



POLICY ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

Definitions

1 Special Educational Needs

A pupil has “special educational needs” if he has a learning difficulty which requires special education provision “in addition to” (Stage 2) and “otherwise different from educational provision made generally in an ordinary school”, (Stage 5).

Learning difficulty means that the pupil “has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age, or has a disability which hinders his use of everyday educational facilities.”

2 Disability

A pupil is regarded as having a disability if he has a physical or mental impairment, which has substantial or long term (more than a year) adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

3 Special Educational Needs Provision

Special educational provision means “*educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision generally made for children of comparable age*”.

A pupil is defined as having special educational needs if he comes under any of the following categories:

- (1) Cognitive and Learning – language, Literacy, Maths, Numeracy.
- (2) Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Well being
- (3) Medical conditions/syndromes (If it hinders pupil learning and participation)
- (4) Sensory impairments
- (5) Speech language and Communications.
- (6) Physical difficulties.

Legislative Framework

In accordance with the Education (NI) Order 1996: Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1996 Order) and the Education (NI) Order 1996 as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SENDO) (Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs), operative from September 2005, Every School a Good School 2009, Good Practice Guidelines 2009 and Provisional Criteria for Statutory Assessment 2009.

The School will:

- Identify pupils with special educational needs, and place on the SEN Register.
- Pupils who are LAC¹, SAM², or EAL³ may not automatically be recorded as SEN.
- Those pupils with a Medical diagnosis/Physical Condition, who have their needs met by reasonable adjustments will be placed on the Medical Register and NOT the SEN Register. Some may benefit from a “Key Card” to alert staff where their reasonable adjustments are recorded. (Reasonable adjustments mean, reasonable steps to avoid putting a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage). If reasonable adjustments are not working, then move to SEN.
- Recognise a continuum of needs* and will clarify a pupil’s needs accordingly,
- Liaise with a pupil’s previous school to ensure a full exchange of information relevant to meeting his special education needs,
- Monitor the outcome of interventions on a regular basis. Under attainment may indicate SEN but poor performance may not always.
- Develop, as required, suitable intervention programmes, including Education Plans and Learner Profiles; support pupils having special education needs through a variety of appropriate strategies,
- Seek the support of external agencies and the views of teachers, parents and pupils in determining the appropriate level of support and discuss the individual special needs of the pupils.
- Ensure that teachers are fully aware of those pupils requiring support and that appropriate strategies are put in place.
- Maintain records for monitoring and evaluating the progress of individual pupils,
- Make arrangements for the annual review of statemented pupils.
- Review regularly the operation of this policy,
- Advise parents of their right to access an independent system of appeal should they be dissatisfied with any aspect of special needs provision for their son.
- Arrange comprehensive assessment of those pupils who require exam concessions.

* In recognising that there is a continuum of needs, the Special Educational Needs – Code of Practice sets out a five stage approach to the identification of children having learning difficulties, the assessment of their special educational needs and the making of whatever special educational provision is necessary to meet those needs. The first three stages are school based, calling as necessary on external specialists. At Stages Four and Five the Education Authority shares responsibilities with schools.

The SENCO will:

- devise and update an SEN Action/Development plan.
- ensure confidentiality, however the welfare of the child is paramount and takes precedence.

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT, PROVISION

¹ Looked After Child

² Substance Abuse Monitoring

³ English as an Additional Language

A pupil can be identified as having a special need from one, or a combination, of the following:

1. Admissions information.
2. Parental concern.
3. Information from previous school.
4. Teacher/ Classroom Assistant concern.

If a pupil, on entering the school, has an identified need, then it is the responsibility of the SENCO, to liaise with the pupil, parents and, as required, external agencies, to determine how the school can best respond to meeting the pupil's individual needs. The pupil's teachers will be advised about the nature of the identified need and advised as to the support required. Where an individual education plan is required the SENCO will initially draw up the plan, in consultation with the pupil and parents, and communicate it to the relevant teachers. Staff will be advised as to the strategies which should be put in place to meet the targets set out in the education plan. The plan will normally be reviewed annually, at least.

From September 2015 form tutors will be responsible for recording the 'pupil voice' for any Stage 2 SEN pupils in their registration group. The information will be forwarded to the SENCO for including in the Stage 2 IEPs. Stage 3, 4 and 5 IEPs (including pupil voice) will be completed by the SENCO.

If a concern is expressed by a parent, or teacher, it is for the SENCO to determine how best the school should respond to these concerns, in line with the Code of Practice.

LEARNING SUPPORT:

If a pupil arrives in school with an identified learning difficulty, or concerns are expressed by a teacher, then he will be assessed by the SENCO, Mr G. Steele, or Ms B. Logan, in order to determine whether there is a need for individual support. Parents will be advised about the purpose and outcome of the assessment. If individual support is determined to be necessary, then this will be provided by the SENCO, or a classroom assistant. Support will continue as long as it is deemed to be necessary. If a pupil has a learning difficulty his teachers will be advised as to the strategies which should be put in place to meet the pupil's needs. **Where necessary, it is the responsibility of the SENCO, in consultation with pupil, parents, relevant teachers and Classroom Assistants to draw up an Individual Education Plan.** A hard copy of the each IEP and Learner Profile is available for permanent and substitute teaching staff, as well as electronically on SIMS.

As part of the school's Enrichment Programme, senior pupils may act as Learning Mentors.

Where it is deemed appropriate, provision will be made, for both internal and external examinations, for special examination arrangements. This will be the responsibility of the SENCO and the Exams Officer for Access Arrangements.

The SENCO will provide training on special needs or arrange for training as part of INSET, where and when necessary.

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APPENDIX A Code of Practice

The Code currently sets out a five-stage⁴ approach, the first three stages being based in school.

- Stage 1:** When SEN are identified by teaching staff, parents or health professionals, SENCO will register a pupil as having SEN and teacher will refer to the Stage 1 Action Plan for differentiation.
- Stage 2:** the SENCO takes lead responsibility for collecting and recording information and for co-ordinating the pupil's special educational provision, working with the pupil's teachers and allocates support from a member of the Learning Support team; SENCO gathers evidence of barriers to learning.
- Stage 3:** teachers and SENCO are supported by specialists from outside school.
- Stage 4:** Education Authority considers the need for a statutory assessment and, if appropriate, makes a multi-disciplinary assessment.
- Stage 5:** Education Authority considers the need for a statement of special educational needs; if appropriate, the Authority makes a statement and arranges, monitors and reviews provision.

APPENDIX B Arrangements for Making and Dealing with Complaints relating to SEN

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) came into effect on 1 September 2005 as a result of SENDO and exists to:

- 1 resolve disagreements between E.A.s / Boards of Governors of schools and parents about the way in which they carry out their responsibilities towards children with special educational needs

and

- 2 resolve disagreements between parents and schools about the provision being made for children with special educational needs.

Involvement with DARS will not affect the right of appeal to the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)**.

SENDIST considers a parent's appeal against the decisions of the Education Authority about children's special education needs, where parents cannot reach agreement with the Board. Should a parent wish to take a case to tribunal the steps are set out clearly in the booklet "*Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal*" obtainable from DENI, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7PR.

⁴ In 2019 this will change to a three-stage approach but as yet is not to be implemented.