



**ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL**  
*To lead those in our care to grow in their faith  
and to benefit from an enriching education*

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## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY**

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### **Principles**

*‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.’*

*Psalms 118:22*

### **Guidelines to Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014 (COP) with Policy and Procedures for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disability at St Thomas More School**

As a Catholic school guided by the teachings of Christ, we strive as a community to successfully include those with special educational needs and disabilities and to ensure equality of opportunity.

#### **2 Compliance**

This policy is written to comply with the statutory requirements laid out in the **Code of Practice 2014 (COP)** and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

The Equality Act (2010)  
Special Educational Needs (Information) Regulations (2014)  
Statutory guidance on supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions (2014)  
Teacher standards (2012)

#### **3 Context**

The purpose of the **Code of Practice 2014 (COP)** is to give statutory guidance that all schools **must** have regard to on the discharge of responsibilities related to special educational needs and disability.

The Code sets out guidance on policies and procedures aimed at enabling pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and disabled children and young people (aged from 16 to 25) to reach their full potential; to be included in their school communities and make a successful transition to adulthood. For the vast majority of children and young people their mainstream setting will meet all their special educational needs. Some children will require additional help from SEN services or other agencies external to the school. A very small minority of children will have SEN of a severity or complexity that requires the Local Authority (LA) to produce an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan) detailing the special educational provision the learning difficulties require.

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 him or her. Children and young people with disabilities e.g. asthma do not necessarily have SEN. However, where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will be covered by the SEN definition (see below 4).

#### **4 Special Educational Provision explained:**

Some children and young people need educational provision that is additional to or different from what is expected from teachers in their day to day pedagogy i.e. high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised. High quality teaching should be sufficient to meet the individual needs of the majority of

children and young people. Any necessary additional provision is regarded as special educational provision under Section 21 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

## 5 Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children and young persons have a learning difficulty 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 facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institution. A disability is defined in the Equality Act of 2010 as “...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

Children at St Thomas More will not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because their mother tongue or the language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

## 6 The Fundamental Principles

At St Thomas More School, we strive to:

- Ensure ‘achievement for all; Enabling every child to be the best they can be regardless of background, challenge or need.
- Identify students with SEN.
- Include students with SEN in our mainstream school so that they are not further disadvantaged, making reasonable adjustments to include students to the fullest extent.
- Take the views of the students into account.
- Involve parents in supporting their child’s education.
- Offer students with SEN a broad, balanced and relevant education and facilitate their progress. This will be in keeping with the recommended **graduated approach (COP 5.38)**; assessing student needs, planning and implementing strategies and then reviewing and fine-tuning interventions, involving external expertise as needed.
- Ensure teachers act upon their responsibilities towards students who have SEN by assessing, recording and reviewing progress and liaising with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to ensure that progress is monitored so that intervention can be optimally fine-tuned.
- Ensure the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), Learning Support Teachers (LSTs) and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) have an opportunity to meet weekly to discuss SEN students’ cause for concern and suggest methods and strategies to meet students’ needs.
- Ensure that the Governing body is updated about the progress of SEN students and reviews provision regularly; in particular through the role of link governor and through the use of available data e.g. RAISEonline.
- Additional aspects of assessment (including diagnostic) linked to four areas of need:
  - communication and interaction
  - cognition and learning
  - social, emotional and mental health
  - sensory and/or physical needs.

## 7 Admission Arrangements

- Admission arrangements for students with Education, health and care plans are not subject to the normal admissions procedures, as places are allocated through Haringey LA. The Executive Headteacher has responsibility for ensuring that the admission policy of the school, in relation to students with SEN, is handled positively and sensitively and that all parents and children are made to feel welcome.

## **Our Aims**

- We recognise that we will need to consider the individual needs of students when planning our curriculum and pedagogy. We aim to provide a curriculum, which is accessible to the individual needs of our students and includes students with SEN, disabilities and the wide range of needs at St Thomas More School.
- We recognise that some students will need additional support to ensure access to the whole curriculum. We will ensure that the needs of SEN students are identified and assessed and we aim to provide appropriate support strategies. If additional specialist advice and support is necessary we will contact the appropriate external agencies.
- We recognise the importance of early identification and assessment of students with special educational needs. We will develop practices and procedures, which will aim to ensure that all students' special educational needs, are identified and assessed and the delivery of the curriculum will be planned to meet their needs.
- We recognise the vital role of parents/carers in the identification, assessment and response to their students' special educational needs. We will work in true partnership with parents/carers, valuing their views and contributions and keeping them fully involved in their child's education.
- We are committed to effective collaboration between all agencies working with a child and a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting students' special educational needs. We will actively support the establishment and maintenance of close links with all agencies working with the child.
- Staff at the school are committed to ensuring that students with special educational needs:
  - Have access to high quality education within a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
  - Benefit fully from the school's personalised approach for individual needs, including being taught by specialist staff when appropriate.
  - Are provided with a stimulating and accessible environment.
  - Have equal opportunity to achieve their full potential in all aspects of their development.
  - Are involved, along with their parents, in the identification and assessment of their needs.
  - Are included in the life of the school and have their contribution welcomed.
  - Are prepared for the challenges of life in a complex changing society.

## **8 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **8a Role of Governing Body**

- Ensuring that the school complies with the COP 2014 and related legislation, including the general and specific duties as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensuring that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented. This will be evidenced by visits (which could be by the link Governor, members of the curriculum committee or members of the full Governing Body) and a subsequent report back to the Governing Body.
- Establishing appropriate staffing and funding arrangements.
- Considering and reporting of the effectiveness of the school's work for students with SEN (at least annually).
- The Governing Body delegates the role of responsible person to the Headteacher.
- Establishing the purpose and work of the SEN Governor.

### **8b Role of the Executive Headteacher**

- Along with the Governing Body, ensuring that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy and are given appropriate training and support so that they can fulfil their duties.
- To ensure the school's offer as contained in the School Information Report is published on the School website and updated appropriately.

### **8c Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)**

The SENCO works within the following key areas of responsibility as set out in the Code of Practice (section 6.84)

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy.
- Drawing up annually and reviewing a SEN improvement plan for the department.
- Providing information on the above to the Governing Body and Executive Headteacher.
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers.
- Leading and managing the SEN team of teachers and learning support assistants.
- Coordinating provision for students with special educational needs and leading on the graduated approach.
- Ensuring access arrangements for examinations.
- Overseeing the records on all students with special educational needs.
- Overseeing liaison with parents of children with special educational needs and facilitating transition where appropriate.
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff and coordinating external training where appropriate.
- Liaising with external agencies.

#### **8d Role of SEN Staff**

- Learning Support Teachers (LSTs) are specialist qualified teachers. They support and supervise the education of students with an ECH plan.
- Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and student ambassadors provide mainly in-class support, as directed by the SENCO or Deputy Headteacher i/c Teaching and learning, to students who have EHC plans or are included in the category of SEN support. They may withdraw small groups for learning support, literacy support, behaviour support groups etc.

#### **8e General roles for all Teaching and Support Staff**

All staff are involved in teaching and supporting students with SEN and must be aware of procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for the students. To this end, information on students with SEN is published in October of each year and provided in a Profile booklet which is confidential and available in the school shared area. Summary Education Plan or student profiles are written with the contribution from parent/child and made available to teaching staff to support in their planning.

### **9 Departmental Structure**

The name of the person who is responsible for co-ordinating the day-to-day provision of education for students with special educational needs is Isabelle Goursaud

The SEN team is:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Isabelle Goursaud     | -SENCO  |
| Mary Rowland          | - Assistant SENCO/Teacher with SEN responsibility |
| Ms J Cornwell         | - Assistant SENCO/Nurture Group Teacher           |
| Ms M Plewa            | - Assistant SENCO/Mathematics Teacher             |
| Sister Frances Cullen | -Learning Support Teacher (LST)                   |

### **10 Identification of SEN and the graduated approach**

On entry to St Thomas More students undergo CATs and Reading tests. If a student's reading age is 3 to 4 years below their chronological age, or their CATs average score is less than 92, the student may be placed onto the SEN Register for further investigation and support. Parents will be contacted. Records from primary school, if available, will be scrutinised to inform interventions plans.

Any student who joins the school as a casual admission will be similarly tested and information from a previous school, where available, is similarly assessed.

Teachers and other staff should also refer on to the SENCO, students who may have special educational needs. The SEN register is updated and is constantly available electronically to all staff in the school shared area.

Twice a year (in October & May) a snapshot of the SEN register is taken and published in paper and electronic format for all school staff in the SEN shared area, which also carries copies of personalised plans and training resources for all staff.

Appropriate interventions to address literacy issues, dyslexia support, autism and other learning differences will be put in place and effectiveness tracked via assessment and termly grid grades. If the school decides, after consultation with parents, that a student requires additional support to make progress, the SENCO, in collaboration with teachers, will support the assessment of the student and have an input in planning future support. The subject teacher will remain responsible for planning and delivering individualised programmes. Parents will be closely informed of the action and results.

Students can be removed from the SEN register when they have made relevant progress in literacy, numeracy and behaviour. The register is a 'changeable' system.

When students do not make adequate progress the SENCO will request an assessment for an Education, health and care plan (EHCP) from the Local Authority (LA), when if despite an individualised programme of sustained intervention the student remains a significant cause for concern. An assessment for an Education, health and care plan (EHCP) might also be requested by a parent or outside agency. The school will have the following information available:

- The action followed with respect to additional support
- Student Support Plans
- Records and outcomes of regular reviews undertaken
- Information on the student's health and relevant medical history
- Progress Levels
- Literacy/Numeracy attainments
- Other relevant assessments from specialists such as support teachers and educational psychologist
- The views of parents
- The views of the child
- Children's Services reports
- Any other involvement by professionals

## **11 Review of EHCPs**

EHCPs will be reviewed annually.

The SENCO will organise these reviews and invite:

- The child's parent
- The child if appropriate
- A representative of the LA
- Any other person the LA considers appropriate
- Any other person the SENCO considers appropriate

The aim of the review will be to:

- Assess the student's progress.
- Review the provision made for the student in the context of progress and levels of attainment in basic literacy/numeracy and other areas.
- Consider the appropriateness of the existing EHCP in relation to the students' performance during the year, and whether to cease, continue, or amend it
- Set new targets for the coming year

## **12 Parents' Concerns**

In the first instance if there is a complaint to senior managers within the school or Heads of Year about provision for a student with SEN, it needs to be passed to the SENCO. The SENCO will investigate the complaint and the procedure will fit into the school's overall complaints procedure.

### **13 Training for Staff**

St. Thomas More Catholic School is committed to providing and facilitating attendance at in-service training in the area of SEN. The school is committed to regular training for staff on pertinent SEN topics such as auditory processing difficulties, autism, attention deficit disorder, speech and language difficulties etc.

### **14 Outside Agencies**

The SEN Department continues to update the list of agencies with which the school works. This will be reviewed annually and may include:

- SEN Consultants
- Specialist teams (e.g. Sensory Impairment, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy)
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Educational Psychologists

The SEN Development Plan fosters links with other schools and colleges for the appropriate placement of students.

**This policy will be reviewed annually**

*This policy was agreed on 7 December 2004*

*This policy was revised on 11 May 2006*

*This policy was revised in March 2009*

*This policy was revised on 28 March 2012*

*This policy was revised, June 2015*

*This policy was ratified by the Full Governing Body on 27 June 2017*

*This Policy was reviewed by the Full Governing Body on 27 June 2018*

*This Policy was reviewed by the Admissions and Ethos Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019*