

**ST MARGARET'S**  
SCHOOL

# Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy

Reviewed and updated January 2022

## Introduction

St Margaret's School (the "**School**") is an independent school for pupils from the ages of 3 – 18. The School is committed to the equal treatment of all pupils including those with special educational needs ("**SEN**") and disabilities. This policy works towards eliminating disadvantages for pupils with SEN and disabilities by:

- using best endeavours to ensure that all pupils (including those with medical conditions) get the support needed in order to access the School's educational provision
- not treating disabled pupils less favourably than their peers
- making reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage in matters of admission and education
- ensuring that pupils with SEN and disabilities engage as fully as practicable in the activities of school alongside pupils who do not have SEN and disabilities
- ensuring parents are informed when special educational provision is made for their child and are kept up to date as to their child's progress and development.

In drawing up this policy, the School has had regard to the following guidance and advice (in so far as they apply to the School):

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015, last updated April 2020)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (September 2021)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Admissions Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils and Accessibility Plan. The Policy is circulated to all staff at the beginning of the academic year. The Learning Support Coordinator disseminates this Policy to new staff as part of their induction programme. Staff receive regular updates by email and all relevant information is maintained on the Learning Support intranet site.

## Definition of special educational needs

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, a child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age;
- have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or early years providers;
- are under five years old and would be likely to have such difficulties if special educational provision were not made for them.

We welcome international boarders into the secondary school, many of whom have English as a second language. Children will not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. The School's support for those children whose first language is not English is set out in the School's English as an Additional Language Policy.

## **Definition of disability**

A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

Not all pupils who have SEN are disabled. Not all disabled pupils have SEN.

## **Governor and staff responsibilities**

The governing body is responsible for determining school policy and provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

The Head is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the School's SEN provision and keeping the governing body fully informed of the implementation of the School's policy in practice.

The Learning Support Coordinator is Amrita Patel. Her responsibilities include:

- determining the strategic development of the SEN and disability policy and provision in the School, together with the Head and governing body
- having overall day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEN and disability policy
- assessing pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties/disabilities
- coordinating specific provision for children with SEN and disabilities, including those who have Education Health Care (“EHC”) plans
- ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the School's approach to identifying and meeting SEN
- ensuring that teachers are given any necessary information relating to a child's learning support needs and/or disabilities (if known) so that teaching practices are appropriate
- contributing to the in-service training of staff
- ensuring parental insights are considered by the School to support their child's SEN and disability
- liaising with the School's medical staff, external professionals and agencies, as appropriate
- maintaining a central record and overseeing the records of all children with special educational needs and learning difficulties/disabilities
- monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties/disabilities through the School
- to oversee the work of the assistant learning support teacher in the Junior School

The School's Learning Support Coordinator reports informally on a regular basis to a member of the Senior Management Team (“SMT”) and is also available in order to discuss learning support issues with Heads of Year and other staff members. Learning support issues are also discussed during weekly staff meetings as and when appropriate.

An additional member of staff in the junior department is allocated eight slots a week to work with pupils with diagnosed specific learning difficulties. The Learning Support Coordinator meets weekly with the additional learning support teacher.

An important part of the Learning Support Co-ordinator's role is discussing the needs of particular pupils with other teachers and keeping close and positive contact with all parents concerned.

## Curriculum access

All teachers are Educational Support Teachers, since all are required to differentiate their planning and delivery to ensure that all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It is therefore the class teacher / subject teacher's responsibility to ensure that learning is differentiated according to the needs of the pupil. Advice may be sought from the Learning Support Co-ordinator as appropriate.

Teachers need to be aware of each pupil's skills and abilities and must then match this knowledge to identifying and providing appropriate ways of accessing the curriculum for every pupil. The learning support list and strategy reminders provide additional information about any pupil with individual learning needs.

## Identifying and supporting pupils with SEN and disabilities

The School's curriculum, plan and schemes of work take proper account of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN and disabilities. The School regularly reviews pupil progress to help monitor whether children are making expected progress. Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEN (and should not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having SEN). However, where the School reasonably considers that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, for example where there are early indications that a pupil is not making expected progress, the School will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents and the pupil (as appropriate) to help determine the action required including whether any additional support is needed, such as in-class support.

The School may request parents to obtain a formal assessment of their child (such as by an educational psychologist), the cost of which will usually be borne by the parents. Where parents wish to request a formal assessment from outside of school, they must ensure the School is given copies of all advice and reports received.

If there are significant emerging concerns, or identified SEN or disability, the School will take action to put appropriate special educational provision in place taking into account any advice from specialists. Parents should always be consulted and kept informed of any action taken to help their child, and of the outcome of this action. **Parents will be informed and consulted by the Learning Support Coordinator.** Due weight will also be given to a pupil's wishes (according to their age, maturity and capability).

Arrangements for special educational provision and support are made through the School's graduated approach to SEN support: assess - plan - do - review:

- **Assess:** The School will carry out an analysis of the child's needs so that support can be matched to need. If a pupil does not make reasonable progress, the teachers may conclude that the strategies currently being used with that pupil are not resulting in their learning as effectively as possible. In these circumstances, the class/subject teacher will complete a Record of Concern (see **Appendix 1**), available on the School's intranet site, or raise concern through conversation or email with the Learning Support Coordinator.

In addition to ongoing teacher-based assessments, mid-year and end of year tests, a variety of assessment mechanisms are available (See **Appendix 2**). If it has not already done so, the School may, in consultation with parents, engage external agencies and professionals to help assess the child's needs and advise on any support needed.

- **Plan:** Where it is decided to provide SEN support, the teacher and the Learning Support Coordinator will agree in consultation with parents and the pupil the

adjustments, interventions, support and any teaching strategies or approaches that are to be put in place. These will be recorded on the School's information system.

- **Do:** Teachers will work closely with the Learning Support Coordinator to assess and monitor the targeted plan of support and the impact of support and interventions in place for the child.
- **Review:** The effectiveness of any support and its impact on the child's progress will be reviewed as agreed between the School and parents on a case by case basis. Teachers, working with the Learning Support Coordinator, will revise the impact and quality of the support and interventions in light of the pupil's progress and development and will decide on any changes to the support in consultation with parents and the pupil (as appropriate).

The School recognises that some pupils with a SEN may also have a disability. The School will do all that is reasonable in order to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can adequately cater.

### **Recording progress of pupils with SEND**

The School will record the progress of and any support for pupils with significant learning difficulties or disabilities or where they have an EHC Plan. This will be recorded by way of an **Individual Education Plan**. This is drawn up in consultation with the pupil's teacher(s), the Learning Support Coordinator, the pupil and their parents and kept on the School's information system. The Individual Education Plan contains key information such as:

- Record of concern/copies of e-mails/record of conversation
- Records of meetings/contact with parents
- Educational Psychologist's report, if provided
- Progress and attainment level
- Outcome sought
- Teaching/learning strategies and strategy reminders providing a valuable summary of pupils' needs
- The additional or different provision of support in place
- Involvement of any specialists or professionals, e.g. educational/clinical psychologists, dyslexia specialists, specialist teachers etc.
- Results of internal assessment, where one has been carried out
- Records of individual lessons or small group lessons with additional notes and observations
- Information the pupil would like to share about themselves, e.g. strengths, weaknesses, diagnosed learning difficulties, disabilities or medical conditions and what these mean to the pupil and how these affect them
- Date the Individual Education Plan was drawn up and date for review.

The pupil's file may be amended as and when circumstances change and at the request of the pupil, parent, teacher, or Learning Support Coordinator. Relevant learning support records are updated regularly and are available to relevant staff on the Learning Support site. Staff are encouraged to consult the lists for information about any pupils they may teach, especially at the start of each academic year when new teaching groups are formed.

The pupil (subject to their age and understanding), together with their parents and teachers, review the plan regularly and the child is encouraged to take ownership of it and to set their own targets.

The School will measure the overall progress of pupils with SEND at the end of the various key stages such as GCSE and A level to see how much progress they make compared with that of their peers.

Once a pupil has been entered onto the Learning Support List, they will be monitored for the remainder of their schooling at St Margaret's.

### **Early Years Provision**

The School monitors progress of all pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage ('EYFS') and ensures compliance with the statutory framework for the EYFS. The designated teacher responsible for coordinating SEN provision in the EYFS provision is [**Dianne Jolley-Tiplady alongside the Head of EYFS & Junior School Emma Gray**]. The **designated teacher and child's form teacher** will discuss with parents any concerns they may have about a pupil's needs and/or progress, in accordance with this policy.

Children in EYFS partake in screening programmes to look for any concerns at the earliest point, as per our assessment, recording and reporting guidelines.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child, including those with SEND. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with SEND must be made as appropriate.

### **The School's SEN provision**

The School's SEN provision currently includes:

- Individual withdrawal or lunch time lessons
- Small groups of withdrawal (2 – 4 students)

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Social and emotional
- Study skills
- Subject specific support, e.g. MFL, English Literature, Science, Maths, will be provided by subject specialists.

### **Timetabling learning support lessons**

St Margaret's is committed to the inclusion of all pupils within the classroom. Many support lessons are timetabled to take place during library enrichment sessions, study periods and lunch time enrichment sessions.

If appropriate, some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra support. This is in order that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. A considerable amount of care and attention is taken in deciding from which lessons a pupil may be withdrawn.

### **Further aspects relating to SEND provision**

#### **Admissions**

The School is academically selective and welcomes all children who can make the most of the opportunities offered and can flourish in its caring environment. The School's Admissions

Policy aims to eliminate from the admissions process, as far as possible, any substantial disadvantages which may be encountered by applicants with disabilities.

The School will treat every application from a SEN and disabled pupil in a fair, open-minded way. The School will assess all pupils for admission on the basis of its standard selection criteria and endeavours to ensure that it is able to fully support the needs of all prospective pupils. We do not, however, have the facilities to offer highly specialised and intensive treatment. The School does not currently employ general unassigned Teaching Assistants in the Senior School for the provision of intensive individual assistance.

Parents of children with disabilities, SEN or learning difficulties are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the School's Admissions Department and/or Learning Support Coordinator before the School considers the application for a place and before they sit the School's entrance exam so that adequate provision can be made for them on the day. Parents are asked to provide a copy of a medical report or educational psychologist's report to support a request, for example, for large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other special arrangements. Before an offer of a place is made, the School will assess whether it is able to adequately cater for and meet any SEN and disabilities (if known) through discussion and meetings with parents, consideration of any professional reports and references from previous schools, assessment of the pupil at a taster day, as appropriate.

An offer of a place may not be made if the School determines, following consultation with parents, that they are unable to meet and provide for a child's needs, or that the child will not be able to fully access the curriculum on offer. The School will always consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and each pupil with a learning difficulty or disability requires special consideration and treatment. If appropriate and reasonable, adjustments will be put in place. Should any child have already been identified with a learning difficulty and/or disability, relevant reports should be brought to school so that the Learning Support Co-ordinator can look at them. The Learning Support Co-ordinator's expertise is sought if teachers, including the Head, are concerned about a child and whether St Margaret's School would be a suitable school for them. For pupils seeking entry into EYFS, reports will also be read by the Head of the Junior School who also oversees EYFS.

Should the child's needs change before or after joining the School, the School will review the provision and whether it is appropriate for the child to join or remain at the School.

The School's Admissions Policy is available on the School's website. It applies equally to all prospective pupils and details how the School supports those applicants with SEN and/or a disability.

### **Withdrawal**

Where, after all reasonable adjustments have been made or considered, the School feels that it is unable to accommodate a disabled pupil or meet their needs, the School may require parents, after appropriate consultation, to withdraw their child. Fees in lieu of notice will not be chargeable in these circumstances and the acceptance deposit returned.

### **Pupils with an Education Health Care Plan**

The needs of the majority of pupils with SEN will be met effectively through the School's SEN support. However, where the child or young person has not made expected progress despite the SEN support in place, parents and the School have the right to ask the Local Authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC Plan for their child. Parents are asked to consult with the School before exercising this right. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right.

If the Local Authority refuses to make an assessment, parents have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Health, Education and Social Care Chamber). The School does not have this right of appeal.

Where a prospective pupil has an EHC Plan, the School will consult with the parents and the Local Authority (where appropriate) to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC Plan can be delivered by the School. Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHC Plan may need to be charged, either directly to the parent or to the Local Authority if the Local Authority is responsible for the fees and the School is named in the EHC Plan. In all other circumstances, charges may be made directly to parents, subject to the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The School co-operates with the Local Authority to ensure that relevant annual reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.

### **Three-year accessibility plan**

A copy of the School's Accessibility Plan can be provided upon request by writing to the Head or the Learning Support Coordinator. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

### **Bullying and behavioural issues**

All pupils are taught that any form of discrimination, bullying and harassment is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Pupils are taught through the curriculum, PSHE and the tutorial programme the importance of respecting each other and behaving towards each other with kindness, courtesy and consideration. The School's behaviour and anti-bullying policies make clear the seriousness of bullying, victimisation and harassment and that appropriate sanctions will be applied to any pupil who displays inappropriate behaviour.

The School recognises that disabled pupils or those with SEN may be particularly vulnerable to being bullied. The School's Anti-Bullying Policy makes it clear that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and will be taken very seriously.

The School also recognises that bullying (or other matters such as bereavement) can lead to learning difficulties or wider mental health difficulties. Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN but where there are concerns, an assessment may be undertaken to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues.

The School recognises that children with SEN and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and additional barriers can therefore exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

The School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed if there are any safeguarding concerns relating to a child.

### **Entitlements to additional time and/or support in external assessments**

Children who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be entitled to support, such as additional time and/or modified provision, to complete external assessments. Parents should speak with their child's form teacher, the Examinations Officer or the Learning Support Coordinator with regard to any application for additional support as soon as reasonably practicable. The Learning Support Coordinator will process applications for appropriate examination access in conjunction with the child's form tutor.

### **Concerns**

The School will listen to any concerns expressed by parents about their child's development and any concerns raised by children themselves. Parents must notify their child's form teacher or the Learning Support Coordinator if their child's progress or behaviour gives cause for concern.

### **Review**

The School will review this policy on an annual basis to ensure the School meets the needs of those pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

# ST MARGARET'S

SCHOOL

## APPENDIX 1

### RECORD OF CONCERN

To: **Amrita Patel**

Learning Support Co-ordinator

Date:

From:

Dept:

**I am concerned about the following student:**

( pupil )

Student name: .....

Form:

Reason for Referral:

The student has difficulties in the following areas:

- Literacy
- Organisation
- Exams/revision
- Language skills
- Numeracy
- Homework
- Handwriting
- Other (please specify)

**Referral received:**

**Action to be taken**

## **APPENDIX 2**

Diagnostic tests used to make assessments of learning strengths and weaknesses include:

- WRAT 4 (Wide Ranging Achievement Test)
- CTOPP (Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing)
- HORT (Hodder Oral Reading Test)
- ART (Access Reading Test)
- DASH (Diagnostic Assessment in Speed of Handwriting)
- WRIT (Wide Range Intelligence Test)
- WIAT II UK T (Weschler Individual Achievement Test)
- DST-j & DST-s (Dyslexia Screening Test junior & senior)
- HGRT (Hodder Group Reading Test)
- Vernon Spelling test