

**Dulwich College (Singapore)**

**Learning Support Department Policy Document**

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## **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

This handbook / Policy and Procedure document aims to provide an overview of the structure and day-to-day running of the Learning Support Department. It also describes how the LS team are expected to carry out their duties.

### **Links to College Philosophy & Objectives and Values Statements**

- Allow every student to realise their potential.
- To promote the development of the whole child through a holistic approach to learning.
- Celebrate diversity in our local and international community

### **Definition of Special Educational Needs**

Dulwich College Singapore uses the framework outlined by the British SEN Code Of Practice, adapted to the international context of an international school in Singapore:

At DCSG Children are identified as having a special educational need if they have a formal diagnosis, from a recognised professional that identifies a Specific Learning Difficulty or impairment.

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they are taught.

Learning Support provision means educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in school'.

### **Aims & Philosophy**

The College aims to provide appropriate Learning Support to students in order to enable them to access and respond to the curriculum as successfully as possible; and in doing so applies the following fundamental principles:

- To cater for students with SEN needs through an individualised approach to provision.

- The majority of special educational needs of students at DCSG will normally be met in mainstream classrooms. However where further support is required curriculum withdrawal may be appropriate.
- Whenever appropriate the views of the student should be sought and taken into account.
- Parents have a vital role and responsibility in supporting their child's education.

### Focus of the Learning Support department:

1. To provide effective support for those students who are disadvantaged by a Specific Learning Difficulty.
2. To provide support for those students who have been identified as having difficulties / barriers to learning from the referral process or through data collection and/or assessment.
3. To support teachers in terms of differentiation and teaching strategies to meet the needs of the students in their class.

### **Organisation**

The Learning Support Department is part of the Additional Educational Needs Faculty within DCSG. The AEN faculty comprises of Learning Support, English as an Additional Language and Gifted Education. It is important to state that all teachers should consider themselves to be teachers of Additional Educational Needs and the AEN faculty is there to support them in this goal.

Learning Support staff will be required to work in conjunction with other members of the AEN faculty as well as being part of multi-disciplinary meetings, working alongside class teachers and pastoral leaders, supporting admissions or running professional development in areas of experience or expertise.

### **Enrolment**

Decisions about admission of students with special educational needs are generally made by the admissions team in consultation with the appropriate learning support teacher and Head of AEN. However, final authority regarding the entry of any new student into the school rests with the appropriate Head of School / Headmaster.

Students with special educational needs are accepted into the school on a case by case basis. The needs of the child and their families are considered against current levels of staffing, expertise and resources within the school.

Additional adult support or specialist resources such as speech and language or occupational therapy may be considered necessary in order for the student to receive the adequate support. This additional cost will be required to be met by the parents.

Except in exceptional circumstances once a child has been formally offered a place at DCSG the school is then committed to educating that child. However, when a student is not accessing and responding to the curriculum in a meaningful and productive way, the College holds the right to place a student on a Placement Support Plan (PSP) to insure that a correct placement decision is made to support the child's learning.

In order to ensure the best possible teaching and learning environment for its students, DCSG reserves the right to limit the number of students with special educational needs in any class or year group. [\(See appendix 1 PSP policy and procedure\)](#)

## **Admissions procedures**

Potential student's learning support needs are identified via the admissions procedure; submission of previous school reports; and via their initial interview and admissions testing.

Whenever Specific Educational Needs are identified then the application will be reviewed by the appropriate member of the Learning Support team and Head of AEN. At this point a recommendation to accept, decline or ask for further testing will be made to admissions. Where possible, diagnostic testing and interview should take place with the appropriate learning support teacher when a student is available to do so in Singapore.

If a student is admitted into the College and it is later discovered that information regarding previous diagnosis of Specific Learning Difficulties or Social emotional problems were withheld, the College reserves the right to review the student's placement at the College. All students with SEN will under go the same admissions procedures as other students (i.e. CAT testing).

## **Learning Support Provision**

Whilst Dulwich College Singapore (DCSG) is a selective school it welcomes a diversity of students some of whom have special educational needs. The college's Learning Support staff work with students, their teachers, and their families in order to assist them in reaching their potential in school.

DCSG provides an inclusive working environment for students admitted into the College, which includes provision for students who fall under the following categories:

### **Mild Support:**

Provided by trained professionals. A balanced service model of consultative support, accommodations, individual, small group, or in class support.

### **Moderate Support**

A program through which children with more specialised needs are supported through a combination of individual or small group support.

The learning support department will arrange provision appropriately to meet the needs of the individual and / or cohort of students who require support at any given time.

Students may be withdrawn from their normal timetabled lessons when specific provision is made for students with identified learning difficulties. In each instance, the student(s) will follow a structured programme to meet their needs. The program will be determined by the learning support specialist in liaison with parents, colleagues both internal and external to the school. All withdrawal programmes will be by arrangement and agreement of parents. Provision may also take the form of in-class support and / or class teacher support to aid differentiation needs. [\(See appendix 2 Parent consent letter for LS provision example\)](#)

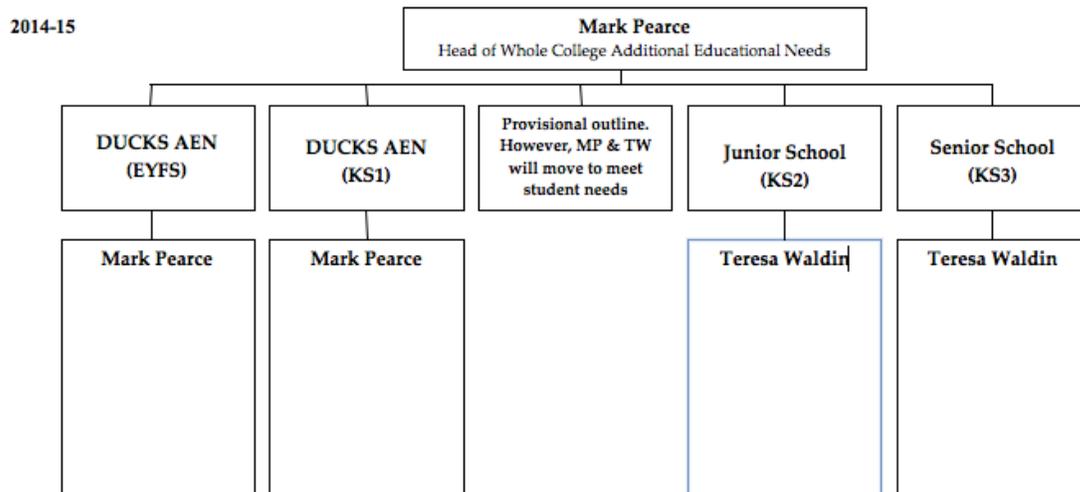
### **3 STAGED APPROACH**

At DCSG we operate a graduated three-stage response to student’s special educational needs and the following terms are used to describe the different stages of Learning Support throughout the College:

<b>Teacher Action Plan (TAP)</b>	This term indicates that the child’s progress is being monitored by the LS team. The child is not currently receiving any additional learning support within school, or from any external professionals. The child does not at this time, require assistance over and above that which is generally being provided within their classroom. <a href="#">(See appendix 15 TAP Form)</a>
<b>School Action</b>	This term indicates that the LS team is directly involved with the child either through direct support, assessing their learning needs or in developing and implementing an IEP or Student Information Sheet. Some IEPs /SIS may be predominantly implemented by classroom teachers; and support will predominately be through teacher support and consultation. However, withdrawal provision may occur where appropriate.
<b>School Action Plus</b>	This term indicates that an external professional such as an Educational Psychologist or a Speech and Language Pathologist has diagnosed the child with a SPLD or an impairment of some sort and thus will require some direct intervention through the Learning Support department and/or outside agencies. On some occasions a student may have a diagnosis of need, however they will not be receiving specific withdrawal support. For example, their needs may be being addressed by a Speech & language pathologist externally.

A detailed flow chart with accompanying information showing the practical aspects of the 3 levels is available in the appendices. This clarifies steps and the referral procedure. The Learning Support Department may on rare occasions fast track students or modify this approach where the individual's need requires. (See appendix 14 LS Referral - Provision visual)

## Flexible staffing model



## The role of the Learning Support Team

When a new referral is made the Learning Support Team will often carry out some sort of assessment, and / or gather information on the child. The purpose of such an assessment / evidence gathering is to gain a detailed understanding of any learning difficulties the student might be experiencing; their learning style; strengths, and weaknesses etc... The Learning Support Team can establish whether or not the student is displaying behavioural learning characteristics of a 'Specific Learning Difficulty' such as Dyslexia, or dyspraxia for example; *they cannot however make a diagnosis*. Only a suitably qualified Educational or Developmental Psychologist can make diagnosis. The LS department are well placed to make recommendations for further testing supported with evidence and assessments to give a full picture of the student's abilities/needs.

## Learning Support, Guidance Counselling and Pastoral Care

Where behavioural, social & emotional issues arise the pastoral leaders/systems have the responsibility for the effective provision of student welfare. However, where a qualified

professional diagnoses a SPLD such as an Autistic Spectrum Disorder or ADHD, which may effect behaviour and social & emotion issues the appropriate Learning Support teacher will meet in consultation with the appropriate pastoral person to agree upon appropriate support provision. This support may require the pastoral leader, class teacher or learning support teacher to take the lead, dependant on the needs of the individual.

### **Placement Support Plan (PSP)**

The Placement Support Plan (PSP) is school-based intervention that draws upon the knowledge & skills of a group within the school community. Ideally, the PSP may require input from the student, their parents, a sampling of other staff (including AEN staff), and a member of the leadership team. This co-ordinated intervention is discussed & agreed upon by those at attendance with the ultimate aim of improving social, emotional & / or cognitive behaviours that lead to positive self worth & self actualisation of the student in the school environment. However, it also serves the purpose of making a placement decision of a student whom it is felt that The College may not be the best learning environment for their needs.

Learning Support teachers may be required to play an active role in the process of students who are placed on the Colleges PSP. Meeting with families, making recommendations and providing evidence to address whether the student is able to access and respond appropriately to curriculum at DCSG.

### **Early Intervention**

The importance of early identification and support for any child who may have special educational needs cannot be over-emphasised. The earlier action is taken, the more responsive and successful the child is likely to be.

However, assessment should not be regarded as a single event but as a continuing process. The learning support department endeavours to support students through the philosophy of early intervention, and recommend family's to seek further investigation, when school intervention does not meet the needs of the individual and adequate progress is clearly not being made.

### **Students with a diagnosis**

Where appropriate, students who enter DCSG with a 'diagnosis' or written description of their learning needs, will automatically be placed on the Learning Support register. However, the learning support stage at which they are placed will depend upon the level of support that they require in order to adequately access and respond to the curriculum. The designated Learning Support teacher in conjunction with the Head of AEN will consult, appropriate members of staff to decide upon the appropriate level of support for the child 'TAP – School Action+'.

A written diagnosis will only be accepted if it is provided by an external professional, (such as an Educational Psychologist) who is accredited by an appropriate professional body. Any such

document must contain the student's D.O.B. and full name and must be dated in order to be considered valid by the school. The school will request that parents update external assessments at least once every three years (every two years, Year 10 onwards to satisfy exam board requirements for access arrangements at IGCSE & IB)

### **Discussing your concerns with parents**

A student should only officially receive LS direct intervention after a referral form has been completed by the class teacher, subject or form tutor and parent consent has been obtained.

When discussing concerns about a child/student. Neither the LS teacher or class teacher should attempt to make a diagnosis. Avoid labels such as Dyslexia or Autism. Staff ought to describe the particular difficulty the student is experiencing in terms of their actual behaviour or understanding. Be clear and specific, and provide examples of their work if it is appropriate. Avoid making comparisons with other students.

Record any significant parental meetings using the LS meeting form ([See appendix 3 Parent meeting form](#))

### **Referring Students for Learning Support**

Teachers may at any time be concerned by the lack of progress of an individual student. See (Learning Support Visual) for information about how and when to refer a student. When a referral is made a student would normally work through the 3 staged approach TAP- School Action – School Action +. However, the LS team may fast track students if appropriate.

A document called 'learning support history' is kept by the LS department (attached to the LS register of need). This gives brief details, of any support that a child may have received in the past. This helps profile students when a referral is made. ([See appendix 4 Learning Support register exemplar & appendix 5 Learning Support referral form](#))

### **Re-referring pupils who have been taken off the SEN Register**

Except in exceptional circumstances pupils who have been removed from the Learning Support register may not be re-referred to the LS team for a period of 3 months. This will allow time for the teaching staff to monitor the student's progress. After which the student can be re-referred directly to the Learning Support department. No additional paperwork needs to be completed in this case.

If a student has been off the register for an entire academic year or more, the teacher making the referral must follow the entire referral process.

## **Individual Educational Plan IEP (LS)**

At DCSG the development and implementation of Individual Education Plans for students is the shared responsibility of class teachers, subject teachers, tutors and Learning Support staff.

The written IEP is a working document which should be accessible to all relevant parties.

Regular, responsive and proactive communication is essential in ensuring that any IEP is effective, and it is the responsibility of all teachers involved to ensure that such communication takes place.

IEP (LS) are written by the Learning Support team in consultation with classroom teachers, parents and the student (where age appropriate) for all children who have been diagnosed with a Specific Learning Difficulty. The IEP on rare occasions may be used for students who have not received a formal diagnosis. This arrangement will be at the discretion of the Learning Support teacher and the Head of AEN.

The IEP (LS) should be used to inform teaching and learning, and should be used as an aid for the preparation of suitably targeted differentiated work. IEP targets should be addressed in the mainstream classroom as this is where the student will do the majority of their learning. Targets will also be focused on through direct intervention through the Learning Support lessons. However a partnership of both is considered to be 'best practice'.

Students who have had some sort of specialized report are entitled to an IEP or SIS, and thus support if appropriate. However, there may be situations where students need support but have not received any type of assessment. Due to e.g... financial reasons, the students age, geographical issues, nature of the difficulty, etc... in such circumstances, students can receive support, however in most cases will not receive an IEP. This decision remains at the discretion of the learning support department and Head of AEN. [\(See appendix 6 IEP \(LS\) template\)](#)

## **Student Information Sheets**

The Student Information Sheets (SIS), is a form used when an IEP is not needed or is being developed. This form provides important information about a student's learning needs as well as providing simple classroom strategies to help the classroom teacher provide appropriate learning for the student. This document does not have targets and does not require authorisation from a parent to be administered. [\(See appendix 7 Student Information Sheet LS\)](#)

## **Learning Support Monitoring form**

It may sometimes be appropriate to monitor how Learning Support students are progressing in their mainstream classes. This form will provide the LS teacher with information to inform their planning, set and review IEP targets and may also help aid decisions to do with provision requirements. [\(See appendix 8 LS Monitoring Form\)](#)

## **Adequate progress & Exiting students from the register of need**

Where a child has made 'adequate progress' in aspects of their learning the Learning Support team may decide to change the nature or quantity of support allocated, or exit them from the register of need. It is important to note that some students will be meeting the Colleges expectations as well making adequate progress. However, they may still need support to overcome any barriers to learning presented from a specific learning difficulty.

Adequate progress will obviously depend on the students individual needs however, it can be defined in a number of ways. It might, for instance be progress which:

- closes the gap between the student and their peers
- prevents the attainment gap growing wider
- Meet College performance levels
- matches or betters the student's previous rate of progress
- ensures access to the full curriculum
- demonstrates an improvement in self help, social or personal skills
- demonstrates improvements in the child's behaviour
- Meets agreed curriculum and / or IEP targets
- Achieves agreed criteria in standardised and / or psychometric assessments

Learning Support exit criteria will usually be multifaceted in nature and individual to the student's personal learning needs and schooling history. The above statements simply serve as some guidelines for consideration.

Changes to LS provision are usually implemented at the beginning of each term. However, entry and exit of a student on the LS register can happen at any point of the year.

### **Assessment**

Assessment plays an important role in the LS department. The college seeks to build an extensive catalogue of assessment materials that help to identify barriers to learning, screen for learning difficulties, aid learning and teaching in mainstream classes and profile student's needs. LS staff members will be expected to have responsibility for administering (and reporting on) a number of assessments for students throughout the college and will be expected to continually gain expertise in this area and train other LS staff where appropriate. When deeper psychometric assessment is sought, (e.g. WIAT II assessment) parents should be informed through the Educational testing permission letter. [\(See Appendix 9 Assessment materials documentation TBC & Appendix 10 Educational testing permission letter\)](#)

## **Learning support register of need**

The Learning Support register is continually updated by learning support teachers in their respective schools and can be found on the on \_\_\_\_\_. Changes or additions to the register will be disseminated throughout the year as appropriate.

The Head of AEN should maintain up to date statistical data regarding the numbers and percentage of LS students within each year group and college as a whole.

The Learning Support Register contains basic information about individual student's difficulties; and outlines any special provision currently being made. This document is sensitive and confidential therefore it should only be available for academic staff and school administrators.

## **Access Arrangements**

These are agreed at the pre-assessment/pre-planning stage and help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment process. Access arrangements must not, however, affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes nor must they give the candidate an assessment advantage over other candidates undertaking the same or similar assessments.

The LS department takes the lead on administering access arrangements for formal in-house testing (E.g... SATS, NC test, End of year Assessments) on the basis of recommendations made from a specialist report (E.g. Educational / Clinical Psychologist report / Occupational therapist). The Learning Support teacher will take the lead on implementing such arrangements in consultation with the Head of AEN and appropriate teachers / Year Group Leaders. Decisions will be based on what resources are available to the Learning Support department and importantly that arrangements do not affect the reliability or validity of an assessment.

Access Arrangements that the school will generally be able to facilitate (where recommendations have been made) are as follows:

- Extra time (usually) 25% unless specified by external assessment
- Use of Word Processor in end of year examinations/agreed assessments
- A scribe for extended writing tasks in end of year examinations
- Someone to read the question (amanuenses) in end of year examinations.
- A quiet work space that is distraction free to take the test.

Access Arrangements that go well beyond the above, might usually suggest that the students needs are beyond that which the College can cater for and would usually lead to the student going on to a PSP.

Access arrangements applications forms for IGCSE and IB examinations are to be completed by the Head of AEN in conjunction with the schools Examination officer and IB Coordinator.

### **All staff have responsibilities for meeting students AEN**

The teaching needs of all pupils, particularly children with SEN require:

Positive attitudes from all staff.

Partnerships with teachers which encourage the students to become active learners, helping to plan, build and evaluate their own learning programme wherever possible.

A climate of warmth and support in which self-confidence and self-esteem can grow and in which students with SEN can experiment without fear of criticism or failure.

Partnerships between home school and outside agencies (where appropriate).

It is the role of the LS team to assist staff in making adequate provision for students with SEN and it is expected that teachers will be proactive in seeking all necessary advice and support. A partnership and collegial approach is of greatest importance between LS staff and class teachers, is central to providing effective support.

### **Differentiation**

All teachers are expected to differentiate to meet the individual needs of students on the learning support register. Differentiation for learning support students means teaching a student to match their way of learning, and considering the students individual learning needs. Students make progress at different rates, not all students learn in the same way and thus, need to be taught using different teaching strategies. Teachers are advised to seek guidance to differentiate for SEN students from learning support specialists

### **Working with outside agencies and the community**

At times it may be necessary for a child to receive specialist support from an agency outside of the College. This may entail a referral to an Educational/Clinical Psychologist, a screening and/or assessment from speech and language pathologist and / or an occupational therapist.

When an outside agency report has been acquired, the school requires full access to its content so it can best provide the correct support and placement of the child. Refusal of the school to access the report may result in the child's placement at the College being reviewed. The College understands that confidentiality is of the upmost importance and will work in collaboration with the child and family to insure that respect and consideration is maintained throughout what may be a very stressful time for the family. [\(See appendix 11 Outside agencies guidelines\)](#)

DCSG is committed to developing relationships with service providers within the community. Whether this be through having outside specialist such as Occupational Therapist or Speech and Language Pathologists coming into work with our students, or inviting guest speakers to talk to our parents about learning difficulties, or workshops for teachers. DCSG realises there are a number of excellent resources in the community that can benefit and support parents, teachers and students alike.

Providing there is physical space and the schools agreement to use facilities, outside agency support can be done on school grounds after agreement from the relevant Head of School and the Head of AEN.

The College will do its best to facilitate such arrangements, however space and time resources may be minimal and Learning Support teachers involvement in such arrangements should be minimal and that of a facilitating nature.

On rare occasions there may be a recommendation (from inside or outside the College) that a student needs a adult with them full time to access and respond appropriately to the curriculum. These situations will be dealt with on an individual basis with the discussions taking place between the Head of AEN and the relevant Head of School. However, in such cases it could only be on a short-term basis and would usually mean that the students needs are beyond that the College can cater for and thus the students placement will be up for discussion through the PSP.

## **Guidance for Learning Support Staff**

In addition to the professional expectations outlined in LS teachers' individual contract and job description, the following guidance should be observed when carrying out their daily work.

### **Administration and Teaching space**

It is expected that all LS classrooms and offices be kept neat and tidy, and that teaching spaces in particular are orderly and inviting environments for students to work in.

### **Timetables**

A copy of each staff member's individual timetable should be submitted to the Head of AEN, once compiled. All LS staff members must ensure that the Head of AEN is informed promptly of any long term revisions to their timetables.

## Planning Files

Staff must ensure that their planning files are properly labelled, concise, legible and well organised, to meet the agreed needs of the department and / or individual school. (See [appendix 12 LS Lesson planning doc TBC](#))

Planning files are working documents and should contain evidence of reflective teaching.

## Student files (hard or soft copies) should contain the following:

- Current IEP
- Referral form
- Outside agency reports
- Previous IEP
- School reports
- CAT/CEM scores (where appropriate)
- Samples of work
- Important correspondence

## Transition

During Term 3 Learning Support teachers will pass on all documentation required (See above - student file contents) for LS students who are moving up to the next Key Stage (Including an IEP to work on at the start of Term 1 – the following academic year). A transition meeting will take place, where recommendations for provision in terms of required support and programs will take place at least 5 weeks before the end of the academic year. (See [appendix 13 Key stage transition document](#))

## Report Writing

LS teachers will write reports to parents at the end of the academic year. This will give the teachers the formal opportunity to inform parents of progress made. LS reports will only be written for Students who have had a diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difficulty, and / or have an IEP.

## **Workload**

The Learning Support department provides a flexible staffing model throughout the college where staff may be required to teach in different schools to utilise their skill set and best meet the needs of the College cohort.

Should staff find that they have additional long-term extra free periods they should ensure that the Head of AEN is informed and that these periods are used for strategic development within the department.

The Head of AEN will oversee the effective deployment of the LS team throughout the college in terms of workload and responsibility.

## **Staff absences**

Should a LS teacher be absent for any reason they are expected to inform their Head of School (or relevant contact person) and the Head of AEN as soon as possible so that their lessons can be adequately covered. Similarly, should the Head of AEN be absent then they should inform their line manager and team straight away.

Whilst it is understood that LS staff may be used as cover when class teachers are absent, this should be the exception and not the rule. Learning Support lessons should not be cancelled so that Learning Support staff can be used as cover.

When a LS staff member is absent students can return to the lesson when it is not disruptive to the class or the child's learning (e.g. if they are withdrawn from Mandarin for the year, it would not be appropriate for them to be placed back in that lesson because the LSD teacher is absent). Where possible LS lessons will be covered internally.