

St. Thomas More Language College

Learning Support Department 2025-2026

Introduction

At STMLC, we believe that all pupils are entitled to have their needs met across every aspect of school life and to be given equal opportunities to thrive. In line with this philosophy, all school policies are reviewed with careful consideration for inclusion, accessibility, and equity.

This SEND policy has been developed in accordance with the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015) and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which outlines the duties of schools in relation to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out specific responsibilities regarding Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans, the role of the SENCO, the publication of the SEN Information Report, and ongoing provision for students with SEND.

Learning Support Department

The Learning Support Department at STMLC is staffed by a dedicated team comprising three teachers, six Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), and the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Mrs. Krol. The team works collaboratively and tirelessly to support pupils with SEND in reaching their full potential.

We are committed to a whole-school approach, working in close partnership with subject teachers, in-house practitioners, and external agencies to ensure pupils have full and meaningful access to the curriculum.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise the vital role that parents and carers play in supporting their children's education. We actively encourage their involvement in all aspects of SEND provision and decision-making. Parents are invited to attend meetings and reviews where their child's progress is discussed.

Their insights and contributions are highly valued, and any concerns raised are carefully noted and addressed.

Admissions and Inclusive Practice

At STMLC, we consider placements for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including but not limited to: autism spectrum disorder (ASD), sensory processing needs, dyslexia, dyspraxia, moderate learning difficulties, and speech, language, and communication needs.

We are happy to offer a place to any pupil, provided that we are confident in our ability to meet their individual needs and support them in making meaningful progress toward achieving their full potential.

All pupils are entitled to equal access to school life, including the curriculum, enrichment opportunities, and facilities. Wherever possible, pupils with SEND are taught in mainstream classrooms, where quality first teaching is the foundation of our inclusive approach. Teachers strive to adapt their practice to meet the needs of every learner.

Where additional support is required, targeted strategies and reasonable adjustments are implemented to remove barriers to learning. These may include in-class support, differentiation, assistive technology, or access arrangements.

Regular assessment and monitoring processes are in place to ensure that any pupil who is underachieving is identified early. In such cases, the class teacher—supported by the SENCO and Learning Support Team—will investigate the causes of underachievement and implement appropriate interventions.

All staff are made aware of the individual needs of students on the SEND Register. Guidance and strategies are shared to help teachers make effective and reasonable adjustments to lesson content, while continuing to provide appropriate challenge to support pupils' progress.

The school maintains a regularly updated SEN Register, which is shared with all staff. This document outlines each pupil's primary area of need and key strategies for support. It is a key tool in ensuring that staff are informed, responsive, and consistent in their approach.

Identifying and Assessing Needs

At STMLC, we pride ourselves on knowing our pupils as individuals. Early identification of additional needs is key to ensuring that every student receives the right support to thrive. We use a range of information to help us identify pupils who may require additional help:

- Transition information from previous schools, including Key Stage 2 data
- Concerns raised by pupils, parents, teachers, or external agencies
- Standardised assessment results, including CATS, MALT, and NGRT
- Ongoing teacher observation and in-class performance

There is strong collaboration between the academic and pastoral teams to ensure that no concern is overlooked. If a pupil is identified as needing support, targeted short-term SEND provision may be introduced to reduce or remove barriers to learning.

These interventions are developed in consultation with the pupil and their parents/carers, and are tailored to address the specific needs identified. The views of the pupil are central to this process, as we believe that when pupils have ownership of their goals, they are more likely to engage and succeed.

Each intervention is reviewed after an agreed period of time to assess its effectiveness. Based on this review, support may be continued, adapted, or replaced with different strategies. Throughout this process, we expect parents and carers to work in partnership with school staff to ensure the best outcomes.

High-quality teaching, differentiated for individual needs, is the first step in responding to pupils with SEND. When considering whether a pupil requires additional special educational provision, the SENCO will take into account a wide range of information gathered from school-based assessments, staff observations, and any relevant external reports.

The decision to implement additional or different provision is guided not only by academic data and observed progress, but also by the aspirations and concerns expressed by the pupil and their family. This collaborative process helps determine whether the pupil's needs can be met through the school's core offer or if further intervention, including referrals to external agencies, is necessary.

The Graduated Approach

The SEND Code of Practice outlines a graduated response to identifying and meeting pupils' needs, recognising that provision and strategies must be continuously adapted through a four-part cycle: Assess, Plan, Do, Review. This approach ensures that support is tailored, evidence-based, and responsive to change.

1. Assess

The SENCO considers all relevant information gathered from within the school—such as progress data, teacher observations, and assessment results—alongside any external reports. This helps to form a clear picture of the pupil's strengths, needs, and barriers to learning.

2. Plan

At this stage, the SENCO works collaboratively with teachers, parents/carers, and the pupil to agree on specific, measurable outcomes. The plan takes into account the views and aspirations of the pupil and their family. Appropriate interventions are identified, staffing is allocated, and timescales are set for review.

3. Do

Interventions and support strategies are implemented. Class teachers remain responsible for working with the pupil on a daily basis and retain responsibility for their progress, even when interventions involve additional adult support outside of the classroom. The SENCO supports staff in ensuring strategies are followed with fidelity and consistency.

4. Review

At the end of the agreed period, the SENCO reviews the intervention in consultation with staff, the pupil, and parents/carers. The pupil's progress toward the agreed outcomes is evaluated. Based on the review, a decision is made whether to continue the current support, modify the approach, or escalate the level of intervention. This cycle is then repeated as needed, with each round of review informing the next steps.

The graduated approach supports a dynamic and responsive SEND provision model at STMLC, ensuring pupils receive the right support at the right time.

SEND Provision

Any pupil identified as having additional or special educational needs may receive extra support from the Learning Support Department at STMLC. The majority of support takes place within the mainstream classroom, where our staff work closely with subject teachers to deliver high-quality, inclusive teaching.

In some cases, pupils may be taught outside of the classroom for targeted one-to-one or small group interventions, depending on the nature and extent of their needs. The type of support provided is tailored to each individual and planned in collaboration with the pupil, parents/carers, and teaching staff.

If you would like to discuss the support available, please contact Mrs. S. Krol, the SENCO, using the school's main contact list.

The Learning Support Team consists of trained and experienced staff whose skills are regularly updated through ongoing professional development. Training may include attendance at courses or collaborative work with external specialists.

At STMLC, a wide range of interventions and resources are available to support students with SEND, including but not limited to:

- In-class support from Learning Support Assistants
- Mentoring for emotional and academic development
- Social Club at lunchtime to support peer interaction and social skills
- Access arrangements are put in place to support students with identified needs in exams
- ADHD support sessions focusing on understanding the diagnosis and developing executive functioning skills
- Dyslexia support sessions help with building confidence and improving literacy skills
- Cultural Capital sessions, to enhance general knowledge and engagement
- Homework Club, to support with organisation and task completion
- 'Drumbeatable sessions' as a tool for emotional regulation and sensory input
- Targeted withdrawal sessions for literacy and numeracy, delivered one-to-one or in small groups
- Touch typing and assistive technology training
- Vocabulary development and spelling support (e.g., Word Wizard)
- Friendship Group for students with ASD – focused on developing social interaction and communication skills.
- Gardening Club, promoting emotional well-being through hands-on activities
- Anime Club, providing a shared-interest group to help students build peer connections and social confidence.
- Theatre Box, an exploratory workshop introducing students to careers in theatre
- Post-16 Guidance, personalised support to help students make informed decisions about their next steps in education or training
- EBSNA Intervention – targeted support helping students to improve attendance

In addition, we work with an extensive network of internal and external professionals to support the progress and well-being of our students. These include:

In-school support:

- Mental Health Lead
- School Nurse
- School Counsellor
- Pastoral and Academic Leads for each year group

External and specialist services (some delivered on-site):

- Educational Psychologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

- ASD Outreach Advisory Teachers
- Early Help Services
- Access arrangement Assessor

Many of these professionals also provide regular training to our staff, ensuring that all adults working with pupils are well-equipped to support a range of needs.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the provision outlined within the plan will be implemented in consultation with parents/carers, and reviewed regularly in line with statutory guidance.

Transition Support: Starting and Leaving STMLC

Primary to Secondary Transition

At STMLC, we recognise that the move from Year 6 to Year 7 can be a time of anxiety and uncertainty for pupils and their families, particularly for those with additional needs. We are committed to making this transition as smooth and positive as possible.

We work closely with our feeder primary schools to gather detailed information about each child. Key members of staff, including the SENCO, visit primary schools to meet with Year 6 teachers, SENCOs, and – where possible – the pupils themselves. This allows us to gain a full understanding of the child's strengths, needs, and any successful strategies already in place.

In addition to the Transition Day for all Year 6 students, STMLC offers two additional transition sessions for pupils with Special Educational Needs and those identified as vulnerable or anxious. The first session includes parents, while the second is student-only to build independence and ease anxiety.

We also offer a week-long summer school at the start of the summer holidays. This helps pupils become familiar with the school environment, routines, staff, and expectations before the new academic year begins.

All information gathered during transition is shared with relevant staff before the start of Year 7, including pastoral teams and teaching staff, to ensure early planning and appropriate support from the outset.

Preparation for Adulthood and Post-16 Transition

Supporting pupils as they prepare to leave STMLC is equally important. We aim to equip all students with the knowledge and confidence to make informed choices about their next steps.

From Year 9 onwards, pupils receive structured careers education and advice. For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), all annual reviews from Year 9 onwards include a focus on Preparing for Adulthood, covering key areas such as:

- Further education or training
- Independent living
- Participation in the community
- Employment and aspirations

Before GCSE options are chosen, pupils receive tailored careers guidance to support informed decision-making. During Years 10 and 11, all pupils take part in sessions delivered by our Careers Service. Students who require more personalised guidance can also meet with a member of the Learning Support Team for additional support.

For Year 11 students with EHCPs, the final annual review is held in the autumn term, to ensure enough time for a smooth and well-planned transition to post-16 education. We work closely with the Local Authorities, parents/carers, and receiving colleges or training providers to ensure the right provision is identified. We also support families with application processes and attend meetings as needed.

The Role of Parents and Carers

At STMLC, we believe that a strong and collaborative partnership with parents and carers is essential to ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Parents play a vital role in supporting their child's learning, development, and well-being, and their involvement is central to the success of any provision made.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Work closely with the school and relevant professionals to support their child's progress and development.
- Communicate regularly with staff to share any concerns or insights about their child's needs or provision.
- Attend meetings and review sessions, including those forming part of the assess-plan-do-review cycle.
- Encourage and support their child to participate fully in school life, both academically and socially.

We value the contribution of parents and seek their views in all decision-making processes. We encourage parents to ask questions, offer feedback, and take an active role in setting and reviewing goals for their child.

Parents should also be aware that Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide information, advice, and support to families of children and young people with SEND. These services are commonly known as Parent Partnership Services or SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service). Further information about this support is available through the Local Authority's website or SEND Local Offer.

What to Do if You Have Concerns About SEND Provision

If you have any concerns about the provision in place for your child's special educational needs, we encourage you to raise them as early as possible so they can be addressed effectively.

1. Initial Contact:
Your first point of contact should be Mrs. Krol, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). You can reach her through the usual school communication channels (e.g. phone, email, or via the school office).
2. Escalation:
If your concern is not resolved after speaking with the SENCO, you should then contact the Headteacher to discuss the matter further.
3. Formal Complaint:
If the issue remains unresolved, you may make a formal complaint to the Governing Body. This can be done by contacting the Clerk to the Governors via the school office.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need. Your feedback and involvement are vital in helping us achieve this aim.