



ST MARY'S SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & FUNCTION (14)

Revised April 2020

To be reviewed April 2021

MISSION STATEMENT

‘St Mary’s School and College is committed to providing a high quality, supportive and inclusive learning environment in which all pupils are able to achieve well in their learning and personal development. We aim for all learners to become as independent as possible and to be well prepared for adulthood and life beyond school and college.’

OUR VALUES

We:

- always keep children and young people and their learning needs at the heart of our work
- believe parents and carers are essential partners in the education and care of their children
- ensure the School and College is fit for purpose; providing a safe, secure and inclusive environment for learning and living.
- Support the development of positive relationships based on good communication, respect and mutual trust
- provide a stimulating, creative, engaging and high quality curriculum that is both accessible and challenging for all our pupils, so that they develop skills, abilities and talents and are well prepared for adult life
- focus our work on supporting and developing independence across the school day and waking day curriculum
- Manage our resources effectively to ensure maximum benefit to learners

OUR VISION:

- To improve the life chances of pupils by providing the best possible educational opportunities for our learners, allowing them to work towards independence and to achieve well over time;
- To continually strive to improve standards in every aspect of Trust provision;
- By providing consistently high quality educational experiences across all phases of their education, we aim to raise aspirations for children and young people, enabling them to be confident and successful in their next step in education or training and in their preparation for adulthood

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

St Mary's equal opportunities policy reflects and promotes an understanding of, and sensitivity to, the religious, cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and beliefs of children and young people. Every member of St Mary's is regarded as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of creed, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality or disability.

We aim to engender a sense of community and belonging, and to offer new opportunities to children and young people who may have experienced previous difficulties. We recognise this will require an appropriate response to specific needs of individuals and/or groups and the promotion of a non-discriminative environment.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

St Mary's School and College abides by and adheres to the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations (2015)

1. WHAT IS ST MARY'S SCHOOL AND COLLEGE AND WHO DOES IT CATER FOR?

St Mary's School and College is a non-maintained Co-educational Day and Residential Special School catering for children and young people who have special educational needs arising from severe and complex speech, language and communication needs. Pupils may also have additional physical, medical and learning difficulties.

St Mary's has Department for Education approval for 160 children and young people, including 45 day students aged between 7 and 19 years. The school located in the town of Bexhill-On-Sea in the county of East Sussex.

Pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The school admits pupils on a day or weekly boarding basis and operates a six-term year. The school may offer residential provision on alternate weekends. Pupils' placement at the weekend is negotiated with parents or guardians and the Local Authority, depending on their individual needs and requirements.

2. MEETING THE NEEDS

At St Mary's each child or young person is treated as an individual. A number of young people are provided with 1 to 1 support throughout the school day or waking day curriculum, where this is specified within their EHCP.

There are regular reviews of a pupil's progress as required including statutory Annual Reviews, Looked after Children Reviews, residential key working targets and pupil progress meetings. Where a pupil's level of need indicates a particular cause for concern, additional meetings might also be called in order to review what intervention can be offered and how best this can be monitored in order to understand its impact.

At St Mary's School and College, we recognise that positive parental involvement in children's education does make a significant difference to their achievements. The partnership between parents and staff at St Mary's to support children and young people in their learning is seen as vital. St Mary's will endeavour to communicate well in order to help parents to be involved in their child's education. Children and young people's views are considered as part of their regular assessment and review cycle. Views are sought in a number of ways such as school council, annual reviews, and student house meetings and in supporting their life and independent skills through contributions to their personal care plan.

3. REFERRALS AND ADMISSIONS

Referrals to the school come from Local Authority Education or Special Educational Needs Department or the parents/carer of the child and young person.

The documentation, which the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) requires is:

- EHC Plan
- recent educational psychologist and therapists' reports
- current levels of educational attainment (SATs, standardised tests)
- most recent education report from their current school
- social history of the young person, including family composition and ethnic data
- any relevant Social Service involvement
- medical conditions including any recent Consultants' reports and the need for any specific input
- details and description of any relevant behaviour patterns

The Headteacher and the SENCO review this documentation. We may invite the child or young person for a taster visit and/or arrange to visit them in their current setting in order to support our decision making process. The SENCO will manage the taster

visit(s) and ensure the child or young person is appropriately supported at all times. For a residential referral, an overnight stay or extended day may form part of the taster visit.

At the end of the assessment, the Headteacher, in liaison with the SENCO and senior staff, as appropriate, will decide if St Mary's is an appropriate placement. The SENCO communicates the decision to the commissioning Local Authority or to parents if they have requested the placement directly.

4. THERAPY

The focus of therapy at St Mary's School and College is to support access to the curriculum and to provide opportunities to make improvements in areas of identified special educational need or disability. The therapy support our children and young people receive promotes improved outcomes for pupils through both the school day and waking day curriculum. The Therapy team supports and trains all staff working with the children and young people to ensure each individual pupil is well supported to reach their full potential and that their needs are met.

5. EDUCATION

St Mary's curriculum provides a differentiated programme of academic education which challenges and supports all children and young people to make good progress and reach their potential. Personal, social, health and emotional education is delivered as an integral part of the academic programme and is recognised as vital in teaching pupils how to learn and function effectively in society.

Each of our professional staff holds relevant professional qualifications. Where it is required, support workers are expected to hold, or are working towards nationally recognised qualifications that are specifically relevant to their role.

Pupils are usually taught in classes of around 12 pupils with a minimum of 2 members of staff (a teacher and support worker) and over the course of the day other staff may be present. For example, specific pupils may have an individual Support Worker. Occupational (OT) and Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) or therapy assistants may also work in the classroom. The make-up of classes is determined by the needs of the pupils and also the number of pupils in each year group.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught within a dedicated learning environment that offers flexibility and personalised learning through delivery from a dedicated teacher, OT and SaLT. Foundation skills are built upon on preparation for Key Stage 3. All pupils have access to specialist teaching areas to support the delivery of the curriculum.

The National Curriculum is followed and adapted to the learning needs of pupils. St Mary's offers a personalised pathway via a range of accreditations in the 14-19 curriculum; for example, entry level as well as functional skills in English and maths, entry level in science and arts, BTECs and other accreditations linked to vocational pathways. Importance is placed on employability and developing skills to be work ready and there is a programme of experience for older students based at our dedicated Vocational Centre. This provides students with on the job introductions to the world of work. Sport, music and art are valuable parts of the curriculum and pupils have opportunities to compete, perform or display their work.

6. RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

We aim to ensure that children and young people have a happy and enriching residential experience that enables them to move towards independence and also supports their learning and development through our waking day curriculum. The focus of our care work is on the personal, social, health and emotional development of the individual, with a focus on working towards individual independence within a safe, structured and supportive living environment. Pupils contribute towards the well-being of their group by recognising personal skills and self-worth and developing their sense of citizenship.

Keyworkers work with young people to identify individual targets through a small steps programme which are linked to those set in their care plans. In addition, the well-being team provide sessions to each house looking at issues of bullying, sex and relationship awareness and other sensitive issues. These sessions support the on-going work staff provide informally as part of developing social awareness understanding. Parents can also request individual support from the Well-being team.

St Mary's School and College offers residential provision for both school pupils and post-sixteen college students. Appropriate segregation and organisation is in place to meet the necessary safety and child protection requirements with male and female sleeping arrangements on different levels and in different areas. All residential houses are staffed by designated Care staff and experienced Integrated Support Workers. The level of staffing is appropriate to meet the individual needs of the pupils taking into account individual risk assessments, child protection concerns and the age/stage of development for each pupil.

There are opportunities for pupils to integrate with the local community and enjoy the local facilities of the beach, parks, country walks, youth clubs, horse riding and other leisure and sports facilities. Evening activities are encouraged and arranged by staff in consultation with pupils, but the individual's choice to participate or not is respected, thus allowing freedom to utilise their living accommodation for social interaction, quiet individual time or study. Some facilities located within the main building areas are also

available for use during the evening and include the swimming pool, gym, art block, cooking room, ICT and sensory room and music facilities.

Pupils live in small living area groups in a stimulating but calm and managed environment. Each living area has a sitting room and kitchenette with full TV, DVD and computer facilities; most bedrooms are shared between small groups of pupils, which encourage both socialisation and community living skills. There is an emphasis on creating a homely and comfortable environment.

Developing independence

The aims and emphasis for the residential provision is the maximisation of independent living skills and self-reliance in preparation for adult life. Students learn to prepare light meals and to plan their leisure times. Management of money is an on-going target for all our students as are issues around personal and sexual health. Rules and routines are specifically designed to meet the needs of developing pupils. Additional opportunities for flexibility, autonomy, privacy and participation in decision-making are intrinsic elements to enable young people to develop and achieve responsibility and self-determination.

Night cover

Night cover is provided by waking staff and staff undertaking sleeping in duties. A senior member of staff is available on call every evening providing additional support.

Catering

Food is an important part of residential school life and one that is taken very seriously here at St Mary's. We have a policy of making everything we provide from good quality raw ingredients, on site each day, with the only exception being that we buy in bread and yoghurts. We offer nutritionally analysed, healthy, freshly prepared food throughout the day. Our catering team are also always on hand to answer any allergy or dietary queries.

We cater for all tastes and preferences including special dietary requests and requirements. We regularly provide national, cultural or religious celebration meals to support learning and encourage a cultural palate, as well as researching new ideas to keep our menus fresh and inspired. We offer a variety of choice at main meals including a full salad bar and a large variety of seasonal fresh fruit.

The main school dining room is used by the pupils for lunch and pupils support the preparation of supper and breakfast in the houses. The main aim for staff in relation to mealtimes is to create a pleasant atmosphere, conducive to eating and socialising and developing social and communication skills. Good humour, a listening ear and attention to the needs of the group as a whole are a prerequisite to an enjoyable and

relaxing mealtime. Meals are planned and prepared with a view to supporting all pupils to eat healthily.

7. TRAVELLING

St Mary's operates a six-term academic year with the residential provision organised on a weekly basis. These arrangements are designed to maximise the learning experience for the children and young people. Most residential pupils travel to St Mary's School and College on Sunday evenings in order for them to commence education at 9.00am on Monday. On Friday, St Mary's day ends earlier, enabling pupils to arrive home at a reasonable hour.

8. CHILD AND FAMILY SUPPORT

St Mary's School and College provides support which is available to families and pupils in a wide range of areas. These include supporting at times of difficulty, support through children's' and adults' Social Care Assessments and helping parents and carers to address any welfare concerns at home or at school.

9. RESIDENTIAL CARE STAFF

All Residential Care staff and Integrated Support Workers hold or are working towards nationally recognised qualifications that are specifically relevant to their role, and require the demonstration of competence at level 3 or above on the Qualifications credit framework. For the majority of St Mary's care staff, this will be a level 3 QCF or Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce (Children's Social Care Pathway). Alternative qualifications will be acceptable only if they demonstrate equivalent levels of competence across relevant areas of work.

An essential aim in relation to the recruitment of staff is to ensure that the number of staff and their experience and qualifications are appropriate to perform the required tasks concerning the education, care, welfare and well-being of all children and young people. There is a full programme of in-service and external staff training according to the requirements of the individual disciplines.

10. HEALTH

It is the primary aim of all staff to act as good parents in relation to the health of children and young people accommodated by St Mary's. With parental agreement, most residential pupils are registered with the local General Practitioner. The GP's local

practice consists of male and female General Practitioners, all of whom are available to contribute towards children and young people's medical requirements. This arrangement ensures that the requirements of the Children Act (1989 and 2004) concerning the rights of pupils to choose their own practitioner are met.

The GP practice has a detailed knowledge of local health services and resources available, including specialist consultants.

Nurses and medication-trained staff are available 24 hours a day across the week. There is a weekend on call service. Residential pupils requiring more comprehensive care and supervision through longer-term illnesses are supported by agreed arrangement with parents.

We acknowledge the right of pupils aged 16 years and above to give their own consent to examination or to treatment. Staff must also be aware that pupils under 16 years may also be able to give or refuse consent, depending on their capacity to understand the nature of treatment. Parental consent is required for nursing and medical intervention for pupils under the age of 16 with the exception of sexual health matters.

The parents of all pupils, who have received medical care or treatment, are provided with detailed written information. Information concerning more significant illness or injury will immediately be relayed to parents in order to reach agreement regarding arrangements for their child's care, including transportation home if required. In circumstances where a pupil is admitted to hospital for urgent medical treatment, parents or those adults with parental responsibility will be contacted to give consent to treatment. In the event that medical procedures are urgent and parents cannot be contacted, staff are required to seek the assistance of the Headteacher who, acting in Loco-Parentis, may give the necessary consent.

Children and young people who require support with intimate care needs have these needs identified at admission. All pupils have recorded and agreed procedures for their intimate care as part of their care plans and these are reviewed and updated as part of the annual review or when individual needs change. Plans are developed and agreed by parents and pupils (where appropriate) in consultation with residential, education and support staff. Copies of the care plans are held on pupils' files as working documents which are available for staff who work closely with pupils to refer to. Staff are trained in intimate care.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that any medicines are carefully administered and securely stored. The Head of Care and School Nurse ensure that adequate facilities and procedures for the safe administration and storage of medicines are maintained and adhered to.

Dental treatment will be arranged in circumstances where immediate attention is required or where frequent attendance is necessary in order to complete lengthy orthodontic procedures. Routine dental examinations and treatment, however, remain the responsibility of parents in the home area.

11. STAFF RECRUITMENT

Staff selection procedures include thorough checks on the suitability of staff prior to appointment, with previous employment/personal reference checks being verified. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) clearance is completed prior to new staff taking up a position at the school. A Safer Recruitment Policy is followed and procedures include ensuring at least one member of every interview panel has undertaken safer recruitment training.

12. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Behaviour can be influenced by factors such as clear and motivating systems to support positive engagement, sensitive and professional practice, sound management, a predictable, safe and stimulating environment, and the quality of relationships between staff, children and young people.

Positive Behaviour Management operates within the school and waking day curriculum. It is designed to encourage pupils to achieve good levels of behaviour and promote independence and good communication.

Some pupils at St Mary's School and College may at times exhibit behaviour that can be described as challenging as a result of the complex difficulties they experience. This can put themselves, others and property around them at risk. When other strategies have been applied, but have not de-escalated the risk, physical intervention may be required. To ensure that such intervention is consistently applied, staff are trained in the principles and practices of Team Teach which identify a range of responses to de-escalate behaviour prior to physically intervening, which is only done as a last resort. Staff are regularly trained. On the occasions that challenging behaviour may necessitate physical intervention (reasonable force), any physical intervention used under the Team Teach framework will be in keeping with the guidelines issued under the Children Act (1989 and 2004), Education Act 2010 and Department for Education guidelines on Restrictive Physical Intervention. Strong emphasis is placed on early intervention, personal responsibility and de-escalation within the Team Teach system.

Reports of all incidents of physical intervention are documented and parents/carers and when appropriate, Placing Authorities are informed. Where this has happened, follow up work will be undertaken to ensure pupil voice is taken account of and that strategies are planned to reduce the risk of further incidents.

13. ANTI BULLYING

St Mary's School and College strives to create an environment where young people can be supported in their emotional and social needs and to achieve their full potential. All forms of bullying interfere with achieving this aim. Therefore, such behaviour will not be ignored. The staff team will be proactive in their use of the strategies and systems in place to address bullying at all levels while providing opportunities to support and challenge those who are displaying bullying behaviours and support those who are bullied.

14. CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

Child protection and the safeguarding of pupils is the highest priority for all of our work at St Mary's School and College. St Mary's procedures for dealing with child protection issues conform to the arrangements described in the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures and follow local authority guidelines on Child Protection in Residential Schools (Children Act 1989 and 2004).

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for child protection and welfare issues at St Mary's, and for liaison with relevant Local Authority Social Care Departments. St Mary's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has a specific responsibility for championing the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people registered at the school. The DSL's responsibilities include:

- receiving and acting upon any reported concerns
- ensuring the Child Protection Policy is implemented and promoted
- promoting best safeguarding practice across the wider partnership network
- acting as a first point of contact for staff to discuss any concerns

The DSL and other senior leaders who have up to date DSL training, offer support, advice and gives a level of expertise to all members of the school staff team.

The main aims for staff concerning child protection includes a comprehensive understanding of the school's procedures. There is regular, specific training in the recognition of abuse and knowledge that abuse in any form always constitutes serious harm. Suspicion or evidence of abuse must always be reported to the DSL for appropriate investigation.

Across St Mary's School and College, both internally and externally, we have CCTV in operation. This is placed in communal corridors, entrances and exits to safeguard pupils, students, staff and St Mary's property. All cameras are signposted where necessary.

15. COMPLAINTS

Complaints can arise through several routes: from a young person / parent/carer, from a member of staff or from an outside agency or member of the public. We have a Complaints Policy that is reviewed regularly and shared with anyone who makes a formal complaint. There is also a whistle blowing policy which is available to staff.

Although the vast majority of concerns and complaints can be managed informally in the first instance, sometimes they can become formal. The emphasis at the first stage of a complaint is on problem solving by core staff and their managers. The aim is to address concerns and solve problems at the earliest stage. It is however, important to respect the rights of everyone to have their complaint investigated further if they are not satisfied with initial attempts to resolve the problem. In this situation, the complaint will be processed through the Headteacher. If the complaint is against the Headteacher in the first place, the complaint can be made to the governing body. If the matter is still not resolved within the timescale determined within the school policy, the Chair of the Governing Board may be contacted. When there has not been a satisfactory outcome from the complainant's perspective, they may also make a complaint to their Local Authority or Ofsted.

All children and young people are able to meet with the Standard 20 visitor who visits the residential houses every term. The contact details of the Standard 20 visitor are displayed in all the residential areas. During these visits young people are given the opportunity to meet individually with the independent visitor where they can raise any concerns. These concerns can be dealt with by the staff on duty during the visit and will be reported on in the Standard 20 visitor's report. The Residential House Manager and the Head of Care will address these concerns. The reports are made available to the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Board.

An independent advocate for children and young people will also visit each living area each half term to offer the opportunity for pupils to discuss any issues or concerns with another adult, a report is sent to the school after each visit.

Each residential house has a complaints system online so that any complaints made by young people are recorded alongside actions taken by staff to resolve the complaint and referred to the Head of Care / Assistant Heads of Care.

16. INSPECTIONS

The school is subject to inspections by Ofsted, the Health and Safety Authority, the Fire Service and the Environmental Health Officers. St Mary's School and College also receives monitoring visits from placing local authorities.

17. REVIEW

To be reviewed April 2021

Approved by the Interim Education Board:

Date: 02.04.2020

Signed:



Date: 02.04.2020

Chair of the Interim Education Board