

ST MARGARET'S
SCHOOL

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy

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Reviewed By	Simon Winchester
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Committee Owner	Education Committee

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
- EHRC guidance 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils' (2019)
- EHCR technical guidance for schools in England (updated September 2023)
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (March 2014, last updated January 2024)

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 Special Educational Needs Coordinator ("**SENDCo**") / Academic 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 Academic Support Drive.

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.

The expression 'learning difficulty' covers a wide variety of conditions and may include those known as autistic spectrum condition, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, semantic processing difficulty and learning problems which result from social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The expression may also include those who have problems with their eyesight or hearing.

We welcome international boarders into the secondary school, many of whom have English as a second language. Pupils 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 pupils 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). Long term means that the impairment will have lasted or be likely to last for 12 months or more.

Not all pupils who have SEN are disabled and not all disabled pupils have SEN but understandably, there is overlap.

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 SENDCo/Academic Support Coordinator is Stavroula Alachiotis-Merchant. 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 SEN and disabilities
- coordinating specific provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities, including those who have Education Health Care (“**EHC**”) plans
- ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities to pupils with SEN and disabilities and the School's approach to identifying and meeting SEN
- ensuring that teachers are given any necessary information relating to a pupil'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 pupil'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 pupils with SEN and disabilities
- monitoring the progress of pupils with SEN and disabilities through the School
- to oversee the work of the assistant learning support teacher in the Junior School

The School's Learning Support Department consists of the SENDCo, Assistant SENDCo, and a team of four Senior School Learning Support Assistants.

The SENDCo 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. Academic Support issues are also discussed during weekly staff meetings as and when appropriate.

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

All teachers are responsible for helping to meet a pupil's needs (irrespective of any specialist qualifications or expertise). All staff are expected to understand this policy so that the School can identify, assess and make provision to meet those needs.

Curriculum access

All teachers are teachers of SEN (SEND Code of Practice 2015), since all are required to differentiate their planning and delivery to ensure that all pupils 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 SENDCo 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 SEN register and Support Plans 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 pupils are making expected progress. Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a pupil 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 SENDCo/Academic 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 pupil'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 an Initial Concern Form, available on the School's intranet site, or raise concern through conversation or email with the SENDCo/Academic 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 1**). If it has not already done so, the School may, in consultation with parents, engage external agencies and professionals to help assess the pupil's needs and advise on any support needed. Any specialist advice received will usually be discussed with the pupil's parents.

- **Plan:**

Where it is decided to provide SEN support, the teacher and the SENDCo/Academic 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 SENDCo/Academic Support Coordinator to assess and monitor the targeted plan of support and the impact of support and interventions in place for the pupil.

- **Review:**

The effectiveness of any support and its impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed as agreed between the School and parents on a case by case basis. Teachers, working with the SENDCo/Academic Support Coordinator will review 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 for.

Reasonable adjustments

The School is committed to treating all pupils fairly. In light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the School will seek to ensure that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage, by comparison with pupils who are not disabled, by making reasonable adjustments:

1. to policies, criteria and practices (i.e. the way the School does things); and
2. by providing auxiliary aids and services (i.e. provision of additional support or assistance).

The School is not required to remove or alter physical features to comply with the duty to

make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils or applicants. Similarly, the School is not required to provide auxiliary aids for personal purposes unconnected with its provision of education and services.

School staff seek to understand the needs of each and every pupil and to ensure that all pupils have the chance to make good progress according to their ability. In practice, making reasonable adjustments can be a daily, iterative process. Adjustments can often be made by staff at short notice or no notice, for example, taking steps to ensure that a pupil has understood instructions, or that they are seated where they are able to hear and concentrate.

Once any required adjustments have been identified, the School will consider whether they are reasonable adjustments for the School to make by reference to the following factors:

- whether it would overcome the substantial disadvantage the disabled pupil is suffering;
- the practicability of the adjustment;
- the effect of the disability on the pupil;
- the cost of the proposed adjustment;
- the School's resources;
- health and safety requirements;
- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards; and
- the interests of other pupils (and potential pupils).

The School will discuss the proposed adjustments with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, the SENDCo, and (with the parents' consent) any appropriate third party, which may include, for example, a medical practitioner or educational psychologist. The School will communicate any decision regarding reasonable adjustments with parents and the pupil (where appropriate).

Parents can assist the School in this process by ensuring that staff are informed of their child's needs, making available any relevant reports, assessments and information and working with the School if appropriate to implement any measures or reinforce any strategies put in place.

Where, despite reasonable adjustments to assist a pupil's access to educational provision and the other benefits, facilities and services the School provides, a disabled pupil is

evidently still at a substantial disadvantage, the School may draw this to the attention of the parents and make recommendations. This might include, for example, seeking further external professional advice, seeking a statutory assessment, additional support funded by the parents or other external sources.

How do parents request adjustments?

If the parents feel that there are further particular adjustments the School could make, parents may write to or speak with their child's class teacher, in the first instance, or the SENDCo. Parents are encouraged to provide copies of any medical or specialists reports as evidence of the adjustments required.

Recording progress of pupils with SEN and disabilities

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), SENDCo/Academic 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 emails/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 SENDCo. Relevant learning support records are updated

regularly and are available to relevant staff on the School's data system. Staff are encouraged to consult the SEN register on the database system 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 pupil is encouraged to take ownership of it and to set their own targets.

The School will measure the overall progress of pupils with SEN 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 SEN register, they will be monitored for the remainder of their time at the School. Pupils will be taken out of the SEN register when they have made good progress and the support or interventions have stopped for two whole terms.

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 SENDCo/Academic Support Coordinator and pupil'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.

Pupils 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 pupil reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each pupil, including those with SEN and disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with SEN and disabilities 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
- In class support
- Assessments for exam arrangements

Support is provided in the following areas;

- Spelling: SNIP
- Literacy: Nessy, Dyslexia Gold and Lexia UK
- Numeracy
- Study skills: The Metacognition Book and The Revision Skills Guide
- Social Skills group
- ELSA
- Sensory Breaks/Movement Breaks
- Handwriting: Write Start
- Lego Therapy
- Memory Magic
- Power of Two
- Precision teaching
- Subject specific support, e.g. English and Maths will be provided by external subject specialists.

Timetabling academic 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 SEN provision

Admissions

The School is academically selective and welcomes all pupils who can make the most of the opportunities offered and can flourish in its caring environment. The School welcomes all pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, provided we can offer them any support that they require, cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them. We aim to ensure that all our pupils, including those with SEN and/or disabilities, are provided with a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn.

Where a prospective pupil is disabled, the School will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the School. This is to ensure that the prospective pupil is not put at a

substantial disadvantage compared to a pupil who is not disadvantaged because of a disability. Where parents make a request for adjustments such as for large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other special arrangements, they will be asked to provide a copy of any medical reports or educational psychologist's reports to support such requests. The School will assess whether it is able to adequately cater for and meet any SEN through discussion and meetings with parents, consideration of any professional reports and references from previous schools, assessment and observation of the pupil through our assessment process, as appropriate.

In addition, parents are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the School before the School considers the application for a place and before they sit the School's entrance exam so that adequate provisions can be made for them on the day.

”There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a prospective pupil's disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments, we feel that the pupil is not going to be able to access the education offered, or that their health and safety, or those of other pupils or staff, may be put at risk, we may not be able to offer a place at the School.

Should any pupil have already been identified with a SEN and/or disability, relevant reports should be provided to the School for review by the SENDCo. The SENDCo's expertise will be sought if teachers, including the Head, are concerned about a pupil and whether the School would be suitable to meet their needs.. For pupils seeking entry into EYFS, reports will also be read by the Head of the Junior School who also oversees EYFS.

Should the pupil's needs change before or after joining the School, the School will review the provision and whether it is appropriate for the pupil 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

The School reserves the right, following consultation with parents, to request or require the withdrawal of a pupil from the School if, in our opinion after making all reasonable adjustments, the School is unable to meet the pupil's needs. In these circumstances, the School will support the parents in finding an alternative placement which will meet the pupil's needs. Any decision to request withdrawal or require the removal of a pupil will be made as a last resort and in line with the terms of the parent contract.

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 academic support. However, where the pupil has not made expected progress despite the academic 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, 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.

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

In line with its duty under the Equality Act 2010 the School's three-year Accessibility Plan sets out how the School will

- 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.

A copy of the School's Accessibility Plan can be provided upon request by writing to the Head or Estates manager.

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 SEMH. Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a pupil 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 pupils with SEN and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and additional barriers can therefore exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of pupils. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for pupils 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.

Staff will support such pupils in expressing any concerns they may have and will be particularly vigilant to any signs or indicators of abuse, discussing this with the DSL as appropriate. The School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed if there are any safeguarding concerns relating to a pupil.

Entitlements to additional time and/or support in external assessments

Pupils 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. Exam access arrangements allow examination candidates with SEN and disabilities to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. These are strictly regulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications on behalf of the examination boards, under the remit of Ofqual, and are administered and applied by the School in accordance with the published guidance and requirements.

Parents should speak with their child's form teacher and SENDCo with regard to any application for additional support as soon as reasonably practicable. The SENDCo will process applications for appropriate examination access in conjunction with the pupil's form tutor.

Parental responsibility

To ensure that parents and pupils can be given the most appropriate advice and support, it is important that all relevant information and documentation about any possible SEN and any history of learning support is shared with the School. Parents must provide the SENDCo with copies of any reports or recommendations concerning the pupil's SEN and/or disability from previous schools or elsewhere. Parents agree to do this when completing the registration form and accepting the terms and conditions of the parent contract.

Concerns

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

We hope that any difficulty or concern can be sensitively and efficiently handled and resolved informally before it reaches the formal complaints stage. That said, the School's Complaints Procedure (which applies equally in the EYFS setting) is on our website and sets out how parents can raise a formal complaint and how the School will handle it. We will also send the parents a copy of the Complaints Procedure on request.

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.

APPENDIX 1

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