



## **LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY**

This policy is a 'whole school' policy and relates to both the senior school and junior school (including the Early Years Foundation Stage).

This policy takes into account the revised Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice, 0-25 years 2014 (SEND Code, 2014).

### **Aims of the Learning Support Policy**

Bootham aims to enable students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Learning Difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), termed *Learning Differences* to achieve their full potential.

We will do this by creating a graduated response to individual students' needs (see *Referral procedure for student concerns*) as well as a secure and sensitive environment that will help them to overcome their barriers. Learning Support Staff work with students with learning differences and is managed separately at the junior and senior school sites. Kerri Haynes-McDonnell is Head of Learning Support and Louise Leaf is the SENCO at the junior school, working under the supervision of Kerri Haynes-McDonnell

### **SEN Code of Practice (2014/2015)**

This whole school policy takes into account the revised Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice, 0-25 years 2014 (SEND Code, 2014/2015). The new Code emphasises a whole-school approach to supporting students with special educational needs which is clearly reflected in Bootham School's policy and procedure. Bootham School fully supports the SEN Code of Practice (2014/2015) which stipulates that the five fundamental principles that support inclusive education are:

1. A child with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) should have his or her needs met.
2. The special educational needs of children will normally be met in mainstream schools or settings.
3. The views of the child should be sought and taken into account.
4. Parents/Carers have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education.
5. Children with special educational needs should be offered full access to a broad, balanced curriculum at all levels.

### **Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

A child has special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) if he or she has learning differences that call for special educational provision to be made. A child has SEND or learning differences if he or she: a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age b) Has a disability which prevents or

hinders him or her from making full use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age. A disability is 'a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities.

The definition of 'Special Educational Needs' in the Children's and Families Act 2014 overlaps with disability and includes students with significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age in mainstream state school. This does not mean all disabled students have SEND or all students with SEN have a disability

The SEND Code of Practice (2014/2015) does not assume that there are hard and fast categories of special educational needs, but recognises those children's needs and requirements fall into four broad areas:

- a. Communication and interaction  
*e.g. Speech, language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)*
- b. Cognition and Learning  
*e.g. Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD), Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)*  
*The most common SpLDs are dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia and dysgraphia. All **specific learning difficulties** (SpLDs) exist on a continuum from mild to moderate through to severe.*  
*In the UK we have used the terms profound, severe, moderate and mild to describe people with learning disabilities, but there are no clear dividing lines between the groups. Furthermore, there is no clear cut off point between people with mild learning disabilities and the general population and you may hear the term borderline learning disability being used.*  
*In the past, diagnosis of a learning disability and understanding of a person's needs was based on IQ scores; today the importance of a holistic approach is recognised, and IQ testing forms only one small part of assessing someone's strengths and needs.*
- c. Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)  
*e.g. Conduct disorders, OCD, Anxiety, Attachment difficulties, Panic, Depression.*
- d. Sensory and/or physical  
*e.g.*
  - *Visual Impairment (VI)*
  - *Hearing Impairment (HI)*
  - *Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)*
  - *Physical Disability (PD)*

Bootham School admits students with a range of learning differences on an individual basis to determine whether their needs can be met. This discussion is in collaboration with families in order to support a successful transition to secondary school. The admissions process is a transparent one which aims to learn as much as possible about the child's needs and ensure the available provision is put in place.

## **Learning Support at Bootham School**

At Bootham our emphasis is on *Learning Differences* rather than learning difficulties and our relatively small size allows for an individual response within the confines of a demanding curriculum. We recognise that problems accessing the curriculum fully, without support, are not confined to a particular ability range and that learning differences include the needs of the very able. All of our teachers take responsibility for meeting the needs of all of our students through differentiated, high-quality teaching in our classrooms. Our aim is that our students should leave us as confident young men and women who are aware of their strengths and who have developed appropriate strategies to enable them to achieve their potential in the next stage of their lives.

### **Objectives of Learning Support Provision**

- Identify the needs of students with learning differences at the earliest opportunity, assess and plan provision to meet individual learning differences where appropriate.
- Ensure teaching and support staff are aware of individuals' learning differences and various learning styles so that appropriate support and teaching strategies can be implemented throughout the curriculum
- Provide ongoing support and advice to staff and parents/carers to support students with LDD who are on the learning support register.
- Develop an effective partnership with teaching and pastoral staff to ensure that there is a proactive and positive approach to the learning needs of students with learning differences and support a strategic approach to intervention at each level (Wave 1-3) through opportunities for collaboration and staff training.
- Ensure that systematic procedures are in place as part of the identification, monitoring and tracking and review process of students with LDD.
- To provide suitable resources and materials as part of Curriculum Support lessons in order to enhance the learning experience for students who require additional lessons.

### **Admissions**

Entry to Bootham Junior School is via a taster day in school and a current school report, designed to ensure that an individual will be able to reach their potential with the curriculum and support available. Admission to the senior school is by interview, assessment and report. The selection process aims to take into account the whole person rather than simply relying on entrance test results; the decision to admit a student is taken after careful consideration as to whether the individual will be able to benefit from what Bootham has to offer. Nevertheless, the school offers an academic curriculum leading to GCSEs (or iGCSEs) and A levels, and our 'reasonable adjustments' for student needs can only start with this provision in mind. Although we have a Learning Support Department at Bootham, it is important that we feel that a student will be able to cope with the curriculum demands. Individual tuition/small group or a personalised timetable may sometimes be advised during a student's time at Bootham or made a condition of entry in some circumstances. This will be discussed if relevant, or made clear to parents if a place is offered with such stipulations. Some students will arrive at Bootham having already been identified as having a special educational need or learning difference and with a possible history of provision such as extra time allowed in tests and exams. The Head of Learning Support will monitor these individuals and make sure that such provision is continued where relevant. (Please see Word Processor and Access Arrangements guidance document).

*Both at the application stage and also later in the admissions process, parents/carers are given the opportunity and indeed urged to notify the school of any learning difference or disability of which we should be aware prior to the start date.*

### **Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

Infrequently, the school may agree to admit a student who is supported by a Statement of Special Needs, or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC). The approach to the school may come from the Local Authority or from the student's parents. Careful discussion will be necessary to determine whether the school can reasonably meet the provision required by the Statement or EHC. Where admission to Bootham is deemed appropriate, the Head of Learning Support/SENCo will be responsible for monitoring that the student's requirements under the Statement/EHC are being met, and for complying with other requirements of the Statement/EHC, including the annual review of the Statement.

Education Health and Care Plans are issued by the Local Authority where necessary and are used by the school to plan SEN provision for children with severe and complex needs. The EHCP includes:

- a detailed profile of the child, their strengths and aspirations for the future
- any education, health and care need they have
- the goals or outcomes for the student agreed by the family and professionals for the next phase of their education
- any education, health and social care provision in place to meet their needs

The EHCP includes a detailed annual support plan/action plan. This plan sets out the goals for the student for the next year, and the activities that everyone supporting the child will put in place to support them.

### **Identification of LDD**

Bootham School aims to identify students with LDD or those for whom learning support is valuable in the following ways:

- By receipt of information from a previous school
- By the provision of information from parents/carers
- By screening students at the beginning of the academic year and as a need arises.
- By conducting initial assessments in areas of reading, writing and processing where an ongoing concern has been raised.
- By the raising of concerns from members of staff via *Procedure for student concerns or the SEND termly Audit*.
- By providing support for staff through monitoring and updating electronic records with teaching and learning considerations to support a variety of learning differences and by ongoing, regular partnership with staff to develop support strategies for students with learning differences.

### **Screening and Assessment**

All junior school students are monitored through a process of regular assessments and teacher observations. Where potential learning differences are noted students will either be placed on a monitoring list or given further assessments in conjunction with a parent consultation. Following this a Learning Support Plan may be drawn up or further professional support may be recommended. In the senior school, all Lower

Schoolroom (Year 7) and Middle Schoolroom (Year 8) students will take annual reading, spelling and numeracy tests. These tests help us to identify from the earliest possible stage, any students that may require additional support. In some cases, a student may be identified at a later date. Evidence is then collected, and if it is thought necessary the student will be seen by the Specialist Assessor in Learning Support and assessed prior to public exams. The school has a systematic process to respond to concerns and referrals to Learning Support; one which relies on evidence and feedback gathered from teachers and parents and a range of standardised assessment tools to identify any potential learning differences.

A record is maintained of all students requiring extra support. Teaching staff are made aware of these students and their needs through regular updates and electronic records. If the outcome of assessments indicates an area of need or a potential learning difference, parents/carers will be consulted and advised as to the way forward regarding their child.

Staff and parents/carers can raise a concern. The procedure for staff is outlined clearly and there are a range of referral forms for teaching staff to complete.

- Support for students may include:
- Monitoring by the form tutor, pastoral team or subject staff to provide a context for the concern raised.
- Classroom observation and feedback from the subject teacher
- Screening/indicative assessment (*please note that these are not necessarily diagnostic assessments and further specialist support may be an appropriate direction to take with advice from the Head of Learning Support*).
- Updated information on ISAMS and updated teaching and learning information to support classroom-level intervention and Quality First Teaching (QFT).
- Discussion/meeting with parents/carers.
- A Learning Support Plan for selected students to outline key areas of need.
- At the Senior School, a small number of identified students attend Curriculum Support lessons during their timetabled day. This is organised on a case by case basis. The focus for interventions includes the development of basic skills, coursework and exam preparation support, study skills and revision techniques and where appropriate, work centred around social communication and general speech and language skills.
- At the Junior School, pupils may be invited to join a small intervention group, be given extra support within class by a teaching assistant or, occasionally, one to one support out of the classroom.

### **The LDD Register**

An LDD Register is kept electronically to store important information regarding students' learning differences. It is updated regularly and forms part of the key communication system between the Learning Support Department and teaching staff. Some students may only need staff to be aware of specific learning differences, whilst others will require further intervention. The LDD Register outlines areas of need and key teaching and learning considerations to implement in the main classroom. As progress is made and/or a learning profile may change, students may be taken off the LDD Register if support is not required. Students may also be added to the LDD Register following consultation with parents/carers if deemed appropriate.

The LDD Register highlights students with learning differences on a 'Wave' basis which is signified by different coloured stars. This system links to the 'Wave' of support needed by the particular student. At Bootham School a majority of students

require support at 'Wave 1' level where the focus is on developing teaching and learning strategies in the mainstream classroom to support learning differences. A small number of students may require withdrawal lessons and a small minority may require the support from outside agencies which is arranged by parent/carers as appropriate. Please see below for a breakdown:

**Wave 1 (Universal):** describes quality inclusive teaching which takes into account the learning needs of all the children in the classroom. This includes providing differentiated work and creating an inclusive learning environment.

**Wave 2 (Targeted):** describes specific, additional and time-limited interventions provided for some children who need help to accelerate their progress to enable them to work at or above age-related expectations. Wave 2 interventions are often targeted at a group of students with similar needs.

**Wave 3 (Specialist):** describes targeted provision for a minority of children with the involvement of outside agencies/professionals.

### **Learning Support Plans**

Selected students may require a Learning Support Plan which outlines areas of need and teaching and learning considerations to support effective teaching and learning. This will be the case for a small number of students and where appropriate, parents/carers may wish to contribute. At the Senior School, progress for students with a Learning Support Plan is reviewed annually and the format of Learning Support Plans is support/strategies-led rather than target-driven. At the Junior School, they are reviewed termly and are mostly target driven, although for some children a strategy plan is more suitable.

### **Support for Teachers**

Teachers are supported in their teaching of students with LDD in the following ways:

- Information outlined in the LDD Register
- Regular meetings, dialogue and updates during directed time regarding students on the LDD Register
- In-class observation and subsequent feedback highlighting key teaching and learning/Wave 1 considerations
- Provision of Learning Support Plans for selected students
- Regular input during staff meeting time and staff INSET on various learning differences/special educational needs
- Advice given within department, pastoral and whole-staff meetings
- Partnership and collaborative work

### **Support From Outside Agencies**

External support services can play an important part in helping the school identify, assess and make provision for students with special educational needs. Service providers who may work with parents/carers include Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services, Behaviour Outreach Support Service, Speech and Language Therapy Team, Physiotherapist / Occupational Therapist and the Educational Psychology Service. If there is any information arising from a specialist service provider who has been involved in working with the student and their family, the Head of Learning Support/Senco will need to be informed where appropriate so that a joint-planning approach can be implemented to take on board the advice from other professionals. Other key members of staff are involved in liaising with outside

professionals and at times, a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting may take place to inform a collaborative discussion around support.

### **Educational Psychologist Input and In-house Testing**

The Learning Support department draws on the information provided by a variety of agencies and professionals. A Specialist Assessor comes into the Senior School to conduct formal exam access arrangements assessments at different points throughout the year. The Head of Learning Support conducts all informal screening and assessment to establish whether exam access arrangements are needed before GCSEs and a variety of standardised assessment tools are used to identify the need for an arrangement. Teachers or parents/guardians and teaching staff may also refer a child for an assessment in Learning Support. In-house testing identifies any area of difficulty that the child may be experiencing and the results may determine a need for additional support. Support may include: teaching and learning information, a Learning Support Plan, extra time in tests, use of a laptop if there is a significant difficulty with handwriting and in a few cases, students may attend Curriculum Support lessons. The department also has an Exam Access Arrangements policy that details the school's approach and rationale regarding exam access arrangements. At the Junior School, the Senco can conduct informal screening for Dyslexia and Dyscalculia. These do not provide a diagnosis, but will signpost the need for any further professional assessment.

### **Access to Public Examinations/Exam Access Arrangements**

The Head of Learning Support is responsible for ensuring that students with learning differences have appropriate access arrangements for public examinations. These are described in publications by the examinations boards. The responsibility for arrangements lies with the school. There must be evidence of need that is ongoing and persistent in order to have a clear case for an exam access arrangement. Whilst students may be identified in Schoolrooms, formal assessment for exam considerations usually take place at the end of Upper Schoolroom (Year 9). Initial assessments scores identify whether extra time may be needed and this process is accompanied by a systematic procedure for referral which is followed by further testing if appropriate. It is important to note that a learning difference does not automatically warrant exam considerations and the evidence gathered must be substantial and illustrate a clear profile of need. Parents are invited to discuss arrangements with the Head of Learning Support.

### **Use of a Laptop and Word Processors**

Students at Bootham School with Specific learning differences may require the use of a laptop or other device to support the organisation and presentation of work. Students may be allowed to use a device in school as their normal way of working where a need has been established via:

- An ongoing concern raised by staff, parents/carers or the Learning Support department. Senior School staff can raise a concern regarding Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) using the *Exam Access Arrangements Referral Form*.
- Recommendations and assessment results that relate to speed of writing or other area of need where a device will significantly support the production of work. Assessment reports from in-house testing or an assessment conducted by an outside professional or specialist may support the use of a laptop or other device in school.

## **Use of a Laptop: Conditions**

In order to use a laptop in the Senior School as their normal way of working, the following conditions apply:

- A Specific Learning Difficulty (SPLD) has been identified and use of a laptop is recommended by the school and/or outside professionals.
- The student feels fully confident in using a laptop for day-to-day activities and is confident with basic, operational features such as using software, saving and organising work electronically and emailing work to staff where appropriate.
- The Learning Support Department approves the use of a laptop as the normal way of working.
- The student uses a laptop regularly apart from in lessons where other learning activities do not require it.
- A subject teacher has the right to veto the use of a laptop in lessons where specific situations apply such as during practical work or where its use may be problematic, i.e. during experiments.
- If a student is using a laptop in a way that is causing a distraction, or appears not to fully require it any more, the necessity of laptop use will be reviewed.
- Students must be responsible for their own laptop and have a spare battery in case mains power is not available.
- Students will need to print their work out or email their work to teaching staff, depending on the preference of subject teachers.
- Students should use a plain font and allow for teachers' comments.
- If there are problems in lessons with their laptop, the student should try and switch to pen and paper unless there is a specified medical need.
- Students should ensure their work is backed up by an external device.
- Students can print their work in the library.

In order to use a laptop in the Junior School as their normal way of working, the following conditions apply:

- A Specific Learning Difficulty (SPLD) has been identified and use of a laptop is recommended by the school and/or outside professionals.
- The Learning Support Department approves the use of a laptop as the normal way of working.

Students must use a school device, provided by the IT department.

The school recognises that a laptop or other device may be an appropriate way of working but please note this is on an individual case by case basis. The emphasis initially will be to support differentiated writing activities in mainstream lessons so as to avoid the use of a laptop as an immediate, default option.

While the school accedes to JCQ's recommendation (section 5.8 in the Joint Council for Qualifications booklet on Access Arrangements) the complexities outlined above mean that it will be unrealistic for our students to use a laptop in an examination unless they have been using it as their routine, normal way of working throughout their examination years at least. The use of word processors in examinations (section 5.8) must be viewed within the school's position on word processor/laptop use for Schoolrooms.

The Senior School Learning Support Department will be available to:

- Help students establish a daily routine and encourage them to operate in an organised and independent way.
- Act as a trouble-shooter for general staff queries concerning laptop users.



- Timetable a lunchtime support session for laptop users to support general organisation.

All considerations for laptop use will need to come through the Head of Learning Support and parents/carers and students will be required to sign a contract.

### **Role of the Head of Learning Support and the SENCo**

The Head of Learning Support (reporting to the Academic Deputy Head) and the SENCo (reporting to the Head of Learning Support and the Head of the Junior School) are responsible for ensuring the school maintains a legally compliant, effective strategy for supporting those students with learning differences. Each of these managers is also responsible, in their own section of the school, where relevant, for:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the policy
- Co-ordinating the provision for students with learning differences, including those with Statements/EHCPs
- Managing and supporting Learning Support department staff
- Monitoring the progress of students with learning differences
- Maintaining records which record the progress of and support for students with learning difficulties/disabilities
- Researching, defining, enabling and communicating to students, staff and parents, appropriate access arrangements for public examinations
- Liaising with parents
- Contributing to CPD
- Liaising with teaching staff, parents and external agencies
- Ensuring good liaison between the two schools

### **Co-ordination**

The Head of Learning Support holds regular meetings with support staff, various members of staff and the Academic Deputy Head. The Head of Learning Support will also be involved in meetings with external professionals regarding support for students on the LDD register. This provides a forum in which concerns can be raised and ideas for progress can be shared. In addition, close liaison is maintained between all teaching staff so that information and good practice can be updated regularly.

Parental involvement is encouraged and the Head of Learning Support is available to attend meetings when necessary so that parents/carers and guardians can discuss any issues that may arise. Private appointments with the Head of Learning Support can be made on request or discussion can take place over the telephone if that is more convenient.

### **Staffing**

At the senior school, the following members of staff support the work of the department:

Kerri Haynes-McDonnell: Head of Learning Support

Helena Landau: Learning Support Assistant

Liam McCreesh: Learning Support Assistant

Jess White: Learning Support Assistant (Social/Emotional support)

Louise Leaf is the Junior School Co-ordinator for Special Educational Needs (SENCo); she is supported by a team of Teaching Assistants.

### **Extra-Curricular Provision**

The school's rich provision of activities often provides opportunities for extending

the more able as well as engaging those who find some of the curriculum challenging in the classroom. The organisation for school trips and visits takes account of students' individual needs and where possible, an additional member of staff accompanies trips outside of school.

### **Staff Training and Development**

All members of staff are encouraged to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to work with SEN students. Part of the Head of Learning Support/SENCO's role in school-based INSET is to develop awareness of resources and practical teaching procedures for use with SEN students. As a routine part of staff development, INSET requirements in SEN will be assessed in order to identify priorities for staff training. The Head of Learning Support and SENCO are responsible for keeping their own training records up to date, and for bringing changes of provision or regulation and guidance to the notice of staff. The school will provide regular training opportunities for all teachers through the regular INSET programme. Individual staff members may choose to attend courses that address learning differences in their particular subject and may request for guidance from the Learning Support department if it is required. The Head of Learning Support will offer both informal and formal opportunities for staff training and CPD in learning differences.

### **Governors**

One of the responsibilities of the Governors' Educational and Pastoral Committee is oversight of the provision of learning support and accessibility for students with SEND and learning differences and it is their duty to meet the Independent School Standards in welfare, accommodation and safety.

### **Charges**

Once a student has been accepted into Bootham School, the 'reasonable adjustments' which we deem necessary will be made without extra charge. Occasionally, some additional services may be required, or requested, for which the school reserves the right to make an additional charge, on a case by case basis, on the basis of what is reasonable, after proper explanation and consultation with the student's parents/guardians/carers.

### **Complaints**

The school naturally hopes that a parent will not feel that they have cause to complain but its Complaints Policy is published on the website /available from the school office for any parent who wishes to use it.

### **Equality Act 2010 - Accessibility**

In accordance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act the school has a three-year accessibility plan to increase the extent to which disabled students (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the school's curriculum we will also improve the provision to disabled students of information which is already in writing for students who are not disabled. Where possible, we will improve the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school.

### **Behaviour**

The school's objective is to ensure that a student with SEND or other protected characteristic does not suffer less favourable treatment as a result of discrimination (please see Bootham School Behaviour Policy). The imposition of school discipline takes cognisance of individual student's needs.

## Compliance

This policy has regard to the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015) and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014

## Related Policies and Documents Available at Bootham Senior School and Junior School

- Accessibility Plan
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy / Expectations, Standards and Positive Relationships Policy
- EAL Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Able and Interested Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Educational Visits
- Equality policy
- Exam Access Arrangements Policy
- Exams Policy

**Date of last review:** September 2021  
**Person responsible:** Head of Learning Support  
**Review group:** Education Committee  
**Approval group:** Governors' Meeting  
**Date of next review:** September 2024

Pending approval at the Education Committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**Note: This policy will be checked and updated, on an annual basis, for matters of fact and process.**

**October 2020** – Checked for fact and process – no changes needed (KHM/KMc)

**Sept 2021 - Review:**

- Deletion of EAL Provision (a new EAL Policy is to be created)
- Update to Staff List
- Change to Review Month – to bring in line with other Teaching and Learning Policies