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# The Mill Hill School Foundation

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## Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Policy 2023



## **Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Policy**

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## Introduction

1. This policy aims to encompass all appropriate issues relating to special educational needs, learning difficulties and disabilities that ensure a pupil's individual educational needs are met effectively.
2. This policy takes full account of the SEN and Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015. Where appropriate, the Foundation Schools endeavor to follow guidelines to ensure the most effective learning experience for our pupils is provided in order that they may reach their full potential.
3. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following other Foundation policies:

Health & Safety Policy: a. Part 1 - Governors' Health & Safety Policy Statement; and b. Part 2 - Organisation & Responsibilities
Accessibility Plan 2022 2025
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (Pupils)
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (Staff)
Recruitment, Selection & Disclosure Policy
Admissions Policy
Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy for each Foundation School
Anti-Bullying Policy for each Foundation School
Curriculum Policy for each Foundation School
Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy

## Ethos of the Foundation

4. The Mill Hill School Foundation (MHSF) offers an inclusive learning environment for inquisitive boys and girls. We aim to develop thoughtful, motivated and responsible young people with a global outlook through the provision of a first-class education to boys and girls from 3 years to 18 years and to support its pupils in the passage from childhood to adulthood; we help them to thrive and find their own path to happiness and success through the range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities presented by each of our schools. We value the diversity of our school community and appreciate the contribution that pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or Disabilities can bring to school life (referred to as 'SEND' throughout this policy). This policy aims to encompass all appropriate issues relating to special educational needs, learning difficulties and disabilities that ensure a pupil's individual educational needs are met effectively.

## Statement of Intent

5. The Foundation is committed to providing an environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents, guardians and visitors regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are further committed to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion. The Foundation makes reasonable adjustments to cater for pupils so they can embrace the Foundation. The Foundation will make every reasonable effort to provide disabled access to its pupils, staff and visitors.

6. Our grounds are stunning and comprehensive, but our buildings are a mix of old and new. At present our oldest buildings do not provide for the level of disabled access seen in our newer buildings. The Foundation will continue to work towards improving access for the disabled as the opportunity presents itself and this may require the replacement of old buildings with more modern ones as part of the Estate Development Plan.

### **Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

7. The SEND Code of Practice 2015 referred to above states that:
- A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
  - A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
    - Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
    - has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age; or
    - has special educational provision that is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from, that made generally for other young people of the same age

A child is defined as having special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which needs special teaching. A learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age; or, it means a child has a disability which needs different educational facilities from those generally provided by schools for children of the same age in the area.

8. Children will not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. The School's support for those children whose first language is not English is set out in the School's Policy on English as an Additional Language (EAL).

### **Definition of Disability**

9. A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).
10. Not all pupils who have SEN are disabled. Not all disabled pupils have SEN.

### **Policy Objectives in respect of Pupils with SEN and/or Disabilities (SEND)**

11. The Objectives of this Policy are:
- To maintain a continuity of support for pupils with SEND across the Foundation.
  - To share information regarding pupils with SEND across the Foundation.

- To develop a partnership between teachers, pupils and their parents/guardians that encourages pupil confidence in the learning process.
- To continue to develop a positive attitude to areas of SEND through regular INSET, updates of appropriate developments in the area of SEND and access to the SENCO/Head of Learning Support for staff to seek advice and support.
- To give new academic staff SEND-based induction.
- To use a graduated procedure, in the manner recommended in the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015).

### **Policy Aims in respect of pupils with SEND.**

12. The objectives of this Policy are achieved through the following aims:

- To ensure that pupils with SEND have equality of access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, with other pupils within the Foundation.
- To promote effective partnership between parents/guardians, pupils and staff in the education of pupils with SEND and to involve outside agencies where appropriate.
- To create an environment in which all pupils with SEND have the opportunity to achieve their potential, thus acknowledging that all pupils have the right to equal opportunities and should be supported in developing their skills to the optimum.
- To ensure that each child with SEND and/ or a disability is ensured a smooth transition into the School where a pupil's current needs will be communicated and met.
- To identify and assess a pupil's SEND as early as possible.
- To ensure that the pupils themselves (wherever possible) are encouraged to participate in all the decision-making processes.
- To recognise the difference between a pupil who has a SEND and one for whom English is an additional language (EAL), and in addition to be aware of those for whom both of these issues are present.
- To raise awareness of the assessment and identification and review processes that have been set up for meeting a pupil's SEND.
- To raise staff awareness of SEND being a whole school responsibility, encouraging inclusive classroom practice and, where necessary, curricular programmes in order that pupils' individual needs are addressed.
- To ensure a culture within which every teacher in the Foundation understands that he/she is a teacher of pupils with SEND.

### **Categories of Need of Pupils with SEND**

13. Four broad areas give an overview of the range of needs that should be planned for. The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across all these areas and their needs may change over time.

- a. Communication and Interaction. Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they may have a difficulty in saying what they want to, understanding what has been said to them or they have a difficulty in understanding social rules or communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, including Asperger's Syndrome, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction
- b. Cognition and Learning. Support for learning difficulties may be required when children or young people learn at a slower pace than their peers. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs. Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) affect one or more specific aspect of learning. This encompasses range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.
- c. Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties. Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn, displaying increased anxiety levels or exhibiting a drop in expected work levels. These indicators may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained.
- d. Sensory and/or Physical Needs. Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a physical disability which may prevent them from fully accessing their learning or a full and varied school curriculum. Pupils with a visual or hearing impairment may require a range of reasonable adjustments or the use of specialist equipment.

### **Access to the Curriculum by Pupils with SEND**

14. All pupils have access to the curriculum across the Foundation schools with inclusive teaching styles to address the differing needs of children although an individual teaching plan may recommend modifications in response to a pupil's educational needs. All pupils are supported and encouraged to achieve their potential; pupils with special educational needs receive help according to their needs. Parents and pupils are involved as partners in the educational process. We follow DfE guidance to reduce educational failure and maximise the potential of all children with special educational needs.

### **Access to Information on SEND**

15. Across the Foundation information regarding individual pupils with SEND can be readily accessed by all teaching staff. All staff are informed of how and where to locate relevant SEND information for individual pupils. For more specific information regarding guidelines for support please refer to the individual School's SEND Handbooks.

### **Admissions for Pupils with SEND**

16. We believe that having a learning difficulty and/or disability should not be a barrier to achievement. Treating every child as an individual is important to us, and we welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Support Department can provide them with the support that they require. Whilst we are able to offer a range of support across the Foundation (for specific guidelines on support please refer to each of the individual school's SEN Handbook), we do not, have the facilities to offer highly specialised and intensive support. We advise parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the Admissions department and/or the SENCO before he or she sits our entrance exam so that we can make adequate provision for him/her.

17. If a candidate has an Educational Psychologist report that states their need for extra time due to a specific learning difficulty and they are in receipt of extra time in their current setting children will be given additional time in their entrance exam. Requests for extra time must be made at the time of registration. This similarly applies for other access arrangements eg reader, laptop etc. Pupils will be reassessed periodically during their time at the Foundation to ensure that all access arrangements remain valid and up to date. Pupils at secondary school are only entitled to exam access arrangements in accordance with JCQ regulations. See point 28 below.

### **Identifying Pupils with SEND**

18. We believe early identification of SEND, where appropriate, is essential to ensuring the best possible results for our pupils. Identification is through high quality summative and formative assessments, teacher observations and parental feedback or concerns. In some cases, evidence will be drawn from external specialists. If this is the case, it is best practice for any professional assessor to be chosen and agreed jointly by the school and parent/guardian. The school must have contact with the professional to ask any questions. Information in reports conducted before joining the Foundation can be out of date and not representative of our setting, therefore we reserve the right to request a new assessment if it is deemed necessary to the progress of the pupil. For specific guidelines on how each individual school identifies pupils with SEND please refer to the individual school's SEND handbook.

### **Inclusion**

19. Pupils with SEND have access to the full life of the School, including curricular and extracurricular activities. A positive view of learning difference is actively promoted and confidentiality is ensured; there is sensitivity to the stigma sometimes associated with SEND.

### **Recording Progress of Pupils with SEND**

20. Meeting the needs of pupils with SEND is a whole school responsibility; accountability at every level ensures pupils make progress. The Foundation seeks to measure overall progress consistently within our robust school assessment processes. In addition to on-going monitoring of progress, the individual schools will measure the overall progress of pupils with SEND at the end of the various key stages such as GCSE and A level to see how much progress they make compared with that of their peers. Please refer to the individual school's SEND Handbook for details on recording progress of SEND pupils.

### **Early Years Provision**

21. The School monitors progress of all pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The designated teacher responsible for coordinating SEN provision in the EYFS provision is the SENCO at Grimsdell, Kim Vanstone. The SENCO or the child's form teacher will discuss with parents any concerns they may have about a pupil's needs and/or progress, in accordance with this policy.
22. Where a child appears to be behind expected levels and 'Early Help' sought, the cycle of action: assess/plan/do/review is used to create a graduated response to needs, this is carried out throughout the year. Decisions to involve specialists are taken in discussion with parents and parents are informed if their children are to receive SEN support. Any child on SEN support will have a pupil profile that provides teachers with support and guidance. The school's SENCO manages these profiles and is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary, in close liaison with the child's class teacher (Key Worker).

### **Pupils with an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan**

23. The needs of the majority of pupils with SEN will be met effectively through the School's SEN support. However, where the child or young person has not made expected progress despite the SEN support in place, parents and the School have the right to ask the Local Authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC Plan for their child. Parents are asked to consult with the School before exercising this right. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right.
24. If the Local Authority refuses to make an assessment, parents have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Health, Education and Social Care Chamber). The School does not have this right of appeal.
25. Where a prospective pupil has an EHC Plan, the Head in conjunction with the Head of Learning Support, and appropriate members of the Senior Leadership Team will consult to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC Plan can be delivered by the School.
26. The School co-operates with the Local Authority to ensure that relevant annual reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.

### **Training**

27. The Mill Hill School Foundation has an on-going programme of Continuing Professional Development opportunities both in and out of the school for all staff. The SENCOs/Heads of Learning Support at each school deliver training to staff as needed. Specific training needs are met as required.

### **Exam Access Arrangements for Pupils with SEND**

28. Particular attention is given to ensuring that examination access arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties/disabilities are correct and comply with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations. As defined by JCQ, September 2022

*"Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the ~~particular~~ needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'."*

29. At Mill Hill School, the Head of Learning Support, Exams Officer, Exams Assistant and some of the Learning Support Teachers and at Mill Hill International, the Exams Officer attend yearly training on Access Arrangements to ensure they are fully cognisant of any changes to JCQ regulations and to ensure the school complies fully with JCQ regulations.
30. Assessment for access arrangements can only be conducted by an internal specialist assessor or a school approved external assessor. Prior to any external educational assessments, parents must speak with the Head of Learning Support at the relevant school.
31. For more detailed information regarding access arrangements please refer to the individual schools' SEND Handbook and access arrangement policy.



## **Concerns**

32. The Foundation will listen to any concerns expressed by parents about their child's development and any concerns raised by children themselves. Parents must notify their child's SENCO or Housemaster/Housemistress/teacher/tutor if their child's progress or behaviour gives cause for concern.

## **Responsible Persons for Pupils with SEND**

33. The 'responsible' person for SEND is the Head of each School:
- Mrs Kate Simon, Head of Grimsdell Mill Hill Pre-preparatory School
  - Mr Leon Roberts, Head of Belmont Mill Hill Preparatory School
  - Mrs Jane Sanchez, Head of Mill Hill School
  - Ms Sarah Bellotti, Head of Mill Hill International School
34. The person co-ordinating the day-to-day provision of education for pupils with SEND in each school is the SENCO or Head of Learning Support.
- Ms Kim Vanstone, Grimsdell
  - Mrs Louise Watters, Belmont
  - Ms Lisa Silverman, Mill Hill School
  - Ms Beata Szaszkowska, Mill Hill International
35. The School Governors are reported to on SEND issues annually and developments via the Governors' Academic Committee, when appropriate.

## **Liaison within the Foundation**

36. The Heads of Learning Support of Grimsdell, Belmont, Mill Hill School and Mill Hill International meet annually to share good practice and to discuss the transition of pupils from one Foundation School to another. There is a professional commitment to sharing good practice and raising the profile of SEND in a positive way throughout the Foundation.

## **Policy Aims for Pupils with Disabilities**

37. The Foundation consists of selective Schools and admission to each School depends upon the prospective pupil meeting the criteria to maintain and, where possible, improve the educational and general standards for its pupils. As part of its regard for the welfare of all its pupils the School must feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop each prospective pupil to the best of his or her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by that pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful School career, and emerge a confident, well- educated and well-rounded adult.
38. Where it is practicable to make reasonable adjustments to enable a prospective pupil to take up a place at the Foundation and to satisfy the current admissions criteria, the Foundation is committed to providing those reasonable adjustments.

39. In most cases where the Foundation agrees to provide additional services such as learning support, no extra charge will normally be made. Where additional charges do need to be made at a level that reasonably reflects the cost to the Foundation of providing an unusually high level of support, parents will be advised of such charges in writing and in advance.
40. In order to meet the needs of disabled pupils, the Foundation requires full information. The Foundation will ask all applicants for admission to one of its schools to disclose whether they have received any academic/learning support and/or have had an Educational Psychologist's report from their previous school or college or have any disability or other condition of which the Foundation should be aware.
41. In assessing a pupil or prospective pupil, the Foundation may need to take advice and require assessments as appropriate. The Foundation will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality. The parents of the pupil will be expected to bear the cost of such advice or assessments.

### **Expectations of Staff**

42. All staff have a responsibility to:
- ensure that they do not treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else for a reason relating to the person's disability;
  - not indirectly discriminate against a pupil with a disability by failing to make a 'reasonable adjustment' when a disabled pupil is placed, or is likely to be placed, at a 'substantial disadvantage' in comparison with a person who is not disabled.
  - if a pupil discloses a disability to you, request their permission to forward this information to relevant colleagues; and if a teacher, to give consideration to delivery methods, materials available in alternative formats, provision of course materials (eg. by larger font size in printed materials) in advance and appropriate assessment.

### **Accessibility Constraints for Pupils with Disabilities**

43. One of the obvious problems that the Foundation has in accommodating pupils with a disability, in common with many other Schools of its type and age, is its layout and plant. School constraints:
- a. Mill Hill International School. The site consists of a number of buildings located in a 'U' shape around a central open area with tennis courts and sports areas elsewhere on the site. The main building is listed. The classrooms are in the original listed building over two floors and in associated single and two storey buildings throughout the site. There is no lift access.
  - b. Grimsdell Mill Hill Pre-Preparatory School. The School is a former house and as such its layout is compact, but classrooms are spread over three floors and there is no lift access.
  - c. Belmont Mill Hill Preparatory School. Covers a site of some 40 acres. The classrooms are based about two central quadrangles over two or three stories with no lift access except to two buildings. Some classrooms are set away from this area and the games fields are further down a steep slope. Various classrooms are fixed with regard to the subjects taught in them on the valid educational grounds that

facilities are best concentrated. Belmont School is situated in a Conservation Area and some of its buildings are listed. There is a lift in the Roger Chapman building.

- d. Mill Hill School. The site covers a wide sloping site of some 120 acres. The plant consists of many separate buildings of many storeys and most are without lifts. Some buildings are listed, and the whole site is a green belt conservation area. The School also has, again in common with most similar Schools, a system of fixed subject teaching areas, as outlined above and with regard to use of specialist academic equipment and facilities. The Boarding Houses pose a similar problem, both in their distance from central facilities, and also their internal layout.
44. The most challenging and long-term aspect of our Accessibility Plan concerns access for the physically disabled. At present the Foundation is not able to provide unimpeded access for wheelchair users across all areas of the campus and in all buildings. We do, however, have a number of wheelchair ramps held centrally and deployed to each of the schools on an as required basis. These are capable of being used with motorised wheelchairs that can be positioned at ground level around the Foundation to assist wheelchair users gain access to buildings where there are steps. For full details, see the Foundation's Accessibility Plan.

## **Review**

45. The Foundation will review this Policy on an annual basis to ensure the Foundation and its schools meets the needs of those pupils with SEND

This Policy was approved by the Academic Committee of the Court of Governors, on 3rd May 2023

This Review: May 2023

Next Review: Spring 2024

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