

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY

Value Statement

This Policy has been created by the Board of Governors of the school following consultation with pupils, parents and staff. The school motto 'Ut Vitam Habeant' (That they may have Life) reflects its mission to enrich through education the life of the people in its care and encourage them, in turn, to bring life to others. Through this policy the school seeks to fulfil its mission in relation to pupils who have special educational needs and to promote their spiritual, moral, social, cultural, intellectual and physical development, in keeping with their individual aptitudes, so that they may reach their full potential.

In the policy:

- 'Code of Practice' means the Department of Education's Code of Practice on the Identification and
- Assessment of Special Educational Needs (September 1998);
- 'EA' means Education Authority;
- 'IEP' means Individual Education Plan;
- 'parent' includes a guardian and every person who has actual custody of the pupil;
- 'SEN' means special educational needs;
- 'SENCO' means the School's Special Educational Needs Coordinator who works under the direction of the Vice Principal;
- 'Statement' means a statement of special educational needs;
- 'Vice Principal' means the Vice Principal responsible for Pastoral Care and Discipline who has oversight of all SEN matters.

In discharging its responsibility under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, to make provision for pupils with SEN, the school will have regard to the Code of Practice and the Supplement to the Code of Practice (September 2005).

Aims of the Policy

- to ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities in relation to pupils with SEN;
- to identify as early as possible pupils with SEN and make adequate provision for them;
- to ensure that staff work in close partnership with pupils and their parents in seeking to meet their needs;
- to involve, where necessary, external agencies such as the EA and Health and Social Services in determining and evaluating provision for pupils;

- to ensure close liaison among staff, including the Vice Principal, the SENCO, Year Heads, tutors, subject teachers and, where appropriate, classroom assistants in providing for pupils.

Links to Other School Policies

The policy is linked to the school's Curriculum, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Positive Behaviour and Use of Reasonable Force policies and, like them, seeks to create a safe and caring environment in which effective learning and teaching can take place and all pupils are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

Definitions

SEN: A pupil has SEN if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her. Some but not all pupils with SEN have a Statement.

Learning Difficulty: A pupil has a learning difficulty if he/she has:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of his/her age;
- or
- a disability which hinders his/her use of everyday educational facilities.

Special Educational Provision: educational provision which is different from, or additional to, provision made generally for pupils of comparable age;

Disability: a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;

Physical Impairment: may include cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, arthritis, hearing or sight impairment, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, chronic fatigue syndrome, cancer, multiple sclerosis and facial disfigurement.

Mental Impairment: may include depression, post traumatic stress disorder and schizophrenia. It may also include what are often known as learning difficulties, for example, emotional behavioural disorder, ADHD, ADD, emotional and behavioural difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and developmental disorders such as dyspraxia.

IEP: a plan drawn up for a pupil by the SENCO, in conjunction with the pupil's Year Head, after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents, tutor, class teachers, and, where appropriate, outside agencies. The plan builds on the curriculum the pupil is following alongside other pupils and may make use of other, readily available materials. It is implemented as far as possible in the normal classroom setting. It sets out:

- the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties;
- the special educational provision required, including staff involved, frequency of support and any specific programmes, activities, materials or equipment;

- the nature of the support required from parents at home;
- targets to be achieved in a given time;
- any pastoral care or medical requirements;
- monitoring and assessment arrangements;
- review arrangements, involving the pupil, his/her parents and relevant staff.

Stages of the Code of Practice

The Five Stage Approach: There is a five stage approach to identifying pupils with learning difficulties, assessing their needs and making provision to meet those needs. The first three stages are school based, calling as necessary on external specialists, while the last two stages, which relate to statutory assessment, are ELB based.

There is no automatic movement through the various stages as progress in response to action taken at Stage 1, 2 or 3 may mean that a pupil will not have to move to the next stage. On the other hand, action at Stage 2 or 3 may be appropriate even if no action has previously been taken at Stage 1 and, in exceptional circumstances, the school may refer a pupil for a statutory assessment without going fully through the school-based stages. Moreover, a pupil may already have a statement on admission to the school.

Stage 1: begins with the concern that a pupil may have SEN, normally expressed either to or by the pupil's tutor. The tutor will inform the Year Head who will collect and record information about the pupil, after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and teachers and any other relevant source, for example, Health and Social Services. In conjunction with the Year Head, the SENCO will make an initial assessment of the pupil's needs and, after further consultation with the pupil and his/her parents, will put arrangements in place, if necessary, to meet those needs. The SENCO will enter the pupil on the school's SEN register and inform the parents that this has been done. The pupil's progress will be kept under review and, whether special arrangements have been put in place or not, the pupil will be kept on the register until his/her progress no longer gives cause for concern.

N.B. At Stages 2, 3 and 4 the procedures followed at Stage 1 in relation to collecting and recording information and consulting the pupil, his/her parents, relevant staff and other sources will be followed.

Stage 2: begins with a decision by the SENCO, in conjunction with the Year Head, after consultation with the pupil and his/her parents, to proceed with early intensive action which will involve the drawing up of an IEP.

Stage 3: begins with a decision by the SENCO, in conjunction with the Year Head, after consultation with the pupil and his/her parents, to involve outside agencies in providing additional support for the pupil. At this stage an existing IEP may be amended or a new one drawn up.

Stage 4: begins with a decision by the SENCO, in conjunction with the Vice Principal and the Year Head, after consultation with the pupil and his/her parents, to refer the pupil to the EA for a statutory assessment. Likewise, a parent or other agency may refer the pupil for a statutory assessment.

Stage 5: is where, following a statutory assessment, the EA determines a pupil's educational provision through making a Statement.

Admission/Retention of Pupils with a Statement

If the EA recommends that a pupil for whom it has made a Statement should remain in the school or be admitted to the school from elsewhere, the Board of Governors will consider the recommendation. If, in consultation with the Principal, it considers that the school will be able to make suitable provision for the pupil, while ensuring the interests of other pupils already in the school, it will allow the pupil to remain or admit the new pupil.

Annual Review of Statement

The school will endeavour to implement the recommendations in a pupil's Statement and will participate in an annual review of it which will:

- incorporate the views of the pupil, his/her parents, relevant staff and other agencies;
- assess progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the Statement and collate information for use in planning future support for the pupil;
- assess progress towards meeting agreed targets;
- review the special provision made for the pupil;
- consider whether it might be appropriate to cease to maintain, or amend, the Statement;
- where appropriate, set fresh targets for the coming year;
- after the pupil's 14th birthday and each year thereafter, include a Transition Plan which will address the pupil's needs in relation to his/her eventual transition from school to further or higher education or employment, in line with his/her career aspirations.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

The Board of Governors will keep this policy under review and monitor its implementation.