

Learning Difficulties and Disability Policy

1. Wilmslow Preparatory School : Learning Difficulties and Disability Policy

This policy has been updated in October 2010, in accordance with the “Special Educational Needs: Code of Practice” (2001) , Every Child Matters (The Children Act 2004) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA 2001).

Principles

The Head Teacher, Staff and Governors at Wilmslow Preparatory School for Girls are committed to the integration of children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. Disabilities may also include conditions such as asthma, allergies and diabetes.

We aim to provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum, but also to offer small group support, or individual help, where children have specific needs.

We aim to develop an ethos of care, empathy and understanding. This is essential when dealing with children with learning difficulties or a disability, who may have low self-esteem.

We recognise that each child should feel valued as an individual and can contribute to the school in a variety of ways.

We are prepared to make “reasonable adjustments” (SENDA 2001) to ensure a good education for all and promote disability equality (Disability Discrimination Act 2005).

2. Admission Arrangements

All admissions to the school are based upon the school’s “Admissions Policy”. There is no differentiation made between pupils with, or without, learning difficulties or a disability.

Admission is generally by interview in the Lower School and by interview and informal assessment in Years 3 – 6. The assessment process is used to inform staff and parents of any difficulties the child might be expected to experience in order that the parents might make an informed choice as to the suitability of the School for their daughter.

There is no special unit attached to the school.

3. Building Arrangements

At present, a physically disabled person can gain access to all rooms on the School’s ground floor. A ramp might be needed between Cobham and Main School. There are also steps from the playground area into the Speech room, Music room and Hall which could be converted into ramp access. There is already a ramp into the Art room.

For a pupil in Forms 1 or 2, we would switch classrooms with Reception so that the pupil’s Form room is on the ground floor. For a pupil in Forms 3, 4, 5 or 6 these classrooms are already on the ground floor and access would be through the school’s main entrance.

The IT suite is situated on the first floor, and depending on the extent of the child’s physical disability, this may not be accessible. We would therefore review provision of this subject – much can now be done in the classrooms as each classroom has its own computer and there are interactive whiteboards.

For PE lessons, again the extent of the child's disability will depend on how much she can take part in the lessons as they are currently. A lesson plan would be prepared and agreed with the child's parents. A classroom assistant would also be timetabled to support the child.

4. Responsibilities

Children experiencing difficulties will be supported within the classroom by their class teacher and classroom assistants/NNEB where appropriate and may be supported by Mrs Savage for Specialist Support.

Where necessary, additional support and advice may be provided by an Educational Psychologist, Dyslexia Action Centre, Cheshire Education Support Team, Speech and Language Specialists, School Doctor and the SENCO.

Although there is no special unit, the school is well resourced and toilets for the disabled are available in each building.

The Infant Library acts as a base for the SENCO and is also used as an additional learning area, with additional computers for SEN. The Science room is also used as a base for older children.

5. Staff and Training

The needs of particular children are assessed by the SENCO before determining the specific training needs of staff. There is a termly LDD staff meeting to discuss all children on the LDD register. All relevant members of staff attend meetings and specific training as appropriate.

6. Identification, Assessment, Monitoring and Review

We believe in early intervention, and therefore it is essential to have good liaison, so that programmes of study and other information can be passed on.

The SENCO liaises closely with all the Staff.

Presently the SENCO is available 0.4 sessions a week and provides tuition in small groups or on an individual basis. She is also available to support children in class and observe and offer advice.

The SENCO:

- observes children in lesson time
- records any concerns of her own and those of any members of staff who teach the child
- draws up IEPs in conjunction with the form teacher, class assistants and parents
- uses a graduated approach to intervention
- approaches outside agencies, when required, after consultation with parents
- keeps all staff informed of developments and good practice
- liaises with the parents, initially informally with the class teacher and then through twice yearly appointments, to monitor progress. She is also available to speak to parents at their request.
- consults the children when writing and reviewing their IEPs and may also invite them to meetings with their parents (at her discretion)

- reviews IEPs twice a year or more often if necessary.

7. Initial identification

Physical or medical difficulties are discussed when pupils are admitted to the School and entered on the Admissions Form which is signed by the parents. The class teacher is informed and the information is shared with the SENCO. If the medical problem is likely to affect the child's ability to learn, such as a hearing or visual impairment, the SENCO will record the details and ensure that Staff are aware of any likely problems.

Early Years Learning difficulties are initially identified based upon the class teacher's professional judgement. Concerns are registered with the Head Teacher and the SENCO. An initial Record of Concern is completed in consultation with the SENCO, class teacher and parents who agree the areas of concern and decide on the appropriate next steps to meet the child's individual needs.

Assessment is initially based upon Cheshire's Step by Step Foundation Stage profile and a Baseline Assessment in Reception using PIPS.

From Year 1 learning difficulties may also be identified by scores from the Standardised tests done every October/November and by any other forms of formal assessment eg reading tests. Any child with a standardised score of less than 100 or a reading age less than their chronological age will be identified and monitored.

Procedures for Identification and Assessment as laid out by the Code of Practice will be followed, unless our concerns or specialist advice mean that we have to miss out a stage and move straight on to School Action Plus. This may occur when a new child comes into the school, or when a medical condition is diagnosed.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

School Action – Class teachers

- the class teacher is responsible for the initial identification of a pupil's learning difficulty through observation of classroom practice and on-going assessment
- the class teacher is responsible for informing the SENCO of their concern. A decision will be made together on whether to implement School Action
- if necessary, a differentiated IEP will be formulated with the SENCO. This will contain additional targets to an already differentiated curriculum
- the class teacher will invite parents/ guardians to a meeting to discuss concerns and decide on a plan of action. A review meeting will be arranged to set further targets
- the class teacher will keep the SENCO informed of any developments between reviews

School Action – SENCO

- the SENCO will inform the staff and the parents of the decision to move to School Action Plus
- is responsible for all relevant paperwork for external agencies etc
- liaises with outside agencies to provide support and advice for pupils, parents and teachers
- is responsible for the IEP in association with any outside agencies

- continues to monitor all paperwork
- in consultation with the Head Teacher and outside agencies, makes the decision to proceed to request formal assessment, where necessary

9. Planning support for children with additional needs

Individual Education Plans

Children identified as having learning difficulties may have an IEP which will specify long term aims, but also give the children more specific targets. Children on School Action or School Action Plus will have an IEP. This will be written by the SENCO in liaison with the class teacher and parents. The child's class teacher will remain responsible for providing the child with appropriate differentiated work but may use the SENCO for support if required.

IEPs should give three or four achievable targets. The targets should be evaluated regularly and as a result of the evaluation, new revised targets should be set. The IEP should explain how the targets will be achieved and who will be responsible.

If a child fails to make adequate progress after two reviews, or if a specific problem is identified, appropriate action will be taken. This may mean calling in a specialist eg. an educational psychologist, school doctor, SENCO etc or simply updating the IEP with new targets.

The IEPs will be reviewed twice a year, and more often if necessary,

The parents, class teacher, Head Teacher, SENCO and any specialist may be invited to the review. The child will also be consulted.

The SENCO will regularly monitor all of the children on the Special Needs Register. Regular testing is carried out in school for assessment purposes and copies of all test results are studied carefully. If children are falling behind, appropriate action will be taken. Sometimes this additional support may only be necessary for a short period.

Governors

The Governors, especially the named Educational Governor, will be kept informed as children move through stages.

The Governing Body evaluates the success of LDD provision through reports from the Educational Governor. The Head Teachers report to the Governing Body also covers LDD developments. The Governing Body, through the School Development Plan, ensures that relevant INSET for staff is provided.

Parental Support

We aim to fully involve parents and ask them to support their children by hearing them read, helping with spellings and supervising homework. Parents are also encouraged to come in to discuss any worries with Mr Reynolds, the SENCO or the class teacher.

10. Resources

We aim to provide reading books at the appropriate interest level as well as the correct reading level. We add to resources every year. We aim to provide a multi-sensory approach to learning especially for those children with a specific learning difficulty.

We also try to promote disability equality in school by choosing books, posters, pictures that reflect our diverse society.

11. Practice

Our aim is to integrate the child with learning difficulties and/or a physical disability so that she feels a valued member of the school. We try to do this by:

- Providing opportunities for success at all levels.
- Providing a supportive environment where the child is not afraid to make mistakes.
- Differentiating the tasks so that there is a good match between the child's ability and the task.
- Being flexible in our teaching styles.
- Celebrating success.
- Ensuring we provide a suitable physical environment to allow full access to all activities.

12. Arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating Learning Difficulties and Disability provision

The LDD policy is reviewed every two years. As Wilmslow Preparatory School for Girls is small, it is possible to carry out regular monitoring and pass on information in weekly informal diary notes. There is also a termly LDD staff meeting to discuss each child and circulate information. The SENCO meets with the Education Governor annually to discuss LDD issues within the school.

13. Arrangements for transition

To enable a smooth, effective transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1, the class teachers share and discuss each child's level of achievement in the Foundation Stage Profile. Children achieving below the expected National Level 6/7 in any area of learning will receive targeted support to enable them to achieve the Early Learning Goals and then move on to the National Curriculum levels. Should the transition be to a different setting, the Head teacher contacts that setting and documentation is forwarded. The SENCO is also always available to be contacted if necessary.

14. Complaints

Complaints from parents of pupils with learning difficulties will, in the first instance, be dealt with by the class teacher, SENCO and/or the Head Teacher. If the parents wish to pursue the matter further, the Chairman of Governors should be approached, whereupon the relevant Complaints Panel of the Governing Body would be assembled. Also see the full School Complaints policy.

Policy updated by Netta Savage (SENCO) October 2010

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