

**TOPIC: Pupils with a Learning Difficulty**

**Rationale**

Our commitment to identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with a learning difficulty stems from our principles of

- i. Equality and inclusion
- ii. Our commitment to both excellence and equal opportunity
- iii. Every pupil achieving his/her potential, regardless of gender, race or learning difficulty
- iv. Raising achievement for all through a curriculum that is broad, balanced and appropriately differentiated
- v. Developing talents by providing opportunities that match the expectations and needs of our students

**Purposes**

1. The school aims to:
  - 1.1 Identify and monitor a student's needs at the earliest possible stage
  - 1.2 Ensure that all procedures for identifying students with special educational needs are known by everyone in the community
  - 1.3 Involve parents at an early stage and encourage them to be involved with their child's education
  - 1.4 Select and use systematically, a range of identification and assessment procedures for students who may have a learning difference
  - 1.5 Devise strategies for provision which includes both organizational and curricular strategies as part of differentiated, extended and enriched learning experience
  - 1.6 Raise students' levels of achievement.
  - 1.7 Continuously improve classroom-based provision
  - 1.8 Develop appropriate teaching and learning programmes

- 1.9 Possess adequate records that follow the student through the school which are clear, factual, up-to-date and reliable
  - 1.10 Acknowledge and promote parental involvement and partnership in students' learning
  - 1.11 Ensure both policy and programme are flexible to meet the learning needs of students.
2. The school is committed to ensuring that:
    - 2.1 Pupils with special educational needs feel valued and are fully integrated into the life of the school community.
    - 2.2 Extra-curricular activities are open to all.

## **Definitions**

- 1 Special Educational Needs are learning needs which arise as a result of a student's performance with tasks related to their education.
- 2 A pupil with special educational needs is one who has particular problems accessing an area, or areas, of the school curriculum such that his/her performance and learning suffer overall.
- 3 Special Education Needs arise from constraints which may be any one or a combination of the following:
  - i. Physical
  - ii. Social
  - iii. Emotional
  - iv. Sensory
  - v. Intellectual
- 4 Special Educational Needs embraces both students with a specific learning difference (e.g. dyslexia) and with a disability (e.g. visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairment)

## **Guidelines**

1. Where students are perceived as 'having a difficulty or disability' to the detriment of their intellectual ability, the College will provide a supportive environment.

## 2. Identification

- 2.1 Using the results of tests alongside students' records, information from parents and departmental/class teacher tests/observations, the College will establish which pupils have general or specific learning difficulties, which students may be exceptionally able, which students may have long-standing emotional/behavioural difficulties and which students may have specific reading difficulties (dyslexia).
- 2.2 Physical, medical and health needs will be established
- 2.3 The College will seek to identify its students with a learning difference through the staff, and the expertise of external agencies.
- 2.4 The College will use the following identification tools:
  - i testing
  - ii tracking
  - iii diagnostic assessment based on students' work and performance in class, using both subject specific and general checklist
  - iv teacher observations
  - v parental observations
- 2.5 The register of identified students will be updated on an ongoing basis by the HOD Learning Support.

## 3. Referral Procedure

- 3.1 Pupils are tested by examination and class teacher assessments.
- 3.2 Teachers will identify the needs of individual students in every area of the curriculum.
- 3.3 An analysis of performance at attainment levels in all areas of the curriculum will be used to identify particular difficulties.
- 3.4 Students identified with specific learning needs will be referred to the HOD Learning Support who will liaise with class/subject teachers who will be asked to monitor students' progress.
- 3.5 Pupils may be referred from year level class meetings.

#### 4. Assessment Procedure

- 4.1 Staff of the College may identify and recommend to the HOD Learning Support, students who require further learning assessment.
- 4.2 If the College is sufficiently concerned about the degree or nature of the difficulty, an Educational Psychologist's assessment may be recommended to parents to provide a more complete picture of the student's abilities and difficulties.
- 4.3 A parent may request an independent assessment e.g. by an Educational Psychologist recommended from an external agency.
- 4.4 Assessment must be rounded and on-going so that students developing at different rates, and with different needs, are taken into account.
- 4.5 Assessments need to be updated regularly to promote current relevant information on the learning needs of students and to meet the requirements for external examinations.

#### 5. Intended Outcomes

- 5.1 The College will enable more students to achieve their potential by:
  - 5.1.1 giving close attention to the needs of individual pupils through differentiation and careful monitoring of progress
  - 5.1.2 recognising the rights of all students to develop their individual skills and abilities, and for their achievements to be celebrated
  - 5.1.3 having high expectations of what students can achieve
  - 5.1.4 creating a rich and stimulating learning environment with many opportunities for enrichment
  - 5.1.5 engendering depth of understanding and a 'thirst' for learning
  - 5.1.6 using variations in pace, styles of learning, classroom organization and student activities to create interest and motivation.
  - 5.1.7 Developing higher order thinking skills
  - 5.1.8 Encouraging all pupils to think for themselves
- 5.2 Gifted and talented students will be referred to the TIC Gifted and Talented Students for consideration for specific learning programmes

- 5.3 The College will recognise students' gifts and their deficits and will recognise that the remediation in their area of difficulty is required.
- 5.4 Effective teaching and learning strategies will include gifted children with visual-spatial strengths and students who are better at expressing themselves verbally than through writing.
- 5.5 All staff must adopt teaching strategies which encourage the development of mutually supportive relationships between students, staff and parents as self-esteem enhancement is at the very heart of provision for all pupils with a learning difficulty.

## 6. Whole School Perspective

- 6.1 The College will carry out the following educational measures:
  - 6.1.1 Provide a nurturing environment that not only recognises, but also honours diversity
  - 6.1.2 Create a balance between making allowances for students' difficulties and continuing to advance in their areas of talent
  - 6.1.3 Encourage students to take sensible risks and learn that neither failure nor success is a threat

## 7. Practical Arrangements

- 7.1 All staff will be informed of the practical needs of the student in order that the curriculum is delivered effectively in all subjects and the student is treated with understanding
- 7.2 The student will be given direct support as required e.g. by the College's Learning Support Service
- 7.3 The HOD Learning Support will keep in direct contact with the student receiving support

## 8. Responsibility

- 8.1 The specific responsibility for gifted and talented pupils with a learning difficulty/disability is with the TIC Gifted and Talented.

## 8.2 The HOD Learning Support will:

- 8.2.1 Formulate and maintain a register of students with a learning difficulty/disability
  - 8.2.2 Ensure specific budget allocation
  - 8.2.3 Establish suitable identification and assessment procedures, together with support structures for students
  - 8.2.4 Establish monitoring systems to review students' progress
  - 8.2.5 Liaise with parents, staff and identified students
  - 8.2.6 Establish links and use a range of outside agencies, both those supporting Gifted and Talented students/families and those supporting the particular learning difficulty or disability
  - 8.2.7 Provide support for teachers in the classroom
  - 8.2.8 Monitor the effectiveness of teaching support programmes, together with the Deputy Head – Teaching and Learning and other members of the SMT where appropriate.
  - 8.2.9 Review provision regularly
  - 8.2.10 Liaise with HoDs/TiCs to review planning
  - 8.2.11 Inform and involve Board of Governors as appropriate by the Headmaster and the Senior Management Team.
  - 8.2.12 Keep up with recent developments and attend courses
- 8.3 All teachers who come into contact with able students with learning difficulties must consider his/her needs when planning the delivery and assessment of their area of the curriculum.

## 9. Monitoring

9.1 The College's success in meeting the needs of students with a learning difficulty/disability is evaluated using the following indicators:

- i records of individual progress
- ii value added information
- iii staff performance management and review
- iv students' comments
- vi parents' comments
- vi examination results
- vii feedback from subject and classroom teachers
- viii comments of the HOD Learning Support and the TIC Gifted and Talented
- ix ERO inspection reports
- x successful transition to the next stage of learning.

Ratified by Headmaster: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed

\_\_\_\_\_ Date