



St Catherine's School & College

*Specialists in Speech, Language and
Communication Needs*

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY

March 2026

Document Information

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- Statement Please see our Admissions Policy for further details included under Admissions Arrangement

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Throughout this policy St Catherine's School and College are referred to as 'St Catherine's School'.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY

1. Aims and objectives

Our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy aims to:

- Make sure St Catherine's School fully implements national legislation and guidance regarding students with SEND
- Set out how St Catherine's School will:
 - Support and make provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities
 - Provide students with SEND access to all aspects of school life
 - Help students with SEND fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best
 - Help students with SEND become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
 - Support students with SEND make a successful transition into adulthood
 - Communicate with students with SEND and their parents or carers and involve them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the student
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for students with SEND
- Communicate with, and involve, students with SEND and their parents or carers in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the student
- Make sure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff

2. About our school

St Catherine's School is a non-maintained day and residential special school for students aged 9-19 whose primary needs are speech, language and communication (SLCN). Students must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which lists the necessary provision and objectives. As such, class groups are kept small (maximum 10), teachers are trained/experienced in teaching students with SLCN and therapists (Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists) are employed to work as part of a multidisciplinary team. The pace, the content and delivery styles are adapted to ensure access for all. All teachers, therapists, residential staff and medical staff accept their corporate responsibility as coordinators for students' special educational needs. The curriculum is modified, based on the National Curriculum Programme of Study (2014), to support students with speech, language and communication needs and programmes are put in place which will give them the necessary tools and skills to access this curriculum. The school helps students to reach their full potential and encourages independent learning. At the Sixth Form College individual programmes are developed according to need, ability and interest. Targets (known as liaison aims) are written for each student and reviewed on a

termly basis. Students are given supported vocational opportunities both in school and at the Isle of Wight College. Students have the opportunity to work towards exams at an appropriate level.

3. Vision and values

Our vision is to continue to be leaders in delivering integrated education, therapy, residential and independence training for young people with speech, language and communication needs, empowering individuals to be happy, healthy and confident in their future lives.

We are focused on creating an inclusive environment, where provision is tailored to the needs and abilities of all students. These aims are delivered through our broad and balanced curriculum and through the wide variety of extra-curricular activities and trips. It is our aim to ensure that every student has the support to benefit from all that is available in school.

Parents and students will be involved in decisions affecting future provision and we aim to ensure that parents of SEND students are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment.

St Catherine’s School aims to embrace the needs of all students, and has a whole-school approach to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). All teachers teach students with SEND, and adaptive teaching takes place within the classroom as part of high-quality teaching.

We offer meaningful opportunities for all students by addressing their diverse learning needs. We establish appropriate learning challenges, assist students in overcoming barriers to learning and provide them with the opportunity to flourish, while supporting them in reaching their full potential.

Our Values

RESILIENCE	COURAGE	RESPECT	AMBITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth mindset • Problem solving • Positive wellbeing • Sense of worth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a go • Make decisions • Ask for help • Independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For self • For others • Appreciation • Diversity/equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hope • Strong work ethic • Aim high • Perseverance

3. Legislation and guidance

This is based on the statutory guidance [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#), [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [working together to improve school attendance](#).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- [Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), which sets out schools' responsibilities for students with SEND
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out local authorities' and schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report
- The [Equality Act 2010](#) (section 20), which sets out the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out the school's responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes having a disability) and those who don't share it.

4. Inclusion and equal opportunities

At our school we strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all students, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all students the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations. We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the school environment to make sure that students with SEND are included in all aspects of school life.

5. Definitions

○ **Special educational needs**

A student has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a **learning difficulty or disability** if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or
- 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

○ **Special educational provision**

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of

the same age by mainstream schools. We involve experts as needed, to ensure progress as part of a graduated approach, in line with the SEN Code of Practice. The graduated approach is a 4-part cycle of assess, plan, do, review.

- **Disability**

Students are considered to have a **disability** if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

- **The 4 areas of need**

The needs of students with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Students often have needs that cut across more than one area, and their needs may change over time. Students at St Catherine’s School have their primary barrier to learning as Speech, Language and Communication, which fall under the category of Communication and Interaction. Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the student’s particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

AREA OF NEED	
Cognition and learning	<p>Students with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific learning difficulties, which impact one or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Moderate learning difficulties • Severe learning difficulties • Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where students are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment

<p>Social, emotional and mental health</p>	<p>These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or disorders. Students may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or an eating disorder • Attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder • Suffered adverse childhood experiences <p>These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, or by the student becoming withdrawn or isolated.</p>
<p>Sensory and/or physical</p>	<p>Students with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided.</p> <p>Students may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment <p>These students may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.</p>
<p>Communication and interaction</p>	<p>Students with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or not understand or use the social rules of communication.</p> <p>Students who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.</p>

6.1 Roles and responsibilities

- **The governing board/board of trustees**

The governing board is responsible for making sure the following duties are carried out:

- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school
- Inform parents/carers when the school is making changes to special educational provision for their child
- Make sure that the school has arrangements in place to support any students with medical conditions
- Provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND
- Provide an annual report for parents/carers on their child's progress
- Record accurately and keep up to date the provision made for students with SEND
- Publish information on the school website about how the school is implementing its SEND policy, in an SEN Information Report
- Publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and the school's accessibility plans
- Determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of students
- Make sure that all students from year 8 until year 13 are provided with independent careers advice

6.2 The Principal

The Principal will:

- Work with the governors and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to determine the strategic development of policy and provision within the school
- Work with the school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for all students and their progress
- Advise the LA when a student needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review
- Monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development
- Regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally
- With the SLT and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison, with

national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.3 Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is differentiated to meet student needs through a graduated approach
- The progress and development of every student in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENCO to review each student's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow the SEND policy and the SEN Information Report
- Communicating with parents/carers regularly to:
 - Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
 - Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
 - Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the student and the school
 - Listen to the parents'/carers' concerns and agree their aspirations for the student

6.4 Parents or carers

Parents or carers should inform the school if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

Parents or carers will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the student's SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. They will be:

- Invited to termly meetings to review the provision that is in place for their child
- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEN support outside school and any changes in the student's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with school staff, agree their aspirations for the student
- Given an annual report on the student's progress

The school will take into account the views of the parents or carers in any decisions made about the student.

6.5 The student

Students will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the student:

- Explaining what their strengths and difficulties are
- Contributing to setting targets or outcomes
- Attending review meetings
- Giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions

The student's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

7.1.1 SEN Information Report

The school publishes a SEN information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school. The information report will be updated every three years and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains.

- **Our approach to supporting SEND**
 - **Identifying students with SEND and assessing their needs**

We will assess each student's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the school. This will build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. We will also consider any evidence that the student may have a disability and if so, what reasonable adjustments the school may need to make.

Whilst all students at St Catherine's have an EHCP, we recognise that SEND needs can change over time. Class teachers will regularly assess the progress of all students and identify where progress fails to match their previous rate of progress. This may include progress in areas other than attainment; for example, wider development or social needs.

When teachers identify an area where a student is making slow progress, they will target this area with differentiated, high-quality teaching. If progress does not improve, the teacher will raise the issue with the wider relevant team, for example, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and/or our mental Health team. Where necessary they will, in consultation with the student's parents or carers, consider consulting an external specialist.

Potential short-term causes of impact on behaviour or performance will be considered, such as bullying or bereavement. Staff will also take particular care in identifying and assessing students whose first language is not English.

- **Consulting and involving students and parents/carers**

The school will put the student and their parents/carers at the heart of all decisions made about their special educational provision.

When we are considering any changes to current SEN provision, we will have an early discussion with the student and their parents/carers. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty
- We take into account any concerns the parents/carers have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

Notes of these early discussions will be added to the student's record and given to their parents/carers.

- **The graduated approach to SEN support**

Whilst all our students have already been identified as having SEN and have an EHCP, needs often change over time. We will take action to remove any barriers to learning, and put effective special educational provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

Assess

Termly assessments and data monitoring meetings with a member of our SLT helps to identify when a student is making less than expected progress. The student's class teacher and the wider therapy teams will carry out a clear analysis of the student's needs. The views of the student and their parents/carers will be taken into account.

7.1.2 Plan

In consultation with the parents/carers and the student, the teacher will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes, and a clear date for review. This may be within the classroom setting, in a small group or as a 1:1 intervention. The assessment will be reviewed regularly to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the student's need. For many students, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

All staff who work with the student will be made aware of the student's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed.

7.1.3 Do

The student's class or subject teacher retains overall responsibility for their progress.

Where the plan involves group or 1-to-1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the student. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.

7.1.4 Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the student's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

We will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents/carers and students
- The level of progress the student has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the student

The teacher and the wider team will revise the outcomes and support in light of the student's progress and development, and in consultation with the student and their parents/carers.

○ Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for students with SEN by:

- Tracking students' progress termly
- Holding termly liaison meetings with multidisciplinary teams (Education, S<, OT and mental health specialist, when necessary) to review and update termly targets.
- Using student questionnaires
- Termly data monitoring meetings by the SLT
- Holding annual reviews for students with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from the student and their parents/carers

7.1.5 Therapies

We have a range of qualified therapists as part of our team. Referrals can be made from school staff for advice and requests for support.

7.1.6 Speech and Language Therapy

Every student at St Catherine's benefits from a range of speech and language therapies, delivered by trained specialists. These can be:

- one-to-one, in pairs or small groups
- class-based
- functional sessions within the local town setting
- sessions involving residential houses and families
- or specialist support, such as high-tech augmentative and alternative communication devices, signed supported English and symbolised resources

These therapies are delivered within the framework of each child's tailored plan.

Each year, an annual review report is prepared by the child's speech and language therapist; and in each transition year, students will also complete a full re-assessment, informing decisions about their educational journey.

7.1.7 Occupational Therapy

When a student starts school at St Catherine's, our team of occupational therapists begin by identifying their strengths and needs regarding their sensory, motor and perceptual abilities. These needs will be fully explored through our detailed assessment process. Every student at St Catherine's benefits from a range of occupational therapies, delivered by trained specialists.

Sessions can be:

- one-to-one, in pairs or small groups
- class-based
- functional sessions within the local town setting, emphasising travel skills and community access
- or sessions involving residential houses and with families

These therapies are delivered within the framework of each child's tailored plan.

Each year, an annual review report is prepared by the child's occupational therapist. In each transition year, students will also complete a full re-assessment, informing decisions about their educational journey.

7.1.8 Art Psychotherapy

As part of our continued commitment to supporting our students' well-being and mental health, an Art Psychotherapist has been added to our therapy team.

They offer both group and individual sessions to students who are referred for support.

The artwork created can provide a powerful focus for discussion, helping identify emotions and reflect on and make sense of them. It does not solely rely on verbal communication to be successful, and so is a helpful tool for those with communication difficulties who often struggle to access traditional psychotherapy.

7.1.9 Movement Psychotherapy

Movement Psychotherapy (MP) uses dance, movement and body responses to understand lived experiences and to express and communicate thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

This is really useful in our work with children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, as it allows them to express themselves creatively and playfully, without relying on verbal communication.

7.2.1 Residential Support

A team of qualified residential staff work with students in the residential setting. Residential Action Plans are developed with each student to ensure relevant targets are set and reviewed. Each house has its own staff team led by a Residential Manager (or Head of House) and Team Leaders. Each young person also benefits from having a 'key worker' in the house who they know they can always turn to.

Together the team offers a multi-layered support system, which collectively provides a warm, supportive family environment for young people, including:

- Well planned and balanced social programmes
- Help to manage everyday routines
- Support to keep in touch with home
- Support for students towards independent travel
- Homework support
- Help with budgeting, pocket money and finances
- Support in developing life and social skills/experiences

One or more members of the residential team sleeps in each residence overnight, which means that students will be greeted in the morning by people they saw before going to bed; the same familiar faces are also on hand, should they be needed overnight.

As well as being inspected by Ofsted on a yearly basis, our residential provision is monitored by National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) every half-term.

7.2.2 Medical Care

Some of our students may have difficulties that extend beyond their speech, language and communication. No two learners are the same and our comprehensive medical and support services reflect this.

St Catherine's has a well-equipped Medical Room at each of our school and college sites. These rooms are staffed during the school day by two dedicated registered nurses, who are based on site five days per week. They work closely with our staff team to provide each student with optimum healthcare, health checks and health education. The medical team accesses support from key healthcare providers as appropriate for our students' needs.

Parents have a key responsibility for their child's health and medical needs and the medical team will always provide healthcare in partnership with parents. Which is why it's important that there is open and active two-way communication between St Catherine's and parents.

7.2.3 Other Support

There are a range of other support services which can be called upon as necessary and subject to funding requirements. These include:

- Child and adolescent psychotherapist
- The Youth Trust (for counselling)
- Adult Mental Health Services
- Child And Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Physiotherapy
- Bereavement counselling; and
- Any other therapy as required

Additional staff support (as determined by a student's EHCP and funding) may also be provided.

8. Safeguarding

We recognise that students with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers, and additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group.

For more details of the pastoral support we offer students with SEND, and the support we provide to help students overcome any communication barriers they face, see our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy.

9. Expertise and training of staff

Training will regularly be provided to teaching and support staff. The Principal and SLT will continuously monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development.

10. Links with external professional agencies

The school recognises that it will not be able to meet all the needs of every student. Whenever necessary, the school will work with external support services such as:

- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- Physiotherapists
- General practitioners or paediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services

11. Admission and accessibility arrangements

o Admission arrangements

All young people applying to St Catherine's School and Sixth Form College must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The EHCP must detail that the student has a significant language disorder to be considered for admission.

Enquiry forms will be reviewed by our Admissions Co-ordinator. The Admission Co-ordinator will then request a more detailed application along with the student's EHCP and other relevant paperwork. The application will then be reviewed by our Assessment Team.

Once the application has been reviewed, and if we feel that we can support your child, then we recommend that you attend one of our Open Days.

Following a visit to the school, we will invite your child for a three-day/four-day trial; this helps us all ascertain whether St Catherine's is right for them. Once the trial is completed, our team will decide whether we feel we are the best placement for your child. Fees can be paid for privately or by agreed Local Authority funding.

[Please see our Admission Policy for further details.](#)

- **Accessibility arrangements**

Please see our Accessibility Plan. It covers how St Catherine's ensures that it will:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment to enable disabled students to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services you provide
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

12. Complaints about SEND provision

Where parents/carers have concerns about our school's SEND provision, they should first raise their concerns informally with the class teacher. We will try to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve their concerns, parents are welcome to submit their complaint formally.

Formal complaints about SEND provision in our school should be made to the Principal in the first instance. They will be handled in line with the school's complaints policy. If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the school's response, they can escalate the complaint. In some circumstances, this right also applies to the student themselves.

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEN Code of Practice](#).

13. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our SEND policy. We will do this by evaluating whether or not we are meeting our objectives set out in section 1.

We will evaluate how effective our SEND provision is with regards to:

- All staff's awareness of students' SEND needs at the start of the autumn term
- Students' progress and attainment
- Whether students feel safe, valued and included in the school community
- Comments and feedback from students and their parents/carers

14. Monitoring the policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Principal every year. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year. It will be approved by the full governing board.

15. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents:

- SEN information report
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting students with medical conditions policy
- Attendance policy
- Safeguarding / child protection policy
- Complaints policy
- Residential and Care Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health Care Policy
- Medication Policy
- Modified School Curriculum
- Sixth Form Integrated Programme
- Occupational Therapy Policy
- Speech and Language Therapy Policy
- **Admissions Policy**