

St Thomas More Roman Catholic Academy



# Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

*All members of our community are given equal opportunities in line with the Single Equality Duty.*

**Policy Written:**

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Reviewed By **Ethos and Safeguarding  
Committee**

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**Adopted By Full Governing Body**

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## St Thomas More R C Academy Mission Statement

St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Academy is a Catholic school, and as such we attempt to follow the example of Jesus Christ in our work, worship and relationships.

### **Our aims are:**

- To be a community based on Christian values, notably Love, Justice, Peace, Truth and Tolerance, and to encourage individuals in their commitment to these ideals.
- To provide a secure, welcoming and ordered environment in which individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others.
- To give individuals the opportunities to develop their full potential as human beings, and to encourage and challenge them to do so.
- To encourage everyone to strive to do their best and to strive for the highest standards in all areas of activity. To help children grow into confident, open, resourceful young people with a sense of responsibility and of service.



## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

*“All children have the right to a good education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential.”*

*Introduction – Removing Barriers to Achievement 2004*

### Context/Aims

This Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy details how St Thomas More RC Academy will strive to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any student who has special educational needs and that those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach or support them.

The school endeavours to ensure that teachers are able to identify and provide for those students who have special educational needs, to allow them to access the curriculum and join in the activities of the school alongside students who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the child receiving the special educational provision.

The school will have regard to the DfE Code of Practice (January 2015) when carrying out its duties towards all students with special educational needs and will ensure that parents are notified of any decision by the school that SEN provision is being made for their child. The school will seek to work closely with parents, students and relevant outside agencies, to ensure that the correct provision is made.

Partnership with parents plays a key role in enabling children and young people with special educational needs to achieve their potential. The school recognises that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience that are vital to contribute to the shared view of a student’s needs and the best way of supporting them. All parents of children with special educational needs will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valuable role in their children’s education.

Young people with special educational needs often have a unique knowledge of their own needs and their views about the support they need and the progress that they feel they are making will be ascertained. They will be encouraged to participate in the decision making process and contribute to an assessment of their needs, the review and transition processes.

**The information in this policy should be read in conjunction with the SEN Information Report/ Local Offer and the Equality Policy. The SEN policy supports the statutory guidance set out in the ‘Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years’ (DFE January 2015).**

### Definition of Special Educational Needs

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. A child of compulsory school age or a young person is considered to have a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of 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 or mainstream post-16 institutions (*Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years DFE 2015*).

Students must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language they will be taught.

## **Disabled Students**

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘... 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’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and those with SEN. (*Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years DFE 2015*)

The FOUR areas of special needs identified in the Code of Practice are:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical Impairment

## **Identification, Assessment and Provision**

Provision for students with special educational needs is a matter for the school as a whole. The identification of students with special educational needs is done so in the context of many strategies which operate in the school. Link staff from subject departments meet with SEN staff on a regular basis to discuss students and provision.

In addition to the governing body: the Head Teacher, SENCO, SEN staff and other members of staff have important responsibilities.

All teachers at St Thomas More RC Academy are teachers of students with special educational needs.

Teaching SEN students is a whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response. Central to the work of every class and every subject is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation that takes account of a wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the students. The majority of students will learn and progress with these arrangements, however, for students with SEN, it may be necessary to increase the level of provision to support and enhance their learning abilities.

## **Early Identification**

Assessment is a continuing process that can identify students who may have special educational needs. The school will measure children's progress by referring to:

- Evidence from teacher observation and assessment
- Student performance against the progression descriptions within the National Curriculum at the end of a key stage
- Student progress against the objectives specified in the curriculum programmes
- Standardised screening or assessment tools.

## **Graduated Response**

St Thomas More RC Academy adopts a graduated response to meeting special educational needs in line with the Code of Practice.

## **Wave 1 Support (W)**

This requires the initial use of classroom approaches and academy resources in line with 'Quality First' teaching before bringing specialist expertise to assess and advise on the difficulties that a student is experiencing. High quality teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to those students who have or may have special educational needs. Occasionally though, it may be deemed necessary to consult specialist advice at an earlier stage, depending on the need.

When a student is identified as having special educational needs, the SENCO will seek to share information, appropriate strategies and advice from outside agencies. Information is made available to staff on SIMS with additional strategies available on the SEN Link shared area for staff to access. Subject staff who have SEN Teaching Assistants supporting students with special educational needs in their classes will set termly outcomes which will be reviewed jointly with the SEN Teaching Assistants to support monitoring student progress.

Such interventions are a means of helping students, parents and school to match appropriate provision to individual student needs. The school will record the steps taken to meet the needs of individual children. If a student is known to have special educational needs on transition to the school; the Head Teacher, SENCO, SEN team, departmental and pastoral colleagues will:

- Use information from the primary schools and outside agencies to provide an appropriate curriculum for the student and focus attention on action to support the student within the classroom (SEN staff undertake meetings with primary schools, to ascertain relevant SEN information at the point of transition).
- Ensure that ongoing observation and assessment provides feedback about the student's achievement to inform future planning of the student's learning.
- Ensure opportunities for the student to show what they know and understand to monitor progress.
- Involve the student in planning and agreeing targets to meet their needs.
- Involve parents in developing a joint learning approach at home and in school.

## Monitoring Student Progress

It is recognised that not all students will be identified as having special educational needs. Some students may develop needs due to a range of developmental factors. Teachers may conclude that the strategies they are currently using result in the student learning as effectively as possible. In these circumstances they will consult the SENCO and SEN staff to consider what else might be done. This is done either through the school referral system, or pastoral meetings, as necessary.

The starting point will always be a review of the strategies being used and the way in which these might be developed. Evaluation of the strategies in place may lead to the conclusion that the student requires help over and above that which is normally available within the particular class or subject.

The key test of the need for action is evidence that current rates of progress are inadequate. Adequate progress can be defined in a number of ways. It might, for instance, be progress which:

- Closes the attainment gap between the student and the student's peers
- Prevents the attainment gap growing wider
- Is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers
- Matches or betters the student's previous rate of progress
- Ensures access to the full curriculum
- Demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills
- Demonstrates improvements in the student's learning behaviour
- Is likely to lead to appropriate accreditation
- Is likely to lead to participation in further education, training and / or employment.

Students will have targets set and reviewed by subject staff. Targets and information from feeder schools are used to help plan initial targets. Staff review and plan further targets depending on the students' progress. Progress information is shared by Heads of Departments and the data placed on the SISRA.

When a student is identified as having special educational needs the school will provide interventions that are based on the transition information and / or an assessed need. Parents / Carers are informed of the special educational provision being made.

The triggers for intervention at this level could be concern, underpinned by evidence about a student who, despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities:

- Continues to make little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted specifically to the student's identified area of weakness
- Shows signs of significant difficulty in developing literacy and / or numeracy skills that result in poor attainment in some areas of the curriculum
- Presents Social, Emotional, and Mental Health needs which require additional input and monitoring.
- Has sensory or physical problems and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum and use of appropriate resources.
- Has communication and / or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of differentiated curriculum and use of strategies.

If the SENCO concludes that a student may need additional support to help them progress, they will consider their reasons for concern alongside any other information about the student already available to the school. Information and advice from appropriate agencies will be sought to further assist with assessment, identification of need and advice on appropriate support. Students identified as needing further specialist and additional support will be placed on the Special Educational Needs Record (K).

The academy supports an **Assess - Plan - Do - Review** approach.

This includes early discussion with the student and their parent/ carer, identification of the desired outcomes and agreed actions to meet those outcomes and regular review of impact and quality of the interventions. Reviews are child centred, with a strong focus on the views of the student.

### **Wave 2 - Special Educational Needs Support (K)**

Students with significant needs requiring more individualised and specialised support will be placed on the Special Educational Needs Record. These students are characterised by the involvement of external agencies, for example: the Dyslexia Referral Team, Language and Communication Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapy Service. A request for support from external services is always made in consultation with parents or carers and other staff.

At the level of Special Educational Needs Support, external agencies will usually meet with the student and the parents / carers, as well as the SENCO or other key staff. They may be involved in:

- carrying out further assessments including observations, so that they can:
- advise subject, pastoral staff, parents and carers on appropriate strategies,
- identify further specialist assessments to inform planning and measure student progress,
- give advice on the use of new equipment or materials
- provide support for particular activities or transition needs.
- attend review meetings.

### **Trigger points for consideration of Special Educational Needs Support:**

The student has needs above those which can be met with quality first teaching and:

- continues working at academic progress levels substantially below that expected of students of a similar age, despite appropriate differentiation, resources and strategies.
- experiences specific learning difficulties affecting one or more specific aspects of learning preventing access to the curriculum and resulting in substantially below expected progress
- has social, emotional or mental health difficulties (SEMH) which substantially and adversely impacts on their learning and wellbeing.
- has sensory or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits, providing direct intervention to the student or advice to staff by a specialist service
- has an ongoing communication or interaction difficulty that impedes the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning. These might include physical

impairment (PI) vision impairment (VI) hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI).

When the academy seeks the help of external support services, parental permission is sought as services may request to see the student's records in order to establish which strategies have already been employed and which targets have been set and achieved. Using information from teachers, external agencies, parents / carers and the student, outside agencies advise and identify appropriate student strategies and objectives to be shared with staff and families. Information about strategies and ways of working will also be shared on SIMS and via departmental SEN-link staff. Delivery and evaluation of the strategies and objectives in the classroom will remain the responsibility of subject teachers.

If the SENCO / SEN staff and the external agency feel that the information gathered about the student is insufficient and that more external advice must be sought, this will be done in agreement with the parents / carers.

### **Wave 3 - Educational, Health, Care Plan. (EHCP)**

For a few students, the help given by the school through Special Educational Needs Support may not be enough to enable the student to make adequate progress. It will then be necessary for the school, in consultation with parents / carers and the external agencies already involved, to consider whether to ask the Local Authority to initiate a consideration for an Education, Health and Care Plan. For some students this process may have been preceded by two or more Early Help Assessments (EHAs).

Where a request for a statutory assessment is made to the Local Authority, the graduated response, including the Assess - Plan - Do - Review process, will have demonstrated considerable cause for concern validated by professional assessments of need. The SENCO will gather information and provide written evidence to the Local Authority detailing the nature, extent and cause of the student's learning difficulties including:

- The current level of functioning and progress made by the student in comparison to that of their peers
- Any need requiring above 10 hours intervention or funding equivalent
- Provision maps or similar for the student
- Records of regular reviews and their outcomes
- The student's health including the student's medical history, where relevant
- National Curriculum progress, PIVATS scores, attainment and any other relevant test scores
- Educational or any other assessments made, for example by an advisory specialist support teacher and / or Educational Psychologist
- Views of the student
- Views of the parents / carers
- Involvement of any current or prior intervention from other professionals for example: Children's Services, Education Welfare, Health or CAMHS and evidence of implementation of recommendations

The school will support the process in:

- ensuring that the focus is on the student as an individual
- enabling the student to express their views, wishes and feelings

- enabling students to be part of the decision making process, be making it easy for students and their parents / carers to understand
- highlighting the student's strengths and capabilities
- enabling the student and those that know them best to say what they have achieved, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
- indicating the availability of Parent Partnership Services to support families.

The school recognises that in addition to the educational setting or health and care sectors, parents / carers or students aged over 16 but under the age of 25, have a right to ask the Local Authority to conduct an Education Health Care needs assessment and will support by facilitating assessments as appropriate and providing requested information to the Local Authority.

When the Local Authority receives a request for statutory assessment, it must decide within the time frame specified in the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 Years' whether or not to carry out such an assessment. That decision will include whether the special educational provision required to meet the student's needs can be reasonably provided from within the school's resources or whether it may be necessary for the Local Authority to make special educational provision in accordance with an Education Health Care Plan. An Educational Health Care assessment will not always lead to an Educational Health Care Plan. In this case the school will continue to support the student as appropriate through a Special Educational Needs School Support Plan.

### **Monitoring an Education, Health and Care Plan.**

Education, Health and Care Plans are reviewed regularly (a minimum of every 12 months) with the student and parents / carers. The SENCO or Associate SENCO will chair such reviews and will present information on behalf of the school, as to the student's progress. All supporting outside agencies will be invited. The focus will be on what is going well, what could be better and on reviewing and setting agreed outcomes. Information is sought prior to the review, and shared with those attending. Following a review meeting, the SENCO will send a report summarising the meeting to the Local Authority and participating parties/agencies. The format of the reviews are child centred and designed to have the needs and wishes of the student in mind.

### **Planning for Adulthood**

From Year 9 onwards the Connexions service is contacted to support students and their families in preparing for and transitioning to post-16 careers, training or further study. Planning for adulthood is an important aspect of Education, Health and Care Plans. This may include supporting joined up provision for students with SEN in specific circumstances help achieve good outcomes for them, for example, looked after children, care leavers, children on roll but accessing alternative provision, children in medical care and children of service personnel.

Students aged 16 and over are supported alongside parents / carers in the decision making process where some rights of decision making transfer from the parent / carer to the student, subject to their capacity to do so.

The school seeks to support students aged 16 and over to prepare for transition to adulthood and supports the Local Authority and Health and Care sectors in transitioning students to Adult Services as appropriate.

### **Access Arrangements for Examinations**

Staff use the school referral system to refer students with SEN and / or a disability who may qualify for Access Arrangements for examinations. Student support details and evidence of the student's 'normal way of working' are forwarded together with the impact of access arrangements as recorded by subject staff. The specialist teacher and / or SENCO, in conjunction with the Exams Officer, are responsible for arranging appropriate assessments and relevant applications to the exam boards. The student is always consulted as part of this process. Students and parents/carers will be informed of any accessibility arrangements granted by the exam boards.

### **Personal Budgets**

Where a Personal Budget provision is set out in an Education, Health and Care Plan the school will work closely with the Local Authority, student and family to ensure that it is administered within Local Authority guidance.

### **Information sought prior to an Education, Health and Care Plan review**

The SENCO will seek information, usually four weeks prior to a review, from all those involved in providing for the student's special educational needs. External agencies are invited to send their reports to accompany the school's report. Parents / carers are invited to send their views prior to the meeting, although they may be added to at the meeting. The student's views are also sought and circulated with the school report. All reports received will be circulated two weeks in advance of a review.

Information sought includes:

- Student evaluation of their own progress, including their views and aspirations.
- Parent / carer evaluation of child's progress, including their views and aspirations
- Academic subject teacher feedback on progress made in respect of targets, and strategies being used.
- Pastoral feedback on what is working well and what could be better.
- Support staff feedback on progress relating to objectives.
- Reports from other professionals where appropriate, for example, the Educational Psychology Service, Connexions, LA Specialist Support teams, Learning Mentors, CAMHS, Children's Services.

### **Review Meetings**

The SENCO or Assoc. SENCO will chair the meeting and the following will be invited to attend:

- The student
- Parents / carers
- Pastoral staff

- Independent supporter where identified
- The student's key worker from the SEN Team
- The Educational Psychologist (where appropriate)
- Representative from the Local Authority, as appropriate
- Professionals from external agencies, including Connexions, where appropriate
- Representatives from relevant supporting agencies or services
- Connexions Service for students from Year 9 onwards

As a guide:

- Meetings will be as informal as possible.
- Every effort will be made to avoid the use of professional jargon.
- Assessment information will be explained as a matter of course, in a way that is understandable for the student and non-professionals attending the meeting
- Time will be given for students and parents / carers to express their views and to ask questions if they are unsure about anything.
- The school will seek, as much as it can, to support the needs of those attending with disabilities and EAL. Those attending with additional needs are invited to inform the school of specific needs on receipt of their invitation, so that arrangements can be made in time.
- Information from the meeting will be forwarded to the LA within one to two weeks. Copies will be sent to the parents / carers and relevant external agencies attending the meeting.

### **Special Educational Needs Record**

All students who are identified as having special educational needs within the school are placed on the SEN Record. Any student additions to or progression from the SEN Record will usually be done through a review meeting. Parents / carers will be informed of any changes. It is the responsibility of the SENCO to monitor the school SEN Record and to ensure that students are regularly reviewed.

Subject and pastoral staff together with SEN staff will support the assessment of the student and the planning of future support for the student in discussion with colleagues and in monitoring the impact of support. The student's subject and pastoral teachers remain responsible for identifying need, working with the student, setting subject specific targets and outcomes and planning and delivering appropriate learning programmes. SEN staff will support in the assessment of the student and identification of appropriate resources and in the setting and reviewing of termly outcomes

Students on the SEN Record are identified as having either a School Support Plan (K) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (E).

### **Special Educational Needs School Support Plan.**

All students at K on the SEN Record have a Special Educational Needs School Support Plan. Support is monitored termly and reviewed on a regular basis using the Assess – Plan – Do – Review system, with at least one annual review. Outside agencies, supporting the students, are invited to these meetings to share advice and recommend further strategies that may be different or additional to those set at academy.

Students with ADD / ADHD are monitored by the Child Adolescent and Mental Health Service (CAMHS). They will be on the SEN Record if they have additional identified Special Educational Needs.

### **Intervention**

The SENCO, SEN Team, relevant professionals, the student's subject teachers and pastoral staff will identify and action the support needed for students on the SEN Record. This might include:

- Provision of different learning materials, approaches or specialist equipment
- Individual or group support within the classroom or short term withdrawal
- Additional extra staff time to devise the nature of the planned intervention and to monitor its effectiveness
- Support and monitoring from pastoral staff / learning mentors / school counsellor
- Undertaking of staff development and training aimed at introducing more effective strategies.
- Access to Local Authority support services for advice, strategies, equipment, parent / carer support and staff training
- Referral to external agencies or support mechanisms
- Special arrangements for examinations

### **Provision Maps**

Provision maps are used to supplement SEN School Support Plans and Education, Health and Care Plans and identify the support that a student is receiving. All students on the SEN Record will have a Provision Map. They are stored in the SEN link folder in the shared area for staff to access. A copy is sent to parent / carers. Provision maps are reviewed annually or earlier if it is thought necessary.

Provision Maps include information about:

- General information about the student including where they are placed on the SEN register
- The student's area of need
- School support in place
- Resources / aids
- Any external agency involvement
- Any non-education provision
- Additional information about the student that is relevant
- Objectives set out in the plan.

Provision Maps will only record that which is additional to or different from the differentiated curriculum provision and will focus on no more than three or four individual targets to match the student's needs. Target setting is a part of our school's integral assessment for learning and as such student targets are set and reviewed with the staff best placed to ensure progress.

All students on the SEN Record are allocated a key worker from the SEN Team who oversees the student's Provision Map. Key workers are instrumental in the setting and reviewing of support objectives and attend review meetings.

## Glossary

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS):** support and treat students with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

**Early Help Assessment (EHA):** A social care assessment of a student and his or her family, designed to identify needs at an early stage and enable suitable interventions to be put in place to support the family.

**Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP):** a plan which details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided for a student with a SEN and/or a disability.

**Graduated approach:** A model of action and early intervention to support students who have special educational needs.

**Independent Supporter:** A person recruited locally from a voluntary organisation or community sector to support families going through an EHC needs assessment and the process of developing an EHCP.

**Key Worker:** A member of the SEN Team, usually a SEN teaching Assistant with some responsibility for overseeing the progress of the identified student. The key worker will usually remain the same throughout the student's time at the school for continuity.

**Local Offer:** offer of support and services Local Authorities are required to set out offering information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children with special educational needs.

**SEN School Local Offer and SEN Information Report:** offer of support outlining the support available in St Thomas More RC Academy and linking to the Local Authority Local Offer.

**National Curriculum:** the full and statutory entitlement to learning for all students, determining what should be taught, including performance, assessment and reporting.

**Parent Partnership Services:** provide advice and information to children with SEN or disabilities, their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities. They provide neutral and factual support on the special educational needs system.

**Special Educational needs Co-ordinator (SENCO):** A qualified teacher who has responsibility for co-ordinating SEN provision.

**Review:** the review of an EHCP which the Local Authority must make as a minimum of 12 months.

**Special Educational Needs (SEN):** A student has special educational needs if they have ‘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 the facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age from mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions’.

**Disability:** A disability is ‘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’ and substantial is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. Students with disabilities may or may not also have SEN.

**Special Educational Provision:** Special educational provision is provision that is different from or additional to that normally available to students of the same age, which is designed to help children and young people with SEN or disabilities to access the national Curriculum.