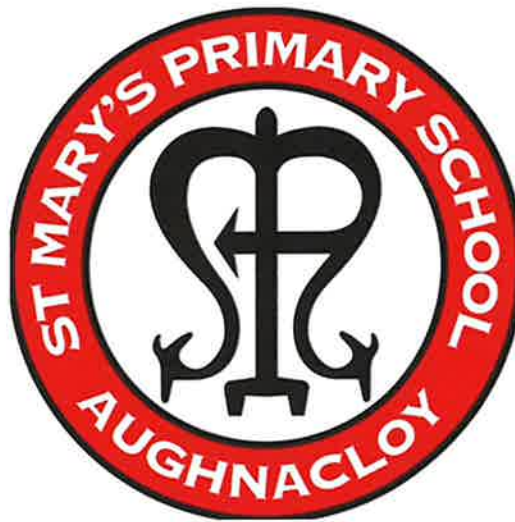




**St. Mary's Primary School**  
**Aughnacloy**



**Special Educational Needs**  
**Policy**

**Date Ratified by Board of Governors:**

16/10/24

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## St. Mary's Primary School Vision



*“Protect what is good, change what requires changing and appreciate the beauty of our world.”*

In Saint Mary's, we strive to create a nurturing and dynamic learning environment where every child is empowered to reach their full potential. Our school is a happy, family environment, hardworking and successful. The child is at the centre of everything we do. Together we are dedicated to fostering a safe, supportive and stimulating environment where every child can thrive and become a confident, compassionate, and capable individual.

We recognise that some pupils 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 adjustment to provide for their individual needs.

As a Rights Respecting School we encompass the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It states: ‘a child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families’ (UNCRC Article 23).

All children are valued and respected. We aim to respond with sensitivity to the needs of the individual and support them in reaching their full potential (UNCRC Article 29: goals of education).

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 C&YP 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 schools 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 include new SEN Regulations and a new statutory Code of Practice as of 2021, 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.

### Other Points of Reference

This policy takes account of the following documentation:

Code of Practice 1998 (DENI)

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/the\\_code\\_of\\_practice.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/the_code_of_practice.pdf)

Supplement to the Code of Practice 2005 (DENI)

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/supplement.pdf>

Disability Discrimination Code of Practice (2005)

Every School A Good School 2009 (DENI) [http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/03-schools\\_impvt\\_prog\\_pg/03-every-school-a-good-school-a-policy-for-school-improvement.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/03-schools_impvt_prog_pg/03-every-school-a-good-school-a-policy-for-school-improvement.htm)

Good Practice Guidelines 2009 (Inter-EA)

<http://www.eani.org.uk/parents/special-education/publications/>

In light of the Freedom of Information Act, copies of this policy information is available to all relevant stakeholders.

## **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.

### **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**

'Inclusion is about the quality of children's experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school'.

Removing Barriers to Achievement (2004)

In order to make sure that we meet our pupils' needs and include them in all aspects of school life, this SEN policy links closely with all our other policies in supporting pupils such as: Positive Behaviour and Discipline, Child Protection, Pastoral Care, Health and Safety and Medical Needs. E.g. A pupil may be gifted or talented in one area yet have communication difficulties/ASD. Also, a newcomer may have a Specific Literacy Difficulty. A medical need may impact on a pupil's learning.

### **SEN categories and sub-categories**

**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)

c) 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 Mrs E. Harper.

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

At Saint Mary's we are dedicated to providing an inclusive, supportive and empowering learning environment where every child with special educational needs can thrive.

The principal, staff and Board of Governors at Saint Mary's are committed to:

1. ensuring that each child's individual difficulties are identified and assessed as early as possible so that relevant programmes are created to aid success in learning and to be educated wherever possible alongside their peers.
2. ensuring that the parents and persons with parental responsibility are informed of their child's SEN provision, are made aware of the Special Educational Needs Advice and Information Service (SENAIS) and the Special Educational Needs Advice Centre (SENAC) and are encouraged to recognise the central role they play in the education of their children.
3. enabling all pupils to be offered access to a broad, balanced, relevant and, where appropriate, differentiated curriculum and equal opportunities to achieve their full potential thus contributing to the development of their self-confidence, self-esteem and positive self-image.
4. ensuring that pupils express their views and are fully involved in all decisions that affect their education and ultimately to create a situation where children can take their place within the class context both intellectually and socially.
5. working in partnership with parents, governors and other outside agencies to ensure adequate provision for children with special educational needs.
6. encouraging a range of teaching strategies that accommodate different learning styles and promote effective learning.
7. developing an appropriate system of assessment, record keeping and evaluation to monitor progress in keeping with the school's assessment policy.

8. employing an appropriate range of resources in the most effective way.
9. supporting the teacher's continuing professional development in SEN possibly through PRSD, inset training or attending courses organised by EA Special Needs team.
10. supporting CA's in their professional development through inset training or attending courses organised by EA Special Needs team.

### 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 Mr McCaughey (acting principal). However, to facilitate the day-to-day running of the provision the board of governors has delegated responsibility to co-ordinate the provision for pupils with special educational needs to Mrs Harper (Learning Support Co-ordinator).

### 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 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; and
- 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 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 realisation of the school development plan; and
- provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to special educational needs.

**Learning Support Co-ordinator** In all mainstream schools, the Learning Support Co-ordinator will 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;
- maintain the school's SEN register and oversee 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;
- contribute to, manage, and review PLPs in consultation with the Learning Support Co-ordinator; and
- involve classroom 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 the child about his/her strengths;
- 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 St. Mary's, as far as reasonably practicable, we seek and have regard to the child's views about their strengths, learning difficulties and education, considering 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;
- contributing to the review of PLPs, Annual Reviews, and the Transition process; and
- involving and supporting the pupils to participate in making decisions about matters affecting them.

Seeking their views and supporting them to participate in making decisions about their learning is good practice. The pupil'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 St. Mary's 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 or young person also plays a key role in helping us understand individual needs. Teachers, classroom assistants 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 prior to 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; and
- support targets on PLPs.

## Admissions Arrangements

The admission arrangements with respect to the majority of pupils with special educational needs are consistent with the school's general arrangements for all other pupils.

Children with statements of special educational needs are placed in school at the request of the EA. When seeking to place a pupil with a statement, the EA in line with SENDO legislation, will take into account:

- a. the wishes of the child's parents;
- b. the ability of the school to meet the child's special educational needs;
- c. the provision of efficient education for other children in the class or school and
- d. the efficient use of resources to determine the suitability of the placement.

**SENDO** became operative in Northern Ireland on 1 September 2005. The implications of this Order are that:

- it strengthens the right of children with special educational needs to be educated in Mainstream schools and
- it introduces Disability Discrimination Legislation. · SENDO is available at [www.deni.gov.uk/equality/disability](http://www.deni.gov.uk/equality/disability)

## 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.

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

- Ramp access
- Disabled toilet facilities
- Sensory room
- Tuition room
- Medical and Hygiene room

### **SEN Specialism**

Mrs Harper is trained in Reading Recovery, the Numeracy Catch-Up programme, the WellComm programme, Talking Partners Programme (with AT classroom assistant) and Primary Movement. Mrs Sabharwal has training in the use of Makaton. Mrs Donnelly is trained in the Toe-To-Toe programme as well as three classroom assistants. All staff are trained in Sensory Circuits and these classes are run daily each morning (1 session for pupils in KS1 and 2 and a second for Foundation Stage).

Mr McCaughey, Mrs Sabharwal and two classroom assistants are trained in Endocrine Care.

### **Resources**

ICT Resources include:

- 1 computer/laptop in every classroom
- Interactive Whiteboards in all mainstream classrooms and tuition room
- Chromebooks for pupils (at least 4 to each class)
- I-pads

A wide range of commercial and hand-made resources are readily available to support the needs of individual pupils.

### **Annual Report**

The BOG report each year will contain information about SEN provision within school. Information for this report will be collated by the Principal and SENCO.

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

At St. Mary's we are aware that early identification of children with special needs is very important in accordance with the Code of Practice 1998 and the Supplementary Code of Practice, but also recognise the importance of maturation in a child's development.

The following may be used to identify pupils' needs:

- Parental information
- Information from Nursery School or other transferring school
- Baseline assessments (P1)
- Cognitive ability tests (CAT,)
- Attainment tests (PTE, PTM, BPVS, SWST )
- Summative and formative assessment
- Teacher observation
- Professional Reports
- Statements of Special Educational Need
- Care Plans: Health, Risk assessments
- Personal Education Plans for looked after children
- PLP Reviews
- Annual Reviews

## **Management of SENs**

In St. Mary's, we follow the three-stage approach as set out in the Draft Code of Practice (2020) which recognises that there is a continuum of SEN needs and that the requirements of the majority of pupils with SEN lie at Stages 1 and 2 with needs being met by the school assisted by outside agencies and/or specialists as required. In the process of identifying pupils with SEN, teachers use a record of concern.

**Stage One:** School delivered special educational provision

- PLP required
- The majority of SENs will be met through this Stage
- The responsibility lies with the school

- In mainstream schools and classes
- Reasonable adjustments and additional strategies and approaches aimed at meeting and addressing the child's SEN

**Stage Two:** School delivered special educational provision plus external provision for example, the EA or a HSC Trust

- PLP required
- A smaller number of children will need this provision
- The responsibility lies with the school plus external provision from EA
- In mainstream schools and classes (and by exception in special school or Learning Support Centre (LS Centre) for the purpose of assessment)
- 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

**Stage Three:**

- Statement of SEN
- School and EA delivered special educational provision plus any relevant treatment or service identified by a HSC Trust
- PLP required
- A smaller number of children will need this provision
- The responsibility lies with the school and the EA – with input from a HSC Trust where relevant

- In mainstream schools, LS Centre attached to mainstream schools or special schools (as determined within the Statement)
- Reasonable adjustments, school delivered special educational provision plus EA provision as set out in the Statement.

### **Record Keeping**

The following records are stored in individual folders in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal's office (Stage 3):

- Records of Concern
- PLPs/Reviews
- Statements/Annual Reviews
- Assessment results/data (if appropriate)
- Individual Pupil Files
- Record of liaison/meetings with EA/Health Services
- Record of meetings with parents

In addition, the SENCO will keep a record of the following:

- SEN Register
- Record of liaison/meetings/contact with EA/Health Services/Educational Psychologist
- Record of meetings/contact with parents
- Staffs' Support, Advice and Training Records

Class teachers are also encouraged to keep a copy of PLPs and reviews and monitoring sheets in a file in the classroom which can also be shared with the support staff. Teachers will review and update PLPs regularly via SIMS.

## **Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with SENs**

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to ensure that the progress of pupils on the SEN register is monitored. In St. Mary's we endeavour to track pupil progress through;

- PLPs monitored for quality, progression and appropriateness through meeting with teachers on a regular basis.
- Evidence showing that the pupil is making progress.
- Quality reviews of PLPs and other relevant and purposeful measures that focus on educational outcomes to inform future planning and inform movement either up or down through the Code of Practice Stages.
- Use of Assessment data
- Provision of additional support and effectiveness of withdrawal groups or programmes
- Discussion with pupils and parents.

## **Professional development**

The Principal oversees the professional development of all staff in school in consultation with the SENCo.

The SENCo keeps a record of all training relating to SEN.

All staff keep up to date with developments in the whole area of SEN in order to provide effectively for pupils.

Any staff attending INSET disseminates the training with colleagues during staff meetings.

## **Partnerships**

In St. Mary's we have developed partnerships with each of the following teams:

Educational Psychology

Speech And Language therapists

RISE NI

Occupational Therapists

Physiotherapists

Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS)

Behaviour Support

Language & Communication

Speech and Language units in St. Patrick's Dungannon and Gibson Omagh

Specific Literacy Difficulties (SPLD)

Interdisciplinary Services – Ace Team

Tamnamore Learning Centre

Sensory Service/Vision Impairment

Community Paediatrician

Endocrine Nurse RBHSC

## **Other Support Services**

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Barnardos

Counselling Services

Save The Children (F.A.S.T.)

## **Complaints**

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

If you have any queries in relation to 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.

Details of this service can also be found on EA website.

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

DARS was established in September 2005 as part of the implementation of the Special Needs and Disability Order (SENDO). It aims to provide an independent, confidential forum to resolve or reduce the areas of disagreement between parents and schools/Boards of Governors for pupils who are on the Code of Practice, in relation to special educational provision. Where interested parties have made an attempt to resolve a disagreement and this has been unsuccessful, a referral may be made to DARS.

Members of the DARS team will facilitate the possible resolution of disagreements (in a separate venue from home or school) but do not have the authority to resolve a dispute. DARS is separate and independent from Special Education Section.

Involvement with DARS will not affect the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). Parents/Guardians may contact this service directly.

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

Where agreement cannot be reached between a parent and the EA with regard to a child's special educational needs, legislation gives the right of appeal to the

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). This body considers parents' appeals against decisions of EAs and also deals with claims of disability discrimination in schools.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

This policy should be reviewed regularly and in light of changes in legislation or practice following consultation with all staff members, parents and external agencies.

***Policy Date September 2024***

*Signature of Principal* B McCaughey

*Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors*

Jim Lough

***Review Date September 2025***