ST SWITHUN'S SCHOOL

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY (SENIOR SCHOOL)

Policy History	
Reviewed and updated	**September 2026**
Date of next review	**September 2027**

Learning support policy contents

1. **Definitions and background** **Page 2**
2. **Aims and objectives** **Page 3**
3. **Identification and provision** **Pages 3-4**
4. **Learning support lessons** **Page 4**
5. **Access arrangements for external examinations** **Pages 4-5**
6. **Review and development** **Page 5**

Reviewed by:

Deputy Head Academic	**Head of Learning Support**	**Education Committee**
Charles Hammel	**Julie Stickland**	**Steve Bailey, Chair**
Date: September 2026	**Date: September 2026**	**Date: October 2026**

St Swithun's is a learning community in which pupils should experience success. We are committed to an inclusive culture where all girls are enabled to have equality of access to the curriculum in a welcoming, valuing and respectful environment. Sometimes a pupil needs additional support to enhance development or learning performance in order to strengthen self-esteem across an area(s) of the curriculum. The department which takes responsibility for this is called the Learning Support department.

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies to ensure the effective and efficient provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at St Swithun's. The provisions in the *Children and Families Act 2014* and their implementation through the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015)* issued by the DfE and DH have steered the formulation of this policy.

Definitions and background

The *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015)* provides the following definition:

> A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she: has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or; has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age…
>
> Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is '…a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. … 'Long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

Learning support at St Swithun's encompasses those pupils who have SEN according to the definition above as well those who may be identified within school as needing additional, individual provision to support their learning and academic progress.

There is a separate policy for English as an Additional Language. The school recognises that a pupil should not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language (or form of language) in which she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home.

Aims and objectives

The principal aim of the learning support department is to provide individually tailored support for girls experiencing difficulties with aspects of their academic studies. It contributes to an environment in which all pupils are nurtured to develop, intellectually challenged through academic study, stimulated through co-curricular activities, and encouraged to achieve their best. Learning support provision involves the identification, assessment and monitoring of the needs of individual pupils.

The learning support department also supports all teaching staff in ensuring that they are kept informed about individual educational needs of pupils and suitable classroom strategies to support those needs, so that teachers can provide high quality, well differentiated teaching. The work of the learning support department encourages awareness of and respect for individual differences and varying ways of learning, and collaborates with all staff to identify pupils' subject-specific areas of difficulty and agree appropriate methodologies to address them.

Identification and provision

The school maintains a learning support register, which is the responsibility of the head of learning support. It is a fluid document; pupils may be added or removed from it at any time dependent upon their individual educational need as measured throughout their school career. Pupils are listed in year groups.

The inclusion of a pupil's name on the register at St Swithun's can be for a broad range of reasons, from a slight interruption in progress which requires greater than normal differentiation to a recognised learning difficulty or disability which presents a barrier to learning and therefore demands a much more, potentially long-term, specialised approach.

The register also includes any pupil with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan from a local authority. Where a girl has an EHC plan, this will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the local education authority's requirements to ensure that appropriate support and provision are in place. The school and/or parents can request that the local authority make an assessment with a view to an EHC plan being produced. The school will consult with the parents in any such cases, and it will also liaise with the local authority to ensure that the provision in any EHC plan can be delivered by the school.

Learning support can encompass four broad areas of pupil development: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; sensory and/or physical need.

A girl requiring learning support may be identified by a variety of means, including:

- Staff referral;
- Parental referral;
- Self-referral;
- Information received from her preparatory/junior school;
- School monitoring, such as occasioned by teacher observation, progress reviews, written reports or academic monitoring;

- School testing and screening procedures, including internal school assessments and examinations and also results from standardised assessments such as MidYIS, Yellis and ALIS baseline testing and Exact literacy screening.

Once the head of learning support is aware of a pupil, further information on the profile of the pupil will be gathered, and additional, more specialist assessment (informal and/or formal) may be carried out within the department. The head of learning support communicates openly with parents about this, so that the school and parents can work collaboratively. In some instances it may be appropriate for the school to recommend a further assessment by an external specialist (e.g. an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language specialist, Psychiatrist, etc.). With the parents' permission a written copy of any such assessment report should be made available to the school and kept on the pupil's record.

An individual plan is then devised to assist the pupil's further development. Desired outcomes for the pupil are at the centre of this process. The learning support teacher, with the pupil, writes a pupil passport which includes statistical background (where appropriate); the pupil's areas of strength; anything the pupil finds difficult; identified strategies and advice for teachers which help the pupil in the classroom; ideas to follow to enable self-help; and potentially some short term or general targets. If deemed appropriate, individual, weekly lessons with a member of the learning support team will be organised.

All staff have access to the learning support register and pupil passports, as well as more general advice and resources to support teaching pupils with particular needs, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, AD(H)D Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder and ASC (Autistic Spectrum Condition).

Learning support lessons

Many girls on the learning support register will attend individual learning support lessons with specialist teachers. Some may attend learning support lessons regularly and over a longer term, whereas others may attend for shorter periods to address a specific issue(s), for example to accelerate key points of learning or provide repetition of learning opportunities to address insecure learning. Lessons are scheduled to take place during study periods or before school and not during curriculum time. Tailored programmes of work are devised on an individual basis and objectives agreed between the pupil and her teacher. At the end of each term/year an informal review takes place to assess the effectiveness of the strategies, and pupils themselves contribute to the regular review of their progress.

Access Arrangements for external examinations

Should the school hold sufficient information on the history of need and the history of provision for an individual, it may be possible to make an application for an Access Arrangement(s) for an external examination in accordance with JCQ regulations. A decision on any such application will be taken by the examination board on the basis of the evidence put forward by the school.

The head of learning support coordinates assessing, gathering evidence of need and applying for Access Arrangements, and liaises with the examinations officer with regard to the implementation of Access Arrangements for both internal and external examinations. A guide to Access Arrangements for parents is published on the parent portal.

Review and development

Learning support policy and provision are reviewed regularly. Provision is evaluated in a number of ways, e.g. through monitoring of classroom practice by the head of learning support and heads of departments; analysis of pupil tracking data and assessment results; and value-added data for pupils on the learning support register. Development plans are drawn up in order to increase continually the impact and effectiveness of this aspect of the school's educational and social role.