

St Malachy's Primary School Armagh



Special Educational Needs Policy

Reviewed April 2019

Rationale/Vision

All the staff at St Malachy's Primary School are committed to providing equal access for all our pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum which of course includes the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We recognise that some pupils during their time at St Malachy's P.S may have special educational needs and /or a disability. In the interest of these children we will endeavour to make every reasonable arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

Definitions

Learning Difficulty

"Learning difficulty means that a child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of educational facilities. "Special education provision means educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age. "Code of Practice 1998 (paragraph: 1.4)

Disability

"Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities"

SEN Provisions of SENDO

"The new law will strengthen the right to an ordinary school place for children with a Statement, 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.

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 ensure that we meet our pupils' needs and include them in all aspects of school life, the SEN policy links closely with all our other policies in supporting pupils such as: Discipline, Child Protection, Health and Safety and Medical Needs. It also links with English as a second Language. *For example:*

- A pupil may have English as an Additional Language but also have a Specific Literacy Difficulty.
- A pupil may have a medical need which has an impact on his/her learning.

The following areas encompass all aspects of SEN/Disability:

1. Cognitive and Learning

- Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulty (DYL)
- Dyscalculia (DYC)
- Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Difficulties (DCD)
- Mild Learning Difficulties (MILD)
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
- Unspecified Learning Difficulties (U)

2. Social, Emotional and Behavioural

- Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)
- Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD)

3. Communication and Interaction

- Speech and Language Difficulties (SL)
- Autism (AUT)
- Asperger' Syndrome (ASP)

4. Sensory Difficulties

- Severe/profound hearing loss (SPHL)
- Mild/moderate hearing loss (MMHL)
- Blind (BL)
- Partially sighted (PS)
- Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

5. Physical

- Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- Spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus (SBH)
- Muscular dystrophy (MD)
- Significant accidental injury (SAI)
- Other (OPN)

6. Medical Conditions/Syndromes

- Epilepsy (EPIL)
- Asthma (ASTH)
- Diabetes (DIAB)
- Anaphylaxis (ANXS)
- Down (DOWN)
- Other medical conditions/syndromes (OMCS)
- Interaction of complex medical needs (ICMN)
- Mental Health Issues (MHI)

7. Other

- Other (OTH)

Guidance for Schools: Recording Children with Special Educational Needs- SEN Categories (Department of Education)

Policy Aims

- To identify pupils with SEN/Disability as early as possible using a variety of means and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
- To ensure full entitlement and access for pupils with SEN/Disability to high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum.
- To raise the self-esteem of all children with SEN/Disability and have each child realise that their opinions are valued.
- To ensure that each child's develops to his or her full potential, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally.
- To make the best use of resources and teaching strategies to enhance learning.
- To develop a recording system so that each pupil's performance can be monitored and reviewed appropriately.
- To work closely with all relevant outside agencies in order to improve the quality of support available for each pupil with SEN/Disability.
- To meet the needs of all pupils who have SEN/Disability by offering appropriate forms of educational provision and the most efficient use of available resources.
- To encourage a range of teaching strategies that accommodates different learning styles and promotes effective learning.
- To encourage parental involvement in all aspects of SEN provision.

Arrangements for Co-ordinating SEN Provision

Roles and Responsibilities

SEN provision will be the overall responsibility of the Board of Governors and 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 Mrs Catherine Kearney (**SENCo**)

Board of Governors

In "Every School a Good School" (DE- The Governor Role (2010) Chapter 12 of the document relates specifically to the Governor Role for pupils with special educational needs.

The following section provides an overview of Governor's responsibilities from this document as highlighted in the SEN Resource File (2011).

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 Board of Governors has a statutory duty to:

- Take account of the provisions of the DE Code of Practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs.
- Use their best endeavours to provide for pupils identified with SEN and that parents are notified of their child's special educational 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.
- Ensure 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 a written accessibility plan.

The Board of Governors may establish a committee of its members to monitor the school's work for children with special educational needs.

Principal (Code of Practice 1998)

The Principal should:

- Keep the Board of Governors informed about issues.
- Work in close partnership with the SENCo.
- Liaise with parents and external agencies as required.

- Delegate and monitor the SEN budget.
- Ensure that the SMT are actively involved in the management of SEN within the school.
- Provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to Special Educational Needs.

SENCo

In all mainstream schools, a designated teacher 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 SEN.
- Maintain the school's SEN Register and oversee all the records on pupils with special educational needs.
- Liaison 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.
- Liaison 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 EPs in consultation with the SENCo.
- Involve classroom assistants as part of the learning team.

Special Needs Teacher/Learning support Teacher

He/she should:

- Be aware of current legislation.
- Be familiar with the administration process within the school.
- Be involved in testing and recording data for the SEN Register.
- Work closely with all members of staff to identify pupils' needs.
- Implement the delivery of suitable programmes for all identified pupils with SEN/Disability which promote progression within an inclusive setting.
- Contribute to EPs which inform learning and teaching.
- Monitor and review progress.
- Be involved in the Annual Review process and attend professional development training.

SEN Support Staff

"Assistants are deployed flexibly and effectively, and contribute to the observation and monitoring of the learner's progress, to lesson plans and to the assessment of the learners with whom they work." (TTI 1.3)

Support Staff will:

- Work under the direction of the class teacher.
- Be involved in planning and reviews.
- Help to monitor and review pupil progress.
- Look for positives by talking to the child about his/her strengths.
- Provide practical support.
- Listen to the child and speak to staff on the child's behalf.
- Explain boundaries and operate these consistently and fairly.
- Keep records and attend meetings.
- Share good practice.

Pupil

"The child should, where possible, according to age maturity and capability, participate in all the decision making processes which occur in education."

(Supplement to the Code of Practice- pars 1.19)

Key decisions for a particular pupil might include:

- Contributing to the assessment.
- Contributing to education plans through setting targets.
- Working towards achieving agreed targets.
- Contributing to the review of EPs

Parent/Carer

"The relationship between the parents of a child with SEN and their child's school has a crucial bearing on the child's educational progress and effectiveness of any school based action. Professional help can seldom be wholly effective unless it builds upon parental involvement and provides reassurance that account is taken of what parents say and that their views and anxieties are treated as intrinsically important." (Code of Practice 2.21)

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 important information may need to be made available upon a child's entry to the school.

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 to a higher or lesser stage of need. Parents should be invited as necessary to:

- Meet with the staff to discuss their child's needs.
- Attend review meetings.
- Inform staff of changes in circumstances.
- Support targets on EPs.

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.

Children with Statements of SEN are placed in schools at the request of the relevant Education and Library Board.

When seeking to place a pupil with a Statement, the Board 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

All schools should have an Accessibility Plan (see Five Board Guidance).

Within this document it is important that you provide details of the point that our school has reached in terms of ensuring accessibility.

For example:

- *At present pupils with SEN/Disabilities have equal access to all areas of the school building.*
- *The school is fully accessible to wheelchair users; and or*
- *There is a well- equipped SEN teaching/resource base and facilities for personal care, including a toilet adapted for use by persons with the disabilities.*
- *Access to a broad and balanced curriculum can be facilitated appropriate to age, ability, aptitude and attainments.*

Annual Report

The Board of Governors in St Malachy's School report each year on SEN provision in school. Information for this report will be collated by the SENCo and 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 5.12-page 44)

In St Malachy's Primary School the following are used to identify pupils' needs.

- Parental information.
- Information from Nursery School or other transferring school.
- Cognitive ability tests.
- Attainment tests.
- Summative and formative assessment.
- Key Stage Assessments
- Teacher Observations.
- Professional Reports.
- Personal Education Plans for looked after children
- IEP Reviews
- Annual Review

At any time during the year teachers who have concerns about a child's learning or who identify a child as having special educational needs will inform the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator of their concerns as early as possible. The SENCo will add the child's name to the SEN Register at the appropriate Stage. Parents will be notified. Depending on the nature of the difficulty, the teacher and/or SENCo will prepare an Action or Education plan, outlining specific short-term targets and the planned action to address these. A copy of the plan will be given to the SENCo termly. These IEP'S will be retained.

The Management of Special Educational Needs

In St Malachy's Primary School, we follow the five stage approach as set out in the Code of Practice (1998).

This approach recognises that there is a continuum of SEN and that the requirements of the majority of pupils with SEN lie at Stages 1, 2 or 3. This means that their needs are met by the school with the help of outside agencies and/or specialists as required.

Stage 1

Stage 1 begins with a concern of the class teacher that a child may have special educational needs.

Class Teacher

The class teacher:

- Will maintain day-to-day responsibility for meeting the pupil's special educational needs.
- Should inform the SENCo and the Principal of her concerns and consult the child's parents.
- Collect and record information about the child.
- Provide or arrange special help within the normal curriculum framework, such as: increased differentiation of class work, alternative teaching and learning strategies to help meet the child's needs. The nature and aims of such provision should be recorded, together with the targets, monitoring arrangement and review date.
- Monitor and review progress and report back to the SENCo

The SENCo

- Ensure that parents are consulted and with consent place the child's name on the SEN register.
- Advise and support the class teacher.

Stage 1 Review

Parents will be informed of proposed action and a review date. Having considered the review outcomes, the SENCo will decide whether to remove the pupil's name from the register, keep the pupil at Stage 1 or move the child to Stage 2.

Stage 2

Stage 2 begins with a decision at the Stage 1 Review, or following discussions between teachers and parents to proceed with early and more intensive action.

The SENCo

- Will take the lead in assessing and identifying the child's learning difficulty. This includes planning, monitoring and reviewing the special educational provision working with the child's teacher. The class teacher remains responsible for working with the child in the classroom. He will ensure that an Education Plan is drawn up for the pupil.

Stage 2 Review

The Stage 2 review may be conducted by either the SENCo or the classroom teacher. It will focus on the child's progress.

- If progress has been satisfactory the SENCo may decide that the child should remain at Stage 2 in order to consolidate gains. If the progress continues to be satisfactory, the SENCo may decide that the child no longer needs special education provision at Stage 2 and may decide to move the child to Stage 1.
- The child's name will be kept on the SEN Register until there is no longer any significant concern about progress.
- If the relevant and purposeful measures at Stages 1 and 2 do not result in adequate progress the SENCo will move the child forward to Stage 3 and a referral will be made to specialist support services/agencies outside the school.

Stage 3

Stage 3 begins with a decision either at Stage 2 review or following discussions between the SENCo, Principal, teachers and parents, that early intervention with external support is necessary.

At this Stage the SENCo takes the lead role, working closely with the child's teacher and drawing on the expertise of relevant external support services.

The SENCo, working with the class teacher, and with the help of external support services, should ensure that a Stage 3 Education Plan is drawn up. They will consider a range of teaching approaches and appropriate support materials, including the use of ICT. The Education Plan will set out revised strategies for supporting the child's progress and arrangements for monitoring and review. This will be implemented, as far as possible, within the classroom setting. Parents will be informed.

At Stages 2 and 3 of the Code of Practice the SENCo and the classroom teacher will consider potential benefits of:

- The Good Practice Guidelines
- SEN Resource File
- Encouraging inclusive activities to ensure integration of the pupil.
- Differentiated teaching.
- Withdrawal for more intensive support.
- SEN Resources available within school; support programmes, ICT, etc.

- Available staff skills which support pupils with SEN.
- Implementation of any provision/strategies as a result of external advice, support and training provided by the Education and Library Board and other services.

Review of the Stage 3 Education Plan

The Stage 3 review may be conducted by either the SENCo or the classroom teacher. It will focus on the child's progress and whether this has been adequate. Relevant external support services may also be present, especially if the child's progress has not been satisfactory.

- If intervention remains appropriate the child will remain at Stage 3 for a further period of time.
- If the progress has been satisfactory and intervention is no longer required, the SENCo, following consultation, may agree that the child no longer requires external support at Stage 3 and may move the child back to Stage 2 and an Education Plan at that stage will be drawn up.
- If the relevant and purposeful measures at Stage 3 have not resulted in adequate progress, following consultation with the SENCo, classroom teacher, external support services and the child's parents, the Principal may request a Statutory Assessment.

Stage 4

"In some cases schools will conclude that the pupil's needs remain so substantial that they cannot be effectively met within the resources normally available to the school." (Supplement to the Code of Practice -4.64)

When this happens an application from the Principal will be sent to the Education and Library Board. The Board will then consider the need for transition to Stage 4. However it should be noted that a request of this kind will not always result in Statutory Assessment nor will Statutory Assessment always lead to a Statement of Special Education Needs.

In reaching a suitable decision, the Board will consider:

- The degree of the child's difficulty.
- The nature of the provision required.
- Whether the child's special educational needs can reasonably be met by the resources normally available to the school.
- Use the 5 Board Provisional Criteria Statutory Assessment.

Following Statutory Assessment

The EA will either:

Make and maintain a Statement of Special Educational Needs and arrange, monitor and review provision.

Or

Provide a Note in Lieu of Statement.

A Statement of Special Educational Needs sets out the child's educational and non-educational needs, the objective to be secured, the provision to be made and the arrangements for monitoring and review.

A Note in Lieu of a Statement sets out the reasons for the Board's decision not to make a Statement of Special Educational Needs and includes supporting evidence from the Statutory Assessment.

Stage 5

Statement of Special Educational Needs

Once the statement has been made final:

- Provision and/or support will be arranged to meet the child's needs.
- The SENCo ensures that a Stage 5 Education Plan is drawn up.
- The Annual Review and Transition processes will take place.

The Annual 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 Reviews should be seen as part of the process of continuous monitoring of the child's progress.

The Annual Review will

- Gauge the child's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the statement.
- Review the special provision made for the child, including placement.
- Consider the appropriateness of maintaining the Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Relevant school staff will undertake the Review on behalf of the Board.

The Review will take place in school, chaired by the Principal (or other person as delegated).

Relevant forms and 5ELB guidance for this process is available from Special Education.

Exceptional Cases

In most cases transition through the five 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.

Record Keeping

The following are records that the SENCo will keep:

- SEN Register
- Records of Concern
- Education Plans/ Reviews
- Statements/Annual Reviews
- Assessment results/data
- Individual Pupil Files
- Record of Meetings with Outside Agencies
- Staffs' Support, Advice and Training Records

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with SEN

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to ensure the progress of the pupils on the SEN register is monitored.

- Education Plans will be monitored for quality, progression and appropriateness.
- Evidence the child is making progress. IEPs being a working document.

- Reviews of Education Plans to inform future planning and inform movement either up or down through the Code of Practice Stages.

Professional Development

The Principal oversees the professional development of all staff.

The SENCo will keep a record of all training relating to SEN. It is essential that 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 in connection with SEN will disseminate the training with his/her colleagues.

Partnerships

In St Malachy's Primary School we have developed partnerships with each of the following:

EA Support Services

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Behaviour Support
- Language and Communication
- Specific Literacy Difficulties (SPLD)
- Visual Impairment
- Psychology Service

The above list is continually being added to.

Complaints

All complaints regarding Special Educational Needs in our school will be dealt with in line with the school's existing complaints procedures.

SEN Advice and Information Service

The Education and Library Boards have set up an SEN Advice and Information Service to provide support in relation to children with Special Educational Needs. Details of this service can be found on ELB websites.

Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS)

DARS was established in September 2005 as part of the implementation of the Special Needs Disability Order (SENDO). It aims to provide an independent confidential forum to resolve or reduce the areas of disagreement between parents and schools/Board of Governors or ELBs 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 ELB with regard to a child's special educational needs, legislation gives the right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). This body considers parent's appeals against decisions of ELBs and also deals with claims of disability discrimination in schools.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

Our policy will be reviewed regularly and in the light of changes in legislation or practice following consultation with staff members, parents and external agencies.

Policy Date _____

Signature of Principal _____

Signature of Chairperson of the BOG _____

Review Date _____