



**MOUNT HOUSE
SCHOOL**

INSPIRING EVERY INDIVIDUAL

SCHOOL POLICIES

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, AND LEARNING SUPPORT

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Scope

This policy applies to Mount House School (“the School”)

Aim

The aim of this policy is to define and explain the responsibilities the School is able to accept, the support it is able to provide, and the responsibilities of parents in relation to students who may experience special educational needs (SEN) or learning difficulties or may require learning support during their time at the School.

Related Policies

The School has the following related policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Safeguarding Policy.

The School’s Admissions Policy clearly outlines its policy on admissions and procedures in relation to applicants with SEN and/or disability.

The School’s Relationships and Sex Education Policy is available to parents in the policy section of the School website.

Accessibility

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

1. Values and Principles

We aim to provide every student with access to a broad and balanced education, corresponding to the National Curriculum (2014) and Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 0-25 (2015).

At the School we support and value the abilities of all our students. It is our duty to provide equal opportunities for every person in our care and a safe and fully equipped learning environment which caters to the needs of every student as an individual. We are committed to inclusion within the School curriculum and participation in all aspects of school life.

The School adopts a ‘whole school approach’ to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). All staff work to ensure the inclusion of all students.

The School is committed to ensuring that students with SEND can fulfil their potential and achieve optimal educational outcomes. The School will use its best endeavours to meet SEND legislation.

2. Definition of Special Educational Need and Learning Difficulties

A child has Special Educational Needs if they have a learning or social and emotional difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child has a 'learning difficulty' within the meaning of Section 20(2) Children and Families Act 2014 if they:

- a. have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age;
- b. have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions;
- c. have significantly greater difficulty in maintaining appropriate behaviour than the majority of students of the same age.

A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language (or form of language) in which they are or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which they have been spoken at home.

A child has a 'disability', within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Not all students who have SEN are disabled. Not all disabled students have SEN.

The School recognises that some students with SEN or learning difficulties may also have a disability.

3. Background

A number of students in mainstream independent schools such as Mount House School may have or show signs of having a special educational need or learning difficulty which affects one or more subject areas for which different or additional educational provision may be needed from time to time.

The signs of a special educational need or learning difficulty may not previously have been apparent or reasonably detectable.

Special educational needs and learning difficulties may affect children who have a high IQ as well as those of lower academic ability.

The terms special educational needs or disability and learning difficulty cover a wide variety of conditions and may include dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, and communication impairments such as autistic spectrum conditions. They may also include those who have

physical disabilities, visual or hearing difficulties, or social, emotional or mental health difficulties.

A student may also require additional support for other reasons, such as if the student has ADHD which may adversely affect their ability to concentrate and learn or has English as a second language.

Parents are required to inform the School of any special educational need or learning difficulty that has at any time affected their child either currently or in the past or any other reason for which the student may require additional support. Parents should inform the School at the time they make an enquiry; there is a section on the enquiry form for this purpose.

Any need for additional support in the School environment, whatever the origin, will be referred to below as a "learning need".

4. Aims and objectives

4.1 Aims

- The School is committed to the principle that every student will have access to a broad and balanced education, in line with the fundamental principles of the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years' (DfE and Dept for Health; January 2015), to ensure that:
 - All students with special educational needs (SEN) have their needs met and get the support they need to allow them to develop and to achieve their best possible educational, and other, outcomes.
 - Students with SEN engage in the activities of the School alongside students without special educational needs.
 - Students with SEN are offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education.
 - Students and parents participate as fully as possible in decisions, the School providing appropriate information and support to them. Their views, wishes and feelings are considered.
 - There is a teacher responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision in the School (the SENCO).
- We will strive to ensure that individual learning needs are identified at the earliest opportunity, to support development and progression in all areas, and good mental health and wellbeing.
- In accordance with the 2015 Code of Practice, all teachers are responsible for the progress and development of all students in their class, and the teaching staff have a responsibility to differentiate all lessons to cater for individual student needs, to ensure excellent educational outcomes for the students.
- The Board of Directors, staff and students at the School will accept and value each other and their differences, and will use their best endeavours to ensure that the School is accessible and that no student will be discriminated against.
- Safeguarding procedures will be maintained to ensure that all students are protected from harm and neglect.

- All students with learning needs will be able to access the curriculum by the provision of adaptive teaching and learning opportunities, extra support or additional resources where appropriate.
- Teachers are expected to have high expectations of all students and to differentiate downwards to provide the scaffolding to ensure all do access this learning. In this way, all students are supported and encouraged to achieve their potential.

4.2 Objectives

We are committed to:

- The early identification, assessment and graduated provision for all students causing concern.
- The continuous monitoring of student progress to aid such identification and to involve all staff in the continued progress of students with special educational needs.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating all provisions in place to overcome barriers to learning.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers thus enabling them to take an active role in their child's education.
- Involving students actively in the decision-making process regarding their education, where appropriate.
- Working with outside agencies to meet the needs of students with SEN.
- Ensuring support and regular professional development opportunities to enable staff to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Ensuring that pastoral care and support is available for all students so that they may develop in all areas and build a strong sense of self-esteem.

5. Responsibility for the coordination of SEN provision

The SENCO is responsible for overseeing the School provision for students with SEN.

All teaching and relevant support staff are responsible for the learning progression of students with learning needs:

- Every teacher is a teacher of special educational needs;
- Every teacher is expected to seek to anticipate individual learning needs;
- Every teacher is expected to overcome barriers to learning.

6. Arrangements for coordinating SEN provision

6.1 Screening

The School's approach to the detection and management of special educational needs and learning difficulties will be guided by the "Special educational needs and disability code of

practice: 0 to 25 years" (or any substitute or amending Code of Practice) issued from time to time by the Department for Education.

The law imposes on schools a responsibility both for the physical and emotional well-being as well as the educational needs of students whilst in the care of the School. For this reason and also as a matter of good practice, the School has introduced the following systems:

Mount House School will screen students for special educational needs. All students will be screened in years 7, 9 and 12. Students who enter the School will be tested during their first term in the School. The cost of such screening will be included in the termly fees. It is important for parents/guardians to realise that these are screening and not diagnostic tests. The screening tests are not competitive, and no specific preparation is required, nor indeed would it be beneficial.

In addition, information from parents, teachers and school assessment and reporting (including MidYis, YELLIS and ALIS) is used to identify students who may have a learning need.

If the outcome of a test or any other circumstances gives the School reason to think that a student may have a special educational need or learning difficulty, the School will report and consult with their parents/guardians as necessary and make recommendations.

Assessment information may lead to a request for a formal assessment by an Educational Psychologist, Occupational or Speech and Language Therapist, or by another professional as appropriate.

The parents will be responsible for the cost of any formal individual assessment conducted by external professionals.

6.2 Internal Special Educational Provision and Outside Professional Assessments

Mount House School has access to specialist learning support teachers who are qualified to make assessments and who can provide appropriate support to students with special educational needs and specific learning difficulties.

The SENCO and the SEN teacher arranges internal support with the Teaching Assistants and/or teachers as well as additional support from external agencies where appropriate.

In addition, the School can provide the names of other learning support teachers, educational psychologists or other outside professionals to whom parents may refer for tuition, further advice or formal assessment.

In every case, the decision whether to take up the learning support offered by the School or to refer to an outside agency under a private arrangement will be that of the parents, with advice from the School. Parents bear the overall responsibility for taking decisions about the management of their child's special educational needs or learning difficulties.

A parent who would prefer to have an external formal assessment must ensure that the School is given copies of all advice and reports received.

In order for the School to accept recommendations for examination access arrangements from an educational psychologist or specialist assessor, the external professional must have an established relationship with the School and be suitably qualified, for example; they are registered with the Health Care Professionals Council (HCPC) in the case of Educational Psychologists or have a current Assessment Practising Certificate in the case of specialist assessors.

Where professional outside agencies are used or an updated report for tertiary / higher education is required, the costs will be additional to the normal school fees, subject to the School's duty to make reasonable adjustments, and terms of payment must be negotiated separately by the parents with the outside agency.

6.3 Learning Support

The following procedures are followed where a learning need is suspected or identified:

If a learning need is suspected, the SENCO/SEND Department may suggest a period of support and monitoring by the class teachers and tutors. The SENCO/SEND Department may conduct an internal assessment.

Following an assessment, the SENCO/SEND Department may recommend a course of tuition in, for example, literacy or study skills with a learning support assistant. This may be 1:1 or small group support. Learning support of this kind will be arranged, subject to prior agreement being reached with the parents as to the charging arrangement for this.

In some circumstances, the SENCO/SEND Department will recommend an assessment by a professional outside agency such as an educational psychologist.

Where necessary the SENCO/SEND Department will draw up a student profile to inform staff of a student's learning needs and necessary support strategies within the classroom.

6.3.1 Examination Access Arrangements

The School carries out specialist assessments for students who require access arrangements in their school exams due to their specific learning difficulties, including internal and public (GCSE, iGCSE, IBCP, Level 3, and A Level) exams.

The School is not responsible for writing full Diagnostic Assessment Reports required for access arrangements and resources in higher education but can arrange them with suitable professionals known to the School.

It is recommended that students who wish to continue their exam access arrangements at university and/or intend to apply for a Disabled Students Allowance should commission an external professional, such as an educational psychologist or a specialist Assessor, to provide a Full Diagnostic Assessment Report. Commission of the report is a private matter between the parents and the external professional and responsibility for payment lies with the parents.

6.4 Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans

Parents and the School have the right under Section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ask the local authority (LA) 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 LA refuses to make an assessment, the parents (but not the School) have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

Where a prospective student has an EHC plan, the School will consult the parents and, where appropriate, the LA to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC plan can be delivered by the School. The School will cooperate with the LA 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 be charged to the local authority if the authority is responsible for the fees and the School is named in Section 1 of the EHC plan. In all other circumstances the School will agree the charging arrangements with the parents with regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, where applicable.

7. English as an Additional Language (EAL)

There are some students at Mount House School for whom English is an additional language. Provision exists for the delivery of EAL to these students. This subject is delivered through, and is monitored by, the Literacy Co-ordinator.

If a student has just arrived in England and their English is found to be very basic, the school may recommend attendance at an EFL course designed to teach the foundations of the English language. Students who have reasonable English and who are able to follow lessons may receive specialist EAL support in school. This support would be via EAL teaching staff according to the needs of the student in question. There is an additional charge for some of these services. Lessons are allocated to each year group and students are either taught in small groups or individually, depending upon both need and availability. Please see the Language Policy for full details of the provision.

Lessons are allocated to students are either taught in small groups or individually, depending upon both need and availability. Further support sessions can be offered by staff during lunch times and after school.

Excellent communication with students, teachers and parents is maintained in several ways. Student profiles are written for each EAL student during the academic year and these outline their current level of linguistic ability as well as strategies for both students and subject teachers to employ in order to improve overall language development and academic performance. Subject teachers routinely refer to Student profiles for all EAL students whom they teach. The Student profiles are also sent to parents and guardians upon request, so they are made aware of this information. In addition, teaching staff are informed about students at staff meetings, via emails and in preparation for Parent Evenings.

Once a student's English is very fluent, they will remain on the EAL List and the Literacy Co-ordinator and SENCo will monitor progress but not actively intervene unless there is a cause

to do so. In all cases, the suitability of the year group curriculum will be assessed and an individualised timetable created if appropriate.

The Literacy Co-ordinator also liaises closely with the Exams Office, particularly with regard to establishing which EAL students are entitled to extra time in public examinations and entitled to use bilingual dictionaries.

EAL students can sit the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) in the sixth form.

8. Anti-Bullying Policy

The School recognises that students with special educational needs, disabilities or learning difficulties may be at a greater risk of being bullied than other students. 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 student's tutor, Head of Year or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.

9. Additional welfare needs

The detection of abuse or neglect of students with a special educational need or disability may be particularly difficult. This creates additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The School is mindful in particular that:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury in fact relate to the student's special educational need or disability should not be made without further exploration; students with a special educational need or disability can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs;
- there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action is required.

Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy.

The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE), relationships education / relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes, through the supportive school culture and through the School's policies.

10. Alternative arrangements

10.1 Withdrawal

The School reserves the right, following consultation with parents, to ask for or require the withdrawal of the student from the School if, in its opinion after making all reasonable adjustments and exhausting appropriate strategies:

- the student is in need of a formal assessment, support or one-to-one teaching, learning support or medication to which parents do not consent;
- parents have withheld information from the School which, had the information been provided, would have made a significant difference to the School's management of the student's special educational needs and learning difficulties;
- the student's learning needs require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Head, the School cannot reasonably be expected to provide, manage or arrange;
- the student has special educational needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities that make it unlikely that they will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities which the School provides.

10.2 Alternative Placement

In any of these circumstances the School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide the student with the necessary level of teaching and support.

11. Monitoring Progress of Students with SEND

Meeting the needs of students with SEND is a whole school responsibility; accountability at every level ensures students make progress. The School seeks to measure overall progress consistently within robust school assessment processes. In addition to ongoing monitoring of progress, the School will measure the overall progress of students with SEND at the end of the various key stages such as GCSE and A Level to see how much progress they make compared with that of their peers.

12. Record Keeping

12.1 All records created under this policy are managed in accordance with the School's Records Retention Schedule and may contain personal data. Details of how the School obtains and uses this information is set out in the School's Privacy Notice for parents and students and Data Protection Policy and procedures.

13. Liability of the School

Unless negligent in the operation of this policy, the School accepts no responsibility to the student or parents caused by, or arising out of, any failure to detect or refer a special educational need or learning difficulty or other condition or situation of special need.

14. Information and Support

The SEND Code of Practice is a useful source of information, and support is available from specialist organisations including The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS).