

Priory School

Policy on Special Educational Needs



Priory School will use its best endeavours to ensure that it identifies and assesses children and young persons in a timely fashion and puts effective support in place using the graduated approach to intervention, recognizing the importance of the role of class and subject teachers to provide appropriately differentiated teaching and support.

SENCO: Mrs Gillian Bilbo: member of the School Executive Committee.

Working with Mr Edmund Matyjaszek: School Principal

Mrs Emma Soar: Head of Senior School

Mr Simon Lynch: Head of Junior School

Mrs Michelle Kirby: Head of Cabin School

The Policy is available on the School's website or in hard copy on request from the School Office.

September 2017

Next update: September 2018 or earlier to reflect changes in legislation.

1. The aims of this policy are to promote good practice in our detection and management of special educational needs, to explain the support we can provide for children or young persons who have special educational needs and the co-operation we will need from parents and children and young persons. The policy reflects the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 0-25 years [April 2015], relevant sections of the Children and Families Act [September 2014], the Equality Act [2010] and Statutory Guidance on supporting children at school with medical conditions [September 2014].

2. "Special educational needs" and "learning difficulty"

This policy accepts the definition of SEN [Special Educational Needs] as set out in section 20(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014:

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

A child or young person only has a learning difficulty or disability under the Act if he or she :

- a) has a 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 or mainstream post- 16 institutions within the area of the local authority.

A person has a disability if:

- a) he or she has a physical or mental impairment , and
- b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

There are two elements to this definition:

- 1. the child or young person must have either a learning difficulty and/or a disability**
- 2. and that learning difficulty or disability must require special educational provision to be made for him or her.**

Only children and young people who satisfy both elements of this definition have special educational needs.

Children or young people who do not fall within these definitions do not have any rights under SEN law.

This includes greater learning difficulties due to home language or dialect being different to the language in which they are taught. However, children for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support, provided they meet or are deemed to have the potential to meet the School's academic criteria and it is

considered at admission their needs can be met within the resources available

Disabled children and young people without SEN are not covered by the new Act or Code of Practice but included in other legislation eg The Equality Act 2010: everyone has duties in relation to disabled children and young people under The Equality Act 2010. They must not discriminate and they must make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people. The definition of disability includes children with long term health conditions eg asthma, epilepsy, diabetes and cancer.

2.1 A child who finds a particular subject difficult does not necessarily have a "learning difficulty" in the legal sense of that expression; there will often be disparities in the speed with which children learn, in their skill at solving problems and in their general acumen. Priory School is a small family school, and the small class sizes create a supportive context where individual learning styles and speed of working of individual children are taken into account. Children will usually be in their appropriate class by age, but subject setting in the Senior School enables level of work to be tailored to abilities. A recent Isle of Wight Medical report cited Priory School as a "good, nurturing school" in the care it gives pupils with special needs; the high regard shown for this is evidenced by the willingness of local social services and NHS CAMHS services to refer, where appropriate, specific pupils they deem able to benefit from Priory School's approach. The school has also been selected to support a 'looked after child'.

2.2 The expression "learning difficulty" covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems which result from social, emotional, mental health or behavioural disorders. The expression may also include those who have sensory and/or physical needs such as problems with their eyesight or hearing or who have communication and interaction difficulties such as an autistic spectrum disorder. Difficulties may result from poor attendance; the appropriate authorities will then be consulted.

2.3 Learning difficulties may affect children across the ability range and may become apparent at different stages of their educational journeys. For example, spelling difficulties may occur when visual strategies are not sufficient to cope with increasingly challenging words. This may indicate a learning difficulty of a dyslexic nature. Sometimes a child's learning difficulty becomes apparent for the first time at the age of 11+ or older, when educational and personal organisational pressures tend to increase.

3 Policy statement

3.1 Priory School is a mainstream independent day school with high academic standards which accepts boys and girls from the age of 4-18 years. We carry out assessment tests on each pupil prior to admission and during their school career, in order to detect signs of learning difficulties or specific academic needs, which may become apparent from these results.

3.2 Pupils receive a differentiated curriculum suited to their needs. If they do not appear to be making the expected progress, this will be followed up by their form teachers in conjunction with the SENCO. The school has a system whereby any member of staff can raise concerns with the form teacher, SENCO, Principal or Heads of School about a child with potential SEN or other barriers to learning. All members of the Operational Executive Committee should be kept informed of such discussions.

The school follows the SEND Code of Practice 2015: 0-25 years graduated approach with regard to the identification, assessment and review of pupils with special educational needs. The four key actions are :

Assess: the class teacher and SENCO should clearly analyse a pupil's needs before identifying the pupil as needing SEN support.

Plan: Parents must be consulted wherever it is decided that a pupil may benefit from support. The pupil's name will then be added to the School's additional support register.

Do: The class or subject teacher should remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. Where the interventions involve group or 1:1 teaching away from the main teacher, he/she still retains responsibility for that pupil's learning.

Review: the effectiveness of the support should be reviewed in line with the agreed date and discussed with the pupil and parents.

Pupils who fail to make expected progress and on the basis of accumulated evidence may be seen to present with learning difficulties can also be placed on the additional needs register following appropriate assessment.

The provision which we can make for a child or young person who appears to have a learning difficulty includes: assessment in school, learning support and referral to an educational psychologist or speech therapist for a formal assessment if considered necessary.

3.3 We will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents about their child's learning difficulties. Teachers will be given any necessary information about a child's needs and the graduated approach to intervention will be adopted to meet the needs of the individual child or young person. This procedure is outlined in the staff handbook, revisited on a regular basis and supported by training as appropriate.

4 Implementation and procedures

4.1 Screening test: Prior to admission and during a pupil's school career, we will carry out assessment and screening tests, the results of which will be reported to parents. Ongoing assessments are used to monitor individual progress and, if these give us reason to think that a child may have a learning difficulty, parents will be invited to meet for detailed discussion with the SENCO and form teacher. Further diagnostic assessments can then be carried out in school and used to inform specialist support and advice if necessary. The cost of these initial screening tests is included in the tuition fees; any EPA [Educational Psychologist's Assessment] and any resulting support provision agreed with the school is additional to the school fees.

4.2 Formal diagnostic assessments: If the results of an inhouse diagnostic assessment or advice from an Educational Psychologist or Speech and Language Therapist indicate that your child may have a learning difficulty, we would normally ask you to agree to follow his or her instructions.. You may consult an Educational Psychologist or Speech and Language Therapist retained by the School, or one of your own choice. The cost in either case must be borne by the parents.

4.3 Support teaching: As an option, and if justified by the test results, we may suggest a course of support teaching on a one-to-one basis in school. This would normally be in term time, payable by parents as an extra in addition to the school fees.

4.4 Half a term's notice in writing (or payment of half a term's fees in lieu of notice) is required to terminate support teaching.

4.5 Learning support: If the test results indicate that there may be a learning difficulty but the circumstances are not such as to indicate an immediate formal assessment or a course of support teaching, we may suggest that your child gives up one of the normal curriculum subjects, or receive in-class assistance, or attend a small learning support group which will concentrate on developing skills such as phonics, spelling, mathematics and handwriting. Your child's progress and needs will be monitored and, if necessary, we will recommend a formal assessment or alternative support if in-class learning support does not appear to be meeting your child's needs.

4.6 In general, our approach will be to keep in mind the issues surrounding a child or young person being prematurely labelled; later assessment might result in a different explanation for the difficulty or such labelling might be detrimental to the child or young person's welfare.

4.7 The school will co-operate with parents and with the local education authority in the provision of information for inclusion in an application for an Education Health Care Plan (EHC). As an independent school which does not receive government funding, including for any pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school does not have to participate in the local offer. Should any pupil or young person apply successfully for an EHC and the school agrees to be named as the provider, it will work with all parties towards effective implementation of the plan. Local contact details for advice for parents are provided at the end of this policy.

4.8 Provision and implementation of EHC plans will be subject to ongoing review and will have due regard to local and government changes in legislation.

4.9 Welfare needs: The School recognises that pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties may be at risk of being bullied. The School has an anti-bullying policy which make it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously. If parents are concerned about their child's or young person's welfare they can approach the pupil's form teacher or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.

4.10 Mrs Gillian Bilbo is the School's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) working closely with Mr Edmund Matyjaszek , the Principal and the Heads of School. They have responsibility for:

- ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of a child or young person's special educational needs;
- working with the child or young person for them to add their voice to intervention plans and review their provision on a regular basis.

- ensuring that appropriate interventions are in place.
- advising and supporting other staff in the School; to coach staff in the implementation of the graduated response, to the use of the assess, plan, do, review cycle and to monitor ,with other members of the Executive, the use of differentiated teaching [in line with Teaching Standards 2012: it is every teacher's responsibility to adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils].
- ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with special education needs is collected, recorded and updated and passed on to relevant staff
- undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice on special educational needs.
- Liaising appropriately with the local authority for the provision of specialist help and applications for EHC plans if relevant.

4.11 Responsibility: Parents bear the ultimate responsibility for taking decisions about the management of the child or young person's learning difficulties in the light of any advice given. A parent who would prefer to have a formal assessment instead of support teaching or learning support should make arrangements accordingly with the School or outside but must undertake to pass on copies of all advice and reports received.

4.12 External teaching: If parents opt for support teaching outside the School, the Principal must be satisfied with safety and travel arrangements and also that such teaching is at times which fit in with the remainder of the curriculum, timetable and community life of the School.

4.13 Information: Because dyslexia and some other learning difficulties are often inherited, it would be helpful to know at the outset if you (either parent) or your children or close relations have been affected by a learning difficulty at any time. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. A copy of any report or recommendations which have been made in relation to special educational needs at your child's previous school or elsewhere in his/her school career would allow us to plan focused support for your child at the earliest opportunity.

4.14 Concerns: We need to know immediately if your child's progress or behaviour causes you concern at home so that we can devise and agree a working strategy with you.

4.15 Examinations: Children or young persons who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be eligible to apply for extra time and other supporting mechanisms to complete internal examinations and public examinations.

4.16 There are formal procedures to register for extra time for public examinations. These incorporate information using the School's assessment system or from an EPA paid for directly by the parents. Any extra costs incurred in the writing of these applications will be borne by the parents.

5 Alternative arrangements

5.1 Withdrawal: We reserve the right, following consultation with you, to ask or require you to withdraw your child from the School if, in our opinion, after making all reasonable adjustments and exhausting appropriate strategies:

- your child is in need of a formal assessment, remedial teaching, learning support or medication to which you do not consent; and/or
- you have withheld information from the School which, had the information been provided, would have made a significant difference to the School's management of your child's learning difficulties; or have for whatever reason been unable to ensure attendance in either class or in separate provision that would allow the programme of support agreed on to be delivered and/or
- your child's learning difficulties require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Principal, the School is unable to provide, manage or arrange and/or
- your child has special educational needs that make it unlikely he/she will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities which we provide.

5.2 Alternative placement: In any of these circumstances we will do what is reasonable to help you to find an alternative placement which will provide your child with the most appropriate level of teaching and support.

5.3 Financial: Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances will not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. Any deposit paid in respect of your child will be credited to your account.

Learning Support staff:All support staff are fully CRB checked and have received appropriate Child Protection Training.

SENCo:

Mrs Gillian Bilbo: B.Sc Hons , PGCE, Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy.

Support staff:

Mrs Sue Akers: Cert Ed, CCET, RSA Dip SpLD

Mrs Judy White: Level 4 SEN, Level 4 Childcare, NNEB: level 4 [Nursery to aged 7]

Authorised: EJ Matyjaszek, Principal

September 2017

Next annual review date: September 2018,

[or earlier to reflect any further changes in

legislation.]

Related School Policies: Anti-bullying, Staff Handbook, Complaints Policy, Data

Protection Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Equality Policy, Use of Internet Policy

