



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Policy

St Mary's Church of England Primary School keeps children safe by ensuring and promoting the safeguarding and welfare of all children in its care: all policies support the most current "Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance" and "Safeguarding Policy", are fully consistent with the "Every Child Matters" agenda, and fully support the principles of equal opportunities for all.

This policy has been reviewed and updated in September 2026 to reflect current statutory guidance, legislation and local SEND arrangements in England and Staffordshire.

1. Introduction

St Mary's Church of England Primary School is committed to providing an inclusive education in which every child is valued, respected and supported to achieve their potential. We recognise that children have different strengths, needs and starting points and that some children require special educational provision or reasonable adjustments to access learning and the wider life of the school.

This policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, equality, accessibility, behaviour, medical needs, attendance, complaints and information governance policies. Our practice is underpinned by the principles of the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years and the Equality Act 2010. The school will also have regard to current Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant statutory safeguarding guidance.

2. Statutory and regulatory framework

This policy has regard to the following legislation and guidance applicable in England at the time of review:

- Children and Families Act 2014, particularly Part 3 concerning children and young people with SEND.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, as amended, including the changes introducing the SENCO NPQ as the mandatory qualification from 1 September 2024.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance; current GOV.UK version last updated 12 September 2024).

- Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, together with the updated 2026 Equality Act Code of Practice where relevant.
- Education Act 1996 and associated duties concerning education and special educational provision.
- Children Act 1989 and relevant safeguarding duties.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, as applicable.
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and other relevant health guidance.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, alongside school information-sharing and safeguarding arrangements.
- From 30 September 2026, section 16LA of the Children Act 2004, inserted by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, introduces a statutory information-sharing duty for relevant persons in specified safeguarding circumstances. The school will follow the accompanying statutory information-sharing guidance and its safeguarding and data protection procedures.

The government published proposals for further SEND reform in 2026. These proposals are not treated as current law unless and until they come into force. The school will review this policy when statutory changes are enacted or new statutory guidance is issued.

3. Our values and aims

Our school values are Love, Hope and Wisdom.

Our SEND provision reflects these values and aims to:

- create a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment in which children with SEND are known, valued and respected;
- place the child and their family at the centre of decision-making and provision;
- maintain high expectations and aspirations for pupils with SEND;
- identify needs early and respond through high-quality teaching and a graduated approach;
- remove or reduce barriers to learning and participation;
- ensure that pupils with SEND have full and meaningful access to the curriculum, enrichment, trips, clubs and wider school life, making reasonable adjustments where required;
- listen to and act upon the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people and their parents/carers;
- work collaboratively with families, the local authority, health, social care and other professionals;
- support independence, preparation for adulthood and successful transitions;
- monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision and use evidence from assessment and review to improve outcomes.

4. Definition of SEND

The SEND Code of Practice states that 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 them. At compulsory school age, this means they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream settings.

Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010. A person is disabled where they have 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.

Having SEND does not mean that a child will necessarily have low attainment. Equally, a child may have a special educational need even where their attainment is broadly in line with age-related expectations. Identification considers the whole child, their strengths, barriers, progress and the provision required to access learning.

5. Broad areas of need

The SEND Code of Practice identifies four broad areas of need. These are not intended to be rigid categories and a child may have needs in more than one area.

5.1 Communication and interaction

This includes speech, language and communication needs and autism. Children may experience difficulties with understanding or using language, social communication, interaction or processing communication.

5.2 Cognition and learning

This includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Needs may affect areas such as literacy, numeracy, memory, processing, organisation or the acquisition of new concepts.

5.3 Social, emotional and mental health

Children may experience a wide range of social and emotional needs which affect learning, relationships, behaviour or emotional regulation. Such needs may include anxiety, low mood, difficulties with attention, attachment or self-regulation. The school considers underlying need and avoids assuming that behaviour alone represents a SEND diagnosis.

5.4 Sensory and/or physical needs

This includes visual impairment, hearing impairment, multi-sensory impairment and physical disability. Children may require specialist equipment, adaptations, environmental changes or advice from specialist services.

6. Identification and assessment

The purpose of identification is to understand what action the school needs to take.

Identification is a shared responsibility. The SENCO has strategic responsibility for SEND, but class teachers remain responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils they teach, including pupils receiving additional support.

The school uses a range of evidence, including:

- teacher assessment, observations and professional judgement;
- the child's views, strengths, interests and experiences;
- parent/carer concerns and information;
- attainment and progress data, including relevant statutory assessments;
- reading, spelling, writing and mathematics information where appropriate;
- attendance and pastoral information where relevant;
- information from previous settings and transition records;
- advice and assessment from specialist services;
- information from health or social care professionals where appropriate and lawfully shared;
- evidence of the impact of teaching, adaptations and interventions over time.

The school will not identify a child as having SEND solely because they are performing below age-related expectations. Other factors, such as attendance, English as an additional language, disadvantage, health, family circumstances or interrupted education, may affect progress and will be considered alongside SEND indicators.

7. Quality First Teaching and inclusion

High-quality, adaptive teaching is the first response for all pupils, including those with SEND. Teachers are expected to know pupils' needs and strengths, plan appropriate adaptations and evaluate their impact.

Depending on individual need, reasonable adjustments and adaptive teaching may include:

- clear modelling, explanation and worked examples;
- scaffolding and structured practice;
- pre-teaching and overlearning;
- explicit vocabulary and language support;
- visual prompts, concrete resources and assistive technology;
- adapted recording methods or alternative ways of demonstrating learning;
- carefully considered seating and environmental adaptations;
- additional processing time and chunking of instructions;
- planned opportunities for movement, regulation or sensory support;

- targeted adult support that promotes independence rather than creating unnecessary dependency.

Intervention should complement, rather than replace, high-quality classroom teaching wherever possible. Teachers remain responsible for ensuring that pupils receiving intervention continue to have access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.

8. Graduated approach: Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Where a pupil is identified as having or possibly having SEND, the school follows a graduated approach. Staffordshire County Council currently describes its graduated approach as Assess, Plan, Do, Review, with an Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review pathway available where additional support is required.

8.1 Assess

The school analyses the pupil's needs, strengths, progress and barriers. This includes teacher assessment, the pupil's views, parent/carer information and, where appropriate, specialist advice. Assessment is ongoing and is used to determine the most appropriate provision.

8.2 Plan

Where additional or different provision is required, the teacher and SENCO work with the pupil and parents/carers to agree outcomes, adjustments, interventions, responsibilities and a review date. The provision is recorded clearly enough for staff to implement it consistently.

8.3 Do

The class teacher remains responsible for the pupil's day-to-day learning. Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed appropriately and work under the direction of the teacher. The impact of support is monitored and linked to classroom learning.

8.4 Review

Provision is reviewed at agreed intervals, normally at least termly for pupils receiving SEN Support. Reviews consider progress towards outcomes, the pupil's views, parent/carer views, the effectiveness of provision and the next steps. Provision is adapted where evidence shows that changes are required.

9. SEN Support and individual plans

Where a pupil requires support that is additional to or different from the provision normally available, the school may place the pupil on SEN Support. The school will explain the support to parents/carers and involve them in planning and review.

Individual plans or pupil passports will be used where they add value. They will focus on strengths, needs, outcomes, reasonable adjustments and strategies that enable the pupil to

participate and learn. They will be reviewed and updated rather than becoming static documents.

10. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Where a pupil's needs cannot reasonably be met through ordinarily available provision and SEN Support, the school may work with parents/carers and the local authority to consider an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment. A parent/carer or the young person may also request an assessment in accordance with statutory arrangements.

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the school will secure the special educational provision specified in the plan for which it is responsible, subject to the statutory framework. The school will work with the local authority, parents/carers, the pupil and relevant professionals to review the plan and support progress towards the outcomes.

EHCP annual reviews must take place at least every 12 months. For pupils approaching a phase transfer, the statutory timescales for review and amendment will be followed.

For pupils in Year 6, transition planning will include the receiving secondary school wherever possible, with the EHCP annual review supporting preparation for the next phase.

11. Pupil voice, parent/carer partnership and co-production

Children and young people are at the centre of SEND decision-making. Their views, wishes and feelings will be sought in an age- and communication-appropriate way and will inform assessment, planning and review.

Parents and carers are valued as partners. We will communicate clearly, listen to concerns and share information about strengths, needs, provision and progress. We recognise that families often hold important information about what works for their child.

Where there is disagreement, the school will seek to resolve concerns through discussion, review and, where necessary, the school's complaints and SEND disagreement resolution arrangements. Parents/carers will be signposted to independent SEND information, advice and support.

12. Equality, accessibility and reasonable adjustments

The school is committed to equality of opportunity. We will not unlawfully discriminate against disabled pupils and will make reasonable adjustments where required to prevent disabled pupils being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Accessibility is considered across the curriculum, physical environment and communication. Adjustments may include changes to teaching approaches, resources, routines, communication, assessment arrangements, access to activities and the physical environment.

SEND provision is inclusive and pupils with SEND should participate in the same curriculum and wider opportunities as their peers wherever reasonably possible.

13. Safeguarding and information sharing

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. SEND can be a factor that increases vulnerability, but pupils with SEND are not inherently vulnerable. Staff must remain alert to safeguarding concerns and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

Information about a pupil will be handled lawfully, securely and on a need-to-know basis. Consent will be sought where appropriate, but safeguarding information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis to do so.

From 30 September 2026, section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 creates a statutory information-sharing duty for relevant persons in specified circumstances where information may be relevant to safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare and disclosure may facilitate another relevant person's safeguarding functions. The school will have regard to the statutory information-sharing guidance and will ensure staff understand the interaction between safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection.

14. Supporting pupils with medical needs

Where a pupil has a medical condition alongside SEND, the school will work with parents/carers and relevant health professionals to ensure that education, health and care needs are appropriately coordinated. Individual healthcare plans will be used where required. Medical needs will not automatically constitute SEND, but they may create barriers to learning or require reasonable adjustments.

15. Transition

Transition can be particularly significant for pupils with SEND. The school will plan transitions carefully, share relevant information lawfully and involve pupils and families. This may include enhanced visits, visual information, meetings with receiving staff, transition plans and the sharing of successful strategies.

Transitions between classes and key stages will be planned according to individual need. For pupils with EHCPs, statutory annual review and phase-transfer requirements will be followed.

16. Staffing, training and resources

All staff receive appropriate SEND training and professional development. Training will reflect the needs of pupils currently attending the school and may include communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social and emotional needs, sensory and physical needs, safeguarding, medical needs and adaptive teaching.

The school will ensure that the SENCO meets the current statutory qualification requirements. Since 1 September 2024, the leadership-level SENCO NPQ is the mandatory qualification for relevant SENCOs, with specified transitional arrangements for existing SENCOs.

Resources are allocated according to identified need. The school will maintain an overview of SEND provision and evaluate the impact of resources, interventions and staffing.

17. SEND funding

SEND funding in mainstream schools is provided through the school's delegated resources and, where applicable, additional high-needs funding arrangements operated by the local authority. The school will use available resources to meet identified needs and will work with the local authority where a pupil's provision requires resources beyond those ordinarily available to the school.

Funding decisions will be based on the needs of individual pupils, the provision required, available resources and the relevant local authority arrangements. The school will keep appropriate evidence of provision and impact.

18. Roles and responsibilities

18.1 Governing Board

- Ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements for meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision and outcomes.
- Ensure that the school meets its legal duties regarding equality, accessibility and SEND.
- Ensure that a named governor has oversight of SEND.

18.2 Headteacher / SENCO

- Lead the strategic development of SEND provision.
- Coordinate identification, assessment and support.
- Support staff to implement adaptive teaching and effective provision.
- Work with pupils, parents/carers, governors, the local authority and external agencies.
- Monitor SEND provision, outcomes and use of resources.
- Support statutory EHCP processes and annual reviews.
- Ensure relevant staff receive appropriate SEND training.
- Maintain appropriate SEND records and ensure confidentiality and lawful information sharing.

18.3 Class teachers

- Take responsibility for the progress and development of pupils in their class, including pupils with SEND.

- Provide high-quality adaptive teaching and appropriate reasonable adjustments.
- Implement and review agreed SEN Support provision.
- Work closely with the SENCO, support staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Monitor progress and identify concerns early.

18.4 Teaching assistants and support staff

- Support pupils in accordance with agreed provision and teacher direction.
- Promote independence and avoid unnecessary adult dependency.
- Share observations and concerns with the class teacher and SENCO.
- Participate in relevant training and professional development.

18.5 Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to express their views, identify what helps them learn and take an active role in reviewing their provision as appropriate to their age and understanding.

18.6 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to share information, attend meetings, contribute to planning and review, and work collaboratively with the school and other professionals.

19. Monitoring, evaluation and impact

The school evaluates SEND provision through its normal self-evaluation and improvement processes. This includes reviewing:

- progress and attainment of pupils with SEND;
- the quality of adaptive teaching and reasonable adjustments;
- the impact of interventions and additional provision;
- pupil and parent/carer views;
- the effectiveness of EHCP and SEN Support processes;
- attendance, participation and inclusion;
- staff training and confidence;
- the use and impact of SEND resources.

SEND provision is reviewed regularly and at least termly for pupils receiving SEN Support. The school will use this evidence to refine provision and inform school improvement planning.

20. Complaints and disagreement

Concerns about SEND provision should normally be raised with the class teacher and/or SENCO in the first instance. Where a concern is not resolved, parents/carers may use the school's Complaints Policy. Where appropriate, the school will signpost families to Staffordshire SENDIASS and other independent sources of SEND information, advice and support.

Where a disagreement concerns an EHCP or a local authority decision, parents/carers and young people have rights under the statutory SEND framework, including mediation and appeal rights in specified circumstances.

21. Staffordshire Local Offer and SEND support

The school's SEND information forms part of the wider local offer. Staffordshire County Council's current SEND information explains that its graduated approach includes Assess, Plan, Do, Review and an Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review pathway. Families can access information about SEND services, EHC needs assessments, EHCPs, health, social care, education and support through the Staffordshire SEND Local Offer.

Staffordshire's SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2026–2029 identifies three local priorities: timely and consistent support; listening to and supporting families; and nurturing inclusive environments and best practice. The school will work in partnership with local services and families in support of these principles.

22. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local authority arrangements or school provision.

Next scheduled review: September 2027.

Appendix 1 – Key current references

- **SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>
- **Mandatory qualification for SENCOs:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-qualification-for-sencos>
- **SENCO NPQ:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/special-educational-needs-co-ordinator-senco-national-professional-qualification>
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- **Information sharing to safeguard children and young people:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>
- **Staffordshire SEND support:** <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/special-educational-needs-send/send-support-staffordshire>
- **Staffordshire SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2026–2029:**
<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/special-educational-needs-send/send-and-alternative-provision-strategy-2026>