Academic Support Policy

2026-2027

Reviewed by Amy Sivadasan: 14th January 2026

Next review: January 2027

1 Objective

To help those students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the curriculum in the most effective way, so that they can fulfil their potential and experience academic success.

2 Context

MPW London is a mainstream independent college catering for students aged between 14 and 20. The college is not, and does not intend to be, a specialist provider for those with special educational needs. However, the provision which we can make for students who appear to have a learning difficulty includes:

- learning support through classroom intervention, subject workshops and surgeries, and study skills workshops;
- bespoke individual subject tuition; and
- an internal formal assessment or, where appropriate, referral to an educational psychologist.

We shall do all that is reasonable to accommodate students with learning difficulties, including reporting to and consulting with both students and parents/guardians, ensuring that tutors are given any necessary information about a student's learning difficulties, and liaising with tutors and Heads of Departments to ensure that teaching practices are appropriate to support a student's individual needs.

3 Aims

- to identify, at an early stage, students who may have special educational needs or a disability and make staff aware of the needs of those students
- to provide a graduated response that recognises the individual nature of each student's needs
- to hold high expectations of all students with identified learning needs and to ensure that they are continually stimulated, appropriately challenged and always achieving their potential
- to foster good practice in terms of teaching and pastoral support to ensure special needs are accommodated
- to ensure that, as far as possible, individual special needs provision does not exclude students from mainstream provision
- to foster partnerships with students, parents/guardians and external support providers to ensure that students with special needs make good progress
- to provide appropriate INSET for new and existing staff
- to build and maintain a bank of resources to support learning provision
- to ensure that college procedures relating to discipline, organisation of educational visits, risk assessment and exam access arrangements take account of special educational needs and disabilities.

Some students may be affected by circumstances which impinge upon their educational progress. It is the responsibility of each tutor to be sympathetic to the special needs of each student, whether they are general or specific learning difficulties, physical and sensory impairments or social, emotional and mental health difficulties, to remove barriers to learning.

4 Definition of Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

According to the Children and Families Act 2014, a student is classified as having SEN if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Students have a learning difficulty if they:

(a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age. At MPW this is interpreted as below-average standardised scores on standardised psychometric assessments carried out by a qualified assessor;

or

(b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for students of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions (if your child has a disability, please ask to see our Disability policy).

According to the Equality Act 2010 an individual is classified as 'disabled' if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (more than 12 months) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

We identify four areas of need:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Communication and interaction needs
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

In the rest of this document, the abbreviation 'SEND' is used to encompass all students at MPW with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The following important points should be noted:

- A student 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. A student who finds a particular subject difficult does not necessarily have a 'learning disability' in the legal sense of the term: there will often be disparities in the speed at which students learn, in their skill at solving problems and in their general ability level.
- The expression 'learning difficulty' covers a wide range of conditions and may include those known as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties. It may also include those who have problems with their eyesight, hearing, or those who have an autistic spectrum disorder.
- Learning difficulties may affect students who have a high IQ and academic ability as well as those of lower IQ and academic ability. Sometimes a student's learning difficulty becomes apparent for the first time during the secondary phase of education, when educational pressures tend to increase.

5 The Academic Support Team

All tutors have a responsibility for identifying and meeting the educational needs of all students and ensuring their inclusion in every aspect of college life, whatever their learning difficulty.

5.1 The roles and responsibilities of the Head of Academic Support

- To ensure the day-to-day operation of the college's Academic Support Policy.
- To create and maintain a central register of students identified as SEND and to keep detailed records in the college's Management Information System (iSAMS) for all those listed.
- To inform all relevant staff of students with SEND.
- To assess/reassess students to determine current level of need for exam access arrangements.
- To apply for exam access arrangements through the JCQ or other appropriate governing bodies.

- To provide information, support and develop strategies to enable staff to work confidently with students with special needs, as well as to ensure the effective implementation of provision and intervention by providing high-quality staff training.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the college's SEND provision and to lead an annual review of the policy and its implementation to facilitate future planning at a strategic level.

5.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Learning Support Tutor

- To support the Head of Academic Support in the production and review of the SEND student profile and the maintenance of the SEND database
- To provide learning support to individuals or small groups of students and to assist students towards achieving their academic goals.

5.3 The roles and responsibilities of Directors of Studies

- To inform the Head of Academic Support of any students with a known diagnosis of SEND or refer students of concern
- To assist the Head of Academic Support in developing, monitoring, and updating the SEND student profile.
- To monitor and support students' progress throughout the course of the year and to assist students in achieving academic goals.

5.4 The roles and responsibilities of Heads of Department

- To evaluate the implementation of appropriate teaching strategies and provisions for SEND students in their lesson observations of subject tutors
- To review their department's provision, resources and the progress of their SEND students during departmental meetings and provide feedback to the Head of Academic Support.

5.5 The roles and responsibilities of subject tutors

- To adapt and differentiate their teaching delivery appropriately and in accordance with the student's stated needs on their SEND student profile.
- To assist the Academic Support department in identifying and providing support to students with SEND.
- To monitor and record progress of students with SEND and to liaise with the Director of Studies, Head of Department and the Head of Academic Support, particularly in cases where a student is underachieving or failing to meet targets.

6 Admissions Arrangements

MPW currently has limited facilities for the disabled. However, the college will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014, in order to accommodate the needs of prospective students who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the college can cater adequately. The college needs to be aware of any known disability or special educational need which may affect a student's ability to participate in the admissions procedure and take full advantage of the education provided at the college. Parents/guardians of a student who has any disability or special educational needs should provide the college with full details during the admissions process and before accepting the offer of a place.

Parents/guardians of prospective students should also refer to the college's Admissions Policy.

6.1 Academic Support Special Cases:

1. Students with an Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP)

Where a prospective student has an EHCP, we will consult the parents/guardians and, where appropriate, the local authority to ensure that the provision specified in the EHCP can be delivered by MPW. We will co-operate with the local authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHCPs are carried out on an annual basis as an

absolute minimum and more frequently if required. Those involved in the review may include: the Head of Academic Support, the student, parents/guardians, as well as other relevant professionals such as an educational psychologist, learning support or subject tutors.

Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHCP will need to be charged to the relevant local authority if the authority is responsible for the fees and MPW is named in Part 4 of a Statement or Section I of the EHCP. In all other circumstances charges will be made directly to parents/guardians unless the additional services can be a "reasonable adjustment" where no charge will be made, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

The aim of the annual review is to:

- assess the student's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the EHCP and to collate and record information that the college and other professionals can use in planning their support for the student;
- assess progress towards the targets in the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)that were set at the previous review;
- review the special provision made for the student, including the appropriateness of any special equipment provided, in the context of the National Curriculum and associated assessment and reporting arrangements;
- consider the continuing appropriateness of the EHCP in the light of the student's performance during the previous year, and any additional special educational needs which may have become apparent in that time, and thus to consider whether to cease to maintain the EHCP or whether to make any amendments; and
- set new targets for the coming year to stimulate ongoing achievement; progress towards those targets can be considered at the next review.

2. Students with physical disabilities and/or medical conditions

A medical diagnosis or a disability does not necessarily imply special educational needs; however, medical conditions may have a significant impact on a student's experiences and the way they function in college. The impact may be direct, in that the condition may affect cognitive or physical abilities, behaviour or emotional states. The impact may also be indirect, perhaps disrupting access to education through unwanted effects of treatments or through the psychological effects that serious or chronic illness or disability can have on a student and their family. Examples of such conditions include eating disorders, anxiety disorders, attention deficit disorders, recent or long-standing injuries, visual or hearing impairment, or any other condition that may cause a student to be disadvantaged.

Students with disabilities or other medical conditions may choose to have their own SEN/D student profile created in conjunction with the Head of Academic Support, the Learning Support Tutor and/or their Director of Studies. The plan will include information on how the disability or illness is affecting the student's education, as well as possible goals and support strategies. In this case, teaching and learning strategies, exam access arrangements and individual support will be put in place in similar fashion to all students with identified learning needs, as outlined below.

In some cases, accessibility will be an issue and details about this can be found in the college's three-year accessibility plan.

7 Identification, Assessment and Monitoring of Learning Needs

7.1 Identification

Our approach to the detection and management of learning difficulties will be guided by the *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years* (DFE - 0000205-2013), Department for Education (**DfE**), January 2015 (**Code**), or any substituting or amending code of practice issued from time to time by the Department for Education (**DfE**).

Students who have already been diagnosed as having special educational needs before joining the college will be referred to the Head of Academic Support, who will then begin the process of collating the information necessary produce a student SEND profile, to help relevant members of staff to consider implications for teaching practice and to provide general academic support. Relevant information will be sought from various sources to create a comprehensive profile of historical evidence of need and support. Sources of information include:

- Reports and references from previous schools. In particular, at the point of entry to Years 10 and 11, the last two academic reports and any available SAT reports will be requested
- Documentation pertaining to access arrangements from previous schools for students entering Years 12 and 13. (It should be noted that such documentation may not exist if the student's SEN/D needs were not recognised at the time.).
- Any available educational psychologist reports
- Performance on MPW English and Mathematics entrance tests (GCSE students only)
- Feedback information provided by those who interviewed the student as part of the admissions process.

Students who have not been diagnosed before as having a learning difficulty, but whose learning causes concern should be referred to the Head of Academic Support as quickly as possible. Referral can come from a variety of sources:

- Subject tutor request (the tutor should inform the relevant Director of Studies that a referral has been made)
- Director of Studies request
- Student counsellor request
- Request from parent or guardian
- Student request
- Following information from the student's previous school.

7.2 Assessment

As poor attainment and slow progress through the curriculum are the key indicators of a student's potential learning difficulties, their progress in these terms will be the primary means for assessing the level of support required for a student. Where needed, a formal assessment of learning difficulties will always be conducted by the Specialist Assessor at MPW or, where necessary, by a registered educational psychologist known to MPW as per JCQ requirements.

7.3 Monitoring

Monitoring and review of the student's progress occurs primarily by means of tutor feedback and half-termly reports. Input from parents/guardians, tutors, Directors of Studies and the students themselves is essential to providing the correct level of support for a student. The student SEN/D profile will be the focal point of discussions between students and their Directors of Studies when it comes to the student's learning needs.

8 Types of individual support

- The involvement of the Director of Studies in monitoring student progress.
- Supervision and monitoring by the Academic Support Team. The Head of Academic Support assesses, advises on and implements the programme of support outlined in the SEN/D student profile. In some cases, support may involve subject specific strategies, or it may be more appropriate to offer limited individual or group support, such as supplementary tuition or study skills surgeries.
- Differentiated work in the classroom.
- Referral, with the agreement of parents/guardians, to an external educational psychologist or other appropriate professional agency for the purposes of assessment. All costs for such professional services will be met entirely by the fee payer. Copies of any reports arising from such consultations will be added to the student's Learning Support file and will provide a basis for support provision. Sometimes these external agencies will be providing ongoing specialist support tuition. Under these circumstances, the specialist teacher can liaise with the Head of Academic Support, so that the student is assured of a collaborative approach to his/her learning.
- Professional recommendations for specialist provision (i.e., physical or practical aids, such as a laptop computer) may be met within or outside the college. If it is possible to offer provision in college, any additional cost will be agreed upon and met by the fee payer, unless they can be considered to be a 'reasonable adjustment', in which case no charge will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- Liaison with awarding bodies to ensure the appropriate access arrangements are put in place.

8.1 Special Examination Access Arrangements

Students with learning difficulties may qualify for special examination arrangements. The Examinations Officer and the Head of Academic Support oversee all applications for special examination arrangements. The college is required to follow the guidelines and procedures laid down by the Joint Council for Qualifications [www.jcq.org.uk/access-arrangements/] when applying for and implementing any special arrangements agreed. The aim of the JCQ guidelines is to ensure SEND students are not disadvantaged, whilst being equally mindful of the need not to give any student an unfair advantage. The 2023-24 JCQ guidance explicitly states that*:*

'For an institution to support any application for access arrangements in examinations there must be a compelling, clear and detailed picture of current need with a substantial weight of evidence.'

Access arrangements will only be granted if the provision is the student's normal method of working within the college and the application has been made before the college's deadline for processing such applications, which will be 31 January of the academic year for which the application is made.

8.2 Policy Review

The effectiveness of the Learning Support Policy is reviewed throughout the year. The Head of Academic Support audits departmental schemes of work, SEND resources, and conducts lesson observations to assess the quality of the access provision. SEND is also a standing item on the agenda at both Pastoral and Academic Board meetings. An annual evaluation takes place in August, after the examination results have been published, and this is presented to the Senior Leadership Team.

9 Linked Policies

- Access Arrangements Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Disability Access Plan

- Disability Policy
- Promoting Good Behaviour Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy