

# Bedales Learning Support Policy

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# Bedales Learning Support Policy

This document describes Bedales Learning Support Policy. It has been written having regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, 2015 (CoP) and with reference to the following other documents:

Children and Families Act 2014

Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools DfE February 2013 (updated June 2018)

Bedales Schools' Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Bedales Schools' Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan

Bedales Schools' Admissions Policy.

## Introduction

At Bedales Schools we aim to develop inquisitive thinkers with a love of learning who cherish independent thought. We aim to enable all students to develop their talents by educating the whole person, 'Head, Hand and Heart'.

Bedales is a selective school. The selection process includes tests, interviews and informal assessment during a short residential stay at the School, and review of application documentation. It is designed to allow the selection of students who will meet their potential at Bedales, within the support framework described in this Policy. For this reason, full disclosure of current or likely learning support needs at the time of application is crucial, and the School may not be able to retain a student if relevant information has been withheld.

It is recognised that all children have individual needs and, in most cases, these are met through good classroom practice. Some children require additional academic support needs as a result of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a Disability. The support provided at Bedales is described in the sections which follow and is designed to meet the needs of students who can work independently in subject lessons, alongside their peers.

## SEN and Disability (SEND)

A student has SEND where his or her learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from, or additional to, that normally available to students of the same age (CoP, 2015). There are five broad areas of need:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs
- Maths Learning Differences.

## Disability

A disability is defined as 'A physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on a student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (Equality Act 2010).

Students who have a disability do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled young people and those with SEN (CoP 2015). The Bedales Head of Learning Support chairs the Three Schools Disability Policy Review Committee which meets annually to review the Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan.

An important aspect of Bedales' philosophy is the knowledge that SEN and Disability are completely independent of ability in general. High aspirations are held for all students. It is the responsibility of the whole staff to educate all Bedales' students, including those identified as having a disability or SEN.

### Aims

- To ensure that students with SEND meet their full potential
- To encourage students with SEND to become confident, independent learners
- To maintain high aspirations for students with SEND
- To promote equal opportunities for all students.

### Objectives

- To identify students with SEND as early as possible and ensure that their needs are met
- To identify and focus attention on students' skills and talents, and build self-esteem
- To support students to manage their own emotional responses and develop emotional resilience
- To operate a 'whole student, whole school' approach to the management and provision of support for SEND
- To provide support and advice about SEND to all School staff
- To encourage students to participate in the decision-making processes regarding their support needs
- To maintain and develop partnership with parents.

### Identifying Special Educational Needs and Disability

The purpose of identifying a student's SEND is to determine what support is necessary, not to allocate the student to a category or to attach a label. It is therefore important that overall needs and welfare are taken into account, not just SEND. This means being alert to the impact of other factors such as attendance and punctuality, health and welfare, English as an additional language or disruption to family life, e.g. through frequent relocation.

Each student's skills and levels of attainment are assessed prior to entry through formal examination and interview. Information is also gathered from parents/carers and previous schools, including school reports and reports from external specialists such as educational psychologists. This information is used to consider whether a student may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and, if so, what reasonable adjustments may need to be made. A transfer meeting is held during the Summer Term with the Head of Learning Support at Dunhurst regarding the support needs of students joining from Block 2 and planning meetings are held with parents/carers as necessary. After admission, further individual assessment is carried out by suitably qualified Learning Support teachers or by the relevant external specialists as necessary.

Subject teachers make regular assessments of the progress of all students, and this is discussed at review meetings (approximately half-termly). During these meetings teachers and tutors will note good effort or progress for congratulation and reward or will raise a concern regarding a student who is making less progress than expected. A concern can be characterised by progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better the student's previous rate of progress
- fails to close an attainment gap between the student and peers
- widens an attainment gap

Assessment also takes account of students' own self-evaluation, and progress in areas other than academic attainment, for instance social skills. At Bedales, the cycle of assess-plan-do-review involves collaboration

between the student, parents/carers, subject teachers, academic tutor and houseparents. Subject teachers assess progress in a variety of ways, including topic tests, formal internal exams in the Summer Term of Block 3, Block 4, and 6.1 and mock exams in the Spring Term for students sitting external exams in the Summer Term (Block 5 and 6.2). Subject teachers may also give 1:1 tutorial time with students in order to check progress. Academic tutors check on progress on an individual basis; the frequency varying according to need. Following review meetings, the comments of subject teachers are discussed with the student and the student's parents/carers and are accessible to them online. The academic tutor initiates and manages this process and implements any actions decided upon.

## **A Graduated Approach to SEN Support**

The first response to a concern is to focus high-quality, differentiated teaching at the areas of weakness. This is co-ordinated and monitored by the academic tutor. Where progress continues to be less than expected, the Head of Learning Support will add the student's name to the Learning Support Register at Level 1 and monitor progress closely. Previous assessment data and reports will be reviewed and further targeted individual assessment may be carried out. Additional support in the form of 1:1 Learning Support lessons may be suggested at this stage and the student's response to such support can help to identify particular needs. If SEND is seen to be impacting most heavily on progress in Maths, a student may be offered 1:1 Learning Support lessons with a Maths specialist. Learning Support lessons are weekly, individual lessons which take place during private study periods and do not require students to be withdrawn from any other lessons. Parents are advised in advance of the relevant fee increase. At this stage, the student will be included in the Learning Support Register at Level 2.

Subsequent reviews will determine whether Learning Support lessons should be put in place (or continue), will provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the input and will guide intervention towards particular areas of weakness or barriers to learning. Individual Learning Support lessons will support students across the curriculum by providing specialist (often multi-sensory) teaching of skills and strategies and giving opportunities for additional practice, reinforcement and feedback. Students will be introduced to assistive technology as appropriate, for instance the use of keyboard training or computer reader. Curriculum work will often provide the context for this input, but Learning Support lessons will not seek to replace subject teaching. Subject teachers continue to be responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the students in their classes, but the Learning Support teacher or Head of Learning Support will provide written comments and attend review meetings, attend parents' meetings, liaise with subject teachers and advise on supportive classroom strategies.

Students with complex Learning Support needs, perhaps resulting from difficulties in more than one area, may be referred for assessment by an external specialist such as a specialist assessor, an educational psychologist or a speech and language therapist. The Head of Learning Support ensures that relevant recommendations are discussed with the student and made available to inform classroom and 1:1 teaching. The Head of Learning Support also ensures that the full report and a summary of the teaching recommendations is always accessible to all staff.

Where necessary, the Head of Learning Support will liaise with parents and carers to organise other regular specialist intervention at Bedales, such as speech and language therapy, and in conjunction with houseparents, may facilitate a student's attendance at counselling, therapy or other services relating to social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

If specialist diagnostic assessment shows that a student has a severe sensory or other impairment which requires intervention beyond the capacity of the School to provide, it may be appropriate for the School and parents to consider requesting the Local Authority to carry out an Education, Health and Care needs assessment. If the outcome of this is that an Education, Health and Care needs Plan (EHCP) names Bedales as the institution which the student should attend, the School will co-operate with the Local Authority to provide the agreed support and ensure that the EHCP is reviewed annually as required in the SEND Code of Practice. Any additional provision required would be at parents' expense.

When the student's Learning Support teacher(s) and subject teachers agree that a student is making good progress and it is agreed that Learning Support lessons are no longer required, the student will initially remain on the Learning Support Register at Level 1 and will continued to be monitored.

Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a student has SEND. Where such concerns are raised, an assessment is carried out by an external specialist to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues. The outcome of these assessments is used to determine the most appropriate form of support, which can include referral to the School Counsellor.

Learning difficulties or mental health difficulties can also arise as a result of other events such as bullying or bereavement. These events will not always lead to children having SEND but they can have a severe impact on learning and well-being. Support as outlined above may be necessary, without the need to include the student on the Learning Support Register.

Concerns about progress may be raised by a student, parents/carers or School staff at any time and will be investigated initially via the regular review process outlined above. The Head of Learning Support coordinates the discussions and assessments, collates the evidence, organises the appropriate support and updates the Learning Support Register accordingly. The Learning Support Register is therefore constantly under review.

### **Supporting Students and Families**

Students and their families have access to this Policy by requesting a copy via the Head's PA. The Head of Learning Support attends all parents' meetings and is available to discuss the needs of any student. The other Learning Support teachers also usually attend parents' meetings regarding the students they teach. When this is not possible, an alternative time or a telephone/Teams conversation is arranged instead.

The Bedales Admissions Policy describes admission arrangements in relation to students with SEND. The Head of Learning Support is responsible for implementing Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines to ensure that students with SEND have appropriate access to internal assessments and public examinations through making 'reasonable adjustments' (eg allowing extra time). JCQ guidelines are updated annually and the Head of Learning Support attends training relating to this, every year during the Autumn Term. Where a full diagnostic assessment or an exam access arrangement assessment is required, this is arranged in School by the Head of Learning Support. The Head of Learning Support works closely with the Exams Officer to maintain an up-to-date list of those students who require exam access arrangements. Subject teachers use this list to ensure that these arrangements are also in place for internal assessments.

Academic tutors take the lead role in ensuring a smooth transition from class to class, across School years and to other schools and institutions. While at Bedales, a student may well continue with the same Learning Support teacher for as long as is necessary, and continuity is maintained where possible in subject teaching and pastoral care. The Head of Learning Support is responsible for providing reports etc. as requested at transition points.

The Head of Learning Support liaises with the Health Centre concerning any health issues which may result in SEND and obtains copies of reports or doctors' letters where these may be required as evidence for exam access purposes.

## Supporting Students at Bedales with medical conditions

The Health Centre manages provision for any students with medical conditions, holds the relevant records and liaises with the Head of Learning Support and teachers to ensure that all students, including those with SEND, have full access to education and trips. Some students with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the School will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## Accessibility

Bedales Schools are committed to a gradual increase in accessibility over time. To this end, the Three Schools' Disability Committee meets annually to review the Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan. The Committee is chaired by the Bedales Head of Learning Support.

## Monitoring and Evaluation of SEN provision

The Education Sub-Committee of the Bedales Schools' Board of Governors meets annually in the spring term and its meetings include review of SEN provision. Key indicators are:

- An overall profile of the Bedales student population showing numbers identified as having SEND and what the areas of need are
- A review of the identification and assessment process showing the number of students identified or assessed through classroom teaching, screening, exam access assessments & full assessments
- The number of students being monitored as a result of initial identification, the number also being taught 1:1 and the number of students being monitored but no longer taught 1:1.
- A review of academic and other outcomes for students with SEND
- Evidence of involvement of whole teaching staff
- LS attendance at review meetings and parents' meetings and other evidence of strong partnership with parents
- Inspection of documentation (including assessment reports and classroom evidence) by JCQ Exams Inspector

## Training and Resources

All teachers taking up posts at Bedales complete an induction programme which includes a session presented by the Head of Learning Support to explain the systems and structure of the School's SEND provision and to discuss the needs of individual students. Additionally, the Head of Learning Support has input to the training of any staff undergoing School-based initial teacher training. The further professional development needs of teaching staff are identified during this process and also, for existing staff, by Heads of Departments during regular appraisal meetings. In-house or external training is provided during training days.

The Head of Learning Support holds reference books on the most commonly occurring SEND and maintains a selection of up-to-date online advice sheets for staff. The Head of Learning Support attends the annual training required in order to administer exam access arrangements.

The Head of Learning Support attends relevant conferences to keep up to date with resources and developments in the field of SEN, particularly as they relate to the independent sector. The Head of Learning Support carries out staff appraisal for members of the Learning Support department, which identifies training needs in order to improve and update Learning Support teachers' skills and expertise in the field. Weekly Learning Support Department meetings allow time for discussion and dissemination of good practice.

## Storing and Managing Information

All reviews, reports, letters and any other documents relating to individual students are regarded as confidential and are held on the School computer system which is password protected. Where these documents exist in hard copy, they are stored in locked filing systems. The Head of Learning Support holds educational psychologist reports and all other documents relating to the provision of exam access arrangements, as required by JCQ regulations. Documents are removed to the secure archive one year after the cohort has left the School.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The team consists of:

Deputy Head (Academic)  
Head of Learning Support  
General Learning Support Teachers  
Maths Learning Support Teachers

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)  
Lead Nurse (Bedales Health Centre)

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NB: All School Policies are available to staff and can be found here:

[T:\ThreeSchools\Policies\\_Handbooks\\_Key\\_Documentation\Staff\\_viewable](T:\ThreeSchools\Policies_Handbooks_Key_Documentation\Staff_viewable)