

Learning Support Policy

“.. in which the strong will have ideals to inspire them and the weak may not be frightened away by excessive demands.” (RSB 64:19)

A. REQUIREMENTS – CURRICULUM

Refer to Academic and Curriculum Policy

B. REQUIREMENTS – TEACHING

Refer to Academic and Curriculum Policy

C. POLICY STATEMENT

The academic curriculum at Downside aims to develop the potential of every pupil to the point where they exceed their academic expectations, while deepening understanding of the Roman Catholic and Benedictine ethos of the school. Downside regards academic success as an integral part of the broader spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. This policy outlines the measures to be taken so that pupils are able to access examinations and make the most of the gifts bestowed upon them by God.

At Downside, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils have an equitable access to the curriculum. We have a Learning Support Department and there is a Learning Support Register.

Definition: SEN

SEND Code of Practice (January 2015): introduction p14-15:

- *Children and young people have special educational needs 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 he or she:*
 - *has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*
 - *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 in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.*

SEND Code of Practice (January 2015): 6.15 p94-5:

A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such 95 support. Such improvements in whole-class provision tend to be more cost effective and sustainable.

Learning difficulty' covers a wide range of conditions, permanent or temporary. It may include specific learning difficulties (eg dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, autistic spectrum disorders, eyesight or hearing disorders) or it may include learning difficulties resulting from emotional or behavioural problems. Learning difficulties affect pupils within a range of different intellects or underlying abilities.

Definition: Disabled children and SEN

SEND Code of Practice (January 2015): introduction p16-17:

- *Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.*
- *The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:*
 - *They **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.*

SEND Code of Practice (January 2015): 6.27-6.35 p97-8:

Broad areas of need:

1. Communication and interaction
2. Cognition and learning
3. Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
4. Sensory and/or physical needs

Downside, as an independent school, is not bound to follow the new SEND Code of Practice, but operates with close reference to it to ensure best practice.

D. AIMS

- Implement the best practice in the recognition and management of Special Educational Needs.
- Support and develop pupils so that they have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- Maintain a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN (SEND CoP: 6.14).
- Demand the highest standards from teachers and pupils, in keeping with the School's mission statement and the Academic and Curriculum Policy.

- As part of its commitment to inclusive learning and removing barriers to learning, adopt a four-part cycle and graduated approach to providing support:
 1. Assess
 2. Plan
 3. Do
 4. Review

E. PROVISION

See Appendix 1 and Diagram 1, and Appendix 2 and Diagram 2.

i. Partnerships

- Partners include pupils, parents and the School, and an effective partnership between all three parties will help all pupils on the Learning Support Register to fulfil their potential.
- Downside will ensure that parents are involved in the decision making if learning support is recommended for their child.
- The School will liaise with parents to ensure that key information pertaining to their child's needs is considered when determining how to support the pupil.
- Pupils will participate in all the decision-making processes and contribute to the assessment of their needs, the review and transition processes.

ii. Transition to Downside

- The Head of Learning Support, or another member of the Learning Support Department, will liaise with the Admissions Department in ensuring that a pupil's needs can be met within Downside's provision.
- If a pupil is known to have an identified learning difficulty when they arrive at the school, parents will be expected to ensure that the School receives copies of at least the most recent reports from their current school and/or other professionals such as educational psychologists (EP), paediatricians, speech therapists, occupational therapists or any other professional who has been involved in assessment of a child's learning needs.

iii. Curriculum

- Pupils on the Learning Support Register will attend all subject lessons. In some cases, it may be deemed more appropriate for a pupil not to study one particular subject so that they can benefit from support from specialist staff.
- Teachers will provide high quality teaching, differentiating for individual pupils, and be responsible for each pupil's level of progress, including where pupils access support from the Learning Support Department.
- Teachers will use the Referral System to keep the Learning Support Department informed of any concerns, and liaise with the Learning Support Department to identify need and implement interventions to secure progress.

iv. Duties and Responsibilities of the Learning Support Department

For those pupils that arrive at the School with a previously identified learning difficulty, and those pupils who are later identified as having learning difficulties, the School will:

- Provide training for staff to ensure that they can improve their understanding of strategies to support pupils on the Learning Support Register and deliver high quality teaching, which is differentiated for individual pupils.
 - Maintain a Learning Support Register, which is available for all staff.
 - Develop a graduated approach to supporting pupils on the Learning Support Register (see Appendix 1).
 - Develop and maintain Pupil Profiles for pupils on the Learning Support Register.
 - Provide access to information on pupils in the Learning Support Register on both School's network and 3Sys.
 - Where there is a previously identified learning difficulty, assess and draw up a Pupil Profile as needed.
 - Screen and assess existing and new pupils as required.
 - Consider evidence that a pupil may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and, if so, what reasonable adjustments need to be made for them.
 - Focus on inclusive learning and removing barriers to learning (SEND CoP: 6.44 p100).
 - Class teachers, supported by SLT, should be responsible for identifying less than expected progress (SEND CoP: 6.17).
 - The first response should be high quality teaching ("quality first"). If progress continues to be low, the teacher should work with the SENCO to identify need (SEND CoP: 6.19).
 - Rigorous interventions should be implemented to secure progress in the area needed (SEND CoP: 6.19). Response to that intervention should be monitored in the classroom. Targeted interventions (6-8 weeks), which are reviewed in the classroom constitute "reasonable adjustments". Further interventions could be implemented, as needed, when the response is reviewed in the classroom.
 - Make regular assessments of progress for all pupils, identifying those making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.
 - Record the progress of, and support for, any pupils with special educational needs, and for pupils with a disability.
 - Make reasonable adjustments, which may include the provision of appropriate assistive technology. This could be available in IT rooms and on House computers, for example.
 - Liaise with the EAL Department to identify the needs of those for whom English is not their first language as this group of pupils requires particular care (SEND CoP: 6.24).
 - Arrange to further assess pupils for special educational needs and gather information from teachers, where it is deemed necessary.
 - Provide suitably for pupils with Statements/EHC plans.
 - Teach subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with a Statement/EHC plan (Refer to 'Teaching' Requirements in the Academic and Curriculum Policy).
- Ensure that pupils' admissions, discipline and other procedures eg arrangements for school trips or examinations, take account of pupils' needs.

v. Reasonable Adjustments

The Learning Support Department will offer the following arrangements and adjustments to support pupils with previously identified learning difficulties and for those pupils identified as having learning difficulties whilst at the School.

Included in School fees:

- Use of drop-in facility during supervised study and prep time, by arrangement.
- Assessment of learning needs, as necessary.
- Target interventions, as required.
- Assessment and coordination of examination access arrangements (See Appendix 2).

Additional charge:

- In the cases where a new pupil already has a diagnosed learning difficulty, a meeting will be arranged prior to arrival to confirm the level of support. These cases will be dealt with on an individual basis.
- Following assessment, the Head of Learning Support will determine the appropriate pathway for pupils to further support the work of teachers in the classroom (see Table 1).

Table 1: Learning Support provision by specialist staff

Pupils will be offered a pathway for one whole academic year, although there may be occasions when pupils change pathway at the start of a term. All pupils on a pathway will have individual learning plans for their lessons and these are reviewed termly.

Pathway A Pupil with 35 minutes of LS per week	Pathway B Pupil with 70 minutes of LS per week	Pathway C Pupil with >70 minutes of LS per week
<p>Most likely to be specific support in one subject area.</p> <p>£440 per term (£1320 per year) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One 35-minute lesson per week with a specialist teacher. • Minimum of 27 35 minute lessons in the course of the academic year. 	<p>The majority of pupils requiring additional lessons with a LS specialist teacher.</p> <p>£880 per term (£2640 per year) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 minutes of learning support per week with a specialist teacher. • Minimum of either 27 70 minute lessons or 54 35 minute lessons in the course of the academic year. 	<p>A small number of pupils with pronounced learning difficulties.</p> <p>The provision of support will be dependent upon the needs of the individual pupils, and the package and associated cost will be agreed with parents on a termly basis. The provision may include other forms of support in addition to standard lessons with a specialist teacher.</p> <p>A basic Pathway C package would equate to £1760 per term and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 140 minutes of learning support per week with a specialist teacher. • Minimum of an equivalent of 27 140 minute lessons or 108 35 minute lessons in the course of the term.

F. PASTORAL CARE

The Learning Support Department has a special interest in the pastoral care of all pupils who are on the Learning Support Register. The Learning Support Department can often provide an important source of information for staff, and an important means of communication between home and School, to ensure the welfare of pupils on the Learning Support Register.

The Head of Learning Support is a member of the School's Welfare Committee and, as such, is able to ensure that pupils on the Learning Support Register are fully supported whilst at the School.

Policy reviewed and amended 8th September 2018 and confirmed as the current Policy.

Daniel Gibbons

Appendix 1: Levels of provision at Downside

Level 1: Monitor (Subject teachers and pastoral staff to remain aware)

History of difficulties with spelling, writing, organisation and / or aspects of behaviour.

Provision:

- Access to Fasnfeld Centre and LS tutor support by arrangement for a specified time when viewed as necessary or in response to a new assessment.
- Possible extra time in exams and / or use of lap-top.
- Likely to have main support from curricular staff, or to be on pathway 1

Level 2: Additional support (Pupils have 1:1 or small group support)

Reading levels in low or below average level and/or similar difficulties with spelling and written work. Difficulties with independent learning and / or concentration.

Provision:

- May have 1:1 or small group lessons and reduced timetable. In 4th and 5th year, some supervised study in Fasnfeld Centre.
- May qualify for specific access arrangements such as 25% extra time in exams and possible WP.
- Likely to be on pathway 1 or 2

Criteria for Level 2 category:

Intervention through **Level 2 support** could be triggered by the teacher or others' concern, underpinned by evidence, about a pupil who despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities:

- Makes limited progress even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly the pupil's identified area of weakness;
- Shows continuing difficulty in establishing literacy or mathematical skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas;
- Presents persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the school;

Level 3: High Priority Category

Continuing and severe difficulties with literacy skills, reading age well below average and similarly weak spelling.

Provision:

- These pupils will have a reduced timetable and will be allocated 1:1 or small group lessons within this time. They will also be able to access the department outside of lessons.
- Examination access arrangements such as extra time, reader, scribe or use of a lap-top will be made for them according to their assessed needs. These pupils may have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC Plan) or Statement of SEN.

Criteria for High Priority category

Provision under **school action plus** would be for pupils who despite receiving an individualised programme and/or concentrated support under school action, the pupil:

- Continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period;

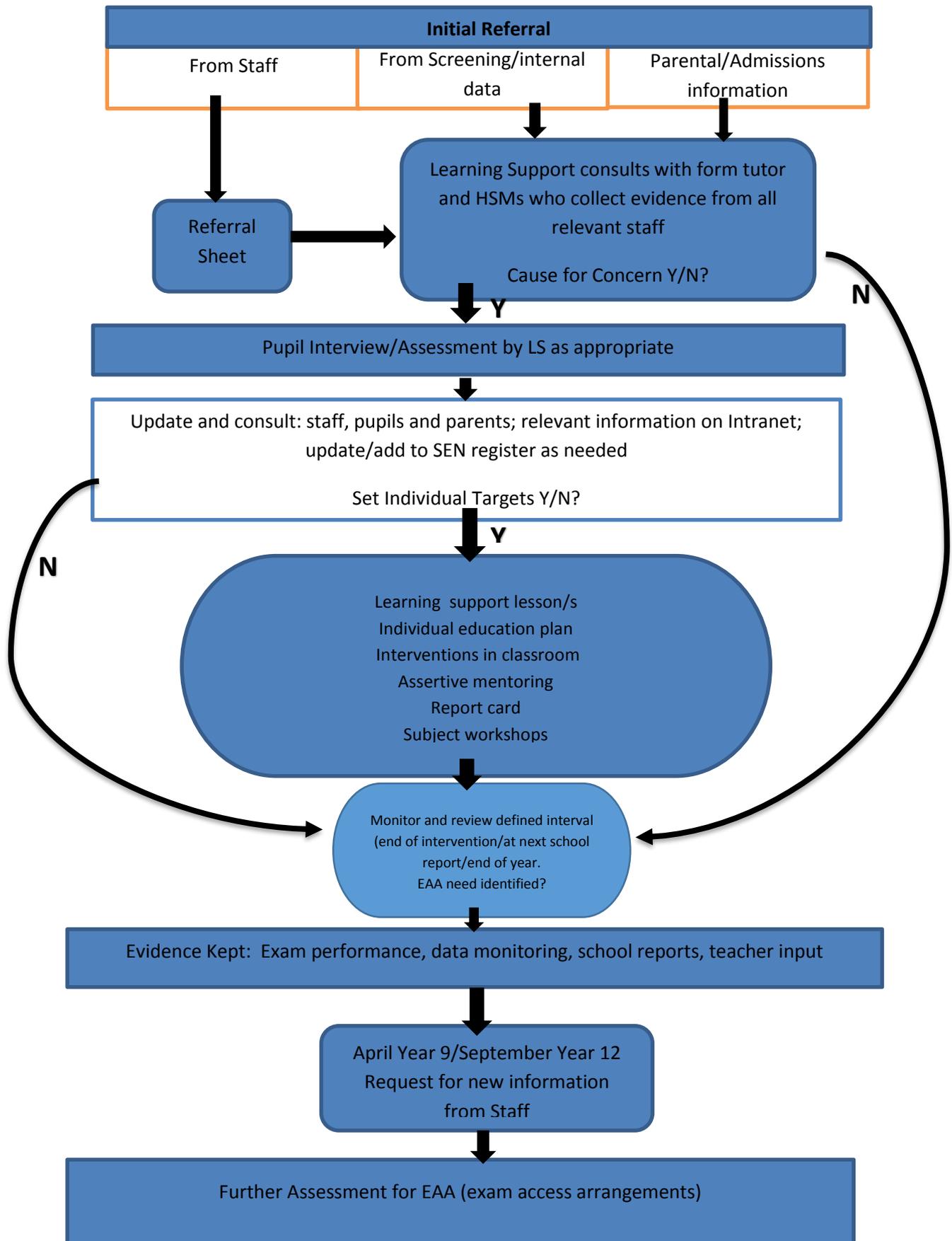
- Continues working at national curriculum levels substantially below that expected of pupils of a similar age;
- Continues to have difficulty in developing literacy and mathematics skills;
- Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with their own learning or that of the class group, despite having an individualised behaviour management programme;
- Has sensory or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits by a specialist service, e.g. speech therapist.
- Has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

Process for Referral, Assessment and Monitoring (See Diagram 1)

- Pupils are offered learning support input by various routes:
- Additional teaching may be reason for parents choosing Downside; information requested from parents at the point of entry to school ask for information to be given about any special educational needs;
- Prep school and other reports may suggest that a pupil would benefit from one-to-one support;
- Entrance exam results or common entrance may indicate the need;
- Assessments taken during the first term or examination results may flag up to colleagues the need for further input;
- Parents' conferences may also produce requests for LS input;
- Use of staff referral forms are also useful tool and a pupil can have a few lessons in the Department to help us ascertain any areas of need.

Some pupils will attend LS for a relatively short time, for example before examinations to get some help in revision methods or to fill in some 'missing' areas of work.

Diagram 1: Process for Referral, Assessment and Monitoring of Pupils with LS Needs



Appendix 2: Examination Access Arrangements

Definitions of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (JCQ Regulations and Guidance: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2018-2019, p3)

- Access Arrangements:

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with **specific needs**, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.

- Reasonable Adjustments:

The Equality Act 2010* requires **an awarding body** to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a **substantial disadvantage** in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; **and**
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not “reasonable”.

**References to legislation in Chapter 1 are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see Chapter 1, section 1.8, page 8). The definitions and procedures in this document relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.*

Role of Head of Learning Support

1. To ensure that all pupils, who are entitled to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments in examinations, have suitable provision made for their particular needs, and that any applications are made following the regulation and guidelines detailed in 'JCQ Regulations and Guidance: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2015-2016'.
2. The Head of Learning Support is responsible for ensuring that the School follows the JCQ regulations and guidance in all matters pertaining to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, as detailed in 'JCQ Regulations and Guidance: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2017-2018'.
3. The Head of Learning Support will coordinate all access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, liaising with the Examinations Officer and other relevant staff as necessary.
4. The Head of Learning Support is responsible for informing all relevant stakeholders (eg pupils, parents, Examinations Officer, staff) of the pupils with access arrangements and reasonable adjustments in examinations.

Process for Applying for Examination Access Arrangements

See Diagram 2

*EAA are discussed and agreed with pupil and parents

1. Pupils and parents sign confirmation of the EAA which may be for internal examinations or for which an application will be submitted to JCQ.
2. Pupils and parents are informed of the duration of the EAA and when a new application process will need to begin.
3. If pupils are not provided with EAA, there are two possible scenarios.
 - i. Parents can appeal against a decision.
 - ii. Continue to collate evidence.

Diagram 2: EAA Process

