

EASTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL



SUPPORT FOR LEARNING POLICY

Rationale

Learning Support exists for pupils of all levels of ability, including the very able. Its role is to develop and support a pupil's learning wherever a need is encountered or any barrier to learning is identified, be it temporary or longer term.

The Code of Practice (2004) states that children and young people may require additional support for a variety of reasons and may include those who:

- have motor or sensory impairments
- are being bullied
- are particularly able or talented
- have experienced a bereavement
- are looked after
- have a learning difficulty
- are living with parents who are abusing substances
- are living with parents who have mental health problems
- have English as an additional language
- are not attending school regularly
- have emotional or social difficulties
- are on the child protection register
- are young carers

Aims

The aim of the Support for Learning Department is to ensure that a pupil's additional support needs are identified, addressed and kept under review. Where appropriate pupils will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and employ strategies to support themselves. We aim to support the development of an inclusive school where the school adjusts to the child and gives them the best opportunities to achieve their potential. The complex and varied school curriculum and the changing needs of pupils means that a variety of strategies and approaches need to be deployed. For example, tailored study skills advice, increased use of ICT and in class support from teachers and Pupil Support Assistants (PSA), all of which help pupils to overcome the barriers to their learning and develop the skills required to become independent learners. The Support for Learning Department are alert to the changing needs of pupils and ready to deploy the range of supports available to them.

Students with significant additional support needs, either general or specific, may have a reduced or adapted curriculum. Where a decision is taken to make an alteration to the existing curriculum then it will be done against a clear educational rationale, which positively addresses the interests of the pupils concerned. This may mean they have an individualised curriculum to allow additional independent or supported study and reduce the overall curricular load. In other cases this may mean an adapted curriculum where pupils access a curriculum based on life skills as opposed to a classroom based learning experience.

“Count Us In”, HMIE defines an inclusive approach to education as:

- Creating an ethos of achievement for all pupils within a climate of high expectations.
- Valuing a broad range of talents, abilities and achievements.
- Countering conscious and unconscious discrimination that may prevent individuals from thriving in school.
- Actively promoting understanding and a positive appreciation of the diversity of individuals and groups within society.

This approach requires the school to be increasingly flexible in the way it responds to individuals. The Support for Learning department and school have a clear vision as to the aims and expectations for pupils with ASN. This approach is supported by the introduction of A Curriculum for Excellence. The four capacities support the aims of an effective and inclusive education for all pupils.

The Support for Learning department aims to ensure that all pupils with ASN have the opportunity to be:

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- responsible citizens
- effective contributors

Adapting the curriculum to ensure that there is a balance between content, and learning and teaching approaches that improve pupils’ understanding, will allow pupils with ASN to experience a meaningful curriculum. The Support for Learning Department will contribute to a curriculum design and delivery that meet the needs of pupils and assists them in becoming confident individuals and successful learners.

We will try to help the school move away from a ‘one size fits all’ approach to one that recognizes individual needs. This requires the school to offer a wide range of learning opportunities. The Support for Learning Department will support subject departments in becoming flexible and responsive and in how they plan and deliver programmes.

The key role that Support for Learning plays in this is to support departments by:

Assessment and Strategies

Pupils can be referred to the department by class teachers, principal teachers, support staff, guidance, pupils, and parents or through the Joint Support Team (JST). Staff complete a self assessment/practice evaluation exercise, once they have tried altering in-class strategies and evaluated these as having been unsuccessful in supporting the pupil, the DHT Support then decides which support area the referral should be passed onto. This is done as stages one and two of the East Renfrewshire Staged Intervention Process (STINT). Pupils can refer themselves or be referred by parents if they are concerned about their progress.

Once a referral from a member of staff has been received, the department will carry out the following steps:

1. Interview pupil and contact parents
2. Conduct appropriate assessments, e.g. round robin of subject teachers, class observation, study of pupils jotters and class work
3. Seek advice and request further assessment from colleagues and specialists e.g. Educational Psychologist or Sensory Impairment team, possible referral to JST,
4. Provide feedback to class teacher, pupils and parents
5. Monitor progress and evaluate supports put in place

Co-operative Teaching

This involves working alongside teaching staff to ensure that the learning and teaching within class is meeting the needs of pupils with ASN.

- Plan jointly
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Engage in evaluation of lessons
- Provide strategies to ensure pupil's needs are being met
- Cooperative teaching within the class

Tutorial Teaching

Where appropriate work in the Support for Learning base is planned with mainstream teacher support. Core skills such as language, communication and numeracy are worked on. In addition, where appropriate, study skills, exam techniques and other curricular areas will be studied. On occasion if a pupil's additional support needs are significant an adapted curriculum will be provided and a holistic approach to the development of life skills will be put in place.

- Take into account planned progression of IEPs/CSPs
- Individual progress monitored
- Liaison with mainstream staff
- Pupils and parents involved in planning of IEPs/CSPs
- Pupils involved in peer and self assessment
- Target setting with teacher

Consultancy

Support for Learning staff will work with departments to support them in developing strategies and differentiated materials for use with pupils who have ASN

- Staff advice on teaching strategies and appropriate curriculum to take into account ASN of individuals. (SfL Departmental List)
- Work with class teacher to differentiate work
- Help develop appropriate assessments
- Pupils seek advice/ feedback on teaching and learning methods and materials.
Parents – encourage partnership with school.
Provide feedback to parent's on progress. Take parents views into account through feedback, regular meetings, phone calls and emails.

Stint

Pupil Support Staff will work alongside class teachers, parents and pupils to write Staged Intervention plans. These documents ensure that pupils who require significant adaptations to the curriculum needs are met

- Collaborate with parents, staff and other agencies as required when drawing up targets
- Make sure targets are based on the SHANARI Well-being wheel and the targets are:
Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Timed
- Ensure the plan is a working document
- The plan is part of a broad and balanced curricular programme
- The plan is reviewed with parents, pupils and all relevant agencies

Liaison with Specialist Services

When appropriate Support for Learning staff will work alongside parents, community school staff and outside agencies such as Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Outreach Teachers and Health staff to ensure that all pupils with ASN needs are being met.

- Involve agencies as early as possible (At transition from primary if required)
- Keep accurate records.
- Allocate time to meet and talk.
- Ensure there is a shared purpose
- Ensure that pupils and parents are involved in decision-making

Staff Development

Staff in Support for Learning will contribute to in-service for school staff to update them on new issues, information and strategies used to support pupils with additional support needs.

- Develop expertise by attending training and in-service/ sharing information/seeking advice of colleagues
- Run in service training for staff as required
- Share expertise
- Work in partnership with staff
- Support staff in developing confidence in their own abilities
- Use examples of good practice from departments to build confidence in other staff members.

Pastoral Care

Support for Learning will work in conjunction with PSMT to ensure that pupil's curricular and emotional needs are being met. Support for Learning PT and teachers will carry a pastoral care caseload and monitor the educational and emotional well being of pupils with significant additional support needs

- Support pupils to ensure smooth transitions
- Provide curricular guidance and pastoral support for pupils
- Implement strategies to promote positive behaviour
- Provide support to promote pupil welfare
- Regular meetings with guidance staff

Working with Parents

Working with parents is an essential part of the department's aims. Parents are invited to participate in all aspects of decision-making. Parents are encouraged to work with Support for Learning through:

- ASN Transition Information Evening in April
- S1 settling in meetings in October
- Yearly reviews
- IEP target setting reviews
- Regular contact with parents by phone and email.
- Home school diary
- Departmental open door policy throughout the year and at parents Evenings

Transitions

All staff within the Support for Learning department are involved with transitions from P7 to S1 in line with East Renfrewshire Council All Change policy.

- Pupils with ASN identified by primary staff
- Close collaboration with primary staff
- SFL staff to work in P7 class for several sessions in May/June
- Transition meetings
- Additional visits and transition programme for identified pupils
- ASN Information Evening
- Staff issued with information about pupils with ASN
- Staff issued with strategies for ASN
- S1 review meeting in October

The Support for Learning Department are also involved with post school transitions. SFL staff and Pastoral Care teachers identify pupils who require post school planning. Create achievable transition plans and involve all appropriate agencies and partners in reviews.

Collaborate with Careers Scotland Adviser, Educational Psychologist, FE Colleges and DHT Support in ensuring that placement is appropriate and best fitted to the pupils' aspirations and abilities.

Assessment Arrangements

The Support for Learning Department will create assessment arrangements for pupils, where required, for both internal and external exams. PT SFL will work closely with SMT member responsible for SQA and chief invigilator. Support for Learning will interview individual pupils and collaborate with subject teachers to ensure that pupils use the most appropriate assessment arrangements. These arrangements can consist of a variety of supports such as additional time, access to ICT, reader and scribe, prompter, enlarged paper etc.

Internal Exams

- Class teachers to contact department as early as is possible, by email or written request to arrange support. Where appropriate pupil is withdrawn for assessment and given support required
- Class teachers to monitor appropriateness of support and liaise with SFL department to ensure that supports are meeting the pupils' needs.

External Exams

- Evidence collated for arrangements by class teacher and SFL staff
- Pupils interview and supports discussed
- Verification meetings with Educational Psychologist and DHT for SQA
- Letter sent to parents to confirm supports to be requested
- PT completes SQA additional support request
- Chief invigilator contacted
- Timetable of support issued to pupils and staff

Coordinated Support Plans (CSP)

Where appropriate the PT Pupil Support (Learning) may be responsible for the coordination of a CSP. The decision to investigate the opening of a CSP will be made by the Joint Support Team.

- Educational psychologist and PT to have initial discussion using East Renfrewshire Council CSP guidelines.
- Joint Support Team to discuss if planning meeting should take place
- PT to arrange planning meeting inviting relevant personnel including pupil, parents, health, social work and any other relevant parties
- At planning meeting East Renfrewshire Council's guidelines to be followed and decision to be made about opening of CSP
- If CSP to be opened PT to identify relevant personnel to be involved in CSP.
- Reviews of CSP to be arranged within time limits described in East Renfrewshire Council CSP guidelines.

The Role of the Pupil Support Assistant (PSA)

Pupil Support Assistants provide support for learning and teaching for pupils of all abilities and support needs under the direction of classroom teachers. They assist classroom teachers with practical tasks, preparing teaching materials and resources and relieving teachers of non-teaching duties. They also undertake administrative and supervisory duties on behalf of the class teacher and within the Pupil Support department. PSAs are literate and numerate, have good interpersonal skills and a particular ability to relate to children. They give physical assistance to pupils and undertake prescribed therapies where appropriate.

General:

Main duties in order of priority:

- Support for pupils in class;
- Supervision in the support base;
- Administrative/clerical work when required; and
- Other duties as may be required due to absence of other PSAs.

In Class:

In class, the class teacher and the PT Behaviour Support/ PT Support for Learning will agree the PSA's duties. Where support is provided as a result of a Pupil Support Referral bid then agreement about the PSA role will be clarified when any bid for support is accepted and written into the STINT plan.

This may include:

- Support for an individual pupil – helping them to stay on task; and
- Supporting pupils generally in class as the need arises.

If a PSA is allocated to a particular individual in class and that pupil is settled and on task, the assistant would normally support other pupils in the class as necessary. The PSA would use his or her own judgment for this.

Promoting independence is a key part of the PSA's role. Their job is to encourage pupils to gradually gain independence. PSAs are there to help pupils by:

- giving pupils strategies to help them;
- keeping them on task;
- reading and scribing where appropriate;
- supervising access to computers;
- assisting with note taking;
- assisting with study techniques;
- working in small groups or one to one in class;
- helping a pupil catch up with missed work;
- explaining points and repeating instructions given by the teacher;
- helping a pupil by getting around, going to the toilet, changing for PE;
- helping pupils working on the computer, carrying laptop for a pupil;
- preparing audio tapes, scribing work a pupil has taped;
- observing a pupil in class;
- supporting a pupil's behaviour;
- reporting back to a teacher on problems or successes;
- contributing to planning or review meetings about a young person;
- Help contribute to the nurturing environment of the Pupil Support Base;

- Contribute to team meetings about issues and/or concerns about pupils they work with;
- Evaluate support given to pupils – specifically, how a pupil behaves and engages with classwork as a consequence of PSA support;
- Any other task to support a pupil not mentioned above; and
- The PSA timetable will always be flexible to offer better support as needs arise.

A PSA should not be asked to:

- Teach any pupil or group of pupils element of their course work;
- Sit with a pupil in any corridor or public area who has been sent out to be disciplined;
- Supervise a whole class for any length of time; and
- Work with a pupil on a task which is not adequately differentiated to meet their needs.

Inspiring Confidence and Trust

Often pupils with additional support needs lack confidence and expect failure. PSAs are positive, fair and consistent in order to ensure that pupils become more confident and reach their full potential. This is done by:

- varying levels of support to meet the pupil's needs
- promoting independent learning
- having a clear understanding of the pupil's difficulties

Departmental Evaluation

The department evaluates its performance through the following measures:

- How Good is our School 3 – performance indicators
- Whole school self-evaluation procedures
- IEP/CSP reviews and other reviews with parents and pupils
- Parent feedback
- Pupil feedback