



From: The Head of Learning Support, Sarah Beynon

21 September 2023

Introduction to the Learning Support department

Dear Parents,

As the academic year begins, I wanted to introduce the Learning Support Department and explain our role and the work we do with students.

The Learning Support Department is based in its own building next to the Health Centre at Whitefield. It provides a pleasant environment in which we are able to work with students on a one to one or small group basis. There are currently three specialist teachers in the department: myself (Sarah Beynon), Hettie Preiss-Chapman and Vicky Palli-Evans; we are supported by a part-time administrator, Hayley Nolan.

Academic teachers are specialists in their areas and have primary responsibility for the learning in the subject they are teaching. When additional intervention is needed, we offer short-term interventions in a range of areas, including support with literacy and written work, study and revision skills and other support, often requested by subject teachers. This list is not exhaustive as our aim is to tailor support to each individual's needs. Not all students who come to us have an identified SEND and not all students with an identified SEND need support from us. As outlined in our SEND and Learning Support policy (available here <https://www.abingdon.org.uk/about/school-policies/>), students will be offered up to six lessons during an academic year, which are taught on a rotational timetable and are not charged for.

In addition to the support outlined above, all students who have been formally assessed and are on the SEND register are monitored closely as they progress through the school. Your child's profile will be updated with any new SEND information, and teachers will be able to access this via the school database. With this in mind, please ensure that you provide us with the most up-to-date information regarding the nature of your child's SEND, including their educational psychologist or other reports and any recommended access arrangements for exams. As this information is required by external examination boards, we are only able to permit exam access arrangements (such as extra time) if your child has been assessed by a fully qualified specialist within the time frame stipulated by the boards – that is, during or after Curriculum Year 9 (our 3rd year). If you think your child needs such an assessment, please contact me regarding the process that needs to be followed.

As part of our whole year group monitoring, all of the 1st and 3rd Year will take screening tests during Michaelmas Term. This will happen in the next few weeks and is part of our baseline testing. There is nothing your child can do to prepare for this and there is no need for them to be concerned about it. Some students will be contacted afterwards and offered follow up appointments; you will be contacted separately if this applies to your child.

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I hope that this letter gives you a good understanding of the scope and nature of Learning Support at Abingdon. I have already written directly to parents of new joiners who have an identified SEND; if this is your child and you have not heard from me, please get in touch. Furthermore, if you have any questions or would like to discuss our role further, do please feel free to contact me - email is the best way, at least initially.

Best regards,

Sarah Beynon (Mrs)
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Head of Learning Support