



Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

The Palmer Catholic Academy

MISSION STATEMENT



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The Academy's Mission promotes the academic and personal development of each member of its community, both students and staff alike.

We serve Christ in each other to the Glory of God and Service of all.



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Adoption by Governing Body of The Palmer Catholic Academy:

Date of Implementation: January 2025

Signature of Chair of Governors: *M Leslie-Povoas*

Signature of Headteacher: *P Downey*

Review Date: January 2026

The Palmer Catholic Academy

Special Needs Policy 2024-2025

All teachers are teachers of special educational needs. We recognise that it is the teacher's responsibility to meet the needs of all children in their class through their classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation. However, if the student does not make adequate progress even when teaching approaches are targeted at a student's identified area of weakness, the student may then be identified as having special educational needs.

1. Guiding Principle

Our guiding principle is one of inclusion. We want to identify and break down possible barriers to learning. The aims of education for students with learning difficulties and disabilities are the same as those for all students.

2. Objectives in making provision for students with SEN

- To value all the students in our academy equally.
- To ensure that all students have equal access to a broad, balanced curriculum which is differentiated to meet individual needs and abilities.
- It is the responsibility of all teachers to identify and meet the Special Educational Needs (SEN) of students. In this they can draw on the resources of the whole academy.
- Every child is entitled to have his or her particular needs recognised and addressed.
- To offer high quality support to ensure that all needs are met.
- To maximise the opportunities for students with special educational needs to join in with all the activities of the academy.
- All students are entitled to experience success.
- Consideration of SEN crosses all curriculum areas and all aspects of teaching and learning.
- To seek the views of the child and take them into account.
- To acknowledge and draw on parents' knowledge and expertise in relation to their child.

This policy will contribute to achieving these objectives by ensuring that provision for students with SEN is a matter for the whole academy and is a part of the continuous cycle of assessment and review.

3. Roles and Responsibilities/Co-ordination of provision

Provision for students with special educational needs is a matter for the academy as a whole.

3.1 Governing Body

The School Governors have specific responsibility to:

- Do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any student who has special educational needs.
- Ensure that students' needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them.
- Ensure that teachers in the academy are aware of the importance of identifying, and providing for, those students who have special educational needs.
- Consult the LEA and the governing bodies of other schools, when it seems to be necessary or desirable in the interest of co-ordinated special educational provision in the area as a whole.
- Ensure that a student with special educational needs joins in the activities of the academy together with students who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the child receiving the special educational provision their learning needs call for and the efficient education of the students with whom they are educated and the efficient use of resources.
- Ensure that parents are notified of a decision by the academy that SEN provision is being made for their child.

In doing so Governors will have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the Disability Rights Code of Practice for schools, to produce and keep under review the information report.

The new guidance makes it clear that, "while overall responsibility rests with the board, there should be a lead member of the governing body or a sub-committee with specific oversight of the school's arrangements for SEN and disability"

The lead member will:

- champion the school's support for pupils with SEN and disabilities, including good practice in pupil engagement
- ensure that the board has the information it needs for assurance about the school's practice
- work closely with the head teacher or principal, senior leadership team and (in the case of mainstream schools) the SENCO (*DFE- February 2025*)

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher has responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the academy's work, including provision for students with SEN. The Headteacher keeps the governing body fully informed and works closely with the academy's SENCO.

3.3 The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is Mrs T Pascoe-Matthews who can be contacted by phone, Monday to Friday. Her responsibilities include:

- An overview of the progress and provision in place for students with SEN/EHCP
- Co-ordinating provision for students with special educational needs.
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers.
- Managing Learning support teachers and assistants.
- Liaising with parents/carers of students with special educational needs.
- Liaising with the feeder Primary Schools and outside agencies.
- Contributes to the SEN information report which is updated annually.
- The SENCO meets on a regular basis with other senior staff to review students who have been identified as 'Vulnerable'.

The SENCO meets regularly with SENCOs in other schools which enables him/her to keep up to date with current initiatives locally and nationally and to seek out and share best practice. Mrs Pascoe-Matthews is supported by a Deputy SENCO Mrs Cameron.

3.4 Teaching Staff

All teachers are teachers of children with SEN and do their best to adapt the curriculum to meet their needs. All staff are involved in the ongoing development of the academy's SEN policy and are aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for students with SEN. Staff are reminded of their responsibilities as stated in the SEND Code of Practice and have completed training on this using the National College platform.

The class teacher understands that progress and development of every student in their class, including those who get extra support from teaching assistants or specialist staff remain their responsibility. Teachers are aware that the first step in supporting all students, including those with SEN, is high-quality teaching, differentiated for individual students.

Teachers are involved with every stage of the 'graduated approach' process

SEN support is implemented and regularly reviewed using the 'graduated approach':

- 1) **Assess:** the class/subject teacher and SENCO analyse a student's needs before identifying them as needing SEN support
- 2) **Plan:** the class/subject teacher and SENCO usually agree the support to be put in place. Teachers/HOY and SENCO also notify and consult the student's parents. This support is available on a one-page profile our school-based SEN support plan
- 3) **Do:** the class/subject teacher remains responsible for working with the student on a daily basis. Students may also receive additional interventions outside the main curriculum, but the focus usually involve integrating all students and continuing to use high-quality, differentiated teaching
- 4) **Review:** the class/subject teacher and SENCO review the effectiveness of the support regularly and agree any changes where needed.

4. Admissions and inclusions

Students with SEN are admitted to the academy on the same basis as any other child. The academy's admissions criteria are included in the academy prospectus.

Specialist provision

The academy **does not** have a specialist unit.

Learning Support staff have received specific training in working with students who have:

- Language and communication difficulties
- Specific learning difficulties
- Emotional, social and behavioural difficulties
- Autistic spectrum disorders
- Moderate learning difficulties

The academy employs a team of Learning Mentors who work with the SENCO to provide additional support students with SEN.

The academy welcomes applications for admission from the parents/carers of students with mobility difficulties but does not have complete wheelchair access. *There are toilets for disabled students in Mother Teresa Building and access facilities in Bede House.*

The Governors would, however, make every effort to accommodate a student's particular needs and would work with the LEA to improve facilities. This is being taken forward through the Access Initiative Scheme.

5. Identification and assessment of students with special educational needs

All students are entitled to a balanced and broadly-based curriculum. This policy aims to ensure that teaching arrangements and strategies are fully inclusive. The majority of students will have their needs met through normal classroom arrangements and appropriate differentiation, which may include some short-term support. The Governing Body will ensure that it makes appropriate provision for all students identified as having need of special educational provision. The Governing Body reviews the policy and reports annually on the allocation of available resources of the policy in meeting SEN.

All students receive help through differentiation but if the students do not make adequate progress, the SEN Department will be informed and make further assessments. All staff are responsible for identifying students with special educational needs. The SENCO will work with staff to ensure that those students who may need additional or different support are identified at an early stage. The progress made by all students is regularly monitored and reviewed. Students are identified as having special educational needs if additional or different action is being taken. Assessment of a student's difficulties is carried out, initially, by a member of the Learning Support Team.

6. Single SEN Status

Students identified with SEN will get help that is either extra to and/or different from the help that the academy usually gives students through differentiation. If there are concerns that the student is not making adequate progress, the class teacher, form tutor or Head of Year will refer these concerns to the SENCO. The SENCO will gather information from the student, parents, and all staff involved in the student's education and welfare. The information gathered will form part of the assessment needed to help the academy decide what help may be needed.

Support available to students through SEN may include:

- Tutorial support at KS4/5
- Additional support in class
- Small group teaching for specific literacy and/or numeracy difficulties, study skills, language and communication skills
- 1:1 short session on a regular basis using an established reading programme
- Homework Club
- Short interventions during Form time.
- Speech and language programme
- Outreach sessions provided by SEaTTS
- Mentoring
- Pastoral Support
- Lunch Club in Learning Support
- Educational Psychologist assessments
- Referrals to CAMHS, Speech and Language team, OT and trained counsellors
- Planning for adulthood / career advice
- Visits to colleges and support with post-16 applications and transition
- 1:1 or Group Tuition via the National Tuition Programme (NTP)

If the student does not make adequate progress receiving SEN support, the academy may seek further advice and support from other professionals' e.g. Educational Psychologist, and Outreach Services from specialist provisions. Students and parents/carers will be fully involved and kept informed about the involvement of external agencies and proposed interventions.

SEN support will take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised; with a growing understanding of the student's needs and of what supports the student in making good progress and securing good outcomes.

Advice from outside professionals will be incorporated into a student profile and these professionals will be invited to contribute to the monitoring and review of progress. The student profile will have strategies which should be implemented in the main part in the normal classroom setting.

If a student demonstrates significant cause for concern, the academy may request a statutory assessment. Whilst the statutory assessment is being carried out, the student will continue to receive SEN support.

The delivery of the curriculum and planning to help students succeed in meeting targets continues to be the responsibility of the **subject teacher**.

7. Education and Health Care Plans

Following a statutory assessment, students may be placed on an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). Their plans will be reviewed annually and a report provided for the Local Education Authority. When students are due to transfer to another phase, planning for this will be started in the year prior to the year of transfer.

The academy will liaise with the Connexions Service and other agencies to arrange Transition Plans for students with EHCP's (and other students with SEN who may benefit from Transition Planning) in Year 9, and will ensure that these Transition Plans are reviewed annually as part of the Annual Review process.

The Connexions Service will also be invited/involved in the review process of students with SEN in Year 11.

The academy will also liaise with SENCOs from Primary Schools to ensure a smooth transition for students in Year 6 transferring to Year 7.

If a student makes sufficient progress an EHCP may be discontinued by the Education Authority.

8. Complaints Procedures

The academy's complaints procedures can be found on the academy's website. Under the SEN and Disability Act 2001 parents/carers may seek advice on resolving disagreements with the LEA and/or the Independent Mediation Service. The academy will make further information about this process available on request.

9. Arrangements for training and development of all staff including support assistants

The academy makes an annual audit of training needs for all staff considering academy priorities as well as continued professional development. Particular support is given to Newly Qualified Teachers and other new members of staff. Special needs are included within the academy training. In addition, staff attend training organised by the LEA and other agencies e.g. universities and institutes.

10. Arrangements for partnership with parents/carers

The academy will always tell parents/carers when their child is receiving help for their SEN.

Partnership with parents/carers plays a key role in enabling students and young people with SEN to achieve their potential. The academy recognises that parents/carers hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents/carers of students with special educational needs will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valued role in their student's education.

If parents/carers have any concerns, they should first talk to the Head of Year or SENCO. Parents/carers are invited to attend all reviews.

11. Student Participation

Students will be encouraged to participate in all the decision-making processes including the setting of learning targets and contributing to their student profile and transition processes.

Each student has a meeting prior to their review so that their views can be recorded. All students are involved in the review process. If they are not present at the meeting all outcomes are discussed with them including any targets set.

12. Links with other agencies and voluntary organisations

The academy receives regular visits from the Educational Psychologist.

The academy has established partnerships to support young people and families with: -

- Education Welfare Service
- CAMHS
- Specialist Education and Training Support Service (SEaTSS)
- Brentwood Catholic Children's Society (counselling)
- Local F.E. Colleges for vocational courses and bridging courses
- Prospects (Redbridge) a career Service for Transitions Reviews and advice to all students with special educational needs.
- School Nurse for protocol and advice on medical needs
- Neighbouring borough Local Authority Special Services
- Social Services

13. Success Criteria

The success of the education offered to children with SEN will be judged against the aims set out above. The policy will be reviewed annually and the Governing Body's Annual Report will report on the implementation of the policy. Specific success criteria for each year are set in accordance with the academy's target setting procedures for all students.

The policy is supported by the School Improvement Plan and should be read in conjunction with the following academy policy:

- Disability and Equality Scheme

APPENDIX 1

The following legislation and guidance is also relevant to this policy:-

The Children's Act	1989
Education Act 1996	<i>This legislation is amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001. The SEN Code incorporates references to relevant sections of the Act</i>
School Standards and Framework Act 1998	<i>Section 42 requires that governing body's annual report includes information on the implantation of the SEN policy</i>
SEN and Disability Act 2001	<i>Amends both the Education Act 1996 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995</i>
Revised Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs	<i>November 2001</i>
SEN Toolkit	<i>2001</i>
Inclusive schooling – students with special educational needs	<i>2001</i>
The Education (SEN) (England) Regulations 2001	<i>Annex A of SEN Code sets out what must be included in the SEN policy</i>
The Education (SEN) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999	<i>1999</i>
The Special Educational Needs (Provision of information by Local Education Authorities) (England) Regulations 2001	<i>2001 – Sets out LEAs' duties to publish information on funding, SEN policy and specific action being taken on SEN issues</i>
Disability Discrimination Act 1995	<i>As amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001</i>
Draft Disability Rights Code of Practice	<i>Draft for consultation available on the DRC website at www.drc-qb.org Code expected to come into force from September 2002</i>
The Mental Capacity Act: Protecting the Vulnerable	<i>2005</i>
Working Together to Safeguard Children	<i>2023</i>
Supporting Students at School with Medical Conditions	<i>2017</i>
Equality Act: Advice for Schools	<i>2014</i>
The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations	<i>2014</i>
Children's and Families Act	<i>2015</i>
Special Education Needs (SEN) and disabilities: guidance for school governing boards	<i>2025 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sen-and-disability-duties-guidance-for-school-governing-boards/special-educational-needs-sen-and-disabilities-guidance-for-school-governing-boards#sen-and-disability-checklist</i>

APPENDIX 2

Code of Practice Definition of Special Educational Needs

For the purposes of this policy we have used the term Special Educational Needs as defined by the Code of Practice.

A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. (*Code of Practice D.F.E. 2015*).

Students have a learning difficulty if they:

- a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of the same age; or
- b) have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for students of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions
- c) A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if they fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above, or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them. See Clause 20, Children and Families Bill.

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

Definition of Disability

A child is disabled if he is blind/deaf or dumb, or suffers from a mental disorder of any kind, or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity, or such other disability as may be prescribed. See Section 17 (11) Children's Act 1989.

A person has a disability for the purpose of this Act if they 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. See Section 6 Equality Act 2010

Special educational provision means:

- a) for students of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for students of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area
- b) for students under two, educational provision of any kind

See Section 312, Education Act 1996