



THE PERSE SCHOOL CAMBRIDGE

POLICY ON LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND LEARNING SUPPORT

This policy applies to the Perse School (“the School”) which comprises the Perse Pelican Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School including the EYFS setting (“the Perse Pelican School), the Perse Preparatory School (“the Perse Prep School”) and the Perse Upper School (“the Upper School”).

A child has a ‘*learning difficulty*’ within the meaning of s.312(2) *Education Act 1996* if s/he has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age; or a disability which prevents or hinders him/her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of that age. A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which he or she will be taught.

The aim of this policy is to define and explain the responsibilities the School is able to accept, the support it is able to provide, and the responsibilities of parents in relation to pupils who may experience learning difficulties or may require learning support during their time at the school.

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

1. Background

A number of pupils in mainstream independent schools such as The Perse may have or show signs of having a specific learning difficulty which affects one or more subject areas for which different or additional educational provision may be needed from time to time. The signs of a specific learning difficulty may not previously have been apparent or reasonably detectable.

Specific learning difficulties may affect children who have a high IQ as well as those of lower academic ability.

The term specific learning difficulty covers a wide variety of conditions and may include dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder, and communication impairments such as autistic spectrum disorders. It may also include those who have physical disabilities, visual or hearing difficulties, or emotional and behavioural difficulties. A pupil may also require additional support for other reasons, such as if the pupil has English as a second language.

Any need for additional support in the School environment, whatever the origin, will be referred to below as a "learning need".

Parents are required to inform the School of any learning difficulty that has at any time affected their children either currently or in the past or any other reason for which the pupil may require additional support.

2. Screening

The law imposes on schools a responsibility both for the physical and emotional well-being as well as the educational needs of pupils whilst in the care of the school. For this reason and also as a matter of good practice, the individual Schools have introduced the following systems:

The Perse Prep School and the Upper School:

The Perse Prep School and the Upper School have introduced a system of screening pupils for specific learning difficulties. In the Upper School, new pupils who enter the School in Years 7 – 11 inclusive will be tested during their first term in the School. In the Perse Prep School pupils are tested at the beginning of each academic year. Pupils who join the Perse Prep School during the academic year are tested on entry.

The cost of such screening will be included in the termly fees. It is important for parents/guardians to realise that these are screening and not diagnostic tests. The screening tests are not competitive, and no specific preparation is required, nor indeed would it be beneficial. In addition information from parents, teachers and school assessment and reporting (including MidYis) is used to identify pupils who may have a specific learning need.

If the outcome of a test or any other circumstances gives the School reason to think that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, the School will report and consult with their parents/guardians as necessary and make recommendations.

The Perse Pelican School:

Regular assessment and observation of the Pupils is part of the School's ongoing practice to ensure that the School meets their needs. Any concerns are then discussed with the Perse Pelican School's Special Educations Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Assessment information may be shared with parents and may lead to a request from the School for further advice, or formal assessment by an Educational Psychologist, Physical or Speech Therapist, or other professional as appropriate. The parents may consult a professional of their choice or those recommended by the School. The parents will be responsible for the cost of any formal individual assessment conducted by external professionals.

3. Special Educational Provision or Outside Professional Assessments

The Perse Prep School and the Upper School have access to specialist Learning Support Teachers who are qualified to make assessments and who are able to provide appropriate support to pupils with learning difficulties. The Perse Pelican School has a Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). In addition the School can provide the names of

other Learning Support teachers, Educational Psychologists or other outside professionals to which parents may refer for tuition, further advice or formal assessment, together with the likely costs involved. In every case the decision as to the course of action will be that of the parent, with advice from the School and one of the Learning Support Teachers or the Perse Pelican School SENCO if required.

The following procedures are followed in each individual school where a learning need is suspected or identified:

The Upper School:

If a learning need is suspected, the Upper School Learning Support Teacher may suggest a period of support and monitoring by the class teachers and tutors. The Learning Support Teacher may recommend a course of tuition in for example literacy or study skills, or indicate the desirability of an assessment by a professional outside agency such as an Educational Psychologist. Where necessary the Learning Support Teacher will draw up a pupil profile to inform staff of a pupil's needs and necessary support strategies.

The Perse Prep School:

If a learning need is suspected, the School having consulted with the Perse Prep School Learning Support Teacher will let parents know and suggest an assessment. This may be followed by a period of support and monitoring by the class teacher and Learning Support Teacher, or assessment by a professional outside agency such as an Educational Psychologist may be recommended.

The Perse Pelican School:

If a potential learning need is identified, the Perse Pelican School will let parents know and may suggest a period of support and monitoring by the School. This is referred to as Special Educational Needs (SEN) School Action and will involve discussion between the class teacher, SENCO, parent and pupil. It may involve the drawing up of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). A second stage, SEN School Action Plus, may follow if further advice and professional assessment and support are required to assist the pupil.

Full details of additional charges levied by the School for the provision of learning support are contained in the School's Policy on Learning Support Charges, a copy of which is available on the School's website.

In the Upper School learning support tuition normally takes place outside school hours. In the Perse Prep School and the Perse Pelican School learning support tuition normally takes place within school hours.

Parents may opt for support teaching outside the School provided that the School is satisfied with the arrangements, including travel, timing and delivery of the remainder of the curriculum to the pupil. Where professional outside agencies are used or an updated report for UCAS applications is required, the costs will be additional to the normal school fees, and terms of payment are negotiated separately with the outside agency.

Our approach to the detection and management of learning difficulties will be guided by the "Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs" (or any substituting or amending Code of Practice) issued from time to time by the Department for Education.

Parents have the right under s 329(1) of the Education Act 1996 to ask the local authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The School also has the right (under s 329A) to ask the LA to arrange an assessment. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right. If the LA 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).

Where a prospective pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, the School will consult the parents and, where appropriate, the LA to ensure that the provision specified in the Statement can be delivered by the School. The School will cooperate with the LA to ensure that relevant reviews of Statements are carried out as required.

Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the Statement will need to be charged, either directly to the parents, or the Local Authority if the Authority is responsible for the fees and our school is named in Part 4 of the Statement as set out in the School's Policy on Learning Support Charges.

The School recognises that pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties may be at risk of being bullied. The School has an anti-bullying policy which make it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously. If parents are concerned about their child's welfare they can approach the pupil's class teacher or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.

Parents bear the overall responsibility for taking decisions about the management of their child's learning difficulties. A parent who would prefer to have a formal assessment instead of remedial teaching or learning support should make arrangements accordingly with the School or outside agency but must ensure that the School is given copies of all advice and reports received.

4. Alternative arrangements

1. *Withdrawal:* The School reserves the right, following consultation with parents, to ask or require the withdrawal of the pupil from the School if, in our opinion after making all reasonable adjustments and exhausting appropriate strategies:
 - 1.1. the pupil is in need of a formal assessment, remedial teaching, learning support or medication to which parents do not consent; and/or
 - 1.2. parents have withheld information from the School which, had the information been provided, would have made a significant difference to the School's management of the pupil's learning difficulties; and/or

- 1.3. the pupil's specific difficulties require a level of support or medication which, in the professional judgment of the Head, the School cannot reasonably be expected to provide, manage or arrange; and/or
- 1.4. the pupil has learning difficulties and / or disabilities that make it unlikely that he/she will be able to benefit sufficiently from the mainstream education and facilities which the School provides.
2. *Alternative Placement:* In any of these circumstances the School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide the pupil with the necessary level of teaching and support.
3. *Financial:* Withdrawal of a pupil in these circumstances will not incur a charge to fees in lieu of notice.

5. Liability of the School

Unless negligent in the operation of this policy, the School accepts no responsibility to the pupil or parents caused by or arising out of any failure to detect or refer a learning difficulty or other condition or situation of special need.

Edward Elliott on behalf of the Governors

March 2011