



Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties Policy

(including provision for pupils with EHCP & support for Mental Health & Wellbeing)

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1 **Aims**

- 1.1 This is the policy on special educational needs and learning difficulties of St. Christopher's Independent Preparatory School and Nursery.
- 1.2 The aims of this policy are as follows:
 - 1.2.1 to promote good practice in the detection and management of special educational needs (**SEN**)
 - 1.2.2 to explain the support the School can provide for children who have learning difficulties and the co-operation needed from parents
 - 1.2.3 to actively promote the well-being of pupils.

2 **Scope and application**

- 2.1 This policy applies to the whole School including the Early Years Foundation Stage (**EYFS**).

3 **Regulatory framework**

- 3.1 This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:
 - 3.1.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
 - 3.1.2 Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2024)
 - 3.1.3 Education and Skills Act 2008
 - 3.1.4 Childcare Act 2006
 - 3.1.5 Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 - 3.1.6 Equality Act 2010; and
 - 3.1.7 Children and Families Act 2014.
- 3.2 This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:
 - 3.2.1 Special Educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department for Health, January 2015) (**Code of Practice**)
- 3.3 The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:
 - 3.3.1 Equal Opportunities Policy
 - 3.3.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures
 - 3.3.3 Risk Assessment Policy
 - 3.3.4 Anti-bullying Policy
 - 3.3.5 English as an Additional Language Policy
 - 3.3.6 Admissions policy

4 **Publication and availability**

- 4.1 This policy is published on the School website.
- 4.2 This policy is available in hard copy on request.
- 4.3 A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the School Secretary during the School day.
- 4.4 This policy can be made available in large print if required.

5 **Definitions**

5.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

- 5.1.1 References to **working days** mean Monday to Friday, when the School is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the School's website.
- 5.1.2 References to an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** are references to a plan or programme designed for children with SEN to help them to get the most out of their education. An **IEP** builds on the curriculum that a child with learning difficulties or disabilities is following and sets out the strategies being used to meet that child's specific needs.
- 5.1.3 References to **Provision mapping** are references to provision maps used by the School as an efficient way of showing all the provision that the School makes which is additional to and different from that which is offered through the School's curriculum. The use of provision maps can help the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (**SENCO**) to maintain an overview of the programmes and interventions used with different groups of pupils and provide a basis for monitoring the levels of intervention.

5.2 **"Special educational needs" and "learning difficulty"**

- 5.2.1 St. Christopher's Independent Preparatory School and Nursery offers its pupils a challenging curriculum with high academic standards in order to prepare them successfully for entrance into a range of public schools. However, it sees its primary aim as offering the pupils a broad-based and liberal education to as many as can benefit from it. In order to achieve this end, St. Christopher's Independent Preparatory School and Nursery recognises that some of its pupils, though able, have been identified or subsequently identified as experiencing various types of SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulty). This means that, for those pupils, modifications to the teaching and learning process must be considered. In some cases, the SpLD can represent a real disability to learning. Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.
- 5.2.2 Children have a learning difficulty if they:
 - (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or

- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools.
- (c) are under five and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or are likely to do so when of compulsory school age if special educational provision is not made for the child.

- 5.2.3 A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language or form of language which is or has been spoken at home. However, children for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support. Please see the School's English as an Additional Language Policy.
- 5.2.4 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.
- 5.2.5 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 or mental health difficulties. The expression may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing or who have an autistic spectrum disorder.
- 5.2.6 Learning difficulties may affect children who have a high IQ and academic ability as well as those of lower IQ and ability.

6 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

- 6.1 The Proprietor has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.
- 6.2 To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Proprietor has allocated the following tasks:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Headteacher/SENCO	As required, and at least annually
Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness	Headteacher/SENCO	As required, and at least annually
Maintaining up to date records of all information created in relation to the policy and its	Headteacher/SENCO	As required, and at least annually

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
implementation as required by the GDPR		
Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	Headteacher/SENCO	As required, and at least annually
Formal annual review	Proprietor	As required, and at least every 2 years

6.3 The School's SENCO has responsibility for:

- 6.3.1 ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of a child's special educational needs
- 6.3.2 advising and supporting other staff in the School
- 6.3.3 ensuring that appropriate IEPs are in place and effectively implemented
- 6.3.4 ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with special education needs is collected, recorded and updated
- 6.3.5 undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice.

7 Procedures

- 7.1 The School is a mainstream independent school with high academic standards. Even so, we carry out screening tests when teachers raise concerns/ the SENCO deems appropriate in order to detect signs of learning difficulties, where apparent from the test results.
- 7.2 The School's approach to the detection and management of learning difficulties will be guided by the Code of Practice. In general, the School's approach will be cautious so as not unnecessarily to run the risk of a child being labelled "dyslexic" when a later assessment might result in a different explanation for the difficulty.
- 7.3 It is essential that pupils who are experiencing difficulties have their needs identified quickly so that the appropriate provision can be made. If class teachers have concerns at any stage in a pupil's education regarding progress, they should discuss these without delay with the SENCO.
- 7.4 It is the responsibility of the subject or Form teacher to discuss in depth with the SENCO their concerns about their pupil. They must provide and have gathered supporting evidence e.g. recent exam grades, observations and tried and tested strategies, including differentiated activities.
- 7.5 The SENCO will then observe the child/their work and decide if further investigation is needed or if the teacher needs to be providing a more differentiated approach to the child's

learning. If this is the case, the SENCO will provide teaching tips for the class teacher. We have close links with parents at St. Christopher's Independent Preparatory School and Nursery, and the class teacher, at the earliest opportunity, should be the first person to alert the parents to concerns and enlist their active help and participation. If a child is not progressing with a more differentiated curriculum, the SENCO will provide an internal assessment.

7.6 Screening test

- 7.6.1 Where there is cause for concern, the School will carry out a Screening Test on pupils, the results of which will be reported to the pupil's parents.
- 7.6.2 The tests used are not diagnostic tests of a kind which an Educational Psychologist would carry out, and they are not infallible. The purpose of the tests is to detect circumstances which may need further investigation or a formal assessment.
- 7.6.3 If the outcome of a test or any other circumstances give us reason to think that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, we will report and consult with the pupil's parents as necessary and make recommendations.
- 7.6.4 Once a pupil is seen by SENCO, they will be placed on the SEND Register. This does not automatically mean that the child has an identified diagnosis of SEN, but more that the school recognises a child may need extra support. The SEND Register has two strands: one for children, who have been identified by the school with a Special Educational Need and the other is for those children, 'who are under observation'. The registers are electronic, and all information is kept securely. All staff have access to this register and are expected to be fully informed of any changes to existing provision or new pupils that are placed onto the register. Hard copy files of all LS pupils are kept by the SENCO.
- 7.6.5 Support for pupils within the second strand may not require immediate support but will be monitored closely by staff and SENDCo. Staff will regularly meet informally with the relevant staff to ensure that progress is being made. If at any stage it is felt that a child who is being monitored does require support, the SENCO will implement the next steps, in line with the School's Policy on identification.

7.7 Formal assessment

- 7.7.1 If the test results indicate that a pupil may have a learning difficulty which ought to be assessed without delay, we will ask the pupil's parents to agree to the pupil being formally assessed by an Educational Psychologist. The School will ask the parents to agree to follow their recommendations unless there are persuasive reasons to the contrary.
- 7.7.2 The parents may consult an Educational Psychologist of their own choice. The cost must be borne by the parents.

7.8 Learning support

- 7.8.1 If the screening test results indicate that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, but the circumstances are not such as to indicate an immediate formal assessment or a

course of additional specialist teaching is required, the School may suggest that the pupil gives up one of the normal curriculum subjects and instead attends a small learning support group which will concentrate on developing skills such as phonics, spelling, maths and handwriting.

7.8.2 Learning Support of this kind will be provided at no additional cost.

7.8.3 The SENCO will organise a graduated response for support in the following ways:

- (a) Monitoring. Most children will have their needs met through teaching and classroom management as well as appropriate differentiation within the day-to-day learning. The SENCO will oversee this and monitor and review at half - termly intervals. No teaching targets are necessary for these children.
- (b) Group work will be decided by the SENCO in liaison with class teachers at the beginning of each half term for Maths and English. The maximum number of pupils that can currently be seen in a group is four.
- (c) Learning support will be prioritised for those pupils who have a full EP Report or internal assessment and where this has been recommended by the SENCO due to the outcome of an internal assessment.
- (d) The SENDCO can support other areas e.g., emotional wellbeing, behavioural problems, social skills, handwriting, spelling groups etc. These interventions will all be decided on a case-by-case scenario in liaison with the class teacher.
- (e) The school will work with or make referrals to external agencies where support is needed for the child that is outside the remit and resourcing levels of the school itself, for example support from CAMHs, Speech and Language, or Occupational Therapy.

7.8.4 The pupil's progress and needs will be monitored and, if necessary, the School will recommend a formal assessment, if the learning support does not appear to be meeting the pupil's needs.

7.9 External teaching

7.9.1 Parents may opt for additional specialist teaching outside the School, provided that the Head is satisfied with your child's safety and travel arrangements and also that the additional specialist teaching is at times, which fit in with the remainder of the curriculum, timetable and community life of the School.

7.10 Examinations

7.10.1 Pupils who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be eligible for extra time and / or other 'access arrangements' to complete public examinations.

7.10.2 The criteria for pupils being allocated extra time has changed. The new criteria states that if a child has a standardised score in an assessment of 85 or above, they will no longer be automatically eligible to receive extra time. However, pupils may be entitled to 25% to 50% extra time if evidenced in an Educational Psychologist's

report. Use of a laptop is a centre delegated access arrangement and may be in place if this is the pupil's usual way of working.

7.10.3 With respect to 11+, the current system in place for most Senior Schools is that parents are expected to liaise with their chosen schools regarding appropriate access arrangements. It is the parents' responsibility to collate and send in the relevant paperwork to their chosen Senior School such as EP or Medical reports, before any pre-tests are carried out.

7.10.4 Parents are asked to liaise with their child's class teacher and/or the School's SENCO in good time with respect to this.

7.11 Information sharing and parent involvement

7.11.1 Parents are asked to provide the School with a copy of any report or recommendations which have been made in relation to Special Educational Needs at their child's previous school or elsewhere within the last 12 months. Confidential information of this kind will only be shared within the School on a "need to know" basis.

7.11.2 The School will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents about their child's learning difficulties and to ensure that teachers are given any necessary information about a child's learning difficulties and that teaching practices are appropriate.

7.11.3 SEND Parent Consultation meetings are held termly. IEP targets are reviewed and updated, if necessary. Copies of IEP targets and IEP Reviews are stored electronically. Hardcopies are kept in the pupil's folders and class teachers are also provided with copies. Parents will be informed by the SENCO of any changes in procedure relating to their child. Targets are also shared with the pupil.

7.11.4 Any pupil without a formal diagnosis, but who is on the 'Pupils Under Observation' SEND Support Register, is monitored regularly; the class teacher, SENDCO and Teaching Assistant tracks their progress (where appropriate)

7.11.5 Parents should notify the School immediately if their child's progress or behaviour causes concern so that the School can devise and agree a strategy with the parents.

7.11.6 Parents bear the overall responsibility for taking decisions about the management of their child's learning difficulties. A parent who would prefer to have a formal assessment instead of additional specialist teaching or learning support should make arrangements accordingly with the School or outside, as appropriate. In these circumstances parents must ensure that the School is given copies of all advice and reports received.

7.12 Individual Education Plan/Provision Map

7.12.1 The SENCO will ensure that an appropriate IEP/Provision map is in place where required.

7.12.2 The IEP / Provision map will be prepared in consultation with the parents and, if appropriate, the pupil and will include:

- (a) the adjustments, interventions and support required to meet the outcomes identified for the pupil
- (b) the expected impact on the pupil's progress, development or behaviour, as appropriate; and
- (c) clear dates for review.

7.12.3 In carrying out the review, the SENCO will consider:

- (a) the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress
- (b) the views of relevant teaching staff, the parents and, if appropriate, the pupil; and
- (c) any changes that are required to the support and outcomes set out for the pupil.

8 Education Health and Care Plans (EHC Plan)

- 8.1 Parents and the School have the right under section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ask the local authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC Plan. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right. If the Local Authority refuses to make an assessment, the parents (but not the School) have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).
- 8.2 Where a prospective pupil has an EHC Plan, the School will consult the parents and, where appropriate, the Local Authority to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC plan can be delivered by the School. The School will co-operate with the local authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC Plans are carried out as required.
- 8.3 Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHC Plan will need to be charged to the Local Authority if the authority is responsible for the fees and our school is named in Section I of the EHC Plan. In all other circumstances charges will be made directly to parents unless the additional services can be considered to be a "reasonable adjustment" for which no charge will be made, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

9 Additional welfare needs

- 9.1 The School recognises that pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties may be at risk of being bullied. The School's anti-bullying policy makes it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously.
- 9.2 If parents are concerned about their child's welfare they can approach the pupil's form teacher or the Pastoral Deputy Head to discuss their concerns in private at any time.
- 9.3 Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of pupils with a special educational need or disability creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The School is mindful in particular that:

- 9.3.1 assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's special educational need or disability without further exploration
- 9.3.2 pupils with a special education need or disability can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- 9.3.3 there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required.
- 9.4 Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in the School's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
- 9.5 **Disability**
 - 9.5.1 The School recognises that some pupils with special education needs or learning difficulties may also have a disability.
 - 9.5.2 The School will make all reasonable adjustments in order to afford opportunity to disabled pupils. However if, despite such adjustments, the School is unable to provide adequately for the pupil's needs, the School may decline to offer a place to a pupil or request that parents withdraw their child from the School (see 10 below).
- 10 **Arrangements for supporting pupils who are looked after or previously looked after**
 - 10.1 A termly 'Personal Education Plan' (PEP) meeting takes place which is attended by the Looked After Children (LACs), their guardians/foster parents, the SENCO and a representative from the Local Authority. These meetings are used to review whether the needs of the looked after child are being met and to set realistic and achievable targets for the forthcoming term. Currently St. Christopher's Independent Preparatory School and Nursery has no pupils who receive Pupil Premium.
- 11 **Alternative arrangements**
 - 11.1 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**:
 - 11.1.1 your child is in need of a formal assessment, additional specialist teaching, learning support or medication to which you do not consent; and / or
 - 11.1.2 your child's learning difficulties require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Head, the School is unable to provide, manage or arrange
 - 11.1.3 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.
 - 11.2 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 necessary level of teaching and support.

- 11.3 Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances will not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. The deposit paid in respect of your child will be credited to your account.

12 Training

- 12.1 The School ensures that regular guidance and training is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.
- 12.2 The level and frequency of training depends on role of the individual member of staff.
- 12.3 The School maintains written records of all staff training.

13 Risk assessment

- 13.1 Where a concern about a pupil's welfare is identified, the risks to that pupil's welfare will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken to reduce the risks identified.
- 13.2 The format of risk assessment may vary and may be included as part of the School's overall response to a welfare issue, including the use of individual pupil welfare plans (such as Behaviour, Healthcare and Education plans, as appropriate). Regardless of the form used, the School's approach to promoting pupil welfare will be systematic and pupil focused.
- 13.3 The Head has overall responsibility for ensuring that matters which affect pupil welfare are adequately risk assessed and for ensuring that the relevant findings are implemented, monitored and evaluated.
- 13.4 Day to day responsibility to carry out risk assessments under this policy will be delegated to the SENCO who has been properly trained in, and tasked with, carrying out the particular assessment.

14 Record keeping

- 14.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.
- 14.2 The records created in accordance with this policy may contain personal data. The School has a number of privacy notices which explain how the School will use personal data about pupils and parents. The privacy notices are published on the School's website. In addition, staff must ensure that they follow the School's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy. This includes the School's data protection policy and information security policy.

15 Version control

Date of adoption of this policy	June 2025
Date of last review of this policy	June 2025
Date for next review of this policy	June 2026

St Christopher's Preparatory School
Special Educational Need and Learning Difficulties Policy

Policy owner (SMT)	Head Teacher and SENCO
Policy owner (Proprietor)	ILG

Appendix 1

Report to parents: possible Learning difficulty indicated

Dear Parents

Y1 screening for Learning Difficulties

This is to let you know that during a recent screening test, [• name of pupil]'s results indicated the possibility that [• he / she] may have a learning difficulty in the area of [• please describe]. The tests which we use are not diagnostic tests of a kind which an educational psychologist would carry out. Their purpose is to detect circumstances which may need further investigation or a formal assessment and they are not infallible. It may turn out that your child has no problem after all.

[• My recommendation at this stage is that we try [• learning support / additional specialist teaching] for the remainder of this year and then assess [• name of pupil]'s needs again at that stage.]

OR

[• Because the test results were considerably below the levels normally to be expected of children of this age, my recommendation is that [• name of pupil] should be formally assessed by an Educational Psychologist.]

I would be happy to discuss some further details of the provision we can make for children who have certain kinds of learning difficulty. If [• name of pupil] turns out to have a learning difficulty which is formally diagnosed, we will need to co-operate closely so as to ensure that support is given at the right level.

Please contact me via email uogara@stchristophersschool.org.uk for a convenient appointment if you would like to discuss the various choices in more detail. Otherwise, would you please write to me as soon as you can with your decision.

Yours sincerely

Ms U O' Gara
SENDCO