



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY (MTGS)

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This Special Needs Policy takes into account:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: for 0-25yrs (2015)
- The Children and Family Act (2014)
- The Equality Act 2010
- Teachers Standards 2012 Section 5
- MTGS Accessibility & SENDA Policy
- JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment Guidelines
- MTGS Safeguarding Policy

1. **OVERVIEW**

- 1.1. Merchant Taylors' Girls' School (MTGS) is an academically selective independent school. We welcome all pupils who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer and can flourish in our caring environment. We aim to provide all our pupils with a school career that promotes intellectual, emotional, social and physical development, allowing them to emerge as confident, well-educated and well-rounded adults. We celebrate all successes both academic and non-academic.
- 1.2. MTGS recognise pupils of all abilities may experience obstacles to learning and our aim is to treat each child as an individual and welcome children with special educational needs and disabilities, providing we can support their needs.
- 1.3. MTGS aim to provide all pupils with a balanced and enriching curriculum and to ensure full entitlement and access to all MTGS pupils, so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
- 1.4. MTGS aim to educate pupils with special educational needs alongside their peers, whenever possible, within the normal curriculum, after giving due consideration to the appropriate wishes of the pupils and their needs. In keeping with the Equality Act (2015; updated 2020) and the Children and Family Act (2014), MTGS will strive to make reasonable adjustments to support pupils with SEND.



2. **DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED**

- 2.1 A pupil is said to have special educational needs if their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision to be made.
- 2.2 A pupil has a learning difficulty or disability if they:
- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of their peers or
 - have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

(Section 6), Equality Act 2010.

- 2.3 The above definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, cancer and mental health concerns.

- 2.4 It should be noted that under the Equalities Act 2010 'hidden' impairments such as Dyslexia, Autism, ADHD may qualify as a disability and are therefore subject to reasonable adjustment duties.

- 2.5 The SEND Code of Practice identifies 4 areas of need:

- **Communication and interaction**
This includes pupils who are on the Autistic Spectrum, and/or pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).
- **Cognition and Learning**
This includes pupils with specific learning difficulties, including Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia.
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties**
This may include pupils who have a wide range of social and emotional and/or mental health difficulties which can manifest themselves in a variety of ways including self-harm, eating disorders, depression and/or anxiety and substance misuse. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (inattentive/attentive) is also included under this area.
- **Physical and/or Sensory**
This includes pupils who have visual and/or hearing impairments, or a physical need that means they require additional on-going support and equipment.



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Note: a pupil may fall into one or more of the categories listed above.

- 2.6 MTGS will make best endeavours to meet the requirements of any individual within the context of 'reasonable adjustments as required by the Equality Act 2010.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF PUPILS WITH SEND

- 3.1 The school will admit pupils who satisfied the school's entry requirements but may have special needs. Parents/Guardians of candidates who know in advance of the entrance assessments that their child has been diagnosed with a specific difficulty or is receiving additional support must inform the school's admissions office and provide copies of all reports and other relevant information. Parents/Guardians will be asked to withdraw the pupil, without being charged fee in lieu, in the professional judgement of the Head and after consultation with the parents/guardians and the pupil (where appropriate), the School cannot provide adequately for the pupil's educational needs.

3.2 Entry to Senior School 11+/16+

- 3.2.1 Examination access arrangements (e.g. extra time, use of a reader, scribe or laptop) will be awarded to candidates during the examination/admissions process, if they provide MTGS with a recommendation from the pupil's School SENCO or from Educational Psychologist or certified Specialist Teacher Diagnostic Report or a medical recommendation from a health care professional. It must be noted that all reports for external examination access arrangements must meet the JCQ regulations.
- 3.2.2 Whole year screening takes place in the first term of Year 7, measuring ability in literacy skills and provides data to form part of the schools tracking and monitoring of pupil progress and identify pupils who may need monitoring.
- 3.2.3 MTGS use Alis and MIDYIS tests to give a baseline for predicting future performance and these scores can also be used to generate further investigation.
- 3.2.4 The school recognises that potential underlying difficulties may only emerge as a pupil progresses through the school. Teachers can raise SEND concerns about a pupil by following the SEND Cause for Concern referral system. In addition to this the Learning Support Department meet regularly with Heads of House



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and the Pastoral Team to review pupils' progress. Pupils can also make self-referrals and parents can raise concerns directly to the Learning Support Department.

4. OBJECTIVES FOR MTGS IN RELATION TO SEN

When a pupil has been identified as having SEND the school will endeavour to:

- 4.1 Ensure full entitlement and access for pupils with SEND to inclusive quality teaching within a broad, balanced curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
- 4.2 Identify those pupils who have difficulties with learning, which are significantly greater than the majority of pupils within the same age group and academic level.
- 4.3 Supply information to the pupil and their parents/guardians outlining the support required and to take into consideration the views and feelings of the pupil and their parents/guardians.
- 4.4 Meet the needs of pupils with SEND with appropriate provision and resources. Where possible this will be completed within the school, but on occasions it may be necessary to advise parents to seek specialist assessment and/or teaching outside of school.
- 4.5 Advise and liaise with staff and parents/guardians on the identification of SEND and provide strategies for in class support. Where necessary, the SENDCO may recommend either an external or internal assessment.

5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUPILS AT MTGS WITH SEND

- 5.1 All teachers at MTGS are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their classes, including those that need additional SEND support from specialist staff. Inclusive quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils where necessary, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND.
- 5.2 MTGS will regularly review the quality of teaching for all pupils. This includes reviewing teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support pupils with SEND.
- 5.3 Class and subject teachers, supported by HoD and HoH carry out regular monitoring of pupils' progress. These seek to identify pupils



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making less than expected progress. This can be characterised by progress which:

- 5.3.1 is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.
- 5.3.2 fails to match or better the pupil's previous rate of progress.
- 5.3.3 fails to close the attainment gap between the pupil and their peers.
- 5.3.4 widens the attainment gap.

Note: This may include progress in areas other than attainment, e.g., social needs.

6. CONSULTING AND INVOLVING PUPILS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- 6.1 MTGS recognise the need and importance for effective partnership with parents/guardians and the promotion of a pupil centred approach.
- 6.2 When identified as potentially needing special educational provision, the school will have a discussion with the pupil and their parents/guardians. MTGS

These conversations will promote a pupil centred approach, whereby:

- All parties develop a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty
- Parents/guardians will be able to raised their concerns
- All parties understand the agreed outcome sought for the pupil
- All parties are clear on what the next steps are

Parents/Guardians will be notified if additional support is provided for their child.

- 6.3 Where parents/guardians have sought external agencies, reports should be shared with the school, in order to establish and agree the support provided in school.

Note: When parents/guardians are advised or seek assessment or services by an external professional or agency to assist their child beyond the scope of the support provided from school, any charges will be borne by the parent/guardian and not by the school.



7. IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR SEND

- 7.1 When a pupil has been identified as having SEN, the school will support to remove barriers to learning and where appropriate put 'reasonable adjustments' in place. Support provision is revised and refined with a growing understanding for the pupil's needs and their progress made as they progress through the school.
- 7.2 MTGS use best endeavours and implement reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of the individual pupil.

MTGS aim to:

- Liaise closely with the pupil, their parents/guardians and the staff to support the needs of the pupil
- Adopt a pupil-centred approach
- Liaise with outside agencies/professionals, as appropriate, to support the pupils needs
- Collaborate with staff to support the social and emotional well-being of the pupil
- Collaborate with subject staff to ensure the needs of the pupil are met within the classroom
- Monitor and review the progress of pupils in line with the school's tracking and reporting procedures
- Support and develop pupils' academic achievements but also non-academic and personal qualities, developing self-esteem and self-worth
- Provide staff with pupils' individual Pupil Profiles (PP) detailing relevant and accurate descriptions of pupils' needs and teaching strategies to support their learning in the classroom. PPs are prepared in collaboration with the pupil and relevant diagnostic reports or assessments
- Provide Individual Learning Plans (ILP) for pupils attending Learning Support lessons. ILP are produced in collaboration with the pupil and parent/guardians, and are reviewed twice a year



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- Provide ongoing CPD for staff
- Liaise closely with external agencies/professionals as appropriate to the individual needs of the pupil

8. EDUCATIONAL, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS (EHCP)

8.1 The SENDCO will work closely with the relevant Local Authority to support the needs of the individual pupil, as stated in their EHCP.

As per the Children and Families Act (2014), it is the legal responsibility of the pupil's Local Authority to arrange the provision specified in their EHCP.

9. SAFEGUARDING AND SEND PUPILS

9.1 The increased vulnerabilities of children with SEND mean that safeguarding must remain a constant focus for all school staff. MTGS recognize 'the welfare of the child is paramount, and this underlies all our work with our pupils, including pupils with SEND.

9.2 MTGS recognise pupils with SEND may experience the following vulnerabilities:

- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing and reporting.
- More prone to peer group pressure or bullying.
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further explanation.
- Disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.

(Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021))

9.3 MTGS follow the MTGS Safeguarding Policy.



10. THE ROLE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES CO-ORDINATOR

- 10.1 The position of Head of Learning Support/SENDCO has responsibility for SEND provision at MTGS. The key responsibilities of the SENDCO include:
- 10.1.1 Overseeing the day-to-day operation of MTGS SEND policy
 - 10.1.2 Co-ordinating provision for pupils with SEND
 - 10.1.3 Liaising with all the relevant staff teaching pupils with SEND
 - 10.1.4 Advise on the graduated approach to support pupils with SEND
 - 10.1.5 Liaising with internal professionals to support the needs of pupils with SEND
 - 10.1.6 Liaising with parents of pupils with SEND
 - 10.1.7 Liaising with external professionals, including educational psychologists, doctors, speech and language therapists, etc. to support the needs of the pupils
 - 10.1.8 Management of the school's SEND budget and other resources to support pupils' needs effectively
 - 10.1.9 Working with SMT to ensure the school meets its responsibilities under the quality Act 2010 with regards to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
 - 10.1.10 Contact and liaise with SENDCOs from other schools within the corporation
 - 10.1.11 To liaise with Universities and Higher Education to ensure a smooth transition
 - 10.1.12 Supporting teachers with their knowledge and understanding of SEND, both in terms of identification and teaching
 - 10.1.13 Attending regular training and INSET sessions relevant to the role



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- 10.1.14 Regularly meet with the Pastoral Team to monitor and support pupils with SEND

11. MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- 11.1 The school pastoral team and school Nurse are involved in the care of girls with any medical condition. Please refer to our policy on Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions for further information

12. MENTAL HEALTH

- 12.1 The school has specific legal responsibilities towards pupils whose mental condition falls within the definition of disability under the law. This requires us to ensure that pupils with a well-recognised mental illness are not disadvantaged and that reasonable adjustments are put in place to support their learning. Please refer to our policy 'Pupil Mental Health' for further information.

13. ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

- 13.1 Follow the English as an Additional Language Policy

14. RESOURCES AND DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

- 13.1 The Learning Support Department has a range of resources to develop the skills of pupils and it is the role of the Learning Support Department to keep informed of any new resources that will be beneficial to the school.

15. Exam ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS



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- 15.1 The regulations for Access Arrangements for public examinations are determined by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and other relevant Awarding Bodies.
- 15.2 In order to apply JCQ regulations, evidence must be presented to demonstrate a history of need and ensure no candidate is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to their peers as a result of a specific needs or learning need; equally that no candidate should be unreasonably advantaged by provision of an access arrangement.
- 15.3 Once a pupil has been awarded access arrangements it does not automatically qualify them for access arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments the subsequent year and they may need to be tested accordingly, as well as the access arrangement reflecting the pupil's normal way of working.
- 15.4 Testing required for access arrangements will be completed by the Learning Support Department, after the views of the pupil, their parents/guardians and subject teachers, as well as evidence of performance within the school have been collated in order to demonstrate a clear picture of need and their normal way of working. Should any further external testing be required, the cost is the responsibility of the parents.
- 15.5 External assessments or educational psychologist reports may not be used as evidence for access arrangements unless there is an established working relationship between the external assessor and the school. In addition to this, prior to the external assessment the school must have provided background information to the external assessor to ensure MTGS and the assessor are working together in a joined up and consistent approach.
- 15.6 The Access Arrangements awarded at previous schools are not automatically carried forward and do not guarantee eligibility for Exam Access Arrangements at MTGS.
- 15.7 Where Access Arrangements are required as a result of a long-term medical condition, the professional diagnosis should ensure there is clear and substantial evidence for an arrangement to be made as a direct result of the candidate's long-term and continuing medical needs presenting a persistent and significant barrier to learning.
- 15.8 Pupils with Exam Access Arrangements are awarded such arrangements as their standard way of working in school (classwork and internal assessments and tests) as well as in public examinations.



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15.9 The final decision regarding Exam Access Arrangements for internal and public examinations rest entirely with the school in its capacity as an examination centre.

16. EVALUATION OF SEND PROVISION

16.1 The SENDCO liaises regularly with the Headmistress of MTGS and Stanfield, Duty Head MTGS, SENDCO MTBS, school nurse and school counsellor and Exams Officer.

16.2 MTGS's SEN Policy and Development Plan are updated regularly and adjustments are made when necessary.

16.3 The importance of target setting for individuals needing support is an important part of the New Code of Practice. It is the aim that any support is monitored, adjusted and reviewed regularly. A focus on outcomes is important if a graduated response is going to work.

16.4 Currently SEND support is measured in the following ways:

- School Tracking System
- Internal and external examinations
- End of term reports
- Parents' Evenings
- Views of the pupil
- Individual Learning Plans
- Diagnostic testing
- Book reviews
- Learning Walks
- Teacher feedback

All teacher and support staff will be made aware of the pupil's needs, the support provided, and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress will be regularly reviewed. Pupil Profiles and regular updates in staff meetings will ensure this information is communicated to the pupils' teachers and support staff.

17. PLANNING THE TRANSITION INTO POST 16. UNIVERSITIES. TRAINING AND THE WORKPLACE



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- 17.1 Pupils at MTGS entering post-16 education should have access to supportive provision allowing them to build on their achievements.
- 17.2 The SENDCO will liaise with the Head of Sixth Form and Head of Careers before the pupil approaches the transition point. Similarly, the SENDCO will support pupils and parents/guardians, as well as liaise with the educational provider or employer to ensure that relevant information about previous SEND provision is shared.
- 17.3 The pupil's Local Authority will be able to offer advice on the financial support available to pupils in higher education and how to claim it.
- 17.4 Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) is available to help pupils in higher education with the extra costs they may incur on their course because of a disability. Applications for DSA can be made to Student Finance application services.

18. ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

- 18.1 Complaints will follow MTGS Complaints Procedure

19. Your LOCAL OFFER

- 19.1 Each Local Authority has a Local Offer, which provides information on the support available to children and young adults with Special Needs and Disabilities. For your Local Offer search the internet for the Local Offer for your home address.