



**BEDFORD
GIRLS'
SCHOOL**

Learning Support Policy

2023-24

Date reviewed: 01/08/23

Date of next review: 01/09/24

Reviewed by: Head of Learning Support / Assistant Head (Assessment and Pupil Progress)

Introduction

All students at BGS should have meaningful and equal access to the curriculum. We offer an inclusive education responding positively to each student's unique learning profile including students who require learning support.

Learning Support Needs at Bedford Girls' School:

- Children have learning support needs if they have a learning requirement or special educational need, which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Students with these needs are identified as early as possible.
- All appropriate staff are provided with a Google document detailing the special educational provision and/or appropriate levels of support and differentiation and these are put in place at the earliest opportunity. There is also a SEN flag in the school management information system, iSAMS, to indicate that a student has a level of need.

Student Tracking:

- Our Learning Support team work closely with the Challenge and Extend Coordinator to identify those students who require support in one area but may well be excelling in others (see 'Challenge and Extend Policy'). Thus, we ensure that these students' experiences at the school are as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.
- We are sensitive and flexible in our approach and methods when considering both their academic and pastoral needs. We keep up to date with developments in the Learning Support sector and ensure we fulfil the requirements of relevant legislation such as the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEN and Disability Code of Practice, 0-25 years 2015 and the Equality Act 2010.

Admissions:

- As outlined in our Admissions Policy we consider an individual's learning needs during the application process. Parents must alert us to any disability, special educational need or medical condition in the application form. We will then contact parents to ensure we address the needs their daughter may have in the assessments.
- During the assessments, the Head of Learning Support will oversee these arrangements.
- Once a student is accepted into the school, and provided that she can benefit from the type of education we offer, the school will work with the family to ensure that any particular learning needs are met.
- As Bedford Girls' School is an academically selective school, all the students we accept into the school have demonstrated their ability to cope successfully with the anticipated

requirements of this academic curriculum and the pace of the work. The School will comply with its obligations under the Equality Act and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2010.

Examinations:

- We monitor students who require special provision to determine whether or not it is appropriate to apply for access arrangements in external examinations.

Expectations for all students:

- All students, whatever their specific learning requirements, can expect support and guidance to enable them to achieve their best both within the classroom and beyond it. We will do so by continuing to provide a caring and challenging environment for the academic and personal development of students from ages 7 to 18.
- Bedford Girls' School focuses exclusively on the needs of students, reflecting our ongoing commitment to single-sex education, to encouraging each individual student to pursue the highest academic and personal goals of which she is capable in order to prepare her for tomorrow's world.

Identification

The School will do all that is reasonable to detect and deal appropriately with a learning difficulty which is considered to be a "special educational need". The School staff are not, however, qualified to make a diagnosis of conditions such as those commonly referred to as dyslexia, or of other learning difficulties.

The screening tests available to schools are indicative only: they are not infallible. The Parents will be notified if a screening test indicates that the Pupil may have a learning difficulty. A formal external assessment can be arranged by the School at the Parents' expense or by the Parents themselves.

We expect staff to be aware and proactive rather than simply reactive with regard to the identification of students who may need learning support

Relevant guidance about individual students and strategies, which will help support them in their learning, is provided for staff on the school intranet. All Bedford Girls' School students have a range of abilities and talents and it is vital to us that we help the students to recognise this and to build on and develop their strengths.

Junior School

- All students in the Junior School undertake CATs (Cognitive Assessment Tests) upon admission to the Junior School and in Years 4 and 6.
- Where there is a disparity in their scores, students are closely monitored to aid in the assessment of learning needs. Previous school information is also considered (including SEND and EHCP information).
- It is expected that all Junior School staff be aware and proactive with regard to the identification of students who may need learning support.
- If a teacher has a concern about an individual student, they report this to the Deputy Head of the Junior School and invite the school's Learning Support Mentor in to observe pupils further. Specific targets may be set, an ILP written or if necessary a referral to the Learning Support Team.

- The Head of Learning Support receives any observational notes and will investigate further as necessary.

Senior School

- All students in Year 7 undertake a MidYIS test which measures, as far as possible, ability and aptitude for learning. It occurs within Computer Science lessons at the start of the Autumn Term. Students who join in Year 8 or 9 will undertake the MidYIS test in Year 9, students who join in Year 10 will complete the YELLIS assessment upon joining the school. Students who join the Sixth Form will complete the ALiS assessment with the whole year group in September.
- Results and findings are analysed by the Head of Learning Support, along with any information from previous schools (including SEND and EHCP information) and a programme of tracking and monitoring of individuals is established.
- Students who join the school after this are assessed on an individual basis.
- Students who have social, emotional or mental health issues are identified by the Pastoral team and overseen by the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- If a teacher has a concern about an individual student, they report this to the Head of Learning Support, providing specific evidence, and he will investigate, looking at the student's overall progress and consulting with her other teachers as necessary.
- The Head, Assistant Head and Heads of Year meet every term to look at the progress of all students in every year group.
- Referrals are made to the Head of Learning Support following these meetings for follow up investigations and interventions.

Intervention

A key indicator of our inclusion is that our Head of Learning Support is not solely responsible for students who need learning support. Instead, there is collaborative planning between all teachers to ensure progression along the learning continuum as follows:

- Staff respond in a flexible way to individual learning needs, including the needs of those who are learning a language other than their first language or have a learning support requirement.
- Within the classroom, the staff employ differentiation strategies to ensure that, as far as possible,
 - all students are given work which is appropriate to them,
 - all receive the support they need to achieve appropriately and to feel good about their achievements, and
 - that the most- able are set suitable challenges and are encouraged to aim high.

Junior School

- Students are supported through targeted work with the class teacher, the Learning Support Mentor or with a Teaching Assistant.
- Students with specific needs will have an ILP (Individual Learning Plan) which is co-constructed by students, the class teacher and the Learning Support Mentor.
- Parents are also invited in to discuss the ILP and to support from home.

Senior School

- Setting is used to group students by ability in Mathematics from Year 8, and there is an element of streaming in Biology, Chemistry and Physics at Key Stage Four.
- Students in Years 7 to 11 may be given extra staff support on an individual basis if they experience significant organisational, motivational or academic difficulties. Sessions will occur on a regular basis, which may or may not be in timetabled lessons.
- Subject teachers run sessions for students who may be experiencing specific difficulties within their subject or run sessions to help them with their revision; these include weekly Maths Clinics and Science workshops.
- Students with specific learning difficulties and who require additional support will have access to one-one support with a member of the Learning Support department.
- Support will be in the form of one to one sessions aiming to achieve the goal of removing any barriers to learning they are facing as a result of their identified need.
- The Learning Support department will also advise and liaise with classroom teachers to ensure they are aware of appropriate strategies to be employed in the classroom.
- Students with specific medical conditions or social, emotional or mental health issues, which might affect their learning, also receive support to ensure that they are comfortable, secure and successful within school. This can include mentoring with a trusted adult, counselling within the school or referral to an outside agency.

Tracking and Monitoring

The Head of Learning Support, and Deputy Head of the Junior School, keep a record of all of the students receiving targeted support; this is updated regularly and includes information about the specific support and interventions for each student. At key reporting times every term the progress of each student is looked at across all subjects and the intervention is reviewed.

Junior School

- The Learning Support Record is continuously updated by class teachers and a member of the Learning Support department, with information about the support and interventions in place for each student.
- The ILPs are reviewed termly to assess their impact on student progress and both students and parents are involved in reflecting on progress with learning.

Senior School

- Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress) and Heads of Year meet at the time of Progress Reviews in October, half termly reports each term, and internal examination sessions in January and June. The Head is apprised of the outcome of these meetings.
- In these meetings the progress of every student is tracked – information is held centrally in the tracking and monitoring folders and discussed with the Head of Learning Support to ensure that appropriate measures are put into place for students.
- Following the internal mock and end of year examinations, a member of the Learning Support department, Assistant Head and the Pastoral team review the academic progress of students on the learning support lists, measuring their attainment against MidYIS or ALIS expectations.
- The Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress) and the Head of Learning Support meet weekly to discuss the progress of individual students.

- Updates from teaching staff will be requested periodically about the work and progress of individual students and the School will liaise with parents as appropriate.
- Lists of students who are being supported and monitored are circulated to teachers.
- The Deputy Head (Pastoral) oversees the monitoring of students with social, emotional or mental health needs, liaising with teachers as appropriate and looking at the academic progress of the students every term.

Record Keeping

- Records are kept within school of students who
 - need specific learning support (such as an Educational Psychologist's report),
 - those for whom testing has revealed profiles consistent with a specific need, and
 - students who have received learning support during their time at the school.
- These records may comprise
 - referral details,
 - copies of original tests,
 - notes pertaining to outcome,
 - copies of reports from outside agencies,
 - correspondence relating to the specific need and
 - brief details of the time spent with the individual student.
- Information is stored digitally and is available to teaching staff so that they are aware of the specific needs of the students they teach and can offer them appropriate guidance.

Communication with Parents

- All parents are informed about the progress of their daughters and consulted about the specific needs of the students through the system of Parents' Evenings (at least one a year for each age group) and progress reviews or formal written reports (half termly depending on the age group).
- However, parents are encouraged to contact the school at any time, should they have specific questions or concerns.
- The Form Tutor, Pastoral officer, Heads of Years, Head of Learning Support, Learning Support Teacher, School Nurses, Deputy Head or Headmistress may be the point of contact, depending on the nature and the seriousness of the concern.
- Parental contact will be appropriately redirected if necessary.
- Confidentiality will be respected, and, as always, the welfare of the individual student will be the focus of any action taken.

Internal Referral Process

- When a student has been referred to the Head of Learning Support by a member of the teaching staff, for a first visit, parents will be contacted by the Head of Learning Support to make them aware of their daughter's proposed appointment with him and to discuss briefly the reasons for the referral.
- Head of Year or Head of Junior School will be kept informed of the proposal to make all such communications with parents in order that the Head of Learning Support can be fully aware of the particular circumstances of each student before making the call.
- Following the appointment, information to parents and the results of any testing will be made freely available to parents.

- The Head of Learning Support will consult parents, teaching staff and form staff with regard to any further steps to be taken in response to the findings of the testing.
- Should reports from outside agencies form part of the decision making for Access Arrangements, he will liaise with the parents and with the appropriate professionals.
- The Head of Learning support will inform and discuss the referrals with the Assistant Head - Student Progress and Tracking.

Examination Access Reports

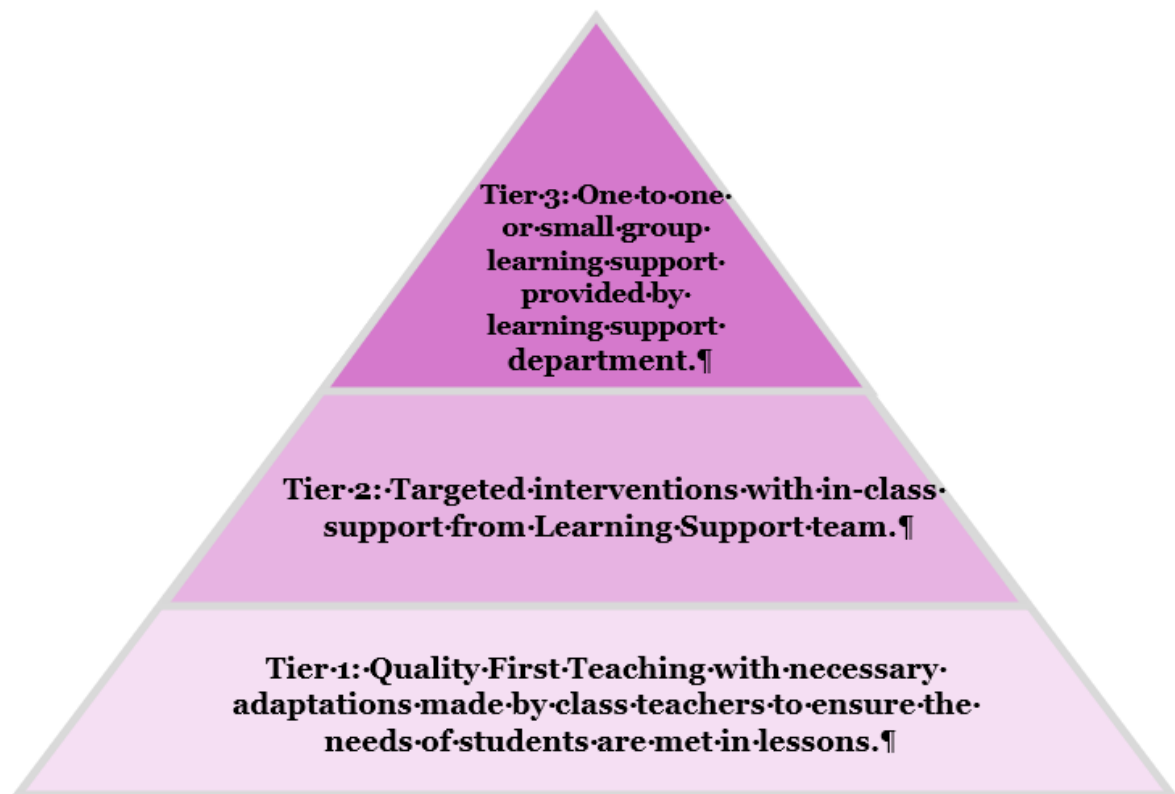
- It is made clear on SEN school reports that any additional private educational assessments are solely a decision for parents to make but with regard to examination access arrangement applications the school can only accept private assessment reports from assessors that meet the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations.
- These can be found paragraph 7.3.4 of the [JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments guidance](#).
- Prior to any further assessment being arranged, parents are required to contact the Head of Learning Support, to ensure that any assessments are valid and can be accepted for examination access arrangements applications.

Feedback

- The Head of Learning Support is available at all Senior School Parents' Evenings and meets with the parents and the students he oversees and supports in order to provide feedback from support sessions.
- The member of the learning support department who is supporting the individual student will communicate with the parents of students receiving such support, informing them of the support being provided, the progress of the student in these sessions and when the sessions are completed.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Learning Support provision within the school operates on a tiered system of need:



The Role of the Teacher

Teachers are responsible for the progress and development of all the students in their classes. High quality inclusive teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who have Learning Support needs. Teachers are expected to deliver lessons in line with the Quality First Teaching guidance summarised below. Additional interventions and provision are used to ensure the teacher has the support to meet the needs of all the students in their class.

The key characteristics of quality first teaching can be summarised as:

- Highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives;
- High demands of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning;
- High levels of interaction for all pupils;
- Appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining;
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk both individually and in groups;
- An expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently;
- Regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils

Source: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/8447/7/00844-2008DOM-EN_Redacted.pdf

The teachers constantly monitor the progress and well-being of the students and their part in the identification and referral process is significant. This monitoring is embedded in their daily practice. If they consider that a student may have learning support needs of any sort, they refer the student with a description of their concern to our Head of Learning Support. If they think that a student may have a social, emotional or mental health need, they refer the individual to the appropriate member of the pastoral team. Furthermore, teachers have access to the learning support register, as well as

the SEN indicators flags in the iSAMS registers and the recommendations and strategies for all students. They will take this into account when planning classroom activities. The referral system is detailed in [appendix 1](#).

The Role of the Head of Learning Support

The Head of Learning Support works full time in school. The role includes:

- liaising with staff (Junior School, Senior School, IB PYP and DP Coordinators and the Senior Leadership Team),
- seeing students
- contacting representatives of outside agencies as required
- working closely with the Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress) so that arrangements for seeing students and alerting appropriate staff proceed smoothly.
- screening students for specific learning difficulties,
- documenting findings, notifying staff and communicating with parents and, as appropriate, with outside agencies.
- attending training courses/continuing to update professional knowledge
- attending regular update meetings to ensure awareness of changes to JCQ/IB/CIE Edexcel International rules on access arrangements.
- putting in place any strategies necessary to comply with the latest SEN framework legislation (social, mental, emotional and health) to remove any barriers to learning.
- liaising with the Examinations Manager providing the evidence required to apply for access arrangements and advising how the needs of the student can reasonably be met within different assessment situations.
- liaising with Heads of Department regarding the access arrangements appropriate in assessments relating to their subjects, including in controlled assessment tasks.
- working with appropriate outside agencies involved in supporting students with more complex needs to ensure that they can fully access the curriculum and working to remove any barriers to learning they might be facing.
- co-ordinating the support for students with Education, Health and Care Plans and managing the annual review process.

The Role of the Learning Support Teacher

- The Learning Support Teacher works with the Head of Learning Support and the wider student support team to help students access the curriculum.
- They work with students on a one-to-one and group basis to support them with their curriculum requirements and to develop study skills, and collaborate with teaching staff to identify and implement strategies and practices that remove any barriers to learning a student's additional needs may present.
- The Learning Support Teacher will also work with the Head of Learning Support to provide training and education for students, teachers and parents that develops awareness and understanding of neurodiversity and SEND in the school community and beyond.

The Role of the Learning Support Mentor

- The Learning support mentor works with the Head of Learning Support and the Learning Support Teacher to assist students in a group or one-to-one basis.
- The Learning support mentor provides support, motivation and guidance to help students overcome obstacles to their learning. These could include learning difficulties, family issues, mental health problems or a lack of confidence in a subject.
- The responsibilities of the Learning support mentor will include:
 - actively listening to students' concerns
 - discussing ways and forming plans to address these
 - providing support, advice and guidance tailored to each student's situation
 - liaising with teachers, social workers and educational psychologists and making referrals if needed
 - speaking with parents/carers about strategies to deal with each child's situation

The Role of the Learning Support Teaching Assistant

- The Learning Support teaching assistant works with the Head of Learning Support, to support individual students with special educational needs through the academic, emotional, social and personal elements of school life.
- The responsibilities of a Learning Support teaching assistant may include:
 - Motivating students and supporting and encouraging pupils in their schoolwork.
 - Encouraging children to communicate.
 - Helping students to understand instructions.
 - Helping students who need extra support to complete tasks.
 - Supporting students during social activities, outings, and sports events.
 - Helping students prepare for activities, such as Physical Education (PE).
 - Following a child's EHCP.

The Role of the School Nurses

The health and safety of each individual student is of prime importance to us. The school nurses work closely with form and subject staff in the Junior and Senior Schools, including Heads of Years, the Head of Learning Support and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that any medical, social, emotional and mental health needs of Bedford Girls' School students that impinge on their learning are taken into account and that students are supported and feel secure within the school environment.

The role of the Nurses includes:

- regularly seeing students who have specific health needs or concerns,
- keeping accurate records
- communicating with staff and parents as required.
- monitoring the progress of any students with recognised medical conditions which might impact on their performance in school or general well-being.

In the Senior School the Deputy Head (Pastoral) receives regular updates at weekly RAG meetings from the School Nurses to discuss any concerns about students and for strategic planning. Information is shared with the Head as appropriate. The Head of the Junior School meets with Heads of Year fortnightly to discuss any concerns relating to specific students and possible interventions or support which needs to be implemented.

The school Counsellor meets with students requiring additional counselling support regularly

The Role of the Heads of Years, Form Staff and other Pastoral Staff

- Heads of Years oversee the pastoral work of their teams of Form Tutors who have responsibility for the day to day care and well-being of each individual student within the tutor group.
- Whenever concerns arise, with regard to any specific learning, medical, social, emotional or mental health need, form tutors work with the Heads of Years and members of the Pastoral Team to ensure that the required support is offered, incidents are thoroughly documented and other staff and parents are notified as appropriate.
- The welfare of the individual student is always the focus of any action taken.
- The Heads of Years have an overview of the students within their stages who need any additional support. In the Junior School, the Head of the Junior School and class teachers have this overview.
- As part of our ongoing monitoring we check that students are coping successfully with their peers, as noted in KCSIE, that SEND students can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying.

Junior School

- The Deputy Head of the Junior School meets regularly with the Head of Learning Support to discuss concerns raised by teachers or parents about individual students.
- The Deputy Head of the Junior School liaises with class teachers during the process of writing and reviewing the ILP.
- The Head of Junior School tracks the progress of students who are on the Learning Support list.

Senior School

- The Heads of Years take on the responsibility for liaising with Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress), the Head of Learning Support and the Examinations Manager.
- Form tutors are aware of any SEND students in their form and the Head of Learning Support liaises with them to ensure that they have a full understanding of a student's individual needs.

The Role of the Examinations Department

Access Arrangements

- We monitor students who require special provision to determine whether or not it is appropriate to apply for access arrangements in external examinations.

- In the Summer Term of Year 9, those students with specific needs will be reviewed so that arrangements can be clearly in place in the Autumn Term for the start of their GCSE courses in Year 10.
- If a student is eligible for an access arrangement, it is normally applied for at the start of the GCSE or GCE course and may be applicable to controlled assessment and coursework tasks.
- When applying for access arrangements for a student, appropriate evidence of provision and need is held on file in the Examinations office with a copy of the JCQ Fair Processing Notice signed by the candidate.
- Access arrangements in examinations and assessments, such as extra time or rest breaks, are sometimes arranged for students with medical conditions or social, emotional or mental health issues. These should ideally be submitted in line with the JCQ Access Arrangements date; 24th May 2023.

Private Assessors

- If a parent chooses for their daughter to undertake a private assessment with an assessor who does not work for the school, the parent is required to contact the Head of Learning Support to ensure that any assessments are valid and can be accepted for examination access arrangements.
- If students have access arrangements which have resulted from an assessment with a private assessor, the private assessor must meet the qualification requirements set out in paragraph 7.3.4 of the [JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments guidance](#).
- Private assessors must contact the school in advance of the assessment being carried out. The private assessor must also complete and submit a Form 8 to the school before assessing the candidate in line with paragraph 7.3.5 and 7.3.6 of the guidance.

International Baccalaureate

- The IB Diploma Program has well-established support mechanisms for assessment requirements.
- For IB students, access arrangements are requested on IBIS and facilitated by the IB Coordinator, Head of Learning support and Examinations Manager.

Internal Examinations

- Access Arrangements for students are therefore in place for internal examinations in Years 10 – U6 and for a few individual cases in younger years so that the students concerned are able to develop their strategies for using these Access Arrangements.
- Liaison between the Heads of Years, the Heads of Departments, the Head of Learning Support, the Deputy Head (Pastoral), the Examinations Manager and the Senior Leadership Team takes place as required.

The Examinations Manager

- The Examination Manager works closely with the Head of Learning Support to ensure that students with learning support needs are effectively and efficiently supported throughout their GCSE/GCE/IBDP courses and in the examination periods.
- Access arrangements are applied for by the Examinations Manager once all the evidence is collected and signed off by the Head of Learning Support.
- The Head of Learning Support advises the Examinations Manager of any change in circumstance, which may affect a candidate's eligibility for access arrangements.

- The Examinations Manager puts in place the detail of the arrangements needed for written papers.

SLT Roles

Assistant Head – Assessment and Student Progress

- The Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress) meets weekly with the Head of Learning Support to discuss the progress of students receiving support and those being recommended for further screening, providing information from baseline and internal assessments.
- The progress the students are making is reviewed regularly and at the end of each year, if required, their plans are modified. Their progress is closely monitored and parents are kept informed.
- The Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress) liaises closely with the Head of Learning Support regarding specific learning needs, which are newly diagnosed, and the ongoing provision for students whose particular needs have already been recognised.

Others

- The **Headmistress** meets with all Assistant Heads and the Head of the Junior School weekly or fortnightly so that she has an overview of the students' welfare and particular needs, learning and medical, social, emotional or mental health, across the whole school.
- The **Deputy Head (Pastoral)** co-ordinates the pastoral provision across the Senior School, working closely with the Heads of Years.
- The **Head of the Junior School** fulfils the role of student tracking in the Junior School.
- The **Assistant Head (Experiential Learning)** liaises with Heads of House and those running co-curricular activities to ensure full support of individuals and may liaise with the Learning Support Department in relation to school trips as appropriate.

Support for Staff

- Reminders are given to staff about individual students' needs periodically throughout the year, at the start of each term, before Parents' Evenings and at report writing time.
- In addition to ongoing liaison with the Head of Learning Support, staff are supported as they address the particular learning needs of individuals and groups of students, for example through the programme of in-service training.

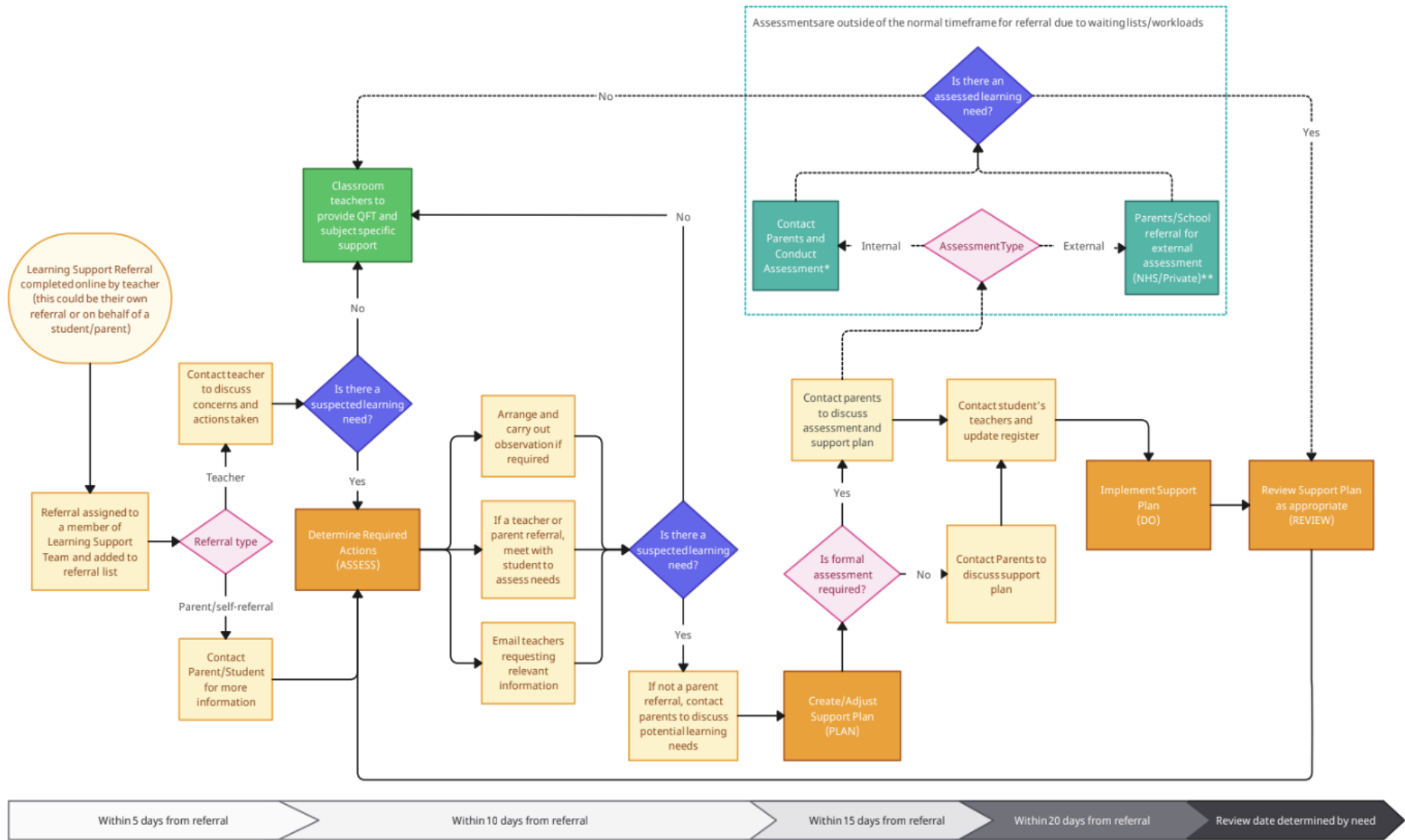
See also the School's

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

Disability Accessibility Plan

Admissions Policy

EAL Policy



Appendix 1: Learning Support Referral