



# Whole College Learning Support Policy

**This policy applies to:**

Whole College (including EYFS and IB)

**Monitoring by:**

Academic Management Team

**Person responsible for this policy:**

Director of Learning Support

**Review dates:**

Last Review – September 2025

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The aim of the College is to provide an excellent 21st century education by being a forward-thinking and high-achieving co-educational school with a strong academic focus, excellent student support, and a global outlook.

This policy is drawn up in accordance with the Special Educational Needs Discrimination Act 2001 (SENDA); the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014, SCHEDULE 10 of the 2010 Disability Act and the IB Access and Inclusion Policy.

## POLICY OBJECTIVE

To set out the rationale and methodology for Learning Support at Ardingly College.

## POLICY AIMS

1. To identify those students who have a learning difficulty and/or disability; to ensure that students' individual needs are identified, through careful monitoring and assessment, in order to support progression, good mental health and wellbeing.
2. To ensure appropriate support is provided for those students with a learning difficulty and/or disability to enable them to achieve full access to a broad and balanced curriculum through quality teaching and learning opportunities, extra support, or additional resources where appropriate and accessible pastoral care in a safe and stable environment.
3. To ensure that less favourable treatment or discrimination does not occur, that the College offers equality of opportunity and inclusion for all of its applicants and students and that reasonable adjustments are made for students with a learning difficulty and/or disability.
4. To ensure that the College uses its best endeavours to meet SEND legislation; that the whole community accepts and values each individual and their differences, respects and welcomes diversity and uses its best endeavours to ensure that the school and its curriculum and activities are accessible to everyone, that no student will be discriminated against on any grounds.
5. To ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of students and their parents are fully considered and to recognise the need to support children and their parents in order to facilitate the development of the child and help him the child achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood. To ensure that, through the regular reporting system, year group parents' evenings, individual meetings with Learning Support and tutors, parents are encouraged to be involved with their children's education.

## Definitions

Appropriate definitions include:

1. Disability: a person has a disability if a student has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

2. Discrimination: For any reason which relates to their disability, the school treats them less favourably than it treats or would treat others to whom that reason does not or would not apply.
3. Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties:
  - a. A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.
  - b. A child has a learning difficulty if:
    - i. has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
    - ii. If a child has a disability which prevents a child from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools; or
    - iii. It means a child has a learning difficulty or disability that requires help which is additional to or otherwise different from what is normally available.

## Learning Support Objectives

1. To ensure that the curriculum accommodates the individual student's learning difficulty, enabling access to a broad and balanced education in which the student can participate fully with peers.
2. To create a whole school learning atmosphere in which the student can access the appropriate pastoral support through tutor, Housemaster/Housemistress, Chaplain, Medical Staff, EAL Support, matrons, peer groups or older students.
3. To create a safe environment where the student can feel secure, protected from harm or neglect, so that the student may develop in all areas and build a strong sense of self-esteem.
4. To promote the individual's self-esteem in order to achieve the College's goals of academic potential and independent learning.
5. To acknowledge fully the importance of the parents' role in supporting their children's education and to ensure that both student and parents are fully included in any decision making.
6. To monitor the student's progress through careful evaluation and target setting and to make this information available to all staff concerned with the student's education.

## ADMISSIONS AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Ardingly College is an academically selective school and welcomes all children who can make the most of the opportunities that are offered and can flourish in the caring environment of the school. Treating every child as an individual is important to us, and we welcome students with special educational needs, a learning difficulty and/or disability, provided that our Learning Support Department and College resources 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 special educational needs, a learning difficulty and/or disability to discuss their child's requirements with the school before the child sits our entrance exam so that we can make adequate provision for the child. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report, other recognised specialist, or a medical report plus confirmation from their current school about their "normal way of working in exams" known as access arrangements, to support their request for extra time or other adjusted arrangements.

## ON ENTRY

Each student with special educational needs, a learning difficulty and/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 the child becomes a student at the school.

Our Learning Support Department is staffed by fully qualified specialists who can support each student with a specific learning difficulty in the following areas: dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, together with conditions such as speech and language difficulties, mild ADHD and ADD.

While the College provides support and specialist teaching to students who demonstrate special educational needs, a learning difficulty and/or disability, Ardingly College is not staffed to support children with advanced or complex educational or psychological difficulties. The College reserves the right not to admit students whose needs it cannot meet after reasonable adjustments have been considered. The Head's decision will be final in all cases.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

1. Ardingly College has established a professionally staffed Learning Support Department. Its aim, throughout the whole school, is to work with teachers, tutors, the Medical Department, parents and students themselves to identify those students who demonstrate special educational needs, a learning difficulty and/or disability and to make available the appropriate level of support from subject and specialist teachers, working in close consultation with parents, tutors and medical staff, together with any relevant outside agency. It offers specialist one to one and/or small group lessons and help with study skills outside the normal curriculum, working closely with the child and his/her parents and to help him/her to overcome the barriers that his/her difficulties present. Other adjustments can be arranged, such as the use word processors in class. It is also responsible for determining and organising appropriate access arrangements for both internal and external

- examinations, such as extra time, use of word processing facilities for appropriate examination papers. The Learning Support Department, in conjunction with the Housemaster/Housemistress, Medical Department, parent and student, will liaise with outside agencies where appropriate.
2. The Policy has regard to the Code of Practice on the identification, assessment and support of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is, however, unlikely that students at the College will have an Educational and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and thus a three-stage approach has been implemented:
    - a. Monitor and provide differentiated learning as appropriate.
    - b. In addition to learning needs being accommodated within the classroom, the student is also receiving some additional specialist support, including support from a Learning Support Assistant in the Pre and prep School, along with intervention group support.
    - c. An individual plan of support is devised which is additional to and different from the normal provision
  3. The Department believes that close liaison between student, parents, pastoral and teaching and medical staff is essential in order that the school:
    - a. provides a stimulating, reassuring and stable environment where the student can gain full and equal access to the curriculum and all aspects of school life.
    - b. caters for the specific needs of each individual student, ensuring that both student and parents are involved in the decision-making process regarding his/her education.
    - c. provides appropriate pastoral support through tutor, housemaster or housemistress, Chaplain, Medical Staff, Learning Support, matrons, peer groups and older students.
  4. Students are screened annually and/or on entry to the school and receive regular attainment tests. Students judged to be at risk throughout the schools will be monitored by the Department and the appropriate action taken to provide the appropriate support. Parents and guardians are closely consulted at all stages and the views of the students themselves are also considered. The progress of students judged as being at risk is monitored closely.
  5. The screening process is thorough but there are some students whose problems appear at different stages or who are referred by another source - be it by parent, teacher, or tutor. The Department will monitor, assess where necessary and recommend the appropriate action. Teaching staff are actively encouraged to voice any concern to the Department or in department meetings.
  6. Provision Plans are drawn up for each student on the Learning Support List, updated where necessary by the specialist teacher in consultation with other members of staff, parents and the student and sent to all teaching staff. These detail particular difficulties experienced by individual students and areas where teaching staff can differentiate.
  7. Learning Support teaching plans/targets are reviewed regularly by the Learning Support department, in conjunction with the student, for those receiving specialist individual support.
  8. The provision of formal educational assessments and additional specialist tuition is provided at an extra cost to parents.

## PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY PROVISION

We recognise that some students with learning difficulties may also have physical disabilities. Parents and prospective parents of children with such disabilities can obtain copies of the College'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 disabled students, parents, and visitors with a disability.

In addition to physical accessibility issues, we would discuss with parents the provision that could reasonably be made to meet other disabilities through which a student may be disadvantaged, including sensory impairment with vision or hearing. The College seeks to work with parents, medical specialists, and other health care professionals to find a way forward within the means of the College to improve the provision of information, teaching and learning to disabled students. Such ways may include the use of devices with specialist apps, voice recognition software, reading software within lessons and other dedicated, specialist electronic devices.

### Accessibility for Disabled Students

An accessibility strategy is a strategy for, over a prescribed period:

1. increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the schools' curricula.
2. improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools.
3. improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is readily accessible to students who are not disabled.

## IB ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The College support the IB belief that all students should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Standard assessment conditions may put some students at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of achievement. Inclusive access arrangements may be applied in these circumstances if it is observed that they could reduce or minimize barriers for the candidate. Assessment is part of teaching and learning and access arrangements is applied to students throughout their course of study in all classroom work and formative assessment that are part of daily learning and teaching.

Each student with special educational needs, a learning difficulty and/or disability requires special consideration and treatment. If appropriate, access arrangements will need to be put in place along with careful consideration given to a student's choice of subjects to remove any disadvantage that may occur though not to give a student an advantage. 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 the child becomes an IB student at the school.

The inclusive access arrangements provided to a student are planned at the start or early on during the IB course based on teacher's observations of a student during their classroom activities and/or examinations. Any arrangements are incorporated to be the usual way for a student to access classroom work and tests.

Inclusive access arrangements provide are:

- Carefully individualised and monitored.
- Reflect optimal support required.
- Based on current requirements
- Drawn from teachers' observations.
- Considered in line with eligibility criteria of the IB Access and Inclusion policy
- Based on individual requirements of a student, e.g., hearing loop

The school provides relevant support materials, electronic resources, and academic support structures such as screening, tracking, and monitoring to promote access to the school's programmes for as many IB students as reasonable. All teachers and pastoral staff and tutors are provided with the student's Provision Plan which outlines their strengths and barriers to learning so that teachers can differentiate and use appropriate teaching methods and assistive technology where suitable, to support a student's progress through the IB. These access arrangements are put in place in response to a student's needs and used in classroom activities, and for class tests and examinations. Teachers' observation of the student during classroom activities and tests is also used to revise and amend access arrangements so that they remain suitable to support a student's learning throughout the course of the IB programme.

The school provides opportunities to access the programmes for the broadest possible range of students through the Accessibility and Disability Policy. This shows the ways in which we plan to make our buildings and classrooms progressively more accessible to disabled students.

In addition to physical accessibility issues, we would discuss with parents/students the provision that could reasonably be made to meet other disabilities through which a student may be disadvantaged, including sensory impairment with vision or hearing. The College seeks to work with parents, medical specialists, and other health care professionals to find a way forward within the means of the College to improve the provision of information, teaching and learning to disabled students. Such ways may include the use of devices with specialist apps, voice recognition software, reading software within lessons and other dedicated, specialist electronic devices.

Application for inclusive access arrangements in IB examinations are submitted on behalf of the student by the IB Co-ordinator supported by the Head of school with the students/parent consent. Each request for inclusive access arrangements is judged on their own merit and as such supporting documentation (a medical or psychological evaluation report), along with a sample of work done under timed conditions, must have been undertaken and dated within three years of the intended examination session. Students will be familiar and have practised the access arrangements prior to the final IB examinations.

## ACCESS FOR ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

For students, whose current course of study and assessment is delivered in a language that is not their first, best or native language and whose language is below the level that is deemed linguistically competent nor formal in expertise and fluency.

Linguistically competent level is defined as being able to interact with, process, understand, analyse, produce or use:

- Technical language of content areas
- Fluent and flexible language for academic purposes
- Language of varying linguistic complexity across genres and topics, with explicit and implicit understanding needed for written material in essays, reports and presentations.
- Oral and written language that is comparable with peers in the language to work with the academic demands for the course of the IB programme.

Eligibility for inclusive access arrangements is based on standard scores on a standardised language test not earlier than one year before the IB examination session.

Specialist support for additional language learners can be provided by the College's EAL department at additional cost. Additional language learners are tested before entry and advice given as to the necessary levels of language support that may be needed.

## ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of the College, students from Year 6 must have reached a level of competency in English to enable them to access the curricular and non-curricular activities fully. We may recommend that some students, whose first language at home is not English, receive tuition in English as an Additional Language to bring them to the required standard.