



**Policy for the Identification, Assessment  
and Provision for children with  
Special Educational Needs**



September 2023



## ‘Learning to be a wonderful me’

**In Dunclug Nursery School we are committed to providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment to support young children’s learning and development.**

We recognise that the children in our care have individual interests, characteristics and needs and aim to enable each child to develop positive attitudes about themselves and towards their learning by –

- providing experiences that extend learning and challenge thinking
- maintaining positive relationships as a staff team, with our children, their parents, the community, the Board of Governors and other relevant agencies
- promoting the health and wellbeing of our staff, children and their families
- inspiring and developing all members of our school community

## Principles and Aims

In 'Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning' (DENI - October 2013), the Executive recognises –

**“The need to identify and address potential barriers to a child’s development as early as possible, lay important foundations for lifelong learning and provide additional support to families, children and communities.”**

**Dunclug Nursery School aims to –**

- ensure that each child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, irrespective of any barriers or challenges, by intervening at the earliest stage to identify and provide for Special Educational Needs
- educate all children, regardless of their needs, inclusively and where possible, alongside their peers
- provide a caring environment with equitable access to all aspects of the curriculum and other experiences
- promote a positive self-image for children with special educational needs, by providing affirming learning opportunities
- access, within our means, appropriate resources to support children with special educational needs in the most effective way
- maintain partnerships with parents and all other relevant sectors

In line with **‘The Code of Practice’ (1998)** children will be identified as having a Special Educational Need if he or she has a significant cognitive, emotional, physical or medical need, which makes accessing the Curriculum more difficult for them than the significant majority of their peers.

We recognise that the term ‘Special Educational Need’ embraces a breadth of learning difficulties that vary in type, duration and severity.

DENI’s ‘Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education’ states –

**“some difficulties that young children experience are temporary and will be resolved as they develop. Others will have difficulties that are long term and will require additional support to ensure they make progress.”**

Special Educational Needs may arise as a result of –

- Cognition or Learning difficulties
- Social, Behavioural, Emotional or Wellbeing difficulties
- Speech, Language or Communication difficulties
- Social, Communication and Interaction Difficulties
- Medical conditions
- Physical difficulties
- Sensory Impairment – (hearing or visual difficulties)
- Developmental delay

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The purpose of the SENDO (Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order) is to –

- strengthen the right of pupils with Special Educational Needs to be educated in mainstream schools
- make it unlawful for schools to treat pupils with a disability and pupils with a prospective disability less favourably than other pupils in all aspects of school life
- place a duty on schools to work towards making school life more accessible to disabled pupils, in terms of premises, the curriculum and written information.

### **Admission of children with Special Educational Needs**

Dunclug Nursery School welcomes admission requests from all children. The admission arrangements for the majority of children with Special Educational needs are consistent with the Nursery School's arrangements for all other children.

Children with statements of Special Educational Needs are placed in schools at the request of the Education Authority. There are times when children with a statement of Special Educational Needs can be placed supernumerary to the Nursery School's enrolment number of 78.

In these cases the Education Authority's Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SARS) consults with the Board of Governors, who can decide to provide a placement for a child, after taking into account –

- ✿ the ability of the school to meet the child's special educational needs
- ✿ the provision for efficient education for other children in the class or school
- ✿ the efficient use of resources, including staffing and accommodation.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### **Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors has a responsibility to :

- consult with EA SARS service regarding the admission of children with Statements of Special Educational Needs in the supernumerary context
- agree and keep under review the Nursery School's policy for SEN
- ensure necessary provision is made for children with SEN
- report annually to parents on steps taken to implement the Nursery School's SEN policy
- work in cooperation with the Principal to establish appropriate staffing and funding arrangements and maintain general oversight of the Nursery School's work
- have in place a designated Governor who will have contact with the Principal/SENCO and staff

Designated Governor for Special Educational Needs – Mrs. Ruth Rock.

### **Principal**

The Principal has a responsibility to :

- oversee SEN provision
- inform Governors about SEN provision
- manage provision and appropriate staffing for pupils with SEN

Principal – Mrs. Pamela Muir

### **SENCO**

The SENCO has a responsibility to :

- coordinate the implementation of the Nursery School's policy
- maintain the SEN register
- liaise with parents, other professionals and support agencies
- provide support and disseminate relevant information and training to staff
- coordinate and assist with annual review meetings
- report to the Designated Governor regarding SEN provision in Nursery School
- provide support on devising and implementing Personal Learning Plans to meet the needs of children with SEN
- maintain records pertaining to all children with SEN enrolled in Dunclug Nursery School
- provide transition information for receiving Primary Schools

SENCO – Mrs. Pamela Muir

## Teaching Staff

The Teaching Staff have overall responsibility for the pupils in their classes who have Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.

Class Teachers have a responsibility to :

- identify initial concerns about a child and act upon these concerns appropriately
- work in partnership with parents to plan for, support and review children's learning
- maintain records and Personal Learning Plans, along with evidence of a child's progress at each stage
- ensure that learning opportunities are appropriately differentiated to enable children with SEN to access play and other experiences as fully as possible
- facilitate all children's inclusion in the Nursery School Class
- liaise with other agencies about children with additional needs in their care

## Nursery Assistants

Nursery assistants who are employed in a general role have responsibility to :

- assist with classroom set up and preparation for learning opportunities through play
- provide in-class pupil support under the direction of the class teacher
- undertake supervisory roles during outside play or during transitions between areas

SEN Nursery Assistants work under the direction of the class teacher to :

- assist them with facilitating the child's inclusion in their Nursery Class
- provide in-class / individual support as directed
- assist the pupil with self-care needs as appropriate
- assist with and contribute to planning, monitoring and reviewing Personal Learning Plans
- provide feedback to the class teacher about a child's progress and/or difficulties
- support the child to make choices, help him or her to develop independence and to work as part of a small group

## Partnerships with parents

'Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning' (DENI 2013) states that early years settings should –

**“encourage and support parents in their role as first and ongoing educators.”**

In Dunclug Nursery School we value the knowledge, experience and views of parents. We operate an 'open door' policy with regards to communicating with parents, welcoming them in their role as partners in their child's education.

Parents will be kept well informed of their child's progress and will be included in the decision making and planning/reviewing processes regarding the SEN provision for their child.

Teachers who have initial concerns about the individual needs of a child will complete a Record of Concern. If this concern persists and it is felt that additional support is necessary, this will be discussed with parents in terms of the Code of Practice (1998).

Equally if parents have a concern regarding their child's learning or development, or if their child has involvement with other professionals e.g. Speech and Language therapist / Paediatrician, they should contact the class teacher, who will complete a Record of Concern.

Parents will regularly be invited to discuss Personal Learning Plans (PLPs), where they are necessary, as well as having the opportunity to meet with teachers during consultations in October and March.

Annual Reviews will be held for children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs at Stage 5 of the Code of Practice. Parents will be invited to provide contributions to these meetings, which are normally held in our Nursery School and are attended by other professionals who are also contributing to the child's SEN provision. Children's progress will be discussed, as well as any amendments that may need to be made to their statement and the setting the child will transition to for the following School Year.

### **External Agencies**

A number of other Health and Educational agencies are available to support children who have Special Educational Needs in our Nursery School. The Principal/SENCO, Teachers and SEN Nursery Assistants of Dunclug Nursery School liaise closely with these agencies, including :

- Educational Psychology Service (EA)
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Early Years' Inclusion Service (EA)
- SEN Inclusion Service (EA)
- Sensory Service (EA)
- Community Paediatrician
- Health Visitors
- AAIS Support Service (EA)
- Behaviour Support Team (EA)
- Surestart
- Toybox Initiative
- Inclusion and Diversity service (EA)
- RISE (EA)
- Castle Tower School
- Health and Social Care Trust (Social Services / Family Support)
- School Nursing Team
- Other professionals or agencies, as appropriate

## Identification , Assessment and Provision

In identifying, assessing and providing for children with Special Educational Needs, we will adhere to the principles outlined in : -

- The Education Order (NI) 1996
- The Code of Practice (1998)
- The Supplement to the Code of Practice (2005)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (2005)
- Learning to Learn (2013)

The Code of Practice (1998) states that –

**“children with special educational needs should be identified as early as possible and assessed as quickly as is consistent with thoroughness.”**

As part of our Induction programme, prior to the children starting Nursery, we send an SEN Questionnaire to parents, to seek information on any additional needs they may have prior to starting Nursery School. This enables us to facilitate a smooth transition into Nursery, to take all reasonable steps to liaise with professionals currently working with the child and to access appropriate resources / support to facilitate full access to learning opportunities through play.

Initial concerns may be raised by parents, teachers, play group leaders from a previous setting attended, or health professionals. Where concerns are raised regarding a child's Special Educational Need, the class teacher will make an initial Record of Concern.

In order to make the best possible provision for children with Special Education Needs, Dunclug Nursery School follows these stages –

### **Stage 1 -School delivered Special Educational Provision**

At this stage of the Code of Practice, special educational provision is made by the school.

The child or young person will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Personal Learning Plan (PLP).

Responsibility for teaching and learning lies with the school.

School will put in place reasonable adjustments and **additional** strategies and approaches aimed at meeting and addressing the child's SEN.

The majority of children and young people with SEN will have their educational needs met through this stage of provision.

Often a child makes progress in response to school delivered special educational provision at Stage 1. If this is the case, the child may be removed from the SEN Register. If a child does not make adequate progress and continues to experience significant difficulties despite the school fully implementing a wide range of provision at Stage 1, the setting may consider seeking external support or advice from the Education Authority or Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).



## **Stage 2 -School delivered Special Educational Provision plus external provision**

At this stage of the Code of Practice, special educational provision is made by the school plus external provision e.g. the EA or an HSCT.

The child or young person will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Personal Learning Plan (PLP).

Responsibility for teaching and learning lies with the school plus external provision from the EA.

School will put in place Reasonable adjustments, **additional** strategies and approaches plus resources, advice, guidance, support and training provided through the EA SEN support services to address the child's SEN.

A smaller number of children and young people will need this provision.

A child will be recorded at Stage 2 whilst additional support is being provided from either EA or a HSCT, or whilst a request for Statutory Assessment is being made.

If a child or young person makes adequate progress following external support at Stage 2, they may return to Stage 1 and continue to be provided with the school delivered special educational provision. However, if they do not make suitable progress, despite the external support, they may be referred for consideration of a statutory assessment of their educational needs.

If the EA agree to carry out a statutory assessment and then decide to issue a Statement, the child or young person will then move to Stage 3 of the Code.

If the EA does not agree to carry out a statutory assessment, the child or young person may remain at Stage 2 if receiving additional support from EA SEND Services or be placed at Stage 1 and continue to receive school-based SEN Provision.

## **Stage 3 – Statement of Special Educational Need**

At this stage of the Code of Practice, special educational provision is made by the school, EA plus any relevant treatment or service identified by a HSCT.

The child or young person will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Personal Learning Plan (PLP).

The responsibility lies with the school and the EA – with input from HSCT where relevant

School will put in place reasonable adjustments, school delivered special educational provision plus EA provision as set out in a Statement.

A smaller number of children and young people will need this provision.

Article 19 of the Education Order 1996 requires all statements to be reviewed annually. This is to ensure that the needs of the child are still being met and that the placement and provision remains appropriate.

The recommendations in each Annual Review will determine whether or not Stage 3 is appropriate for the current needs of the child.

## **Provision and Resources**

Provision for Special Educational Needs in Dunclug Nursery School can be made in a variety of ways, depending on the nature and severity of difficulties a child is experiencing. The type of provision a child receives is reviewed regularly.

Provision may be organised in the following ways –

- Teacher and SENCO liaise with regards to resources, teaching strategies and access to the curriculum.
- Play opportunities are adapted to facilitate access for the child with SEN.
- Individual support given by a teacher or nursery assistant.
- Small group support provided by teacher and/or support staff.
- Whole group provision as part of the larger class group.
- Facilitate visits from EA services / Health Professionals working with the child.
- Support/advice from other agencies implemented in classroom.

**Dunclug Nursery School will take every reasonable step to access appropriate resources and staff development to help us to ensure the best outcomes for all children, regardless of their needs or potential barriers to learning.**

## **Complaints Procedure**

In the event of a complaint :

- ✿ Parent and class teacher will arrange to meet to discuss the parent's concerns. Teacher will inform SENCO.
- ✿ Teacher will attempt to allay concerns / resolve problem.
- ✿ Records of the meeting and subsequent actions will be maintained.
- ✿ If the problem persists, parent can report their concern according to the School's 'Reporting concerns and complaints' policy.