



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

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Signed: Chair of Governors: Julian Campbell	Date: 06/12/24
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CONTENTS

[1. POLICIES](#)

[2. SEN HUB](#)

[3. THE MILDENHALL HUB](#)

[4. SEN CODE OF PRACTICE](#)

[5. DEFINING SEND](#)

[6. SEND AT ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY](#)

[7. THE SEND TEAM AT ST MARY'S PRIMARY ACADEMY](#)

[8. HEADLINES FROM THE 2014 CODE OF PRACTICE.](#)

[9. IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AT SS \(SEN SUPPORT\)](#)

[10. WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CHILDREN](#)

[11. PAPERWORK FOR CHILDREN AT SS \(SEN SUPPORT\)](#)

[12. MOVING TO AN EHCP \(EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN\)](#)

[13. TEACHING AND LEARNING](#)

[14. ADAPTATIONS TO THE CURRICULUM TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT](#)

[15. ACCESS TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES](#)

[16. STAFF EXPERTISE](#)

[17. CHILDREN WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS](#)

[18. CHILDREN WITH SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS](#)

[19. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS](#)

[20. GOVERNORS](#)

[21. COMPLAINTS](#)

[22. SUFFOLK'S LOCAL OFFER](#)

[23. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES](#)

[24. MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS](#)

'In the light of Christ we will shine together'

Jesus said: I am the light of the world. John 8.12

Live as children of light – for the fruit of light is all that is good and true and right. Ephesians 5.8-9

Our ambition is to serve our community by providing an excellent education, which is inclusive and distinctive within the context of Christian belief and practice, upholding our values in the daily life of the Academy and in our relationships with others.

1. POLICIES

St Mary's Church of England Academy is an inclusive school. All of our school policies are interlinked and should be read and informed by all other policies. In particular, the SEND policy is linked to behaviour, anti-bullying, medical accessibility and safeguarding policies.

2. SEN HUB

St Mary's Church of England Academy is part of the Mildenhall SEN Hub which is a partnership of 15 local schools, working together to improve provision for children with SEND. Together with the other schools, we have produced a guide for parents of children with SEN.

3. THE MILDENHALL HUB

SEN Information is available from our website and is a comprehensive guide which explains how all of the Hub schools support children and parents. The Mildenhall Hub SEN Information was produced in conjunction with our hub schools. The website also includes a link to Suffolk's Local Offer for parents and children with SEN and disabilities.

4. SEN CODE OF PRACTICE

This SEND policy is written to comply with the 2014 Children and Families Act and its SEN Code of Practice, together with the Equality Act 2010.

5. DEFINING SEND

The 2014 Code of Practice says that:

A person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. At compulsory school age this means he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others the same age, or, has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools. Taken from 2014 SEN Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years – Introduction xiii and xiv.

6. SEND AT ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

Our objectives are:

- To identify, at the earliest possible opportunity, barriers to learning and participation for pupils with SEND
- To ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and achieves to the highest possible standard
- To enable all children to participate in lessons fully and effectively
- To value and encourage the contribution of all children to the life of the school
- To work in partnership with parents
- To work with the Governing Body to enable them to fulfil their statutory monitoring role with regard to the Policy Statement for SEND
- To work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the need of individual pupils
- To ensure that all staff have access to training and advice to support quality teaching and learning for all pupils

Around 30% (children) of our children are either at SS (SEN support) or have EHC Plans (Education, Health and Care Plans). This is above the National Average and means that all teachers expect to include children with SEND in their classes. Another 2% of the school population have additional needs that require classroom adaptations but these needs do not have a significant impact on the student's ability to learn and cause them to be considered as SEND. In 2023 -24 we supported a total of 127 children on the SEND register.

7. THE SEND TEAM AT ST MARY'S PRIMARY ACADEMY

The member of staff with responsibility for SEND is Ms Osborne (SENDCo). She coordinates all SEND activities, working in conjunction with the SEND Governor, the Mrs Lauren Nightingale-Roffe The SENDCo responsibilities are to:

- Coordinate provision for pupils with SEND
- Liaise with and advise teachers on all SEND matters
- Manage SEND learning support assistants
- Liaise with parents of pupils with SEND
- Liaise with primary/secondary school SENDCo's, educational psychologists, school nurse, S+L therapist, play therapist, Virtual School (for CIC) and other health/special education outreach services
- Children in Care (CIC)

The SENCo will meet regularly with other schools and will keep herself up to date with current initiatives locally and nationally to seek out and share best practice.

8. HEADLINES FROM THE 2014 CODE OF PRACTICE.

- No more statements will be issued by the Local Authority. Statements have been replaced by Education, Health and Care plans (EHC Plans) which can be used to support children from birth to 25 years.
- School Action and School Action Plus have been replaced by one school based category of Need known as 'Special Educational needs Support' (SS). All children are closely monitored, and their progress tracked each term. Those at SS are additionally tracked by the SENDCO.



- There are four broad categories of SEND:
 - communication and interaction
 - cognition and learning
 - social, emotional and mental health
 - physical and sensory.

We have children in all these categories.

- We work closely with parents and children to ensure that we take into account the child's own views and aspirations and the parents' experience of, and hopes for, their child. Parents are invited to be involved at every stage of planning and reviewing SEND provision for their child.
- All children benefit from 'Quality First Teaching': this means that teachers expect to assess, plan and teach all children at the level which allows them to make progress with their learning. In addition, we implement some focused interventions to target particular skills.
- We have high expectations of all our children. Children on our SEND register should make progress which compares well with the progress made by other children in school.
- We do not discriminate against any children requiring admission to St Mary's or any subsequent SEND provision - we welcome them into our school.

9. IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AT SS (SEN SUPPORT)

Children with SEND are identified by one of three assessment routes all of which are part of the overall approach to monitor pupil progress:

- the progress of every child is monitored at termly pupil progress meetings. Where children are identified as not making progress in spite of Quality First Teaching they are discussed with the SENCO and a plan of action agreed.
- Class teachers are continually aware of a child's progress. They 'seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances', characterised by progress which:
 - is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
 - fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
 - fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers

We use qualified advisors to undertake a range of standardised tests with children. These can be used to add to and inform teachers' own understanding and assessments of a child. Parents are advised to contact their GP if they think their child may have ASD or ADHD or some other disability.

10. WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CHILDREN

We aim to have good and informative relationships with all of our parents. If a child is experiencing difficulties, parents will be informed either at parents' meetings (Autumn and Spring terms) or during informal meetings to discuss the child's progress. It shouldn't come as a surprise to a parent to learn that their child is being identified as having SEND.

Once a child has been identified, the class teacher will meet the parents to:

- formally let them know that their child is being placed on SS
- discuss assessments that have been completed
- agree a plan and provision for the next term.

This is part of the graduated approach cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review required in the Code of Practice. Depending on their age, and their interest, the child may be invited to attend meetings. Records are kept of these meetings and copies are available to parents. Thereafter, parents – and children- are invited to a meeting each term to review progress made, set targets and agree provision for the next term. In the summer term, there is an annual review of the child's progress.

11. PAPERWORK FOR CHILDREN AT SS (SEN SUPPORT)

Once a child has been identified as needing SS the following paperwork is completed:

- Annually, a one-page-plan or passport is used to record the child's strengths and interests, what they enjoy about school, what they find hard and what helps them to achieve. This is completed with the child and parent and acts as a guide to their class teacher. The information may be updated during the year.
- Termly, at progress meetings, a Individual support record (ISR) is produced and/or reviewed. The plan records specific and challenging targets for the child to achieve in half a term, together with the personalised provision (which may be 1-1 or in a small group) put in place to enable the child to achieve these targets.

12. MOVING TO AN EHCP (EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN)

If children fail to make progress, in spite of high quality, targeted support at SENS we may apply for the child to be assessed for an EHC Plan. Generally, we apply for an EHC Plan if:

- The child is in the care of a local authority and therefore additionally vulnerable
- The child has a disability which is lifelong and which means that they will always need support to learn effectively
- The child's achievements are so far below their peers that we think it likely that the child may at some point benefit from special school provision.

Children who we think will manage in mainstream schools, albeit with support, are less often assessed for EHC Plans. Having a diagnosis (e.g. of ASD, ADHD or Dyslexia) does not mean that a child needs an EHC Plan. If the application for an EHC Plan is successful, a member of the Local Authority will call a meeting for parents, the child and the school together with any health or social care professionals who are involved with the family. The meeting will record the child's strengths, their dreams and aspirations as well as the barriers they face. Following the meeting, the LA will produce the EHC Plan which will record the decisions made at the meeting. In 2021-22 we have had 18 children with EHC plans on the school role.

13. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our aim is for all children to be working independently, in class, at the cusp of their potential. Children with SEND are entitled to be taught by their teacher. Teachers aim to spend time each day working with all children with SEND, individually or as part of a group. When allocating additional TA support to children, our focus is on outcomes, we aim to put in sufficient support to enable the child to reach their challenging targets, but without developing a learned dependence on an adult.

Teaching is carefully and regularly monitored to ensure that all of our pupils receive the highest quality education. The progress of all children is monitored through lesson observations; work scrutiny and pupil progress meetings. This ensures pupils with SEND are equally monitored and taught to the highest standards.

The emotional and social skill development of all children is monitored using the Thrive Approach. This assessment tool was specifically developed for use in schools and provides a framework for the precise assessment of children who have social and developmental needs and are struggling to manage at school. It helps teachers to plan focused intervention for those children whose behaviour seems to make no sense. It focuses on what lies behind the behaviour. We have a full-time Thrive practitioner in school who is able to work with children who have developmental needs on either a 1:1 or small group basis. The Thrive approach is grounded in neuroscience and attachment theory. Our Practitioner is able to work closely with students on specific areas of development and provide a high level of support to very vulnerable children. If we have a child for whom their EHCP requires intensive ESMH support the SENDCo and class teacher will liaise to create a Boxall profile for the individual child which can be shared with supporting professionals. We do not use the Boxall profile for all students in the school but it is a vital tool when working with and monitoring the ESMH development of the most vulnerable and needy children.

The school has a range of interventions available which are listed and costed on a provision map. When considering an intervention, we look first at the child's profile of learning in order that we can select the intervention which is best matched to the child.

Targets for children at SS are deliberately challenging in the attempt to close the attainment gap between these children and their peers. Interventions are often crucial in closing these gaps, so are monitored closely by both the class teacher and by the SENDCO (who monitors overall progress after the intervention).

- Interventions are planned in half term blocks
- At the end of each half term, progress towards targets is assessed and recorded.
- A decision is then made as to whether to continue the intervention, to swap to a new intervention or to allow a period of consolidation in class.

The SENDCo monitors interventions to identify 'what works' and apply to the school overall. The SENDCo applies for High Needs Funding from the local authority to fund the additional staffing and resources that the most vulnerable children require. The SENDCo provides this information to the Principal in order that regular Pupil Premium reports can detail the interventions used, their costs and their impact. The reports also detail vulnerable group performance including attainment and progress.

14. ADAPTATIONS TO THE CURRICULUM TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

St Mary's Primary Academy is disability friendly. The school is on one level, with automatic doors, wide corridors and easy access toilet facilities, a dedicated Nurture space and a variety of additional breakout areas. There is a medical room and generally find that no additional adaptations to the building are necessary for children with physical disabilities.

The school has a portable 'soundfield' system which can be used if a child is identified as having mild hearing loss. Other adaptations to the physical environment will be made, as appropriate, to accommodate children with other sensory disabilities. We have some adapted keyboards, switches and associated programmes to support children with limited motor control skills.

All of our classrooms are inclusion-friendly: we aim to teach in a way that will support children with tendencies towards dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASD etc. Where necessary, the curriculum can be amended to suit individual needs. Such variations are detailed in Individual Support records (ISRs). All of our children access a wide ranging and challenging educational curriculum, and we recognise achievement and expertise in all curricular areas. As part of normal class differentiation, curriculum content can be simplified and made more accessible by using visual, tactile and concrete resources.

15. ACCESS TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All of our children have equal access to educational activities and after school clubs. We support many children financially to participate in such activities including residentials, instrumental music lessons and holiday clubs. Where necessary, we adapt to meet the physical and learning needs of our children. Class trips are part of our curriculum and we aim for all children to benefit from them. No child is excluded from a trip because of SEN, disability or medical needs.

16. STAFF EXPERTISE

All of our teachers are trained and supported to work with children with SEN. We offer training and self-help opportunities through access to in-house or development courses, provision of books or guidance towards useful resources. Teachers work closely with the SENDCo and follow detailed IEPs. A number of our TAs have ELKLAN (speech and language) training which helps them to support children with communication difficulties. Our Early years setting has been awarded the ELKLAN Communication Friendly Status award and we are currently in the process of gaining this status for the whole academy. We also have 5 staff trained in Makaton signing which also supports language development in children and we are accredited as a Makaton Friendly setting Other TAs have expertise and training on other areas or specific interventions (e.g. Irlens, ELSA, Dyslexia and British Sign Language). If we identify information we can't access without the aid of additional, more specialist help, and the school buys-in additional expertise from the local authority or other sources. This includes access to Educational Psychologists, play therapist, music nurture, art nurture and Family Support Practitioners

17. CHILDREN WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Behaviour is not classified as an SEND. If a child shows consistent unwanted behaviours, the class teacher will assess the child's needs, taking into account family circumstances and the child's known



history. If the child's behaviour is felt to be a response to trauma or to home-based experiences (e.g. bereavement, parental separation) we complete a CAF with the family and support the child through that process.

If parents and school are concerned that the child may have mental health needs, we encourage parents to ask their GP for a referral to a mental health professional through the Emotional Wellbeing Hub. If the child is felt to have long term social, emotional or mental health needs (e.g. with anger management) the school offers a range of social skills or therapeutic interventions. The Academy also accesses support from behaviour specialists. We were part of a pilot scheme introducing the work of Mental Health Support Workers to schools during 2020-21 and now use the expertise of these practitioners to support children and families with anxiety and/or depression. If it is appropriate we will refer families and children to the Counsellor and Playtherapist who works at the school on one day a week. The school Pastoral Team, led by Mrs Rutter, are responsible for ensuring that all referrals from staff requesting additional SEMH support are allocated to a pastoral support pathway and that the class teacher is given additional support with meeting the needs of that child.

All children's behaviour is responded to consistently in line with our Behaviour Policy, although reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate individual needs.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, especially towards children with SEND and disabilities. We will actively investigate all allegations and, if there is cause, work with both the bully and the victim to improve their social skills.

18. CHILDREN WITH SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Some children and young people find it difficult to listen, understand and communicate with others and may need support to develop the surprising number of skills involved. SLCN is the umbrella term most commonly used to describe these difficulties. It stands for Speech, Language and Communication Needs. Children with SLCN may have difficulty with only one speech, language or communication skill, or with several. Children may have difficulties with listening and understanding or with talking or both. Each child also has a unique combination of strengths. This means that every child with SLCN is different.

Is it common?

Speech, Language and Communication Needs, or SLCN, is quite common. It is estimated that around 10% of children starting school have SLCN – that's approximately 2-3 in every classroom.

Speech, language and communication needs can occur as a result of hearing loss, general developmental needs or as part of a disability or medical syndrome, such as Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy or Autistic Spectrum Condition. Difficulties with talking can also present as a child's main area of need but without an obvious cause. The majority of children, who are late to talk, do not develop persistent difficulties with talking. We employ an independent Speech and language Therapist, Hannah Sherwood, to assist staff with supporting children with SLCN.

19. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

Transition into and within school



We understand how difficult it is for children and parents as they move into a new class or a new school and will do what we can, according to the individual needs of the child, to make transitions between classes- including from the nursery- as smooth as possible. This may include, for example:

- Additional meetings for the parents and child with the new teacher
- Additional visits to the classroom environment in order to identify where the toilets are, where the pegs are etc.
- Opportunities to take photographs of key people and places in order to make a transition booklet.

Enhanced transition arrangements are tailored to meet individual needs and may include an adjusted or individual timetable.

Transition to Secondary School

Transition reviews for Year 6 pupils are held in the Summer Term of Year 6. The SENDCo provides details of each child's needs to their relevant secondary school once the school place has been confirmed by the Local Authority in order to facilitate a smooth transition. The SENDCo also runs a weekly transition group for year 6 students who have been identified as needing extra support. This group runs from January to July. The secondary school SENDCo is invited to review meetings and additional transition arrangements may be made e.g. extra visits, travel training etc.

20. GOVERNORS

It is the statutory duty of the governors to ensure that the school follows its responsibilities to meet the needs of children with SEND following the requirements of the Code of Practice 2014. The school has a Governor, Ms Lauren Nightingale-Roffe, with particular responsibility for SEND who meets with the SENDCo at least termly to discuss actions taken by the school.

21. COMPLAINTS

The school works, wherever possible, in partnership with parents to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting pupils' needs. All complaints are taken seriously and are heard through the school's complaints policy and procedure. In the first instance, parents should talk to the class teacher, SENDCo and/or Principal.

22. SUFFOLK'S LOCAL OFFER

The purpose of the local offer is to enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. It includes provision from birth to 25, across education, health and social care. Suffolk's Local Offer is available from the website <http://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/home.page>

In addition, <https://www.access-unlimited.co.uk> is the One Stop Shop for Suffolk children and young people with additional needs and disabilities. It includes information about activities and breaks available for Suffolk children with SEND as well as information for parents about benefits, about how Suffolk aims to support children through education, health and social care.



23. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, faith, gender or capability in all aspects of school. We promote self and mutual respect and a caring and nonjudgmental attitude throughout the school.

24. MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

The SENDCO will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. It will be reviewed every two years by the Community, Ethos and Mission Committee; or before at any time, if there is new relevant legislation or guidance.