



# Special Educational Needs Policy 2024 - 2025

**UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD - ARTICLE 23** (children with a disability) - A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence

**UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD - ARTICLE 12** (respect for the views of the child) - Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

**UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD - ARTICLE 28** (right to an education) - Every child has a right to an education.

## **Rationale/Vision**

Bangor Integrated Nursery School staff are committed to providing equal access to a broad and balanced educational experience based on the Curricular guidance for Pre-school Education for **all** learners. We recognise that some children during their school career may have special educational needs and/or a disability. In the interests of these children, we will endeavour to make every reasonable arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

As an Integrated School we are committed to the education together of those of different abilities. At Bangor Integrated Nursery School we intentionally support, protect and advance an ethos of diversity, respect and understanding between those of different cultures and religious beliefs and of none, between those of different socio-economic backgrounds and between those of different abilities. One of the principles of Integrated Education is equality and we have both equality and inclusion as core values of our school.

The legislation that currently governs practice regarding children and young people (C&YP) with special educational needs (SEN) is the Education Order (1996). The current Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of SEN provides guidance on how the legislation is to be delivered in schools and was published in 1998.

SENDO (2005) increased the rights of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities to be educated in mainstream schools and aimed to ensure that children with disabilities were not disadvantaged compared to their peers in school. This included the school being proactive in areas such as ensuring that the school is prepared with an adapted environment and differentiated curricula for all children who may wish to attend, including those with SEN/Disabilities.

The Supplement to the CoP was published in 2005 and updated parts of the 1998 CoP to reflect the changes following SENDO (2005).

The most recent legislation, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016, strengthens and builds upon the duties contained within the Education Order (NI) 1996 and SENDO (NI) 2005. It places new duties on the school's Board of Governors, the Education Authority and Health and Social Care Trusts. It provides new rights for parents and children over compulsory school age. It is one element of the new SEN and Inclusion Framework which includes new SEN Regulations and a new statutory Code of Practice which at the time of issue of this document is awaiting ministerial approval.

NB: In the interim, schools have been advised that they must continue to adhere to all aspects of the Code of Practice (1998) and the Supplement to the Code of Practice (2005), except for recording children under the new three stages of the Code of Practice.

## **Definitions**

For all involved in a child's education it is important that there is a clear understanding of the terms 'special educational needs,' 'learning difficulty' and 'special educational provision, as defined in Article 3 of the 1996 Order.

### **Special Educational Needs**

A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

### **Learning Difficulty**

A child has a learning difficulty if:

(a) they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;

(b) they have a disability which either prevents or hinders them making use of everyday educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in ordinary schools; or

(c) they have not attained the lower limit of compulsory school age and is or would be if special educational provision were not made, likely to fall within (a) or (b) when of compulsory school age.

### **Special Educational Provision**

Special educational provision (SpEP) is educational provision, which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in ordinary schools.

### **Disability**

The following definition of disability is taken from the Disability Discrimination Act (1995):

A disability is when someone 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.

(Paragraph 2.3)

### **Key Principles of Inclusion**

*The Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (ECNI, 2006), states: "...all pupils have a right to the same opportunities in the whole of their educational life."*

All schools should have an inclusive ethos and actively seek to promote the inclusion of every child. Schools should approach inclusion as an integral part of all school policies including the school's SEN policy, school development plan, the school's accessibility plan and policies relating to e.g., discipline, bullying and pastoral care.

## **SEN and Medical Categories**

[The following is the list of the five overarching SEN categories and sub-categories taken from: Department of Education Northern Ireland \(2019\) Recording SEN and Medical Categories – Guidance for Schools, Bangor: DENI\).](#)

### **1. Cognition and Learning (CL) – language, literacy, mathematics, 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 and 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)
- b) Severe Challenging Behaviour associated with SLD or PMLD (SCB)

### **3. Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)**

- a) Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)
- b) Language Disorder associated with a differentiating/ biomedical condition (LD)
- 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 or Moderate Hearing Impairment (MMHI)
- e) Multi-sensory Impairment (MSI)

#### **5. Physical Need (PN)**

- a) Physical (P)

#### **Children with a medical condition**

Children who have an identified medical condition will be recorded on the school's medical register. Those who do not require special educational provision will be recorded on the medical register only and will not be placed on the SEN register.

A pupil with a medical diagnosis or disability may or may not have a SEN but what is key is "does the pupil have a requirement for special educational provision to access the curriculum."

A pupil can be recorded on both the SEN register and medical register if they have both a medical need and require special educational provision to be made for them.

The medical register is the responsibility of the Principal, Miss Algie.

The following is the list of the key medical diagnoses as commonly identified and agreed by the Department of Health which occur within the school population taken from Department of Education Northern Ireland (2019) Recording SEN and Medical Categories – Guidance for Schools, Bangor: DENI.

- Epilepsy
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Anaphylaxis
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Dyspraxia/ Development Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)
- Developmental Language Disorder (Medical) (DLD)
- Global Developmental Delay
- Down Syndrome
- Complex Healthcare Needs
- Anxiety Disorder (includes social anxiety, phobia, school refusal, obsessive compulsive disorder)
- Depression
- Eating Disorder
- Psychosis
- Other Medical Disorder
- Cerebral Palsy
- Spina Bifida – with Hydrocephalus
- Spina Bifida – without Hydrocephalus
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Acquired Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Physical Disability
- Other Medical Condition/ Syndrome

## Policy Aims

- To identify children who may have SEN/disability as early as possible using a variety of measures and in consultation with parents and appropriate education/health personnel.
- To ensure that all children with SEN/disability feel valued and that their parents know that their child is important, valued and celebrated within the school community.
- To encourage close parental partnerships and involvement in all aspects of SEN provision, so that parents are engaged, informed and feel supported by the school.
- To create a caring, supportive, nurturing environment in which all children can express their views and participate in their learning taking into account their age and capacity.
- To create a community of inclusion, educating children with SEN, wherever possible, alongside their peers, adjusting the environment and procedures to accommodate the children's needs.
- To ensure full entitlement and equality of access for children with SEN/disability to high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant, and differentiated curriculum, in order that children can develop to their fullest potential.
- To work closely with EA services, allied health professionals and other outside agencies as appropriate to support children using a multi-disciplinary approach to meet SEN.
- To monitor and review each individual child's progress appropriately and share this with parents regularly.
- To promote collaboration amongst staff in the implementation of the SEN policy.



## **Arrangements for Co-ordinating SEN Provision**

Although meeting the needs of pupils with SEN is a whole school issue, the overall responsibility for managing SEN provision resides with the Board of Governors and the principal of the school. However, to facilitate the day-to-day running of the special educational provision the board of governors has delegated responsibility for co-ordinating the provision for pupils with special educational needs to Miss Pamela Algie (SENCo).

## **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 function in relation to the school with a view to ensuring that provision is made for registered pupils with special educational needs. SEN is a standing item on the Board of Governors agenda and is discussed at each meeting.

The SEN Governor is \_\_\_\_\_. It is the role of the SEN governor to monitor the school's provision for children with special educational needs and to act as a point of contact between the Governors and Principal/SENCO on matters of SEN.

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 for identifying and assessing special educational needs;
- use their best efforts to provide for pupils identified with SEN

- ensure that parents are informed of their child's special educational needs and the provision that the school intends to make to address these;
- 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; and
- prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

## **Principal**

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

- keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN issues;
- work in close partnership with the SENCo;
- liaise with parents and external agencies as required;
- delegate and monitor the SEN budget;
- work with staff members to ensure consistency of practice and contribution of all staff to the realisation of the School Development Plan (SDP);
- provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to special educational needs.

SENCo (soon to be Learning Support Co-ordinator - LSC)

In all mainstream schools, a designated teacher who usually assumes the title of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) should be responsible for:

- the day to day operation of the school's special educational needs policy;
- responding to requests for advice from other teachers;

- co-ordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- maintaining the school's SEN register and overseeing all the records on pupils with special educational needs;
- working in partnership with parents of children with special educational needs;
- establishing the SEN in-service training requirements of the staff, and contributing as appropriate to their training; and
- liaising with external agencies.

## **Class Teacher**

The class teacher should:

- be aware of current legislation;
- keep up to date with information on the SEN Register;
- gather information through observation and assessment;
- develop an inclusive classroom;
- work closely with other staff to plan for learning and teaching;
- create, implement, monitor and review PLPs for the children in their class; and
- involve additional adult assistants as part of the learning team.

## **SEN Support Staff/ Additional Adult Assistants**

Support Staff/ Additional Adult Assistants should:

- work under the direction of the class teacher;
- be involved in planning;
- look for positives by talking to/observing the child;
- provide practical support;
- listen to the child/speak to staff on the child's behalf;
- explain boundaries and operate these consistently and fairly;
- keep records and attend meetings; and
- share good practice.

## **Pupil views**

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

When seeking the views of the nursery child it is important to firstly consider the child's level of understanding and their ability to communicate, as this will help determine the best ways to capture their views. Eliciting the views of some children will be particularly challenging especially in the initial stages of their nursery school year and increased parental input may be needed to support this process.

Ways of seeking the child's views may include:

- observations of the child's preferences while at play;
- photographs; and
- use of questioning and recording answers.

Seeking the child's views and supporting them to participate in making decisions about their learning is good practice. The child's progress will be more effective when both they and, where appropriate, their parents are involved, and account is taken of their wishes, feelings, and perspectives.

## **Parent/person with parental responsibility**

At Bangor Integrated Nursery School we acknowledge that successful partnerships between parents, pupils and school play a key role in promoting a culture of co-operation, openness and transparency and have a crucial impact on the effectiveness of special educational provision. Seeking the views of the child also plays a key role in helping us understand individual needs.

Teachers, pastoral staff, SENCo (soon to be LSC) 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.

It is the school's responsibility to inform parents when staff are considering placing the pupil's name on the SEN 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 acceptance of a child's place within the school via the online information sharing form or on child's entry to the school in the Parent/Principal Meeting.

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; and
- support targets on IEPs/PLPs.

## **Admissions**

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

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO) (2005) legislation strengthened the right for children with a Statement to attend an ordinary school, unless it is against the wishes of parents or it is incompatible with the efficient education of others. Children who have special educational needs but do not have a statement, must, except in specific circumstances, be educated in an ordinary school (Article 3(1) SENDO, 2005).

Children with Statements of SEN are placed in the school at the request of the Education Authority (EA). When seeking to place a pupil with a Statement, the EA 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.

## **Accessibility**

Every grant-aided school and independent school is required to have a written accessibility plan which should be publicly available and accessible via the school's website. The focus in the school's accessibility plan is to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum. By way of example, this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure, and cultural activities;
- improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of the information which is provided in writing to pupils who are not disabled. This should be completed within a reasonable time and take into account their disability and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

At present:

- pupils with disabilities have equal access to all areas of the school building;
- the school is fully accessible to wheelchair users;
- there are well-equipped facilities for personal care;
- access to a broad and balanced curriculum can be facilitated appropriate to age, ability, aptitude, and attainments; and
- written information can be provided in a variety of formats upon request.

## **Special Facilities, Resources and Accommodation**

The School has a number of special facilities, resources, and accommodations for pupils with SEN including:

- Disabled toilet facilities;
- step-free access to all play areas both indoors and outdoors; and
- Sensory Room, with additional sensory areas and resources in each classroom.

## **Annual Report**

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

This report is made available online through the school website or printed copies are available on request from the Principal.

## **Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs**

It is vitally important that children with SEN are identified as early as possible and that an awareness of their possible difficulties is clearly communicated between all the professionals involved with their development.

*(Code of Practice 1998, paragraph 2.14)*

Children with SEN should be identified as early as possible and assessed as quickly as is consistent with thoroughness.

*(Supplementary Guide of the Code of Practice paragraph 5.12 - page 44)*

In Bangor Integrated Nursery School, the following may be used to identify pupils' needs:

- information from transferring settings (where available);
- teacher observations;
- personal education plans for children looked after;
- statements of special educational need;
- annual/transfer reviews;
- professional reports; and
- parental contributions.

## **The Management of Special Educational Needs**

### **The Three Stages of Special Education Provision**

In Bangor Integrated Nursery School, we adhere to the three stages of the Code of Practice. These stages focus on the level of intensity of the special educational provision required for a child to make adequate progress commensurate with their abilities and improve their outcomes. Responsibility for children with SEN at each stage lies with the school, given the day-to-day role of the school in a child's teaching and learning, with increasing EA involvement when required. A summary of the three stages of special education provision is set out below:

#### **Stage 1 includes:**

- School delivered special educational provision;
- A PLP is required;
- The majority of special educational needs will be met at this stage;
- The responsibility lies with the school;
- Operates in mainstream schools and classes; and
- Reasonable adjustments and additional strategies and approaches are implemented, aimed at meeting, and addressing the child's SEN.



The PLP (currently IEP) should contain the core information/evidence of the school action to inform a request, if considered necessary, for access to EA SEN services at Stage 2. The child will only move to Stage 2 once any external special educational provision is being implemented.

**Stage 2 includes:**

- School-delivered special educational provision plus external provision, for example, the EA or the HSC Trust;
- A PLP is required,

A smaller number of children will need this provision;

- The responsibility lies with the school plus external provision from EA;
- Operates in mainstream schools and classes; and
- Reasonable adjustments, additional strategies and approaches are implemented plus resources, advice, guidance, support, and training provided through the EA SEN support services to address the child's SEN.

In the event of a child not making progress, despite the external support from the EA, the child may require consideration for a statutory assessment. A new online form designed to guide the user through the process is used to make a request for statutory assessment. The PLP contains the core school information the EA will use to consider and if appropriate, make a statutory assessment.

The pupil will remain at Stage 2 when a request for a statutory assessment is being considered, is being made and, if appropriate until a Statement is made.

**Stage 3 includes:**

- Pupils with a statement of SEN;
- School and EA delivered special educational provision plus any relevant treatment or service identified by the HSC Trust;
- A PLP is required (currently IEP);
- A smaller number of children will need this provision;

- The responsibility lies with the school and the EA –with input from the HSC Trust where relevant;
- Operates in mainstream schools, LS centres attached to mainstream schools or special schools;
- Reasonable adjustments, the school delivered special educational provision are implemented plus EA provision as set out in the Statement.

At Stage 3, the child has a statement and is receiving special educational provision (as set out in the Statement).

The pupil's PLP should be revised, to reflect the content of the statement (as it relates to the PLP including the SEN category (or categories); setting expected outcomes based on the objectives of the special educational provision and the nature and extent of the EA's provision including any relevant service and treatment the HSC Trust are to provide; and any additional school provision or modifications to the curriculum, as itemised in the statement; the pupil's PLP (IEP) will be subject to regular monitoring, review and evaluation and will form the key basis of educational information to inform the annual/ transfer review of the statement.

### **Exceptional Cases**

In most cases transition through the three-staged assessment process occurs in sequence. However, in exceptional circumstances, pupils may demonstrate such significant or unforeseen difficulties that with multi-professional and parental agreement a move to a higher stage of need is necessary immediately.

### **The Annual/Transfer Review**

Article 19 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 requires that any child or young person who is the subject of a statement of special educational needs, whether attending a special or mainstream school, must be reviewed annually, to make sure that the needs of

the child or young person are still being met and to consider the appropriateness of the placement. Annual/Transfer Reviews should be seen as part of the process of continuous monitoring of the child's progress. The Annual Review procedure is designed to:

- gauge the child's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the Statement;
- review the special provision made for the child, including placement; and
- consider the appropriateness of maintaining the statement of special educational needs.

The annual review is carried out by the school on behalf of the EA.

The Review will take place in school and is chaired by the principal (or another person as delegated by the principal).

Relevant forms and the EA's guidance for this process are available by contacting Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SARS) of the school's local EA office or they can be downloaded from the EA website.

## **Record Keeping**

The SENCo keeps the following records in school:

- SEN Register;
- records of concern;
- individual education plans/(PLP)reviews;
- statements/annual reviews/transition plans;
- assessments/observations;
- individual pupil files;
- record of liaison/meetings with staff from the Education Authority's SEN Support Services/Health and Social Care Trust
- minutes of meetings with parents; and
- support, advice, and training provided to staff.

## **Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to ensure that the progress of pupils on the SEN register is monitored. This may be achieved by considering that:

- individual education plans are monitored and reviewed for quality, progression, and appropriateness through meeting with teachers on a regular basis;
- evidence is collated to demonstrate whether the pupil is making progress; and
- information gathered is used in future planning for intervention and to inform movement throughout the stages of the Code of Practice.

## **Professional Development**

The principal in consultation with the SENCo oversees the professional development of all staff in the school. It is essential that all staff are kept up to date with SEN developments to provide effective teaching and support for pupils.

Following attendance at relevant internal or external education and training programmes, staff members should be encouraged to disseminate the information provided to build the capacity of their colleagues.

## **Working in partnership**

In school we work with a range of EA Pupil Support Services, where appropriate, to receive training and guidance to support the school and parents in meeting the needs of children with special educational and medical needs.

[Examples of EA Pupil Support Services may include:](#)

- Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS)
- Sensory Service
- Special Educational Needs Inclusion Service (SENIS - supporting children with MLD, SLD, Down Syndrome and Medical Needs)

- SEN Early Years Inclusion Service (SENEYIS)
- Language and Communication Service

Other services may include:

· [Behaviour Support and Provisions](#)

· [Education Psychology Service](#)

### **Other Support Services (for example)**

- RISE NI
- Barnardos
- Infant Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (ICAMHS)
- Child Development Clinic (CDC)

### **Complaints**

All complaints regarding SEN will be dealt with in line with school's existing complaints procedures.

If you have any queries in relation to the special educational needs of a child with a statement or who is currently being assessed for a statement of special educational needs, you can contact your local EA Office. Please contact your SEN Link Officer in the first instance. Contact details should be on the EA documentation issued to you alongside your child's statement.

### **Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS)**

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) provides an independent, confidential forum to resolve or reduce the disagreement, in relation to special educational provision, between parents and school/Boards of Governors or the EA for pupils who are on the Code of Practice where previous attempts to do so have been unsuccessful.

Parents can contact the service which is provided by Global Mediation.

Involvement with DARS will not affect the right to appeal to the Special Education Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

**Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) considers parents' right to appeal against the decisions made by the Education Authority about their child's special educational needs whenever an agreement cannot be reached.

This service also addresses claims of disability discrimination in school.

**Monitoring and evaluating the SEN Policy**

The SEN policy will be reviewed annually. It will be amended as appropriate in light of changes in legislation or practice following targeted consultation with all staff members, parents, and external agencies. This policy will be brought to the Board of Governors for final approval.

Policy Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Signature of Principal:.....

Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors: .....

Review Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_