



Portsmouth
High School

GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Learning Difficulties and Disability Policy

Pre-School, Prep, Senior and Sixth Form

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Part of the Girls' Day School Trust family of schools

Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Policy

1. Introduction

This policy was reviewed and updated in September 2025 **broadly** in line with the **SEND Code of Practice 2015** and the **Equality Act of 2010**.

This school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all students which aims to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of students in a mainstream setting. When planning, this school aims to provide suitable learning challenges and respond to students' diverse learning needs.

Some students have barriers to learning and require particular action by the school. Such students may need additional or different help from that given to other students of the same age.

Students may have learning needs and disabilities either throughout or at any time during their school career. This policy ensures that curriculum planning and assessment for students with learning difficulties and disabilities takes account of the type and extent of the needs experienced by the student.

Support for a variety of needs is a collective whole-school responsibility – all teachers are teachers of pupils with individual needs.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are:

- to ensure the full integration of all students in the life of the school
- to create an environment that meets the learning needs and disabilities of each child
- to ensure that the learning needs and disabilities of children are identified, assessed and provided for within the context of our school
- to allow every student to experience success in their learning and to achieve to the highest standard possible
- to enable all children to have full access to all elements of the school curriculum
- to ensure that parents are able to play their part in supporting their child's education
- to ensure that our children have a voice in this process.

3. Educational Inclusion

Parents of children with SEND applying for a place at the school are invited to discuss the child's needs with the SEND Coordinator at an early stage, and the school may also contact the child's current school to gain further information. Each student is looked at as an individual case to see whether the school can effectively meet their needs. Every effort is made to accommodate a student's needs where possible, including arrangements for entrance tests.

The school can be named by the Local Authority in an EHC Plan with the school's agreement. Whether the school is named or not, a place will only be offered by the school once it is established that the school can support the provision specified on the EHC Plan.

We have high expectations of all students and we aim to achieve this through the removal of barriers to learning and participation. We want all our students to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. Through appropriate curricular provision, we respect the fact that students:

- have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations
- require different strategies for learning
- acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates
- need a range of different teaching approaches and experiences.

4. Definition of Learning Support

Learning support is provided through differentiated teaching in the mainstream classroom and specialist support that is targeted to meet the needs of the cohort. Additional needs may include:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of the same age within the school
- a significant discrepancy between her attainment and underlying ability
- a disability which prevents or hinders her from making use of the educational facilities that are provided for students of the same age.

Students must not be regarded as having a learning need solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Students who may need specialist support with their learning include those with the following types of learning difficulty:

- specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia
- social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- communication and interaction needs e.g. ASD, ADHD and speech and language difficulties
- sensory and physical difficulties e.g. visual or hearing impairment, physical and medical difficulties.

The person who co-ordinates such students' educational needs is the SEND Coordinator. The SEND Coordinator in the senior school is Mrs J Lennon-Bell and Mrs H Cells in the prep school.

Due to the selective nature of the school there are likely to be few students with general learning needs across the curriculum. Any such students are generally most effectively supported within the ordinary classroom through the adaptation of existing curriculum and materials.

5. Identification and Assessment

Prep School

In Early Years we closely monitor and assess girls on an ongoing basis in both Pre-school and Reception. Reception pupils are assessed at the end of the year against the Early Learning Goals. All early intervention is in line with the Code of practice and parents are fully involved.

Arrangements are made for a seamless transition to Reception from Pre-school and Reception to Year 1 with information sharing at all stages.

The school recognises the importance of early identification, assessment and provision for any child who may have learning needs and disabilities and to aid this the following are used:

- Early Years observation and Foundation Stage profiles
- CEM Reception baseline assessments
- GL progress tests in English and Maths
- CAT Tests
- TOMAL - Test of Memory and Learning
- DASH - Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting
- CTOPP – Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing
- TOWRE – Test of Word Reading Efficiency
- Tracking system based on formal assessment (See Assessment Policy)

Intervention is not necessary when a child makes adequate progress. This can be defined in a number of ways. It might, for instance, be progress which:

- closes the gap between child and peers
- prevents the gap growing wider
- is similar to those starting on the same baseline
- matches or betters previous rate of progress
- ensures full access to the curriculum with support
- an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills
- demonstrates improvement in behaviour.

Many pupils with mild learning needs will make adequate progress within a supportive environment without any additional intervention. If, however, adequate progress is not seen to be being made, then intervention will be made using the graduated approach outlined below.

Senior School

The school recognises the importance of early identification, assessment and provision for any student who may have learning needs and disabilities and to aid this the following assessment tools are used:

- Access Reading Test (Year 7 & 9)
- Vernon's Graded Spelling Test (Year 7& 9)
- Symbol Digit Modalities Test (SDMT) (Year 7 & 9) – visual processing
- DASH (Year7 & 9) – Writing Speed
- CTOPP – Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing
- TOWRE – Test of Word Reading Efficiency
- TOMAL 2
- Access Mathematics Tests
- GL Assessment Dyscalculia Screener
- exam papers not fully completed gathered for evidence of additional need (Year 7-9)
- green pen system – when granted extra time Yr10+ (students change to green pen when using extra time allowance in exams/tests/assessments)

Intervention is not necessary when a student makes adequate progress. This can be defined in a number of ways. It might, for instance, be progress which:

- closes the gap between the student and peers
- prevents the gap growing wider
- is similar to those starting on the same baseline
- matches or betters previous rate of progress
- ensures full access to the curriculum with support
- demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills
- demonstrates improvement in behaviour.

Many students with mild learning needs will make adequate progress within a supportive environment without any additional intervention. Staff have received training in identifying and supporting students with Specific Learning Needs. In addition, a programme of teaching about study and revision strategies is taught to Year 7 students and consolidated by staff through their subject teaching. This teaching covers many of the recommendations made by educational psychologists for students with mild specific learning needs. If, however, adequate progress is not seen to be being made, then intervention will be made using the graduated approach outlined below.

6. Curriculum Access, Provision and Review

The school follows the guidance set out in the **SEN Code of Practice 2015** and the **Equality Act of 2010** and uses a graduated approach in the form of a four-part cycle in which the class or subject teacher assesses the student's needs, drawing on a range of evidence, plans appropriate differentiation, puts this into practice and reviews the outcome.

Additional needs:

- If the graduated approach and associated teaching strategies implemented produce only minimal progress the Head of Learning Support will consider whether the pupil should be placed on the **Additional Needs Register**. Pupils are placed on the register if they have a diagnosed specific learning need or if their needs cannot be met by the graduated approach outlined above. The SEND Coordinator will look at samples of work and carry out observations or assessments as appropriate and these will be discussed with class teachers.
- Parents will be consulted and may be advised that a full assessment by an Educational Psychologist or specialist teacher would be useful. Parents who require the support of an Educational Psychologist or other outside agencies are required to obtain these services at their own expense outside of school. Advice on suitable agencies may be given by the SEND Coordinator.
- Occasionally a student with very significant difficulties will be permitted to discontinue a curriculum subject to allow for private study time and individual learning support. This arrangement is made at the discretion of the head teacher and in consultation with the student, parents, Deputy Head Pastoral and/or Deputy Head Academic and the SEND Coordinator.
- Appropriate provision will then be made if adequate progress is not being achieved. Extra provision may include timetabled curriculum support lessons. This option will be discussed with parents in consultation with the SEND Coordinator, Deputy Head Pastoral and/or Deputy Head Academic. Parental consent will be sought before pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra support and parents will be kept fully informed of the effectiveness of the support.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for a pupil with a “disability” as defined in the Equality Act i.e. children having a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [their] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.” The scope for flexibility to meet individual needs means that a meeting with the parents, the SEND Coordinator and a member of SLT will be held to discuss the appropriate reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids, the school can provide.
- If there are still concerns about the pupil’s progress, the school can recommend referral to a variety of agencies depending on the pupil’s identified needs. As Portsmouth High School is an independent school and not maintained by the Local Authority, the school does not have access to all the services of the LA. Parents who require the support of an Educational Psychologist or other outside agencies are required to obtain these services outside of school. Advice on suitable agencies may be given by the SEND Coordinator. The school will complete any necessary documentation requested by the agency and strategies recommended by external support services will, wherever possible, be implemented in the pupil’s normal classroom setting and through specialist teaching provided by the Learning Support department. Students who have independently commissioned reports are not placed on the Additional Needs Register unless the report indicates a very significant level of difficulty and the Educational Psychologist/specialist teacher has discussed this with the school.

EHC Plans:

- The parents of pupils with learning difficulties considered by the school and/or parents to be significant enough to require an EHC Plan should approach their relevant Local Authority and request a Statutory Assessment. The school will supply all necessary documentation requested by the LA and will complete and review EHCs regularly.
- The SEND Coordinator maintains a register which records the names of all pupils on the Additional Needs Register. This will be circulated to all teaching staff. Additions and updating are done regularly by the SEND Coordinator. Detailed records of all specialist support provided and reviews of classroom support are also maintained.

7. Responsibility for Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Portsmouth High School recognises the Code of Practice's emphasis that it is the responsibility of each teacher to provide suitably differentiated work for students in a class and to seek to initially identify and then support students in his/her class with advice and guidance from the SEND Coordinator. The teacher is supported in this by:

- the Head of Faculty in the Senior School or curriculum leader in the Prep School who is responsible for schemes of work and supporting materials
- the SEND Coordinator who will give guidance on the preparation of differentiated materials and teaching strategies
- the distribution of standardised scores for reading, spelling and mathematics assessment results along with the results of the MidYIS tests so that teachers are aware of the differing abilities of each member of their teaching groups to enable them to adjust their teaching strategies and resources to meet the individual needs of the student.

In this school the SEND Coordinator:

- manages the day-to-day operation of the policy
- reports back to the Head of the Prep School / Deputy Heads who makes recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) regarding the future development of policy
- co-ordinates the provision for and manages the responses to students' needs;
- supports and advises colleagues
- assesses the learning difficulties of individual students
- oversees the records of all students with learning difficulties and disabilities;
- acts as a link with parents
- acts as link with external agencies and other support agencies
- manages a range of resources, human and material, to enable appropriate provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities
- contributes to the professional development of all staff

- organises the assessment of students for access arrangements in public examinations based on the current JCQ criteria
- teaches groups of students and individual students.

8. Resources available for students with Learning Difficulties

The SEND Coordinator is responsible for the operational management of the specified and agreed resourcing for special needs provision within the school, including the provision for any students with EHC Plans.

The Deputy Heads, Head of the Prep School, and the SEND Coordinator meet together annually in December to agree on how to use funds allocated.

9. Partnership with Parents

At Portsmouth High School we value the knowledge parents have of their daughters and use this to enable us to provide the appropriate learning support. Equally, we will always inform parents of any concerns we have and discuss fully any action we feel necessary. It is our objective that every parent/carer feels happy and confident to discuss their student's needs with their class teacher in the Prep school and Deputy Head Academic in the senior school and/or SEND Coordinator at any time.

Parents will be consulted before individual assessments take place and the results will be communicated to them. Parents commissioning an educational psychology report will be offered the opportunity to discuss it with the SEND Coordinator and will be given a copy of any strategy sheet circulated to staff.

10. Student Participation

In our school, we encourage students to take responsibility and to make decisions. This is part of the culture of our school and relates to students of all ages.

Students are involved at an appropriate level in setting targets for their individual learning support lessons and are encouraged to make judgements about their own performance. Through study skills teaching, they will be encouraged to evaluate their work constructively and take responsibility for their progress. We recognise success here as we do in any other aspect of school life.

Students who have an educational psychology report will have the opportunity to discuss its implications with the SEND Coordinator.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The SEND Coordinator monitors the movement of students within the learning support system in school and will provide the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with an annual summary of the impact of the policy on the practice of the school.

The SEND Coordinator liaises with the Deputy Heads and Head of Year 7 about the needs of students transferring to the Senior Department.

The SEND Coordinator and the SLT will review this policy annually and consider any amendments in the light of the annual review findings. The SEND Coordinator reports the outcome of the review to the staff.

Date September 2025

Review Date 2026

SEND Coordinator (Senior School)