



## LEARNING SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE POLICY

**The Learning Support and Challenge Policy applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage.**

### **BACKGROUND AND AIM**

Farlington takes children from a broad intellectual range, sometimes with a V.R. of less than 100. We also take children whose first language is not English who will need additional help. We supply limited support from specialist staff to those pupils whom we identify as having special needs. Learning difficulties may affect children who have a high IQ equally as those of lower academic ability.

The aim of this policy is to explain the responsibilities we are able to accept, the support we are able to provide and also the responsibilities of parents in relation to pupils who may be affected.

### **'LEARNING DIFFICULTIES'**

- A child has a 'learning difficulty' within the meaning of s.312(2) *Education Act 1996* if she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of her age; or a disability which prevents or hinders her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of that age.
- The expression '*learning difficulty*' covers a wide variety of conditions and may include dyslexia, dyspraxia or attention deficit disorder. It may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing.
- Learning difficulties are sometimes genetic in origin. Parents are therefore asked if there is a family history of any learning difficulty.

### **SCREENING FOR ALL PUPILS**

- The law imposes on schools a responsibility both for the physical well-being and the educational needs of pupils whilst in the care of the school. For this reason and also as a matter of good practice, we have introduced a system of testing all pupils for learning difficulties.
- Each pupil (aged 7 and over) will take tests appropriate to their age.
- It is important for parents to understand that these are 'screening' and not diagnostic tests. At best, they will reveal the need for a formal assessment to be carried out by an education psychologist.
- These tests are not infallible. Therefore, each pupil will be re-tested at the appropriate level at approximately yearly intervals or at an earlier stage if cause for concern is expressed.



- Testing will be conducted in a classroom environment. Unlike some other kinds of tests, they are not competitive and no specific preparation is required or beneficial.
- Any child whose results indicate a problem or any pupil whose teachers express concern is sent for further extended tests by the SENCO, who will consult with the English department and Headmistress of School as appropriate. After consultation with the Headmistress or Headmistress of Prep School, recommendations are made which could include a visit to an Educational Psychologist.

### **OUTCOME OF SCREENING**

- The outcome of the screening tests will be reported to parents by letter. The letter will inform parents that a learning difficulty is or is not suspected.
- If a recommendation is made that an Educational Psychologist be consulted, we will inform parents of the following:

The names of between one and three educational psychologists to whom the parents may refer for further advice and/or formal assessment.

The likely cost of the referral which is to be borne by the parents.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION**

- The School at present employs trained Special Needs tutors to provide educational support for a small number of pupils with mild to moderate learning difficulties.
- Further details of this provision and its cost to parents will be provided during consultations at the appropriate time.
- The right is reserved following consultation to require parents to withdraw a child from the School in any case if, in the opinion of the Headmistress:

the child is reported to be in need of assessment or additional or remedial teaching or medication to which a parent does not consent; or

the learning difficulties require teaching or medication which, in the opinion of the Headmistress, the School is unable to provide or manage; or

the pupil has special needs that make it unlikely she will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities provided by the School.

- Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances would not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice. A deposit paid in respect of the child would be credited to the account.
- The cost of the assessments, professional advice and remedial teaching is payable by parents in addition to normal fees and half a term's notice (or payment of half a term's fees in lieu) is required to terminate remedial teaching. Fees paid for additional or remedial teaching will not



be funded under any circumstances.

- Parents may opt for remedial teaching to take place outside the School provided the Headmistress is satisfied with all the arrangements including travel, timing and delivery to the pupil of the remainder of the curriculum.
- Unless negligent under the terms of this policy, the School accepts no responsibility to the pupil or parent caused by or arising out of any failure to detect or refer a learning difficulty or other condition or situation of special need.

### **THE LIABILITY OF THE SCHOOL**

- Unless negligent under the terms of this policy, the School accepts no responsibility to the pupil or parent caused by or arising out of any failure to detect or refer a learning difficulty or other condition or situation of special need.

### **THE ORGANISATION OF LEARNING SUPPORT**

- In order to try to avoid girls missing subjects such as Music and Drama, there are no “protected” subjects. This will allow more flexibility in the Learning Support timetable, will reduce the number of P.E. lessons missed and means that girls, for whom non-academic subjects may be a strength, will avoid missing them.
- Girls in the Prep School will attend their Learning Support lessons at the same time each week.
- Unless there is a serious need, no girl (excluding those having ESOL lessons) should have more than one lesson a week.
- Girls in the Prep School will receive focused help from the Teaching Assistant on a regular basis.
- Each girl will be re-tested at the end of the year to assess whether she has progressed. Any girl who does not appear to be benefiting from her extra help should stop lessons so that another girl can receive help.
- ESOL students will have a strong emphasis on curriculum support.
- If a girl in the Senior School is seriously struggling, then the decision will be taken as to whether she should drop Latin. Every attempt will then be made to timetable extra help during that time.
- Parental concerns about which lessons are to be missed will be listened to, but no changes will be made on this basis alone.
- Parents should not be promised lessons until after discussion with the Learning Support department.
- The Learning Support department should be alerted before a new entrant arrives if there is a suspicion that she will need extra help.