

St Robert of Newminster Catholic School & Sixth Form College



SEND Policy 2025-26

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School Motto - Sic Luceat Lux Vestra: Let Your Light Shine

Our Vision – At St Robert of Newminster we recognise that each individual member of our community is created in God's image with unique talents and abilities. We nurture each person through loving relationships and rich daily experiences centred on the teachings of Christ. We affirm the dignity of each individual and our values underpin everything we do across our school, with and for each student and member of staff to enable them to 'Let their light shine'.

Our Mission – At St Robert's we want pupils and staff to feel comfortable to explore their relationship with God, whilst realising that the members of our school community come from different backgrounds, beliefs and faiths. Our school is a place, where all are valued equally and belong. We strive to create an environment where pupils can encounter the love that God has for each of them. With Christ at the centre, our school seeks to exemplify faith in action, working for justice and compassion, manifest in acts of charity and kindness. We work for those in need, and instil an ethos of care, kindness, and respect. As an inclusive family, we seek to help and care for the most vulnerable and marginalised. Our community is built upon values, which are inspired by the Gospel and the Church. Our values are visible in the environment, relationships, interactions, and our day-to-day life.

Professional Requirements of Staff

In the light of our mission statement:

All members of staff have a professional responsibility to meet the academic, moral, social and spiritual needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.

To enable this to happen we will:

- Provide excellent adaptive teaching and learning experiences to ensure progress for every pupil in the classroom.
- Encourage pupils to come to a fuller understanding of the difference between right and wrong. To be good citizens of the school community, pupils must follow school rules, which are enforced by every staff member.
- Give every pupil the opportunity to develop healthy lifestyles inside and outside of curriculum time. The school has a responsibility to encourage healthy eating and exercise during the school day.
- Make explicit the Gospel values of respect and value for others to all pupils in their interaction with every member of the community. All members of the community have a responsibility to live out Gospel values in their work relationships.
- Give every pupil the opportunity to develop spiritually. The growth of the whole person must be implicit in the ethos of the school.

Introduction

This policy is in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2014) and provides a clear framework for its implementation in our school.

This policy reflects the overall aims of the school and its Mission Statement. It should be read in conjunction with other school policies.

1. Our Aims

The school aims to create a climate which will nurture this mission, always aware that the children are at the centre of everything we do and the individual needs of every child matter.

St Robert's is an inclusive community that acknowledges that all our pupils have equal rights to the opportunities offered by education. This includes the right to attend mainstream school, to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to be part of the social life of our school community. They are also entitled to an education that ensures continuity and progression. It is with this ethos that the school aims to:

- Enable pupils with a variety of Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) (including physical, social, emotional, medical and academic needs) to reach their full potential and to be included fully in our school community.
- Offer, to all pupils, access to a broad, balanced, appropriate, relevant and flexible curriculum.
- To ensure that children and young people with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEND.
- To reduce barriers to progress by embedding the principles in the National Curriculum Inclusion statement <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>
- Ensure that the provision, support, teaching and learning available matches the nature of the needs of the individual child ensuring effective learning.
- Provide and maintain a happy, secure, safe and healthy school environment, in accordance with the current legislation and guidance.
- Ensure all pupils are included fully in our school community and continue to develop as an integral part of the local community as the school develops and maintains partnerships with parents, parishes, primary schools and the wider community.
- Ensure all pupils can develop within a worshipping community, in which prayer and liturgy are encouraged as part of faith development.
- Encourage all members of our school community (pupils, parents, staff and governors) to follow the example of Christ in their daily work and relationships: to treat one another with justice and dignity, tolerance and respect and to be aware of and respond to each other's needs, hopes and aspirations.
- Undergo regular reviews where staff, parents, pupils and relevant agencies are involved in the evaluation and assessment of the needs and progress of individual pupils, to ensure the needs of the pupils are being fully identified and supported.
- Ensure there is inclusive education for pupils with additional needs via the provision of appropriate education and networks of support alongside their peers in the context of the prevention of social exclusion.
- Support the development of inclusive education at St Robert's by ensuring reasonable adjustments, training, structures and systems are in place to meet the needs of all our pupils.
- Help those pupils at risk of social exclusion to be engaged in education programmes that will support them and enable them to achieve.

- As required, make reasonable adjustments to the curriculum and buildings to ensure all pupils are included within our community.

At St Robert's, our commitment to SEND and inclusion for all children is shown by supporting the entitlement of full-time education for all young people and striving to continually develop processes which provide all pupils the chance to participate, attain and achieve. It is ensured that by continuous development of processes it is possible to identify, support and track those most at risk with a view to them remaining and achieving within the system.

Correct provision, intervention and support is required for the success of all pupils, and we take time to ensure there is sustained intervention to support full-time attendance in education within our school. This involves the implementation of sustained support and appropriate intervention to promote positive and effective behaviour and teaching and learning experiences for all pupils.

Further in our aims is our commitment to improving attainment and achievement, participation and supporting transition.

We develop our good practise in line with new Government legislation as it changes.

2. Admissions Procedures (To be read in conjunction with St Robert's school admission policy)

Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities are considered for admission to the school on the same basis as children without SEND.

Parents/carers of children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have the right to request admission to a school of their choice and the school is obliged to meet the needs of that child within the mainstream setting unless there is a case where the child's inclusion would be incompatible with the education of other children.

Prior to starting school there will be discussions with feeder school staff regarding the needs of individual children and, in many cases, St Robert's staff will be invited to attend transition reviews for SEND children held with the primary school, parents/carers and representatives from any outside agencies involved.

Throughout the transition period parents/carers of children with an EHCP or SEND are welcome to contact the SENCo to discuss the provision that can be made to meet the identified needs of their child.

3. SEND Code of Practice (2014)

The revised Code of Practice was completed in 2014 and sets out a guidance on policies and procedures aimed at enabling pupils with Special Educational Needs to reach their full potential. This replaces the SEN Code of Practice 2001 and provides a single piece of statutory guidance on special educational needs. Key changes parents/carers should be aware of are:

- The Code of Practice operates under a 0-25 system, bringing together guidance into one consistent system and thus replacing the Statement of SEN with a new document known as the Education, Health and Care plan.
- There is now one single stage of school-level SEN, known as SEN Support. This replaces the old system of 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus'.
- The statutory assessment process is twenty weeks. This means that the time local authorities must decide whether to assess a child has been reduced by half and assessment and drafting of an EHCP has been reduced to nine weeks.
- Further information about how the new Code of Practice operates within Sunderland Local Authority can be found by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25of-practice-0-to-25>.

4. Identification of Pupils with Additional Needs

We know when pupils need help if:

- Concerns are raised by parents/carers, external agencies, teachers, or the pupil's previous school, regarding a pupil's level of progress or inclusion.
- Screening, such as that completed on entry or because of a concern being raised, indicates gap in knowledge and/or skills.
- Whole school tracking of attainment outcomes indicates lack of expected levels of progress.
- A pupil asks for help.
- Observation of the pupil indicates that they have additional needs in one or more of the four broad areas of need:
 1. Communication and interaction
 2. Cognition and learning
 3. Social, mental and emotional health
 4. Sensory/physical

If parents have concerns relating to their child's learning, these must initially be discussed with the child's Head of Year. This then may result in a referral to the school SENCo. All parents will be listened to. Their views and their aspirations for their child will be central to the assessment and provision that is provided by the school.

5. Waves of Support

Pupils with SEND at St Robert of Newminster School are supported by a four-wave system which is summarised here:

Wave 1 Quality First Teaching

All teachers at St Robert of Newminster School are aware of their responsibility as teachers of pupils with SEND (Teacher Standards, 2012) and are skilled in the provision of quality first teaching, the first and most important step in providing an inclusive classroom. Where an additional need has been identified, class teachers will make reasonable adjustments which are informed by high quality CPD and advice and guidance from the SENCo and Learning Support Department. Progress of Pupils identified as 'Wave 1' is closely monitored by class teachers and the SENCo and a decision made to reduce or increase support.

Wave 2 Short-term Intervention

When a pupil is not making expected progress, despite reasonable adjustments, short-term, specific intervention may be provided. Support recommendations will be generated and shared with class teachers and other adults where appropriate, including parents and carers. The impact of any intervention will be closely monitored through assessment or observation and a decision made to reduce or increase support.

Wave 3 SEN Support (K)

A pupil will be added to the formal SEND register, and parents and carers informed, if they:

- Make little or no progress, even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in a pupil's identified area of weakness.
- Show signs of difficulty in developing Literacy or Mathematics skills that result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas.
- Present persistent emotional, social and/or mental health difficulties, which are not met by the intervention techniques employed via the pastoral system.
- Have sensory or physical problems and continue to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment.
- Have communication and/or interaction difficulties and continue to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum.

Once on the register as SEN Support (K), a process of 'Assess – Plan – Do – Review' will be undertaken in regard to the identified barrier(s) to learning. This is known as the **Graduated Response** in the SEND Code of Practice (2014) and is described here:

Assess: The SENCo will gather information on a pupil's need(s) from all stakeholders, including class teachers, the pastoral team, external agencies and specialist services, as well as the views of the pupil and their parents and carers.

Plan: The SENCo will, in collaboration with parents, carers and the pupil, co-construct a SEND Support Plan. This plan will set out any agreed support, interventions and expected outcomes and will be shared with class teachers and other adults involved with the pupil in school.

Do: The SEND Support Plan will be implemented in school.

Review: The impact of the plan will be reviewed by teachers, the SENCo, LSAs, the pupil themselves and their parents and carers. Plans are reviewed termly. If pupil progress improves sufficiently, SEN support may no longer be needed.

Wave 4 Education Health Care Plan (E)

If a pupil's needs are still not being met by the provision and support given at the SEN Support stage then, following consultation with everyone involved with the pupil, the school will gather evidence and may begin the Formal Statutory Assessment process for an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). The Local Authority will expect the SENCo to provide the following information and evidence:

- The intervention and support already given to the pupil, and the impact this has had.
- A detailed picture of the needs of the pupil.
- Records of regular review meetings and their outcomes.
- The pupil's health, including the pupil's medical history where relevant.
- Attainment data in all subjects.
- Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Educational and other assessments, for example from an advisory specialist support teacher or an educational psychologist.
- Views of the parents/carers and of the pupil.
- Involvement of other professionals.
- Any involvement by the social services or education welfare services.

A person-centred 'request to assess' meeting can then be held to decide whether to apply for Formal Statutory Assessment. This application, if submitted, will be forwarded to the LA who will decide whether to proceed with the assessment. If accepted, an outcome based EHCP will be prepared specifically for the pupil, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The EHCP will be reviewed annually on a statutory basis. The pupil would be given an E code on the SEND register once an EHCP is issued.

The SEND Code of Practice recommends that all pupils on the SEND register, at both SEN Support and EHCP stages, have their progress reviewed at least termly as part of the Assess – Plan – Do – Review graduated approach. There are also opportunities throughout the year for parents/carers to come into school and review the progress of their child with school staff at parent evenings. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to contact the SENCo if they would like to arrange a review meeting at any other time.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Head Teacher	Mr Chris Hamill
Acting Head of School	Mrs Kirsty Dunn
SEND Governor	TBC
Acting Deputy Head Teacher	Mr Scott Clark
Acting SENCo	Miss Ashleigh Power
Learning Support Assistants	HLTAs and LSAs

There is an identified Governor for Special Educational Needs provision who works closely with the Head Teacher, Senior Assistant Head Teacher and SENCo.

The SENCo oversees the provision for all SEND pupils, be they in receipt of an education and health care plan (EHCP), SEN support or an additional needs list which may include having previously been in receipt of support or medical concern. The SENCo will monitor the support provided in lessons from teaching staff and learning support assistants, as well the support

provided outside of lessons. The SENCo will monitor pupil attendance and progress in evaluating the SEND Support Plan or ECHP.

The Head Teacher works closely with governors, SLT and SENCo to ensure effective day to day operation of the school's SEND policy. The Head Teacher, SLT and SENCo identify areas for development in Special Educational Needs and contribute to the school's development plan.

Four key areas of SEN co-ordination at St Robert's are:

- Strategic direction and development of SEND provision in the school – the SENCo facilitates the development and implementation of the SEND policy in order to raise achievement and improve the quality of education for all pupils with SEND in conjunction with all staff in the school.
- Teaching and Learning – the SENCo, in conjunction with Senior Leaders and Heads of Department, develops effective ways of overcoming barriers to learning and sustaining effective teaching through setting targets, analysis, assessment and monitoring.
- Leading and managing staff – the SENCo ensures staff have the necessary information they need.
- Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources – the SENCo identifies and monitors the resources used to support the teaching of pupils with SEND.

Whole School

Careful consideration is given to the ways in which Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) are deployed to make sure that SEND pupils receive teacher time. This includes the flexibility to change support to best meet individual pupil needs and support pupil progress and achievement.

It is the expectation that lessons are well adapted; the quality of teaching and learning in classes is key to ensuring that children make progress and can then, in some cases, be removed from the SEND register.

Use of Intervention planning, in conjunction with the regular assessment, monitoring and collection of data, ensures the collection of evidence of the effectiveness of interventions.

All pupils with SEND are set aspirational targets from KS2 to KS4. As part of the whole school data and monitoring cycle there is a regular check and review of the expectations of pupils with SEND and their achievements and progress. Expectations are high and progress is tracked carefully.

Learning Support Department Staffing

- There is a named SENCo who is line managed by a member of the Leadership Team. Strategic oversight is led by an Assistant Head Teacher.
- Members of teaching staff (full and part time) work within the department to support the teaching of SEND pupils with specific needs particularly with links to Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Entry Level and GCSE courses as well as personalised courses.
- LSAs play a valuable role in the support of pupils across the school in all curriculum areas. They work in partnership with the SENCo, Heads of Department, pastoral team

and teaching staff. Their allocation to lessons and individual pupil support is evolved via flexible and strategic timetabling to maximise LSA support allowing mainstream teaching. LSA skills are developed to support the various intervention strategies employed to support progress for all pupils.

- LSAs are involved in the running of various morning, lunchtime and after school clubs for pupils, in addition to providing support during Year 6 transition. To support the needs of pupils with more complex SEND, LSAs are involved in the supervision of some children from the moment they arrive in school, throughout the school day (including break and lunch times) and up until they are collected at the end of the school day.
- Staff within the Learning Support Department are involved in class support and part of their role includes working with class teachers to support the development of differentiated materials within curriculum areas.
- Learning Support staff are also involved in small group withdrawal sessions as and when this is required to help support a child's individual needs.
- LSAs are also used to provide targeted support to pupils who may be underachieving in core subjects and are delegated to working with groups of pupils as identified by SLT, SENCo, Heads of Department (HODs) and Heads of Year (HOYs).
- LSAs are required to give regular feedback regarding pupil progress/concerns to the SENCo and at school SEND meetings.
- As part of their role, LSAs are attached to a key group of pupils, working in year groups, and working as mentors allocated pupils to support with difficulties relating to additional needs.
- Continual CPD is offered for all support staff to ensure development of specialisms in key areas.

7. Teaching and Learning

Staff at St Robert's strive to ensure that all children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and that programmes of study are flexible enough to meet every child's needs. All pupils, including those with SEND, have targets set as part of the whole school curriculum across all departments. There are high expectations of achievement for all pupils, including those with SEND, in accordance with expected progress measures from KS2 to KS4.

The school strives to ensure that all pupils have access to a curriculum pathway that meets their individual needs and ensures they engage in high quality Teaching and Learning, enabling them to enjoy and achieve. This may include links with outside providers of accredited courses and access to partnerships with specialist provision where appropriate. No child will be excluded from any learning activity due to their impairment or learning difficulty unless it is clearly of benefit to that individual and leads towards inclusion.

Our school ethos ensures that Teaching and Learning opportunities are absorbing, rewarding and effectively differentiated and that teaching styles are diverse. Staff work together to ensure that children being support are not isolated and peer tutoring and collaborative learning is encouraged. Children with sensory or mobility impairments or a specific learning difficulty may access the curriculum through specialist resources such as ICT where this is appropriate. Extra-curricular activities are barrier free and do not exclude any pupils.

To give further support for pupils with additional needs there are programmes developed that focus on Literacy and Numeracy intervention, booster classes, homework, and social skills. Some pupils are withdrawn into smaller groups to receive additional support for Literacy and

Numeracy, or as part of their GCSE curriculum enabling access to other accredited alternative curriculum courses.

A range of adaptive teaching strategies is employed as part of appropriate Teaching and Learning, including but not limited to:

- The use of a larger font size for pupils who struggle with Literacy.
- The use of overlays for pupils who are identified as benefitting from this.
- The use of scaffolding for pupils who struggle with extended writing.
- Opportunities to record work in alternative ways, e.g., use of a scribe or laptop.
- The use of resources with a reading level that pupils can access.
- The use of concrete examples to illustrate abstract concepts.

The SENCo and Learning Support Department can be consulted for additional strategies relating to the additional needs of specific pupils.

8. Support Services

Within St Robert's there is regular contact with a variety of external support services, including support and discussion between primary and secondary school colleagues.

External agency links include, but are not limited to:

- Autism Outreach Team
- Connexions service
- Local FE colleges
- Health services – Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, etc.
- Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)
- Children's Social Care Services
- Educational Psychologists
- Speech and Language Team
- Specialist Support Team

In addition to the above, we also have an Extended Services team within school, who work closely together with the school leadership team to ensure that maximum support is available for all pupils in the school. This team includes the School Based Social Worker, School and Home Liaison and Attendance Team. Where these staff are involved in the support of a SEND pupil, close liaison with the SENCo is expected to take place.

9. The Role of Parents/Carers and the Child

Parents/carers: their role, involvement and support

To best support pupils identified as having SEND, staff and parents/carers should work together with the school, to ensure that the best possible provision is in place for the child throughout their time at St Robert's.

Parents/carers are encouraged to be involved at all stages of the transition and planning process and they will be invited to attend all review and transition meetings.

Parents/carers are encouraged to attend regular review meetings. During review meetings and parent/carer evenings, parents/carers will be given information regarding the progress of their child, highlighting strengths and areas of concern. The review process will involve discussions regarding ideas and materials for the supporting learning at home as well as in school, and targets made are specific and achievable with clear indications of how they will be monitored and reviewed. The review process also supports transition planning at all Key Stages.

In addition to regular meetings parents/carers are welcome to make additional appointments to discuss the needs and progress of their child, should they have any concerns.

Children: their role and involvement

All pupils, including those with SEND, are given the opportunity to voice their views on the school via pupil voice surveys and membership of the school council.

Pupils are all made aware of the curriculum targets set by their teachers in particular curriculum area and they are involved in the review of these targets on a regular basis.

It is expected that when pupils are offered additional support and intervention, they and their parents/carers will fully embrace the opportunities for support to enable them to continue to make progress.

During parent/carer review meetings pupils are given the opportunity to discuss their progress and concerns. Pupils are asked to complete a written evaluation of their progress, support and concerns prior to the review meeting, to which they are invited. They are encouraged to discuss their thoughts and aspirations. Pupils are also free to attend parent evenings to participate in discussions regarding progress and support, at parental discretion.

The SENCo and other member of the department are available for pupils to discuss successes or concerns, and pupils are actively encouraged to do this to enable issues to be addressed and success to be celebrated promptly.

10. Transition

The transition of pupils at all key stages requires careful planning and communication between the pupil, schools, parents and additional support agencies. This is especially fundamental to successful transition for pupils from primary feeders into our secondary school environment, where this transition not only represents a major change for the pupil in the nature of their educational environment, but also coincides with a major change in physical, social, mental and emotional terms as they move into adolescence. In addition to the KS2 to KS3 transition, pupils will also be supported from KS3 to KS4, from KS4 into further education (whether in St Robert's or a different setting) and from there into adult life.

Standard processes for pupils transferring include:

- Visits by St Robert's staff to the pupil within the transferring school.
- Meetings with SENCo and staff between schools to transfer information, including attendance of secondary SENCo at transition reviews.
- Visits by pupils to St Robert's (with parents or accompanied by feeder school staff). Induction activities during the first day of term in September.

- Year 6 pupils take part in St Robert's Transition Week in the summer term. Provision of summer school in the summer holiday.
- LSA mentors assigned to individual pupils with additional needs.

In addition to pupils requiring SEND Support, there will be some pupils with very specific and/or complex needs, including those with an EHCP, who will be supported through the Annual Review process. These pupils will require individualised planning. Where possible the SENCo will attend the final annual review in the primary school of these pupils to enable planning of appropriate support.

As pupils approach transition from KS3 to KS4, it is essential that they are supported in making informed decisions about their future options. This move is a significant transition point in the pupils' journey towards adulthood. The choosing of subject options at 14 represents the first real academic and career choices that pupils are required to make. These choices begin to map out longer-term opportunities, such as further study and future employment. Many pupils will approach this stage of their school careers with enthusiasm and excitement, positively identifying subject options that will lead them on a defined path towards a future in employment, further and higher education and beyond. The school implements a number of measures to support all pupils in making these choices. These include:

- Involving parents/carers in the options process by holding open evenings and careers evenings to provide a forum for questions and concerns.
- Producing written materials to assist with discussions at home regarding KS4 courses, careers and coursework in easily accessible formats.
- Arranging individual careers interviews, where plans for future study or job interests are discussed in relation to the 'options' being considered now.
- Ensuring form tutors and other key staff take an active role in talking through any worries or complications with the child before final decisions are made
- Providing group talks on career-related topics as part of the school careers education and guidance programmes.

The school ensures that, within these and other generic processes adopted by the school, there is recognition of the specific issues that potentially exist for pupils with SEND and that those involved in providing support take account of potential barriers to access, participation and barriers to engagement.

Staff at St Robert's also work hard to ensure that the best possible advice, guidance and support is given to all pupils and their parents/carers regarding provision post Year 11. This will involve input via careers and guidance experts, links with Connexions, colleges and past pupils. At the appropriate Annual Review this is a fundamental part of the planning and will also involve additional professionals relevant to the needs of the individual child e.g., EP, Medical Teams, Autism Outreach, Adult and Children's Social Services, etc.

11. Complaints/Disagreement Procedures

If a parent/carer wishes to complain about the SEND provision for their child, they should in the first instance raise the issue with the SENCo or Head of Year. The problem can then either be rectified or passed to the relevant member of the senior leadership team. If the matter cannot be resolved, the parent/carer can submit a formal complaint to the Head Teacher who will then respond accordingly.

The school will manage complaints in accordance with its Complaints Policy.

The LA will provide a disagreement resolution service as stated in the SEND Code of Practice.

12. Conclusion

St Robert's as a school fully embraces the inclusive learning policy for all pupils and will support this commitment as stated in the policy above by:

- Following the current SEND Code of Practice and promoting good practice and procedures to enable identification of children with Special Educational Needs, to organise the assessment of their needs and to plan, monitor and review appropriate support strategies to meet these needs.
- Ensuring the admissions policy is in line with LA guidelines and supports inclusive values.
- Continuing to work actively with pupils and parents/carers to improve individual pupils' access to education.
- Ensuring all pupils, regardless of their learning difficulties or disabilities, have access to the broad and balanced, coherent and relevant curriculum with high expectations of achievement for all.
- Continuing to strive to develop our inclusive ethos by identifying and removing barriers to learning and participation, and making reasonable, timely adaptations to ensure appropriate provision.
- Continuing to promote high expectations and identifying and deploying resources to meet needs.