



## Learning Support Policy

### PHILOSOPHY

'Our school is:  
an optimistic school promoting Christian attitudes,  
a school where every person belongs,  
a school which values learning ,  
a school that rises to the challenge and celebrates achievement.

Notre Dame educates the whole person:  
HEAD, HEART and HANDS.'

(Notre Dame Mission Statement)

At Notre Dame we are committed to inclusion. We believe that all students are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, suitably differentiated to meet individual needs. As a school, Notre Dame seeks to assist all students, taking into account their intellectual, behavioural, emotional, physical and cultural needs. The school's policy is to ensure access for all students to the academic and social life of the school and to enable each student to make the best progress possible, whatever their needs or abilities. The school will endeavour to give each child opportunities for development and progression recognising that to treat everyone the same is not to treat them equally.

Notre Dame recognises that there is an individualised approach to meeting the needs of students, which is most effectively managed within a graduated approach to intervention as laid out within the Code of Practice. Notre Dame fully endorses the principles laid out in the revised Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, published in January 2015

Notre Dame recognises that students with special educational needs and disabilities are not the sole responsibility of the SEN department. All teachers are teachers of special needs and have a combined responsibility for all students.

The primary aim is to include students with special educational needs and disabilities in the academic and social life of the school and to enable students, from those who experience learning difficulties to the most able, to work to their full potential.

### STAFFING

The named Special Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCO) is Lisa Rogers. The Learning Support team consists of a team of Learning Support Assistants, both full and part time. The post of Learning Support Manager is held by Anita Shaw, the Communication & Interaction Manager by Alison Emery and Lead LSA by Linda Beaty. The department also has an administration assistant acting as the link between staff and parents; Carol Shaw.

### ORGANISATION

Much of our special needs provision is provided by support staff working with subject teachers, within normal timetabled lessons. In core subjects there are specific Learning support assistants with appropriate qualifications to support the course content.

The responsibility for co-ordinating special educational needs and disabilities provision lies with the named SENDCO. The arrangements for students include:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEND policy.
- Managing the SEND team of teachers and learning support assistants.
- Liaison with curriculum areas ie. Faculty leaders, Curriculum Leaders, subject teachers.
- Liaison with pastoral staff ie. Heads of House, Form Tutors, pastoral mentors.

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- Overseeing the records on all students with SEND.
- Maintenance of My Plan documents and EHCPs of SEND in accordance with statutory guidelines.
- Dissemination of information on students to relevant staff.
- Liaison with outside agencies where appropriate.
- Communication and interaction with parents.
- Communication with the governing body through the named governor with a special interest in SEND.
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff.

It is the responsibility of the governing body and the Head teacher to ensure that the appropriate SEND provision is in place. It is the SEND Co-ordinator's responsibility to oversee the day to day running of the Learning Support policy. The education of all students, including the least and most able, is the responsibility of all teachers.

### **ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

These are in accordance with the admissions policy in place at Notre Dame. In the event of over-subscription, children with special educational needs cannot be given lower priority status than other applicants. Priority must be given to students with a Statement for special educational needs & disability.

In so far as it is reasonably practical and compatible with the student receiving the necessary special educational provision, a student with special educational needs will be fully integrated with the other students of the school at all times. This must take into account the efficient education of other students and the use of resources.

### **FACILITIES**

The school has a Learning Support base, G27, giving access to IT, books and curriculum equipment. It is a quiet room with a relaxed atmosphere. The intention is for this room to be used as a flexible learning resource so at any one time a variety of students of differing ages and abilities may be working there. In addition there is an SEN relaxation space used as a sensory environment (G26) where small classes can be taught.

The Learning Support Office provides a base for SEND staff where liaison with parents, students and outside agencies can take place.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF NEED**

The needs of students are identified in a variety of ways:

#### **1. Primary liaison**

Primary schools are visited by the SENDCO and Head of Houses in the summer term. The aim is to identify and assess students' needs and the type of support they will require when they arrive. The SENDCO has the opportunity to discuss the students' needs with primary staff and to observe the students in the classroom context. As well as students' response to the curriculum other information can be gleaned about factors which affect learning such as, for example, family circumstances, physical impairment or absence from school.

When the SEND department is notified of a child with particular needs, extra visits are arranged both by Notre Dame staff to the primary school and by the child to Notre Dame in order to aid the transition process. Miss Rogers & Mrs Emery takes the lead on all Transition visits and plans.

An enhanced transition scheme is in place for those identified by the Primary Schools as having a high level of need. This 6 week programme in the Summer term allows for a smooth transition and enables the SENDCO to appropriately plan for provision.

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During this transition period initial IEPs are drafted to ensure all teachers have information regarding students they may teach.

## 2. Initial assessment and observation

The first three weeks of term are spent on general assessment of students by subject and Learning Support staff. Information on students is then gathered through Support team meetings, Department meetings and the completion of referral forms. This supplements information received during primary liaison.

During the first half term of Y7 all students are given a Reading test and a Spelling test. These are used alongside KS2 results to provide us with baseline assessment data.

Information from staff and tests is collated and used to identify students who have special needs, students who are underachieving and the most able. The SEND register is then compiled and circulated to all departments. Students are seen on an individual basis, their needs assessed, and an Individual Education Plan prepared, if appropriate.

## 3. Information from Outside Agencies

Needs of individuals may be passed on from outside agencies already involved with students at primary school such as the Educational Psychologist, the Communication Interaction Team (Autism / Speech & language) Social Services or the Educational Welfare Officer.

The situation may also arise where outside agencies are called upon by the school to make an assessment of a student if the school and parents feel it is necessary. A more specialist opinion is called upon:

- a) to enable the school and parents to identify the need of the student.
- b) to ensure the need is catered for.

## 4. Identification of Need throughout the school

It is acknowledged that the needs of individuals vary throughout their years at school therefore the identification of need and request for support for students can occur at any time during a students' career at Notre Dame. The identification of need can arise from a number of sources, for example:

- a) Subject teacher
- b) Learning Support Staff
- c) Form Tutor/ Head of House
- d) Parents
- e) Outside Agencies
- f) EWO
- g) The individual student concerned

The procedures for initial identification of need, individual assessment arrangements and reviews are in line with the graduated approach recommended by the revised SEND Code of Practice.

At Notre Dame it is acknowledged that the key to meeting the needs of all students lies in the teacher's knowledge of each student's abilities and the teacher's ability to match this to appropriate ways of accessing the curriculum for every student. When a subject teacher concludes that the strategies they use are not resulting in a student making progress, consideration will be given to providing help over and above that which is normally available.

The key test of the need for action is evidence that current rates of progress are inadequate. Where progress is not adequate it will be necessary to take some additional or different action to enable the student to learn more effectively.

## **SEND Input students (K)**

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- Subject teachers seek the help of the SENCO who leads further assessment and plans, monitors and reviews support.
- An IEP is devised. All staff are involved in providing appropriate methods of access to the curriculum. The student is involved in setting and reviewing targets.
- Parents are kept informed of actions taken to help the student. They are invited to review meetings.
- Interventions are led by SEND staff as required depending on students need
- Observations are completed to track progress.

### **My Plan Students (M)**

- A student is moved to a MyPlan if there is little or no progress despite concentrated support under low level SEND support.
- External support schemes will provide specialist assessments and will advise on targets, strategies and resources.
- The SENCO will work with the subject teachers to plan a new IEP and will monitor and review support.
- Parental interaction will include regular review meetings and home / school support through parent forums and individual consultations.

### **EHCP students (E)**

- If the help given by the school through Action Plus is not sufficient to enable the student to make adequate progress a request is made to the LEA to initiate statutory assessment.
- The LEA, if appropriate, will issue a statement and arrange, monitor and review provision.
- Reviews will take place yearly to ensure support is meeting the needs of the student
- In some cases an enhanced curriculum is planned to support the learning needs of the individual

### **Individual Education Plans**

Individual Education Plans record short-term targets for all students placed at SEND support, MyPlan or EHCP level. Subject staff are asked to complete target sheets in order to contribute to the process of devising the IEP.

A review meeting is held twice a year to which parents and students are invited. These meetings are an important part of the process whereby the SENDCO is informed of the views of parents and students. They enable the students' needs and the support provision in place to meet them to be discussed and modified.

Complete IEPs are available to all teaching staff. Students are a key part of the planning process and have clear targets to work towards taking into consideration their point of view.

## **PROVISION**

Resources are allocated to support students with an identified need. The primary aim is to maximise access to the curriculum therefore in-class support forms the basis of provision. As well as providing full access to the curriculum for all students, this avoids labelling and provides quality, specialist teaching for all.

The supporting of students in lessons is supplemented by a minimum of individual/small group withdrawal as and when the need arises. This is concentrated in the first three years and is aimed at improving literacy, numeracy and communication skills. In some cases an additional curriculum plan can be put into place for students with higher levels of need.

Specialist ICT programmes are used with individuals and small groups to provide personalised and individual programmes of work aimed at improving literacy, numeracy and life skills.

In addition, arrangements for support include:

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- Access to SEND base for extra support, private study or specific teaching
- Paired Reading Scheme
- Individual spelling/reading/comprehension programmes
- Toe by Toe
- Access to ICT & Clicker7
- Development within departments of appropriate resources to support students who experience difficulties and to extend the most able..
- Social and communication skills support groups.
- Behaviour Support
- Social skills/ self-esteem boosting groups
- Homework Club – daily in SEN base, before school and at lunchtime.
- Loan system for laptops and spellcheckers.
- Reading helper strips/pocket spelling cards.

The following points are taken into consideration when developing the support timetable:

- a) The number and expertise of the support staff available
- b) Prioritising the need for support
- c) The consistency of support
- d) The legal requirements of the statements of educational need
- e) The need to be flexible in order to respond to need as and when it arises.

A supported and differentiated curriculum provides access for students to a broad and balanced curriculum. It is the responsibility of individual departments to develop a differentiated curriculum. The SENDCO co-ordinates the classroom support and oversees the development of differentiation within the school. Through the provision of in-class support and differentiated resources students' individual needs can be catered for and barriers to learning and participation can be removed.

### IN-CLASS SUPPORT - GUIDELINES

#### Aims

1. To empower students to gain access to the curriculum.
2. To work with those students identified as experiencing learning difficulties or those requiring extension.
3. To work in collaboration with subject staff.
4. To discuss and evaluate targets and achievements with students.
5. To raise students' self esteem.

#### Implementation

There is no one particular way to support a class. The style of support depends upon students' needs, the subject teacher and the area of learning that is being covered. Support staff need to be flexible and may support in various ways:

1. General class support – working alongside the subject teacher, giving support to all students who require it.
2. Specific class support – working with targeted students whose specific needs have been identified, e.g. EHCP students, or able students who need to be extended.

#### Means by which Support Staff can help students access the curriculum

Working with the student:

1. Build on existing knowledge, skills and experience.

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2. Start at the level of competence of the student.
3. Explain and interpret parts of the lesson.
4. Assist in the reading of instructions, using the context of the lesson to help develop reading and spelling skills.
5. Aid the recording of information, the setting of work, spelling, presentation and transcribing where necessary.
6. Work through tasks stage by stage, making sure concepts have been understood.
7. Encourage the student to develop their own thoughts and ideas by talking and listening to them.
8. Make clear what is expected of the student and the target set for the lesson.

### **Communication**

1. Instructions, written and oral, need to be straightforward, step-by-step.
2. Use precise language; avoid vague terms when giving instructions.
3. Use technical terminology where applicable. Students need to get used to a subject specific vocabulary.
4. Check the print size, clarity, layout and readability level of resources used. Written instructions need to be within students' reading capacity.
5. Group discussion is beneficial to all. It generates ideas; students feel valued members of a team; students have the opportunity to work independently of adults.

### **Evaluation**

The evaluation of students' progress and the nature and/or necessity of support needs to take place on a regular basis. The support timetable is not static and has to respond to the needs of students as and when they arise.

It is essential that this evaluation has the child at the centre of the planning – the child and the parents are a key part in all review meetings and planning stages.

### **SUPPORT/SUBJECT STAFF LIAISON**

1. Support staff need to be aware that the style and approach of subject tutors will vary. Support staff must be flexible but at the same time cater for students' needs.
2. The department should supply the relevant scheme of work to support staff.
3. Both teaching and support staff should discuss the most effective use of support within the class. However, it is the responsibility of the subject teacher to plan for and direct support staff appropriately.
4. The subject teacher retains responsibility for students.

### **REPORTING TO GOVERNORS AND PARENTS**

There will be an annual report from the SENDCO to the Governors (and in turn the parents) and regular updates to the SEND governor evaluating the success of the education provided. This report will include:

## **LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY**

- the success of the SEND policy
- significant changes in the policy
- any consultation with the LEA and other schools
- how resources have been allocated to children who need support over the year

### **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

At Notre Dame, parents are encouraged to bring any concerns initially to the attention of their child's teacher/tutor. If concerns persist the parents may refer to the SENDCO and thereafter the Headteacher. Where difficulties are still unresolved the complaint will be considered by the relevant committee of the Governing Body.

If a parent is not happy with the school's complaints procedure they should contact the LEA which provides a Disagreement Resolution Service. A mediator may be appointed to help find a workable solution to the difficulties which have been identified.

### **INSET**

Opportunities are provided for all staff to develop expertise in meeting the needs of students from the least to the most able. The opportunities include:

- INSET provided by the school/SENDCO/HLTAs
- LEA training initiatives
- Conferences held by other bodies.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH BODIES BEYOND THE SCHOOL**

Regular contact is maintained with appropriate support services such as:

- Educational Psychology Service
- EMAS service
- Social Services
- EWO
- Hearing Impairment Advisory Team
- Visual Impairment advisory Team
- Advisory service for IT and SEN
- Careers SW Service
- Occupational Therapy Team
- Physiotherapy Team

On transfer to or from another school appropriate transfer documents will be forwarded. Every effort is made to ensure that a smooth transition is made into FE training or employment.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

Parents are encouraged to participate fully in the education of their child through a range of formal/informal opportunities such as:

- Parent forums led by external agencies and SENDCO
- Discussions prior to student's admission where appropriate
- Consultation days and evenings
- Access to tutors/SENCO by arrangement
- Involvement in reading initiatives
- Involvement in IEP review meetings/target setting
- Regular and meaningful communication

### **MORE ABLE AND TALENTED STUDENTS**

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Notre Dame recognises the uniqueness of each child and acknowledges that there are some students who may display exceptional abilities in relation to their age range and have specific needs which arise from this.

## Aims

To identify those students who are felt to be able and talented and to support them in developing their gifts and talents to the full.

To ensure that their social and emotional development is appropriate to their chronological age.

To support teachers in making suitable provision for these students.

To work in partnership with parents so that both school and home environments nurture these specific talents.

## Identification

The following criteria should be considered:

- General intellectual ability
- Creative thinking
- Leadership/social awareness
- Visual and performing arts
- Mechanical ingenuity
- Physical and sporting skills

Methods to identify the more able include:

1. Tests
  - SATs
  - reading, spelling, maths
  - school progress and module tests
2. Diagnostic assessment
  - based on students' work and performance in class
  - based on general checklists of characteristics
  - based on subject specific checklists
3. Opinion
  - teacher nomination
  - parental nomination
  - self nomination
  - peer nomination

An audit is completed annually by all departments to produce a register of able and talented students.

## Provision

Teachers should create a range of opportunities for more able and talented students to access a variety of learning styles.

These might include:

- differentiated and flexible curriculum including tasks set at individual levels.
- extension and group work
- individual enrichment study skills acceleration
- enrichment/challenges that will accelerate learning
- extra curricular activities

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- support to colleagues with possibility of extension and acceleration in school and cross-phase
- support to students and parents

By order of the Governing Body of Notre Dame School

Policy first adopted by Governors Standards Committee: date April 2008

Review Term: 3 Yearly

Review Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012 ..... Signed Chair of Standards.....

Review Date: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015..... Signed Chair of Standards .....

Review Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 ..... Signed Chair of Ethos .....

Next Review: March 2021.....