

## **Austin Friars**

### **Learning Support Policy 2020/21**

**Austin Friars exists for the provision of education**

**Austin Friars**

**Registered Charity Number: 516289**

# LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

The Learning Support Policy applies to all children in school, from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to VI Form, including children who have Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN). The policy sets out how we aim to apply a whole-school approach to meet each pupil's needs in reference both to the guidelines provided by the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and to the duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The aim of the Learning Support Department is to ensure that the opportunity for independent learning extends to all pupils - regardless of learning difficulty, disability, or other specific need. All teaching and support staff throughout the school work with pupils who have special or different educational needs, and all staff are responsible for identifying, supporting and including children whose needs may be different from their peers. For all pupils, most of their needs should be addressed through quality first teaching. The Learning Support Department is an integral part of ensuring that equality of access to the curriculum, learning, and extra-curricular activities, is provided for all children within the school. Experienced, specialist staff work alongside class teachers, subject specialists and parents to enable pupils to achieve their potential. Whilst the overall aims of learning support are the same throughout the school, there are differences as children progress up the school due to changes in the needs of the children and in the curriculum framework they are being supported within.

## 1. Admissions Procedures

Admissions procedures for a child entering the school are designed to ensure that individual children's specific needs are met. Completion of the registration form, including details of any difficulties the child has previously encountered, and subsequent discussion with parents is an important part of this process. The number and length of pre-admission visits varies according to the child's age, developmental maturity and any specific difficulties. Records and reports from any previous school are used to inform admission planning and the Head of Learning Support is informed of any concerns, so that appropriate assessment can be carried out or existing assessment reports can be examined.

Where children are identified as needing support in order to access the curriculum and participate fully in the day to day life of the school, a transition plan will be agreed prior to entry suggesting the types of adjustments which can be reasonably be made to support the child and suggesting additional support which can be offered to further develop areas of weakness. Pupils taking some form of Entrance Assessment may have appropriate support (extra time, reader or scribe) provided to ensure that their specific learning difficulties are not a barrier to them being able to demonstrate the assessment objectives. Parental concerns about support during Entrance Assessment should be addressed to the Admissions Officer in the Senior School.

## 2. Identification, Monitoring and screening

We believe early awareness of children's learning differences and difficulties is vital. In EYFS there will be monitoring and review throughout, in addition to points for formal assessment. Pupils' progress is monitored throughout the school and concerns passed on to the Head of Learning Support. In EYFS and the Junior School the class teacher submits a *Learning Support Concern* using the *Pupil Tracking* facility on the staff intranet. In the Senior School a *Learning Support Referral* should be made using the *Pupil Tracking* facility on the staff intranet.

Screening for dyslexia takes place during the Summer Term in Preparatory, in the Autumn Term in 1<sup>st</sup> form and for all new entrants to the Junior and Senior School from J1 upwards. Where there are concerns these will be referred to the Head of Learning Support, who are responsible for liaising with Heads of School (Head of the Junior School, Lower School, Middle School or VI Form), parents, gathering further evidence and deciding on an appropriate course of action. This may be recording the concern but taking no further action, placing the pupil on a *Watching Brief*, carrying out further assessment or arranging assessment or advice from an outside agency.

### 3. Assessment and advice

Requests for assessment may result from information gathered as part of the admissions procedures; be made by members of staff, parents, pupils themselves; or result from the findings of routine whole cohort assessments. The assessment process may take the form of a discussion with the pupil's teachers and a period of monitoring or a more formal educational assessment. Formal assessment by either a dyslexia specialist teacher (Head of Learning Support, or an external specialist) or an Educational Psychologist can be arranged. This is usually carried out in school, but sometimes parents may prefer to use an external, independent specialist teacher or Educational Psychologist. In EYFS a referral may be made to the Area SENCO. Types of assessment will be discussed with parents before any assessment is carried out.

The results of assessments will be fed back to parents orally and a report will be written. A copy of the assessment report will be kept in the Learning Support files, maintained by the Head of Learning Support. Advice and information from the report will be shared with teachers, following discussion with parents.

For most assessments an additional charge will be made to parents, according to the criteria below:

- a. In EYFS a referral may be made via the Area SENCO, which there would not be a charge for.
- b. External specialists and Educational Psychologists will charge for their services and any expenses incurred. This will be charged to parents in full.
- c. There is a normally a charge for assessment for additional support in external examinations. There are two set levels of charges, which are set each year – a higher level for initial applications and a lower level for repeat applications.
- d. Screening tests carried out on new starters, Preparatory and annual reading and spelling screening. No charge is made for this.
- e. Post screening follow up, follow up from concerns raised by class and subject teachers. Parents will be contacted where there are concerns, either from screening or raised by teaching staff. The following options will be offered:
  - i. pupil placed on a *Watching Brief* with relevant information shared with teaching staff and a review of progress with parents after an agreed period of time.
  - ii. informal assessment and/or observation carried out by Head of Learning Support. The purpose of assessment will be to inform teaching and learning and give a clear snapshot of the pupil's current ability and level of attainment. A report will be written and kept on file in school. Findings will be discussed with parents and subsequent action agreed. Recommendations may be made about receiving learning support and information will be shared as agreed with teaching staff. This is not a diagnostic assessment.
  - iii. formal assessment, carried out either by an external specialist as arranged by the Head of Learning Support or by parents, and discussed in b. above.
- f. requests for assessment or concerns raised by parents or pupils. Concerns will be looked into by the Head of Learning Support, and where there is evidence of a reason for concern from screening tests or teaching staff these will be dealt with as in e. above. Otherwise parents may be advised to seek assessment from an external specialist.

The assessment materials used will vary, depending on the age of the child, the specific difficulties they are having and the intended use of the outcome of the assessment procedure. Certain assessment materials have a restricted use – materials and results must be kept in a locked cupboard, they should only be used by appropriately qualified professionals and conducted only in strict accordance with the procedures specified in the handbook or guidelines, and following the *Code of Good Practice for Psychological Testing* (British Psychological Society). Assessment for entitlement to access arrangements in external examinations must follow the guidelines in *Joint Council for Qualifications Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration 2019 - 20*. The test used must be up to date (at the time of the assessment) and the age of the pupil assessed must be within the intended age range of the test.

## **4. Levels of support**

### **4.1 Appropriate differentiation and monitoring**

Many pupils who experience some level of learning difficulties can have their needs accommodated by normal differentiated classroom provision, with the Learning Support Department providing some support and monitoring.

#### *Watching brief*

Pupils who are coping well in school but have a known learning difficulty, or about whom there is a low level of concern, may be placed on a “watching brief”. The Learning Support Department informs teachers about the pupil’s strengths and difficulties, suggests strategies to overcome these in class and monitors progress from a distance.

#### *Drop in sessions*

Drop in sessions run during registration periods and break times. These are usually used where a pupil needs support in one area for a short period of time.

### **4.2 Additional Support**

Children who require additional support, beyond the high quality first teaching provided by class and subject teachers can receive Learning Support. The level of support should be sufficient that the child can feel secure and able to access the curriculum confident of achieving success, but development of independent learning skills is still encouraged. Each child has an Individual Action Plan (IAP), Individual Provision Map (IPM) or Early Years Learning Journey – Individual Education Plan (Early Years LJ-IEP) containing targets for the child’s progress each term.

#### *Small group tuition*

Small group tuition allows pupils’ difficulties to be addressed in a secure environment. Strengths can be identified and learning styles which suit the individual encouraged. As pupils progress through school the focus changes from remediating specific difficulties to developing strategies for success at GCSE and ‘A’ Level.

#### *1:1 tuition*

1:1 tuition may be suggested for pupils whose current difficulties are best addressed on an individual basis. This is most often used for our youngest and oldest pupils, and for those with quite specific or severe learning difficulties.

#### *In class support*

Learning support assistants may work alongside pupils in class, enabling them to achieve at their own level within the classroom environment. Younger children and pupils with significant literacy difficulties particularly benefit from this kind of support.

### **4.3 Support from external agencies**

If a child receiving extra intervention is still not making sufficient progress advice or assessment may be sought from an external agency although this now charged for by the local authority. Parental involvement in this process is important, and the right of parents to be fully informed about concerns relating to their child is paramount. Co-ordination of the response to concerns and communication with parents is the responsibility of the Head of Learning Support. In EYFS advice may first be sought from the Area SENCO.

#### **Support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND**

If parents and carers feel they would like some impartial information, advice or support on any issues relating to their children’s special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), they can contact the Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) who can offer a range of support. We will help parents, carers and young people to prepare for meetings with schools or the local

authority and practically support them at the meetings in an appropriate and impartial manner. We can also signpost to other relevant support networks.

For more information on SENDIASS and how to find support, please click on this link:

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/schoolsandlearning/ils/parentpartnership/default.asp>

**SEND Early Help** – If there is sufficient cause for concern, and evidence of intervention which has not succeeded, a request may be made for *SEND Early Help*. This is co-ordinated through the Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board.

(<http://www.cumbrialscb.com/professionals/earlyhelp/send.asp>) and could lead to an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) (SEND Code of Practice 2015). In EYFS advice will first be sought from the Area SENCO. Gathering of information in school, and involvement of parents is essential to a successful outcome of the process. This is achieved by following the routine record keeping and *LS Referral* process.

#### Annual review of Education, Health and Care Plans

Education, Health and Care Plans are reviewed at least annually (or 6 monthly for a child under the age of 5 years). At present we have 1 pupil who has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) in the Junior School and 4 pupils in the Senior School. Any existing Statements of Special Educational needs will continue to be effective, until they are replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans.

#### **5. Individual Action Plans (IAPs), Individual Provision Maps (IPMs) and Reports**

Pupils receiving formal Learning Support will have an Individual Action Plan (IAP) or Individual Provision Map (IPM) written which contains targets for the child's progress. These are reviewed at specified times, and the level of progress made and new targets set shared with parents. In the Senior School this is combined with the progress report for pupils receiving Learning Support lessons. In the Junior School a separate Learning Support Report is written at the end of each term. Children in EYFS will have an Early Years Learning Journey – Individual Education Plan (Early Years LJ-IEP).

#### **6. Sharing information with other teachers**

All pupils who have some level of Learning Support involvement will appear on the *Learning Difficulties, Disabilities and Special Educational Needs List* (LDD and SEN List). This is available as hard copy from the Learning Support Department. This includes pupils who have been assessed at some stage or who have a known learning difficulty or disability, whether or not they currently receive any input from the Learning Support Department. A condensed form, known as the LDD Register can be accessed via the school Intranet. A brief statement of a child's learning difficulty, eg dyslexia, slow processing speed, past-assessment, (known as a *Learning Support Consideration*) will appear on all class lists obtained from the Intranet. Further information is available on the Intranet via *Learning Support IAPs* and it is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure that they are familiar with the strengths and weaknesses, learning styles and specific strategies relevant to each child they teach.

Each pupil receiving Learning Support lessons in the Senior School has an Individual Action Plan (IAP) written each term. Comments on the pupil's progress should be forwarded to the Head of Learning Support via the *Learning Support Referral* option on *Pupil Tracking*, so that the IAP can be reviewed and targets for the coming term set.

#### **7. Transition**

As pupils transfer between classes and stages in school every effort is made to ensure that new teachers are aware of the strengths, learning styles and difficulties that pupils have demonstrated previously. This process is more important where pupils have a specific learning difficulty. Transition from Pre School to Kindergarten, and from Kindergarten to Transition is overseen by the Early Years Foundation Stage team including the SENCO. Transition from Junior 4 to the Senior School is overseen by the Head of Lower School. Transition from school to work or university is usually overseen by the Head of VI Form. The Head of Learning Support is involved where a pupil is known to have, or there are concerns they may have,

some form of learning or developmental difficulty. Learning Support records transfer with the pupils as they progress through school, and can be shared with providers of further and higher education if requested by pupils.

### **8. Arrangements for exams and assessments**

Where pupils have been identified with some form of learning difficulty, impairment or disability reasonable adjustments can be made in order to avoid them being placed at a disadvantage in exams and assessments. Pupils with learning difficulties may be entitled to arrangements such as extra time, use of a reader or reading pen or a scribe in examinations. The Learning Support Department work with subject teachers, pupils and parents to identify and provide appropriate support.

Additional arrangements of this type are known as *Access Arrangements* and their provision for public examinations must comply with the regulations contained in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration General and Vocational qualifications (produced for each academic year September to August). Educational assessment for access arrangements is usually carried out in school.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Learning Support to ensure that assessment and provision of access arrangements is in accordance with the latest JCQ guidelines, for all pupils who have been identified as having a learning difficulty, or where a concern has been raised by a member of staff, parent or pupil. Access arrangements may not be appropriate for all pupils who have an identified learning difficulty or concern, but should be considered for all pupils on the LDD Register and records kept of the evidence used to support an application for access arrangements or to determine that they are not appropriate.

Support may also be given to pupils for school examinations and assessments. This should be carefully considered so that the objective that is being assessed is not compromised, but the child is not prevented from showing their knowledge and understanding due to their difficulties. In the Senior School support given to pupils in Lower School is intended to work towards the level of support they are likely to be entitled to in public examinations. In Middle School and VI Form support in examinations will be as close to that available in public examinations as possible.

### **9. Resources and facilities**

The Learning Support Department has excellent facilities – with dedicated, modern accommodation in Junior and Senior Schools. The space available allows pupils to benefit fully from a multi-sensory approach.

Resources are used which suit pupils' learning styles and needs – such as the *Nessy Learning Programme*, *Indirect Dyslexia Learning System (IDL System)*, *Alpha to Omega*, *Word Wasp*, *Numicon*, *WordShark*, *NumberShark*, mind mapping and speech to text software.

ICT facilities are important in developing pupils' independent study skills. The Senior School department has computers in study cubicles for distraction free working, and laptops for use by pupils working together or receiving close support. Pupils who would benefit from use of a laptop in subject lessons can bring their own laptop into school, and will be supported in its use and with the use of assistive technology such as speech to text software.

Practical activities help build confidence and can be linked to literacy, maths and social objectives. The kitchen area is regularly used for cooking, and for wet or potentially messy practical activities.

### **10. Charges for Learning Support and assessments**

There is an additional charge made for teaching and assessment carried out by the Learning Support Department. Charges will be discussed and confirmed in writing before any provision takes place.

### **11. Learning Support and SEN Information for Parents of Pupils in EYFS and Junior School**

We have high expectations for, and aim to challenge, all our pupils irrespective of learning differences, Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disabilities. Most of our pupils needs should be addressed through high quality teaching with appropriate differentiation.

The named SENCO for the EYFS is Mrs S Duncan

References:

- Austin Friars Learning Support Policy **2020-21**
- SEND Code of Practice **2015**
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework – **April 2017**

This document is contained within the whole school **Learning Support Policy**, but specifically refers to the **Early Years Foundation Stage** and Junior School. We adopt a graduated approach to meeting the needs of pupils with learning differences, Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disabilities.

### Assess

- Pupils are regularly assessed either through day to day observations or formal assessments.
  - **EYFS** – Using Early Learning Goals criteria and Early Years Outcomes guidance
  - **KS1 & KS2** – Using termly assessments and InCAS data
- **Stage 1**- Where a child appears to show a delay in progress, teachers and practitioners may submit an **LS Concern** in order to keep staff aware of pupils who are more likely to experience learning challenges. Provision continues to be made by the class teacher and parents are made aware.
- **Stage 2** – Should a concern develop an **LS Referral** can be made, with parental consent, by the class teacher to the SENCO for further action or assessment. The Head of Junior School is also notified. Pupils are not designated SEN either if parents do not wish it or if it is considered there remains only a delay in progress.
- **Stage 3** - Where there is little or no improvement in the child's progress more specialist diagnostic assessment or consultation may be sought from an external agency with parental consent. Co-ordination of the response to concerns and communication with parents is the responsibility of the SENCO. Where difficulties are possibly of a dyslexic nature a full educational assessment may be suggested, leading to a formal diagnosis of dyslexia. This is usually undertaken after the age of 7 by a qualified professional.  
*N.B. All pupils are screened for possible signs of dyslexia at the end of KS1 or as new pupils joining the School in KS2.*
- **Stage 4** - If there is sufficient cause for concern and evidence of intervention which has not succeeded, a request may be made for **SEND Early Help**. This is co-ordinated through the Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board (<http://www.cumbrialscb.com/professionals/earlyhelp/send.asp>) and could lead to an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) (SEND Code of Practice 2015). In EYFS advice will first be sought from the Area SENCO. Gathering of information in school, and involvement of parents is essential to a successful outcome of the process. This is achieved by following the routine record keeping and *LS Concern and Referral* process.

### Plan

#### EYFS

- Where it is decided to provide designated SEN support, parents are formally notified and an **EYFS SEND Support Plan** is devised seeking input from the class teacher, SENCO and parents. The child's views are taken into account.
- Targets are deliberately ambitious and a clear date for review is set.

#### KS1 & KS2

- Where it is decided to provide formal Learning Support teaching, an Individual Provision Map (IPM) is devised by the class teacher, SENCO and Learning Support Department Teaching Assistant. The child's views are taken into account.
- Targets are deliberately ambitious and a clear date for review is set.

#### **All Pupils with an EHCP\***

- Where a pupil has an Educational Health Care Plan\* (EHCP), an IPM is devised seeking input from pupils, parents or carers, class teacher, SENCO, Head of Learning Support and any relevant external agencies.
- Targets are deliberately ambitious and a clear date for review is set.

#### **Do**

- EYFS – The Early Years practitioner remains responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. With support from the SENCO, the Early Years practitioner should oversee the agreed interventions or programmes and assess the child's response to the action taken.
- KS1 & KS2 – It is the responsibility of the class teacher and Learning Support Department Teaching Assistant, to monitor the progress made by all pupils with an IPM or EHCP\*

#### **Review**

- EYFS - All IPMs are reviewed in line with the agreed date by the Early Years practitioner, SENCO and parents and taking into account the child's views.
- *N.B. The graduated process is informed by EYFS materials, Early Years Outcomes guidance and Early Support resources.*
- KS1 & KS2 - All IPMs are reviewed at least termly by the class teacher, SENCO and Learning Support Department Teaching Assistant. The child's views should be taken into account. Parents are given a copy and are welcome to liaise with the Junior School so that their views can be taken into account.
- ***Where it is agreed by all parties that a child has made sufficient progress and no longer requires designated SEN support or formal Learning Support they are placed on Watching Brief, with details updated on the LDD and SEN list.***
- All IPMs for pupils with an EHCP\* are reviewed in line with the agreed date by the class teacher, SENCO, parents and any relevant external agencies and taking into account the child's views. A full annual review is conducted every year.

Head of Learning Support  
September 2020

## English as an Additional Language (EAL)

This section is concerned with bilingual learners who have a home language other than English and who study at Austin Friars.

### Context

Bilingual or multilingual EAL learners at Austin Friars come from a range of backgrounds, including for example, pupils from China joining the A Level Programme as part of the Westudy project, and a small number of pupils throughout all stages of the School from bilingual or multilingual backgrounds whose home language is not English.

Bilingual or multilingual EAL learners at Austin Friars generally have well developed literacy skills in both their home language and English.

### School objectives

**All bilingual/multilingual EAL learners at Austin Friars are entitled to the full range of the school curriculum.**

**Austin Friars aims to achieve the following objectives for bilingual/multilingual EAL learners:**

1. To ensure that EAL learners participate in all school activities appropriate to their age group
2. To ensure that the curriculum needs of EAL learners are provided for through discussion with their class teacher, Head of School and Deputy Head (Academic)
3. To support EAL learners in their acquisition of English language skills across the curriculum.
4. To support EAL learners through the extended A Level Programme or learning support system as appropriate.
5. To ensure that appropriate action is taken where required for EAL learners who are taking public examinations at Austin Friars.
6. To encourage teaching staff, where appropriate, to develop resources and teaching materials to enhance the linguistic skills and conceptual understanding of EAL learners, for example by providing glossaries of technical terms being used in the subject, or by providing suitably differentiated learning activities.
7. To ensure that every teacher is aware that they have responsibility for the language development of an EAL learner. To provide information about support and appropriate teaching strategies on the school intranet.
8. To involve the SENCo and/or Learning Support Co-ordinator in the monitoring of EAL learners' progress and to provide assessments where required (for example exam access arrangements).
9. To include bilingual/multilingual learners whose home language is not English on the Learning Support Register with EAL as a Learning Support Consideration on the school intranet system.

### Conclusion

Although the numbers of bilingual EAL learners at Austin Friars are low, it is acknowledged that the progress of bilingual EAL learners is significantly influenced by the school ethos and by teacher attitudes and expectations. Austin Friars welcomes bilingual EAL learners and through the mutual cooperation of the pupils, their teachers and their parents, aims to ensure that their education experience is positive and rewarding.

Where EYFS children for whom English is not their native tongue join the School the above noted provisions are also applicable to them with sensible consideration being given to the linguistic capability and age of each individual child.

A record of strengths, strategies and provisions are accessible on the School's intranet in every case.

Head of Learning Support  
June 2020