



# Oporto British School

*Established 1894*

*To Strive for Success and To Serve*

**SCHOOL POLICY:**





## **LEARNING SUPPORT**

**Adopted : 22 June 2004**

**Reviewed & Revised : May 2007/2010/2012**

**Reviewed: Dec 2013/Feb 2014**

**Due for review: Feb 2017**

 <b>Board of Governors</b>	 <b>Head Master</b>	
 <b>Head Primary</b>	 <b>Head Secondary</b>	<b>Other relevant staff</b>

### **Distribution List:**

Board of Governors

Head Master

Heads of Section

Academic Staff

Parents



## School Mission/ Philosophy Statement

"The school puts the individual's needs and potential as the core of its aims".

Please note, that in line with the School Admission Policy, 'the amount and level of support is, however, limited and the School is unable to provide the resources to pupils with severe learning difficulties'.

## Learning Support Policy

The structure of the Learning Support domain in the School is such that the two distinct areas of Language and Special Needs provision are under one 'umbrella' department.

Throughout the school's history, there has been a number of pupils for whom English is not their first language. Currently, only a small minority of pupils have English as their first language. Most of the curriculum is conducted in English, as is the entire business of the school. Portuguese, Portuguese History and Studies, Spanish and French are the only exceptions. Arguably, all the pupils experience some difficulties resulting from the language being used. However, there are degrees of difficulty, which vary from pupil to pupil. Each pupil may experience learning or language difficulties at a particular time, or constantly.

Additionally, some pupils may experience learning difficulties because of their intellectual capability, their temperament and/or personality, their personal circumstances, or because they suffer from a specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia).

Children are recognised as having Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty, which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. **Children have a learning difficulty if they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.** Special education provision is additional to, or different from, the provision made available for children of their age in the school.

The School Mission Statement includes, "The school puts the individual's needs and potential as the core of its aims". Unless we recognise individual difficulties and needs and do our best to address them, we are unable to meet this part of our mission. **It is the responsibility of each teacher to apply these principles to their own teaching, with each of their pupils.** In the first instance, therefore, the planning and delivery of the curriculum should include differentiated material and approaches, appropriate to the group of individual and individuals within the groups being taught. In some cases, extension material and programmes for gifted individuals need to be addressed.

It is recognised, however, that some pupils, for reasons outlined above, may require additional support. This may be provided in the following ways :

- Teaching and Learning Assistants : may provide general support to, and are directed by, the class teacher, supervising small groups within the class, and helping individuals



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with specific tasks. In the case of assistants employed specifically to deal with one pupil, the LSC monitors and assists as necessary.

- In-Class Support : a specialist teacher (either by virtue of expertise in Language Teaching (TESOL) and / or teaching pupils with Learning Difficulties) would support the class teacher by giving advice on appropriate strategies for teaching and learning, and / or assisting with specific pupils or small groups deemed as requiring help
- Withdrawal from Mainstream Lessons : as for the above point, except that identified pupil/s would be withdrawn to receive specialist assistance in a 1:1 situation or in a small group.

## Identification

Identification of pupils requiring Learning Support (either Language or Special Needs) may occur :

- through information passed on from feeder nursery schools and preliminary contacts made by the school's induction teachers.
- through information received from parents/guardians (or 'carers') of the pupil
- through recommendations and observations from transfer documents from previous schools in the case of older pupils.
- as the result of the day-to day delivery of the curriculum. The class or subject teachers and assistants are in an excellent position to observe and assess each pupil's progress. Their experience and expertise should be used to make professional judgements as to the possible need for additional assistance.
- To make a referral the following process should be observed:
  - 1) a Referral Form should be completed and directed to Learning Support by the concerned teacher. 2) A full consultation will be arranged with the coordinator of Learning Support , and if necessary, other teachers and Heads of Section to discuss. 3) Parental contact is made with a view to recommending a certain course of action.
- as a result of the School's assessment system. The school continually assesses the ability and progress of each individual. This commences on application (in the case of older pupils joining the school), where an initial assessment of a pupil's suitability for entry is made (Admissions Testing). It continues through the pupil's career in the School, either by regular assessment of performance, or by formal School and Public examinations. Regular standardised testing is also carried out as an aid to identification of pupil strengths and any areas of need.
- through formal diagnostic testing. In many cases, this could be carried out initially by the Learning Support Staff. In some cases, formal external testing would be recommended. This would occur in order to identify Specific Learning Difficulties, emotional, behavioural or language problems. It would require the involvement of a professional (e.g. an educational psychologist, speech therapist, etc.), who would



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undertake a formal assessment and provide feedback, both as to the nature of the problem (should one exist) and the educational requirements resulting from the assessment.

In all cases, parents would be expected to agree to recommendations made as the intention of this would be to ensure that the support in place for the pupil remains appropriate and effective. Should they choose not to agree to recommendations, a note will be made of this for future reference.

## **Time Allocation**

The contact time will take into account recommendations from outside Agencies (e.g. psychologists), testing and performance information, teacher suggestions and input from the home. Time allocations will be decided by the Learning Support Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the Head of Sections, Learning Support staff, teachers and parents/guardians. During the course of the academic year, these allocations may be subject to change, depending on pupil performance, timetable changes or other circumstances.

## **Communication**

Any reports on pupils from outside Agencies, plus any internal testing conducted on pupils, should be made available to the staff concerned. All meetings with outside agencies (educational psychologists, etc.) should be recorded and kept confidentially. Similarly, meetings with parents/guardians to discuss pupil progress and performance should be recorded and kept safely. These notes are available to concerned staff and are stored in the LS filing cabinet.

Learning Support notes on lessons, progress and evaluation of pupils are to be shared with Form teachers (or any other involved teacher). This is to be done on a termly basis, when copies of this information are made available to teachers and filed in individual pupil folders.

Informal discussion between staff about pupils' progress and areas of difficulty is an on-going and valuable source of information to all concerned.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) 'Target' sheets may be devised for selected pupils (as recommended by the LSC, AGT Coordinator, Heads of Department, Heads of Section or outside agencies). They should have input from Form teachers, the LSC and / or LS staff, the pupil and parents/guardians. The LSC will ensure with/ in admissions, discipline and other procedures (school trips, examinations etc) take account of pupils' learning difficulties or disabilities. These need to be reviewed on a regular basis.

Learning Support staff share suitable strategies to assist Teaching and Learning across the school environment. Information to broaden staff knowledge of Language and Learning theories, contemporary issues is the responsibility of the LSC (in liaison with AGT Coordinator and Heads of Section) Where necessary, the LSC will provide periodic training in Language and Learning theories to staff.



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## **Pupils with more severe Learning Difficulties**

As pupils progress through the School, it becomes increasingly apparent that some individuals cannot cope with the increasing academic demands. In most cases, learning difficulties are identified quite early on. The difficulty is in knowing which pupils will resolve their learning problems as they progress through the school, and which will have their difficulties cause an ever-widening gap as they move from Form to Form. If it becomes clear, through teacher consultation and referral to outside Agencies, that the pupil would be better placed and served in a different Educational Institution, or by being maintained in a year group, it is the School's responsibility to inform and guide parents in a clear and honest manner.

In the case of a pupil who, because of the severity of the learning difficulty, is unable to cope with the demands of the curriculum offered at the School, the final say on whether the pupil should repeat an academic term/ year or be withdrawn from the School lies with the Head Master, following full consultation with the parents, staff and other professionals, should this be appropriate.

## **Review and Evaluation**

In the first instance, the Coordinator(s) for Learning Support/ EAL will be responsible for the monitoring and review of this Policy every 3 years. The LSC should consult the Able, Gifted and Talented Coordinator and Heads of Department; recommendations will then be provided to the Heads of Section who in turn forward proposals to the Head Master.

**See: English as an Additional Language Policy**

**Adopted : 22 June 2004**

**Reviewed & Revised : May 2007/2010/2012**

**Reviewed: Dec 2013/Jan 2014**

**Pending Board Approval: Feb 2014**

**Due for review: Feb 2017**