



Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Policy for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Mission Statement

‘To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ’s Gospel’

This policy is applied to all students, whether day, boarding or EYFS

Introduction

Thornton College is a mainstream non-selective Catholic school for girls from Pre-Reception up to Year 13. The school makes provision for students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD). This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the identification and management of students with special educational needs at Thornton College. It is intended to provide a consistent framework ensuring that all students have their needs met, allowing them to work towards their full potential. The school’s Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy has regard to the Equality Act (2010). Thornton College does not come under the umbrella of maintained schools but embraces the philosophy and guidance of the ‘Every Child Matters’ white paper (2003) and follows reasonable procedures that have been agreed with Local Authorities with regard to students in its care who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan.

Every child is a unique gift from God, with his or her own unique gifts. At Thornton College we aim to enable students to develop their gifts and talents to the full in a community where students can develop confidence, self-esteem and tolerance and where they will feel valued and respected.

We, as a school, recognise that there is a broad spectrum of ability and differing educational needs and talents. All students may have additional needs at different times and therefore a wide variety of strategies are used to meet these needs as they arise. We believe that meeting the special educational needs of individual students is not a peripheral or external activity but the responsibility of each teacher and therefore teaching strategies need to be responsive to the needs of individuals.

It is only those independent schools that are on the section 41 list or relevant early years’ providers that must have regard to the SEND CODE OF PRACTICE 2015 AND THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014. Thornton College does not use the Code of Practice to plan the support we give to children with SEND issues. As such, parents / guardians should contact the Head Teacher to discuss provision before naming the College on any EHC Plan.

SEND Statement

We make provision for students with SEND. Teachers, and Key Workers in EYFS, identify who requires additional support, working alongside the Special Educational Needs & Disability Coordinator and in consultation with parents. Opportunities for learning within the curriculum are differentiated and targeted towards the area of need for each individual. Reasonable additional support and interventions are provided to support students’ progress. Teachers monitor and review the student’s progress, adapting activities so that the whole curriculum policy is accessible to all. There are some children whose needs may not be able to be met at Thornton College (please refer to the admission policy).

All staff follow our policies for SEND and Inclusion.

Scope

This guidance is applicable to all those involved in with the provision of educational services to those with SEN and learning disabilities and covers the health and safety aspects of that provision.

Aims

The aims of the special educational needs and disability policy and practice in our school are:

- To value each student as an individual. Age, gender, race or individual needs will not constrain any educational entitlement.
- To recognise that some students have difficulties which call for special educational provision 'in addition to and different from' that provided within the differentiated curriculum
- To make reasonable adjustments for those with a disability by taking action to increase access to the curriculum and environment
- To ensure a high level of staff expertise to meet student need, through on-going professional development
- To encourage parents and guardians as partners in the learning process for their students.
- To work in a cooperative partnership with Local Authorities and other outside agencies
- To provide all the students in our school with a broad, balanced and relevant education.
- To stimulate enjoyment in learning at all levels and to encourage the child to become an independent learner.
- To place special emphasis on developing self-discipline, and encouraging high standards of behaviour and courtesy, as well as involving the students in a number of responsible roles.
- To promote and maintain a happy, secure and sensitive environment with firm moral structure where independence, respect for others and the development and maintenance of self-esteem is integral.

Guiding principles will be:

- 1 a balance between the health and safety considerations of employees and individual student's rights to dignity, autonomy and privacy
- 2 employee's health and safety should be maintained, but this should not be used as an excuse for denying disabled pupils and those with SEN access to educational opportunities
- 3 effective management of health and safety considerations for disabled pupils and those with SEN which allows them maximum opportunities in their education

Particular health and safety risks to consider:

- 4 manual handling of students with physical disabilities
- 5 pupils unable to recognise everyday hazards, communicate distress, or move around independently.

- 6 using mechanical aids and equipment
 - 7 using therapy and ball pools
 - 8 administering medical treatment and minimising risk of infection
 - 9 management of difficult behaviour and the use of restraint
 - 10 lone working where an employee works on a one-to-one basis with a SEN pupil
 - 11 transport issues such as getting learning disabled or physically disabled students in and out of transport and making sure that access to the premises is appropriate
 - 12 requirements of specific legislation such as exposure to hazardous substances, use of display screen equipment
- Risk assessments may need to be at different levels. At the general level they should examine
 - what reasonable steps can be taken to minimise health and safety risk without avoiding disability discrimination. An individual risk assessment will relate specifically to the pupil on a case-by-case basis.
 - Risk assessments should be made:
 1. before pupils are admitted
 2. when planning educational activities both on and off site
 3. when planning and purchasing new facilities and when work practices are to be introduced or changed
 4. when deciding on a placement
 5. when an existing pupil develops a health need
 6. when a pupil is to undertake work experience
 - It is important to recognise the involvement of external professionals such as occupational therapists and educational psychologists when undertaking risk assessment.
 - Risk assessment should be kept under review, and the practical control measures monitored for effectiveness.
 - The results of any risk assessment should be communicated appropriate, eg by display in / at
 1. staff room
 2. entrance lobby or reception area
 - areas where specialist equipment is kept / used
 - medical treatment areas
 - transport drop off points

Training must be given to enable those working with SEN pupils and those with learning disabilities to act safely. It should be recognised that specific training in the use of mechanical lifting aids and how to administer medicines may, for example, be required.

Overview

The school employs a full time SENDCO known as the Head of Learning Development, and a team of Learning Support Assistants. There is an Early Years Lead. and Early Years SENDCO

Support of students with learning needs usually takes place within the classroom with programmes of work planned by teachers with support from the Head of Learning Development to enable all students to make progress and experience success.

Students within the school have access to a wide range of activities and the school ethos is based on the belief that every student has something to offer, whether it be academic, sporting, artistic, dramatic or musical ability. The school strives to develop an inclusive curriculum with appropriate teaching methods and learning environments.

Thornton College promotes equal opportunities and students have full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education with access to all subjects within the curriculum using a range of groupings and differentiation strategies. However, in some circumstances, a student may be withdrawn from a modern foreign language subject (Year 8 and year 9 and as an option choice in place of 1 GCSE in Years 10 and 11) either on the advice of an educational psychologist or to provide a more appropriate alternative curriculum based upon the needs and aptitude of the individual. This process will always involve consultation with the student, parents and staff and may involve working in partnership with outside agencies.

We recognise the importance of early identification and assessment of students with special educational needs and aim to address special needs as soon as concerns are raised so that learning experiences are appropriate to a student's current needs. We recognise that good practice can help prevent some special educational needs difficulties arising and can minimise others.

We recognise that responsibility for SEND is a whole school issue and lies collectively with all staff, supported by the SENDCO and Senior Leadership Team.

We believe that parents and carers have a crucial role to play in supporting their student's education. We aim to work in close partnership with parents and carers, valuing their opinions and contributions and supporting them in their child's learning and development.

Parents are alerted to any concerns teachers have about their child's learning, behaviour or progress with the opportunity for regular discussions and meetings between parents, class and subject teachers and the Head of Learning Development (SENDCO).

Definition of Special Educational Needs or Disability

At Thornton College we use the definition for Special Educational Needs and disability from the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2014, p.6). This states that 'a child or young person has **special educational needs** if he or she has a **learning difficulty or disability** which calls for **special educational provision** to be made for him or her.'

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of the same age in mainstream schools

- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of the educational facilities of a kind provided for students of the same age in mainstream schools

Special educational provision is 'educational provision, which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for students of their age.'

A person has a **disability** if he/she "has a 'physical or mental impairment' which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities." (Equality Act and Schools, 2010)

A child has a **learning need** if s/he cannot achieve her/his full potential and requires different or additional support to that normally available to pupils of the same age to meet these needs. Students must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language of their home or medium of communication is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Students with special educational needs will have an identified need in one or more of the following four areas:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional & mental health needs
- Sensory and/or physical needs

All staff are aware of Thornton College's procedures for identifying and making provision for students with special educational needs under the guidance of the Head of Learning Development.

Students under the category 'SEND Support' will receive a graduated approach to intervention and their progress will be regularly reviewed. For students with more complex needs, a request by parents to the Local Authority for an Education and Health Care Plan may be supported providing Thornton College can continue to meet the needs of that child.

Whole School Approach

'Provision for students with special educational needs is a matter for the school as a whole. In addition to the governing body, the Head Teacher of Thornton College, the Head of Learning Development and all other members of staff have important day to day responsibilities. All teachers are teachers of students with special educational needs. Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching. Teaching such students is a whole school responsibility.'

Thornton College aims to provide a whole school approach to special educational needs and to embed inclusive practice across the school. The school develops teachers' skills and strategies for meeting the needs of students with SEND and additional needs through continued professional development with the focus on excellent classroom teaching as a preventative measure and initiatives which promote good practice and raise attainment for students with SEND.

All new members of staff receive, in their induction, some training on working with students with SEND and there is continuing staff development. Teachers are encouraged and supported to keep abreast of new teaching theory and methods and how to implement these appropriately. The school looks for ways to help teachers remove barriers to learning with the Head of Learning Development providing advice, guidance and support.

Regular monitoring and testing of all students ensure that staff are aware of SEND students' current levels of achievement and progress.

Role of the Head of Learning Development (SENDCO)

SEND arrangements are coordinated by the Head of Learning Development whose role includes:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy
- co-ordinating provision for students with SEND
- advising on the graduated response to SEND
- advising on the deployment of resources to meet students' needs effectively
- liaising with parents of students with SEND and with SEND students
- liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent and voluntary bodies
- being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- liaising with the Designated Teacher where a looked after student has SEND
- liaising with the potential next providers of education to ensure a student and their parents are informed about options, and a smooth transition is planned
- liaising with parents of students with SEND
- working with the Head Teacher of Thornton College and governors to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- ensuring that suitable examination and other assessment arrangements are made for students who have difficulties and that suitable resources are available
- ensuring that SEND records are kept up to date
- contributing to and promoting in-service training of staff both in-house and external
- carrying out observations and assessments of individual students to help support and provide for them
- liaising with and advising TAs/LSAs, managing these where appropriate, offering specialist advice and support so that they can apply targets and make provision for identified students
- co-ordinating 1:1 and group learning support, and where appropriate, delivering these
- tracking student's progress using IEPs and other records
- maintaining the school's SEND register
- Providing advice to the Senior Leadership Team on admissions.
- keeping the Head Teacher of Thornton College informed about provision, training needs, students' needs and changes to statutory requirements
- managing the Learning Support team of teaching assistants

Role of the Pre-Reception Practitioner (SENCO) and EYFS Lead

- To work with parents, carers and other professionals in gathering and sharing information in order to build positive partnerships ensuring students feel included, valued and supported.
- To implement systems for identifying, observing and supporting students in Early Years. To record and collate information for all students with SEND in the EYFS setting.
- To oversee the system of planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing of EHC assessments and plans.

- To identify at the 'Two Year Progress Check' any areas where the child's progress is less than expected or there is an identified special educational need or disability. To discuss with the child's parents and/or carer how to support the child.
- To ensure that parents are informed at all stages of assessment, planning, provision and review of their student's education and that their insights inform action taken by the setting.
- To ensure that the annual review of the Equality of Opportunities Policy is shared with parents and staff.
- To advise and support key people on the planning of additional support. To identify training needs for all members of staff, promoting inclusive practice.
- To liaise with providers and professionals involved with students with special educational needs/disabilities and their families, including transfer arrangements to other settings and schools.
- To liaise with the Head of Learning Support about children identified as having SEND who are progressing into Reception/Year 1 at Thornton College
- To regularly attend termly local SEND Network Group meetings. To disseminate and share information and advice to all staff.
- To seek information, advice and training from the Early Years and Childcare improvement Team. To regularly attend termly EYFS Network Group meetings and early Years SENCO Liaison Groups offered by the Local Authority. To disseminate and share information and advice to all staff.

Role of the Head of Sixth Form

To ensure students with additional needs/SEND can be supported at KS5 through:

- Ensuring access to KS curriculums through differentiated teaching
- Ensuring appropriate testing and support is put into place for each student with additional needs
- Ensuring the opportunity for both In-class and out of class support
- Access to vocational programmes at KS5 and the possibility of college links and work experience
- Access to on-line learning
- Advice about access to more detailed and specialist assessment
- Liaise with Head of Learning Development about any student support needs

Role of the teachers

- Teachers will provide high quality teaching, differentiated for individual students.
- Teachers are required to make regular assessments of progress for all students, identifying students making less than expected progress.
- Where a student is making less than satisfactory progress, teachers will, in conjunction with their Head of Department and the SENDCO, make a clear analysis of the student's needs taking into account the student's and parent's views and , if relevant, advice from external agencies.
- Teachers will direct the support from learning support assistants.
- Teachers will liaise with parents of identified students.
- Where a student is identified as having SEND, teachers will continue to provide high quality teaching, differentiated for individual students and will keep records of progress whilst taking account of IEPs/IPPPs, SENDCO guidance and reviews.
- Teachers will contribute to the setting of specific targets for IEPs/IPPPs/EHCs and contribute to the assess, plan, do and review nature of any SEND targets set.
- The class or subject teacher should remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. Where the interventions involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they should still retain responsibility for the pupil.

- Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.
- The class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should revise the support in light of the pupil's progress and development, deciding on any changes to the support and outcomes in consultation with the parent and pupil.

Role of the Head Teacher of Thornton College

- To ensure that the Head of Learning Development has sufficient time to carry out both teaching and administrative roles
- To liaise with the Head of Learning Development regularly with regard to individual students, the effectiveness of current policy and practice and strategic decisions concerning SEND
- To discuss staff training needs with Head of Learning Development and arrange sharing of good practice.
- The headteacher and governing body or proprietor, working with the SENCO should establish a clear picture of the resources that are available to the school. They should consider their strategic approach to meeting SEN in the context of the total resources available, including any resources targeted at particular groups

Role of the governing body of Thornton College

The Governing Body's responsibilities to pupils with SEND include:

- Ensuring that provision of a high standard is made for SEND pupils
- Ensuring that SEND pupils are fully involved in school activities
- Having regard to the relevant legislation when carrying out these responsibilities
- Being fully involved in developing and subsequently reviewing SEND policy

Working with Parents

All staff will work in partnership with parents and carers, involving them in decision making and take into account their knowledge and wishes. The Head of Learning Support will discuss plans relating to SEND pupils and ensure parents are regularly informed using the schools' reporting systems and that information is easily accessible. Where a pupil is receiving SEN support, and has an IEP/IPPP, school will talk to parents at least termly to set clear outcomes and review progress towards them, discuss the activities and support that will help achieve them, and identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school. Wherever possible, meetings are aligned with the normal cycle of discussions with parents of all pupils.

Identification of students with Special Educational Needs

Thornton College operates a procedure of early identification, assessment and intervention for students who have SEND to ensure that students who have difficulties with learning receive the help they need as soon as possible with the resources available in school. The SEN Code of Practice updated 2017, sets out four broad areas of need that students fall into but 'the purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category.' Students may have

areas of needs in more than one area, alongside strengths which also need to be considered. Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEN and should not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having SEN.

Identifying those students who have special educational needs and/or requiring learning support is conducted from several possible inputs:

- Concerns are raised by parents/carers, teachers, external agencies or from the student's previous school regarding a student's level of progress or inclusion.
- Screening tests and initial assessments such as CATs, MIDYIS, Yellis results, or standardised reading and spelling and phonics tests indicate a gap in knowledge or level of skills
- Teacher assessments and whole school tracking of attainment outcomes show a lack of expected level of progress, and the child is not responding to steps taken by the class/subject teacher.
- Observation and /or assessment of the student indicates that the student has additional needs in one or more of the four broad areas of need: - Communication and interaction, Cognition and learning, Social, mental and emotional health, Sensory/Physical.
- Teaching staff can use the SEND referral form at any time should they have concerns about a student in their care.

Parents are encouraged to raise any concerns relating to their child's learning with the child's class teacher/subject teacher or form tutor. Concerns may also be raised with the Head of Learning Development who can be contacted directly.

SEND Register

The names of students who have been identified as having a special educational need or disability are entered into the school database - iSAMS Information for pupils on an IEP/IPPP is shared with parents and remains confidential. The register is updated on a termly basis and all changes updated on iSAMS

On iSAMS staff can find a summary of students' learning difficulties, to enable them to maintain and update their records. Coloured stars against the Pupil profiles flag up the stage of intervention. (Blue – Monitoring, Grey – specific in-class teaching strategies, Yellow – More Complex Needs).

A learning support student file is maintained on all those with an individual education plan, EHC plan or Individual pupil profile plan. This information is kept securely. Records may include assessments and reports both in and out of school, any conversations or meetings with parents and all correspondence or other relevant information.

All records will be maintained in a way that is confidential and secure, in accordance with current Data Protection Legislation

Support for students with SEND

A graduated response for learning difficulties and special educational needs is in place and support is targeted wherever it is most needed at any one time. When a student has been identified as having special educational needs, the curriculum and learning environment will be further adapted by the class/subject teacher to enable students to access the curriculum. These adaptations may include strategies suggested by the Head of Learning Development and/or external specialists. Students may also be provided with specialised resources (funded by parents) and/or some additional adult help in

some of their classes (from generalist Teaching Assistants) allocated from within the school current resources). Intervention activities/programmes may also be suggested and be put in place outside the classroom such as homework club for girls from years 5-11, 1:1 reading for at lunch time for prep students.

The school's provision is regularly reviewed by the Headteacher and the Bursar in line with the school's aims and what can be reasonably accommodated by the school and its finances. They will consider the number of pupils accessing learning support, their level of need, as well as the annual school budgetary limitations. If the school cannot provide the support needed to allow a pupil to benefit sufficiently from the educational opportunities offered as other pupils due to the above pressures, the school may have to recommend that the pupil find a more suitable institution to meet his/her needs. In some circumstances, the school may offer parents the opportunity to fund separately any additional support the pupil might need.

Students with a disability will be provided with reasonable adjustments (such as auxiliary aids and some in class support (parents may be asked to meet these costs) to overcome any disadvantage experienced in school and to increase their access to the curriculum.

Action relating to SEND support will follow a four-part cycle following the 'assess, plan, do and review' model. Decisions and actions are revisited, revised and refined in order to understand individual pupil's needs and what supports them to make the best progress.

Individual Education plans (IEPs) in the Junior School or Individual Pupil Profile Plans (IPPP's) in the Senior School are drawn up for students receiving a higher level of SEND support. Students are central to all decision making and pupils (especially those in senior school) are encouraged to take an active role in drawing up personal targets, discussing useful strategies and learning aids and evaluating progress where possible. They are encouraged to actively identify what is important to them at each stage of education and to look ahead to the future.

Thornton College works in partnership with parents and targets are regularly discussed with parents by the class teacher and/or Head of Learning Development and IEP/IPPP targets are reviewed three times per year. A copy of all IEPs and IPPPs are kept on the school database.

Where a pupil continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence-based support and interventions that are matched to the pupil's area of need, the SENCO may advise involving specialists. Advice will be sought and funded by parents with the SENCO involvement from external agencies regarding strategies to best meet the specific needs of a student.

Advice from the SENCO may be given to parents to seek further support and guidance from Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Health and Social Services, Child and Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Special Educational Needs and Disability Support Services. Parents will have to pay for privately sourced advice and reports such as educational psychologist services.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

Thornton College embraces a whole school ethos that emphasises mental health and wellbeing with all pupils treating each other with understanding and respect in a supportive and nurturing environment. As part of our Emotional Wellbeing programme for all students, we have wellbeing coaching working alongside our pastoral team, offering a confidential 1-1 service which consists of a series of around 6 sessions. Thornton College also fosters a caring ethos in line with our Roman Catholic Faith where everyone understands the importance of a positive approach to all behaviour in a nurturing

environment. This includes: mutual trust and respect between all adults and children, Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) curriculum in class, regular review of the school's Behaviour Policy, teacher led discussions regarding emotions, worries, feelings, class teachers adapting approaches within class to support a child's needs, peer support and extra communication with Parents/ Carers through times of increased need for the child. The school also has a designated student medical and wellbeing officer. Concerns from staff about a student's emotional wellbeing are communicated to the relevant Head of Year and / or DSL who will talk with parents and students about the support that is available. The Deputy Head in charge of Safeguarding (and DSL) oversees all SEMH needs and liaises with the SENCO and has clear processes to support students.

Examination Access Arrangements

Some students will be able to access support and/or adjustments for formal exams such as GCSEs and 'A' levels through applying for Exam Access Arrangements from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). Access assessments and arrangements will be carried out by the Head of Learning Development (SENCO), who holds the appropriate and approved qualification and attends annual update training.

Evidence of need is collected and collated throughout KS3, 4 and 5, with formal testing and submission of an application early in KS4 (no sooner than Trinity Term in year 9) and in KS5 once evidence of need has been demonstrated. For students continuing into KS5, evidence of continued need will be gathered before an application is made. The Head of Learning Support adheres to the time scales set out by JCQ for any applications made. Students, staff and parents are notified of any outcomes.

Students can be referred for SEND support or exam access arrangements by teaching staff for consideration by the SEND department using the SEND referral form and/or teacher exam access arrangements evidence of normal way of working forms. Parents and students can also contact the SENCO with concerns. The SENCO regularly consults with staff about needs.

Evaluating the success of the SEND Policy

Thornton College adopts the assess, plan, do and review approach to ensure that the school is successfully meeting the needs of SEND pupils and parents as well as providing suitable training and support to staff.

Pupil progress is one of the ways of providing evidence for the success of the SEND policy and this will be analysed carefully through:

- Consideration of each pupil's success in meeting targets when reviewed.
- Use of standardised tests.
- School tracking systems.

Parental, student, governor and teacher feedback are also welcomed so that this policy can reflect the needs of all its stakeholders

SEND Policy Review

The school considers the SEND Policy document to be important and, in conjunction with the Governing Body, undertakes a thorough review of both policy and practice as identified in the School Development Plan.

Legal Requirements & Education Standards,
References:

- A: Handbook for the Inspection of Schools – The Regulatory Requirements, Section B, Part 3 (www.isi.net)
- B: Common Social Care Inspection Framework (www.gov.uk)
- C: Health and Safety at Work” Section H of the ISBA Model Staff Handbook,
- D: “Health and Safety and Welfare at Work” Chapter N of the ISBA Bursar’s Guide
- E: “Insurance” Chapter K of the ISBA Bursar’s Guide
- F: Health and Safety Executive, Supporting pupils with disabilities, special educational needs, and additional support needs (www.hse.gov.uk)
- G: "Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities" (www.gov.uk)
- H: Special Educational Needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE 2014 updated 2020)