



ST. MARY'S  
ACADEMY TRUST

**St. Mary's Academy Trust**

# **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy**

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St. Mary's Academy Trust is an inclusive Trust where all children are valued and treated with respect, regardless of their age, gender, background or ability. All of our schools use their best endeavours to ensure that provision for all children is of the highest possible standard, whilst acknowledging that we are continually striving to improve our practice. We are committed to narrowing the attainment gap between children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and their peers without Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

## **1) Definitions**

This definition is taken from the 'Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3)'.

'A child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her'.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- b) Has 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 or mainstream post-16 institutions.

A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to fall within subsection (a and b) when they reach compulsory school age (or would be likely, if special educational provision was not made.'

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is:

'a disability is defined as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long term\* and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

\*'long term' is defined as 'a year or more'

## **2) Aims and objectives**

### **Aims**

It is the aim of St. Mary's Academy Trust to provide every child with the best education possible. We promote a fundamental belief in the equality of opportunity for all children throughout the Trust. All children should be fully included within school life. Reasonable adjustments **must** be made so all children can be fully included.

### **Objectives**

- To identify special educational needs and disabilities as early as possible
- To plan effective provision for all children with special educational needs and disabilities
- To effectively monitor the provision provided
- To effectively monitor the attainment and progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities
- To work in partnership with parents and carers
- To work in partnership with outside agencies
- To deliver a child-centered approach to special educational needs and disabilities provision
- To create an environment where pupils with special educational needs and disabilities can contribute fully to school life

### **3) Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Class teacher**

Responsible for:

- The progress and development of **every** child in their class
- Providing quality first teaching for all pupils and making reasonable adjustments where required
- Working closely with any teaching assistants and specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions
- Working with the SEND Coordinator to review each child's progress against outcomes and adapt provision where necessary
- Writing 'School Focused Plans' and sharing and reviewing these with the child and parents/carers at least once each term (3 times per year).
- Identifying and communicating any concerns about specific children with the SEND Coordinator
- Ensuring that parents/carers are:
  - involved in supporting their child's learning
  - kept informed about the support their child is getting
  - involved in reviewing how the child is progressing
- Ensuring that the school's SEND Policy is followed

#### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo)**

The name of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) is available on the school's website within the school's SEND information report.

Responsible for:

- Working with the headteacher and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in school
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual children with special educational needs and disabilities, including those who have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues
- Working with staff, parents and other agencies to ensure that children with special educational needs and disabilities receive appropriate support and quality first teaching.
- Liaising with any external agencies who may come into school to help support a child's learning e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Service, Educational Psychology Service, Occupational Therapists etc.
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure pupils and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- Ensuring that parents are:
  - involved in supporting their child's learning
  - kept informed about the support their child is getting
  - involved in reviewing how the child is progressing
- Ensuring that there are excellent, up to date records of each child's progress and needs.
- Work with the headteacher and governing body to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments

#### **Headteacher**

The headteacher will:

- Work with the SEND Coordinator and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in school
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of children with SEND
- Make sure that the SEND governor is kept up to date about any issues in the school relating to SEND.

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## **SEND governor**

The SEND governor will:

- Work with the headteacher and SEND Coordinator to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in school
- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing body meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school and update the governing body on this

## **4. Admission arrangements**

Please refer to the admissions information on the school website. The admission arrangements for all children is in accordance with national legislation, including the Equality Act 2010. This includes children with any level of SEND; those with Education, Health and Care Plans and those without.

## **5. Accessibility**

All St. Mary's Academy Trust schools comply with all relevant accessibility requirements. Please refer to the Academies Accessibility Strategy and the school's accessibility plan on the school website for more detail.

## **6. Allocation of resources for pupils with SEND**

All children with special educational needs and disabilities have access to Element 1 and 2 of a school's budget.

Some children with severe and complex needs require additional funding (Element 3: high needs funding) through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Where a child has significant difficulties and does not already have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), an application for statutory assessment may be made to a multi-agency panel, which is administered by the Local Authority. This multi-agency panel will determine whether the level and complexity of need meets the threshold for this funding (high needs funding). It would then be the responsibility of the SEND Coordinator, senior Leadership team and governors, in liaison with St. Mary's Academy Trust's finance team, to agree how the allocation of resources is used.

## **7. Identifying pupils with SEND**

When considering whether a child has special educational needs, **any** of the following may be evident:

- Make little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in a child's identified area of weakness;
- Attainment is significantly below age group expectations;
- Has sensory or physical problems;
- Has communication and/or interaction difficulties;
- Has social, emotional or mental health difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's own learning or that of the class

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having special educational needs.

Where there are concerns around a child, an 'Initial Concerns Form' will be completed.

Where it is determined that a child does have a SEND, parents will be formally advised of this. At this point the decision will be made to add the child to the SEND register at SEND support. The aim of formally identifying a child with SEND is to help school ensure that effective provision is put in place and so remove barriers to learning.

### **Referral for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

If a child has significant difficulties a statutory assessment can be requested. This request can be made by the school or the parents/carers. The application will contain detailed information from a variety of sources including:

- The child
- Parents
- Teachers
- SEND Coordinator
- Social Care (where appropriate)
- Health professionals (where appropriate)

This information will relate to:

- the identification of the child's strengths and needs
- current and past additional provision provided
- the reasonable adjustments made
- actions that have been taken to support the child
- the preliminary progress against outcomes set

A decision will be made about whether or not the pupil is eligible for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) by a multi-agency panel, which is administered by the Local Authority. Parents have the right to appeal against a decision not to initiate a statutory assessment leading to an EHC Plan.

Further information about EHC Plans can be found via:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/schools-and-learning/special-educational-needs/education-health-and-care-plans/>

### **8. Working in partnerships with parents**

We believe that a close working relationship with parents is vital in order to ensure:

- a) Early and accurate identification and assessment of SEND leading to appropriate intervention and provision
- b) Continuing social and academic progress of children with SEND
- c) Personal and academic targets are set and met effectively

In cases where more frequent regular contact with parents is necessary, this will be arranged based on the individual child's needs. The SEND Coordinator may also signpost parents of children with SEND to the local authority SENDIASS (Special educational Needs Disability Information, Advice, Support Service) where specific advice, guidance and support may be required or to the school's Parent Support Advisor.

Parents are invited to attend meetings with external agencies regarding their child, and are kept up to date and consulted on any points of action drawn up in regards to the provision for their child.

### **9. Assessing and reviewing a child's progress towards outcomes**

At St. Mary's Academy Trust, we follow the four-part cycle of assess, plan, do, review. This is an ongoing cycle to enable provision to be revised and refined as the understanding of the needs of the child grows. This cycle enables

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the identification of those strategies and/or interventions which are the most effective in supporting the child to achieve good progress and outcomes.

### **10. Evaluating the success of provision**

Pupil's academic progress will be monitored on a termly basis in line with the Trust Assessment Policy.

Ongoing records based on specific SEND provision and interventions are maintained by class teachers and teaching assistants. These records are reviewed at least termly by the SEND Coordinator in order to evaluate the impact of the provision/intervention. This enables the SEND Coordinator to identify whether provision is effective in supporting children to meet their specific outcomes and, as a result, identify next steps.

### **11. Complaints procedure**

We believe that most complaints can be dealt with through an informal discussion with an appropriate member of staff in school. Because of this, St. Mary's Academy Trust would always advise parents/carers to talk any complaint over with someone in school before making the complaint formal.

However, if this does not resolve the concern/complaint, it can then be taken to the next stage of the complaints procedure. For further detail, refer to the complaints procedure which is available on the school website.

### **12. Training (CPD)**

At St. Mary's Academy Trust, we aim to keep all staff up to date with relevant training and developments in relation to the needs of children with SEND. The SEND Coordinator attends relevant SEND courses, SEND meetings and facilitates/signposts relevant SEND focused external training opportunities for all staff. We recognise the need to train all our staff on SEND issues and we have funding available to support this professional development. The SEND Coordinator, with the senior leadership team, ensures that training opportunities are matched to school development priorities.

### **13. Links with other schools**

All schools within St. Mary's Academy Trust work in partnership. This enables the schools to build a bank of joint resources and to share ideas, advice, training and development activities and expertise.

### **14. Links with other agencies and organisations**

St. Mary's Academy Trust schools continue to build strong working relationships and links with external agencies and organisations. We seek advice in order to fully support our SEND children and aid school inclusion.

Schools within St. Mary's Academy Trust liaise with external agencies and organisations such as:

- Barnsley Education Inclusion Service
- Educational, Child and Community Psychology (ECCP) Team
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Speech and Language Therapy Service (SALT)
- Behaviour Support Services
- Occupational Therapy Services

Parental permission will be sought before any external agency or organisation carries out any work with a child.

## **15. Legislation and guidance**

This policy is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEND and disabilities
- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Regulations 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care plans (EHCP), SEND Coordinators (SENDCOs) and the SEND information report.

Policies referenced within this policy include:

- Barnsley Local Authority Admissions arrangements
- Academies accessibility strategy
- Accessibility Plan (Specific to school)
- Trust Complaints Procedure
- Trust Assessment Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually.

### **COVID-19 AMENDMENT Version 2 (Update 13.1.2021)**

During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, some amendments/additional considerations are required around the above policy.

- Partnership work (for example, with parents/carers, external agencies) continues to be vital however, schools will currently be unable to carry this communication out in a face to face format. Virtual meetings, telephone conversations and emails will be used to maintain these professional relationships.
- Any child identified as presenting a significant risk linked to the transmission of COVID-19 (e.g. children prone to spitting, children who may need to be physically restrained, pupils who require support with mobility due to physical disabilities) must have an individual risk assessment. This risk assessment is to be shared with parents/carers and all adults who are going to be working with the child. If appropriate, the risk assessment is also to be shared with the child too.
- Risk assessments must be shared with the CEO of St. Mary's Academy Trust and will be reviewed regularly by the school and Trust at least monthly.
- Where a child is unable to attend their setting because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, schools must be able to offer them access to remote education of a broad and balanced curriculum. This will be done through the use of our online learning platform, Google Classrooms. Where this is not possible or not appropriate, paper based work may be provided as an alternative. In line with government guidance, the school will monitor pupil engagement with this work daily and provide feedback on learning weekly.
- Specialists, therapists, clinicians and external professionals for children with SEND will be allowed into school to provide interventions as usual (including during times of restricted attendance -National Lockdown). However, contact should be minimized. A record of any visitors must be kept for test and trace purposes. The visitor must work with the child in a designated area away from other children and staff. This area must be cleaned after the session.
- Where possible, interventions should be provided as normal because they will be important in enabling children to access and benefit from education. Where possible, the interventions should be delivered to pupils in the same bubble. If this is not possible, interventions may include children from across the same key

stage but this should be kept to a minimum. Interventions must **not** be delivered to groups of pupils from across two or more different key stages. **At times of restricted attendance (National Lockdown), interventions should be delivered to pupils in the same bubble only.**

- The staff delivering interventions must be particularly rigorous about hand washing and respiratory hygiene.
- Specialist resources used during interventions can be shared by children within the group (e.g. Lego blocks), however they must be meticulously cleaned immediately after use. If they cannot be cleaned, they must be stored away from children for 48 hours (72 hours for plastic).
- Break out spaces used for interventions should be clearly timetabled to ensure no unnecessary contact between groups. These spaces must be cleaned between use.
- Catch-up grant: It is strongly recommended that settings spend this funding on catch up support to address individual needs, including Speech and Language therapy, Educational Psychologist time, small groups and individual intervention. This could be either direct (i.e. the specialist spending time with the pupil) or indirect (i.e. the specialist spending time with the school staff to design an intervention that the teacher/TA then delivers regularly).
  
- **During periods of restricted attendance** (National Lockdown), schools will allow and strongly encourage children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to attend. Additional children, who are considered vulnerable by the school, may be permitted to attend.
- Despite being strongly encouraged to take up a place, some parents/carers may choose not to send their child to school during periods of restricted attendance (National Lockdown). Where this is the case, schools should work collaboratively with families, putting in place reasonable adjustments as necessary, so that children with SEND can successfully access remote education alongside their peers. Where a child has provision specified within their EHC plan, it remains the duty of the local authority and any health bodies to secure or arrange the delivery of this in the setting that the plan names. However, there may be times when it becomes very difficult to do so, for example, if they are self-isolating. In this situation, decisions on how provision can be delivered should be informed by relevant considerations including, for example, the types of services that the child can access remotely, for example, online teaching and remote sessions. These decisions should be considered on a case by case basis, avoiding a one size fits all approach.
  
- **Following periods of restricted attendance**, it is likely that there will be children returning to school who display with some difficulties as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and/or their time away from school, e.g. bereavement, separation anxiety, social difficulties etc. Teachers will liaise with the SENDCo and meet with parents/carers remotely to discuss the child's difficulties and put in place a plan of support. Teachers will be provided with resources and ideas to support the needs of children, e.g. information packs from LA SCI team, social stories, thrive resources. These resources should be used, alongside other resources deemed appropriate by the school, to support teachers' planning to ensure provision meets the specific needs of the pupil.
- Schools will need to work closely with the parents/carers of children with an EHCP and any other SEND children who may find the return to school challenging to support their reintegration. The school must help prepare the child as much as possible, e.g. through the use of social stories, virtual visits/walk rounds and remote calls with staff.