



Friends' School Lisburn

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy

1. Context

The policy is set within the context of our Mission Statement, 'excellence within a caring, supportive community,' and our Pastoral Care policy which has the following aims:

- to support the academic, social and personal wellbeing and development of all pupils
- to create a caring, secure and supportive atmosphere for all members of the school community
- to value all members of the school community as individuals of equal worth
- to encourage pupils and staff to value Friends' School as a community to which each individual can make a unique and valued contribution
- to prepare pupils for the challenges of adult and working life

The policy has due regard for the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (Department of Education 1998) and the Provisional Criteria for Initiating Statutory Assessments of Special Educational Need and for Making Statements of Special Educational Need (NI Education and Library Boards, 2009). The statutory context is set down in the Education (NI) Order 1996 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SENDO).

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 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.

2. Aims

The Aims of this Policy are:

- to promote inclusion
- to provide support and appropriate provision for pupils identified with Special Educational Needs
- to have clear procedures for the admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

3. Definition of Special Educational Needs¹

A child has 'special educational needs' if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her.

A child has a 'learning difficulty' if:

- a) he/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age
- b) he/she has a disability which either prevents or hinders him/her from making use of the educational facilities of a kind provided for children of his/her age in ordinary schools.

In the Education Orders "special educational provision" means educational provision which is "additional to" or, "otherwise different from", the educational provision made for other children of his/her age in an ordinary school.

¹ As set down in Article 3 of the 1996 Order

4. Admissions Arrangements

Decisions on admissions are made by the Education Committee of the Board of Governors and in liaison with the School's SENCO and the EA.

When considering applications from Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs we are consulted on the following areas:

1. whether the school is suitable to the child's age, ability or aptitude or their special educational needs
2. whether the inclusion of this child compatible with:
 - a. the provision of efficient education for the children with whom they would be educated; or
 - b. the efficient use of resources

5. Access to Curriculum

Pupils with special educational needs will have access to the N.I. Curriculum at a level appropriate to their age, ability, aptitude, and attainment. In consultation with parents, guidance will be given on appropriate choice of subjects at key transition points; examination entries; careers; and further and higher education options. In addition, pupils with identified special educational needs will be encouraged to participate as fully as is feasible in the extra-curricular activities of school. Risk assessments will be undertaken, where deemed necessary, to ensure pupil safety. The need for reasonable adjustments will be assessed and implemented in accordance with legislation.

6. Identification, Assessment & Provision

Based on the definition of Special Educational Needs, it is important to note that some pupils may require additional support in a classroom setting who do not have a Special Educational Need. An Additional Needs Register is held by the school to support pupils who need reasonable adjustments, and some of these pupils may have a Pupil Passport to highlight provision in the classroom. Children with a medical diagnosis with no requirement for Special Educational provision will be recorded under our Medical Needs Register.

Pupils with Additional Needs and/or Special Educational Needs may be identified in the following ways:

- liaison with feeder primary school at admission stage
- parental/pupil concerns expressed to school
- information from previous school(s)
- observation and monitoring of pupil's work, progress, behaviour, attitude, social interaction and organisation by subject and pastoral staff
- a Statement of Special Educational Needs
- diagnostic tests
- medical / psychological evidence

The school follows a graduated response model to the identification and support of pupils with SEN. This approach ensures that support is incremental, evidence-informed, and responsive, with interventions tailored to individual need and adjusted relevant to pupil progress. Provision is organised along a continuum of support, recognising that most pupils' needs can be met through high-quality adaptive teaching, while some will require targeted school-based interventions and a smaller number will require support involving external services. Movement along this continuum is fluid and informed by assessment data, professional judgement, and consultation with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil.

In meeting the Special Educational Needs of individual pupils, the procedures outlined in the 3 stages of the Code of Practice will be followed. The three stages of the Code of Practice are as follows:

- i. **Stage 1:** special educational provision is made by the school. The child or young person will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a Personal Learning Plan (PLP).
- ii. **Stage 2:** special educational provision is made by the school with the addition of external provision from, for example, the EA or an HSCT. The child or young person will have an IEP or PLP.
- iii. **Stage 3:** special educational provision is made by the school, the EA and any relevant treatment or service identified by HSCT. The child or young person will have an IEP or PLP.

In all cases, appropriate evidence will be obtained and documented. All evidence will be communicated and

transferred to the SENCO who reports to the Vice-Principal Pastoral and the Principal. Private practitioners or external agencies have no authority to instruct the school to place children on the SEN register.

7. Responsibilities

The **Board of Governors** is responsible for ensuring that every child is a valued member of the school community with equal access to the same opportunities and high-quality learning experiences.

The **Principal** has overall responsibility for Special Educational Needs. This involves:

- developing a whole-school culture of inclusiveness
- ensuring that pupils' needs are identified, assessed, provided for, and reviewed regularly

The Vice-Principal is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of Special Educational Needs provision in liaison with the SENCO.

The Special Education Needs Coordinator is responsible for operating the Special Educational Needs Policy. The SENCO is responsible for:

- overseeing and coordinating the identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs
- liaising with teachers, classroom assistants, nurse, parents, and outside agencies re appropriate strategies of support
- allocation of classroom assistant resources to best meet pupil needs
- disseminating relevant information to appropriate persons
- maintaining a Register of pupils with Special Education Needs
- maintaining a Register of pupils with Additional Needs
- drawing up and reviewing IEPs or PLPs for pupils
- conducting annual reviews of statements of Special Educational Needs
- reporting to Principal on Special Educational Needs issues
- monitoring the effectiveness of Special Educational Needs provision (with the Vice-Principal)
- overseeing the work of the Assistant SENCO

The Assistant Special Educational Needs Coordinator is responsible for operating the Special Educational Needs Policy for a directed age group within school as determined by the SENCO and Vice-Principal Pastoral. In addition, the Assistant SENCO is responsible for:

- overseeing and coordinating the identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs
- liaising with teachers, classroom assistants, the school nurse, parents, and outside agencies regarding appropriate strategies of support
- disseminating relevant information to appropriate persons
- maintaining a register of pupils with Additional Needs
- drawing up and reviewing IEPs or PLPs for pupils
- conducting annual review of statements of Special Educational Needs
- allocation of classroom assistant resources to best meet pupil needs

Whole School

All members of the school community have a responsibility to act in accordance with the SEN Policy. All staff are involved in the support of all learners within their classes, whatever their individual needs, to enable them to reach their learning potential. All staff are therefore involved in the implementation and development of the Policy. It is envisaged that most needs will be met within the normal classroom setting and through whole class teaching.

In line with departmental/pastoral policies, all staff are responsible for the monitoring of pupil progress and where a significant and persistent area of difficulty is highlighted for a pupil, information is passed to the SENCO/Assistant SENCO.

All staff are advised annually of their roles regarding Special Educational Needs provision and are provided with a detailed Special Educational Needs Register and strategies to assist pupils. Staff are also encouraged to seek advice and guidance from the SENCO regarding any aspect of Special Educational Needs.

8. Inservice Training

The school acknowledges its responsibility to provide necessary and appropriate training for all staff members. On an annual basis, members of the Leadership Team review training and development in relation to the needs of Special Educational Needs pupils in School.

9. Access Arrangements for Examinations

Access arrangements allow pupils with special educational needs, additional needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries to access assessments and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. Friends' School Lisburn aims to meet the needs of each individual pupil without affecting the integrity of the assessment. At all Key Stages, access arrangements and their associated requirements will follow our Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy. This is reviewed annually to reflect changes in JCQ guidance and is available on our school website.

10. Review

The content of this policy will be reviewed each year in the light of its appropriateness to provide for the special needs of Friends' School pupils and to meet legislative requirements.

Policy to be reviewed in: May/June 2027.

Appendix 1

The Department of Education has identified medical needs and 5 main 'areas' of Special Educational Need; within each area, several SEN categories are outlined and recorded in '[SEN and Medical Categories Guidance – January 2019](#)'.

1. Cognitive and Learning (CL)

- Dyslexia (DYL)/Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)
- Dyscalculia (DYC)
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)

2. Social, Behavioural, Emotional & Wellbeing (SBEW)

- Social & Behavioural Difficulties (SBD)
- Emotional & Wellbeing Difficulties (EWD)
- Severe Challenging Behaviour (SCB) associated SLD or PMLD
- ADD/ADHD

3. Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

- Developmental Language Disorder (SEN) (DLD)
- Language Disorder (LD) associated with a differentiating biomedical condition
- Communication & Social Interaction Difficulties (CSID)

4. Sensory (SE)

- Visual Impairment (VI)
- Blind (BD)
- Partially Sighted (PS)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Severe/Profound Hearing Impairment (SPHI)
- Mild/Moderate Hearing Impairment (MMHI)
- Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)

5. Physical (PN)

- Physical (P)

Medical Needs

The following is a list of the key medical diagnoses as commonly identified and agreed by the Department of Health which occur within the school population.

- 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

Appendix 2

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service

The Dispute Avoidance & Resolution Service (DARS) came into effect on 1 September 2005 as part of the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO). Disagreements may arise between a parent/guardian and a school or the Education Authority regarding the special educational provision made for a child or young person. If initial attempts to resolve the disagreements have not been successful, it may be appropriate to make a referral to DARS.

References

For further information relating to Special Educational Needs please visit the Education Authority Northern Ireland website by following the link listed below.

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/special-educational-needs-sen>