

Academic Support Policy

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies on:

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Disabled Students
- Disability Access
- EAL
- Equal Opportunities
- Safeguarding Policy

This policy refers to what might, in other schools, be termed SEN, SEND or Learning Support and it considers what Bedford Modern School provides, irrespective of need or ability, to help all students achieve their full potential. We consider this part of our commitment to and evidence of Fundamental British Values, in creating a tolerant, kind and open community where all are accepted and can flourish within our school community.

Rationale

At Bedford Modern School we recognise that there are some students who have Specific Learning Difficulties (sometimes abbreviated to SpLD). The following definition is provided by the University of East Anglia on what Specific Learning Difficulty means:

"Specific learning difficulty" is an umbrella term and is now generally accepted as also including the following:

- *Dyscalculia*
- *Dyslexia*
- *Dysgraphia*
- *Dyspraxia*
- *Attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD or ADHD)*
- *Autism Spectrum Condition*
- *Social, Communication and Interaction difficulties*
- *Physical Difficulties*
- *Social, Emotional and Mental Health*

As with any disability, no two individuals experience the same combination of difficulties and some students may exhibit signs of more than one SpLD. However, these learning difficulties typically affect students' motor skills, information processing and memory and are often productive of high levels of anxiety. These difficulties are likely to be more acute in the examination/assessment situation.¹

Such students will sometimes need enhanced support help to develop and extend their own ability. The school aims to identify these children as early as possible to ensure that school life is successful, enjoyable and rewarding.

¹ <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/dos/wellbeing/guidance-for-staff/disability/specific-learning-difficulties-spld-guidance-for-staff>

The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all current and prospective members of its community. The school welcomes applications from prospective students with or without additional needs, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Additional learning needs are neither seen as a hindrance nor a barrier to admission to the school or to achieving success whilst at the school, and we seek to do all we can to help students in need of Academic Support.

Bedford Modern School recognises the importance of the following acts and will comply with all those parts which are related to the independent school sector while recognising all aspects of these documents as a guide to good practice:

The Disability Discrimination Act 2010

We do not discriminate against a disabled person in making arrangements for admission, on the terms offered to a student, or by discriminating against a disabled person by excluding them from school purely on the grounds of their disability. We will take reasonable steps to ensure a disabled person is not disadvantaged during their time at the school.

The Equality Act 2010

In continuation of the themes as outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995, we will not victimise a student due to their own personal academic support needs.

The Children and Families Act 2014

We consult with parents, the student, and teachers to ensure there is open and clear dialogue about how we can best support that student, and to ensure their voice is heard. We encourage all parents and students to be actively involved in decisions relating to the student's education. We provide students, parents and teachers with the relevant information and support to allow them to do so. We support the student and their parents to help them achieve the best possible educational outcomes.

The SEND Code of Practice January 2015

We will provide 'reasonable adjustment' to ensure that students are not at a substantial disadvantage in relation to their peers either on application or whilst enrolled at the school. We anticipate the needs of the individual as far as we can – we try to intervene before difficulties arise, or as quickly as possible after issues come to light. We expect teachers to include those with disabilities in all of the opportunities available to other children within the realms of the threshold of 'reasonable adjustment.'

Identification

During the admission process

The school aims to identify those students with diagnosed learning difficulties prior to sitting entrance exams to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to allow students to show their true potential and be selected on an equal footing with all other entrants. It is therefore important that appropriate information is provided on the registration form and appropriate documentation from a suitable specialist assessor is provided prior to the entrance examinations. We do not apply a policy of 'double adjustment' once a concession has been made to support a student in the entrance exams: all entrance data is then considered evenly for all students, as it is by exam boards and universities. This further reinforces the need for students and parents to disclose any learning needs or disabilities during the application process, to allow us to make reasonable adjustments to support a student during the admissions process.

After joining the school

Students may be identified for assessment through referrals made by members of the teaching or pastoral staff, statistical analysis of tracking grades, whole-cohort tests and exams, or through concerns raised by parents, teachers, the children themselves or external agencies.

Students, parents and teachers are encouraged to reflect upon and raise any concerns about a student at any time. The school has internal academic monitoring procedures used by staff including analysing student work, report trends or comments to ensure there is regular review of all students. This is to ensure any Academic Support concerns can be addressed as swiftly as possible.

Assessment of students who might benefit from Academic Support

Students will be placed on the Student Profile Report (previously known as the SEND Report) on iSAMS, our internal management system) if:

- a. There has been an external assessment identifying a learning difficulty.
- b. There has been an internal assessment by a Specialist Teacher identifying a learning difficulty.
- c. Academic Support lessons are deemed necessary by the school and agreed by the student and parents.
- d. A student has Access Arrangements
- e. They have a significant health concern and require a Health Care Plan
- f. They have significant social, emotional and mental health issues

Some of our students have a range of overlapping learning difficulties whilst others may have a very specific difficulty. The nature of the concern is recorded in the Student Profile Report along with strategies identified in each individual Student Profile (previously known as IEP) which should help teachers to deliver the curriculum more effectively to the individual student. The Profiles are written with the students to reflect the strategies they feel are useful.

Provision

In conforming to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2015, the majority of provision for students at BMS is within the classroom. We recognise that all teachers are responsible for teaching every child and individual needs are taken into account. Class teachers are supported by using information in our secure school system. Teachers are also supplied with advice and guidance on how to tailor provision for students with Academic Support needs in a variety of ways. The SENDCo and Mental Health Lead retain general oversight of welfare provision for those receiving Academic Support and liaise with relevant parties to support the child.

Specialist support for all students in the school may be provided through:

- Individual lessons with an Academic Support Teacher.
- Small group lessons under the auspices of the Academic Support Department.
- Specific, ad-hoc sessions on individual aspects such as spelling.
- Individual subject-specific sessions, normally at the request of students and run by members of staff of that subject.
- Specific or additional help provided by a subject teacher with guidance from the Academic Support Department.
- Subject-specific support is offered in many departments in regular support sessions and there is particular provision in the Sixth Form through the Learning Support Mentors who work in the Wilden Room.
- Ad-hoc use of our study support centre in which there is always a member of the Academic Support Team available during the school day to provide individualised support when required.

Heads of Subject are required to provide differentiation and detail of the support that is offered to Academic Support students in their schemes of work.

Regular training opportunities are offered to staff to support them in working with our students who have SEND. Heads of Faculty, Heads of Subject or other relevant Line Managers support teaching staff to identify training needs.

Assessment and Monitoring

We have an assessment framework throughout the school for the assessment of learning. Within this framework students who are underachieving (either through effort or attainment relative to their abilities or the overall standards generally expected) can be identified and provision considered.

Students having individual support lessons are set focus areas informally in their lessons with their Academic Support teacher and through discussions with subject teachers where relevant. Parents are able to contribute to decision-making around support for their child at the beginning of the academic year, at parents' evenings and in the end of year review. Naturally, there are many other avenues of contact throughout the year, including phone calls, emails and meetings as appropriate.

Monitoring of reports is conducted by Tutors, Heads and Assistant Heads of Year and SENDCo, and, where appropriate, concerns passed to the Academic Support department. We actively monitor the reports and end-of-year examination results of those with Academic Support needs to ensure they are making good progress, and implement support where progress is not being made. Termly Interim Reports provide information to parents on student progress and thus parents are informed on the progress of their child.

We monitor the school attendance records of those with Academic Support needs, as well as the rewards system to ensure that Academic Support students are both attending school and achieving at a level commensurate with other students.

We also survey Academic Support students once a year, to identify their satisfaction with their support at the school and reflect upon our practice.

Looking at each year group as a whole cohort ensures that we can check each student is making age-appropriate progress in relation to national averages. Regular work scrutiny and regular review of support help ensure appropriate focus areas are set and strategies are in place to assist student progress.

Mrs Z Woodhouse
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