



ALDENHAM
— SCHOOL —

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY

**Reviewed March 2024
By Head of Learning Support**

I. Setting the Context

This SEND policy has been updated and brought into line with the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years', effective from September 2014.

Every teacher is a teacher for every child or young person, including those with SEND. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority of children and young people. Some children and young people need educational provision that is additional to or different from this.

Pupils are identified at the earliest point by analysing progress which:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;
- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress;
- Fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers; or,
- Widens the attainment gap.

There are four broad areas of need identified in the Code of Practice:

- Communication and interaction;
- Cognition and learning;
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties; and,
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

These give an overview of the range of needs that are planned for. The purpose of identification is to work out what action the School needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category.

Aldenham School has adopted the graduated approach with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review. Earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes.

Pupils are supported using a variety of tried and tested methods that have successfully been developed. These methods of support are still evolving to ensure our SEND pupils can successfully access a broad and balanced curriculum. At each stage of this process, pupils and parents/carers are involved and the support is centered around the child. High aspirations about employment, independent living and community participation are developed through the curriculum and extra-curricular provision offered, ensuring young people are prepared for adult life.

2. Principles

As an independent institution, Aldenham School follows the principles of:

- The Education Act (1993)
- The Code of Practice (1994)
- SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years August 2014
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Revised SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA)
- SEN (Special Education Needs) Information Act 2008
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Single Equality Bill 2009
- Breaking the Link between SEN and Low Attainment 2010
- IDP BESD 2010

- The Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Bill 2012
- SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time 2022

3. Definition of Disability, Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The new Code of Practice (2014) referred to above states that:

- A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
- A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
 - Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age;
 - Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age; or,
 - Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other young people of the same age.

“Legally a child is defined as having special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which needs special teaching. A learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age. Or, it means a child has a disability which needs different educational facilities from those generally provided by schools for children of the same age in the area.”

4. Objectives

To promote:

- A whole school approach, with all staff sharing responsibility for provision;
- A partnership between pupils, parents, teachers and management;
- A broad education with access to the full curriculum;
- Provision that enables pupils with LDD (Learning Difficulties and Disabilities) to fulfil their potential; and,
- The development of confident, independent learners.

To:

- Raise the achievement of children with LDD;
- Provide personalised learning pathways for each child with LDD; and,
- Make education more innovative and responsive to the diverse needs of individual children.

The SEN strategy at Aldenham School is based on:

- Early identification and intervention to ensure that help is accessed as soon as possible;
- Removing barriers to learning by embedding inclusive practice in school and early years settings;
- Raising expectations and achievements by developing teachers' skills and strategies; and,
- Delivering improvement in partnership.

5. Access to the Curriculum

All pupils have access to the Aldenham curriculum with inclusive teaching styles to address the differing needs of children although an individual teaching plan may recommend modifications in response to a

pupil's educational needs. All pupils are supported and encouraged to achieve their potential; pupils with special educational needs receive help according to their needs. Parents are involved as partners in the educational process and pupils are involved in agreeing individual development plans for inclusion into the curriculum. We follow the Every Child Matters (DfES 2003) and Every Child Achieves (White paper Nov 2007) strategies to reduce educational failure and maximise the potential of all children with special educational needs.

6. Access to Information

Record sheets including evidence and exam access arrangements are kept in the Learning Support office for each pupil entered on the SEN Register. Further details and teaching implications are also available on iSAMS and staff are encouraged to forward their own comments to the SENCO. In addition, updated information is regularly circulated to teaching staff. They must treat this information as strictly confidential and access to information is in line with the ICT (Information and Communications) code of practice. Guidelines for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and guidelines for identification of LDD pupils are available to teachers on the school computer system.

7. Admissions

Aldenham is an independent school that has an academically selective admissions policy and we welcome all children who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer and can flourish in the caring environment of the school.

Treating every child as an individual is important to us, and we welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Support Department can provide them with the support that they require. We do not, however, have the facilities to offer highly specialised and intensive treatment. We advise parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the Admissions department and/or the SENCO before he or she sits our entrance exam so that we can make adequate provision for him/her.

Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report to support their request; for example, for extra time or other special arrangements such as use of a laptop. Each pupil with a learning difficulty or disability requires special consideration and treatment. If appropriate, adjustments will need to be put in place. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for their child once they have accepted the offer of a place and before he/she becomes a pupil at the school. Should the situation change and the needs change, the school will review the provision and whether it is appropriate for the child to remain at the school.

8. Identifying Pupils with LDD

- On transfer from prep school, with close liaison and advance planning of provision with the Prep school SENCO and parents;
- On admission, information dissemination and implementation of provision;
- Whole year screening of Years 7 and 9 at the beginning of each academic year identifies both those children entering the School at Year 7 or 9 and existing pupils in Year 9 who achieve below average for their age. These children are then monitored and offered learning support according to needs. This is done using specific screening software and also through the interpretation of baseline data from MidYIS and Alis.
- Standardised tests (showing the individual's position compared to others of the same age) are administered to investigate in more detail pupils' learning profiles. These include strengths and struggles in order to advise staff of appropriate strategies and to support applications for exam access arrangements.
- Referral can come from parents, teachers or pupil self-referral. Pupils who are identified as a

cause for concern can be referred to the Learning Support Department for an assessment for SpLD (specific learning difficulty). Following assessment, appropriate teaching strategies are circulated to staff in order to support the pupil effectively in the classroom situation. Details are recorded in iSAMS and relevant exam access arrangements sought.

- Close links are maintained with House tutors, Housemasters and Heads of Department. The progress of each pupil is monitored and concerns regarding individual needs are passed on to Learning Support. Agreed support programmes are circulated to all teachers supporting individual pupils and information available on iSAMS.
- Whilst pupils in the senior school have usually been assessed before arriving, a specific learning difficulty can become apparent at any stage indicated by a discrepancy between general intellectual ability and a particular area of learning. This is often shown by a wide variation of scores in MidYIS and Alis skills testing or by performance in class and exams.
- Full diagnostic assessment is carried out for pupils requiring exam access arrangements for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). All assessment materials and tools provide standardised scores which can be used as evidence of need when applying for relevant exam access arrangements.

9. Provision for Pupils with LDD

In line with the new Code of Practice, Aldenham School provides a 'graduated response' to SEND:

- **ASSESS:** early identification of pupils who are falling behind the level of ability expected from a child of that age;
- **PLAN:** support and advice for pupils, parents, subject teachers and management;
- ensuring that the child is at the centre of any planning and that parents are informed;
- **DO:** differentiated, flexible Quality First Teaching to meet individual LDD needs. Subject teachers and Heads of Department are responsible for meeting the needs of pupils with LDD in their classrooms, having the highest possible aspirations and expectations for all pupils;
- Development of suitable programmes for pupils with LDD, eg. modified curriculum, courses etc;
- Application for, and implementation of, appropriate examination access arrangements (GCSE, GCE) and accommodations and modifications (IB); and,
- **REVIEW:** regular reviews to assess the effectiveness of the support and its impact on the child's progress.

Aldenham School operates a flexible specialist support system in which it makes provision for external professionals such as speech and language therapists and occupational therapists to give programmes of support to children in school and close links are kept with the local county advisors for speech and language, dyslexia and autism for advice and support with regard to individual programmes of support.

- Specialist tuition is offered to pupils with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia etc.
- Qualified specialist teachers provide 1:1 support outside the classroom for identified pupils supporting curriculum subjects, developing independent study skills, numeracy and literacy skills.
- Sixth Form mentors give support to reluctant readers in Years 7 and 8.
- Support also takes the form of small group study skills and individual tuition for specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia etc, as well as for pupils who are finding independent study difficult or who are suffering with anxiety when approaching exams.
- Referrals are made for more specialist assessment and advice, for instance to Educational Psychologist or a Speech and Language therapist for full assessment of dyslexia, and working with those recommendations.
- The progress of pupils with LDD is monitored closely.
- Progress is reviewed 6 times a year on Grade Sheets, in annual written reports, in informal discussions with parents and at annual parents' evenings.

- The department is involved in whole school systems to support pupils whose progress is a cause for concern (SATIS cards, case-conferencing).
- Individual education is planned for each pupil, according to need. By the Sixth Form, pupils are supported to manage the meeting of their own individual learning needs through the Head of Sixth Form.
- Access to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. Most pupils with LDD follow the full curriculum. Exceptionally, their curriculum will be tailored to provide appropriate challenge and promote success.

Mrs Hilary Southgate, Head of Learning Support, is responsible for coordinating the day-to-day provision for pupils with LDD. The school provides support through its staff for LDD including dyslexia, dyspraxia, coordination disorders and ADHD, ASD. She is responsible for managing SEN provision specified in Statements of Special Educational Need and in maintaining effective communication with the Education Authority and outside agents advising and supporting pupils to ensure that provision and assessment remains current and relevant.

10. Inclusion

Pupils with LDD have access to the full life of the school, including curricular and extracurricular activities. A positive view of learning difference is actively promoted and confidentiality is ensured; there is sensitivity to the stigma sometimes associated with LDD.

11. Physical Accessibility

We recognise that some children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities may also have physical disabilities. Parents and prospective parents of children with physical disabilities can obtain copies of Aldenham School's Accessibility Plan and Disability Policy from the website. This shows the ways in which we plan to make our buildings progressively more accessible to pupils, parents and visitors with physical disabilities.

12. Responsibility to governors

- The Head of Learning Support reports to the Deputy Head (Academic), who reports to the Governing body.
- Complaints from parents about provision for LDD can be made to the Head of Department, the Deputy Head (Academic), the Head and the Governing body, recorded in accordance with the ISI guidelines.

13. In-service training

- The team of teachers in the department update their training and qualifications through professional development courses and reading.
- Training is provided to subject teachers in how to meet the needs of pupils during inset training days at the beginning of each term, with new starters and with the GTP (Graduate training programme).
- Training is provided to subject teachers in liaison with the Head of Teacher Development.
- Guidance is available on the school system to assist teachers in the support of specific conditions.

14. Links

- To a cluster of learning support departments in independent schools, through which expertise and experience in provision for LDD in the independent sector is freely shared.
- With local and international educational/clinical psychologist, health and occupational health services – referral to appropriate specialists, and implementation in turn of their

- recommendations.
- With the relevant professional associations and their local counterparts.
- With parents: parents are encouraged to email/phone/come into school, to discuss concerns for transition to higher education – advice on suitable courses any concerns they may have concerning their child's education and welfare.
- Universities, advice on provision for LDD.

15. Department Self-Evaluation

- MidYIS and Alis data provide a baseline value for achievement which allows the value-added data obtained at public exams to be compared to whole school population values.
- Reading and spelling are measured annually using standardised tests to check progress.
- Teachers in the department are regularly appraised as part of the school appraisal cycle.
- Formal and informal lesson observation, checking of teaching files and discussion of pupils and groups is regularly carried out.

16. Exam Access Arrangements

The SENCO, as Head of Centre, confirms assessments are up-to-date and ensures that the JCQ regulations are followed when applying for exam access arrangements. Pupils must have a specific learning difficulty before consideration for exam access arrangements can be given. A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a difficulty which places the learner at a substantial disadvantage. They must not, however, give the learner an unfair assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments. Recommendations by Assessors are only recommendations, and it is the role of the school to decide if these recommendations are substantiated with sufficient robust evidence. When joining the school from another Centre, parents will need to provide up-to-date SEN information. If this information is incomplete, out of date or not robust, parents will be required to arrange for an Educational Psychologist assessment to provide more information that will offer strengths, weaknesses and proposed strategies. An Educational Psychologist with a 'relationship with the school' must be chosen.

17. The Use of ICT in subject lessons

For some pupils, it is appropriate to use ICT to support their learning. Permission to use a laptop in public examinations will be sought from the external examination boards and the same criteria apply to their use in normal lessons. Some pupils enter the school using a laptop as their normal mode of working following recommendation by an appropriate professional following assessment. Permission for word processor use must be given by the Head of Learning Support, having received official documentation about the pupil's specific learning difficulty. Teachers are required to confirm that this is the pupil's normal way of working in lessons and assessments/exams; if this confirmation is not received, this arrangement will be terminated. Laptop use in lessons alone does *not* entitle a pupil to laptop use in exams. Further details are included in the SEND Word Processor Access Arrangement Policy.

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