



## **Moorlands School**

### **INDIVIDUAL NEEDS POLICY**

Moorland School recognises and welcomes its duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 Years 2014. The school's Accessibility Plan are available to parents on request.

This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

#### **The definition of a 'disability' under the Equality Act 2010**

In the Act, a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

The school's Individual Needs provision deals particularly with problems of curriculum access associated with learning difficulties or other disabilities.

As set out in the school's Ethos and Aims, we aim 'to meet the individual needs, foster the aptitudes and nurture the growth of each child.' In this sense, the school's Individual Needs provision is part of a wider commitment to helping any child to discover his or her ability. The provisions of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability aside, we do not view learning difficulties as disabling but rather as obstacles to fulfilling potential which, with appropriate support, can in many cases be overcome.

This difference of emphasis has significant consequences. It is by no means the case that learning difficulties are experienced only by the less able. Indeed, the problems encountered by the most gifted children can require considerable specialist attention. Moorlands is therefore committed to meeting the needs of children who have an identified learning difficulty, whatever their innate ability. It is worthy of note, in this respect, that many children who gain academic awards to their senior schools have, at some point, been given Individual Needs support.

While the Individual Needs Department's Procedure for Referral and Organization of Provision (PROP) follows the approach recommended by the DfE SEN Code of Practice 2014, the school far exceeds any statutory obligations in its approach to identifying and meeting a child's needs.

Moorlands School has specialist staff, trained and qualified to recognise, assess and deal with learning problems throughout the age and ability range. There is a close relationship and constant communication between Individual Needs and mainstream teachers, this is an essential factor in the early identification and the continuing management of any difficulty. As a consequence, 'internal' assessment of children is commonplace when a difficulty has been observed and has been discussed with parents.

The vast majority of children in receipt of support will have very mild or specific learning difficulties. For many of these, the provision will be relatively short term, addressing a particular concern at a particular time. For others, support may be needed throughout their time at the school and beyond.

The level of awareness of all staff is very high, attention to the individual child's needs is a part of the school's ethos. The Able, Gifted and Talented pupils are identified through analysing all the assessment data collected. For children with learning difficulties, through specific training and through involvement in framing each child's individual targets on their Learning Passports, the mainstream teachers are made fully aware of any child's difficulties and can therefore plan their teaching accordingly. In this respect, all children benefit greatly from the teachers' awareness of different learning styles, irrespective of whether they have a learning difficulty.

The level of communication with home is, likewise, very high. Parents are informed of any concern, give their permission for any assessment, discuss the outcomes of such assessment in detail with the staff concerned and are fully involved thereafter in the creation and regular updating of a child's targets and recommendations. They meet formally and informally with a child's learning support teacher to discuss progress and agree action.

The school is able to refer children to a wide range of outside agencies (Educational Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Optometrists, etc) all of whom work in close co-operation with the Learning Support department. Any such referral is discussed with parents before it goes ahead and the outcome of any assessment is communicated to all mainstream teaching staff.

The effect of a learning difficulty on a child's self-esteem is of paramount concern. While the identification of a difficulty is naturally a cause for concern to parents, it is almost always a source of comfort to the child. To know that there is a difficulty and that you will be helped to overcome it is a reassuring process and, while children's self-esteem is very closely monitored and carefully nurtured by the department and by the staff as a whole, being given Individual Needs support is felt as positive by the vast majority of children concerned. It is a matter of pride, in this respect, that our children will talk openly and without embarrassment to prospective parents about their difficulties.

The range of Individual Needs teaching, as outlined below, is wide and will vary according to a child's needs.

In the EYFS, where a specific need is identified, a strategy is put into place. This relates to the prime areas, Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal and Social Development. In Reception, this can also relate to specific areas, Literacy and Mathematics. Strategies are discussed with parents and implemented on an individual or small group basis. These interventions are monitored half termly and progress is reported to parents. Internal assessments can take place if needed.

In Year 1 to Year 6 individual needs will be identified via class teachers, standardised assessments, teacher observations or parental concern. These are then monitored closely and, if needed, internal assessments will take place. All learning support tuition is carried out either as support in the classroom, in small groups or on an individual basis. Any support or intervention is closely monitored with a tailored graduated response. This may be on a short-term basis or for certain pupils throughout their time at Moorlands School.

## **SENCO**

The Individual needs of pupils are overseen by our SENCO Mrs Sarah Irwin.

## **Timetabling of Individual Needs Lessons**

The individual needs of each child are taken into account when timetabling lessons. Lessons take place from 8 30am and in specified timetable slots which cause the least disruption to mainstream teaching. No pupils will be taken out of core subjects and the lessons are on rotation to minimise disruption.

## **Assessment**

Many Senior Schools require an Educational Psychologist's assessment prior to entry to confirm examination concessions. Where the School proposes a referral for assessment by an Educational Psychologist for this or other reasons, the cost of a referral is borne by the parents.

The Head of Learning Support plans for all forms external assessment of children. In the best interests of the children, parents are expected to share with the school any information arising from external assessments which they have themselves arranged.

Where an Individual Needs assessment by the School's staff or by an outside agency is deemed necessary prior to the offer of a place, parents of potential new entrants should expect to bear the cost of such assessment.

## **Application for an 'Education, Health and Care plan'**

Where the school and parents need help to meet the needs of a child, we will apply for an 'Education, Health and Care plan'. In such circumstances, the school undertakes to work in accordance with the Code of Practice and in co-operation with parents, the child, the Local Authority and other agencies as appropriate, to reach an outcome that is in a child's best interests. With regard to the admission to the school of a child with an EHC plan, the school operates in accordance with its Admissions Policy.

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