

The St Michael Steiner School

Policy for Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND Policy)

1. The School's values, vision and aims around SEND

The term SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) is used for a variety of conditions and environmental factors that can prevent a child from learning in a straightforward, age-appropriate manner.

The general educational provision in our school differs from a mainstream general educational provision in that our curriculum is based on the view of child development described by Rudolf Steiner. It is rich, diverse, and developmentally appropriate for each age; it integrates intellectual, practical, physical and artistic development, thus providing what any child needs to flourish as well as being indispensable for children with SEND. We do not follow the National Curriculum.

Extensive research¹ demonstrates that individual trajectories of development are the norm: in any class of rising-seven-year-olds, there will be a range of about three years, and the range increases as the children get older. Put simply, in any class, some children are much further along in the measured aspects of their development than others, this is normal, and teachers need to take account of it.

Because of this, the fact that we teach in whole-class mixed-ability peer groups and that many children in the school do not have English as a first language, observation of children and Adaptive Teaching are essential and normal practice in every class. Children learn in different ways and at different rates, and it is part of our work as teachers to present content in a variety of ways and set tasks that engage all children in a range of different activities. Further strategies are then devised for children who have needs that seem to be beyond the usual range. (See Lesson Planning Guidance)

We recognise that a child may have special needs permanently or develop them at any stage for physical, physiological, social or environmental reasons.

Learning difficulties can appear in one area of learning and not in others, for example a child may struggle with numeracy but not with literacy.

A child is deemed to have a learning difficulty if:

- They have significantly greater difficulty learning than the majority of children of the same age or group.
- They have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities generally provided by the school for children of the same age group.

Areas of learning that may be affected are:

Cognitive/Learning

Communication/Interaction

Emotional/Social/Behavioural

¹ Beginning in 1954 and ongoing, the Zurich Longitudinal Studies investigated levels of maturity that can be measured at particular ages. The goal was to gain a better understanding of the norms of child development. [...] This ambitious research project involved a team of paediatricians, development specialists and biostatisticians, who recorded the development of more than 900 children from birth to early childhood.' Detailed information about these studies can be found at www.largo-fitprinzip.com

Sensory/Physical

A child is deemed to have a disability if:

- They have a physical, cognitive or mental impairment that has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
- The effect is substantial (more than minor or trivial) and long term (more than 1 year in duration).

It is important to note that children in the Kindergarten or Classes 1 & 2 who are assessed externally may be diagnosed with a learning difficulty because their reading is not at a standard level for their age. As we start formal learning later than in mainstream schools, these diagnoses may not be appropriate and may need to be reassessed.

What we offer for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Special educational provision means an aspect or method of education that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for children and young people of the same age at the school.

Elements in our curriculum which support all children including those with learning difficulties include:

- Daily speech work, learning poems by heart and developing clear enunciation, which helps with writing, spelling and verbal expression.
- Daily oral recall of the previous day's lesson by the children helps the children to organise and express their thoughts clearly.
- Regular movement in the classroom: skipping, body geography and coordination games, catching and throwing.
- Form drawing, which develops the senses of movement and balance, spatial awareness and dexterity.
- Craft work including woodwork, clay modelling, sewing and knitting, which develop a relationship with the qualities of different materials, practical skills, dexterity, confidence and aesthetic sense.
- Eurythmy, a form of movement that expresses music and speech and is also used therapeutically.
- Handwriting, which develops dexterity, an awareness of form and aesthetic sense.
- The use of drawing and colour in bookwork, which enables children to learn, and demonstrate what they are learning, without always having to produce writing.
- Teachers deliver the lessons orally which means that children with literacy difficulties can participate fully in the work of the class.
- Bothmer Gymnastics, Games and P.E., which develop spatial awareness and social skills
- Outdoor Curriculum - gardening and grounds maintenance - develops practical skills and an awareness of nature.

Because they receive this provision in their daily life at this school, children who may have required special educational provision in an alternative setting may find that their learning difficulty is significantly diminished or alleviated. Sometimes this curriculum is all they need, and sometimes they will need more support.

2. Identifying Special Educational Needs

Teachers, parents and pupils can refer to the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) for advice planning an assessment and arranging learning support.

Through continued observation of the children in class, teachers are able to identify any concerns related to the learning process or behaviour of a child.

Additionally, our open-door and mentoring policies means that all teachers in the school can observe in any class, thus providing an extra ongoing monitoring resource to help identify any possible emerging learning difficulties.

As a Steiner School we place great value on Child Study. This is a concentrated study of one child at a time, undertaken by all the teachers in the faculty. As far as possible, every child in the school will be studied, so that all the teachers know all of the children well and can decide together what kind of work and support is needed in each case.

Where children are identified as having a Special Educational Need, an initial consultation between the Class Teacher and SENCo takes place and a Graduated Approach to learning support is adopted in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice (2014).

3. SEN Provision

The school adopts a Graduated Approach to SEN support. Where a learning challenge has been recognised, the process of intervention will be as follows:

Stage 1. Assessment and Adaptive Teaching

The Class Teacher, in consultation with colleagues, will decide how teaching should be adapted and plan for it in the presentation of material to the class and in the work the children are asked to do. Adaptive teaching can include aspects such as simplified materials, visual cues, small group reinforcement, etc.

Additionally, one-to-one lessons may be offered outside the classroom when necessary or beneficial.

Strategies and adaptations are reviewed at the end of a block or half term as part of teachers' review process (see Lesson Planning Guidance) and the needs of the child reviewed with the SENCo at the end of each school term.

Stage 2. Continued Assessment and IDPs (Individual Development Plan)

We acknowledge that some therapies and interventions will not show results immediately, and that normal progress is neither regular nor continuous; it can 'plateau' at times, even regress, but this does not always mean that the action taken is not working. Assessment of whether to continue with any support will always be taken in light of our particular understanding of child development.

Where there is little or no improvement in the child's progress after a reasonable period of time:

- The SENCo may suggest an evaluation and assessment programme with Ann Swain, a specialist, Waldorf trained, learning support teacher, aiming to highlight the areas where the child needs extra support and provide indicators as to when it might be advisable to seek further professional support.
- Children identified with special educational needs are usually also referred to the visiting school doctors and their recommendations put into practice, in consultation with the parents.

Following the initial assessments, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) will be written by the class teacher, SENCo and parents. The IDP will include personalised targets, (specific,

measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound); teaching strategies; and recommendations for resources to be used.

The teacher will implement the IDP and regularly assess the child's response to it. All the progress records are kept by the class teacher and the IDPs will be reviewed termly.

Because they do not have a Class Teacher, High School SEND students' progress is monitored via the electronic High School Support Log. Block and Subject teachers document and share their notes on provision, strategies and progress for these students.

When the child does not seem to be making progress, the school may suggest accessing other forms of external assessment and/or therapy such as Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy etc. These are carried out by the NHS and must be arranged by the parents.

Stage 3. External Support and EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)

If it is deemed a child needs an EHCP we liaise with the relevant professional external bodies involved and have regular reviews with the parents, and with the child where age-appropriate.

Being a small independent school, we have limited resources and as such any external professional assessment or treatments/therapies unless provided by the EHCP funding, will have to be met by parents / carers.

4. Communication

Teachers keep in close and regular contact with parents. Informal meetings are encouraged to discuss any concerns of either the parent or the teacher. Discussions are confidential and records are kept.

5. SEND Training for Staff

The SENCo undertakes regular specialist training provided by the school through Educare and Waldorf Modern.

We take advice from Dr. Jenny Josephson, Dr. Francisco Barcello and Ann Swain - Special Education Teacher and convener of the Steiner Waldorf Association for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SWASEND)

All staff have access to the SEND online training provided by the school through Educare. All staff have access to the 2024-2025 Every Child SEN international online course provided by Waldorf Modern.

We have access to training provided by Hounslow Borough Council

The purpose of this policy is:

- To allow and encourage early identification of any children who have or may have learning difficulties.
- To effectively provide for them by allocating the necessary resources that ensure a high-quality teaching standard for our SEN children.
- To promote effective communication between staff, parents and children regarding all SEN procedures.
- It is our aim that our whole school community is aware of the SEND Policy and share this commitment.

We adhere to the statutory guidelines set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 (2015)², and work with our best endeavor for each child.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Admissions Policy.

Admissions of new children with SEND into existing classes takes account of the existing constellation of that class, so that no one class has a disproportionate number of children with learning difficulties and/or behavioral challenges.

If a parent has a complaint related to Special Educational Needs, the Parents' Complaints Policy & Procedure will be followed.

The SEND Team

The school SENCo is Lisa Harrison (lisaharrison@stmichaelsteiner.com)

The contact for the the Early Years is Maria Costa (mariacosta@stmichaelsteiner.com)

You can contact either of these people if you have a question.

Review date: July 2025

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf