

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, LONDON



Specific Learning Difficulties

POLICY DOCUMENT

Specific Learning Difficulties Policy *Staff Handbook Ref: 64*

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

We recognise the need to identify and care for girls with learning difficulties. In particular we need to support the College's aim to 'measure success by the development of each individual', striving to develop the girls' self-reliance and personal ambition to outstrip other people's expectations of them.

Some girls may be entitled to have extra time or use of a laptop in public examinations. Queen's College therefore has a responsibility to identify such girls' needs and make the appropriate arrangements for them in GCSE, AS, A2 and mock papers.

The College therefore collates information from the girls' parents, their previous school, their subject staff and a screening test.

The College SENCO has a SpLD role. Her task is to:

- identify specific learning difficulties
- liaise with parents and staff
- keep records of the girls' needs and special provisions made for them
- make appropriate arrangements with the examining bodies

Specific Learning Difficulties - Procedures

General Remarks

Members of staff with specific responsibilities for Specific Learning Difficulties are:

- the Admissions Secretary
- the SENCO, Mrs Deborah Collis
- the Examinations Tutor
- the Principal

In addition all subject teachers need to be alert to girls showing signs of difficulty so that, at any stage of their time at Queen's, they can be referred to the SENCO for help or further assessment.

Identification of specific learning needs

The Role of the Admissions Secretary

When a girl joins the college the Admissions Secretary should:

- alert the SENCO if there are copies of assessments, carried out by educational psychologists or other specialists, which have been handed to the school by parents or the girls' former schools.
- add any known information to the database.

The Role of Subject Teachers

Teachers should pass on any information derived from parents.

In particular, teachers should recommend girls to the SENCO if they notice possible indications of SpLD. *See Appendix 1*. This especially applies to girls joining the College after Class 3.

The Role of the SENCO

a) Screening

In the first half of the Michaelmas Term the SENCO screens all new girls in Class 3 with a basic test of the girls' spelling, reading, 'visuo-spatial' skills and motor control. The following may be used:

- Vernon Warden (Kirklees) Reading Test
- WRAT 3 Spelling Test
- Daniels and Diack copying test
- a passage of free writing

Results of the screening, with summaries of girls 'at risk' or 'to keep an eye on' are displayed on the SpLD board in the Staff Room and e-mailed to all teaching staff.

If a girl's screening test shows any particular cause for concern, parents are informed either at the Class 3 parents evening by Class 3 Form Tutors or are contacted by the SENCO. If a full assessment is recommended it can be carried out either by the SENCO, for which a charge is made, or by an educational psychologist. In school it includes:

- WRAT III spelling test
- WRAT III reading test
- GRAY ORAL reading test
- Phonological assessment - CTOPP
- 20 minutes' free writing
- ACCESS reading test/GRST
- dyslexia screening test

Older girls referred by subject staff are given support sessions and as a result may be advised to have a full assessment with an educational psychologist, or they can be assessed in school using the same tests as above.

Results of the assessments /sessions are then sent to the parents.

Provision of support

While Queen's College does not provide continued support for SpLD, the College does provide some initial sessions free of charge.

We make provision for up to 25% extra time and word processors in public examinations, and in mock exams, provided that these are appropriate and that certain requirements have been met.

We do not grant extra time or use of laptops in the entrance examination or in internal examinations.

The Role of the SENCO

The SENCO may give one-to-one or small group support at the College's expense for up to half a term.

- a) Following identification of a SpLD, she may:
 - alert the Form Tutor to explain to a girl why she may be given further assessments or sessions.
 - arrange schedules of sessions for the College Secretary to put in the girls' registers.
 - give one to one literacy/study skills sessions of one period a week, with girls taken out of lessons on a rota for the lower years or during private study or lunchtimes for the upper years.
 - provide lists of girls showing cause for concern to all staff, particularly after the new intake of Class 3 and before parents' evenings and public examinations.
- b) Following a request for study skills from a subject teacher, for example essay writing, she may give a few help sessions for up to four girls at time.
- c) Following a recommendation by an educational psychologist for extra time in public examinations, she may give small group sessions on making good use of the extra time.
- d) Following a recommendation by an educational psychologist for the use of a word processor in school and/or public examinations, she may:
 - test typing speed and advise girls and staff about the suitability of using the word processor in public examinations.
 - advise the Examinations tutor about girls likely to be entitled for special arrangements.
 - work with the Examinations Tutor to check which girls are entitled to special arrangements in readiness for public examinations. Definitive lists of word processor candidates are to be submitted to the Examinations Tutor in November, and of extra-time candidates in April.

The SENCO is essentially the person to communicate and discuss the girls' needs for study skills/ further assessments, contacting:

- girls' parents, writing and/or telephoning and/or meeting them to discuss their daughters.
- the Form Tutors, subject staff and the Principal.

The SENCO liaises with the Examinations Tutor, educational psychologists, parents and subject staff to discuss special provision and ensure that all documentation of girls' entitlements is up to date, particularly in the run up to public examinations.

The Role of the Examinations Tutor

- Liaise with the SENCO check any special needs.
- Contact the examining bodies in the November before the GCSE examinations to request and make arrangements for the use of laptops and any other special provisions.
- Arrange suitable spaces for candidates using laptops (in a separate room or part of a room) and ensure printed scripts are submitted with the appropriate paperwork according to the regulations.
- Make arrangements for candidates with extra time.

The Role of Subject Teachers

- Follow guidelines for teaching girls with SpLD. *See Appendix 2*
- Check lists of new girls 'at risk' provided by the SENCO.
- Check girls with SpLD on SEN in the girl database or in the Q:drive SEN folder.

Use of word processor

A girl may use a word processor in lessons if:

- she has a recommendation from an educational psychologist or the SENCO which shows it would be useful.
- both the girl and her parents have discussed with the SENCO the advantages and disadvantages of using one.
- she can demonstrate that she can touch type at least as accurately and efficiently as she can write by hand and be able to type without looking at her hands.
- her parents provide the laptop and have signed an agreement that they will insure the laptop against loss, theft and damage, that the girl takes full responsibility for it, and that the College bears no responsibility for it.

A girl may use a word processor in public examinations if:

- the requirements of the examining bodies are met and permission has been granted by them.
- the word processor is provided by the College after ICT staff have ensured that the girl does not have access to forbidden facilities such as spell-checks.
- subject staff have agreed that the girl will benefit from using one.
- the girl and parents accept that not all subjects are suited to use of a word processor, particularly practicals and examinations for which answers need to be written in small spaces in an answer booklet.

Security

Girls may keep their laptop in a laptop safe during the day and over night.

For

Parents' and girls' Agreement, *see Appendix 3*

Records of special needs

The Role of the Admissions Secretary

- A copy of all assessments to be kept in the girl's file.

The Role of the SENCO

- Keep a copy of all assessments made both in and outside the College.
- Enter brief details of identified problems and/or provision of help onto the girl database or the SEN folder on Q:drive either after own sessions or after receiving an educational psychologist's report.
- Contact parents to request past assessments when the school has not yet been given these.
- Give copies of assessments to the Principal for the Admissions Secretary to keep in the girls' files.
- Give copies of assessments to the Examinations Tutor, pastoral staff, head of English and other members of staff if required.

The Role of the Examinations Tutor

- Keep copies of all reports by educational psychologists requesting special arrangements in public examinations.
- Keep copies of examiners' permission for special arrangements.
- Record and update lists on the NAA website of candidates granted special arrangements.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Possible indications of SpLD

- Bizarre and/or inconsistent spelling (syllables omitted, odd letter groupings).
- Inaccurate copying from the board and/or recording of homework assignments.
- Writing surprisingly short answers.
- Performing better orally than on paper.
- Forgetting punctuation and spelling in an effort to write fast or fully.
- Poor handwriting and presentation (many crossings out).
- Odd use of space on the page.
- Slow and/or inaccurate reading.
- Poor memory for names etc after reading.
- Computational ability in Mathematics worse than understanding of concepts.

- Weakness in writing foreign languages and in learning vocabulary.

Appendix 2

Guidelines for teaching girls with SpLD

- Be sympathetic, encourage, praise.
- Provide introduction to session at the start, aim for structured presentation and sum at points at end.
- Use different coloured board pens or rule lines between sections of notes.
- Break up sessions for allow for information processing.
- Provide clear handouts in advance of session:
 - a) Leave spaces for detail.
 - b) Usual visual as well as verbal information, eg charts, concrete examples, images.
 - c) Preferably use coloured paper.
 - d) Font size should be 12pt or greater.
 - e) Use an unjustified right edge.
- Give glossaries of subject specific vocabulary.
- Draw attention to terms that may be easily confused.
- Put learning materials on the intranet.
- Provide key texts on reading lists.
- Provide questions to guide reading.
- Offer samples of written work etc.
- Give explicit criteria.

Girls with extra time or laptop concessions in public examinations must have practice with these in the run-up to these examinations in mocks/timed work.

Appendix 3

Agreement to be signed by parents and girls before bringing a laptop into school.

Use of laptops in school

I agree that for my daughter to use her laptop in lessons the following requirements must be met:

- that she has a specific recommendation from an educational psychologist or the SENCO with a report which shows that it would be useful.
- that she can demonstrate that she can touch type at least as accurately and efficiently as she can write by hand and can type without looking at her hands.

I have insured the laptop against loss, theft and damage and understand that my daughter takes full responsibility for it, and that the College bears no responsibility for it.

Use of word processors in public examinations

I understand that:

- examination candidates may be placed in a separate room.
- not all subjects are suited to use of a word processor, particularly practical examinations, or examinations for which answers need to be written in small spaces in an answer booklet.

I accept that my daughter may only use a word processor in public examinations if:

- the requirements of the examining bodies have been met.
- permission has been granted by the examining bodies.
- the word processor is provided by the College after ICT staff have ensured that the pupil does not have access to forbidden facilities such as spell-checks.
- my daughter's teachers have agreed that she will benefit from using one.

I accept that I share responsibility with the staff of Queen's College for making sure that the educational psychologist has completed all forms etc to satisfy the examiners' requirements for public examinations normally taken in the II Juniors, I Seniors and II Seniors.

Signature of parent.....

Signature of pupil.....

Date.....

Please return completed form to Mrs Collis (SENCO) at Queen's College.

This policy is reviewed each year by the Council of Queen's College at its AGM.