



ST ALBANS
SCHOOL

Learning Support Policy

Summary:

Date of review	October 2021
Effective date	November 2021
Date of next review	September 2022
Responsibility for review	VJS; AJB; AKG
Circulation	Governors, all staff, volunteers, website, parents on request
Status	Complies with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEND Code of Practice (2014)¹• JCQ Access Arrangements regulations 2021-2022²• JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations 2021-2022³• CAIE Access Arrangements (January release)⁴• Equality Act (2010)⁵• ISI Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements (2021)⁶• Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)⁷

¹ Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25> [Accessed Sept. 2021].

² Source: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AA_regs_21-22_v11.pdf [Accessed Sept. 2021].

³ Source: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/> [Accessed Sept. 2021].

⁴ Source: <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/exam-administration/cambridge-exams-officers-guide/phase-1-preparation/access-arrangements/> [Accessed Sept. 2021].

⁵ Source: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> [Accessed Sept. 2021].

⁶ Source: <https://www.isi.net/news/isi-document-update> [Accessed Sept. 2021 p.13-14 Special educational needs – 2(1)(b)(i)].

⁷ Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> [Accessed Sept. 2021].

1. St Albans School is committed to a whole-school approach to supporting each pupil according to their Individual Learning Profile (ILP).
2. The Learning Support Department's mission is to identify and support neurodiverse pupils in all areas of school life. The aim is therefore to help all learning support pupils achieve the best they can.
3. Bearing in mind the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2014, it is recognised that a range of learning needs and difficulties can occur within the pupil body, even when it has been selected on academic criteria, some of whom may require more personalised support than others.
4. Similarly, the School seeks to maximise the opportunities and potential for the most talented pupils and recognises that the two groups may not be mutually exclusive.
5. Teachers and the pastoral teams are advised on appropriate strategies for individual pupils such as differentiated support in the classroom and use of the 'Teacher Reference Manual', however, there are no teaching assistants in lessons.
6. In accordance with the regulations, irrespective of documented medical, physical or learning difficulties, in all cases, the Head of Learning Support and / or the Head of Centre (Headmaster) must be satisfied that there is an extensive history of need.
7. A candidate's specific access arrangements are determined by the Head of Learning Support and their team.
8. Pupils with a medical or learning difficulty may find some aspects of school life harder than their peers, but with a positive mindset and collective support from home and school, they will be able to achieve the best they can.
9. All pupils are encouraged to become independent metacognitive learners.
10. The structure of the Learning Support Department includes a Head of Department, an Access Arrangements Assessor, a Learning Support Teacher and an Administrator.

Prospective Pupils:

1. The Head of Learning Support can discuss individual cases once a prospective pupil has passed the entrance exam and a firm offer of a place has been accepted.
2. New parents are required to complete the Learning Support section on the New Pupil Information form.
3. New parents also need to share with the Admissions Team and Learning Support Department any diagnostic and / or medical reports that were undertaken prior to joining St Albans School.
4. The Head of Learning Support will consider the recommendations from diagnostic and / or medical reports that were undertaken prior to joining St Albans School, but the Learning Support referral process will take priority and in doing so, adhere to the latest regulations.

Pupil Information & Data:

1. The Learning Support Department creates and maintains an Individual Learning Profile (ILP) for each pupil with an identified learning difficulty and access arrangement(s). This is similar to a 'pupil passport' and is identified as a 'yellow dot' on the school's internal management system.
2. The ILP is shared with and accessed by teachers, enabling key information to be communicated, such as specific needs, access arrangement(s), pupil views and classroom differentiation strategies.
3. The Learning Support department will prioritise the support given to pupils with an ILP.
4. The needs of individual pupils with identified learning difficulties are long term in their nature. However, specific conditions can arise that require short term adjustments: medical injuries or conditions come into this category. In these cases, a temporarily modified academic programme and/or access arrangement(s) can be considered.
5. All relevant communications between Learning Support staff, teachers, tutors, parents and other relevant individuals must be stored in the relevant pupil e-mail, K-drive or paper folder.
6. Learning Support staff will copy in the tutor (and parents where necessary) to e-mail communications that are sent to individual pupils. The Head or Deputy Head of Year and other staff may also be included if deemed appropriate.
7. In addition to the screenings and assessments undertaken by the Learning Support Department, whole - school data is used in conjunctions with teacher evidence, to support the identification of students that may require intervention.

Screenings:

1. All new pupils undertake a computer-based literacy screening at the main entry points (11+, 13+ and 16+), as do any pupils who join the school at other stages.
2. Results that indicate significant concern are communicated to parents and the learning support referral process is instigated.
3. Those pupils that require monitoring are identified to the relevant pastoral team and teachers.
4. If further difficulties arise, the learning support referral process may then be instigated.
5. A 'green dot' may be created on the school's internal management system for pupils that require on-going monitoring, which only staff can access.

Teacher Responsibilities:

1. In addition to this Learning Support Policy, teachers need to be aware of the Access Arrangements Policy and the Word Processing in Exams Policy.
2. Teachers should use the following e-mail address for their communications: learningsupport@st-albans.herts.sch.uk and provide as much detail about their concerns as possible and complete a Teacher Questionnaire when requested by Learning Support.

3. Teachers should leave the Learning Support Department to make initial contact with parents and the follow-up actions with the pupil. In all instances, teachers should act on the advice of the Learning Support Department as to whether and when to speak to the pupil concerned and their parents.
4. Teachers have a professional responsibility to raise with the Learning Support Department concerns about a pupil with persistent and significant learning difficulties that are 'substantial' and 'long-term'.
 - a. 'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial.
 - b. 'Long-term' means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months or is likely to do so.
5. All concerns should be raised by the end of the academic year for pupils in the Lower Sixth and Fourth Form (or by the end of the Autumn Term for a Fourth Former taking IGCSE Mathematics in the January of their Fifth Form year).
6. If something causes a teacher to feel that there is an issue to investigate during a pupil's Fifth or Upper Sixth year that has not previously been picked up or shared with the Learning Support Department, teachers need to provide evidence to show that the difficulty has existed from before the start of the Fifth/Upper Sixth year.
7. In exceptional circumstances, concerns can be raised after the Fifth Form mocks and Upper Sixth mocks, if there is substantial evidence of a long-term learning difficulty or need.

Learning Support Referral Process:

1. All actions must follow this Learning Support Policy, the Access Arrangements Policy and the Word Processing in Exams Policy.
2. Underpinning the referral process is the 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle as recommended by the SEND Code of Practice (2014).
3. The School recognises that teachers, parents, guardians and pupils may legitimately contact the Learning Support Department over concerns that relate to persistent and significant learning difficulties that are 'substantial' and 'long-term'.
4. Below is a summary of the steps involved in the referral process:
 - a. Parent / pupil / teacher concerns are shared with Head of Learning Support.
 - b. Existing screening results are checked.
 - c. Learning Support sends out a pupil and teacher questionnaire to gather specific information.
 - d. A referral meeting is booked with the pupil.
 - e. Collated information is shared with the tutor, parents and pupil, including recommendations.
 - f. Teachers are asked to monitor (GD) the situation and provide feedback to Learning Support.
 - g. The pupil is encouraged to meet with the School Counsellor if appropriate.

- h. The pupil attends further in-house screening and / or assessments, after which reasonable adjustments, such as supervised rest breaks (SRBs)⁸, may then be trialled.
 - i. Alternative access arrangements may be considered and/or implemented by Learning Support.
 - j. The pupil receives 1:1 support with a member of the Learning Support department if required.
5. Different procedures apply in relation to short-term illness or injury. Please contact learningsupport@st-albans.herts.sch.uk in the first instance, noting that medical evidence will be required before further action can be considered.

Long-Term Medical Conditions:

1. If a candidate has a long-term medical condition (for example: hearing or visual impairment, colour-blindness, long-term use of medication), or physical disability which would represent a substantial disadvantage if reasonable adjustments were not made, the candidate's parent or guardian must send the School current medical evidence, in the form of a Hospital Consultant's letter, before joining the School, or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. The letter must indicate the nature of the condition or disability, confirming that it is ongoing (more than 12 months) and must give details of the difficulties which may be experienced when a candidate is sitting examinations.
3. Medical evidence for access arrangements should only confirm the disability and not recommend specific access arrangements. Specialist evidence can relate to any age as long as it remains current.

Access Arrangements:

1. Please refer to the 'Access Arrangements Policy' for full details.
2. The Learning Support Department undertakes all exam access arrangement assessments and administrative requirements in accordance with the necessary regulations, including the gathering of teacher evidence.
3. The Learning Support Department works in conjunction with the internal exams team and the external examinations office, to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are provided for pupils in school and public examinations.
4. Access Arrangements allow pupils with medical, physical or learning difficulties to access public examinations. They enable pupils to show what they can do without changing the demands of the assessment.
5. The School applies for access arrangements to the exam authorities, with whom the final decision rests.
6. The Learning Support Department will ensure that parents and pupils are informed about any access arrangements that are put in place.

⁸ "Supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making a request for extra time, since they may be more appropriate for candidates with a medical condition, a physical disability or a psychological condition. (See Chapter 5, section 5.1 for more detail.) The SENCo must have considered and thoroughly exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks before making an application for 25% extra time. The SENCo considers 25% extra time, and not supervised rest breaks, to be an appropriate access arrangement/reasonable adjustment." (JCQ, 2021:36).

7. The Learning Support Department will ensure that access arrangements requiring an external application to an awarding body, includes a signed data protection notice from the pupil.

Word Processing:

1. Laptops are allowed in lessons for classwork from the Third Form upwards, but not in the Lower School, unless a *need* has been established and agreed by Learning Support.
2. In order to establish a word processing *need* for any pupil, the above learning support referral process has to be followed, including a check of the new pupil screening records for handwriting speed and legibility.
3. A word processor **cannot** simply be granted to a pupil because he/she wants to type rather than write, or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.
4. In terms of word processing in exams, only pupils who have been assessed by the Learning Support Department as *needing* a laptop, are allowed to use one in tests and exams.
5. Please refer to the 'Word Processing in Exams Policy' for further details.

Learning Support Teaching:

1. Each pupil with an ILP may receive up to three, fifty minute, 1:1 sessions per year, with a member of the Learning Support Department. The focus will be on supporting the priority needs of the pupil and directly providing support that is additional to and different from the support that is available in the classroom and through clinics.
 - a. If time permits, a reminder may be sent by Learning Support staff via the 'Calendar / New Meeting' function, to 'invite' a pupil to a meeting; the tutor should also be invited, but the tutor should be told they are not expected at the meeting and have only been included for information.
 - b. If time permits, Learning Support staff may, at the time of a meeting, visit a pupil in the classroom and ask them to attend the meeting.
 - c. If a pupil is absent from school and unable to attend a meeting, they should reply as soon as possible to the e-mail sent by the member of Learning Support explaining their absence. This will enable a new meeting to be organised for the absent pupil and the space offered to another pupil, if time permits.
 - d. Pupils will be made aware through the original meeting communication, that non-attendance at a learning support meeting, without good reason or notice, will result in the Head of Year, parents and tutor being sent an e-mail by the member of Learning Support who booked the meeting, asking the pupil to explain their non-attendance.
 - e. Learning Support staff will endeavour to re-book the meeting for the next available opportunity, bearing in mind existing bookings for other learning support pupils. This is likely to result in a delay before a pupil is next seen by Learning Support.

- f. Persistent non-attendance will result in a compulsory meeting between the pupil, their Head of Year and the Head of Learning Support. Both the tutor and parents will be informed about the meeting and its outcomes, which may include an appropriate sanction, such as a 'white slip'.
2. Each pupil with an ILP will also receive one annual review meeting, either in person with a member of the Learning Support Department, or via an electronic 'Form', with the option of a follow-up meeting if requested or required.
3. A maximum of six support sessions per year may be available in exceptional circumstances, depending on individual pupil needs and staff availability.
4. Pupils with an ILP are encouraged to attend subject-specific clinics run by academic departments.
5. The Learning Support Prefect will undertake a mentoring / study skill role with KS3 pupils that have an ILP.

External Assessments:

1. Staff within the Learning Support Department are fully qualified to undertake the entire referral and assessment process.
2. However, the Learning Support Department maintains a list of approved external assessors with whom the School has an established working relationship.
3. In rare and exceptional circumstances, the Head of Learning Support may recommend an approved external assessor. This can only be done with permission from the Head of Learning Support and in accordance with the JCQ regulations.
4. Rare and exceptional in this context relates to unresolved medical, physical or cognitive concerns about the pupil. Physical or medical reasons require supporting evidence from a Hospital Consultant.
5. Parents and guardians should be aware that paragraph 7.3.6 of the JCQ regulations (2021:83) states that:

“A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre **cannot** be used to award access arrangements and **cannot** be used to process an application using *Access Arrangements online*.

The SENCo must provide the assessor with at least a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed (Part 2 of Form 8).

(Where a learning difficulty specifically arises as a result of a medical condition please see paragraph 5.2.3 and section 5.7 - 25% extra time and/or a scribe.)

Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by a centre, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer.

SENCOs and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated.”

6. Parent or pupil requests for information to support an external assessment specifically for University will only be considered during the pupils’ final Summer term. The purpose of such a report is to support the pupil at University and not for A Levels. Due to data protection rules, relevant information would be shared with the pupil, but they are responsible for passing this to their chosen assessor. The following websites may be useful in this context, but it is the responsibility of parents or pupils to ensure their chosen assessor is suitably qualified to complete the appropriate assessments:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>
 - <https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/>
 - <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>
 - <https://sasc.org.uk/Assessors.aspx>

Specialist Staff & Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

1. The School is open to working with all external specialist staff where appropriate and will facilitate their work with pupils as required.
2. The School is open to working with the Local Authority to offer education to children with Education, Health and Care Plans.
3. In assessing the School’s suitability, regard must be had to the constraints of the site as detailed in the School’s Accessibility Plan.
4. In cases where the Local Authority reasonably concludes that a child with an EHCP can suitably be educated at the School and names the School in the plan, and where academic criteria for entry to the School have been fulfilled, the School will co-operate with the Local Authority in providing the curriculum required and in facilitating the annual reviews of the plan.
5. The School will provide an ILP for a pupils with an EHCP.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

1. When the School identifies an EAL pupil, the Learning Support Department will help teachers meet the needs of the pupil.