



Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

Version 1.0

January 2008

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INTRODUCTION

Glenstal Abbey School strives to provide equal educational opportunities for students with Special Education Needs in accordance with the SEN Act 2004.

Glenstal Abbey School welcomes students with Special Education Needs. The Admissions Policy confirms this openness:

All prospective students are assessed carefully before admission. A number of regular academic tests are administered to assess general ability and performance as well as standardised tests to see if ability matches expected attainment. The aim of these assessments is to prepare for a student's entry to the school and plan for additional support teaching either Resource or Learning Support where indicated. Physical or learning difficulties are not barriers to attending school here unless they would significantly impact on the ability to board. Please refer to the admission policy for the criteria for admission. Students who miss the entry assessment do a series of standardised tests shortly after entry to identify any learning need.

IDENTIFICATION

While many SEN students have already been identified in primary school further students may be identified either at the entry assessments or with standardised tests administered after admission. Students may manifest difficulties even later and the subject teachers and tutors refer students to the SEN department. There is an on-going monitoring of students with fortnightly cards in the Junior years and monthly reports for all other students. This allows parents, teachers and tutors to monitor students' progress and also assists in identifying learning difficulties earlier.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

There is a strong system of support for each student who attends Glenstal Abbey School. Generally classes in Glenstal tend to be small. Subject teachers adapt teaching methods and content to suit the varied learning styles of the students. This differentiated teaching makes learning more interesting for all students. Individual or group project work can be set to stimulate the different learning styles and to enable students to learn both for themselves and from each other.

STAGED RESPONSE

Glenstal Abbey School provides a staged response to students' needs recognising that learning difficulties occur along a continuum. Referrals may come from students or class teachers or tutors or parents and the difficulties are assessed and an appropriate course of action is advised.

Where a student is not achieving his potential, despite teaching being adapted and modified to best suit his needs, then the subject teacher discusses this with the form tutor who can perhaps suggest teaching methods that work in other subjects. If the student is having persistent difficulty the tutor and or subject teacher refers the student to the Special Education Needs Department. The

student then undertakes a series of standardised tests to help isolate the difficulties he experiences in his learning and to help produce an educational response to meet his needs.

The student is supported continuously in the regular classroom and then further helped with a number of support classes depending on the level of need. There is ongoing communication between the subject teachers, tutors and the support teachers to provide an integrated approach to each student's learning.

Once a student has been identified, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is drawn up for the student, with the collaboration of all the partners involved in the student's education, his parents, tutor, support teacher, subject teachers and the student himself. The student attends IEP meetings and is central to the development of the Plan. He is invited to say what ways he learns best and what difficulties he experiences as well as what strategies or goals he might set. In this way the student is encouraged to take ownership of his learning.

Parents are consulted when a student is identified as having a special educational need and are invited to participate in the development of their son's IEP.

Support teaching at Glenstal Abbey School is divided into two categories, **Learning Support Teaching** and **Resource Teaching**.

LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHING

Where the student has significant learning difficulties and yet does not qualify for resource support, the student accesses the learning support programme set up by the school. The School recognises that many students who fail to qualify for Resource support do require support teaching and to this end funds privately learning support for those with significant learning difficulties. The decision to provide learning support depends on standardised tests. The decision is objective. An individual student's needs may vary over time and so thus may the level of support. All students in learning support are assessed on entry and then are periodically (at least twice yearly) reviewed.

Students in this category are those who do not access Resource support but have high incidence conditions and fail to reach the threshold for support.

RESOURCE TEACHING

Glenstal Abbey School processes applications to the National Council for Special Education (N.C.S.E.) for students whose needs fall into one of the 14 categories that qualify for Resource support. Categories include low incidence (rarer conditions) such as psychological conditions or physical difficulties or high incidence (more common conditions) causing significant learning difficulty to warrant Resource Teaching. Students in these categories then have a number of hours sanctioned by the N.C.S.E. The School employs teachers to provide this sanctioned support teaching. The Department pays for this teaching. All students in receipt of Resource support have

an Individual Educational Plan drawn up with the parents, teachers, Resource Teacher and students themselves. This plan sets out strategies and targets and is reviewed twice yearly.

REVIEW:

Each student in receipt of Resource or Learning Support is reviewed at least twice yearly. This is both to evaluate the work done to see that targets that have been set have been met and also to look forward to developing new strategies and targets. The initial plan and review are sent to parents

GROUPING OF STUDENTS:

Students often work better in pairs or groups of three and this also allows the students to be seen more often. Consequently most students unless their specific circumstances indicate otherwise are grouped in this manner to maximise their learning and to increase the level of support available to each student.

DEPARTMENTAL ASSETS

- A two roomed prefabricated building
- 3 desktop computers, scanner, assistive software
- Lending library
- Reading laboratory, Exercise books, Handwriting / Spelling / Comprehension manuals
- Maths materials
- Literary CD collection
- 4 separate work stations
- Tape recorders, adapted keyboard, sloped writing desk.
- Shelf and files for each student's work
- SEN file kept on each student

TEAM OF EDUCATORS AND CARERS

Glenstal Abbey School has a team of people involved in each student's care and education. This team extends to those who care for the student outside school time, the housemasters and nurses and then those involved during school time more directly in the student's education, the subject teachers and tutors and the support teachers. All work as a team to promote each student's learning and personal fulfillment. Parents are integral to this process and all the above partners including parents are invited to contribute to the development and review of student's

Individual Educational Plans. The participation of all partners, including especially parents and the students themselves, is encouraged to produce the best possible result for them.

DEFINITIONS

Individual Education Plan

This is a document drawn up involving all the partners involved in the student's education, his parents, support teacher, subject teachers and includes the student himself. It outlines the learning difficulties experienced by the student, the learning strategies that work well, what further strategies might be employed and sets targets for each term. It is reviewed at least twice yearly. The IEP is circulated to all the partners once it has been agreed.

High incidence disability

These are common disabilities. To qualify for Resource hours, the difficulty has to be of such a severity as to merit Resource support. E.G. Dyslexia

Low incidence disability

These are infrequent conditions which once diagnosed automatically qualify for Resource hours. E.G. Dyspraxia

Learning Support

This is the first type of support for students with a learning difficulty. The degree of difficulty is not such as to qualify for Resource support. Learning support is not funded by the Department in this school, but the school provides funds privately.

Resource Support

Students with either a low incidence disability or a high incidence disability manifesting significant difficulty qualify for state support and Resource hours. The number of hours depends on the category of disability.


National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The NCSE was set up to coordinate the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. Applications for Resource hours, Special Needs Assistants and Assistive technology are all processed by the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO).

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

This policy adopted by the Board

Signed:  Miriam Mc Ellyott.

Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 23rd January 2008