Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

for ACT and the following Academies:

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
St Helen's Catholic Primary School
Holy Family Catholic Primary School
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
St George's Catholic Primary School
Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School
St Thomas More High School

This Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy has been approved and adopted by the Assisi Catholic Trust in Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School. This policy will be reviewed in Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School.

Committee Responsible: Local Governing Committee

Assisi Catholic Trust Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire the children in our care and that our schools place Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church at the centre of all we do. We believe that every child has a right to educational excellence and we are committed in partnership to ensure this happens.

Motto

'Start doing what is necessary, then do what's possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible'

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Assisi Catholic Trust
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy 2026-27

1. Introduction

At Assisi Catholic Trust, we provide the children in our care with the best possible education within a caring and supportive Catholic ethos. We will support the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development of each child, as well as maximising progress, achievement and attainment to ensure their intellectual growth and to fulfil their potential. We are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment where all pupils belong, feel valued, respected and supported to achieve their full potential, regardless of ability, disability, background or starting point.

The Trust recognises that Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are an integral part of our wider commitment to inclusion, equality and social justice. We believe that high-quality teaching, combined with effective leadership, collaborative partnerships and evidence-informed practice, enables all pupils to access learning, participate fully in school life and achieve positive outcomes.

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015), schools within the Trust identify and support pupils across the four broad areas of need: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health needs; and sensory and/or physical needs. While these categories help us to understand and plan provision, we recognise that every child is an individual whose strengths, aspirations and needs must be understood holistically.

The Trust is committed to working in partnership with parents, carers, local authorities, health services, social care professionals and other agencies to ensure that support is coordinated, responsive and centred on the needs of the child or young person. Through this collaborative approach, we aim to remove barriers to learning and participation, promote independence and preparation for adulthood, and ensure that all pupils are able to thrive within their school community and beyond.

This policy provides the strategic framework for SEND and inclusion across the Trust and reflects current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice. Further information regarding each school's individual arrangements for SEND can be found within the school's SEND Information Report, which is published annually on its website.

2. Statement of Intent

Assisi Catholic Trust is committed to ensuring that all children and young people, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, receive a high-quality education that enables them to achieve their best, develop confidence and resilience, and prepare successfully for adulthood.

We have high aspirations for every pupil and believe that SEND should never be a barrier to achievement, participation, belonging or future opportunity. We are committed to developing inclusive schools where diversity is celebrated and where pupils with SEND are valued as equal members of the community.

We recognise that the most effective support begins with understanding the child or young person as an individual. Our approach places pupils and their families at the centre of decision-making and promotes meaningful participation in discussions about support, provision and future aspirations. We believe that parents and carers are key partners in education and that successful outcomes are achieved through open communication, mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Our schools are committed to identifying needs at the earliest possible stage and providing timely support through a graduated approach. This approach ensures that provision is responsive, evidence-informed and focused on improving outcomes rather than simply delivering interventions.

We are equally committed to promoting equality of opportunity and fulfilling our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Through reasonable adjustments, accessible learning environments and inclusive practice, we seek to eliminate discrimination and ensure that disabled pupils are able to participate fully in all aspects of school life.

3. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation, including, but not limited to:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as incorporated into subsequent equality legislation)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Health and Care Act 2022
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Children and Families Act 2014 (Consequential Amendments) Order 2014

Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance

This policy has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to:

- Department for Education and Department of Health (2015), **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years**
- Department for Education (2015), **Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions**
- HM Government (2023), **Working Together to Safeguard Children**
- Department for Education (2026), **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026** (effective from 1 September 2026)
- Department for Education (2026), **Working Together to Improve School Attendance**
- Department for Education (2026), **Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, including Pupil Movement**
- Department for Education (2021), **School Admissions Code**
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2015), **Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils**
- Department for Education (2023), **SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time**
- Department for Education (2024 onwards), guidance relating to the **National Professional Qualification for SENCOs (NPQ for SENCOs)**

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Accessibility Policy

Trust schools will meet all statutory requirements relating to SEND and inclusion and will ensure that practice reflects both legal duties and national expectations regarding inclusive education.

4. Vision for Inclusion

The Trust's vision is to create schools where every child feels safe, welcomed, respected and able to succeed. Inclusion is not viewed as a separate initiative but as an integral part of school improvement, curriculum development and pastoral care.

We believe that effective inclusion is characterised by ambitious expectations, strong relationships, high-quality teaching and a culture of belonging. Pupils with SEND should be visible participants in all aspects of school life and should have equitable access to educational opportunities, enrichment activities, leadership roles and wider experiences.

We are committed to ensuring that pupils with SEND are not defined by their needs but are recognised for their strengths, aspirations and contributions to the school community. Success will be measured not only through academic outcomes but also through attendance, wellbeing, participation, independence and preparation for future life.

This policy also reflects the principles and expectations set out in the Department for Education's **Every Child Achieving and Thriving (2026), the SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People First** consultation (2026). The Trust is committed to promoting inclusive education, early intervention, effective partnership working and high aspirations so that every child and young person can achieve, belong and thrive.

5. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that pupils with SEND receive high-quality support that enables them to achieve positive outcomes and make progress from their individual starting points.

The Trust aims to ensure that all pupils with SEND can access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum; participate fully in school life; develop independence and resilience; and prepare successfully for adulthood. We will foster a culture of high expectations, strengthen staff expertise through ongoing professional development and work collaboratively with parents, carers and external professionals to secure the best possible outcomes for every child.

We are committed to ensuring that provision is evidence-informed, regularly reviewed and focused on improving educational achievement, social development, emotional wellbeing and future aspirations.

6. Current Context and Future Reforms

The Children and Families Act 2014 strengthened the rights of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and placed a duty on schools to ensure they are included and supported to achieve the best possible outcomes. Schools must use their best endeavours to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, work in partnership with parents and carers, and involve children and young people in decisions about their support.

Children with SEND have the right to be considered fairly for admission to a mainstream school, and schools must not refuse admission because a child has SEND or does not have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. We are committed to working closely with families, consulting with parents throughout their child's education, and ensuring that support is planned, reviewed and adapted in partnership with those who know the child best.

The Government is proposing changes to the SEND system, but at present there are no changes to the legal duties placed on schools or the support that children and young people with SEND are entitled to receive. Any national reforms will be introduced gradually over the coming years, and existing SEND provision, Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans, and statutory rights will remain in place unless and until new legislation is implemented. We will continue to provide support in line with current SEND legislation and guidance, and we will keep parents informed of any significant changes that may affect their child or the support available.

Our school is committed to providing an inclusive environment where all pupils can achieve their full potential.

The new Inclusion Mainstream Fund (IMF) provides additional support for children and young people with high levels of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who require provision that is additional to or different from that ordinarily available within the school's resources.

Through our new inclusion strategy (which has to be published annually from 31st December 2026), we identify needs early, work collaboratively with parents, pupils and external professionals, and implement targeted interventions and reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning. The use of IMF funding enables us to provide personalised support, specialist resources, and enhanced staff expertise to ensure that pupils with SEND can access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum alongside their peers and fully participate in school life.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies have strategic responsibility for ensuring that the Trust fulfils its statutory duties relating to SEND and inclusion. They are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of SEND provision, ensuring appropriate accountability arrangements and promoting a culture of inclusion across all schools.

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that SEND and inclusion remain central to school improvement priorities. They must promote high aspirations for pupils with SEND, ensure that staff have access to appropriate training and establish systems that support effective identification, provision and monitoring.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) provides strategic leadership for SEND within the school and coordinates the day-to-day implementation of this policy. The SENDCo works closely with pupils, parents, staff, governors and external agencies to ensure that provision is effectively planned, implemented and reviewed.

All teachers are teachers of pupils with SEND and are accountable for the progress and development of all learners within their classrooms. Teachers are responsible for identifying potential barriers to learning, adapting teaching appropriately and contributing to the graduated approach for pupils requiring additional support.

Key Contact	Role and Responsibilities
Mrs Gemma Ackred	Assisi Catholic Trust Catholic Senior Executive Lead
Mrs Heather Westrop	Assisi Catholic Trust Head of SEND and Inclusion
Mrs Melanie Smith	Headteacher - Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Mrs Carly McMeekin	SENCO - Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Mrs Sally Nutman	Headteacher - Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
Mrs Louise Norris	SENCO - Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
Mr Paul Parascandolo	Headteacher - Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School
Mrs Rachael Marlow	SENCO - Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School
Mr Chris Beazley	Headteacher - Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Mrs Kerri White	SENCO - Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Mrs Annabelle Delgado	Headteacher - St George's Catholic Primary School
Mrs Christine Wallen	SENCO - St George's Catholic Primary School
Miss Liz Keeble	Headteacher - St Helen's Catholic Primary School
Mrs Heather Westrop	SENCO - St Helen's Catholic Primary School
Mr James Green	Headteacher - St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Mrs Sue Chisholm	SENCO - St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Miss Jo Hickey	Headteacher - St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
Mrs Anabelle Hollingsworth	SENCO - St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
Mrs Gemma Ackred	Headteacher - St Thomas More Catholic High School
Miss Vicky Rattenbury	SENCO - - St Thomas More Catholic High School

8. Identification of SEND

The Trust recognises that early identification is critical to achieving positive long-term outcomes. Schools will monitor the progress, attainment, behaviour, attendance and wellbeing of all pupils to identify emerging needs as early as possible.

Identification of SEND will be based on a range of evidence, including assessment information, observations, discussions with parents and pupils, professional advice and information from previous educational settings. Decisions will be informed by a thorough understanding of the child's needs rather than by diagnosis alone.

The Trust acknowledges that slow progress and low attainment do not automatically indicate SEND. Equally, some pupils with SEND may attain in line with or above age-related expectations whilst still requiring additional support due to barriers affecting their learning or participation.

9. Quality First Teaching and Universal Provision

High-quality teaching is the first and most important step in responding to pupils who have, or may have, SEND. Every teacher is expected to provide adaptive teaching that enables pupils to access an ambitious curriculum and achieve success.

Universal provision includes careful curriculum planning, adaptive teaching strategies, explicit instruction, modelling, scaffolding, visual supports, effective questioning, opportunities for overlearning, and responsive approaches to behaviour and wellbeing. Reasonable adjustments are embedded into daily practice so that barriers to learning are minimised and participation is maximised.

Southend Universal Offer:
https://padlet.com/specialistteachingteam/southend-city-inclusion-ideas-and-inspiration-cbow1gcprlnux121/wish/XGyBQb1qDdr2aL6K

Essex Ordinarily Available:
https://schools.essex.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/send-services-and-support/send-advice-and-2#

The Trust expects inclusive classroom practice to be a consistent feature of effective teaching. This includes the creation of calm, predictable and supportive learning environments that promote confidence, independence and a sense of belonging.

10. SEND Support and the Graduated Approach

Where a pupil is identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Assisi Catholic Trust schools will provide support through a graduated approach that is tailored to the individual needs of the child or young person. This process recognises that pupils may require varying levels of support and that provision should be responsive to changing needs and circumstances over time.

The graduated approach follows the cycle of Assess, Plan, Do and Review. Schools will use a range of assessment information, professional observations, discussions with parents and pupil voice to develop a clear understanding of strengths, needs and barriers to learning. Outcomes will be agreed collaboratively with parents, carers and, wherever possible, the pupil, ensuring that support is purposeful, measurable and focused on improving educational, social and emotional outcomes.

Teachers remain responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class, including where interventions are delivered by teaching assistants or specialist staff. The SENDCo will provide advice, guidance and oversight to ensure support is coordinated effectively and is having a positive impact.

Support will be reviewed regularly to evaluate effectiveness and determine whether adjustments are required. Where pupils continue to experience significant barriers despite targeted support, schools may seek additional advice from external specialists or consider requesting an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment.

The Trust recognises that SEND support should never be viewed as a fixed programme of interventions but as a dynamic and responsive process that evolves as a child's needs develop. The primary aim is always to promote independence, confidence and meaningful participation in learning and school life.

11. Referrals to External Agencies and Specialist Services

Assisi Catholic Trust schools recognise the value of collaborative working with a range of education, health and social care professionals to ensure that children and young people receive the right support at the right time. Where a pupil requires additional assessment, specialist advice or support beyond that ordinarily available within school, referrals may be made to external agencies following discussion with parents and carers.

External professionals may include Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Specialist Teachers, School Nursing Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Social Care professionals and other commissioned services. Their involvement helps schools gain a deeper understanding of a pupil's strengths and difficulties and contributes to more effective planning and provision.

The Trust welcomes information provided through both statutory and independent assessment routes. Where parents choose to seek private assessments, schools will consider these reports alongside evidence gathered from school, home and other professionals. Decisions relating to SEND identification, provision and levels of support will always be based on a holistic assessment of need rather than on diagnosis alone.

Partnership with parents remains central throughout any referral or assessment process. Families will be kept informed, involved in decision-making and supported to understand the purpose and outcomes of any specialist involvement.

12. Admissions

Assisi Catholic Trust is committed to ensuring that admission arrangements promote equality, inclusion and access for all children and young people. Pupils with SEND are welcomed into our schools and are afforded the same opportunities as their peers to access a high-quality Catholic education.

Admissions procedures comply fully with the School Admissions Code, the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014. A pupil will not be refused admission because they have SEND, require additional support or are undergoing assessment for SEND.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan that names a particular school within the Trust, admission will be arranged in accordance with statutory requirements. Schools will work proactively with families, previous settings and external professionals to ensure that appropriate planning takes place prior to admission and that reasonable adjustments are made to support a successful transition.

The Trust believes that inclusive admissions practices are fundamental to ensuring that every child has access to educational opportunities that meet their needs and enable them to thrive.

13. Transition

Effective transitions are essential in promoting educational continuity, emotional wellbeing and positive outcomes for pupils with SEND. Assisi Catholic Trust schools recognise that periods of transition can be both exciting and challenging and are committed to ensuring that children and young people receive the support they need during these significant changes.

Transition planning begins early and is tailored to the needs of the individual pupil. This may include enhanced visits, transition booklets, photographs of staff and environments, social stories, personalised transition plans and opportunities for parents and pupils to meet key staff. Schools work collaboratively with families and receiving settings to share information and ensure continuity of support.

Particular consideration is given to pupils moving between educational phases, including transitions into Reception, transfer to secondary education and movement into post-16 provision. For pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans, annual reviews and transition meetings will support effective planning and preparation.

The Trust recognises that successful transitions contribute significantly to confidence, attendance, engagement and long-term achievement and will therefore prioritise transition planning as a key aspect of inclusive practice.

14. Partnership with Pupils and Parents

Assisi Catholic Trust believes that effective partnerships with pupils and parents are fundamental to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We recognise that parents hold valuable knowledge and understanding about their child and that children themselves are experts in their own experiences, strengths and aspirations.

Schools will ensure that parents and pupils are actively involved in discussions about needs, outcomes, provision and future planning. Communication will be open, respectful and accessible, enabling families to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes.

Pupils will be encouraged to share their views, wishes and feelings in ways that are appropriate to their age, stage of development and communication preferences. Staff will make reasonable adjustments where necessary to ensure that all pupils can contribute to discussions about their education and support.

The Trust is committed to adopting a person-centred approach in which planning focuses not only on needs and challenges but also on strengths, aspirations and future goals. This approach promotes self-advocacy, independence and a strong sense of belonging.

15. Funding for SEND Provision

The Trust receives funding to support pupils with SEND through delegated school budgets and additional resources made available by local authorities where appropriate. These resources are used strategically to provide inclusive teaching, specialist support, interventions, staff training, equipment and reasonable adjustments that enable pupils to access learning and participate fully in school life.

Funding decisions are informed by individual pupil needs and the effectiveness of provision rather than by diagnosis alone. Schools are committed to ensuring that resources are used efficiently, transparently and in ways that have the greatest impact on outcomes for children and young people.

Where a pupil's needs exceed the level of support that can reasonably be provided through delegated funding, schools may work with local authorities to access additional funding arrangements and specialist provision. The focus will always remain on ensuring that support is appropriate, evidence-informed and centred on the pupil's identified needs.

The Trust recognises that effective deployment of resources is a key element of inclusive practice and regularly evaluates provision to ensure that funding contributes positively to progress, wellbeing and participation.

16. Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments and Plans

For a small number of pupils, SEND support and targeted interventions may not be sufficient to meet their needs. In these circumstances, schools may work collaboratively with parents and the local authority to consider requesting an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment.

The purpose of an assessment is to determine whether additional provision is necessary to secure positive outcomes across education, health and social care. Schools will provide detailed evidence regarding the pupil's strengths, needs, progress, interventions and support that has already been implemented.

Where an Education, Health and Care Plan is issued, the Trust will ensure that provision is implemented effectively and that all staff working with the pupil understand their responsibilities in supporting the outcomes

described within the plan. The views of the child and family will remain central throughout the process.

The Trust views EHC Plans as tools for improving outcomes and supporting long-term aspirations rather than simply as mechanisms for accessing resources. The focus will always be on ensuring that provision leads to meaningful progress and successful participation in education and wider life.

17. Reviewing Education, Health and Care Plans

Assisi Catholic Trust schools are committed to ensuring that Education, Health and Care Plans remain accurate, relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the pupil. Formal reviews will be undertaken at least annually, although provision and progress will be monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Annual reviews will consider the pupil's progress towards agreed outcomes, the effectiveness of current provision and any changes required to support future development. Parents, pupils, school staff and relevant professionals will be invited to contribute to the review process, ensuring that decision-making reflects a shared understanding of the pupil's needs and aspirations.

The pupil's voice will remain central to the review process. Schools will use a range of approaches to gather views in ways that are accessible and meaningful, recognising that some pupils may require additional support to express their opinions and preferences.

Recommendations arising from annual reviews will be submitted to the local authority within required timescales. The Trust will work collaboratively with all agencies involved to ensure that educational provision continues to promote achievement, wellbeing and successful preparation for adulthood.

18. Preparing for Adulthood

The Trust recognises that preparation for adulthood is a key objective of SEND provision and should begin as early as possible. We are committed to supporting pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and independence required for successful adult lives.

Preparation for adulthood extends beyond employment and includes developing friendships, participating in community life, managing health and wellbeing, increasing independence and making informed decisions about the future. Schools will promote these skills throughout the curriculum and within wider school experiences.

Pupils with SEND will be encouraged to develop aspirations, identify personal strengths and explore opportunities for future education, training and employment. Careers education, enrichment activities and transition planning will be adapted where necessary to ensure accessibility and meaningful participation.

Through our inclusive approach, we aim to empower children and young people to become confident, resilient and active members of society who can fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to their communities.

19. Safeguarding

Assisi Catholic Trust recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may face additional vulnerabilities and barriers to recognising, reporting or escaping abuse. The Trust is committed to ensuring that all pupils feel safe, respected and listened to, and that safeguarding arrangements are responsive to the individual needs of pupils with SEND.

Schools within the Trust recognise that pupils with SEND may experience increased risks associated with bullying, exploitation, neglect, online harm, child-on-child abuse, mental health difficulties and social isolation. Staff will receive appropriate training to understand these additional vulnerabilities and to ensure that concerns are recognised and acted upon promptly.

The SENDCo will work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), pastoral teams and external agencies to ensure that safeguarding concerns are identified early and that support is coordinated effectively. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that pupils with SEND have opportunities to express their views,

wishes and feelings in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that the voice of the child remains central to all safeguarding processes. Where communication difficulties exist, schools will seek specialist advice and use appropriate communication methods to ensure that pupils are able to participate fully in decisions affecting their welfare. Safeguarding education, including online safety, healthy relationships and personal safety, will be delivered through a curriculum that is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

20. Attendance and Engagement

Assisi Catholic Trust believes that regular school attendance is fundamental to achievement, wellbeing, social development and future success. We are committed to promoting excellent attendance for all pupils and recognise that some children and young people with SEND may experience additional barriers to attending school regularly.

In line with a supportive and inclusive approach, schools will seek to understand the reasons behind attendance concerns and work collaboratively with pupils, families and external agencies to identify solutions. Attendance difficulties may arise from a range of factors including anxiety, medical needs, sensory differences, communication challenges, emotional wellbeing needs or difficulties associated with transitions and change.

Schools will monitor attendance carefully and respond promptly where concerns emerge. Support plans may include reasonable adjustments, therapeutic support, pastoral intervention, graduated reintegration programmes or collaborative working with health and local authority services.

Rather than focusing solely on attendance percentages, schools will seek to understand the individual circumstances affecting attendance and implement strategies that promote belonging, engagement and participation. Our aim is always to ensure that pupils with SEND feel safe, successful and connected to their school community.

21. SEND, Behaviour, Suspensions and Exclusions

Assisi Catholic Trust is committed to maintaining safe, calm and respectful learning environments while recognising that behaviour is often a form of communication. We believe that understanding the underlying causes of behaviour is essential when supporting pupils with SEND.

Schools will adopt a relational and inclusive approach to behaviour, promoting positive relationships, self-regulation, emotional wellbeing and restorative practice. Staff will seek to understand the function of behaviour and consider whether difficulties may be linked to unmet needs, disabilities, communication barriers, mental health needs or wider safeguarding concerns.

Before any decision is made regarding suspension or permanent exclusion, schools will carefully consider whether appropriate support, interventions and reasonable adjustments have been implemented. Leaders will review available evidence, consult with relevant professionals and involve parents wherever possible to ensure that decisions are fair, proportionate and lawful.

The Trust recognises that pupils with SEND are nationally overrepresented in suspension and exclusion data. Leaders and governors will monitor patterns and trends to ensure that pupils with SEND are not disadvantaged and that inclusive practice remains at the heart of school improvement. Permanent exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and in accordance with statutory guidance.

22. Complaints and Dispute Resolution

Assisi Catholic Trust values positive relationships with parents and carers and recognises the importance of effective communication in resolving concerns at an early stage. We are committed to working collaboratively with families and external partners to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Where concerns arise regarding SEND provision, schools will seek to resolve issues informally through discussion with class teachers, the SENDCo or senior leaders. Open and constructive dialogue is encouraged so that concerns

can be understood and addressed promptly.

Where informal resolution is not possible, parents may access the school's formal complaints procedures. Schools will ensure that complaints are managed fairly, transparently and sensitively, with a focus on maintaining positive relationships wherever possible.

The Trust recognises the rights of parents and young people to access mediation, disagreement resolution services and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal where appropriate. Schools will cooperate fully with local authorities and legal processes and will provide relevant information within required timescales.

23. Staff Training, Professional Development and Continuous Improvement

The quality of teaching remains the single most important factor in improving outcomes for pupils with SEND. Assisi Catholic Trust is committed to ensuring that all staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence required to deliver high-quality inclusive practice.

Professional development will be informed by school priorities, pupil needs, emerging research and national developments in SEND and inclusion. Training may include adaptive teaching, autism, speech and language development, social and emotional mental health, sensory needs, trauma-informed practice, behaviour support, assistive technology and safeguarding.

The SENDCo plays a key role in supporting professional learning across the school and will work collaboratively with leaders to identify development needs and disseminate effective practice. Staff will be encouraged to reflect on the impact of their practice and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.

In line with Ofsted expectations, schools will focus not simply on training activity but on the impact that professional development has on classroom practice, curriculum access, pupil participation and outcomes.

24. Data, Assessment and Record Keeping

Assisi Catholic Trust is committed to using assessment and information intelligently to improve outcomes for pupils with SEND. Schools will maintain accurate, secure and up-to-date records that support effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of provision.

Assessment systems will be used to monitor attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour, participation and wellbeing. This information will help schools identify emerging needs, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and ensure that provision remains responsive to individual circumstances.

Records relating to SEND support will include information regarding strengths, needs, agreed outcomes, support strategies, professional involvement and reviews of progress. These records will contribute to a clear understanding of the pupil's educational journey and provide evidence of the graduated approach.

The Trust recognises that data should support professional judgement rather than replace it. Leaders will therefore consider quantitative and qualitative information, including pupil voice and parental feedback, when evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision.

All records will be maintained in accordance with data protection legislation and school policies relating to confidentiality and information governance.

25. Accountability, Monitoring, Evaluation and Publication of Information

The Trust is committed to ensuring that SEND provision is regularly monitored, evaluated and improved. Leaders, governors and trustees will consider a range of evidence when evaluating effectiveness, including pupil outcomes, attendance, behaviour, participation, parental views, pupil voice and external review findings.

The quality of SEND provision will form part of wider school self-evaluation and improvement planning. Schools will consider not only academic progress but also wider indicators of success such as confidence, independence,

wellbeing, engagement and preparation for adulthood.

In line with statutory requirements, each school will publish and annually review its SEND Information Report. This report will provide clear information about the school's approach to SEND, available provision, support processes and arrangements for involving pupils and parents in decision-making.

Information published by schools will be accessible, transparent and responsive to the needs of families and stakeholders. The Trust is committed to ensuring that parents can easily access information and understand how support is delivered.

Assisi Catholic Trust Schools SEND Information Reports can be found on the individual school websites:

Holy Family Catholic Primary School – Essex County Council
www.holyfamily.essex.sch.uk

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School - Southend-on-Sea City Council
www.olol.co.uk

Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School – Essex County Council
www.olorcps.net

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School - Southend-on-Sea City Council
www.shcps.co.uk

St George's Catholic Primary School - Southend-on-Sea City Council
www.sgcps.co.uk

St Helen's Catholic Primary School - Southend-on-Sea City Council
www.st-helens.southend.sch.uk

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School – Essex County Council
www.stjosephscanvey.net

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School – Essex County Council
www.strcs.net

St Thomas More High School – Southend-on-Sea City Council
www.st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk

26. Joint Commissioning and Multi-Agency Working

Effective outcomes for children and young people with SEND are achieved through partnership and shared responsibility. Assisi Catholic Trust is committed to working collaboratively with education, health and social care services to ensure that support is coordinated and responsive to individual needs.

Schools recognise that many pupils benefit from involvement from multiple professionals and services. Strong communication, clear planning and shared accountability are essential in ensuring that support is effective and centred on the child or young person.

The Trust will contribute to joint planning arrangements with local authorities and partner agencies where appropriate. Schools will participate in professional meetings, reviews and consultations and will share information responsibly to support coordinated approaches to provision.

Through effective multi-agency working, schools aim to improve educational outcomes, reduce barriers to learning, promote wellbeing and strengthen preparation for adulthood.

27. Local Offer, SENDIASS and Partnership with Families

Assisi Catholic Trust is committed to ensuring that families have access to accurate, accessible and timely information about SEND services and support. Schools will actively signpost parents and carers to local authority services, voluntary organisations and independent advice services that may assist them in supporting their child.

Schools will work closely with local authorities in supporting and contributing to the development of Local Offers. The Local Offer provides information regarding education, health and social care provision available for children and young people with SEND from birth to adulthood and supports families in understanding the services available within their local area.

Essex Local Offer
Essex County Council: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) | Essex Local Offer

Southend-on-Sea Local Offer
Local Offer - (SEND) – Southend-on-Sea City Council

Families will also be signposted to their local Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). These services provide impartial, confidential and independent information, advice and support to parents, carers, children and young people regarding SEND processes, provision, education, health and care plans, and dispute resolution.

Essex SENDIASS Service
Essex SEND - Information, Advice and Support Service (essexsendiass.co.uk)

Southend-on-Sea SENDIASS Service
Support and Advice for Families from SENDIASS Southend

The Trust recognises that effective partnerships with families are a cornerstone of successful inclusion. We are committed to ensuring that parents and carers feel informed, valued and empowered throughout their child's educational journey and that they are treated as equal partners in planning and reviewing support.

28. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by Assisi Catholic Trust in collaboration with Local Governing Bodies, Headteachers, SENDCos, staff and other relevant stakeholders. Reviews will consider changes in legislation, statutory guidance, inspection frameworks, local need and emerging best practice.

The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated through ongoing monitoring of pupil outcomes, attendance, participation, wellbeing, stakeholder feedback and school improvement activity. Any amendments will be communicated to staff, governors, parents and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Through this policy, Assisi Catholic Trust reaffirms its commitment to fostering an inclusive culture where all children and young people, particularly those with SEND, experience a genuine sense of belonging, achieve positive outcomes and are prepared successfully for adulthood and life beyond school.

Trust Policy Template Disclaimer

This document is a standard policy template produced by the Assisi Catholic Trust. All schools must personalise the sections highlighted for local context, including roles, responsibilities, procedures and operational details specific to their site. The Local Governing Committee is responsible for reviewing, adapting and formally adopting the final school version to ensure it reflects local practice while remaining aligned with Trust requirements and statutory guidance.