

# Melville-Knox Christian School

## Additional Support for Learning Policy

---



### 1. Principles

The Bible teaches us that each individual is created in the image of God and is of equal value in God's eyes. Each has a gift or contribution to make in this world and each are expected to make use of the gifts God has given them.

It is the policy of Melville-Knox Christian School that whenever possible, and when adequate help is available, the school will accommodate children from various spectra of learning abilities, including children diagnosed with dyslexia and autism and also children with exceptional capabilities in one or more subjects.

In a class there will be children that are gifted or will take up giftings that will differ in character and scope. As children have different types of gifting they will have different styles of learning. Classes are not to be taught as if all children were all the same, nor should children with barriers to learning be ignored, as each has their own special role.

At Melville-Knox Christian School we aim to:

- value each pupil's gifting and role in the school.
- support teaching so that each child has work presented to them in a way that provides the support that individual children may need to address any barriers to learning.
- encourage children to achieve their potential.
- enable each pupil to acknowledge their achievement.
- provide both universal and targeted support

Universal support starts with the ethos, climate and relationships within every learning environment. This is the responsibility of all teachers at Melville-Knox. An environment which is caring, inclusive, fair and focused on delivering learning to meet individual needs will encourage all children and young people to strive to meet their learning potential. Planned opportunities for achievement which focus on the learning and progress made through activities across the full range of contexts and settings in which the curriculum is experienced also contribute to the universal aspect of support. In addition, all pupils should have opportunities to discuss their learning and development with their class teacher.

In addition, children can benefit from additional or targeted support, tailored to their individual circumstances. This could be at any point of their learning journey or throughout the journey. Barriers to learning may arise from specific learning difficulties, disability, social, emotional or behavioural needs, bereavement or family issues. Additional support may also be required to ensure progress in learning for the gifted and able, looked after children, asylum seekers and those for

whom English is not a first language. This 'targeted' support will usually, but not exclusively, be delivered by staff or other professionals with additional training and expertise.

### **3. Procedure**

In the Application form, parents are asked to list any barriers to learning they are aware of in the children they are wishing to enrol in the school. Teachers will discuss any application(s) indicating barriers to learning with parents at the application interview and will then make a decision as to whether adequate resources are available in order to enrol the child in the school in accordance with the school's Admissions Policy. If the decision is made to enrol the pupil, school staff will make provisions for the child's additional support needs and detail them in the learning support file for that pupil. All teachers and Classroom Assistants to be involved in the teaching of the pupil will be informed of the additional support needed.

In some cases, if after the application and interview there is uncertainty about whether the school has adequate resources to meet a particular child's additional support needs, a conditional placement may be offered. During this time, teachers will assess the child's needs and whether the school is able to provide the support needed. In such instances, the timescale of the conditional placement and the notification of the outcome will be communicated to the child's parents.

In some cases, a child's additional support needs may not be identified until after enrolment. Class teachers who identify the continuing need for additional help in any of their pupils (this might be a learning, health or disability or social or emotional need), will report it to the Head Teacher who will discuss the case with the school management. The school will then discuss any additional support needs with the parents and children. Professional help will be sought where appropriate for diagnosis and additional support. Since a professional diagnosis may take some time to obtain, teachers will do their best to support children with additional support needs and seek appropriate training with the support of the school management while waiting for professional diagnosis and advice.

Class teachers will report to the Head Teacher regarding the progress of individual pupils who receive learning support. The situation of individual pupils will be assessed regularly and any additional needs and challenges addressed, as appropriate, and recorded in their learning support file. The class teacher will give regular feedback to the parents, and their views and concerns will be noted and reported to the Head Teacher, if deemed necessary, for further discussion.

Similarly, children who are more able for any one subject, or for a range of subjects, are to be supported in their learning, by giving them appropriately challenging tasks. Exceptional cases will be discussed at the Management Committee, and similarly the help of Classroom Assistants will be enlisted to help the child in question to reach their full potential in all subjects. Any formalised plans for more able children will be filed in their individual assessment files.

Additional support needs will be reviewed regularly, on a termly basis. During the review process, parent and learner views will be sought about how the support currently in place is working and what can be done to improve that support.

### **4. Resources and Support**

#### **A. The Class Teacher**

The class teacher is the first line of learning support to pupils in their class. There is much that can be done within the class to assist those with learning support needs beside the help of Classroom Assistants. This can be by:

- giving differentiated work
- support through group collaborative learning
- extra time for tasks
- extra support materials (e.g. concrete materials in maths)

### **B. Classroom Assistants**

Most of the learning support at Melville-Knox Christian School is drawn from volunteers and parents who are not paid employees of the school. Melville-Knox Christian School calls these individuals who support the class teacher, "Classroom Assistants". In order to be coherent and beneficial to the overall learning in the school, the Classroom Assistants will go through training in the school's Child Protection and Health and Safety policies and will be given Guidance Notes for Classroom Assistants. Additionally, Classroom Assistants will have to go through the Disclosure Checks.

While basic training is provided to volunteer Classroom Assistants, most volunteers at Melville-Knox will not have adequate training or experience to manage complex or challenging additional support needs. Therefore, in cases in which regular one-to-one support is required owing to social and emotional barriers resulting in challenging behaviour, it is unlikely the school will have the resources to manage such additional support needs without hiring additional qualified support staff. As a small school, charging low fees to make it open to as many as possible, maintained by sacrificial charitable giving, there are practical limits to the extent to which such staff can reasonably be hired by the school.

### **C. Parents**

When pupils need extra support in their learning, parents will often be able to back this up at home. In some cases, additional work at home may not be appropriate - for instance many children with dyslexia have to work so hard to keep up in school that they need rest at home to be able to tackle the next day at school.

Parents' help and inclusion in the support for their children should be sought early, as soon as a need is identified, rather than as a last option, or left only for parents' evening consultation.

Parents can give help with such things as:

- learning letters, phonetics, tables and other memory tasks
- extra reading
- encouragement
- co-ordination exercises

In cases of exceptionally gifted pupils, parents' help will also be sought in order to make a co-ordinated effort in bringing the best out of the child in question, especially if that child receives more work than others as home work.

### **D. Space**

While additional support will usually be offered within the classroom, pupils may perform class work in another area or classroom to provide a quiet setting with few distractions or to enable them to make more noise without distracting others.

This type of support can only be provided if there is a volunteer Classroom Assistant available to help and the additional space available.

As support for learning should ideally be delivered within the classroom, a child will only work in another area or classroom in situations in which they are unable to work without distracting others or are very unsettled. The aim will always be for the child to return to the classroom as soon as it is feasible.

### **E. Training**

Class Teachers and Classroom Assistants will be encouraged to engage in training that will enable them to support the additional support needs of the pupils under their care. Support will be provided by the Head Teacher, the School Management Committee and the School Board.