



Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby

SEND Policy

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| Policy Owner | Headteacher |
| Policy Author | Head of Learning Support |
| Last reviewed by Date | Head of Learning Support February 2026 |
| Last approved by <u>Date</u> | Board of Governors March 2026 |
| Frequency of review | Annual |
| Next policy review by owner | February 2027 |
| Next policy approved by Board of Governors (if applicable) | March 2027 |
| Circulation: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Staff & Governors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inspection Portal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parent Portal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senior & Sixth Pupils |
| Related Policies: | Teaching and Learning Policy PSHE Policy RSE Policy Careers Policy Assessment, Feedback, & Reporting Policy Accessibility Plan Administration of Medicines Procedure Behaviour Policy Anti-Bullying Policy Safeguarding Policy Terms & Conditions [Para. 5.7-5.9, & 6.7.3] |
| Regulatory Body (if applicable) | DfE, ISI |
| Relevant legislation/guidelines | Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3) Equality Act 2010 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) Independent school standards: guidance for independent schools (DfE, April 2026) SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015; GOV.UK page last updated 12 September 2024) Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 |

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| | <p>Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (from 1 September 2025)</p> <p>Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE statutory guidance)</p> <p>UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018</p> <p>JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025/26 (updated March 2026)</p> |
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1 Aims

- 1.1 This is the Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy of Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby [the School].
- 1.2 This policy has been prepared having regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015; GOV.UK page last updated 12 September 2024), the Equality Act 2010, Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended), and relevant Department for Education guidance.
- 1.3 Merchant Taylors' Schools are academically selective, and we welcome all children who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer and can flourish in the caring environment of each School.

Specifically, the aim of this policy is:

- 1.3.1 that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress;
 - 1.3.2 to ensure we treat each child as an individual so that subject learning is delivered through Quality First teaching that will enable all pupils to make good progress according to their abilities and based on a good understanding of their needs, informed by regular, thorough assessment of their work which feeds into lesson planning;
 - 1.3.3 to ensure full entitlement and access for pupils with SEND to high-quality education within a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
 - 1.3.4 to ensure the School has regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015) in so far as it applies to the independent-school context,
 - 1.3.5 to ensure teaching and schemes of work consider the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with EHC plans and SEND;
 - 1.3.6 to provide pupils with SEND and disabled pupils with appropriate support and, where required, reasonable adjustments and auxiliary aids or services to avoid substantial disadvantage, so far as is reasonable in all the circumstances.
- 1.4 To these ends, we request that parents of children with SEND discuss their child's requirements with the School before the entrance examination/assessment so that we can determine adequate provision for the child. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or equivalent or a medical report to support requests for extra time or other special arrangements. This evidence can support an application for access arrangements but must be the normal way of working and cannot be used alone.
 - 1.5 This policy is made available to all pupils, parents, staff, and prospective parents via the School website.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 A child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.
- 2.2 Special educational provision means educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in mainstream schools.
- 2.3 A child or young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:
 - 2.3.1 have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
 - 2.3.2 have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.
- 2.4 A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if they are, or would be if special educational provision were not made for them, likely to fall within clause 2.3 when of compulsory school age.
- 2.5 A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language, or form of language, in which they are or will be taught is different from a language or form of language spoken at home.
- 2.6 Some pupils with disabilities will also have SEN. Others may be disabled under the Equality Act 2010 without having SEN. Where a disabled pupil requires special educational provision, they will also fall within the SEN definition.

3 Responsibility Statement & Allocation of Tasks

- 3.1 The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.
- 3.2 To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Board of Governors has allocated the following tasks:

| Task | Allocated to | Frequency of Review |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Keeping the policy up-to-date and compliant with the law and best practice | Head of Learning Support [SENCO] | As required, and at least annually |
| Day-to-day responsibility for carrying out individual learning plans, reviews, and risk assessments under the policy | Head of Learning Support | As required, and at least termly |
| Monitoring the implementation of the policy, ILPs, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness | Head of Learning Support | As required, and at least termly |
| Maintaining up-to-date records of all information created in relation to the policy and its implementation as required by the GDPR (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) | Head of Learning Support & Data Manager | As required, and at least termly |
| Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy | Head of Learning Support | As required, and at least annually |
| Formal annual review | Board of Governors | Annually |

- 3.3 The School's SENCO has responsibility for:
- 3.3.1 ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of a child's special educational needs;
 - 3.3.2 advising and supporting other staff in the School;
 - 3.3.3 ensuring that appropriate ILPs are in place and effectively implemented;

- 3.3.4 ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with special education needs is collected, recorded and updated;
- 3.3.5 undertaking any other appropriate duties in accordance with the Code of Practice.

4 Procedures

- 4.1 The School's approach to the detection and management of learning difficulties will be guided by the Code of Practice.
- 4.2 Where a pupil is identified as needing SEN support, the School will adopt a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review. The School will work in partnership with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, to agree outcomes, support, expected impact and review dates.
- 4.3 Identification of pupils with a Learning Difficulty
 - 4.3.1 Pupil progress and engagement are closely monitored by classroom teachers in all settings using the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to children's learning difficulties. If the outcome of an assessment [see below] or any other circumstance(s) give(s) us reason to think that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, we will report and consult with the pupil's parents as necessary and make recommendations about future assessment and support. During a pupil's first year and at each key stage thereafter, the School will carry out regular assessments the results of which will be reported to the pupil's parents.
 - 4.3.2 Referral may also come from a variety of sources:
 - (a) Pupil self-referral and/or individual interviews;
 - (b) Parental request;
 - (c) Management request;
 - (d) GP request;
 - (e) diagnostic tests;
 - (f) information from previous school/nursery;
 - (g) a SEND teacher tracking and observing individual pupils in lessons.
 - 4.3.3 In addition to this:
 - (a) In Reception: internal tracking systems are used including daily observations and Learning Journeys which lead to the EYFS Profile and beyond;
 - (b) In Stanfield: this continues for Reception and also pupil progress is monitored through teacher assessment as well as using standardised assessments.
 - (c) In MTS: All pupils are assessed on their reading, spelling and mathematical skills on entry to year 7 to assist with class allocation, timetabling and the identification of support needs. The results are not generally disclosed to parents. However, parents are welcome to contact the School if they wish to know the results. For this the following assessments are used:
 - (i) MIDYIS/ YELLIS/ ALIS;
 - (ii) Entrance Maths Test;
 - (iii) Entrance Reading Comprehension Test;

- (iv) Entrance Writing Test;
- (v) LUCID screening in year 7 or upon entry.

- 4.4 The assessments are not diagnostic assessments of a kind which an educational psychologist would carry out and are not infallible. The purpose of an assessment is to detect circumstances which may need further investigation by the SENCO or a formal assessment. Needs are categorised into four broad areas; communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; sensory and/or physical.
- 4.5 The class or subject teacher remains responsible for working with the pupil on a daily basis, even where interventions involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the classroom. The SENCO will support teachers in the further assessment of need, problem-solving and effective implementation of support. Where a pupil continues to make less than expected progress despite evidence-based support and interventions matched to need, the School will consider involving appropriate specialists, with parents informed and involved.

5 Learning Support

- 5.1 Where assessment indicates that a pupil requires SEN support, the School may put in place monitoring, universal classroom strategies, targeted intervention, specialist support or, where relevant, provision linked to an EHC plan. Any modification to a pupil's curriculum or timetable will be made only following assessment of need, consultation with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, and with clear intended outcomes and review dates.

| Level | Description |
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| 4. Monitoring | These are students who have had SEN concerns raised and are being monitored. Monitoring is led by the class or subject teacher, with oversight from the SENCo and learning support team. |
| 3: Universal | These are pupils who are supported in the classroom through a graduated and differentiated approach with quality first teaching. Department-led subject clinics. Strategies are provided to teachers through pupil profiles. |
| 2: Targeted | These are pupils on the SEND list who receive Learning Support lessons to support their academic and pastoral journey through school. A pupil profile is available to advise teachers on appropriate strategies to support individual students in the classroom and depending on need there will be a learning support assistant in the classroom. |
| 1: Specialist | Pupils who have a diagnosed SEN need are on the flexible curriculum. They have timetabled lessons to support their learning and still access a full curriculum. |
| EHCP | Pupils who have Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) receive specialist support to achieve the objectives set out in the Education Health and Care Plan. |

- 5.2 Learning support of this kind will be arranged, subject to prior agreement being reached with the parent as to the charging arrangement for this.
- 5.3 The pupil's progress and needs will be monitored and, if necessary, the School will recommend a formal assessment if the learning support does not appear to be meeting the pupil's needs.

6 Formal Assessment

- 6.1 The screening tests available to the Schools are indicative only: they are not infallible. Parents will be notified if a screening test indicates that the pupil has SEND.
- 6.2 If there are indications that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, we will ask the pupil's parents to agree to the pupil being formally assessed by an educational psychologist or an appropriate professional where appropriate. Alternatively, our Access Arrangements Assessor can carry out standardised tests to further investigate any concerns. This further assessment can be used to apply for access arrangements and to inform teaching.
- 6.2 Where school-based assessment indicates that a pupil may require further specialist input, the School may recommend advice or assessment from an educational psychologist or other appropriately qualified professional. Such assessment may help inform teaching, support planning and, where relevant, applications for examination access arrangements.
- 6.3 The School will consider what support can reasonably be put in place using its own assessment evidence and will not delay appropriate SEN support pending external assessment. Where referral to the local authority or an Education, Health and Care needs assessment may be appropriate, the School will discuss this with parents.

7 Additional Specialist Teaching

- 7.1 As part of the graduated approach, the School may provide additional specialist teaching or intervention, individually or in a small group, where this is supported by assessed need, agreed outcomes and review. Such provision will complement, not replace, high-quality classroom teaching.
- 7.2 Learning support of this kind will be arranged, subject to prior agreement being reached with the parent as to the arrangement for this. There is typically no charge for this as long as this falls within the terms of reasonable adjustment.

8 Examinations & Access Arrangements

- 8.1 Pupils who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be eligible for extra time and/or other "access arrangements" to complete internal examinations and public examinations.
- 8.2. Examination access arrangements will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with the current JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments regulations. Decisions will

be based on evidence of need, the pupil's normal way of working in school, and the published criteria of the relevant awarding bodies.

- 8.3 Where the School considers that an application for access arrangements may be appropriate, the SENCO will ensure that the required centre-based evidence is gathered and that any assessment and application process complies with current JCQ requirements, including the completion and checking of the relevant forms where required.
- 8.4 The Head of Learning Support will liaise with the Examinations Officer as appropriate to ensure that such pupils receive the access arrangements necessary in examinations.
- 8.5 Parents are asked to liaise with their child's Head of Division in good time with respect to this.

9 Information-sharing and Parent Involvement

- 9.1 New Parents are asked to complete a parent questionnaire to gather key background information which may be relevant and to provide copies of any report or recommendations which have been made in relation to special educational needs at their child's previous school or elsewhere within the last 12 months. Confidential information of this kind will only be shared within the School on a "need to know" basis.
- 9.2 The School will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents about their child's learning difficulties and to ensure that teachers are given any necessary information about a child's learning difficulties and that teaching practices are appropriate.
- 9.3 Parents should notify the School immediately if their child's progress or behaviour causes concern so that the School can devise and agree a strategy with the parents.
- 9.4 Parents are key partners in the identification, planning and review of support for their child. The School retains professional responsibility for assessing need, planning provision, implementing support, reviewing impact and sharing relevant information with staff on a need-to-know basis. Parents are asked to share relevant reports and advice so that provision can be planned as effectively as possible.

10 Individual Learning Plan

- 10.1 The SENCO will ensure that an appropriate ILP is in place where required for pupils with SEN.
- 10.2 The ILP will be prepared in consultation with the parents and, if appropriate, the pupil and will include:
 - 10.2.1 the adjustments, interventions and support required to meet the outcomes identified for the pupil;
 - 10.2.2 the expected impact on the pupil's progress, development or behaviour, as appropriate; and,
 - 10.2.3 clear dates for review.

- 10.3 The ILP, or other record of SEN support, will be reviewed regularly and ordinarily at least termly, with parents met at least three times each academic year. In carrying out the review, the SENCO, relevant staff, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, will consider:
- 10.3.1 the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress;
 - 10.3.2 the views of relevant teaching staff, the parents and, where appropriate, the pupil; and
 - 10.3.3 any changes required to the support, strategies and intended outcomes.
- 10.4 Although the co-ordinating and planning of a pupil's ILP, especially setting appropriate targets, is the responsibility of the Head of Learning Support, the 2014 legislation makes it quite clear that the devising of strategies and the identification of appropriate methods of access to the curriculum should lie within the area of the expertise and responsibility of the individual subject teachers. All teaching staff should therefore be involved in providing further help to pupils through SEN support and the graduated approach. Subject leaders and individual teachers to be informed of the nature of the pupil's learning difficulty through the ILP. Suggested in-class teaching strategies are provided in addition to the type of learning support that will be in place.

11 Education Health and Care Plans [EHC plan]

- 11.1 Parents and the School have the right under section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ask the local authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC plan. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right. If the local authority refuses to make an assessment, the parents (but not the School) have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).
- 11.2 Where a prospective pupil has an EHC plan, the School will consult the parents and, where appropriate, the local authority to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC plan can be delivered by the School. The School will co-operate with the local authority to ensure that relevant reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.
- 11.3 Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHC plan will be charged to the local authority if the authority is responsible for the fees and the School is named in Section I of the EHC plan. In all other circumstances, the School will agree the charging arrangements with the parent(s) with regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 where applicable.

12 Additional Welfare Needs

- 12.1 The School recognises that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional safeguarding challenges. The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy reflects these additional barriers and is informed by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

- 12.2 The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the PSHE programme, through the supportive School culture and through the School's policies.
- 12.3 Pupils with special educational needs are monitored closely and supported through the School's pastoral programme, which has a 'team-around-the-child' approach to pastoral provision.
- 12.4 If parents are concerned about their child's welfare, they can approach the pupil's form teacher or any senior member of staff to discuss their concerns in private at any time.
- 12.5 Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of pupils with a special educational need or disability creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The School is mindful in particular that:
- 12.5.1 assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's special educational need or disability without further exploration;
 - 12.5.2 pupils with a special education need or disability can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
 - 12.5.3 there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required.
- 12.6 Any safeguarding concerns involving a pupil with SEND will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, with close liaison between the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and the SENCO where appropriate.

13 Disability

- 13.1 Some pupils with SEN may also be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. The School will not unlawfully discriminate against a disabled pupil and will consider, on an individual basis, what reasonable adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services may be required to avoid substantial disadvantage.
- 13.2 In considering provision for a disabled pupil, the School will take a case-by-case approach, informed by relevant evidence, consultation with parents and, where appropriate, specialist advice. The School will seek to enable access to educational opportunities and participation in school life so far as is reasonable in all the circumstances.
- 13.3 The School is not under the reasonable-adjustment duty to make alterations to physical features, but addresses accessibility through its Accessibility Plan, which is available on the website.
- 13.4 If, after full consultation, documented consideration of reasonable adjustments, and careful review of the provision that can reasonably be made, the School concludes that it cannot adequately meet a pupil's needs within the mainstream provision it offers, the School will explain this to parents in writing and will refer them to the relevant complaints and contractual procedures.

14 Adjustments

- 14.1 The School can allow pupils to use their own computer devices (as regulated by JCQ) as and when necessary. The School has word processors for use in exams, NEA, and controlled assessments for those who are assessed as needing to use one and for whom it is a normal way of working.
- 14.2 The School may provide reasonable adjustments and examination access arrangements, where supported by evidence of need and the pupil's normal way of working, including the use of a word processor, extra time, supervised rest breaks, a reader, speech-to-text or other arrangements permitted under current JCQ regulations. Such arrangements are determined individually and remain subject to the published criteria of the relevant awarding bodies.
- 14.3 On a temporary basis, classes can be relocated to allow ground floor access.

15 Alternative Arrangements

- 15.1 In rare cases, and only after consultation with parents, consideration of relevant professional advice, documented assessment of need, and recorded consideration of reasonable adjustments and available support, the School may conclude that it cannot reasonably meet a pupil's needs within the mainstream provision it offers.
- 15.2 In such circumstances, the School will explain its decision and reasons in writing, refer parents to the relevant complaints and contractual procedures, and, where appropriate, assist discussions about alternative provision.
- 15.3 Nothing in this clause removes the School's duties under the Equality Act 2010 or its responsibility to consider reasonable adjustments on an individual basis.

16 Training and Qualifications

- 16.1 The Head of Learning Support holds an appropriate SENCO qualification and relevant experience to lead SEND provision. The School keeps under review current national expectations for SENCO training and ensures that SEND leadership remains suitably qualified and up to date.
- 16.2 The School ensures that regular guidance and training is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.
- 16.3 The level and frequency of training depends on the role of the individual member of staff.
- 16.4 The School maintains written records of all staff training.

17 Risk Assessment

- 17.1 Where a pupil's SEND, disability, medical needs or behaviour presents a specific welfare or health and safety risk, the School will carry out an individual and proportionate risk assessment as part of its wider planning for that pupil.
- 17.2 Risk assessments will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with relevant staff, parents, the pupil where appropriate, and any relevant professionals. Their purpose is to support safe participation and access to educational opportunities, not to impose blanket restrictions or assumptions about risk.
- 17.3 Risk assessments may sit alongside individual healthcare plans, behaviour plans, welfare plans, moving and handling plans or education plans, as appropriate, and will be reviewed regularly and whenever circumstances change.

18 Record Keeping

- 18.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.
- 18.2 The records created in accordance with this policy may contain personal data. The School has a number of privacy notices which explain how the School will use personal data about pupils and parents. The privacy notices are published on the School's website. In addition, staff must ensure that they follow the School's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy. This includes the School's data protection policy and information security policy.