Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties Policy

Shrewsbury School

September 2026

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1 Aims

1.1 This is the policy on special educational needs and learning difficulties of Shrewsbury School (**School**).

1.2 The aims of this policy are as follows:

1.2.1 to promote good practice in the detection and management of special educational needs and disabilities (**SEND**);

1.2.2 to explain the support the School can provide for children who have learning difficulties and the co-operation needed from parents;

1.2.3 to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils;

1.2.4 to create a whole-school culture of openness, safety, equality and protection.

2 Scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to Shrewsbury School.

3 Regulatory framework

3.1 This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

3.1.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;

3.1.2 *National minimum standards for boarding schools* (Department for Education (**DfE**), September 2022)

3.1.3 Education and Skills Act 2008;

3.1.4 Children Act 1989;

3.1.5 Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (**UK GDPR**);

3.1.6 Equality Act 2010; and

3.1.7 Children and Families Act 2014.

3.2 This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

3.2.1 Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, April 2015)

3.2.2 Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2025).

3.2.3 Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE, May 2014)

3.2.4 Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (JCQ, subject to ongoing review and updates).

3.3 The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:

3.3.1 Equal Opportunities Policy;

3.3.2 Disability Policy;

3.3.3 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;

3.3.4 Risk Assessment Policy;

3.3.5 Anti-Bullying Policy;

3.3.6 Pupil Behaviour Policy

3.3.7 English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy;

3.3.8 Admissions Policy and Procedures;

3.3.9 Relationships and Sex Education Policy; and

3.3.10 Accessibility plan.

3.3.11 Word Processing Policy

4 Publication and availability

4.1 This policy is published on the School website.

4.2 This policy is available in hard copy on request.

4.3 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

5 Definitions

5.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

5.1.1 References to the **Proprietor** are references to the Board of Governors;

5.1.2 References to an **Individual Learning Plan** (**ILP**) are references to a plan or programme designed for children with SEND to help them to get the most out of their education. An ILP builds on the curriculum that a child with learning difficulties or disabilities is following and sets out the strategies that all teachers should use to meet that child's specific needs.

5.2 "Special educational needs" and "learning difficulty"

5.2.1 Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

5.2.2 Children have a “learning difficulty” if they:

(a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or

(b) have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions (please also see the School's *Disability Policy*).

5.2.3 A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language or form of language which is or has been spoken at home. However, children for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support. Please see the School's *English as an Additional Language Policy*.

5.2.4 A child who finds a particular subject difficult does not necessarily have a "learning difficulty" in the legal sense of that expression; there will often be disparities in the speed with which children learn, in their skill at solving problems and in aptitude generally.

5.2.5 The expression "learning difficulty" covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The expression may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing or who have an autistic spectrum disorder.

5.2.6 Learning difficulties may affect children who have a high IQ and academic ability as well as those of lower IQ and ability. Sometimes a child's learning difficulty becomes apparent for the first time at the age of 11+ or older, when the educational pressures tend to increase.

5.2.7 Learning difficulties may present in such a way that the School and parents may only gradually put the picture together – ‘masking’ and ‘coping’ may mean that features present late or can be difficult to identify. The School makes every effort to assess and modify those assessments according to all available evidence, in order to ensure the best possible provision is put in place for each child.

5.3 **"Neurodiversity" and "Neurodivergence"**

5.3.1 Neurodiversity describes the natural differences in how people think, learn, and process information. It recognises that everyone's brain works differently, with unique strengths, interests, and ways of understanding the world. Most people are neurotypical, meaning their brains process information in broadly similar ways. People whose thinking and processing differ from this are described as neurodivergent.

5.3.2 Neurodivergence refers to differences in how the brain develops and functions, which can affect communication, behaviour, and how someone responds to their environment.

Some forms of neurodivergence are:

- Attention-deficit (hyperactivity) disorder
- Autistic spectrum disorder
- Dysgraphia, dyscalculia and dyslexia
- Tourette's syndrome

This list isn't exhaustive. Some neurodivergent people may have more than one diagnosis, while others may not have a diagnosis at all.

6 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

6.1 The **Proprietor** has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy and has delegated these responsibilities to the **Headmaster**.

6.2 To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Headmaster has allocated the following tasks:

Task	**Allocated to**	**When / frequency of review**
Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness	Karen Mitchell, Head of Learning Support	As required, and at least termly
Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	Karen Mitchell, Head of Learning Support	As required, and at least annually

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Dan Reeve, Deputy Head (Academic)	As required, and at least annually
Formal annual review	Headmaster	Annually

6.3 The School's Learning Support Department has responsibility for:

6.3.1 ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of a child's special educational needs;

6.3.2 advising and supporting other staff in the School;

6.3.3 ensuring that appropriate ILPs are in place and effectively implemented;

6.3.4 ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with special education needs is collected, recorded and updated;

6.3.5 undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice.

7 Procedures

7.1 The School's approach to the detection and management of learning difficulties will be guided by the Code of Practice.

7.2 To ensure collaborative working, the School works closely with parents of children who have or may have special educational needs and learning difficulties to assess and review a pupil's needs and support. Parents are kept informed concerning assessment, planning, provision and review of their child's education.

7.3 Identification of pupils with a learning difficulty

7.3.1 We advise the parents of children with special educational needs, including medical or physical disabilities, to discuss their child’s requirements with Shrewsbury before they sit our entrance examinations. To help us make adequate provision during the admissions process for any pupil who has a need, parents should provide one of the following at the point of application:

(a) a copy of an Educational Psychologist’s report,

(b) a specialist teacher report with a recognised qualification in the assessment of Learning Difficulties, or

(c) a medical report.

7.3.2 All new entrants to the School undergo Initial Assessment Tests (IATs) in their first term to identify possible learning differences and to obtain baseline information on their writing, spelling and processing abilities. The results of the screening assessments, along with any information provided by a pupil's previous school, will form the basis of identifying pupils who might benefit from additional support from the Learning Support Department. For pupils in this position, a further one-to-one assessment with members of Learning Support staff is then offered to provide a more detailed pattern of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses. The outcome of this assessment informs the nature of any additional support offered. The results of the screening tests may lead the School to advise parents of an individual pupils to have a full diagnostic assessment by a specialist teacher or outside agency.

7.3.3 For pupils in all year groups in the School, the fact that they may have a learning difficulty could also come to light during the course of an academic year, through routine setting and marking of written work, and the School has a referral process which can be accessed by all academic teachers, housemasters, housemistresses and tutors.

7.3.4 Where the outcome of any test or any other circumstance(s) give(s) the School reason to think that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, we will report and consult with the pupil's parents as necessary and make recommendations about further assessment and support.

7.4 Formal assessment

7.4.1 If there are indications that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, we will ask the pupil's parents to agree to the pupil being formally assessed by an educational psychologist or appropriate professional where appropriate.

7.4.2 The Head of Learning Support will consult with the parents regarding appropriate assessment, and the cost will be borne by the parents.

7.5 Learning support

7.5.1 A pupil with learning difficulties can access the curriculum through the support of their teachers, who will make any necessary reasonable adjustments recommended in the pupil's ILP.

7.5.2 As part of a graduated approach, the School may suggest a course of additional specialist teaching by a qualified specialist on a one-to-one basis in school. This would normally be one period of 40 minutes per week during term time.

7.5.3 Weekly lessons are organised in such a way as to minimise any clash with other commitments and where possible take place outside the teaching timetable.

7.5.4 Where a pupil with a 'learning difficulty' attends additional one-to-one Learning Support lessons, the School reserves the right to make an additional charge for those lessons, where it is lawful to do so. Charges associated with Learning Support Lessons can be obtained from the Finance Office.

7.5.5 Where the School judges additional one-to-one lessons to be a reasonable adjustment to prevent a pupil with a 'learning difficulty' being put at a significant disadvantage when compared to their peers, there will be no additional cost associated with those lessons.

7.5.6 The decision to undertake a programme of Learning Support lessons is always taken on a case-by-case basis and in close liaison with, and in agreement with, the parents/guardians of the pupil concerned.

7.5.7 The Learning Support Department also provide free-of-charge weekly 'drop in' group lessons for any pupil wishing for more general support on an *ad hoc* basis.

7.6 **External teaching**

7.6.1 Parents may opt for additional specialist teaching outside the School (or online), provided that the Housemaster/Housemistress is satisfied with their child's safety and travel arrangements, and also that the additional specialist teaching is at times which fit in with the remainder of the curriculum, timetable and community life of the School.

7.7 **Examinations**

7.7.1 Examination Access Arrangements are the way in which examination bodies allow candidates with SEND, disabilities or temporary injuries to access examinations and other assessments. The rules are laid down in the JCQ document "Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments", which is subject to ongoing review and updates.

7.7.2 Pupils who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be eligible for extra time and / or other Examination Access Arrangements to complete internal examinations and Public Examinations.

7.7.3 The JCQ regulations require the School to collect evidence from subject teachers before a pupil is assessed/reassessed for Examination Access Arrangements. The evidence collected must be consistent with the pupil's normal way of working and must show a compelling case for the arrangement requested. The Head of Learning Support and Deputy Head of Learning Support are qualified to assess for Examination Access Arrangements. The Head of Learning Support and the Senior Examination Officer work closely to ensure that relevant applications are made for any Examination Access Arrangements which may be needed.

7.7.4 It is important that parents consult with the Head of Learning Support if they believe their child may require an assessment. A privately commissioned assessment cannot be used to award access arrangements. If a pupil is referred for an assessment for Examination Access Arrangements, and they have not previously been assessed, there will be an additional one-off charge. The charges associated with this assessment can be obtained from the Finance Office.

7.7.5 Where a pupil requires an assessment for Examination Access Arrangements, and they have not previously been assessed, and they do not have a diagnosed 'learning disability', there will be an additional one-off charge. The charges associated with this assessment can be obtained from the Finance Office.

7.7.6 Additionally, the JCQ regulations change periodically, so a pupil's access arrangements may need to be adapted to comply with the latest regulation requirements. JCQ also require the School to reapply for Access Arrangements on behalf of all pupils entering the Sixth Form, including those who took GCSEs at Shrewsbury. The School sets deadlines for the submission of any request to the Examination Office for Access Arrangements in public examinations.

7.7.7 Referrals to the Learning Support Department regarding Examination Access Arrangements for a summer series of Public Examinations should be made by the end of January of that same year.

7.7.8 The School will endeavour to follow any recommendations from an assessment that leads to Examination Access Arrangements, but reserves the right to adapt recommended Examination Access Arrangements to a 'local offer', based on the resources available. For example, it may not be possible for an exam candidate to be allocated their own separate room to take an exam, and an alternative provision would be for the School to provide a room with a small number of candidates.

7.8 **Information sharing and parent involvement**

7.8.1 New parents are asked to provide copies of any report or recommendations which have been made in relation to special educational needs at their child's previous school or elsewhere within the last 12 months. Confidential information of this kind will only be shared within the School on a "need to know" basis.

7.8.2 The School will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents about their child's learning difficulties and to ensure that teachers are given any necessary information about a child's learning difficulties, so that lesson plans and teaching can be adjusted to ensure an equitable classroom environment.

7.9 **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**

7.9.1 The Learning Support Department will ensure that an appropriate ILP, where required, is available to an individual pupil's teachers.

7.9.2 The ILP will be prepared in consultation with the parents and, if appropriate, the pupil, and will include:

(a) Contextual background information and results related to standardised assessments;

(b) strategies to support the pupil's progress, including interventions and pedagogical techniques;

(c) Exam Access Arrangements (provisional or otherwise) to be considered and adapted in a classroom setting.

7.9.3 the Learning Support Department will review ILPs as needs arise and will consider:

(a) the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress;

(b) the views of relevant teaching staff, the parents and, if appropriate, the pupil; and

(c) any changes that are required to the support and outcomes set out for the pupil.

8 **Education health and care plans (EHC plan)**

8.1 Parents and the School have the right under section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ask the local authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC plan. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right. If the local authority refuses to

make an assessment, the parents (but not the School) have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

8.2 Where a prospective pupil has an EHC plan, the School will consult the parents and, where appropriate, the local authority to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC plan can be delivered by the School. The School will co-operate with the local authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.

8.3 Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHC plan will be charged to the local authority if the authority is responsible for the fees and our school is named in Section I of the EHC plan. In all other circumstances the school will agree the charging arrangements with the parent(s) with regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, where applicable.

9 Additional welfare needs

9.1 The School recognises that pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties may be at risk of being bullied. The School's *Pupil Behaviour Policy* makes it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously.

9.2 The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the personal, social, health and economic (**PSHE**) programme and the relationships and sex education (**RSE**) programme, which appear in the curriculum in Personal Social Development (PSD) lessons. The School will also tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through the supportive School culture and through the School's policies.

9.3 When teaching pupils about safeguarding, the School recognises that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all pupils and will consider whether it should adopt a more contextualised approach for some pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.

9.4 If parents are concerned about their child's welfare they can approach the pupil's Housemaster, Housemistress, Tutor or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.

9.5 Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of pupils with a special educational need, disability or certain medical or physical health condition that can create additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The School is mindful in particular that these may include:

9.5.1 assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's condition without further exploration;

9.5.2 pupils with a special education need, disability or certain health conditions may be more prone to peer group isolation and can be disproportionately impacted by bullying (including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) without outwardly showing any signs;

9.5.3 some pupils may be unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and can repeat the content / behaviour in school without understanding the consequences; and

9.5.4 there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required.

9.6 The School should consider providing extra pastoral support and attention for these pupils, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

9.7 Any report of abuse involving children with SEND will require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and the Head of Learning Support.

9.8 Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in the School's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*.

10 Disability

10.1 The School recognises that some pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties may also have a disability. Pupils and parents are referred to the School's Disability Policy.

10.2 The School will make all reasonable adjustments in order to afford opportunity to disabled pupils. However if, despite such adjustments, the School is unable to provide adequately for the pupil's needs, the School may decline to offer a place to a pupil or request that parents withdraw their child from the School (see 11 below).

11 Alternative arrangements

11.1 We reserve the right, following consultation with parents, to ask or require parents to withdraw their child from the School if:

11.1.1 the child is in need of a formal assessment, additional specialist teaching, learning support or medication to which parents do not consent; and / or

11.1.2 parents have deliberately withheld from the School information which prevents it from effectively addressing their child's learning difficulties;

11.1.3 the child's learning difficulties require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Headmaster, the School is unable to provide, manage or arrange;

11.1.4 the child has special educational needs that make it unlikely they will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities which we provide.

11.2 In any of these circumstances the School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary level of teaching and support.

11.3 Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances will not incur a charge to fees *in lieu* of notice. The deposit paid in respect of the child will be credited to the school bill payer's account.

12 Training

12.1 The School ensures that regular guidance and training is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

12.2 The level and frequency of training depends on role of the individual member of staff.

12.3 The School maintains written records of all staff training.

13 Risk assessment

13.1 Where a concern about a pupil's welfare is identified, the risks to that pupil's welfare will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken to reduce the risks identified.

13.2 The format of risk assessment may vary and may be included as part of the School's overall response to a welfare issue, including the use of individual pupil welfare plans (such as behaviour, healthcare and education plans, as appropriate). Regardless of the form used, the School's approach to promoting pupil welfare will be systematic and pupil focused. Please see clause 6.2 for details of the individuals with responsibility for carrying out, monitoring, implementing and reviewing the effectiveness of risk assessments under this policy.

14 Record keeping

14.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

14.2 The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published on its website privacy notices which explain how the School will use personal data.

Owner: LW - Headmaster
DTR - Deputy Head (Academic)
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