

# St. Mary's College



## Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy 2024/2025

Reviewed by: S. Townsley – September 2024

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## 1. Statement of Intent

St Mary's College believes all pupils are entitled to an education that enables them to achieve their best, become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and make a successful transition into adulthood.

In compliance with the Equality Act 2010, St Mary's College does not discriminate on the grounds of disability and is committed to giving all students the opportunity to achieve the highest standards through a curriculum which combines breadth and balance with respect for individual talents and a caring environment in which to flourish.

We welcome all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who will take advantage of the opportunities we can offer, providing we can support the individual needs of the student.

Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of this policy, a pupil is defined as having SEND if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age.
- A disability or health condition that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities used by peers of the same age in mainstream settings.
- Special educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream settings.

As a selective setting, every child applying for a place at St Mary's College, will be required to complete a series of entrance assessments before the offer of a place can be made. Parents/Carers of candidates who know in advance of the entrance examinations their child has SEND, or is receiving additional learning support, must inform the college and provide the relevant documentation.

This policy outlines the framework the college will use in meeting its duties and obligation in providing access to a high-quality education for students with SEND at St Mary's College.

Through the implementation of this policy, St Mary's College aims to promote equal opportunities for students with SEND and provide them with access to an independent Catholic education with individual challenge towards holistic and balanced development, service and achievement for life and beyond.

## 2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Local Government Act 1974
- Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986
- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Health and Care Act 2022
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (amendment) Regulations 2024

This policy has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2015) 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Data Protection Policy

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary and Rights to Review Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Accessibility Policy

### **3. Identifying SEND**

The college recognises that early identification and effective provision improves long-term outcomes for students with SEND. On entry to St Mary's College, students have the option of completing an online dyslexia screening assessment. This and other data is used to understand the learning profile of each student.

Students with pre-existing SEND should declare this during the application process to ensure St Mary's College has the relevant resources to meet the needs of the child.

All members of staff have access to the specific needs of those students listed in the Learning Support register, including those with SEND and these students are identified on the SIMS data system used by the college. This allows staff to consider the needs of the students they are working with in their classrooms.

Individual support plans in the form of Pupil Profiles can be accessed by all staff through the SIMS system. Notifications and updates are shared by the SENCo through regular written and verbal communications with staff.

Classroom teachers will conduct regular progress assessments for all pupils, with the aim of identifying pupils who are making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

'Less than expected progress' will be characterised by progress which:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.
- Does not match or better the pupil's previous rate of progress.
- Fails to close or even widens the attainment gap between them and their peers.

The school plans, manages and reviews SEND provision across the following four broad areas of need:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs

#### **4. Objectives**

Every school is required to identify and address the SEND of the students they support.

Through the implementation of this policy, St Mary's College will:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure pupils with SEND have the support they need to access the college's broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensure pupils with SEND have the opportunity to engage in the activities of the college alongside their peers.
- Promote disability equality and equality of opportunity, fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled pupils.
- Make reasonable adjustments, to ensure disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
- Designate a teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEND provision, i.e. the SENCO.
- Communicate with parents/carers about the special educational provision for their child.
- Review, prepare and publish important information about the school and its implementation of relevant SEND policies, including:
  - Information about the admission arrangements for pupils with SEND.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

The **governing board** will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently across the college.
- Ensuring the college meets its duties in relation to supporting pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the college.
- Appointing an individual governor or sub-committee to oversee the college's arrangements for SEND.

The **Principal** is responsible for ensuring the college offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with high quality teaching and a positive and enriching educational experience of for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

In enacting this policy, the principal will:

- Ensure the college holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with SEND.
- Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and learn effectively.
- Ensure those who are teaching or working with pupils with SEND are aware of their needs and have arrangements in place to meet them.
- Ensure teachers monitor and review pupils' progress during the academic year.
- Cooperate with the LA during annual EHC plan reviews.
- Ensure the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions.
- Provide the SENCO with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Ensure teachers understand the strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils.
- Ensure teachers have an established understanding of different types of SEND.
- Ensure the SENCO is provided with opportunities for training.
- Ensure that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the college do not directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with SEND.

The **SENCO** will be responsible for:

- Collaborating with the governing board, Principal and SLT, to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- Working with the relevant governors and the Principal to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.

- The day-to-day operation and implementation of the SEND policy.
- Coordinating the specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND, including those with EHC plans.
- Liaising with the relevant, designated teachers where LAC have SEND.
- Liaising with the parents of pupils with SEND.
- Liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies, as required.
- Being a key point of contact for external agencies, especially the LA and LA support services.
- Liaising with the potential future providers of education to ensure that pupils and their parents are informed about the options, and a smooth transition is planned.
- Drawing up a one-page profile of a pupil with SEND.
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues and working closely with staff members, parents and other agencies.
- Ensuring that the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up-to-date, in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.
- Participating in training and CPD opportunities
- Providing training to relevant class teachers.
- Supporting teachers in the further assessment of a pupil's particular strengths and weaknesses, and advising on effective implementation of support.

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** will be responsible for:

- Liaising with the Principal to inform them of any issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations regarding pupils with SEND.
- Liaising with the relevant staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare, including online and digital safety regarding pupils with SEND.
- Liaising with the SENCO where appropriate regarding safeguarding concerns for a pupil with SEND.
- Promoting supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promote the welfare of pupils with SEND, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances



**Teachers** will be responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for pupils with SEND, in collaboration with parents, the SENCO and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and aiming to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.
- Ensuring every pupil with SEND has access to the curriculum.
- Being accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.
- Being aware of the needs, and support provided to any pupils with SEND they are working with.
- Understanding and implementing strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils with the support of the SENCO.

## **6. Safeguarding**

The college recognises that evidence shows pupils with SEND are at a greater risk of abuse and maltreatment, so will ensure that staff are aware that pupils with SEND:

- Have the potential to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying.
- May face additional risks online, e.g. from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation.
- Are at greater risk of abuse, including child-on-child abuse, neglect, and sexual violence and harassment.

The college recognises that there are additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of pupils. These barriers include, but are not limited to:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's condition without further exploration.
- These pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
- The potential for pupils with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

The headteacher and governing board will ensure the college's Safeguarding Policy reflects the fact that these additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse.

Care will be taken by all staff, particularly those who work closely with pupils with SEND, to notice any changes behaviour or mood, or any injuries, and these indicators will be investigated by the DSL in collaboration with the SENCO.

## **7. Children with specific circumstances**

### **Looked After Children (LAC)**

Pupils at the college who are being accommodated, or who have been taken into care, by the LA are legally defined as being 'looked after' by the LA.

The school has a designated member of staff for coordinating the support for LAC.

Where that role is carried out by a person other than the SENCO, designated teachers will work closely with the SENCO to ensure that the implications of a child being both looked after and having SEND are fully understood by relevant school staff.

## **8. SEND Support**

The college is aware of its duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and recognise that high quality teaching, which is differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND.

Teachers at the college will:

- Set high expectations for every pupil.
- Plan stretching work for pupils whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard.
- Plan lessons for pupils who have low levels of prior attainment or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious.
- Plan lessons to reduce barriers to every pupil achieving.
- Be responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

Decisions on special educational provision for pupils will be based upon:

- Discussions between the teacher and SENCO.
- Analysis of the pupil's progress – using internal formative and summative assessments, alongside national data and expectations of progress.
- Discussion with the pupil and their parent.

Once a pupil with SEND has been identified, the college will employ a graduated approach to meet the pupil's needs by:

- Establishing the pupil's needs.
- Planning the interventions and support required
- Implementing the interventions, with the support of the SENCO.
- Reviewing the success of the interventions and making amendments

The college adopts a graduated response in order to help pupils with SEND and recognises there is a continuum of special educational needs, with some students requiring more support than others.

Where higher levels of need are identified, the college will access specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.

Where, despite the college having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet needs of a student, they have not made expected progress, the school, in consultation with parents, will consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment (EHCP).

## **9. Education, Health and Care plans**

The college will fully cooperate with the LA when research about the pupil is being conducted. The school will provide the LA with any information or evidence needed. All relevant teachers will be involved in contributing information to the LA.

Where the LA provides a pupil with an EHC plan, the college will work closely with the parents and the pupil to examine if and how the college can best implement the plan's provisions to allow the pupil thrive in their education at St Mary's College. The school will meet its duty to provide views on a draft EHC plan.

The college will review each pupil's EHC plan to ensure that it includes the statutory sections outlined in the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', labelled separately from one another. If a pupil's needs significantly change, the school will request a re-assessment of an EHC plan.

The school will ensure that any EHC plan information is kept confidential and disclosed on a need-to-know basis. Information regarding a pupil's EHC plan will only be shared with other educational settings if the pupil is transferring there, for the setting to develop an individual learning plan. The college will take steps to ensure that pupils and parents are actively supported in developing and reviewing EHC plans

### **10. English as an Additional Language**

The college recognises a child with EAL (English as an Additional Language) to be when the main language spoken at home is something other than English. The college conducts its learning in English and therefore there is an expectation students will be able to communicate effectively in the language in order to thrive. The college recognises that being a speaker of more than one language is no disadvantage to educational achievement. Indeed, multilingualism is associated with success. The college will provide learning opportunities to enable all pupils to make good progress and will strive hard

to meet the needs of all pupils learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this.

The college will consider the pupil within the context of their home, culture and community. Where there is uncertainty about an individual pupil, the college will make full use of any local sources of advice relevant to the language group concerned, drawing on community liaison arrangements wherever they exist.

The college appreciates having EAL is not equated to having learning difficulties. At the same time, when pupils with EAL make slow progress, it will not be assumed that their language status is the only reason; they may have SEND.

The college will look carefully at all aspects of a pupil's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of English or arise from SEND.

The admissions team will flag any pupils with EAL on applying to and/or joining the college. Results from the college's entry assessments will be considered and used to highlight any areas where support may be required.

## **11. Involving parents in decision-making**

The College believes that parents have a critical role to play in their children's education. All staff have an important role in developing positive and constructive relationships with parents.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any problems or concerns with the college, with child's teacher initially. If the problem is not resolved then the parent may raise the concern with the Head of Year or Principal as appropriate. If the problem is still not resolved, then the parent may take their complaint to the governors.

## **12. Local Offer**

The purpose of the local offer is to enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. It includes provision from birth to 25, across education, health and social care. A link to the local offer for Sefton can be found below.

<https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>

## **13. Training**

Relevant staff members will keep up-to-date with any necessary training, which will be provided by the SENCO, as well as external agencies, where appropriate. Training will cover both the mental and physical needs of pupils with SEND. The training offered will be delivered to ensure equality, diversity, understanding and tolerance.

## **14. Promoting mental health and wellbeing**

The college will implement a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy. The college will ensure that there is a focus on promoting pupils' resilience, confidence and ability to learn in subjects across the curriculum.

When in-school intervention is not appropriate, referrals and commissioning will be used instead. The college will continue to support the pupil as best it can. The college will consider whether disruptive behaviour is a manifestation of SEMH needs.

The college will focus on work that helps to build self-esteem and self-discipline with the aim of addressing disruptive behaviour.

## **15. Monitoring and review**

The policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Principal in conjunction with the governing board; an updated policy will be communicated to all members of staff, parents and pupils.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025.