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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

September 2023

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ACADEMY

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| Title | Special Educational Needs Policy |
| Summary | Guidance for all stakeholders regarding: definitions of Special Educational Needs; measures the School has in place to meet the educational needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs; roles and responsibilities of governors and School staff. |
| Purpose | To ensure an effective response to meeting the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs. |
| Operational Date | August 2023 |
| Next Review Date | August 2024 |
| Author | Vice Principal and SENCo (LSC) |

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| To be posted on School website | Yes |
| Date and version posted | September 2023 |

Special Educational Needs are circumstances which reduce a pupil's access to learning whether through physical, emotional, learning or behavioural difficulties. The purpose of this policy is to ensure an effective response by the School in providing support and in promoting inclusion for pupils with Special Educational Needs. It should be viewed in the context of the School's wider Pastoral Care Policy.

The School recognises that the needs of all pupils who have Special Educational Needs should be addressed, if at all possible, within the resources of the School. Their right to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including maximum possible access to the Northern Ireland Curriculum, are acknowledged.

Aims

1. To identify pupils with Special Educational Needs as early and accurately as possible using a variety of means and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
2. To follow the procedures and stages laid down by the Code of Practice (see below) on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998) as required by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland and to implement the new SEN framework as per Department of Education for Northern Ireland Guidance;
3. To ensure access for pupils with Special Educational Needs to high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum.
4. To offer curricular, pastoral and extra-curricular opportunities that allow pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills so ensuring progress, promoting success and self-confidence.
5. To provide a broad education which will promote intellectual, emotional, social and physical progress in order that pupils can develop as valuable members of society both now and in the future.
6. To encourage parental involvement in the S.E.N. provision for their child.
7. To consider the wishes of the child when planning and implementing their S.E.N. provision. When considering the wishes of the child, his/her age and understanding should be taken into account.
8. To strive for close co-operation between all services and agencies concerned in order to achieve an effective multi-disciplinary approach to meeting Special Educational Needs.
9. To educate pupils with Special Educational Needs, wherever possible, alongside their peers.
10. To maintain a system of assessment, planning, recording, action and review to cater for the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs. This may require the drawing up of Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.s)/ Personalised Learning Plans (P.L.P.s).
11. To create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs.
12. To encourage all pupils with Special Educational Needs to maintain interest in their education, to have a positive self-image and to develop his/her full potential.
13. To encourage a range of teaching strategies that accommodates different learning styles and promotes effective learning.
14. To provide regular training opportunities for all staff to develop their expertise in supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs.
15. To provide for the needs of all pupils who have Special Educational Needs through the most efficient use of available resources, including Classroom Assistants.

16. To promote collaboration amongst teachers and Classroom Assistants in meeting the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs. This may include contributing to the targets set within I.E.P.s. (P.L.P.s).
17. To implement Guidance on the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings (Circular Number: 2021/13).
18. To liaise closely with the school's Careers Department and outside agencies to ensure pupils with Special Educational Needs make a smooth transition to further/higher education or employment.

Code of Practice

The Code sets out a 3 stage approach:

- Stage 1: Teachers identify and register a child's Special Educational Needs and, consulting the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo/LSC), take initial action. School delivered provision. This may include reasonable adjustments and additional strategies to meet and address the child's S.E.N. An I.E.P (P.L.P.) is required.
- Stage 2: The SENCo (LSC) takes lead responsibility for collecting and recording information and for co-ordinating the child's special educational provision in conjunction with the child's teachers.
Teachers and the SENCo (LSC) are supported by specialists from external agencies e.g. EA or a HSC Trust. This may include additional strategies and approaches plus resources, advice, guidance, support and training provided through the EA SEN support services to address the child's S.E.N. An I.E.P. (P.L.P.) must be produced.
- Stage 3: Education Authority NI considers the need for a statement of Special Educational Needs; if appropriate, it makes a statement and arranges, monitors and reviews provision. This may include reasonable adjustments, school delivered special educational provision plus EA provision as set out in the Statement. An I.E.P. (P.L.P.) must be produced.

Admissions

The admission arrangements with respect to the majority of pupils with Special Educational Needs must be consistent with the school's general arrangements for all other pupils.

Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs are placed in schools at the request of Education Authority NI.

When seeking to place a pupil with a Statement, Education Authority NI will take into account the wishes of the child's parents and the provision of efficient education for other children in the class or school and the efficient use of resources to determine the suitability of the placement.

This arrangement is in line with SENDO legislation.

Identification and Assessment of SEN

Identification of need will take place through a variety of means:

- information from parents and/or primary school;
- concerns expressed by class teachers or Heads of Year;
- the use of standardised assessments as deemed necessary;
- assessment by specialist personnel where required.

Provision

Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs will most often be within the normal classroom situation. Class teachers will be made aware of relevant needs, and advice will be given about appropriate strategies.

In the case of specific learning difficulties, pupils may receive some specialist teaching in small withdrawal groups, particularly in the junior years.

Facilities

The school had an accessibility plan carried out by a firm of architects some years ago. Subsequent to this, the school put in place an implementation plan.

Lifts have been installed in the Crombie, Bruce, Jackson, Darbyshire and Jackson Buildings and an external ramped access has been constructed to cover the Louis Lord and Pollin Buildings. All buildings in the school site are now accessible to people with disabilities.

Accessible toilets are available in the Crombie, Jackson and the Technology Buildings. Changing facilities in both the Sports Hall and Swimming Pool have been converted to cater for wheelchair access, and a specially adapted chair allows access to the swimming pool for pupils with mobility difficulties.

As part of a major capital project, a Learning Support Suite has been created, specifically for pupils with special educational needs. This incorporates a Resource Room, with study carrels, offices for interviews and one to one sessions with pupils, as well as a Classroom area and locker provision for pupils and Classroom Assistants. This has significantly improved facilities for pupils with Special Educational needs within the school.

Arrangements for Co-ordinating SEN Provision

Special Educational Needs provision is the overall responsibility of the Board of Governors and the Principal of the school. However, in order to facilitate the day-to-day running of the provision, the Board of Governors have delegated responsibility for pupils with Special Educational Needs to the SENCo (LSC), in consultation with the Vice Principal.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following section highlights the key roles and responsibilities of all those involved in SEN provision:

Board of Governors

The role of the Board of Governors of a mainstream school 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 School has appointed a SEN Governor who monitors the School's provision for children with Special Educational Needs.

Chapter 12 of the document 'Every School a Good School' (DENI, 2010) relates specifically to the role of the governor in supporting pupils with special educational needs. Based on this information, The SEN Resource File (DENI, 2011) outlines that the Board of Governors has 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 efforts 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;
- check 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.

The Principal

According to the Code of Practice (1998) the principal, should:

- Aλδ:Keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN issues;
- work in close partnership with the Learning Support Co-ordinator;
- liaise with parents and external agencies as required;
- delegate and monitor the SEN budget;
- ensure the senior leadership team (SLT) are actively involved in the management of SEN within the School;
- SLT members should ensure consistency of practice and contribute to the realization of the school development plan; and
- provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to special educational needs.

The SENCo. (Learning Support Coordinator - LSC)

The SENCo. (LSC) will:

- be responsible for the day-to-day tasks of the school's Special Educational Needs policy;
- respond to requests for advice from other teachers;
- co-ordinate provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs;
- maintain the school's S.E.N. register and records on pupils with Special Educational Needs;
- conduct Annual Reviews for statemented pupils;
- draw up, monitor, review and evaluate IEPs/PLPs;
- liaise with parents of children with Special Educational Needs;
- monitor the S.E.N. in-service training requirements of staff, and contribute as appropriate to their training;
- liaise with external agencies;
- co-ordinate the daily activities of Classroom Assistants;
- develop and manage appropriate resources.

Assistant Learning Support Coordinator

The Assistant Learning Support Coordinator will:

- ensure IEPs/PLPs are regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated;
- ensure the needs of individual pupils are appropriately identified;
- ensure external and internal provision is strategic, measured and routinely evaluated;
- support the LSC in respect of liaising with class teachers as well as parents and other relevant external agencies;
- collate and monitor data.

Class Teacher and/or Class Tutor

The Class Teacher / Class Tutor should:

- be aware of current legislation;
- keep up to date with information on the S.E.N. Register;
- gather supporting information through observation and assessment;
- develop and promote an inclusive classroom;
- contribute to manage and review PLPs in collaboration with the LSC;
- actively engage Classroom Assistants, where appropriate, in the provision of additional learning support.

Head of Year

The Head of Year should:

- be aware of current legislation;
- keep up to date with the S.E.N. Register;
- liaise with other staff regarding pupils who are experiencing difficulty;
- work closely with the SENCO/Learning Support Coordinator (LSC);
- update records as appropriate.

Subject Leader

The Subject Leader should:

- be aware of current legislation;
- keep up to date with the S.E.N. Register;
- ensure new members of department are familiar with the S.E.N. Policy;
- ensure that practice and procedures within the department promote learning and teaching which is relevant and accessible to all pupils;
- support class teachers to enable them to provide an appropriate and differentiated curriculum;
- ensure appropriate resources are available;
- discuss issues with class teachers through departmental meetings and forward minutes to LSC when appropriate.

Classroom Assistants

Classroom Assistants should:

- work under the direction of the SENCo. (LSC) and class teacher*;
- be given clear guidance on their specific role in supporting named children;
- provide practical support and guidance for those in their care.
- keep records and attend meetings;
- share good practice.

*Classroom Assistants should support the work of the class teacher by:

- carrying out teacher planned activities/work on targets;
- implementing targeted programmes of work e.g. speech and language/ OT/physio/sensory;
- organising and maintaining resources;
- reinforcing class rules;
- assisting with the supervision of the class;
- monitoring and recording information on pupil progress.

Pupil views

In school, as far as reasonably practicable, we seek and have regard to the child's/ young person's views about their strengths, learning difficulties and education, taking into account their age and maturity. We seek and listen to their views about how they learn effectively and then focus on the strategies that work for them.

Key decisions for a particular pupil might include:

- contributing to their own assessment, provision, and progress;
- working towards achieving agreed targets;
- contributing to the review of IEP/PLPs, Annual Reviews, and the Transition process;
- involving and supporting the pupils to participate in making decisions about matters affecting them.

Parent/person with parental responsibility

It is the School's responsibility to inform parents when staff are considering placing the pupil's name on the S.E.N. register or moving the child between stages. It is essential that parents inform

the relevant school staff of any significant needs their child may possess. They should do this as early as possible. For example, essential information may need to be made available by a parent upon a child's entry to the school.

Parents should be invited as necessary to:

- meet with staff to discuss their child's needs;
- attend review meetings;
- inform staff of changes in circumstances;
- support targets on IEPs/PLPs.

Teachers, pastoral staff, SENCos (LSCs), and other school staff all have a significant role in developing positive and constructive relationships with parents and pupils. We encourage this participation and value its contribution.

Access Arrangements for Examinations

"Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working." (Joint Council for Qualifications)

It is JCQ's advice that access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the examination course.

Further information relating to Access Arrangements is contained in the External Examination Policy.

Annual Report

The Board of Governors report annually on all aspects of S.E.N. provision in school. The S.E.N. section in the Annual Report contains information on the number of statemented pupils; pupils that received provision from EA Pupil Support Services or Health and Social Care Trust and those that accessed school-delivered special educational provision.

Our policy will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect changes in legislation and practice. The views of staff, parents, pupils, governors and external agencies may be sought as part of the consultation process.