

St. Mary's R.C. High School

Policy for Special Educational Needs, Disability and Inclusion

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St. Mary's R.C. High School accepts the definition of Special Educational Needs, as set out in the Revised Code of Practice

Definition of Special Educational Needs:

Students have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty, which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Students have a learning difficulty if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age,
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.
- Have an educational provision that is additional to, and different from, differentiation.

Students must 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.

Definition of Disability

The definition of Disability in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 states:

'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'

The Governors and staff recognise their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Definition of Inclusion

St. Mary's has a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students and does so through setting suitable learning challenges, responding to students' diverse learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment. Staff are responsible for ensuring that the guidelines on Special Needs and Inclusion, as set out in the National Curriculum for all subjects, are taken into consideration in their planning, teaching and assessment.

Mission Statement

We aim to provide every possible opportunity to develop the full potential of every child. Children with special educational needs must be valued as individuals and should be encouraged to integrate with their peers, both socially and academically. They should have access to the whole school curriculum. At all times, consideration will be given to maintaining and enhancing the self esteem of children with special educational needs in accordance with the Christian ethos of our school.

In our school we aim to offer excellence and choice to all our children, whatever their ability or needs. We have high expectations of all our children. We aim to achieve this through the removal of barriers to learning and participation. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. Through appropriate curricular provision, we respect the fact that children:

- have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations;
- require different strategies for learning;
- acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates;
- Need a range of different teaching approaches and experiences.

School Philosophy on Special Educational Needs, disability and Inclusion:

The School endorses a policy of inclusive education, equality of rights and opportunities. No student will suffer discrimination because of perceived learning difficulties, behavior, emotional responses, disability, race or gender.

Teachers at St. Mary's are teachers of all students including those with Special Educational Needs. As such St. Mary's School adopts a 'whole school approach' to special educational needs by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to students' diverse learning needs. The staff of the school is committed to identifying and providing for the needs of all students in a wholly inclusive environment. Inclusion is regarded as crucial to the policy and the school is committed to seeking to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for all students.

The school operates an equal opportunities policy for students: youngsters with special educational needs are afforded the same rights as other students. This includes both those students with Statements of Special Educational Needs, Education Health Care Plans, students with **Banded Funding** and those with less significant problems.

Aims and Objectives

The school's Special Educational Needs Policy provides a framework for the provision of teaching and support for children with learning difficulties.

All staff should be aware of their particular responsibilities with respect to the SEN Policy. They should seek advice from the SENCOs whenever necessary.

The school has two SENCOs, a dedicated team of Teaching Assistants and staff linked directly to our Student Support Services.

The aims of this policy are:

- to create an environment that meets the special educational needs of each child;
- to ensure that the special educational needs of children are identified, assessed and provided for;
- to make clear the expectations of all partners in the process;
- to identify the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for children's special educational needs;
- to enable all children to have full access to all elements of the school curriculum;
- to ensure that parents are able to play their part in supporting their child's education;

Responsible persons

The Governing Body, with the Head Teacher, is responsible for determining the school's general policy and approach to provision for students with SEN.

Mr. Peter Fawcett is the appointed Governor for SEN.

The person coordinating the day to day provision of education for students with special educational needs is Mrs Gina Hastings (SENCO), supported by Mr Sean Warde (Director of Learning).

The Role of the SENCO

The Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO), in collaboration with the Head Teacher, plays a key role in helping to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school to raise the achievements of students with SEN. The key responsibilities of the SENCO are:

- overseeing the day to day operation of the school's SEN policy
- liaising with and advising fellow teachers
- managing the SEN team of Teaching Assistants
- coordinating provision for students with SEN
- overseeing the records on all students with SEN
- keeping a register of students whose learning difficulties cause concern
- liaising with parents of students with SEN
- contributing to the in-service training of staff
- liaising with external agencies including the Herefordshire Children's Services behavior support services, Physical and sensory impairment services and Educational Psychology services
- Carrying out annual reviews of all statemented or Education Health Care Plans pupils
- Reviewing and monitoring students who have banded funding

SENCOs respond to children's needs by:

- managing the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy;
- co-ordinating the provision for and managing the responses to children's special needs;
- maintaining the SEN register;
- having overall responsibility for IEPs;
- supporting and advising colleagues, keeping them informed of children with SEN;
- overseeing the records of all children with special educational needs, and ensuring assessments have been carried out;
- having responsibility for statemented or children with **Education Health Care Plans** and annual reviews;
- acting as the link with parents;
- acting as link with external agencies and other support agencies;
- monitoring and evaluating the special educational needs provision and reporting to the Head Teacher;
- liaising with the Head Teacher to ensure that resources, including staff are available to meet SEN provision

Teachers respond to children's needs by:

- providing support for children who need help with communication, language and literacy or numeracy;
- planning to develop children's understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences;
- planning for children's full participation in learning, and in physical and practical activities;
- helping children to manage their behaviour and to take part in learning effectively and safely;
- helping individuals to manage their emotions, particularly trauma or stress, and to take part in learning.

Teachers' Standards:

A teacher must:

- set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
- promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
- demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
- plan and teach well-structured lessons
- adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
- make accurate and productive use of assessment
- manage behavior effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment

Working with Teaching Assistants

Everyone needs to be clear about whether the teaching assistant can:

1. Give permission for pupils to leave the room
2. Have a role in behaviour management
3. Use the school's reward and sanction system
4. Have a role when the teacher is teaching the whole class or if the pupil they support is absent
5. Mark work; carry out assessments and record pupils' learning

The teacher needs to make sure that:

6. They remain in overall control of pupils' welfare and learning
7. All pupils know why teaching assistants are working in their class and their names and roles
8. Learning objectives are displayed, shared and understood
9. Relevant information about individual pupils is made available to the teaching assistant
10. Teaching assistants understand the key school's policies including SEND, behaviour, health and safety, equal opportunities, teaching and learning, inclusion and safeguarding

Access to the Curriculum

The staff at St. Mary's aims to offer to every child a challenging curriculum, with access to a wide range of resources and appropriate support for learning so that, at the age of 16, the young people will have the skills, knowledge and confidence to enable them to make independent choices for the transition to their future learning, training and work.

In almost all circumstances the National Curriculum is seen as the appropriate core for learning. Where students have Special Educational Needs a graduated response will be adopted and curriculum planning will reflect that the needs of all students have been taken into account. Subject teachers use many strategies to enable every student to learn easily and specialist support is offered to those students whose needs are greater. The school aims to maintain a balance between inclusion of all students in all curriculum activities and the provision of small group teaching or one to one tuition wherever it is appropriate.

The school will make provision for students with Special Educational Needs to match the nature of their individual needs. The school will, in other than exceptional cases, make full use of classroom and school expertise before drawing on external support.

In order to enable students who have special educational needs to have the same opportunities as the rest of their peers a permanent team of teaching assistants is employed to work in class alongside specific children or as general classroom support assistants. A combination of subject specific teaching assistants and general teaching assistants is deployed. The SENCO monitors the provision of each student with special educational needs in each curriculum area but relies heavily on the expertise and knowledge of the support assistants to ensure that the required amount of support is offered to pupils in order for them to have effective access to the curriculum. They are crucial to the ongoing assessment and provision of SEN students.

The SENCO undertakes to organise the support for pupils within the classroom, being responsible for timetabling the team of support assistants.

Support is allocated as follows:

- To pupils with a Special Needs Statement, Education Health Care Plans
- To pupils who receive banded funding
- To pupils with a level 3 need
- To pupils who require general support
- To pupils who may have a short term need

Every effort is made to take into account the requests for support in specific subject areas made by the pupils and their parents as well as requests from subject teachers. Continuity of support is important and, to this end, a number of TA's currently work in close association with a particular department / subject area. Where a subject is supported by more than one teaching assistant a record is kept so that everyone involved is aware of the needs of the group and the support that has been given.

Once the pupils with statements, Education Health Care Plans or banded funding have been allocated their support the other pupils with a level three need are considered. Again an attempt is made to respond to requests for help from pupils, parents and teachers but as the timetabling process progresses there is less flexibility as the available resources are "used up".

The support timetable is completed by using the remainder of the hours available for those groups that have not previously been supported. The timetable is then operated for a trial period so that any necessary alterations can be made. Adjustments are made in response to changes throughout the academic year. The provision is monitored via meeting between the teaching assistants and the SENCO. As a result support is often redirected throughout the academic year.

Identification and Assessment

Before transition, the SEN department at St. Mary's works closely with its partner schools in identifying students with special educational needs. At the beginning of the new academic year all teaching and support staff are informed of the needs of the pupils via the special needs audit (register). This outlines the strengths and weaknesses of particular students.

Students in Year 7 sit the Dyslexia Foundation's standardised spelling test and the Edinburgh reading test. These tests are diagnostic and the information gathered supplements that which is passed to us from the primary schools. These tests are then re-administered in year 9 to monitor literacy progress.

All students are assessed within the curriculum areas on a regular basis. Where necessary, students will be referred to the SENCO for diagnostic testing to construct a profile of the child's strengths and weaknesses.

During Years 9, 10 and 11 some students are identified as needing further diagnostic testing to enable them to have 'Access Arrangements' in their external examinations.

Parental Consultation

The success of the Special Needs Department depends, to a large extent, on good communication and co-operation between parents, guardians and the school. The aim is to build up trust between all parties so that the parents and guardians believe that the school is doing its best to meet their child's needs with the resources that are currently available.

The initial contact between parents or guardians and the school is usually made whilst pupils are in year 6 and preparing for secondary school transfer. There are two open evenings during the autumn term when prospective parents or guardians have an opportunity to discuss their children with the SENCO thus alerting the school to a particular child's possible need for extra support. In order that parents or guardians do not need to discuss their children in front of others the SENCO operates a surgery system in a private office to ensure confidentiality.

Once places have been allocated to pupils the SENCO encourages the parents or guardians of pupils with additional needs to attend a planning meeting during June or July along with their daughter or son.

Parents or guardians of any child that attends St. Mary's are able to contact the SENCO should they have any concerns over the learning progress their child is making.

Heads of Year

The Heads of Year play an important role with regard to the identification and monitoring of pupils with special needs. Good communication is deemed vital. The Head of Year 7 works closely with the Key Stage Three SENCO throughout the year. This cooperation is especially important when gathering information about the new intake. S/he visits many of the primary feeder schools during the summer term. During these visits s/he meets all the children who are due to attend St. Mary's and is able to discuss individual pupils with the class teacher. If a visit from the SENCO is then needed this will be arranged. The SENCO has a meeting with the Head of Year 7 once all the relevant information has been received. As a result of this consultation the first draft of the special needs audit is compiled.

Herefordshire's Children's services

The Children's services Directorate has overall responsibility for placing pupils with a statement of special educational needs or Education Health Care Plans in appropriate schools as well as overseeing and monitoring their progress via the annual reviews. During the Easter term the SENCO is informed as to which pupils with statement or Education Health Care Plans are likely to be awarded a place at St. Mary's the following September. Hopefully the view of the school will be taken into account by the Authority and the school will seek and take note of advice from the Authority.

Providing a graduated response to learning difficulties

When a student fails to make progress and shows signs of difficulty in some of the following areas: acquiring literacy and numeracy; presenting persistent EBD difficulties; having sensory or physical problems; or communication or interaction difficulties s/he will be given support that is 'additional'. This support could include one, or a combination of, the following:

- classroom organisation and management
- in-class support by teacher/teaching assistant
- withdrawal for individual/small group work
- behavior modification programme (including support from the behavior support Services)
- use of specialist equipment
- alternative teaching strategies

The resources allocated to students who have non-statemented or Special Educational Needs will be deployed to implement these interventions. Parents will be informed and students will be involved in decisions taken at this stage.

If a student does not make progress despite the school taking the action outlined, advice will be sought from the appropriate support services such as special needs advisory teachers, Educational Psychologists etc. A request for help from external services is likely to follow a decision taken by the SENCo and colleagues, in consultation with parents, at a review of the student's internal provision. External agencies will usually see the student so that they can advise subject and pastoral staff with regard to provision or strategies. They provide more specialist assessments that can inform planning and the measurement of a student's progress, and in some cases provide support for particular activities.

The trigger for involving external agencies is where, despite receiving an intervention and/or concentrated support, the student:

- continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period
- continues to work at National Curriculum levels substantially below that expected of students of a similar age
- continues to have difficulty in developing literacy and mathematical skills
- has emotional or behavioral difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with their own learning or that of the class or group, despite having an individualised behavior management programme
- has sensory or physical needs, that require additional specialist equipment or regular advice, providing direct intervention to the student or advice to the staff, by a specialist service
- has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

When school seeks the help of external support services, the external specialist may act in an advisory capacity, provide additional specialist assessment or be involved in teaching the student directly.

Education Health Care Plan and Banded Funding

A request for Statutory Assessment or Banded Funding will be made if the student has demonstrated a significant cause for concern that has not been addressed through interventions. The procedure for a request for Statutory Assessment is as set out in the Code of Practice. The procedure for a request for Banded Funding is as LA guidelines. In both cases parents will be involved in the request and their views will be paramount in the application. Parents have the right to request statutory Assessment themselves.

A request for Statutory Assessment or Banded Funding *may* result in an Education Health Care Plan or funding for a specified period of time which will be used as set out in the request for funding.

Education Health Care Plans and review

The plan will only record that which is additional to, or different from, the differentiated curriculum provision and will focus on two or three targets to match the student's needs.

The provision is reviewed at least twice a year by teachers of the student, teaching assistants where applicable and the SENCo, where applicable.

Additionally, the progress of students with Statements of Special Educational Needs, or those receiving Banded Funding, will be reviewed at least annually, or as required by recommendations of the LEA. Students in Year 9 and above will have a Transition Plan drawn up during the review, this will be significant in preparing them for their transition after St. Mary's.

Recording and Monitoring

The SENCO, in line with the Code of Practice, keeps a register of those students receiving Banded Funding or having an Education Health Care Plan. The school maintains a record of identification, provision and review of SEND through the SEND register, support provided and review sheets. Monitoring of SEND provision is carried out by the SENCO with the support team. Provision is amended, if necessary, following the monitoring process.

Resources

St. Mary's receives extra funding for those students whose statements or Education Health Care Plans recommend support through resourced provision. This provision enhances the support team. We aim to employ a permanent team of teaching assistants so that there is continuity and good working relationships are built between the support team and the teachers. The less able students are taught in much smaller groups across the board. We aim to integrate all students fully into mainstream classes.

At the start of each year careful consideration is given to matching the needs of each student to the support which the school provided for that student's learning. Factors considered include emotional maturity and readiness for learning, general language difficulties, degree of challenge of particular courses and subject department requests. This provision is kept under review throughout the year and is modified as necessary.

Liaison

The opinion and expertise of parents or carers, with regard to their children, is very important to us. The parents or carers of children with a statement, Education Health Care Plans or banded funding are invited to an annual review of the provision. Oftentimes there are more frequent meetings, dependent upon the progress their child is making. We aim to improve our communication with parents and carers so that they are confident that the needs of their children are being met to the best of our ability.

All parents or carers of students with special educational needs should be treated as partners. They are encouraged to play an active role in their child's education, are kept informed of their child's entitlement within the SEND framework and have access to information; advice and support during any decision making that will affect their child.

If necessary parents and carers are advised to seek the support of the Parents Partnership Services within the LA.

All parents and carers of students with SEND are actively encouraged to communicate with the school to support their child's learning and to alert the school if they have any concerns about their child's learning or the provision, either via the form tutor, the Head of Year or the SENCO.

Students' views are sought about the support and provision provided in school. They take an active part in target setting within their provision, their views are recorded as part of the statutory annual review process and their views are taken into consideration when Teaching Assistants are deployed. Students or teachers may ask for advice or help from the SENCO at any time.

The SENCO and the Heads of Year meet regularly to discuss in class support and individual pupil's needs. The SENCO also meets with counterparts from other secondary schools.

Pupil Premium

The school use Pupil Premium money (as detailed in the [Pupil Premium Statement on our website](#)) to support systems and processes which ensure continued progress and academic achievement for those in vulnerable groups. The school will also continue with programs, projects and initiatives which support the engagement and involvement of disadvantaged students.

Evaluating Success

The school policy will be kept under regular review and the success of SEND provision will be monitored using the following criteria:

- Students awareness of their targets and achievements
- Students moving towards pre set subject targets
- Raising of National Curriculum levels further than levels on intake might suggest (Value Added)
- Achievement of targets as set in additional provision
- Movement of students off the register
- Increased participation by students with SEND in all aspects of school life
- Students being able to opt for the full range of subjects on offer at KS4
- Students leaving with more certificated courses
- Students at KS4 maintaining good attendance
- Satisfaction felt by parents / carers, students, governors and teachers in the general progress and confidence of these students.

Staff development

It is the policy of the Special Educational Needs Department that all teachers and teaching assistants have the opportunity to further their own learning through continuing professional development. The SENCO arranges INSET training for the teaching assistants to aid their classroom management and increase their working knowledge of specific areas with regard to learning and behavior. These sessions are open to all staff in the school. Some teaching assistants specialise in different areas of need so are encourage to attend appropriate courses outside the school. On return they disseminate their knowledge to the rest of the team via a special needs meeting and email, often giving valuable information to the rest of the staff.

Complaints

The SEND department lays great importance on their desire to be available for discussion of students' progress at any time in the school year. Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school to make an appointment to discuss concerns. If there is cause for concern the form tutor may be contacted in the first instance, followed by the Head of Year or the SENCO if the problem persists.

If parents feel that the school has not responded properly to their concerns, then they should contact the Head Teacher, The Chair of Governors or the County Special Services in Hereford, phone number 01432 260000.