

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES POLICY**

### **Aims**

Malvern College seeks to promote a whole school policy approach through which all staff are aware and informed of the needs of all pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Our practices are designed to detect the presence of a learning difficulty, to enable a pupil with a special educational need to access the curriculum and public examinations, and to help the pupil improve his/her academic skills and learning strategies, take responsibility for their own learning and understand his/her learning profile.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the International Baccalaureate and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations, we are committed to ensuring that all students have a fair opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do in assessment and examination. The provision for suitable access arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties or other disabilities which can significantly affect their performance during examinations (and in some other kinds of assessments) is therefore a priority.

### **Policy Statement**

Malvern College is a mainstream independent school that accepts boys and girls from the ages of 13 to 18. We expect parents to declare any concerns and provide documentation relevant to any special educational need and to agree, if necessary, to assessment as part of the interview procedure and/or to subsequent screening for specific learning difficulties.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format, if required.

"Special educational needs" and "learning difficulty"

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions (if your child has a disability, please ask to see our Disability policy);

- are under five and fall within the definitions above or are likely to do so do when of compulsory school age if special educational provision was not made for the child.

A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or (form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home. (section 20 (4) Children and Families Act 2014). However, children for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support provided they meet the School's academic criteria. Please refer to the School's policy for pupils with English as an additional language.

A child who finds a particular subject difficult does not necessarily have a "learning difficulty" in the legal sense of that expression; there will often be disparities in the speed with which children learn, in their skill at solving problems and in their general acumen.

The expression "learning difficulty" covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The expression may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing or who have an autistic spectrum disorder including Asperger's Syndrome.

Learning difficulties may affect children who have a high IQ and academic ability as well as those of lower IQ and ability. Sometimes a child's learning difficulty becomes apparent for the first time at the age of 11+ or older, when the educational pressures tend to increase.

### **Provision**

The provision offered to pupils with a Learning Difficulty includes private individual tuition for preliminary diagnostic assessment and specialist teaching to help pupils find and implement tailored strategies for their learning to maximise their academic success across the curriculum. Lesson provision is co-ordinated by the SENCO/Head of Department and lessons are delivered by a team of specialist teachers. It may be necessary to seek referral to an Educational Psychologist or Specialist SpLD Assessor for a full psychometric assessment. Any formal diagnostic assessment commissioned by the College will incur an additional cost to parents but will only be undertaken with prior parental permission.

### **Consultation**

Malvern College Learning Enhancement department undertakes to do all that is reasonable to consult with pupils and parents about any identified special educational needs. House and teaching staff are made aware of a pupil's needs as necessary and are encouraged to promote appropriate support/teaching practices.

## **Implementation and Procedures**

### **Screening**

Pupils are screened for learning difficulties in their first term of entry. The screening process does not necessarily use standardised or diagnostic tests but serves to detect profiles and performance that may need further investigation. The cost of this screening is included in the fees. If further investigation is warranted, a period of consultation with the Housemaster/mistress, tutor and relevant departments follows; if it is considered that there may be a learning difficulty, the SENCO writes to parents recommending further investigation through diagnostic testing. Referral may then be made, after discussion with parents, to an Educational Psychologist or Specialist SpLD Assessor.

### **Code of Practice**

Our approach to the detection and management of learning difficulties will be guided by the Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DFE - 0000205-2013), Department for Education (DfE), January 2015 (Code), or any substituting or amending code of practice issued from time to time by the Department for Education (DfE).

### **Policy for Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.**

Parents and the School have the right under section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ask the local authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC plan. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right. If the local authority refuses to make an assessment, the parents (but not the School) have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Health Education and Social Care).

Where a prospective pupil has an EHC plan, we will consult the parents and, where appropriate, the local authority to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC plan can be delivered by the School. We will co-operate with the local authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.

Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHC plan will need to be charged to the local authority if the authority is responsible for the fees and our school is named in Section I of the EHC plan. In all other circumstances charges will be made directly to parents unless the additional services can be considered to be a "reasonable adjustment" where no charge will be made, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010]

For a pupil with EHC the Learning Enhancement department will devise the first IEP, in consultation with the child's parents and, where appropriate the child, within two months of arrival at Malvern College, or immediately the EHC plan is finalized whichever is the later. The child's achievements, in the light of the IEP, will be reviewed at least twice a year by the school, and fully considered at the first annual review of the statement when further targets can be set.

In working with a child with an EHC plan or a statement, Malvern College will at all times take account of good practice, ensure consultation with relevant services where this is necessary, agree priorities (through the IEP process), inform parents, teachers and other interested professionals and regularly review targets and teaching strategies and objectives.

**Welfare needs:** The School recognises that pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties may be at risk of being bullied. The School has an anti-bullying policy which makes it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously. If parents are concerned about their child's welfare they can approach the pupil's Housemaster or Housemistress or Mrs Bijl, the school's Safeguarding Coordinator to discuss their concerns in private at any time.

**Disability:** The School recognises that some pupils with special education needs or learning difficulties may also have a disability. Pupils and parents are referred to the School's Disability policy. The School will make all reasonable adjustments in order to afford opportunity to disabled pupils. However if, despite such adjustments, the School is unable to provide adequately for the pupil's needs, the School may decline to offer a place to a pupil or request you withdraw your child from the School.

**Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO):** [Mr Richard Whitehead] is the School's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). He has responsibility for:

- ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of a child's special educational needs;
- advising and supporting other staff in the School;
- ensuring that appropriate Individual Education Plans are in place;
- ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with special education needs is collected, recorded and updated;
- undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice on special educational needs.

**Responsibility:** Parents bear the overall responsibility for taking decisions about the management of their child's learning difficulties. A parent who would prefer to have a formal assessment instead of additional specialist teaching or Learning Enhancement should make arrangements accordingly with the School but must ensure that we are given copies of all advice and reports received. It should be noted that, for Access Arrangements applications, the Joint Council for Qualifications requires all diagnostic testing to have been conducted by an assessor appointed by the examining centre; therefore, scores from assessments commissioned independently by a candidate's family are not acceptable for (I)GCSE and A Level Access Arrangements applications.

## SEN Documentation

SEN List: The list is kept electronically, updated regularly and distributed to teaching staff, Housems and tutors termly. The Register records formal assessments by an Educational Psychologist, identifies briefly the nature of the difficulty and notes the prescription of any medication. It also indicates which member of the Learning Enhancement department is working with the pupil.

There are 2 possible stages of entry on the list:

- Stage 1: Watch and Monitor - this stage reflects concerns recorded in past educational history or identified from the screening test/at entry.
- Stage 2: School Action - the pupil has a diagnosed profile and is receiving one-to-one specialist tuition from the L/S department.

Written reports from outside agencies (Diagnostic Assessment Reports)

These are the property of the parent or guardian but copies are retained by the Learning Enhancement department and are available to the pupil's Housem and to the Medical Centre. Tutors receive a summarised account of the Learning Difficulty profile with suggested strategies. Confidentiality, discretion with reference to distribution and sensitivity in interpretation are paramount considerations.

Referrals to the Learning Enhancement Department

Teaching or House staff can refer a student to the SENCO at any time. The SENCO will conduct further investigation and, as appropriate, arrange to meet the pupil and liaise with his/her parents. Referral information is retained by the Learning Enhancement department.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

For pupils on the SEN List at Stage 2: School Action, an IEP is prepared in consultation with the pupil after a period of diagnostic teaching. The purpose of the IEP is to provide teaching staff with information and guidance re the special educational needs of the pupil and to offer suggestions and recommendations for supporting classroom strategies. These recommendations are designed to be applicable across the curriculum. The IEP also outlines the areas to be targeted by the Learning Enhancement teacher. The IEP is available electronically on SIMS The IEP is reviewed and updated annually and a copy is available to parents prior to or at Parents' Meetings.

Pupils on the SEN List at Stage 1: Watch and Monitor are kept under review by individual teaching departments, who are supplied with key SEN diagnostic scores and generalised suggestions by the SENCO. Departments use this data together with their holistic knowledge of the pupil to generate a Departmental IEP for each pupil.

Learning Enhancement Lessons

Pupils attending the Learning Enhancement department are offered regular one-to-one 55-minute lessons, usually on a weekly basis. In the Lower School, a slight reduction to a pupil's subject portfolio is advisable to ensure that Learning Enhancement can be accommodated during a free period within the timetable. Where this is not possible, pupils may negotiate a

lesson time outside their academic and co-curricular/sporting commitments. Half a term's notice is required in writing to terminate Learning Enhancement lessons. Pupils are required to give 24 hours' notice if they are unable to attend a lesson. In those cases when Learning Enhancement lessons are judged to be necessary as part of "reasonable adjustment" no charge will be made.

Learning Enhancement tutors may recommend referral to other specialists and/or work alongside other programmes of treatment or therapy at the parents' request.

Learning Enhancement teachers attend Parents' Meetings and are happy to discuss parents' concerns by phone, email or by appointment.

The SENCO liaises closely with other Heads of Department over the provision of schemes of work, textbooks, examination results and the general academic performance of pupils in the Learning Enhancement department. There is also close consultation with Housemasters and tutors as necessary. Tutors are asked to inform and liaise with the subject teachers of their tutees re the SEN profile.

## **Examinations**

### **Access Arrangements at Common Entrance**

Malvern College requires schools with candidates with a specific learning difficulty or any other special educational need to seek permission from the College for Access Arrangements at Common Entrance. An Educational Psychologist's report needs to be sent with the special needs report to the College.

### **Access Arrangements for Internal Examinations**

Pupils who have a special educational need may be eligible for special arrangements in internal examinations. All parties are asked to liaise with the SENCO in good time.

### **Access Arrangements in Public Examinations**

Malvern College is guided by the published guidelines of the JCQ and the IBO. It is school policy that all pupils seeking to apply for examination concessions in public examinations will need to have a full assessment after the commencement of Year 9 (Foundation Year) from a suitably qualified Educational Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist or Specialist SpLD Assessor. While the IBO accepts an assessment commissioned independently in a pupil's country of residence, JCQ only accepts the results of testing conducted by centre-appointed assessors. The assessment must quantify the evidence of a learning difficulty and declare that it is significant, so warranting access arrangements. Any specific recommendations regarding access arrangements are considered carefully and discussed fully with the pupil. Both the Joint Council for Qualifications and the International Baccalaureate Organisation require Access Arrangements to be determined by the school through the combination of data from the diagnostic assessment and the school's own observations of the pupil's needs. The

examining boards therefore require us to monitor and document the history of Learning Enhancement provision for the student for the duration of the relevant course.

#### Parental Responsibility

To ensure that parents and pupils can be given the most appropriate advice and support, it is important that all relevant information and documentation about any possible special educational need and any history of learning support is shared with the school. Parents must provide the SENCO with copies of any reports or recommendations concerning the pupil's special educational needs from previous schools or elsewhere.

#### Departmental Staffing

The department currently has eight specialist teachers (including the Head of Department), all of whom have considerable appropriate experience in supporting and teaching pupils with Special Educational Needs

#### Alternative Arrangements

Withdrawal: We reserve the right, following consultation with you, to ask or require you to withdraw your child from the School if, in our opinion after making all reasonable adjustments and exhausting appropriate strategies:

- your child is in need of a formal assessment, additional specialist teaching, learning support or medication to which you do not consent; and / or
- you have withheld information from the School which, had the information been provided, would have made a significant difference to the School's management of your child's learning difficulties; and / or
- your child's learning difficulties require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the [• Head], the School is unable to provide, manage or arrange;
- your child has special educational needs that make it unlikely he / she will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities which we provide.

Alternative placement: In any of these circumstances we will do what is reasonable to help you to find an alternative placement which will provide your child with the necessary level of teaching and support.

Financial: Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances will not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. The deposit paid in respect of your child will be credited to your account.