



Special Educational Needs Policy

Updated March 2012

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

SECTION 1

- 1) Definition of Special Educational Needs
- 2) The Aims of the School's SEN Policy
- 3) Culture and Ethos
- 4) Planning and Senior Leadership
- 5) Management of SEN within the School
- 6) Admission Arrangements
- 7) Curricular and Extra-Curricular Access and Entitlement
- 8) Reference to other Policies

1) Definition of special educational needs

As defined in the “1996 Order” a child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made. A **learning difficulty** means significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age or a disability, which makes it difficult for the child to use the same educational facilities as other children. **Special educational provision** is educational provision which is different from “or additional to” the provision generally made for children of a comparable age.

The seven main areas of special educational need or difficulty are:-

1. Cognitive and Learning;
2. Social, Emotional and Behavioural;
3. Communication and Interaction;
4. Sensory;
5. Physical;
6. Medical conditions/Syndromes;
7. Other.

2) Aims of the Special Educational Needs Policy

All staff and governors of the school will endeavour to meet the Special Educational Needs of all pupils. This will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that each child's individual difficulties are identified and assessed as early as possible so that relevant programmes are created to aid success in learning;
2. Ensuring that the parents and persons with parental responsibility are informed of their child's SEN provision, are made aware of the Special Educational Needs Advice and information Service (see appendix 1) and are encouraged to recognise the central role they play in the education of their children;
3. Enabling all pupils to be offered access to a broad, balanced, relevant and, where appropriate, differentiated curriculum and equal opportunities to achieve their full potential thus contributing to the development of their self-confidence, self-esteem and positive self-image;
4. Ensuring that pupils express their views and are fully involved in all decisions that affect their education and ultimately to create a situation where children can take their place within the class context both intellectually and socially;
5. Promoting effective partnerships with parents, governors and other outside agencies to ensure adequate provision for children with special educational needs;
6. Developing an appropriate system of assessment, record keeping and evaluation to monitor progress in keeping with the school's assessment policy;
7. Employing an appropriate range of resources in the most effective way;
8. Supporting the teacher's continuing professional development in SEN.

3) Culture and Ethos

- The school is committed to a school improvement agenda.
- The school is child-centred in terms of ethos and culture.
- Social deprivation or other barriers to learning are not seen as an excuse for further educational failure.
- High expectations are maintained for all children.
- The voice of the child is given high importance in terms of planning to meet needs, including establishing and reviewing Education Plans.
- The school is actively engaged in community development and supporting community learning needs.
- Parents are welcomed as partners in the planning and delivery of learning.
- The needs of the whole child are addressed rather than focusing only on measurable outcomes.
- Meaningful links are maintained with the local special school; this may include sharing of staff expertise and opportunities taken for joint training.

The management of Special Educational Needs within the school

The Role of the Governors

The Role of the board of Governors is to exercise its functions in relation to the school with a view to ensuring that provision is made for registered pupils with special educational needs.

The Board of Governors has an allocated governor who has responsibility for educational needs and inclusion.

This is currently:

Governors have a statutory duty to:

- Take account of the provisions in the DE Code of Practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs;
- Use their best endeavours to provide for pupils identified with SEN and that parents are notified of their child's special needs;
- Maintain and operate a policy on SEN;
- Ensure that where a registered pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them;
- Ensure that the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying those registered pupils with SEN and of providing appropriate teaching;
- Allocate funding for special educational needs and disability;
- Prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

It is recommended that the Governors take account of the specific guidance from Chapter 12 of the Handbook. The Board of Governors may establish a committee of its members to monitor the school's work for children with special educational needs.

Planning and Senior Leadership

- The school development plan consistently identifies areas for improvement in special educational needs (SEN) and inclusion. (See Appendix 2)
- School resources, including budget, are targeted at special educational needs and inclusion when appropriate.
- Good practice in SEN and inclusion is identified and disseminated in school as well as peripatetic and SEN adviser services.

Senior Leadership

- The principal is passionate about ensuring all children and young people have their needs identified and met.
- The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) makes regular contributions on the special educational needs and inclusion agenda.
- The whole staff takes responsibility for meeting the needs of all pupils in the school, regardless of the child's ability, SEN, disability, social background or home language.
- Continuing Professional Development is given a high priority for all staff in the school.
- The support staff is seen as an important part of the inclusion team and are included in the planning process, monitoring and evaluation.
- Data is used effectively to identify pupils in need of support and monitor their progress during intervention.
- Pupil needs are supported on the basis of individualised planning and support offered accordingly.
- A balance is maintained between supporting pupils through withdrawal and in-class support
- Time is taken for consultation with support services to ensure a unified approach is in place to meet individual pupil needs.

The Role of the Principal

The principal has responsibility to:

1. Manage with the special needs co-ordinator the provision for pupils with special needs.
2. Liaise closely with the Special Needs Co-ordinator.
3. Liaising and consultation with SENCO regarding referral and annual assessment forms.
4. Providing support and advice for SENCO where necessary.
5. Attending relevant SEN/principal courses.

The Role of the SENCO

Whilst the Code (1998) is not a legal document, schools and boards must have 'regard' to it. It provides schools with a structured framework in which to operate in the identification and assessment of those children who present with SEN (Education (NI) Order (1996) Article 4(2) and Code (1998), p1).

In all mainstream schools a designated teacher should be responsible for:

- The day to day operation of the school's special educational needs policy;
- Responding to requests for advice from other teachers;
- Report to Governors regarding provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- Co-ordinate SEN provision including in secondary school and pre-schools ensuring appropriate liaison with the various teachers who will teach any given child with special educational needs;
- Provide a time-table for submission and review of EPs to all staff; (Appendix 8)
- Maintain a SEN register with records on pupils with special educational needs;
- Complete paperwork for referrals on EP3/EP4/LA1 forms;
- Liaison with parents of children with special educational needs especially when a referral process is to be initiated;
- Establishing the SEN in-service training requirements of the staff and contributing as appropriate to their training;
- Liaison with external agencies (DENI 1998, p7);
- Maintain a reflective view of their role; (Appendix 3)

The Role of the Support Teacher

The support teacher currently provides learning support for 3 hours every Monday and supports 3 categories of children:-

1. Early intervention- pre-register children as well as stage 1 and 2 children,
2. Providing support for children who have been discharged from peripatetic service/no longer need their statement,
3. Extra support for children waiting psychologist/peripatetic assessment.

The support teacher has the responsibility to:

1. Provide withdrawal support for pupils from the above mentioned categories,
 1. Co-ordinate with the class teacher to draw up a target for educational plans which will be completed in support time,
 2. Provide and draw up a support plan including resources and child/parental contributions when appropriate, to compliment and work alongside current educational plan. (See Appendix 4)
 3. Review child's progress and communicate with class teacher for further planning,
 4. Co-ordinate and communicate with the SENCO.

The Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher has responsibility to ensure that:

- Teacher planning takes account of the individual pupil strengths and areas for development.
- Consideration is given to a personalised learning agenda for pupils.
- Where a pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education psychology report the objectives are taken into account to inform teacher planning.
- The teacher collaborates with the SENCo and classroom assistant to ensure that they have sufficient professional knowledge to meet the needs of pupils in his/her class.
- The teacher accepts equal responsibility for their professional development in SEN. Where training is required advice can be sought from the SENCo; a range of ELB courses are available; (see the ELB website); and on-line courses are available for professional development through Learning NI, C2K at no cost.
- The teacher collaborates effectively with the SENCo in establishing, monitoring and reviewing the EP.
- The EP contains SMART targets that provide sufficient challenge appropriate to the ability of the child.
- Learning and teaching is carefully differentiated to ensure that the curriculum is appropriate for individual pupil needs.
- The teacher uses data to monitor and inform future planning for pupils.
- The teacher and classroom assistant work in partnership with a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities.
- The teacher has detailed records and knowledge of the pupil for meaningful parent-teacher consultation.

[The Role of the Classroom Assistant](#)

At all times classroom assistants are to 'work under the direction of and in partnership with the teacher'

The classroom assistant has responsibility to:

- Assist the teacher to develop the independence of the child;
- Be included as part of whole school professional development activities when appropriate;
- Develop specialised expertise to meet the individual needs of the children with whom they work;
- Contribute to a clear understanding of their own role amongst other staff;
- Be actively involved in the appraisal of their work;
- Establish a clear role within promotion of the child's development moving the child towards independence and adult life;
- Contribute to the promotion of the inclusive ethos of the school;
- Promote the self-esteem and emotional well-being of the child;
- Understand the significance of their role and contributing to the overall social, emotional, learning and pastoral development of the children within the school'
- Contribute to the planning, preparation and, where appropriate, facilitation of learning;
- Contribute, in partnership with school staff, to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of progress of the children within their care;
- Contribute to the on-going review processes of the child including working alongside others in the school with outside agencies;
- Work as part of the school team to promote effective relationships with parents.

[Admissions Arrangements](#)

The admission arrangements with respect to the majority of pupils with special educational needs are consistent with the school's general arrangements for all other pupils.

SENDO became operative in Northern Ireland on 1st September 2005. The implications of this order are that:

- It strengthens the right of children with special educational needs to be educated in Mainstream schools and
- It introduces Disability Discrimination Legislation. Children with a statement of special educational needs are placed in school at the request of the Southern Education and Library Board. When seeking to place a pupil with a statement, the Board will take into account:
 1. The wishes of the child's parents;
 2. The ability of the school to meet the child's special educational needs;
 3. The provision of efficient education for other children in the class or school and
 4. The efficient use of resources.

[Curricular and Extra-Curricular Access and Entitlement](#)

As a school we ensure that each child is entitled to participate in all the school offers including extra curricular activities, clubs, school trips, social outings and physical activities for all pupils.

[Reference to other Policies](#)

The following policies are also relevant and in line with SENDO documentation:

- Admissions
- Positive Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Pastoral Care
- Child Protection

SECTION 2

- 1) Identification, Assessment, Review
- 2) Intervention Strategies
- 3) Allocation of Resources
- 4) Evaluation of SEN Provision
- 5) Procedures for Considering Concerns

Identification, Assessment and Review

As a school we are aware that early identification of children with special needs is very important, but also recognise the importance of maturation in a child's development. We liaise with previous schools and settings, take into account any concern expressed by parents or others who know the child, and consider those who have a statement of Special Educational Needs on arrival in school.

Children who have special educational needs will be identified as early as possible. Each teacher alongside the SENCO/ Principal (if required) will be responsible for identification within their own class. The class teacher will employ both formal and informal methods of assessment to identify children, recording and gathering information as evidence. This is to be kept in the class SEN file. Classification of bands are as follows:

- Average band – 95 – 110;
- Above average – 110 – 120;
- 120+ - Well above average and should be considered for 'gifted' register if classroom assessment and observation supports the score and parental consent is granted.

It should be noted that children with standardised scores of **86-95** are in a closely monitored category and children of scores **85 and below** are to be added to the register if classroom assessment and observation supports the score and parental consent is granted. If parental consent is not granted parents will be asked to put their wishes of non-compliance in writing for school records.

Children who are taught in the Primary 1 class will take part in baseline testing at the beginning of the year and will be continuously monitored to ensure progression.

If a concern for a child's progress is expressed necessary advice and support is to be accessed through SENCO.

Where concerns still exist, parental support, classroom observation and informal teacher support should be initiated. Children can also at this stage, where appropriate, access learning support teaching. This involves a 20 minute teaching time per week as an individual or in groups of 2. (see appendix 5)

It should also be noted that in some cases where there is developmental delay, specific difficulties, speech and/or language problems, behaviour or medical difficulties, it may be necessary to formulate Education Plans at this early stage.

Children will be identified as having special educational needs using a combination of some or all of the following;

Standardised assessment,
Formal and informal class observation,
Screening,
Diagnostic testing and
Consultation with SENCO/Principal/outside agencies.

Those with learning delays or specific learning difficulties may also receive individual help in a group setting based on programmes devised specifically for them with the learning support teacher.

At this stage, the class teacher in co-ordination with The SENCO and/or support teacher will formulate an appropriate Educational Plan.

Throughout all year groups liaison between class teachers and the support teachers is ongoing as in consultation to compile and review Education Plans. Our special educational provision adopts a staged approach consistent with the Code of Practice.

Stage 1

Pupils who have been identified as having special

educational needs will in the first instance receive special help within the normal classroom setting. An Action Plan should be drawn up by the Class Teacher and SENCO who will advise and support as required. The child's name would be placed on the SEN Register and would remain there until all support has ended.

Stage 2

If review of this provision indicates that the child continues to have difficulties, an Education Plan should be drawn up by the teacher in co-operation with the SENCO and implemented for a pre-determined period both in class and in a Learning Support withdrawal group when appropriate

Stage 3

If review at Stage 2 indicates that provision is not addressing the child's need, the school by agreement with parents, may ask for help and assessment from services outside the school such as the Educational Psychology Service or other support agency. A referral to any outside agency will be completed by the SENCO. A revised Education Plan will be drawn up with the co-operation of the external specialists and implemented for a pre-determined period.

Stage 4

If strategies employed at Stage 3 have not been sufficient to meet the child's needs and assessment by the Educational Psychologist supports this, the school, by agreement with parents, may ask the Board to make a statutory assessment.

Stage 5

If, having considered the advice received from a statutory assessment, the Board is satisfied that the child's needs cannot be reasonably met within the resources normally available to mainstream schools, it may make a statement of special educational needs and arrange, monitor and review appropriate provision.

All stages of provision feature a structure of targets, strategies and programmes of work to address identified needs, together with records of the provision and the outcomes of review. Parents are consulted at each stage, given copies of EPs and their reviews and offered

opportunities to discuss these. Major emphasis is placed on the importance of parental support for their children's learning.

Statements of special educational need are reviewed annually in consultation with parents, the Board and other relevant agencies.

[Intervention Strategies](#)

As far as possible, Special Education provision is made in normal classroom settings where children will experience learning across the breadth of the curriculum in whole class groups, ability groups, mixed ability groups and through individual teaching.

Some provision may take the form of additional teacher support in the mainstream classroom.

Withdrawal of pupils from mainstream classes for special tuition takes the form of

- Peripatetic Support provided by SELB
- Learning support from the special needs teacher
- Catch-up Maths

When this happens, support staff work closely with class teachers, following agreed programmes of work.

[Allocation of Resources](#)

Special Needs Resources are targeted at early intervention and support teacher payment. Resources are purchased on a class/child need basis with a view in the next few years to build up our Spld resources in line with the most recent action plan (see appendix 6) which includes capability training of staff and a focus on the area of Spld for improvement.

[Evaluation of SEN Provision](#)

The SENCO is responsible for writing and evaluating a yearly development plan which is disseminated to principal, staff and board of governors. The SENCO has also completed a self review using the quality indicator material from DENI Resource File- (see appendix 3)

As a staff we have used documentation from TOGETHER towards IMPROVEMENT to assess special needs provision and will revisit that documentation at the end of 2013/2014.(see appendix 7)

Feedback on pupil progress, samples of the pupils' work are kept in class SEN folder and individual pupil folders by the class teacher (where appropriate) and provide information on pupil progress.

The SENCO/class teacher also review any data from standardised testing of children from Primary Two- Primary Seven to track children's progress from year to year. Each child has a personal profile sheet completed which compiles these results from year to year.

(see Appendix 9)

As a school, the SENCO and Principal hope in the near future to avail of Assessment Manager Training in order be able to make this process more efficient.

[Procedures for Considering Concerns](#)

The school aims to establish good communication with parents recognising that we are on a journey with both parents and children in this process. There are parental interviews in October and February. The SENCO also holds interviews with any children who are due or have been through the referral process. The SENCO also holds interviews with any parents whose child is new on the register as well as any interviews with parents guided by teacher concern. Parents are given copies of the children's IEPs and reviews. Should any concerns arise, parents may speak with the principal or SENCO. Parents of children at Stage 5 are invited to attend the annual review.

Should any complaint or dispute arise the Board operates a SEN Advice and Information Service and a Dispute Avoidance Resolution Service in which parents may contact Mildred Morrison at the SELB.

SECTION 3

- 1) SEN Continuing Professional Development
- 2) Partnership with Parents
- 3) Pupil Participation
- 4) External Support
- 5) Future Developments
- 6) SEN Yearly Planner

The school is committed to the professional development of all staff in relation to Special Educational Needs. The SENCO co-ordinates training needs as they arise. The SENCO also attends any relevant training and attends SEN clusters which take place every term. We also access training from the peripatetic service/advisor services when required.

Partnership with Parents

We value the knowledge, experience and views of parents and seek to establish a partnership with them in making appropriate provision for all SEN pupils.

Time is allocated every term should parents wish to discuss their children's progress or seek advice. This is done through Parental Interviews with the class teacher. **Please note that an extra 5 minutes are added to the normal time allocation during these interviews for SEN pupils in terms 1 and 2 as well as a separate interview provided in term 3.** These meetings are of an informative and advisory nature. The SENCO also has contact with parents whose child is being referred for assessment and also completes the annual review process with the principal, parent and any other persons of interest.

Parents are informed of the details of the Education Plans and are required to sign these documents. Parents are advised at interviews and within class books if requested of their child's daily progress in school. SENCOs/ Principal/ Class Teacher may be contacted directly if required by the parent at any stage during the year.

Pupil Participation

The school acknowledges the pupil's role as a partner in their own education. Where age appropriate (depending on maturity), pupils are involved in the discussion of their progress and future provision.

External Support

External support services play an important part in helping the school identify, assess and make provision for pupils with SEN. The school makes use of teachers, facilities and services from outside the school including links with support services for SEN. It is sometimes necessary to contact outside agencies. These include DHSS, Speech and Language Specialists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Medical and Paediatric consultants and the Psychology Service of the SELB. The SENCO meets with the Psychologist at the beginning of the new school year to discuss the deployment of time allocation. Parents are always consulted before any contact with an outside agency is made.

The school is committed to maintaining links with local playgroups, nursery schools and secondary schools. Provision is made for the transition of pupils with SEN between schools and/or the next stage of education. This is done with parental consent by passing on a portfolio containing samples of the pupils work, EPs and reviews, tests and assessment units (where applicable).

Future Developments

Future developments include:

1. Accessing assessment manager training,
2. Accessing capability training in the area of Spld for all staff,
3. Building up Spld resources and
4. Ensuring classroom practice is Spld friendly.
5. Increasing pupil involvement in their own learning.
6. Developing an initial training course for all new staff both teaching and non-teaching.
7. Allocating a quiet area for teaching support in school where not completed within the classroom.
8. Developing a separate achievement/reward programme for SEN pupils to increase motivation and celebrate personal goals. (See Action Plan [Appendix 6] for developments in 2012/13).

[SEN Yearly Planner](#)

August

- INSET training (SENCo/SELB) where relevant.
- Teachers to receive copy of current SEN register.
- Ensure all staff have a copy of SEN Policy.
- Newly appointed classroom assistants to receive induction training and copies of all relevant policies.
- Teachers with statemented pupils to receive a copy of statement to study.
- SENCo to become familiar with any new statements.
- Devise annual timetable for testing (See Appendix 8).
- Devise annual time-table for EP and review completion.

September

- Discuss allocation of support teaching for identified pupils with whole staff.
- Inform parents of additional support.
- IEPs devised for pupils at Stage 2 and above. To be returned to SENCo by an agreed date.
- IEPs discussed with pupils, parents and classroom assistants.
- Copy of IEP distributed to parents, relevant staff and pupil (where appropriate).

October

- Prior to annual parent meeting SENCo to meet with teachers regarding pupils causing concerns.
- Updating of register, if required.
- Arrange dates for first term reviews (November).
- Prioritise early review dates for statemented pupils.
- Details of Annual Review documentation received from Special Education Section.
- Complete and return any P7 statemented Transfer pupils' advice as requested from Board.
- Review Stage 5 pupils and devise and distribute new IEP.
- Transfer Review meetings for P7 statemented pupils to take place.
- Review meetings for pupils Stage 1 – 4.

November/December

- Documentation regarding Transfer Reviews to be returned to Special Education Section.

- Where a request for a change of placement is considered appropriate the school should complete Form AR1d (See Annual Review documentation) by end of December.
- Complete Reviews and devise/distribute new IEPs.

January

- Arrange dates for Annual Reviews of statemented pupils to take place in February/March.
- Request new advice for pupils for whom needs have changed significantly or when change of provision may need to be considered.
- Refer to SELB Annual Review Guidelines Booklet to ensure correct procedures and attendance of relevant professionals.

February/March

- Update SEN Register.
- Conduct Annual Review meetings and return all relevant documentation to Special Education Section by end of March
- By end of Spring term Stage 1 – 4 Review meetings to be complete and new IEP devised/distributed to all relevant persons.

April/May

- Arrange Review dates for all pupils at Stage 1 and above on education plans.

June

- Completion of Review meetings
- New IEPs not devised unless pupil remaining with same class teacher.
- Make contact with SENCo of post-primary schools that pupils on SEN Register are transferring to and ensure that copies of all relevant documentation are forwarded. Alternatively, arrange to meet.