



LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY 2025-26

Diversity, Equality & Inclusivity Statement:

The commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusivity is at the heart of our values at Austin Friars. Equality means creating an environment where pupils have the chance to achieve their full potential, free from barriers, prejudice, and discrimination. Inclusion is about recognising that each pupil is unique and that their needs can be met in different ways. Diversity means recognising, respecting, and celebrating the added value that differences bring. Our unwavering dedication to our school values – Truth, Love and Unity - is how we fulfil our mission at Austin Friars. It is through our commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusivity that our pupils are empowered to be authentic and succeed.

The Learning Support Policy applies to all children in school, from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to VI Form, including children who have Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and diagnoses of Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) such as Dyslexia. The policy sets out how we aim to apply a whole-school approach to meet each pupil's needs with reference both to the guidelines provided by the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and to the duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The aim of the Learning Support Department is to ensure that the opportunity for independent learning extends to all pupils - regardless of learning difficulty, disability, or other specific need. All teaching and support staff throughout the school, work with pupils who have special or different educational needs, and all staff are responsible for identifying, supporting and including children whose needs may be different from their peers. For all pupils, most of their needs should be addressed through quality first teaching and different accommodations dependent on their needs e.g. using a laptop to word process work.

The Learning Support Department is an integral part, of ensuring that equality of access to the curriculum, learning, and extra-curricular activities, is provided for all children within the school. The Head of Learning Support communicates information about individuals to teaching staff using the school SEN and monitoring registers. This is done during staff briefings/meetings and via the school email system. Experienced, specialist staff work alongside class teachers, subject specialists and parents to enable pupils to achieve their full potential and become more 'enabled' to understand themselves as learners. Whilst the overall aims of Learning Support are the same throughout the school, as children progress up the school there may be changes of focus in response to changes in their needs as the demands of the curriculum increase as they approach formal examinations.

The Head of Learning Support is in charge of the management of testing for exam access arrangements, for pupils who have already been identified with specific learning difficulties or who have been referred to the Head of Learning Support by their teachers. The Learning Support Department endeavours to provide access arrangements for pupils with EHCPs and SpLDs during the different formal and informal examination periods during the school year.

1. Admissions Procedures

Admissions procedures for a child entering the school are designed to ensure that individual children's specific needs are met. Completion of the registration form, including details of any difficulties the child has previously encountered, and subsequent discussion with parents is an important part of this process. The number and length of pre-admission visits varies according to the child's age, developmental maturity and any specific difficulties. Records and reports from any previous school are used to inform

admission planning and the Head of Learning Support is informed of any concerns, so that further assessment can be carried out or existing assessment reports examined.

Where children are identified as needing support in order to access the curriculum and participate fully in the day-to-day life of the school, a transition plan will be agreed prior to entry. This will outline the types of adjustments which can be reasonably made to support the child and suggest additional support which can be offered to further develop areas of weakness.

2. Identification, Monitoring and screening

We believe early awareness of children's learning differences and difficulties is vital. Throughout the school we monitor and review pupils' progress. The Head of Learning Support is responsible for managing any concerns raised about pupils from teachers. In the school class teachers submit a Learning Support Concern via the school intranet which is received by the Head of Learning Support.

Screening for dyslexia takes place during the Michaelmas term in Junior 1 and in 1st form and for all new entrants to the Junior and Senior School from J1 upwards. Students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd form are also screened for reading, spelling and writing at the beginning of the Michaelmas term. Where there are concerns these will be referred to the Head of Learning Support, who is responsible for liaising with Heads of School (Head of the Junior School, Lower School, Middle School or VI Form), and parents, gathering further evidence and deciding on an appropriate course of action. This may be recording the concern but taking no further action, placing the pupil on the monitoring register, carrying out further assessment or arranging assessment or requesting advice from an outside agency.

3. Assessment and advice

Requests for assessment may result from information gathered as part of the admissions procedures; be made by members of staff, parents, pupils themselves; or result from the findings of routine whole cohort assessments. The assessment process may take the form of information gathering from the pupil's teachers followed by a period of monitoring or a more formal educational assessment. Formal assessment by either a Dyslexia Assessor, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist or an Educational Psychologist may be needed. Such assessments can be carried out in school, however, parents themselves are required to contact an external, independent specialist on the advice of the Head of Learning Support. In EYFS a referral may be made to the Area SENCO.

For most assessments an additional charge will be made to parents, according to the criteria below:

- a. In EYFS a referral may be made via the Area SENCO, which there would not be a charge for.
- b. External specialists and Educational Psychologists will charge for their services and any expenses incurred. This will be charged to parents in full.
- c. There is no charge for assessment for additional support in external examinations. Similarly, no charges are made to parents for readers and scribes in both informal and formal examinations.
- d. In the Junior School pupils are screened annually using the Cambridge Primary Insight assessments to help identify different needs in several developmental areas.
- e. All of the screeners are viewed by the Head of Learning Support in the Senior School. Parents will be contacted where there are concerns, either from screening or referrals made by teaching staff.

The following options will be offered:

- i. pupil placed on the monitoring register with relevant information shared with teaching staff and a review of progress with parents after an agreed period of time.

- ii. informal assessment and/or observation carried out by Head of Learning Support. The purpose of assessment will be to inform teaching and learning and give a clear snapshot of the pupil's current ability and level of attainment. A report will be written and kept on file in school. Findings will be discussed with parents and subsequent action agreed. Recommendations may be made about receiving learning support and information will be shared as agreed with teaching staff. This is not a diagnostic assessment.
 - iii. formal assessment, carried out either by an external specialist, or the Head of Learning Support, as arranged by the Head of Learning Support or by parents, and discussed in b. above.
- f. requests for assessment or concerns raised by parents or pupils will be considered by the Head of Learning Support, and where there is evidence of a reason for concern from screening tests or teaching staff these will be dealt with as in e. above. Otherwise, parents may be advised to seek assessment from an external specialist.

The assessment materials used will vary, depending on the age of the child, the specific difficulties they are having and the intended use of the outcome of the assessment procedure. Certain assessment materials have a restricted use – materials and results must be kept in a locked cupboard, they should only be used by appropriately qualified professionals and conducted only in strict accordance with the procedures specified in the handbook or guidelines, and following the *Code of Good Practice for Psychological Testing* (British Psychological Society). Assessment for entitlement to access arrangements in external examinations must follow the guidelines in Joint Council for Qualifications *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025 – 26* (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/>). The test used must be up to date (at the time of the assessment) and the age of the pupil assessed must be within the intended age range of the test.

4. Levels of support

4.1 Appropriate differentiation and monitoring

Many pupils who experience some level of learning difficulties can have their needs accommodated by normal differentiated classroom provision and the use of assistive technology, with the Learning Support Department providing some support and monitoring.

Monitoring register

Pupils who are coping well in school but have a known learning difficulty, are awaiting an external assessment or about whom there is a low level of concern, may be placed on the monitoring register. The Learning Support Department informs teachers about the pupil's strengths and difficulties, suggests strategies to overcome these in class and monitors progress from a distance.

Drop in sessions

Drop in sessions run during break times in the Ostia Suite. These are usually used where a pupil needs support in one area for a short period of time. The Ostia Suite is a nurturing and welcoming environment where students can come to receive support for a specific topic area or piece of work for a short period of time.

Prep club

Prep club takes place on Wednesdays after school in the Ostia Suite where pupils who attend Learning Support lessons as part of their timetable can come and receive help with their prep from the Learning Support staff.

4.2 Additional Support

Children who require additional support, beyond the high quality first teaching provided by class and subject teachers can receive Learning Support in agreement with both parents and the Head of Learning Support. In both the Junior and Senior schools students are normally withdrawn from Modern Language lessons to receive these sessions. The level of support should be sufficient that the child can feel secure and able to access the curriculum confident of achieving success, but development of independent learning skills is still encouraged. Each child who attends Learning Support lessons has an Individual Action Plan (IAP), Individual Provision Map (IPM) or Early Years Learning Journey – Individual Education Plan (Early Years LJ-IEP) containing targets for the child’s progress each term.

Learning Support lessons

Learning Support lessons allows pupils’ difficulties to be addressed in a secure environment. Strengths can be identified and learning styles which suit the individual encouraged. The curriculum of Learning Support lessons varies each year and is moulded around the needs of the individual pupils and can focus on the following areas: literacy, maths, study skills, handwriting, touch typing and support for revision for tests and formal examinations. As pupils progress through school the focus changes from remediating specific difficulties to developing strategies for success at GCSE and ‘A’ Level.

1:1 tuition

1:1 tuition may be suggested for pupils whose current difficulties are best addressed on an individual basis. This is most often used for our youngest and oldest pupils, and for those with quite specific or severe learning difficulties. 1:1 tuition can be provided as part of Learning Support lessons.

In class support

Learning support assistants may work alongside pupils in class, enabling them to achieve at their own level within the classroom environment. Younger children and pupils with significant literacy difficulties or physical impairments may particularly benefit from this kind of support.

4.3 Support from external agencies

If a child receiving extra intervention is still not making sufficient progress advice or assessment may be sought from an external agency although this is now charged for by the local authority. Parental involvement in this process is important, and the right of parents to be fully informed about concerns relating to their child is paramount. Co-ordination of the response to concerns and communication with parents is the responsibility of the Head of Learning Support. In EYFS advice may first be sought from the Area SENCO.

Support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND

If parents and carers feel they would like some impartial information, advice or support on any issues relating to their children’s special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), they can contact the Cumberland SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) who can offer a range of support. We will help parents, carers and young people to prepare for meetings with schools or the local authority and practically support them at the meetings in an appropriate and impartial manner. We can also signpost to other relevant support networks.

For more information on SENDIASS and how to find support, please click on this link:

<https://sendiass.cumberland.gov.uk/cumberland-send-information-advice-and-support-service-send-iass>

SEND Early Help – If there is sufficient cause for concern, and evidence of intervention which has not succeeded, a request may be made for *SEND Early Help*. From September 2024 SEND has been removed from the Early Help process in Cumberland. You will no longer be required to complete an Early Help referral for a request for professional involvement or education, health and care needs assessments (EHCNA) requests. For more information, please visit the Family Information website: <https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-and-families/early-help-support-families>

The purpose of the Early Help assessment is to help your child and can be used to identify extra support your child may need. The assessment will involve everyone who works together to support your child.

Gathering of information in school, and involvement of parents is essential to a successful outcome of the process. This is achieved by following routine record keeping, lesson observations, feedback from teaching and Learning Support staff and the *LS Referral* process.

Educational and welfare provision of EHCP pupils

In class support by Learning Support Assistants is provided for EHCP students based on the learning, physical and sensory and communication needs of each student. EHCP students can attend Learning Support sessions to focus on different areas of their EHCP and to help to remove any barriers to learning identified in lessons. Students with EHCPs receive IEPs (Individual Education Plans) once a term which are focused on their progress towards the long term aims of their EHCPs. The IEPs contain targets which focus on teacher differentiation and the role of Learning Support Assistants in lessons. The Head of Learning Support works closely with the pastoral team, safeguarding team, the school mental health nurse and external specialists to monitor the progress of students with EHCPs and provide support and interventions when necessary. Teachers are regularly asked for feedback about the progress of EHCP students and any updates to their learning or medical needs are provided at weekly briefings and via the school email system.

Annual review of Education, Health and Care Plans

Education, Health and Care Plans are reviewed at least annually (or 6 monthly for a child under the age of 5 years) at a meeting with the Head of Learning Support, the child's parents, relevant staff who work with the child and the named EHCP coordinator is also invited to attend. The child is also invited to attend for part of the review meeting.

5. Individual Action Plans (IAPs), Individual Provision Maps (IPMs) and Reports

Pupils receiving formal Learning Support will have an Individual Action Plan (IAP) or Individual Provision Map (IPM) written which contains targets for the child's progress. These are reviewed at specified times, and the level of progress made and new targets set shared with parents. In the Senior School this is combined with the progress report for pupils receiving Learning Support lessons. In the Junior School a separate Learning Support Report is written at the end of each term. Children in EYFS will have an Early Years Learning Journey – Individual Education Plan (Early Years LJ-IEP).

6. Sharing information with other teachers

All pupils who have been identified as having a special educational need will be on the schools SEN register which can be accessed on the school system. There is also a school monitoring register for those

who are waiting for external referrals/assessments or are being monitored for their learning after receiving interventions/adjustments in the classroom. Further information is available on the Intranet via *Specific Learning Difficulties* and *Learning Support IAPs* and it is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure that they are familiar with the strengths and weaknesses, learning styles and specific strategies relevant to each child they teach. Every teacher is a teacher of SEN.

Each pupil receiving Learning Support lessons in the Senior School has an Individual Action Plan (IAP) written each term. Comments on the pupil's progress should be forwarded to the Head of Learning Support via the *Learning Support Referral* option on *Pupil Tracking*, so that the IAP can be reviewed and targets for the coming term set.

7. Transition

As pupils transfer between classes and stages in school every effort is made to ensure that new teachers are aware of the strengths, learning styles and difficulties that pupils have demonstrated previously through the sharing of the school SEN and monitoring registers. This process is more important where pupils have a specific learning difficulty. Transition from Pre School to Kindergarten, and from Kindergarten to Transition is overseen by the Early Years Foundation Stage team including the Head of Learning Support. Transition from Junior 4 to the Senior School is overseen by the Head of Lower School.

A Transition programme in the summer term is usually run for J4 pupils who will be attending Learning Support lessons or other pupils with specific learning or medical difficulties who require some extra support to help in the transition process. Transition from school to work or university is usually overseen by the Head of VI Form. The Head of Learning Support is involved where a pupil is known to have, or there are concerns they may have, some form of learning or developmental difficulty. Learning Support records transfer with the pupils as they progress through school, and can be shared with providers of further and higher education if requested by pupils.

8. Arrangements for exams and assessments

Where pupils have been identified with some form of learning difficulty, impairment or disability reasonable adjustments can be made in order to avoid them being placed at a disadvantage in exams and assessments. Pupils with learning difficulties may be entitled to arrangements such as extra time, use of a reader/reading pen or a scribe/word processor in examinations. The Learning Support Department work with subject teachers, pupils and parents to identify and provide appropriate support.

Additional arrangements of this type are known as *Access Arrangements* and their provision for public examinations must comply with the regulations contained in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration General and Vocational qualifications (produced for each academic year September to August). Educational assessment for access arrangements is usually carried out in school by the Head of Learning Support.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Learning Support to ensure that assessment and provision of access arrangements is in accordance with the latest JCQ guidelines, for all pupils who have been identified as having a learning difficulty, or where a concern has been raised by a member of staff, parent or pupil. Access arrangements may not be appropriate for all pupils who have an identified learning difficulty or concern, but should be considered for all pupils on the SEN Register and records kept of the evidence used to support an application for access arrangements or to determine that they are not appropriate.

Support may also be given to pupils for school examinations and assessments. This should be carefully considered so that the objective that is being assessed is not compromised, but the child is not prevented from showing their knowledge and understanding due to their difficulties. In the Senior School support given to pupils in the Lower School is intended to work towards the level of support they are likely to be entitled to in public examinations. In Middle School and VI Form support in examinations will be as close to that available in public examinations as possible.

9. Resources and facilities

The Learning Support Department has excellent facilities – with dedicated, modern accommodation in Junior and Senior Schools. The space available allows pupils to benefit fully from a multi-sensory approach.

The Learning Support department in the Junior School uses the following ICT resources; The Nessy Learning Programme and Wordshark. In the Senior School different websites are used to practice touch typing and spelling.

ICT facilities are important in developing pupils' independent study skills. The Senior School department has computers in study cubicles for distraction free working, and laptops for use by pupils working together or receiving close support. Pupils who would benefit from use of a laptop in subject lessons can bring their own laptop into school and will be supported in its use and with the use of assistive technology such as speech to text software.

Practical activities help build confidence and can be linked to literacy, maths and social objectives. The kitchen area can be used for cooking, and for wet or potentially messy practical activities which reinforce pupils learning.

10. Charges for Learning Support and assessments

There is an additional termly charge made for students who are withdrawn to Learning Support. When a student is in receipt of the help of a Learning Support Assistant this is charged by session and on a termly basis. It may be possible to share a Learning Support Assistant with another pupil and thereby pay half the cost. Charges will be discussed and confirmed in writing before any provision takes place.

11. Learning Support and SEN Information for Parents of Pupils in EYFS and Junior School

We have high expectations for, and aim to challenge, all our pupils irrespective of learning differences, Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disabilities. Most of our pupils' needs should be addressed through high quality teaching with appropriate differentiation and support strategies put in place.

The named SENCO for the EYFS is Mrs R Logan

References:

- Austin Friars Learning Support Policy **2025-26**
- SEND Code of Practice **2015**
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework – **July 2025**

This document is contained within the whole school **Learning Support Policy**, but specifically refers to the **Early Years Foundation Stage** and Junior School. We adopt a graduated approach to meeting the needs of pupils with learning differences, Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disabilities.

Assess

- Pupils are regularly assessed either through day to day observations or formal assessments.
 - **EYFS** – Using Early Learning Goals criteria and Early Years Outcomes guidance
 - **KS1 & KS2** – Using termly assessments and Cambridge Primary Insight data
- **Stage 1**- Where a child appears to show a delay in progress, teachers and practitioners may submit an **LS Concern** in order to keep staff aware of pupils who are more likely to experience learning challenges. Provision continues to be made by the class teacher and parents are made aware.
- **Stage 2** – Should a concern develop an **LS Referral** can be made, with parental consent, by the class teacher to the Head of Learning Support for further action or assessment. The Head of Junior School is also notified. Pupils are not designated SEN either if parents do not wish it or if it is considered there remains only a delay in progress.
- **Stage 3** - Where there is little or no improvement in the child's progress more specialist diagnostic assessment or consultation may be sought from an external agency with parental consent. Co-ordination of the response to concerns and communication with parents is the responsibility of the Head of Learning Support. Where difficulties are possibly of a dyslexic nature a full educational assessment may be suggested, leading to a formal diagnosis of dyslexia. This is usually undertaken after the age of 7 by a qualified professional.
N.B. All pupils are screened for possible signs of dyslexia at the end of KS1 or as new pupils joining the School in KS2.
- **Stage 4** - If there is sufficient cause for concern, and evidence of intervention which has not succeeded, a request may be made for *SEND Early Help*. From September 2024 SEND has been removed from the Early Help process in Cumberland. You will no longer be required to complete an Early Help referral for a request for professional involvement or education, health and care needs assessments (EHCNA) requests. For more information, please visit the Cumberland Council website:
<https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-and-families/early-help-support-families>. The purpose of the Early Help assessment is to help your child and can be used to identify extra support your child may need. The assessment will involve everyone who works together to support your child.
Gathering of information in school, and involvement of parents is essential to a successful outcome of the process. This is achieved by following routine record keeping, lesson observations, feedback from teaching and Learning Support staff and the *LS Referral* process.

Plan

EYFS

- Where it is decided to provide designated SEN support, parents are formally notified and an **EYFS SEND Support Plan** is devised seeking input from the class teacher, Head of Learning Support and parents. The child's views are taken into account.
- Targets are deliberately ambitious and a clear date for review is set.

KS1 & KS2

- Where it is decided to provide formal Learning Support teaching, an Individual Provision Map (IPM) is devised by the class teacher, Head of Learning Support and Learning Support Department Teaching Assistant. The child's views are taken into account.
- Targets are deliberately ambitious and a clear date for review is set.

All Pupils with an EHCP*

- Where a pupil has an Educational Health Care Plan* (EHCP), an IPM is devised seeking input from pupils, parents or carers, class teacher, Head of Learning Support and any relevant external agencies.
- Targets are deliberately ambitious and a clear date for review is set.

Do

- EYFS – The Early Years practitioner remains responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. With support from the Head of Learning Support, the Early Years practitioner should oversee the agreed interventions or programmes and assess the child's response to the action taken.
- KS1 & KS2 – It is the responsibility of the class teacher and Learning Support Department Teaching Assistant, to monitor the progress made by all pupils with an IPM or EHCP*

Review

- EYFS - All IPMs are reviewed in line with the agreed date by the Early Years practitioner, Head of Learning Support and parents and taking into account the child's views.
- *N.B. The graduated process is informed by EYFS materials, Early Years Outcomes guidance and Early Support resources.*
- KS1 & KS2 - All IPMs are reviewed at least termly by the class teacher, Head of Learning Support and Learning Support Department Teaching Assistant. The child's views should be taken into account. Parents are given a copy and are welcome to liaise with the Junior School so that their views can be taken into account.
- ***Where it is agreed by all parties that a child has made sufficient progress and no longer requires designated SEN support or formal Learning Support they are placed on the monitoring register, with details updated on the SEN register.***
- All IPMs for pupils with an EHCP* are reviewed in line with the agreed date by the class teacher, Head of Learning Support, parents and any relevant external agencies and taking into account the child's views. A full annual review is conducted every year.

Assistant Deputy Head Academic with Head of LS
September 2025