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University College School Junior Branch

Learning Support Department Policy

Background

UCS is an academically selective school which admits pupils into the Junior Branch on the basis of ability shown in tests and interviews. The school recognises that addressing individual learning needs is the key to pupil success and this policy therefore aims to provide a framework for the support of learning throughout the school.

We will endeavor to provide all pupils with the help and support they may need in order to develop their learning skills and to fulfill their potential.

In keeping with the Equality Act (2010), the non-statutory guidelines within the Code of practice (2015) and the children and families act (2014), the school will strive to make all reasonable adjustments to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties and /or disabilities. (LDD)

Learning difficulties defined

A pupil is defined as having a learning difficulty or disability if:

- They have significantly greater difficulty learning than the majority of others the same age.
- They have a disability preventing or hindering them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age.

The SEND code of Practice identifies 4 broad areas of need:

- Communication and interaction – including autistic spectrum disorders
- Cognition and learning – including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia.
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and physical needs – including visual or hearing impairments

Aims of the Learning Support Department

- To identify and support pupils with SEND and work with them to enhance their learning skills and abilities.
- To support the learning in the school by providing support and advice to pupils, where appropriate, who may not have any SEND but may still be identified as having difficulty with a particular area of the curriculum that is impacting on their academic progress.
- To develop a partnership with all teaching staff so they feel informed about and able to meet the needs of learners within their classes.
- To liaise with parents and outside agencies as appropriate to ensure pupils are given the best opportunities to make progress.

Staffing

The person responsible for coordinating the provision of Learning Support across the UCS foundation is the Head of Learning Support (HLS) based in the Senior School. The HLS JB manages the department at the Junior Branch. There is one additional Learning Support teacher and two Learning Support Assistants making up the Learning Support team.

Both Heads of Learning Support have specialist qualifications for teaching pupils with specific learning difficulties and work closely together to plan provision for pupils with special needs and ensure smooth transfer to the Senior School.

Admission to the Junior Branch

The Junior Branch selects pupils for entry on the basis of their academic ability as demonstrated in an entrance exam and performance at interview. Where an applicant to the school has a physical disability or learning difficulty this should be mentioned prior to the entrance tests and all relevant information (professional and school reports) given to UCS. A decision about appropriate support during entrance tests can then be made on an individual basis. If information is withheld the school may not be able to cater properly for a pupil's special needs.

Identification of pupils with SEND

The school aims to identify pupils with SEND or those for whom learning support would be valuable in the following ways :

- By receipt of information from a previous school.
- By provision of information by parents as described above.
- By the raising of concerns from members of staff about the learning progress of a pupil.
- Observation and assessment by the Learning Support Department.
- By tracking the progress of all pupils within the school using the assessment information stored on the database.
(Annual tests in VR / NVR/ Reading and Spelling, English and Maths levels.).

Support for Pupils – a graduated response.

The school follows the guidelines of the SEND code of practice (2015) in adopting a graduated approach to the provision of additional support for learning of pupils with SEND.

'Assess, plan, do, review'

Stage 1: Concern raised

Concerns may be raised at any time about the progress of an individual pupil by a member of staff or parent. This would usually be in the form of an email or informal discussion with the HLS, followed by completion of a referral form.

Stage 2: Assessment of pupil need

Following referral, The HLS will do an assessment of need. This will involve looking at all available information, work samples, screening results, recent reports etc. and, if appropriate, a classroom observation.

In the light of this information the HLS may meet with the pupil to do a diagnostic assessment of any of the following :

- Spelling
- Reading
- Handwriting
- Maths skills
- Basic screening for specific learning difficulties.

Any significant results from this assessment process will be discussed with parents.

NB The school does not produce written diagnostic assessment reports for parents.

Stage 3: Monitoring

It may be decided following assessment that a pupil should be put on the monitoring list. This will involve the HLS having a termly discussion about the pupil's progress with relevant teachers. Support for teaching staff is given in the form of suggested strategies to be used in class alongside a differentiated approach. Support groups run by teachers, extra reading / in class support from TAs and holiday work packs are all important resources at this stage.

Stage 4: Individual or paired support

Pupils who are still struggling when a number of other class - based strategies have been tried (see above) may be offered individual, paired or small group teaching sessions on either a regular or occasional basis.

NB. Parents will always be consulted at this stage and their permission asked before any individual teaching sessions take place.

When one to one or paired support with a specialist teacher or member of the LS team is agreed, pupils are withdrawn from a lesson once a week on a rotation basis or from a specified lesson agreed with a subject teacher.

The aim of these sessions is to support the learning in the school by building confidence in a particular curriculum area or addressing specific gaps in learning. Whilst they may be used to practice or reinforce particular skills they are not meant to be used for highly specialist teaching programs.

Planning and Review

Pupils should be involved at every stage of learning support planning and review. Targets will be discussed with them and they will be asked to take part in the review of their progress. This may take the form of discussion in learning support sessions or a questionnaire filled out by a TA or parents with a pupil. Older pupils may be asked to attend the end or beginning of a review meeting.

Shared Target planning and review sessions – teachers.

The LS team meets with relevant subject teachers twice a year to exchange information, review progress and agree focus areas for pupils receiving individual or paired support and for those on EHC* plans. This ensures that class targets are supported and that individual sessions are used in the most productive way to support the learning in the school. A form (**shared target sheet**) is produced from these meetings and copied for teachers.

Progress of learning support pupils will be reviewed at regular intervals. Review takes place during:

- Monitoring discussions between staff 1x termly
- Shared Target sessions 2x yearly
- Year Group meetings 2 x yearly
- Learning Support review meetings with parents.

Stage 5: Consideration of extra assistance – involvement of outside professionals.

Following review it may be decided that further assessment of need by an **outside professional** such as an educational psychologist, speech and language therapist or occupational therapist would be useful in order to ensure that all assistance possible can be offered.

The school can advise and recommend suitable professionals but it is the responsibility of parents to engage their services and to cover the costs.

NB It is important to note that reports from educational psychologists and external specialists will NOT guarantee accommodations made in tests and exams or extra support or help within school. Whilst their recommendations may be taken into account, any decision made around extra provision will be made within the context of school performance and assessment. It is considered good practice for any outside specialist to contact the school for information prior to assessment.

Where there is a recognised special need or Learning disability teachers should familiarize themselves with the needs of those pupils they teach and differentiate classroom practice accordingly.

Stage 6: Conclusion of a program of support

Following review when it is decided to conclude a program of support, parents will be informed and the pupil will often be monitored for a term or so to ensure that progress is maintained. Records of Learning Support interventions are kept whilst the pupil is at the Junior Branch and help can be given again if needed at any later stage in the pupil's school career.

Education Health and Care Plans

Very few boys at the JB have had EHC plans. These are legal documents detailing provision to be made to meet a child's severe and complex needs. When a pupil does have one, a shared target sheet is drawn up and reviews arranged regularly with outside agencies, medical and teaching staff and parents. All recommended procedures in the SEND Code of Practice 2014 will be followed, an annual review will be held and contact maintained with the issuing borough.

Support for teaching and pastoral staff

All teachers are supported in their teaching of pupils with SEND in the following ways :

- Learning Support information, teaching and monitoring lists updated each term and emailed to all staff.
- Learning Support handbook distributed to all staff and strategy sheets on Firefly.
- In class observation and feed-back
- Learning Support basic information about recognised needs on SIMs.
- Weekly Liaison meetings between the HLSJB and HLSSS and pastoral support team.
- New teacher induction meetings.
- Shared target planning meetings and sheets..
- Information given at Termly Year group meetings
- Information put on staffroom notice boards and given in weekly staff meetings.

Training for staff

There is an ongoing commitment to raise awareness of pupils' learning needs and to develop teaching strategies that will maximize learning potential. The following help to implement this ;

- New staff induction meeting with HLS and discussion of training needs.

- Whole staff INSET training on matters of learning support arranged as the need arises.
- Individual staff are encouraged to attend courses as appropriate so that they are equipped to deal with the needs of the boys in their care.

Support for Parents

The Learning Support department recognizes that parents have a vital role to play in the identification and support of pupils with learning difficulties.

- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they have about their child's progress with the form teacher or HLS at the earliest opportunity.
- Form teachers or the HLS can be contacted by telephone or email and are happy to meet by arrangement before or after school.
- The school intranet, Firefly will increasingly have useful information relating to Learning Support eg how to help with organisation / reading at home.
- Parents will be consulted by telephone or email at the start of any individual learning support intervention and notified at the end of it.
- Parents views are taken into account when planning and reviewing learning support interventions and they may be invited for meetings with the LS team and other staff to discuss their son's progress.
- The LS team write a report formally once a year on the main report of all pupils receiving individual support.

Transition to Senior School

Every effort is made to ensure a smooth transition from the JB to UCS Senior School for pupils with learning difficulties.

- Transfer review meetings, attended by the HLS at the Senior School, are held for parents in the Spring term before transfer.
- Pupils are invited to stay behind for lunch with a member of the Senior School LS team on the day of the year 6 Frognal visit.
- The HLS attends transfer meetings with Senior School staff at which relevant information is passed on.

Pupils with EAL needs

There is an expectation that all pupils who pass the entrance tests will be able to communicate effectively in written and spoken English. There are however a number of pupils in the school who have learnt English as an additional language (EAL). These pupils may be offered Learning support assistance for a period of time if they experience any specific difficulties in the classroom.

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