



POLICY ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

Definitions

A **Special Educational Need (SEN)** is defined as a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made. A list of overarching and specific SEN categories is included in Annex 1.

A pupil has a **learning difficulty** if they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age and/or has a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities generally provided for children of their age in mainstream schools.

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

Special Educational Provision is education provision that is in addition to, or otherwise different from the education provision made generally for pupils of the same age in mainstream schools.

The **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)** is the staff member responsible for co-ordinating the school's special educational needs provision.

A **Personal Learning Plan (PLP)** sets out a school's programme of special educational provision for the pupil. This document records the provision which is additional to or different from whole school educational provision for all pupils to cater for different abilities and attributes.

The School also has **Learner Profiles (LP)** for pupils that we categorise as pre-SEN. These pupils may have a learning difficulty and/or medical need, but do not require special educational provision. The Learner Profile will identify the strategies of whole school educational provision that are particularly appropriate to address the pupil's need.

Legislative framework

The law dealing with Special Education in Northern Ireland is contained in The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 as amended by The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

The Department of Education has provided guidance for schools in the form of a Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and also a Supplement to the Code of Practice, effective from 1 September 2005,

which was produced as result of SENDO. Schools must consider the advice given in the Code of Practice when deciding what they should do for children with special educational needs. The Code of Practice addresses the identification, assessment and provision made for all pupils who may have special educational needs at some time in their school careers.

SEN Register

Only the School can decide if a pupil should be placed on the SEN Register, based on the evidence of how the pupil presents in the classroom. A pupil with SEN may have more than one type of need. In making the decision, the School will also take into account any additional information provided by parents or carers and other educational or health professionals.

If a pupil has a medical need, this is recorded on the School's Medical Register. Teachers or educational psychologists are not qualified to diagnose medical conditions. A pupil can be recorded on the SEN Register and the Medical Register if they have both a medical need and require special educational provision.

As per the Code of Practice, the SEN Register has 3 Stages which focus on the level of intensity of the special educational provision needed for each pupil to improve their educational outcomes.

- Stage 1: School delivered provision**
PLP required
Applies to the majority of SEN pupils.
- Stage 2: School delivered SEN provision plus external provision e.g., the Education Authority (EA) or Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT)**
PLP required
A smaller number of children will access this provision.
- Stage 3: Statement of SEN**
Both school and EA delivered SEN Provision (such as Adult Assistant) and as appropriate, any relevant treatment or service identified by the HSCT. Some pupils at the stage may be entitled to a classroom assistant.
PLP required.
A smaller number of children will need this provision.

As mentioned previously in this Policy, the School categorises some pupils as pre-SEN, and in these instances, a LP is required.

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT, PROVISION

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

1. Admissions information.
2. Information from previous school.
3. Parental concern.
4. Teacher/classroom assistant concern.
5. Information provided by other educational or health professionals.

If a pupil, on entering the School, has a learning difficulty, then it is the responsibility of the SENCo/Assistant 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 pupil's learning difficulty and advised as to the support required. Where a LP or PLP is required, the SENCo/Assistant 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 Plan. These Plans will normally be reviewed annually.

In terms of reviewing a PLP, Form Tutors will be responsible for recording the pupil contribution to this process (only for Stage 1 SEN pupils in their registration group). The information will be forwarded to the SENCo/Assistant SENCo to help update the PLP. The SENCo/Assistant SENCo will seek the pupil's contribution for Stage 2 and 3 pupils as part of the review of PLPs.

If a concern is expressed by a parent, or teacher, it is for the SENCo/Assistant SENCo to determine how best the School should respond to these concerns, in line with the Code of Practice and in consultation with SLT.

LEARNING SUPPORT

If a pupil arrives in School with an identified learning difficulty, or concerns are expressed by a teacher, then they will be assessed by the SENCo or the Assistant SENCo 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, assistant SENCo or a classroom assistant. The School may also request support from external educational or health professionals.

If a pupil has a learning difficulty, teachers will be advised as to the strategies which should be put in place to meet the pupil's needs. If a pupil is on the SEN Register, these strategies will be outlined on a PLP. If a pupil is designated as pre-SEN, the strategies will be outlined on a LP.

Some pupils with a learning difficulty may also need access arrangements for both internal and external exams. The process of identifying the need for access arrangements is detailed in the School's Access Arrangements Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School:

- Establish a Special Educational Provision Mapping plan which complements Whole School Provision Mapping.
- Identify pupils with special educational needs, and place on the SEN Register if appropriate.
- Liaise with a pupil's previous school to ensure a full exchange of information relevant to meeting the pupil's special education needs.
- Seek the support of external agencies and the views of teachers, parents and pupils in determining the appropriate level of support for a pupil's special educational need.
- Ensure that teachers are fully aware of those pupils requiring support and that appropriate strategies are put in place.
- Monitor the outcome of interventions on a regular basis noting that low attainment does not always indicate that a SEN is present.
- Maintain records for monitoring and evaluating the progress of individual pupils with SEN.
- Make arrangements for the annual review of statemented pupils.
- At the age of 14, all Statemented pupils will have a Transition Plan which will be regularly updated at each transition point.
- Convene multi-disciplinary meetings as required.
- Arrange comprehensive assessment of those pupils with a learning difficulty who may require access arrangements for internal and external exams.
- Advise parents of their right to access an independent system of appeal should they be dissatisfied with any aspect of special educational needs provision for their child.
- Review regularly the operation of this policy.

SENCo:

- Responsible for the strategic direction of the School's special educational needs provision, and its day-to-day co-ordination.
- Review the SEN Policy on an annual basis.
- Maintain the SEN register.
- Ensure early identification and intervention for SEN pupils.
- Dissemination to staff of information on the special educational needs of individual pupils, including those with medical needs which require adjustments to aid learning.
- Conduct Annual Reviews for those pupils that have a Statement of SEN and completion of associated documents.
- Develop PLPs and LPs and review accordingly.
- To ascertain the views of pupils and parents in the development of PLPs and LPs.
- Work with teachers on the day-to-day implementation, monitoring, evaluating and review of a pupil's PLP/LP.
- Provide regular updates on best practice guidelines for teaching SEN pupils.
- Suggest and plan whole school training in SEN.
- Provide individual support to pupils with SEN.
- Liaise with outside agencies and request external support for pupils if required.
- Liaise with primary schools of pupils who have a Statement of SEN and have applied to enter the School, to discuss the suitability of RBAI.

- Day to day management of classroom assistants.
- Ensure appropriate assessment for those pupils with a learning difficulty who may require access arrangements for internal and external exams.
- Ensure confidentiality - however the welfare of the pupil is paramount and takes precedence.

The School has an Assistant SENCo who will help the SENCo fulfil their role and responsibilities, and will deputise for the SENCo if they are absent.

Teachers:

- Responsible for the day-to-day teaching and learning in their classroom of all children whom they teach, including pupils with SEN.
- Be involved in developing and implementing the School's SEN policy.
- Take responsible steps to identify and provide for children in their classes with SEN.
- Help implement and review PLPs for the pupils in their class.
- Direct and support classroom assistants in their role in the implementation of PLPs. The classroom assistant is a key contributor in supporting the teacher in the delivery of targeted strategies and interventions as set out in a pupil's PLP.
- Seek and consider the views of the child within the PLP process.
- Attend INSET relevant to SEN.
- Provide written samples/evidence of pupils' work that illustrate or confirm SEN concern at the time of referral.

Arrangements for Making and Dealing with Complaints relating to SEN

The School's **Complaints Policy** can be followed in such instances.

Pupils (if they are over compulsory school age) and parents can also access **The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS)**. DARS provides an informal means of avoiding and resolving disagreements with schools or the Education Authority (EA) in relation to a child or young person who has or may have a special educational need.

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 a pupil's special education needs, where parents cannot reach agreement with the Education Authority. It also deals with claims of disability discrimination in relation to pupils at school.

Further information on DARS and SENDIST is available from the SENCo.

Appendix 1 – SEN categories

SEN CATEGORIES

1. COGNITION AND LEARNING (CL) – Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Numeracy
2. SOCIAL, BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND WELL-BEING (SBEW)
3. SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (SLCN)
4. SENSORY (SE)
5. PHYSICAL NEEDS (PN)

SPECIFIC SEN CATEGORIES

1. COGNITION AND LEARNING (CL) – Language, Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy:
 - a. Dyslexia (DYL) or Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) – Language / Literacy
 - b. Dyscalculia (DYC) or Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) – Mathematics / Numeracy
 - c. Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
 - d. Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
 - e. Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
2. SOCIAL, BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND WELL-BEING (SBEW)
 - a. Social and Behavioural Difficulties (SBD)
 - b. Emotional and Well-being Difficulties (EWD)
 - c. Severe Challenging Behaviour (SCB) associated with SLD or PMLD
3. SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (SLCN)
 - a. Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)
 - b. Language Disorder (LD) associated with a differentiating biomedical condition
 - c. Communication and Social Interaction Difficulties (CSID)
4. SENSORY (SE)
 - a. Blind (BD)
 - b. Partially Sighted (PS)
 - c. Severe/Profound Hearing Impairment (SPHI)
 - d. Mild/Moderate Hearing Impairment (MMHI)
 - e. Multi-sensory Impairment (MSI)
5. PHYSICAL NEEDS (PN)
 - a. Physical (P)