

St. Mark's Catholic School



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY

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This policy should be read with the school's SEND Information Report and Accessibility Plan.

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How this policy fits with the Information Report

This policy sets out the school's principles, responsibilities and decision-making framework. The SEND Information Report explains the provision available in practice and provides parent-facing information required by the SEND Regulations. Both documents are reviewed together so that they remain consistent.

Our mission

St Mark's is a Catholic community inspired by Gospel values where relationships are rooted in love. At the heart of our mission is a commitment to live out our faith and a dedication to embrace excellence in all that we do. We believe in education that instils possibilities, transforms lives and enables all to fulfil their potential.

1 Purpose and scope

This policy explains how St Mark's Catholic School identifies, assesses and meets special educational needs and disabilities. It applies to pupils in Years 7 to 13, including pupils receiving SEN Support and pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan.

The governing body, headteacher and staff use this policy to secure a consistent whole-school approach. Every teacher is responsible for the progress and development of the pupils they teach, including when support is provided by a learning support assistant or specialist.

Detailed information about the school's current provision, how parents can seek support and the arrangements required under the SEND Regulations is published in the SEND Information Report on the school website.

2 Legal framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children and Families Act 2014, particularly sections 20, 66, 67 and 69
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, as amended
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice 0 to 25 years
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments and the Public Sector Equality Duty
- School Admissions Code 2021
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions statutory guidance
- Keeping children safe in education 2026
- Education Act 1996 and relevant regulations governing access arrangements and school records

The school will apply the latest statutory requirements if legislation or guidance changes before this policy is formally reviewed.

3 Definitions

Special educational needs

A child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- a) have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- b) have a disability that prevents or hinders them from using educational facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Special educational provision

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other pupils of the same age in mainstream settings.

Disability

A person is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A pupil may be disabled without having SEN, and may have SEN without being disabled. Some pupils are both.

What is not SEN on its own

Slow progress or low attainment does not automatically mean that a pupil has SEN. Difficulties caused solely by learning English as an additional language are not SEN. Attendance, health, safeguarding, disadvantage and pastoral factors may affect learning and must be considered carefully, without assuming that they indicate SEN.

4 Principles and objectives

St Mark's expects pupils with SEND to learn an ambitious curriculum, belong fully to the school community and prepare successfully for adult life. We will use our best endeavours to secure the special educational provision a pupil requires.

- identify needs accurately and as early as possible
- maintain high expectations and focus on meaningful outcomes
- remove barriers through adaptive teaching, reasonable adjustments and targeted provision
- involve pupils and parents in decisions that affect them
- review the impact of provision and change it when it is not working
- work constructively with education, health and social care professionals
- support participation in the wider life of the school as well as academic progress

5 Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

The governing body has strategic oversight of SEND and will:

- ensure that the school uses its best endeavours to meet pupils' special educational needs
- ensure that a qualified teacher is designated as SEND Coordinator and that statutory qualification requirements are met
- hold leaders to account for the quality and impact of SEND provision, including pupils' experiences and outcomes
- ensure that pupils with SEND engage in school activities alongside their peers as far as reasonably practicable
- ensure that statutory information is published and kept up to date
- consider SEND and disability when approving policies, allocating resources and reviewing school improvement priorities

The headteacher

The headteacher is accountable for the school's SEND provision. The headteacher ensures that the policy is implemented, that the SEND Coordinator has sufficient time and resources to carry out the role, and that SEND forms part of whole-school improvement and staff development.

The SEND Coordinator

The SEND Coordinator is Miss E O'Gallachoir. The SEND Coordinator will:

- oversee the day-to-day operation of this policy and coordinate provision for pupils with SEN
- advise colleagues on the graduated approach and on effective use of the school's delegated SEND resources
- liaise with parents, pupils, teachers, pastoral staff, external professionals and the local authority
- maintain accurate records and ensure relevant staff have the information they need
- support transition between phases and liaise with potential next providers
- work with the headteacher and governing body to meet Equality Act duties, including reasonable adjustments and accessibility planning
- monitor the quality and impact of provision and report to leaders and governors

Teachers

Teachers remain responsible and accountable for the progress and development of every pupil in their classes. They identify emerging concerns, plan and deliver adaptive teaching, use agreed strategies and adjustments, assess impact, contribute to review meetings and communicate with parents and the SEND team.

Learning support and pastoral staff

Support staff work under the direction of teachers and relevant leaders. They promote access, independence and participation, share observations, implement agreed provision and contribute to review. Support should not unnecessarily separate pupils from teachers, peers or the curriculum.

6 Identifying and assessing need

The school identifies need through a combination of information from previous settings, screening and assessment, teacher observation, progress and attendance data, pupil and parent views, pastoral information and advice from other professionals. No single score or source of information determines whether a pupil has SEN.

Areas of need

The SEND Code identifies four broad areas of need. These help the school plan provision but do not define a pupil or replace an individual assessment:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social emotional and mental health difficulties
- sensory and physical needs

Responding to an emerging concern

1. The teacher gathers evidence and checks whether high-quality teaching, attendance, curriculum access, health or other factors may explain the concern.
2. The teacher discusses the concern with the pupil and relevant colleagues and, where appropriate, with the parent or carer.
3. The school puts suitable classroom strategies or short-term support in place and reviews the response.
4. If the concern persists or evidence indicates a special educational need, the teacher consults the SEND Coordinator for further assessment and planning.

A diagnosis is not required

A medical diagnosis may help the school understand a pupil's needs, but it is neither required nor sufficient on its own for SEN Support. Decisions are based on the special educational provision the pupil needs.

7 The graduated approach

Where a pupil requires SEN Support, the school follows the four-part cycle of assess, plan, do and review. The cycle is repeated with increasing precision as the school's understanding of the pupil develops.

Assess

The teacher and SEND Coordinator analyse the pupil's strengths, needs and barriers. They consider attainment, progress, development, attendance, behaviour, earlier provision, pupil and parent views and relevant professional advice. Assessment is proportionate and may include specialist assessment with parental involvement.

Plan

The pupil, parent and school agree intended outcomes, reasonable adjustments, teaching approaches, additional provision, responsibilities and a review date. Staff who teach or support the pupil receive the information they need to implement the plan.

Do

The teacher remains responsible for the pupil's learning. The teacher works with support staff and specialists to connect additional provision with classroom teaching. The SEND Coordinator supports problem-solving and implementation where required.

Review

The school reviews progress towards the agreed outcomes and the quality and impact of provision. Pupil and parent views contribute to the review. The plan is continued, changed or ended in response to the evidence. Reviews take place at least termly for pupils receiving SEN Support, with more frequent review where needed.

8 SEN Support and EHC plans

SEN Support

The school places a pupil on the SEND register when assessment shows that the pupil has SEN and requires special educational provision. Parents are informed and involved. The register is a working record used to coordinate provision; it is not a label and does not determine a fixed type or level of support.

A pupil may be removed from the SEND register when review evidence shows that they no longer require special educational provision. The school discusses this with the pupil and parent and continues to monitor progress through normal school systems.

Requesting an EHC needs assessment

If, despite relevant and purposeful action, a pupil does not make expected progress and may need provision beyond that ordinarily available, the school will consider whether to request an Education, Health and Care needs assessment. Parents and young people also have the right to request an assessment directly from the local authority.

The local authority decides whether to conduct an assessment and whether to issue an EHC plan. The school contributes evidence, supports the family to understand the process and signposts impartial advice where needed.

Implementing and reviewing an EHC plan

Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the school uses its best endeavours to secure the special educational provision specified in the plan. The plan is reviewed at least annually. Reviews focus on progress towards outcomes, the effectiveness of provision, the pupil's and parent's views, and preparation for the next phase. From Year 9, reviews must include preparation for adulthood.

9 Teaching and curriculum access

High-quality teaching is the first response to SEN. Teachers use assessment to identify barriers, explain and model clearly, adapt tasks and resources, provide suitable scaffolding, check understanding and support pupils to become increasingly independent. Adaptation maintains curriculum ambition and is based on the pupil's needs rather than a diagnosis alone.

Additional provision

Additional provision may include structured small-group or individual teaching, communication or literacy support, study support, specialist programmes, mentoring, assistive technology, environmental changes or specialist advice. Provision is selected because it addresses an assessed need and is reviewed for impact.

Reasonable adjustments

The school will take reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage to disabled pupils. Adjustments may relate to teaching, communication, the physical environment, routines, behaviour systems, assessment or participation in trips and wider activities. The school considers the effectiveness, practicality, cost, available resources, health and safety and the interests of other pupils, while keeping the disabled pupil's needs central.

Assessment access arrangements

Access arrangements for internal and external assessments are based on evidence of need and the pupil's normal way of working. The school follows the current rules of the relevant awarding bodies and does not guarantee a particular arrangement solely because it has been requested or used previously.

10 Participation and partnership

Pupil participation

Pupils are supported to understand their strengths, needs, provision and intended outcomes. Staff seek their views in a way that is accessible and appropriate to their age and communication needs. Pupils contribute to reviews and decisions about support, transition and preparation for adulthood.

Working with parents and carers

The school treats parents and carers as partners. We listen to their knowledge of the pupil, explain decisions in clear language, share progress and provision information, provide opportunities to contribute to planning and review, and respond to concerns promptly. Parents should tell the school about relevant changes or professional advice so that provision can be considered and updated.

Communication

The first point of contact for a classroom concern is normally the subject teacher or form tutor. The SEND Coordinator can be contacted for concerns about identification, provision or statutory processes. Contact details are provided in the appendix and in the SEND Information Report.

11 Wellbeing safeguarding and attendance

Pupils with SEND may face additional safeguarding risks or barriers to reporting concerns. Staff must not assume that behaviour, communication difficulty or disability explains a change in presentation. Safeguarding concerns are acted on under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Behaviour and bullying

The school maintains high expectations while considering whether SEND or disability has contributed to behaviour. Staff use preventative support and reasonable adjustments where appropriate. A sanction is not automatically discriminatory because a pupil is disabled, but the school must consider disability, proportionality and relevant adjustments. Bullying linked to SEND or disability is addressed under the school's behaviour and anti-bullying arrangements.

Attendance

Where attendance is a concern, staff work with the pupil and family to understand the barriers. Support may include reasonable adjustments, pastoral or medical planning, liaison with professionals and a reintegration plan. SEND does not remove the school's duty to promote attendance, but responses must be individual and lawful.

Medical conditions

A medical condition does not automatically mean that a pupil has SEN. Some pupils have both. Medical support is managed under the school's policy for pupils with medical conditions, including individual healthcare plans where appropriate. SEND and medical arrangements are coordinated so that responsibilities are clear and provision is consistent.

12 Transitions and preparation for adulthood

The school plans transitions in proportion to the pupil's needs. This may include additional visits, meetings with the family and professionals, accessible information, transfer of records, staff briefings and early review after the move.

Entry to St Mark's

The SEND team liaises with feeder schools and families so that known needs, provision and reasonable adjustments can be planned. Where an EHC plan names the school, the school works with the local authority through the statutory consultation process.

Movement within school

Relevant information follows the pupil when classes, teachers, key stages or support arrangements change. Staff plan additional transition support where unfamiliar routines, environments or relationships are likely to present a barrier.

Post-16 and post-18 transition

Careers information, advice and guidance is accessible and impartial. From Year 9, EHC plan reviews address preparation for adulthood, including further education, employment, independent living, community participation and health where relevant. The school shares information with the next provider in accordance with data protection requirements and with the pupil's involvement.

13 Working with other professionals

The school may seek advice from education, health, social care or voluntary services when this is necessary to understand need, plan provision or review impact. Depending on need, this may include educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, sensory or physical disability services, mental health services and the local authority SEND service.

Parents are normally involved before a referral is made and are informed about the purpose of professional involvement. Information may be shared without consent where the law permits or requires this, including when necessary to safeguard a child. External advice informs the school's decisions; responsibility for day-to-day teaching and implementation remains with the school.

14 Admissions equality and accessibility

Admissions

The school's published admission arrangements apply. The school will not discriminate unlawfully against a disabled pupil or a pupil with SEN. Admission arrangements for a pupil with an EHC plan are governed by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the statutory consultation process.

Equality

The school has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Disabled pupils are not treated less favourably because of disability except where the law permits different treatment. Decisions are made individually and recorded where appropriate.

Accessibility

The Accessibility Plan sets out how the school increases access to the curriculum, improves the physical environment and improves the availability of accessible information over time. The school considers accessibility when planning developments and makes reasonable adjustments for individual pupils. The plan is published separately and should be read with this policy.

Educational visits and wider participation

Trips, clubs, worship, enrichment and other school activities are planned with accessibility in mind. The school assesses barriers and reasonable adjustments so that pupils with SEND can participate alongside their peers as far as reasonably practicable.

15 Resources staff development and records

Resources and funding

Leaders deploy the school's delegated resources according to assessed need, intended outcomes and evidence of impact. Some pupils may receive high-needs funding arranged by the local authority. Funding does not belong to an individual pupil as a personal budget unless the local authority has formally agreed one; leaders remain responsible for deploying staff and resources effectively.

Staff development

The SEND Coordinator and senior leaders use pupil needs, monitoring and school priorities to plan staff development. Training may be whole-school, role-specific or pupil-specific. The school checks whether training changes practice and improves access or outcomes, rather than treating attendance at training as evidence of impact.

Records and information sharing

The school keeps SEND records accurate, relevant and secure. Staff receive the information required to teach and support pupils safely and effectively. Information is shared in line with data protection law, safeguarding duties and the school's privacy information. Records transfer securely when a pupil changes setting.

16 Monitoring and evaluation

Leaders evaluate SEND provision through a range of evidence. This may include:

- progress, attainment, attendance, behaviour and participation information
- implementation of provision and reasonable adjustments
- lesson visits, work review and curriculum monitoring
- pupil and parent views, including the views of those who may be less likely to respond
- review of individual plans, interventions and EHC plan provision
- staff knowledge, confidence and use of pupil information
- transition outcomes and destinations
- complaints, compliments and recurring themes

The SEND Coordinator reports to senior leaders and governors. Evaluation focuses on whether provision is implemented, whether barriers are reduced and whether pupils make progress towards agreed outcomes. Leaders respond where evidence shows inconsistency, weak impact or disproportionate outcomes for a group.

The policy itself is reviewed annually, but provision is monitored throughout the year. Urgent changes are made when a legal requirement, safeguarding concern or significant weakness is identified.

17 Concerns and complaints

Most concerns are best resolved through early discussion. A parent or carer should normally contact the subject teacher, form tutor or SEND Coordinator, depending on the concern. The school will listen, clarify the issue, review relevant evidence and explain the next steps.

If the concern is not resolved, the parent or carer may use the school's published Complaints Policy. Complaints about the school's general SEND provision are considered through that procedure. Separate statutory routes apply to certain local authority decisions about EHC needs assessments and EHC plans; the school will signpost parents to the local authority and Hounslow SEND Information Advice and Support Service where appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns are handled under safeguarding procedures and should not wait for the complaints process.

18 Publication and review

This policy is published on the school website and is available in an accessible format on request. The governing body reviews it at least annually and sooner when legislation, statutory guidance or school arrangements change. The SEND Coordinator checks it alongside the SEND Information Report, Accessibility Plan, admissions arrangements, complaints procedure and relevant curriculum, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and medical policies.

Appendix Key contacts and reference documents

School contact

SEND Coordinator	Miss E O'Gallachoir
Email	send@st-marks.hounslow.sch.uk
Telephone	020 8577 3600
Address	106 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW3 3EJ
School website	www.st-marks.hounslow.sch.uk

Independent information and local support

Hounslow SEND Local Offer www.hounslow.gov.uk/send-local-offer

Hounslow SEND Information Advice and Support Service hounslowsendiass.org.uk

National legislation and guidance

- [SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#)
- [Equality Act 2010 guidance](#)
- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [Mandatory qualification for SENCOs](#)