. This is likely to mean that a pupil with a specific processing difficulty, for instance, will need extra time both in the classroom for completing some tasks; in school timed-tests; for prep tasks as well as eventually in external assessments as an Access Arrangement.

We consider this not just a requirement but also good practice and in the best interests of all pupils.

The Head of Learning Development maintains a list of all pupils who have come into the school with a diagnosed SEND or history of need. This is reviewed and additions will be made as pupils are identified through in-house assessments. This information is on PASS with access for teachers on 3SYS. The information may include:

- Learning strengths and weaknesses where appropriate from an in-house specialist teacher assessment and/or School screening/or from an external professional report
- Details of access arrangements for internal and external examinations e.g. extra time, typing concessions etc
- Classroom support strategy suggestions

**The information must be regarded as confidential and must not be left where it may be seen by pupils.** It is the individual teacher’s responsibility to refer to these documents. The HoD is keen to improve channels of useful information and attends Departmental meetings each year to engage with all teachers. Currently we are looking at improving methods of information flow from teachers to the SENCo and areas for teacher training.

## **Access Arrangements (AA)**

A reasonable adjustment for a pupil with a SEND may include an access arrangement for internal school and public examinations. Generally, this will be extra time, a reader, a scribe, typing or a read aloud room. The criteria for these are set out by the JCQ for GCSE, Edexcel for IGCSE and GCE exams. The IBO have very similar criteria for IB, as do the CIE for their IGCSE and A level exams. These rules and regulations must be strictly adhered to. The HoD oversees the procedures to ensure all those pupils who are entitled to the appropriate AA receive it, in consultation with the Exams Officers. It is essential that all teachers are aware of their role in providing evidence that is required by the JCQ, as well.

## **Safeguarding**

A pupil's welfare and safety is of paramount importance and specific guidance is given to teachers within the Learning Development Department as they often teach one pupil in their room. All rooms have doors with glass panels. All members of the department are fully-trained in regard to all current Safeguarding guidelines.

### **Key points:**

- See the child in front of you, not the label
- Have high aspirations for all pupils
- Good teachers of pupils with SEND are good teachers
- Enable not disable

**Debra Clayphan, Head of Learning Development, SENCo  
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