



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES POLICY

Whole School including Boarding

This policy is directly guided by the 2015 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice, the 2010 Equality Act and the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage statutory requirements. The policy is committed to the inclusion of all pupils within the school curriculum and participation in all aspects of school life through careful consideration and appropriate support, including making anticipatory and reasonable adjustments but as an independent school we have no obligation to adhere to the Code of Practice.

The Mount School York believes in a holistic approach to education through valuing and nurturing pupils as individuals. All lessons are taught in a caring environment which encourages the development of each pupil's full potential through excellent specialist teaching provided in small classes. There is a strong team around each pupil which includes the Class Teacher / Personal Tutor and other pastoral staff such as the Head of Year, School Nurse and Boarding Staff; however, some pupils will have additional educational needs at times during their school life and will require further, supplementary support.

The aim of the Learning Support Department is to help individual pupils improve their core skills and thereby achieve greater access and achievement across the whole curriculum. Whilst many factors contribute to the range of difficulties experienced by children, we believe that much can be done to overcome them by parents, teachers and pupils working together. Thus, the school's Learning Support aims are to:

- Endeavour to identify all pupils requiring Learning Support as early as possible in their school career.
- Ensure that all pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Provide effective support using a graduated approach to intervention. This approach primarily emphasises the important role of class and subject teachers in appropriate differentiation in the ordinary classroom context.
- Provide, on occasion, a reduced curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability.
- Ensure that parents of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.

Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

According to the SEND Code of Practice a child has a learning difficulty or disability if:

- They have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age.
- They have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age.

The Equality Act (2010) defines a disability when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term is defined as a year or more and substantial is defined as more than minor or trivial.

Learning Difficulties or disabilities fall into 4 broad areas:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, emotional, and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical need

Head of Learning Support/Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

Lucy-Anne Asker is the school's Head of Learning Support and works with pupils in both Junior School and Senior School. Rachel Capper is the specialist named SENCO for Pre-School and the EYFS.

Whilst the daily provision of Specialist support is co-ordinated by the Head of Learning Support, the responsibility of meeting the Special Educational Needs and disabilities of pupils, rests with the Governors (Committee), Head, Head of Learning Support, and individual teachers. In accordance with the Independent Schools standards guidance, the Committee will have oversight of the provision of learning support and access for SEND pupils and will have a nominated SEND link governor.

Admissions

As an independent school, The Mount can decide whether the academic demands of the school are appropriate for each potential pupil. As part of the admissions procedure, the Admissions Department will request any identification of learning difficulties, and these will help the school to advise parents on the suitability of The Mount School York's curriculum for their child.

On occasion, it is most appropriate for a prospective pupil to have a pre-assessment internally with the Head of Learning Support or externally by an educational psychologist prior to undertaking The Mount School York's entrance papers as appropriate. The aim of this is to anticipate a pupil's learning requirements and to create a climate of trust where difficulties are discussed openly, and expectations of inclusive provision are made transparent. Should an external assessment be required the costs are borne by parents, but advice can be given by the school.

Identification, Assessment and Provision

At The Mount School York, we have a whole-school approach to Learning Support policy and practice. Pupils identified as having SEND or LDD are, as far as is practicable, fully integrated into mainstream classes. Every effort is made to ensure that they have full access to the whole school curriculum and are integrated into all aspects of the school.

All teachers are responsible for identifying pupils with LDD and, in collaboration with the Head of Learning Support, will ensure that those pupils requiring different or additional support are identified at an early stage. Assessment is the process by which pupils with LDD can be identified. Whether a pupil is making progress is seen as a significant factor in considering the need for Learning Support provision.

Special Educational Provision means educational provision, which is additional to, or different from, the educational provision made generally for children of the same age.

Early Identification

Early identification of pupils with LDD is a priority. The school will use appropriate screening and assessment tools, and ascertain pupil progress through:

- Evidence obtained by teacher observation/ assessment.
- For Junior School pupils, their performance, judged against level descriptions.
- Pupil progress in relation to subject specific objectives.
- Standardised Screening Tests/Assessment Tests.
- Reports from External Agencies, including educational psychologists.
- Records from previous schools.
- Information from parents.
- External exam results.

Learning Support Provision

On entry to the school each child's attainment will be assessed to ensure continuity of learning when transferring from another school. For pupils with an identified LDD, the Head of Learning Support will:

- Use information from the previous school to shape the pupil's curriculum and pastoral provision.
- Identify the pupil's skills and note areas that require support.
- Ensure on-going observations/assessments provide regular feedback on achievements/experiences, to plan next steps in learning.
- Ensure pupils have opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in all subjects.
- Ensure that if students have a preferred method of recording, including the use of assistive technology, that all staff allow them to use these alternative methods and they become their normal way of working across the whole curriculum.
- Involve pupils in planning/agreeing their own targets.
- Involve parents in a joint home-school learning approach.

Learning Support Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

All pupils are given a settling in process when joining the EYFS. Their progress is monitored and reviewed throughout these years which allows for early opportunities to identify any emerging concerns that might suggest a child has a special educational need and/or disability. Whilst in EYFS, some children may have additional needs that may require particular help, intervention and support. These needs may be short-lived for a particular time in the child's life or may require longer term support. All staff in the Early Years are expected to provide adaptable activities to meet all individual needs and abilities to give a broad and balanced early learning environment for every pupil. We use a graduated approach (access, plan, do, review) to identify, assess and respond to children who have emerging difficulties and where appropriate liaise with families, external agencies or specialists to provide support.

Learning Support Provision in the Junior School

The Junior School also follows a graduated approach model of provision. Class teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class including where pupils access support from a Teaching Assistant. Usually, pupils requiring additional and targeted small group support are identified, following routine in-class assessments, in termly provision planning meetings. On-going concerns lead to internal assessment by the Learning Support Department. External specialist assessments are a parental responsibility; however, referrals can be made or advised upon. Specialist support is targeted at individual needs following assessment. For pupils receiving the standard level of support, 30 minutes per week, there is no additional charge. However, parents may approach the Learning Support Department to ask for more support, which would then have an additional charge.

Learning Support Provision in the Senior School

Help and support is provided by subject teachers through adaptations - and setting in certain subjects. A reduction in the requirement to undertake the full curriculum may be possible with the agreement of the Director of Studies and the Head of Learning Support.

As identified by the school, a time-limited period of withdrawal will be arranged for essential literacy, numeracy, or study skills. This individual support will be with a learning support teacher or another suitable member of staff or a Teaching Assistant. Support may be on a one-to-one basis or within a small group as prescribed by the school. This standard level of support of 30 minutes per week is free, however, support over and above the standard provision is subject to an additional charge.

Learning Support Provision in Sixth Form College

For a few students, it may be appropriate to commence or continue with support on an individual basis as they move into Years 12 and 13. Such support will be flexible and scheduled as and when needed, such as in the run up to examinations. These lessons will often focus on supporting a pupil with their personal organisation and developing study skills which will address some of the hidden disadvantages of LDDs, such as slow processing speed or weak working memory. As is the case across the whole school, a standard level of support, 30 minutes per week, will be provided by the school but any requirements over and above that, will be subject to an additional charge.

Assistive Technology

The Code of Practice emphasises the right of the SEND Pupil to have access to assistive technology as a means of meeting their needs. As examination boards are increasingly keen for candidates to work independently, we want pupils to use assistive technology as their normal way of working. For supporting with their studies pupils may use any of the following equipment: exam reading pens, i-pads, Dragon Speech software on a laptop, e-readers, and audio books, provided these have been approved by the Head of Learning Support.

Although school does have some equipment for use by SEND pupils, parents will be asked to meet any additional costs of pupils needing to have their own personal equipment.

Pupils are responsible for the safe keeping and maintenance of their own individual equipment.

English as an Additional Language

Please refer to the EAL policy as the first point of reference. Care will be needed with pupils whose first language is not English. Teachers will closely follow their progress across the curriculum to ascertain whether any problems arise from uncertain command of English as opposed to special educational needs. It will be necessary to assess a pupil's proficiency in English before planning any additional learning support that might be required. Further details are available in the EAL policy.

Monitoring Pupils' Progress

Progress is the crucial factor in determining the need for additional support. Adequate progress is that which:

- Narrows the attainment gap.
- Prevents the attainment gap widening.
- Equals or improves upon the pupil's previous rate of progress.
- Ensures full curricular access.
- Shows an improvement in self-help and social or personal skills.

All pupils' progress is monitored through the whole school tracking systems. From Years 1 to 8 reading and spelling are specifically measured and if not age appropriate, the Head of Learning Support is consulted. In the Senior School, standardised tests of vocabulary, Mathematics, non-verbal and verbal skills (proof reading, perceptual speed, and accuracy) provide an individual baseline against which to measure subject progress. In the Junior School, INCAS data is used. The Head of Learning Support and teachers will review the approaches adopted. Should individual assessment be required the school will seek the approval of parents.

The Learning Support Register

Registers are held for both Senior and Junior Schools. These are updated whenever there is a change to any pupil's SEND status and available to subject teachers on SharePoint.

Pupil Profiles

For any pupil receiving additional support, a Pupil Profile will be created. A pupil will work closely with their Learning Support Teacher to provide their own Pupil Profile. Each pupil profile will identify if a pupil has a learning difference and list reasonable adjustments and access arrangements which should be adhered to. The Pupil profile will also include a list of teaching strategies for subject teachers to use and areas of concern that the pupil herself has raised. All Pupil Profiles are published and accessible to teaching staff on SharePoint and are reviewed annually in the Autumn term, before being emailed to parents.

Individual Education Plans

A few pupils may have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which will concentrate on three or four individual SMART targets that closely match the pupil's needs. The targets will be set by the pupil's Learning Support teacher working in collaboration with subject teachers and external agencies providing additional support. An IEP is equivalent to one cycle in the Access, Plan, Do and Review graduated model as defined in the SEND Code of Practice.

Education, Health and Care Plan

Occasionally, The Mount School in conjunction with an individual pupil's parents, may apply for statutory assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is a single assessment process that includes education, health, and social services. An EHCP provides a means of access to extra resources when a pupil's needs are beyond that can be catered for by normal differentiation and standard Learning Support provision. An EHCP provides a precise educational and health prescription for the pupil based on accurate and detailed account of their needs. A child with an EHCP may be awarded an individual budget by the Local Authority depending on the nature and severity of their disability, from birth until they reach the age of twenty-five.

EHCPs must be reviewed annually by the Head of Learning Support in conjunction with the Local Authority. The purpose of the review is to monitor the Pupil's progress to ensure that they are achieving the desired outcomes and if necessary for the Local Authority to amend the plan to reflect evolving needs.

Reviewing Pupil Progress and Provision

Provision is reviewed each year, usually coinciding with an Annual Review or Parents' Evening. The school endeavours to hold reviews in an informal manner, and parents' views on their child's progress will actively be sought. Wherever possible or appropriate the school will involve pupils in this process. Meetings can be arranged throughout the year, by parents or the school, where changes to support are thought to be expedient.

Special Considerations for External Examinations

Access Arrangements are made for candidates with the required knowledge, understanding and skills who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment due to a difficulty or disability. Arrangements made will reflect the help usually given at The Mount, on a subject-by-subject basis, and aim to remove barriers caused by the difficulty or disability.

The administration of exam access arrangements is carried out by the Head of Learning Support, working with the Exams Officer. For a successful application to be made, public examination boards require evidence that any special consideration is the candidate's normal way of working. Several criteria must be met in support of each case, as set out in the JCQ's Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations document, updated each year. Applications will be made first for GCSE and if still valid, re-submitted for 'A' Level.

In the Junior School and Lower Senior School, if a pupil's normal way of working suggests exam access arrangements are needed, these are instigated for internal exams. This builds up the evidence required that the provision is of benefit. Exam access arrangements are subject specific and must be supported by evidence and a signed agreement from each subject teacher. Parents and pupils are advised that access arrangements are not a substitute for thorough revision or effective exam technique, for which subject teachers or the Learning Support Department can provide advice.

Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) may qualify for the exam access arrangements of a bilingual translation dictionary in accordance with JCQ regulations. This may not be used in English, or any other subject where additional marks are awarded for Spelling Punctuation and Grammar.

Word Processing in Examinations

The use of a word processor must reflect a candidate's normal way of working in a particular subject. It must be appropriate to the pupil's needs and may be encouraged for certain LDDs. Examples are:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to write legibly.
- A medical condition.
- A physical disability.
- A sensory impairment.
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand.
- Poor handwriting at speed.

Staff Training

The Learning Support Department is committed to keeping in touch with current practices, developments and policies as courses are available and to sharing good practice throughout the school. The Department regularly organises whole school INSET training on how best to support SEND pupils in the classroom, providing Staff with a range of strategies. This INSET is delivered either by the Head of Learning Support or external Specialists who are invited to share their expertise. SEND is also part of the school's induction and appraisal procedures, and the Head of Learning Support is regularly available to provide advice to all staff, on request.