



St Mary's R.C. High School

PER MARIAM

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY

Document owner:	SENCO
Policy reviewed:	May 2026
Approved by:	FGB 01.06.2026
Policy review date:	3 years from policy approved date

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY

1. Introduction and Ethos

St. Mary's Catholic High School is a school rooted in the Gospel values of love, dignity, and respect for every person. We believe that each pupil is made in the image and likeness of God and is, therefore, of infinite worth. Our response to the diverse needs of our pupils is an expression of our Catholic faith and our commitment to the common good.

This policy sets out how St. Mary's will do its utmost to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It reflects our duty to be an inclusive community where every learner is known, valued, and supported to flourish — academically, spiritually, morally, and socially. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). We do so through setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils' diverse learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment. In our school we aim to offer excellence and choice to all our pupils. All children have access to the whole curriculum, and we maintain high expectations of all our children. We aim to help our pupils achieve through the removal of barriers to learning and participation. We want all our children to feel that they have a true sense of belonging in our school community. This includes maintaining and enhancing the self-esteem of children with SEND and providing every possible opportunity to develop the full potential of every child.

We are guided by the principle that “every teacher is a teacher of every child or young person including those with SEN” (SEND Code of Practice 2015). High aspirations, quality-first teaching, and a culture of pastoral care underpin all that we do.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

St Mary's RC High School recognises the recent Department for Education (DfE) publications, including the 2026 Schools White Paper “*Every Child Achieving and Thriving*” and the associated SEND consultation “*SEND reform: putting children and young people first*”, which set out a long-term programme of reform to improve inclusion, introduce national standards, and reshape SEND support through approaches such as Individual Support Plans and revised EHCP arrangements.

As these proposals are subject to consultation and phased national implementation - with key changes expected to begin from around 2029 and full transition extending into the early 2030s - these processes are not yet fully in place within school systems. The school will continue to review and update its SEND procedures in line with DfE guidance as reforms are finalised and implemented over the coming years.

This policy is written in accordance with:

- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015)
- Education White Paper for England: *Every Child Achieving and Thriving* February 2026
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Teacher Standards 2012

- Catholic Education Service (CES) guidance on inclusive education

3. Definition of Special Educational Needs

A pupil has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A pupil has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

The four broad areas of need identified in the SEND Code of Practice are:

Area of Need	Examples
Communication and Interaction	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
Cognition and Learning	Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	ADHD, Anxiety, Depression, attachment difficulties
Sensory and/or Physical	Visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, medical conditions

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The SENCO

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy and coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND. The SENCO will:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND provision
- Coordinating provision for pupils with SEND
- Liaising with and advising teacher colleagues
- Overseeing the records of all pupils with SEND
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff
- Liaising with parents and carers of pupils with SEND
- Working with external agencies, including Local Authority support services
- Managing the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources

- Ensuring Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans are reviewed annually

The SENCO must be a qualified teacher and, if newly appointed after 1 September 2009, must achieve the National Award for SEN Coordination within three years of appointment.

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day management of all aspects of the school, including SEND provision
- Ensuring that the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to fulfil their role
- Ensuring all staff are aware of pupils' SEND and the school's approach
- Reporting to governors on the implementation of this policy

4.3 The SEND Governor

The governing body has appointed a SEND governor whose role is to:

- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties in relation to SEND
- Support and challenge the school's approach to SEND
- Monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision and report to the full governing body
- Ensure the school publishes and implements an accessibility plan

4.4 All Teaching Staff

All teachers are teachers of pupils with SEND. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEND is the responsibility of every teacher. Staff will:

- Understand the learning needs of pupils with SEND and the strategies to support them
- Differentiate and adapt lessons using high-quality, inclusive teaching approaches
- Contribute to the monitoring of progress of pupils with SEND
- Implement and review agreed interventions and strategies
- Communicate regularly with the SENCO and parents regarding SEND pupils

4.5 Teaching Assistants and members of the SEND Team

Teaching Assistants (TAs) and members of the SEND Team play a vital role in the support of pupils with SEND. They will:

- Work under the guidance of the SENCO and class teachers to provide targeted support
- Foster independence in pupils rather than reliance on adult support
- Deliver specified programmes and interventions
- Contribute to the review of progress and update of records

5. A Graduated Approach to SEND Support

St. Mary's adopts the graduated approach described in the SEND Code of Practice, which recognises that there is a continuum of need and a continuum of support. This is a cyclical process of:

The ASSESS – PLAN – DO – REVIEW Cycle

ASSESS – Identify and understand the pupil’s needs through teacher observation, assessments, pupil and parent voice, and specialist advice, as appropriate.

PLAN – Agree outcomes, interventions and support in a SEND Support Plan.

DO – Implement the planned support. The class teacher retains responsibility, supported by the SENCO and Interventions Manager.

REVIEW – Evaluate the impact of support. Involve the pupil and parents. Inform future planning.

5.1 Quality First Teaching (QFT)

All pupils receive quality first teaching. Where a pupil is not making expected progress, the class teacher will first ensure that teaching has been adapted to meet pupils’ needs before any additional intervention is considered. Strategies may include:

- Adapted resources, modified texts, visual supports
- Information and instructions broken down into manageable sections
- Scaffolded tasks and writing frames
- Explicit instruction and modelling
- Flexible grouping and seating arrangements
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts
- Retrieval practice and spaced repetition
- Use of assistive technology

5.2 SEND Support

Where a pupil continues to make less than expected progress, despite high quality teaching, the school will place them on the SEND Register and provide additional or different provision through SEND Support. A SEND Support Plan will be produced setting out:

- The nature of the pupil’s SEND
- The outcomes sought for the pupil
- The support to be put in place
- The expected impact of the support
- A review date

Plans will be reviewed at least three times per year in line with the Graduated Approach (Assess-Plan-Do-Review).

5.3 Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

Where a pupil requires support beyond that which the school can reasonably provide from its own resources, and where a need is significantly affecting their education, health, or care, the school or parents may request an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment from the Local Authority.

Where an EHC plan is in place, the school will:

- Implement the provision specified in the EHC plan
- Ensure annual reviews take place in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice
- Invite the pupil, parents, relevant professionals, and the Local Authority to annual reviews, as appropriate
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records

6. Identifying Pupils with SEND

The school has a range of processes for identifying pupils who may have SEND:

- Information from primary schools (including SATs results) and transition records
- Assessment on entry (reading ages, Cognitive Ability Tests)
- Concerns raised by subject teachers or form tutors
- Parent or carer referrals
- Pupil self-referral
- Review of progress data
- External referrals (e.g. from GPs, CAMHS, paediatricians)

The school takes particular care to consider whether SEND may be a factor where pupils are not making expected progress, or where there are changes in behaviour or attendance.

The SENCO will investigate concerns, gather evidence, and, if appropriate, place the pupil on the SEND Register. Parents will always be informed and involved.

7. Working with Parents and Carers

At St. Mary's, we believe in working in genuine partnership with parents and carers. In the Catholic tradition, parents are the primary educators of their children, and we honour that role. We will:

- Inform parents promptly when we identify or suspect SEND
- Involve parents in decisions about provision and support
- Share SEND Support Plans with parents and seek their views
- Provide regular updates on progress
- Ensure parents have access to the SENCO by appointment
- Signpost parents to the Local Offer and the Local Authority's SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)
- Treat all communication with parents sensitively and in confidence

8. Pupil Voice

We recognise that young people are the experts in their own experience. St. Mary's is committed to ensuring that pupils with SEND have a voice in their own education.

We will:

- Involve pupils in setting their own targets and reviewing progress
- Seek the views of the SEND learner as part of our Department Review process
- Seek pupils' views at all SEND reviews and annual reviews of EHC plans
- Ensure pupils understand their SEND and the support they receive
- Use pupil voice to shape SEND provision across the school
- Support pupils to attend and contribute to their own EHC review meetings

9. Transition

9.1 Transition into School

We work proactively to ensure effective transition into Year 7 for pupils with SEND:

- The SENCO attends Year 6 to Year 7 transition meetings and visits our primary feeder schools wherever possible
- The SENCO liaises closely with the Head of Year 7 and Student Services Manager to promote and support successful transition from Year 6
- A programme of introductory sessions about life at St Mary's for those pupils identified with greatest need
- Additional visits and induction activities are arranged for vulnerable pupils
- Records from primary schools are reviewed before pupils join
- Subject teachers are briefed on the needs of incoming pupils with SEND
- A transition key worker may be assigned for particularly anxious pupils

9.2 Year-on-Year Transition

At each transition point within the school, the SENCO ensures that relevant information is passed to the receiving teachers and form tutors.

9.3 Transition to Post-16 and Beyond

Preparation for adulthood begins early. For pupils with SEND:

- Careers guidance is provided and personalised to individual needs
- EHC plan annual reviews in Year 9 and beyond include a focus on preparing for adulthood
- Links are established with further education providers and support services
- Where appropriate, supported internships, traineeships and supported living options are explored

10. Working with External Agencies

The school works with a range of external agencies and specialists to support pupils with SEND. These may include:

- Educational Psychologist (EP)
- Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT)

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Specialist SEND Support Services (e.g. for hearing impairment, visual impairment, ASD)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- School Nurse and medical professionals
- Early Help and Social Care
- Local Authority SEND team

Where external professionals are involved, the school will ensure:

- Parents are informed and consent is obtained where required
- Recommendations are shared with relevant staff
- Agreed strategies are implemented and monitored

11. Resources and Funding

The school receives funding to support pupils with SEND through its notional SEND budget. The Headteacher and SENCO are responsible for the strategic deployment of this budget, in consultation with the governing body.

Funding may be used for:

- Additional staffing, including Teaching Assistants and specialist support
- Training and continuing professional development for staff
- Specialist equipment, resources, and technology
- External assessments and specialist services

Where a pupil has an EHC plan, additional funding may be requested from the Local Authority where the cost of provision exceeds the school's standard threshold.

12. Staff Training and Development

St. Mary's is committed to ensuring that all staff have the knowledge and skills to support pupils with SEND. The SENCO will:

- Audit training needs across the school
- Provide or commission relevant training for all staff
- Keep up to date with legislation, guidance, and best practice
- Share good practice and resources with colleagues

Training may include specific topics such as ADHD / dyslexia-friendly teaching, ASD awareness, trauma-informed practice, and the use of assistive technology.

13. Inclusion and Accessibility

The school is committed to inclusion and to removing barriers to learning and participation for all pupils with SEND. We maintain an Accessibility Plan (reviewed every three years) which addresses:

- Physical access to the school environment
- Access to the curriculum
- Access to written information

We will make reasonable adjustments as required under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure pupils with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage.

14. SEND and Safeguarding

The school recognises that pupils with SEND can be particularly vulnerable. All staff are aware that pupils with SEND may be at greater risk of abuse and that SEND can be both a cause and a consequence of safeguarding concerns.

In line with our Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), the SENCO liaises closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that SEND and safeguarding concerns are identified and addressed holistically.

15. Concerns and Complaints

St. Mary's hopes that concerns can be resolved informally. If a parent has a concern about their child's SEND provision, they should first contact the SENCO or the child's form tutor. This may result in a meeting to discuss the concerns further and agree a plan of action to address them.

In the unlikely event that the concern cannot be addressed in a satisfactory manner and at an informal stage, parents may use the school's formal complaints procedure. Information about this is available on the school website.

Parents can also seek independent advice and support from:

- The Local Authority SENDIASS (SEND Information, Advice and Support Service)
- The Local Authority SEN team
- IPSEA (Independent Provider of Special Education Advice)
- The SEND Tribunal.

16. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy and of SEND provision will be monitored through:

- Regular review of the SEND Register
- Analysis of progress data for pupils with SEND
- Pupil and parent surveys
- Learning walks and lesson observations focused on inclusive practice as part of the Department Review process
- Governor monitoring visits
- Annual reporting to the governing body.

17. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the SENCO, Headteacher, and SEND governor, before being presented to the Full Governing Body for approval. The review will take account of any changes in legislation or guidance, as well as learning from the school's own monitoring and evaluation.