



## Mount Lourdes Grammar School Learning Support Policy

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This policy takes account of the following legislation and documentation:

### **Legislation:**

- [The Education \(NI\) Order 1996](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(NI\) Order 2005](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act \(NI\) 2016](#)

### **Documentation:**

- [Department of Education Northern Ireland \(1998\) Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Bangor: DENI \(PDF, 644KB\)](#)
- [Department of Education Northern Ireland \(2005\) Supplement to the Code of Practice. Bangor: DENI \(PDF, 801KB\)](#)
- [Equality Commission, Northern Ireland \(2006\) Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools \(SENDO\). \(PDF, 761 KB\)](#)
- [Department of Education Northern Ireland \(2009\) \*Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement, Bangor: DENI.\* \(PDF, 706KB\)](#)

### **Philosophy**

In Mount Lourdes we believe that all students should have equal access to all areas of the curriculum, regardless of their ability and should have equal opportunities for learning in the school. We aim to promote the intellectual, emotional, social and physical development of all our students including those with additional needs and ensure their full entitlement to a broad and balanced, high-quality education so that they can achieve their full potential and enhance their self-esteem. We recognise that there is a continuum of special educational needs which should be matched by a continuum of provision. Students may have additional learning, pastoral, behavioural or medical needs at any time during their school life which may create barriers to learning. In implementing this policy, we believe that pupils can be helped to overcome these barriers to learning. The development of Learning Support provision forms an integral part of the School Development Plan.

### **Defining Special Educational Needs**

A pupil has special needs if she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for her.

A student has a learning difficulty if she:

- **has a significantly greater difficulty in learning** than the majority of the students of the same age;
- **has a disability which either prevents or hinders her from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of her age in an ordinary school.**

### **(The Education Act 1993 Part III)**

The SEND Act, revised SEN regulations and revised Code of Practice are the key building blocks in delivering the new SEN framework.

### **Categories of Special Needs**

The following categories may be defined as having Special Educational needs:

1. students with specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia
2. students with specific weaknesses in basic reading & writing skills
3. students with sensory disabilities e.g. hearing/visual problems
4. students with physical disabilities
5. students with emotional and psychological difficulties
6. students with enforced long absences or who are irregular attendees
7. students with behavioural problems
8. statemented students
9. students whose parents have communicated a serious concern regarding their daughter's personal, academic, social progress in the school
10. students who demonstrate a significant problem in relationship with peers and adults
11. students who are in advance of their peer group and are academically gifted.

### **Principles**

1. **Entitlement.** Every student will be entitled to have her needs identified and responded to appropriately.
2. **Whole school approach.** All teachers have a responsibility to meet the needs of the students. A whole system of communication, monitoring, evaluation and support will be maintained.
3. **Provision.** Provision for students will match their needs and be in partnership with the students' parents.
4. **External support.** A system of liaison with external support agencies will be available if appropriate.
5. **Training.** INSET requirements will be reviewed to accommodate Learning Support Policy requirements.

## **Objectives**

1. to identify and assess students with SEN as early and thoroughly as possible
2. to consult with parents and students with respect to background history, current and future needs and aspirations
3. to listen to the voice of the child and on the participation of children, young people and their parents in decision-making both at individual and strategic levels with a particular change for post 16 pupils with statements
4. to consult with primary schools and secondary schools with respect to background history and current needs
5. once identification, assessment and intervention have taken place, to monitor closely the progress made by students receiving support
6. to ensure that those dealing with SEN students receive advice, support and training as required
7. to focus on both improving and on measuring outcomes for children and young people with SEN or disabilities
8. to ensure that within the school, there is effective communication and co-ordination between all relevant persons, including Principal, Vice-Principal, Senior Teachers, Form Teachers, Year Heads, subject teachers, classroom assistants, parents and external agencies where necessary
9. to establish and update regularly the SEN Register
10. to ensure that access to SEN information on the register is available to students, parents, subject teachers and the pastoral care staff
11. to ensure that the Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC) keeps relevant staff fully informed as to the special educational needs of any students in their charge
12. to ensure that our students' special educational needs are known to other schools or colleges to which they may transfer
13. to regularly review and adapt the curriculum as required in order to match what is taught to the children's aptitudes and abilities
14. to address the areas of literacy and numeracy on a cross-curricular basis
15. to keep under constant review the whole school policy on SEN provision.

## **The management of SEN**

The daily management of the policy will be undertaken by the Learning Support Co-ordinator, Mrs Mary Keaney in partnership with the Assistant Learning Support Co-ordinator, Mrs Catherine Conroy. The overall responsibility will be undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team.

The Code of Practice identifies the roles and responsibilities of all concerned with the students' educational welfare.

## **Heads of Department**

Heads of Department are responsible for:

- ensuring that schemes of work refer to the Learning Support policy and are consistent with it
- ensuring that there is appropriate resource development for SEN students within their departments
- ensuring that the issue of differentiation has been addressed within the departmental schemes of work
- monitoring the implementation of the LS policy in their departments
- ensuring that strategies are drawn up relevant to the student's needs, in conjunction with department members

## **Subject teachers**

Subject teachers are responsible for:

- identifying, detailing and reporting concerns regarding students with educational needs to the Learning Support Co-ordinator
- working with the Learning Support Co-ordinator in diagnosing and assessing the needs of students with SEN
- providing special help within the normal curriculum framework, exploring ways in which increased differentiation of class work, alternative teaching and learning strategies or different classroom organisation might better meet pupil's needs
- reviewing provision regularly
- monitoring outcomes

## **Parents of SEN students**

Parents are responsible for:

- working in partnership with the school staff and other professionals involved with the student
- providing the information necessary to assist staff understand the pupil's needs
- supporting & giving help at home
- being involved in monitoring progress at home and participating in the review process
- communicating any concerns to the school

They will have access to:

- The Learning Support Policy
- The relevant documentation on their child on the Learning Support Register
- Details of statutory & voluntary services which might provide information or counselling
- EAWR flyers, as appropriate, explaining access arrangements and statutory assessment procedures

## **The pupil**

The pupil is responsible for:

- being involved in the decision-making
- setting goals
- reviewing her progress

## **Learning Support Team**

Learning Support Co-ordinator - Mrs Mary Keaney

KS3 Learning Support Co-ordinator - Mrs Catherine Conroy

## **Classroom Assistant Team:**

Mrs Mary Corrigan

Ms Rebecca Cassidy

Mrs Angela Feely

Ms Caitriona Goodwin

Mrs Marie Keenan

Mrs Anna Kroma

Ms Rebecca Magee

Mrs Pauline McCaffrey

Ms Molly McCaughey

Mrs Mary Wray

Mrs Ausra Wheeler

The classroom assistant is responsible for:

- working closely with the Learning Support Co-ordinator
- ensuring that they fully understand the nature of the pupil's SEN
- liaising with the subject teachers
- maintaining records confidentially
- reporting any concerns to the subject teachers and LSC where appropriate
- undertaking relevant training.

## **Additional assistance**

Additional assistance is available from ancillary staff as necessary. The school lift is available to those who need it.

## **Specialist programmes**

Cognitive Abilities Tests are undertaken by the new Year 8 pupils and students in year 11. Students identified as having literacy or numeracy difficulties will receive Peer Tutoring at Key Stage 3. Students who experience phonic/spelling difficulties undertake an ICT Wordshark programme.

Study Skills – how to revise/organise/time management/good health/stress management

Game & Social Club – social interaction/communication for students in years 8

## **Students for whom English is an additional language (Newcomer pupils)**

The following support is provided for these students:

- Initial interview with student
- Bilingual dictionaries and, if deemed necessary, 25% extra time in examinations during their first two years in the country – in line with JCQ regulations
- Class notes if necessary
- Differentiation
- Key words provided
- Early familiarisation with new topics in order to become accustomed to level of language in advance of topic

LSC liaises with Inclusion and Diversity Service.

## **External Agencies**

We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in assisting to identify, assess and provide for pupils with SEN. When it is considered necessary, colleagues from the following support services will be involved with pupils with SEN:

- EAWR
- Educational Psychologist Service
- Social Services
- Education Welfare Services
- CAMHS Team
- SBEW Team
- Hearing Impairment/Visual impairment services
- Occupational Therapy Services
- Medical personnel

## **Access Arrangements**

Mary Keaney – Certificate of Competency in Educational Testing (CCET) course May 2013 and Access Arrangements Training March 2015.

Catherine Conroy - Certificate of Competency in Educational Testing June 2019.

Appropriate Access Arrangements are applied for SEN students, in line with JCQ regulations.

## **Dealing with private Educational Psychologist reports**

The school is under no obligation to follow any advice or recommendations in private reports which in the teachers' professional opinions and the school's experience of working with the child, are not appropriate for the child and/or conflict with the presentation of the pupil in school.

***This policy document should be read in conjunction with other school policy documents such as those on Pastoral Care, Access Arrangements, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, Intimate Care, Literacy and Numeracy in order to gain a fuller picture of the approach taken to pupils with Additional Needs.***

**Learning Support Policy reviewed by Mary Keaney on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024**