

THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM



POLICY DOCUMENT 20

SEND POLICY

Date approved by Board of Trustees:	21/10/2025
Next review due:	Autumn Term 2026
Policy review cycle:	Annually
Policy Owner:	SENCO

Vision Statement

'Together we aim high, discover talents, and build a brighter future'

Thomas Mills High School is an Academy and a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England & Wales under number 7605059

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies: Equality Policy, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Marking and Reporting Policy and Teaching and Learning Policy. All of these are available on the school website.

Mission: At Thomas Mills we believe that “Inclusive schools enable all their pupils to gain maximum advantage from all the opportunities which education has to offer.”

SECTION 1: SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS

This policy is written in line with the requirements of:

- Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years (DFE, 2015);
- Equality Act 2010;
- Schools Admissions Code (DFE, 2012).

1.1 Definitions:

Definition of SEN:

A child or young person has special educational needs (SEND) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her (Children and Families Act, Part 3, 20) and the educational provision that is required to meet the needs is 'special'.

Children have a learning or disability difficulty if they:

- (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders him or her 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 (Children and Families Act, Part 3, 20).

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, January 2015;
Children and Families Act, Part 3, 20 (1 and 2)

Definition of disability:

A person has a disability if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-

to-day activities. According to the SEN Code of Practice (DFE, 2015: 5) 'long-term is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'.

Equality Act 2010; SEN Code of Practice, DFE, 2015

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years, 2015, describes the principles that shape the school's values as:

- taking into account the views of children, young people and their families;
- enabling children, young people and their parents to participate in decision-making;
- collaborating with partners in education, health and social care to provide support;
- identifying the needs of children and young people;
- making high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people;
- focusing on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning;
- helping children and young people to prepare for adulthood.

Definitions from the Equality Act 2010:

Long term - is defined as 'lasting or likely to last for at least 12 months.'

Physical impairment - includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing.

Mental impairment - covers a wide range of impairments relating to mental functioning.

HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are automatically treated as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

1.2 The Objectives of the School's SEND Policy:

The main objective is to offer a clear, coherent way to provide for the special educational needs of as many children as possible in as flexible way as possible. This principle is enshrined in the School's Equality Policy which states, for example, 'We are committed to equality of opportunity for everyone involved in the school'.

- (i) In so doing, to boost the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils with general and specific learning difficulties both as an end in itself and as a means of providing maximum access by such pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- (ii) To facilitate high quality teaching and learning in all lessons to improve the educational opportunities of all pupils, regardless of ability.
- (iii) To meet the broad areas of special educational need of children with: communication and interaction difficulties; cognition and learning difficulties; social, emotional and mental health difficulties; sensory and/or physical needs, and to do this using the school's best endeavours, making reasonable adjustments in terms of the layout/resources of the school.
- (iv) To increase the confidence of pupils with SEND, encouraging them to be involved in their own provision and giving the appropriate support to encourage independent learning.
- (v) To consult with parents about all aspects of the special needs provision made for their children, to communicate clearly and to seek to develop this partnership.
- (vi) To deploy the resources of the Learning Support Department in as effective a way as possible.
- (vii) To use the SEND Code of Practice (2015) as a framework for identification of, and provision for, pupils with special educational needs and to support them whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

1.3 Roles and Responsibilities:

The Governing Body will:

- (i) do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has special educational needs and/or disability
- (ii) ensure that, where the "responsible person" – the Headteacher or the appropriate governor – has been informed that a pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them, following assessment
- (iii) ensure that teachers in the school are aware of the importance of identifying, and providing for, those pupils who have special educational needs and that the approaches used are based on the best possible evidence and are having the required impact on progress
- (iv) ensure that pupils with special educational needs engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils 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 pupils with whom they are educated and the efficient use of resources

- (v) designate a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision – the SEND co-ordinator or SENDCo
- (vi) report to parents on the implementation of the school's policy for pupils with special educational needs as required and ensure that decisions are informed by the insights of parents
- (vii) have regard to the Code of Practice when carrying out its duties toward all pupils with special educational needs
- (viii) identify a named governor for Special Educational Needs
- (ix) prepare a SEND information report and publish it on the school's website.

The Headteacher:

- (i) has responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the school's work, including provision for children with SEND.
- (ii) should keep the Governing Body informed of the progress made by SEND pupils.

Teaching and non-teaching staff:

- (i) are made aware of the school's procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with special educational needs through the Staff Handbook, SEND Register and other information distributed by the SEND Co-ordinator. All teachers have a responsibility to bring to the attention of the SEND Co-ordinator any child whose needs they believe are not being met. It is incumbent upon teachers to be aware of the varying needs of pupils in their classes and to differentiate accordingly. All teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator:

- (i) is the Head of Learning Support, Mr J Day, who is responsible for the implementation of the SEND Policy.

The SEND Co-ordinator is responsible in particular for:

- (i) the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND Policy and for co-ordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, particularly through Education, Health, and Care plans and SEND support, working closely with staff, parents/carers and other agencies
- (ii) liaising with and advising other members of school staff
- (iii) maintaining the school's SEND Register and Additional Needs Register and overseeing the records of all pupils with special educational needs.

- (iv) liaising with the parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities
- (v) liaising with external agencies, including the educational psychology service, the health and social care services and voluntary bodies, liaising with the Deputy Headteacher as necessary
- (vi) liaising with Heads of Year who oversee the education, behaviour and development of pupils, including those with SEBD (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties)
- (vii) managing and deploying the school's learning support assistants
- (viii) liaising with the school's SEND Administrator to complete data collection for the funding of pupils with 'high tariff needs' (School Funding Reform July 2012)
- (ix) running the Learning Support Department
- (x) Overseeing the assessment of pupils by the SEND administrator for examination access arrangements

The Learning Support Department, comprising one teacher, SEND administrator, 3 HLTA's, and a team of learning support assistants, both full- and part-time, meets regularly.

1.4 Admission Arrangements:

The school will admit pupils on the basis of the Academy Policy on Admissions. Pupils with special educational needs, of whatever kind, are admitted without prejudice, although the school gives no priority to admitting such pupils (Schools Admissions Code, DFE, 2012).

1.5 Areas of Specialism:

All teachers at the school have a responsibility for teaching those pupils with special educational needs admitted to the school.

1.6 Special Facilities:

The school is used to working closely with advisory teachers for pupils with physical/sensory disabilities and is happy to make arrangements to enable these pupils to participate as fully as possible in the education and activities offered in the school.

Most of the building is easily accessible by wheelchair and there are disabled facilities: ramps, toilets, a lift in the Sixth Form Centre and one giving access to main school first floor classrooms.

A 'Safe Place to Be' has been established in Rooms W8 and E9. This provides homework and social skills support for pupils with SEND. This facility is available daily at lunchtime and is staffed by the SENDCo and teaching assistants.

SECTION 2: INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL'S POLICIES FOR IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND PROVISION FOR ALL PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED

2.1 Allocation of resources to and amongst pupils with special educational needs:

Staffing resources in the school are allocated to and amongst pupils with special educational needs according to the following principles and practices:

- (i) That the basic standards of literacy and numeracy should be raised as far as possible for as many children as possible whilst they are in Years 7-8.
- (ii) Skills boost sessions are provided by a designated higher-level teaching assistant attached to the Maths and English Departments and pupils with special educational needs may have access to these sessions as appropriate.
- (iii) Children who would benefit from small but regular amounts of one-to-one help for reading have support involving peers and Sixth Form students.
- (iv) That children with general or specific learning difficulties in all Key Stages should receive additional help (whether by in-class support or withdrawal for individual or small group tuition) from the Learning Support Department within the resources available. This is to be reviewed regularly by the SEND Co-ordinator.
- (v) That pupils with special educational needs should be eligible to participate in any programme established under any of these principles.
- (vi) That departments should be enabled, where appropriate and where other resource demands allow, to arrange subject specialist in-class support or to develop team approaches.

The SEND Co-ordinator will advise the SMT on the adequacy of the resources allocated to these purposes, and the Headteacher will report to the Governing Body periodically on this matter.

2.2 Identification and Assessment Arrangements; Review Procedures:

The SEND Co-ordinator is formally responsible for identifying children with special educational needs, assessing their needs and progress and bringing information to the attention of other staff, as appropriate. (All teachers have a responsibility to bring to the attention of the SEND Co-ordinator any child whose needs they believe are not being met.)

- (i) The principal sources of information for identifying children's special educational needs are:
 - Information from parents
 - EHC plans and other records of SEND and provision from children's previous schools

- Liaison with primary schools before children enter Year 7 and a review of need during their first term
- Information and strategies provided by the Specialist Education Service
- Information shared by other professionals such as:
 - an optician writing to the school that a pupil requires the use of coloured paper or a coloured overlay
 - a Speech and Language Therapist making recommendations about how to support a student
- Tests (e.g. using key stage 2 assessment data. Base line assessments in Mathematics and English, and early assessment in other subjects at the beginning of Year 7 and using Lucid Rapid Dyslexia Screening and CAT tests)
- Information from the English and Mathematics Departments on basic literacy and numeracy skills
- Members of staff will discuss with the SEND Co-ordinator how to meet the special educational needs of particular pupils; if they feel that further help is required, the Head of Department will bring the matter to the attention of the SEND Co-ordinator.

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- (ii) Pupils receiving additional support will have their needs assessed and provision recorded by the SEND Co-ordinator. The effectiveness of special help provided will be evaluated and further programmes identified, if appropriate.
- (iii) Pupils with special educational needs and their parents are consulted, about the different and, if appropriate, graduated, stages of provision to meet their special educational needs.
- (iv) The procedures involved in identification, assessment and review, regarding special educational needs, operate in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

2.3 Curriculum Access and Inclusion:

“Inclusive schools enable all their pupils to gain maximum advantage from all the opportunities which education has to offer”

2.3.1 Access for pupils with special educational needs to a balanced and broadly-based curriculum, including the National Curriculum

- (i) All pupils in Years 7-11 follow a common curriculum, based upon the National Curriculum, with a common range of options at Key Stage 4.
- (ii) The school will not withdraw a pupil from an entire subject, nor disapply the National Curriculum, unless in exceptional circumstances. Any decision on this issue will be made by the Headteacher.

- (iii) Pupils in Key Stage 3 may be withdrawn for individual or small group tuition from any subject, but every pupil must attend at least one lesson of Religious Studies each week.
- (iv) Key Stage 4 pupils are supported in lessons; Key Stage 4 pupils may also be withdrawn from some tutorial periods and may receive 1:1 support with particular tasks.
- (v) Pupils are not withdrawn from the same subject all the time for literacy and numeracy catch-up.
- (vi) Allowances and help will be given by subject staff to pupils withdrawn from lessons to minimise any disadvantage of the withdrawal.
- (vii) It is the policy of the school to develop differentiation of class work within the common framework of each subject.
- (viii) As appropriate, support teaching is provided in lessons.

2.3.2 Integration of children with special educational needs within the school as a whole

- (i) All pupils belong to mixed ability tutor groups, attend the same Assemblies, Year Group and House activities, and follow common Tutorial programmes.
- (ii) Although some subjects group pupils by ability, for most of the week children are taught in mixed ability groups.
- (iii) A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available to all pupils.
- (iv) The Sixth Form Society encourages all students in social activities.

2.3.3 Special Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs in public examinations and national tests

- (i) Examination access arrangements are designed to ensure access for pupils with certain disabilities and certain learning difficulties to examinations, without giving them an unfair advantage over other pupils who do not qualify for them.
- (ii) Consideration of whether pupils qualify for access arrangements is given in accordance with the terms of the national regulations issued by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).
- (iii) Decisions at school level, including recommendations to the Awarding Bodies, are made by the Headteacher as Head of the Examinations Centre.
- (iv) No child has an automatic right to access arrangements. Parents are welcome to request such arrangements for their child and present factual information in support of their requests however there is a formal procedure for the assessment of access arrangements. Parental opinions in themselves are not evidence of the need for special arrangements.

- (v) Responsibility for access arrangements testing for the Head of Centre's consideration and for the appropriate bodies rests with the Head of Learning Support, the named 'Specialist Teacher' according to JCQ guidelines, who will consult Heads of Year and other staff (as appropriate) and keep parents informed of the process.
- (vi) Once any Examination Access Arrangements or Special Considerations have been granted it is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to ensure that they are implemented.

2.4 Evaluation

2.4.1 Criteria for evaluating the success of the School's SEND Policy

- (i) Do measures of literacy and numeracy for children with special educational needs show improvement over time?
- (ii) Do children with specialized support demonstrate increased confidence to teachers and/or parents?
- (iii) Is the SEND Co-ordinator making the most effective and efficient use of the available resources?
- (iv) Do teachers across departments demonstrate confidence and competence in differentiating work appropriately?
- (v) Are individual arrangements well adapted to pupils' special educational needs and are they revised appropriately in the light of either success or failure?
- (vi) Is consultation with parents and pupils, regarding SEND provision, viewed positively by parents and pupils?

2.5 Complaints Procedure

Arrangements for considering complaints about special education provision and examination access arrangements.

- (i) Informal complaints by parents should be made to the SENDCo.
- (ii) More formally, the Headteacher will receive and investigate complaints and seek to solve a problem to parents' satisfaction and inform the governor with SEND responsibility as necessary.
- (iii) If the issue cannot be resolved in this way, it may be taken through the general Governors complaints procedure.
- (iv) Complaints about examination access arrangements should follow the procedure outlined above.

SECTION 3: PARTNERSHIP WITHIN AND BEYOND THE SCHOOL

3.1 Staff Development and Performance Management

In-Service Training (INSET) is channelled through the Lead Practitioner (Training).

- (i) The SEND Co-ordinator is made aware of all relevant courses.

- (ii) The School INSET programme reflects the fact that all staff are teachers of special educational needs.
- (iii) Teaching Assistants are encouraged to ensure they have the necessary skills and expertise to fulfil their roles effectively, via INSET as appropriate.
- (iv) Sixth Form students receive advice on how to help pupils with whom they are linked for reading support.
- (v) ECTs, trainees and all new teaching staff are informed of SEND Policy and practice as part of the induction programme.

3.2 Links with Education Department Support Services and other agencies and organisations:

On the Suffolk Local Offer website, infolink.suffolk.gov.uk, information can be found about a range of support available for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. Most children and young people (up to the age of 25) with SEND will have their support provided through services listed in the Local Offer. Many local organisations provide these services, which include education, health and social care.

The Local Offer can be used to find:

- (i) Local schools and nurseries and read about the support they offer
- (ii) Groups and clubs
- (iii) Therapy and psychology services
- (iv) Social work services

The SEND Co-ordinator liaises with support services.

- (i) Advice is available from the Local Authority. Contact may be made when it is necessary.
- (ii) Additional facilities, resources, information from specialist staff are utilised when necessary, e.g. learning/visual impairment.
- (iii) Contact with support services is recorded and kept on file.

It is necessary at times to work closely with health and social services, educational welfare and voluntary organisations and liaison with these services is the responsibility of pastoral staff.

Should contact be necessary with officers of social services or health services, this will take place after consultation with the Headteacher or Deputy Head, as will attendance of school staff at case conferences.

3.3 Partnership with Parents

The school will work with parents, consulting them, taking account of their concerns and wishes in respect of children requiring special educational provision.

- (i) Contact with parents of children with special educational needs is usually co-ordinated by the SEND Co-ordinator.
- (ii) Close liaison with parents of children with special educational needs will help to ensure they are aware of the strategies being used. It is expected that parents will be consulted about any significant change to the provision at an early stage.
- (iii) Parents will be made aware of the reason for, and nature of, any additional provision. Furthermore, the school will share the results of any assessment or testing conducted by the school or LA if requested, progress being made and any substantial modifications to support provided.

This will be through such means as informal phone calls, the pupil log book, the end of year reports, Parents' Evenings and letters. Parents are also free to seek a meeting with the SENDCo at other times.

- (iv) Written contact with parents must be filed.

3.4 Pupil Participation:

A high value is placed upon pupil participation in many aspects of school life: School Councils, House System, Charity Day, etc. Pupils help organise social events, take part actively in the Friends of Thomas Mills Events and are involved in celebrating significant dates in the communal life of the school. Extra-curricular activities offer many chances for pupils to participate positively in school life. In keeping with this, pupils with special educational needs are involved in assessment of their needs and reviewing their progress and their concerns are listened to.

3.5 Links with Other Schools and Transfer Arrangements

- (i) Liaison with other schools in respect of pupils in Years 7-11 who receive substantial special education support is carried out by the Head of Learning Support together with the Head of Year.
- (ii) The responsibility for students transferring to institutions during or at the end of the Sixth Form remains with the Head of Sixth Form.
- (iii) There may be occasions when arrangements are made for integrating pupils previously in special schools/units into the school – such arrangements would be organised and co-ordinated by the SEND Co-ordinator, subject to the approval of the Headteacher.
- (iv) Arrangements to share with other schools: resources, expertise, good practice of linked INSET will be co-ordinated by the SEND Co-ordinator, subject to the approval of the Headteacher.
- (v) The SEND Co-ordinator has responsibility for maintaining records for pupils with special educational needs. These records would be made available at appropriate times to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to other schools or institutions.

3.6 SEN Information Report:

This document is available on the school website and provides detailed information for parents and pupils about how the SEND policy is put into practice at the School.

3.7 Review:

The SEND Policy is reviewed annually by the Governors in accordance with the Handbook of Governance.