

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY STATEMENT



## SECTION I

### [A] INTRODUCTION

This policy statement has been written with due regard to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs which was issued by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland under the terms of the Education [Northern Ireland] Order 1996. The general provisions of Part II of this Order were brought into force on 1 September 1997 and among other things require that the Board of Governors of every grant-aided school must “determine and keep under review, its policy in relation to the provision of education for children with special educational needs” [DENI Circular 1996/40 213].

### [B] BELIEF STATEMENT

This document should be read in conjunction with other school policies including those relating to the school’s curriculum. In each case the guiding principle has been to ensure that all pupils are given access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, that they have maximum opportunity to participate in all areas of the life of the school and that each pupil is given the appropriate guidance and support to achieve their full potential.

### [C] PURPOSE OF THE POLICY DOCUMENT

This policy attempts to set out principles and a framework to ensure consistency of approach to the issue of Special Educational Needs in school. It also provides an outline structure for effective action and provides opportunity for the evaluation of the provision for SEN pupils.

### [D] AIMS

The specific aims of the Special Educational Needs procedures as outlined in this document are:

- [i] to ensure, in consultation with appropriate personnel, the early identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs;
- [ii] to provide appropriate targets, provision, guidance and support for individual pupils;
- [iii] to ensure that appropriate records are kept and maintained;
- [iv] to maximize the achievement of each child;

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- [v] to foster the integration of pupils with Special Educational Needs into the life of the school and to promote their self-esteem and self-image;
- [vi] to ensure that effective and appropriate communication occurs within school with parents and pupils, with feeder primary schools and relevant external agencies;
- [vii] to create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their learning needs;
- [xi] to develop, make available and utilize a range of resources in support of pupils with special needs.

These specific aims are designed to give each SEN pupil access to a broad and balanced education.

## [E] DEFINITIONS

A child will be considered to have '**Special Educational Needs**' if she/he has a learning difficulty which requires that special educational provision be made. A '**learning difficulty**' is characterised by the child having a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age and/or a disability which prevents or hinders full use of the educational facilities provided for children of this age. "Special Educational Provision" means educational provision which is different from or additional to, provision made generally for children of comparable age.

Thus, it can be seen that Special Educational Needs may be permanent or temporary and may change over time and with the educational context, subject or level. At Sullivan, we are dealing in the Secondary Department with children who have been selected as likely to benefit from a Grammar School education. Therefore, the full continuum of need is not likely to be seen in this context. In our context Special Educational Needs are most likely to stem from physical disability, illness, specific learning difficulties eg dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties associated with use of language or number, behavioural difficulties eg attention deficit disorder, specific social and/or emotional circumstances.

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## SECTION II

This section sets out the principles and outlines procedures which reflect current and intended practice with respect to the identification of, assessment of and response to pupils with Special Educational Needs.

### [A] INITIAL IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

- [i] Pupils with learning difficulties will be identified initially

**either** because they enter the school having previously been recognised as having Special Educational Needs [in which case there will be pre-existing documentation outlining their problems, the stage at which they are currently registered and what special provision has been made to meet their needs. The school will endeavour to maintain the continuity of this special provision].

**or** because their normal classroom work and/or behaviour indicates that they are performing at a level sufficiently below that of their peers to cause concern.

- [ii] When a pupil's work and/or behaviour is significantly below the standard of the majority of pupils in the class the subject teacher will begin to gather information designed to establish whether or not the child has a learning difficulty. Appropriate information might include examples of the pupil's work, notes based on classroom observation, the results of formative and summative assessments and, if appropriate, information obtained by talking to the pupil and/or parents.
- [iii] If the teacher believes that sufficient evidence exists to support the view that the child has a learning difficulty then the SENCO should be informed. Reports will be obtained from all the pupil's teachers to establish the extent of the perceived problems and the SENCO would normally discuss the results of these reports with the appropriate Year Head and Form Teacher.
- [iv] At this point, if appropriate, the evidence should be put before the Vice-Principal [Pastoral]. A judgement will be made as to whether it is appropriate to treat the matter under the school's pastoral/discipline procedures or to invoke the arrangements for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

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- [v] If it is decided that it is appropriate to deal with the situation under the Special Educational Needs procedures the SENCO will place the pupil on the SEN register at the appropriate stage [I, II or III].
- [vi] The procedures for assessment, planning, action and review for each stage will be implemented according to the Code of Practice as set out in Section III of this policy document.

## [B] SCHOOL RESPONSE TO IDENTIFIED NEEDS

- [i] A pupil registered at stage 1 will be set particular targets and receive appropriate specific help from the Subject Teachers and Form Teachers. This will primarily take the form of differentiated teaching as agreed by the Subject Teacher[s], Form Teacher, Year Head and SENCO. It may also involve specific help with personal organization, home study and revision usually provided by the Form Teacher often with the co-operation of parents eg monitoring and signing the homework diary on a weekly basis.
- [ii] A pupil registered at Stage II or moving from Stage I to Stage II will receive appropriate specific help and be set more specific targets as outlined in their Educational Plan as agreed by the SENCO, the Subject Teachers, Form Teacher and Year Head.
- [iii] A pupil registered at Stage III will be assessed by outside professionals [normally educational psychologists] and an educational plan will be drawn up jointly by school staff and the contributing professionals. The pupil will then receive the appropriate specific help to try to meet the relevant targets.
- [iv] At the end of the statutory period [3 months] a review meeting will be convened by the SENCO/Year Head and appropriate decisions made. This may involve the pupil remaining at the stage III for a further 3 month period or moving up or down a stage.
- [v] Stages 4 and 5 involve the school's decision to request the SEELB/BELB to undertake a formal assessment which may lead to statementing.

## [C] INVOLVEMENT WITH PARENTS

The school recognizes the unique contribution that parents can make to children's educational progress and undertakes to promote a close partnership and effective working relationship with the parents of pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs. This will involve parents in assessment and review arrangements. It will mean that parental views will be sought and taken into

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account and that effective two way communication is fostered and maintained.

Where a pupil has a statement of Special Educational Need an Annual Review of that statement takes place and parental contributions are sought. Parents are invited to attend the Annual Review Meeting.

Parents wishing formally to complain about the Special Educational Needs Policy, or aspects of its implementation are initially requested to contact the Headmaster or the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

## [D] MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this policy and its implementation will be kept under review. The school's pastoral team will regularly monitor and review arrangements and procedures as they apply to individual pupils.

The outcome of these deliberations will be included in the pastoral minutes together with any recommendations for change which will be considered by the Senior Management Team and referred ultimately to the Board of Governors.

## [E] ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Code of Practice gives in some detail the duties to be discharged by various groups and individuals with respect to the management of Special Educational Needs in schools. This section outlines the roles to be carried out at Sullivan.

- [i] The Board of Governors, in co-operation with the Headmaster, will determine the school's general policy and approach, will establish appropriate staffing and funding arrangements and maintain general oversight of SEN provision. The Board will ensure that the appropriate prescribed information is published and included in the annual report to parents.
- [ii] The Headmaster has the responsibility for the day to day management of SEN provision and will keep the Governors informed and work closely with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The Headmaster will be responsible for requesting statutory assessment for pupils deemed to be at Stage 4 and is likely to be involved in liaison with relevant outside agencies.
- [iii] The SENCO, working closely with Year Heads, Form Teachers and Subject Teachers and Classroom Assistants will have responsibility for the day to day operation of the school's SEN policy and for co-ordinating SEN

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provision. The SENCO will be responsible for maintaining the SEN register, will report and consult regularly with the Pastoral Vice-Principal and will liaise with appropriate outside agencies.

[iv] The Subject Teacher and Form Teacher are crucial to the early identification of need, to the assessment of specific needs and in collaboration with others, to the creation and implementation of strategies to respond to those needs. All staff will be involved in consultations for the development of the school's SEN policy and will be made familiar with the in-house SEN procedures.

[v] Classroom Assistants under the direction of the SENCO and Subject Teachers will support their special needs pupil. [See staff handbook for Principal Duties and Responsibilities of Classroom Assistants]

## [F] LEARNING SUPPORT RESOURCE ROOM

There may be times when a pupil needs to spend time in the Learning Support Resource Room and a policy document exists to explain the procedures used.

## [G] RECORD KEEPING

Teachers involved at each stage of SEN provision will keep and maintain appropriate written records. These will be used to inform and support staff as key decisions are made in the best interests of children's education and in accordance with the principles and aims set out in this policy document.

## [H] STAFF TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Appropriate training will be made available to all staff to enable them to discharge their responsibilities as set out in the SEN policy. The SENCO and the Pastoral Team will co-ordinate the provision of appropriate resources which will be made available in school.

## [I] LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS AND AGENCIES

[i] In order to provide continuity of Special Educational provision for pupils entering Sullivan, the Head of Year 8 and SENCO will seek information from feeder schools.

[ii] The SENCO will seek advice and support from outside agencies when appropriate.

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## SECTION III

### [A] THE FIVE STAGE PROCESS

#### [i] Overview

- Stage I: Form Teachers and/or Subject Teachers take initial action and inform SENCO. Action Plan drawn up.
- Stage II: SENCO draws up Educational Plan to assist the pupil.
- Stage III: Support from outside specialists is requested.
- Stage IV: The SEELB considers the need for statutory Assessment on request from the school and may proceed with such assessment.
- Stage V: The Board considers the need for a Statement of Special Educational Need and issues such a document if judged appropriate and makes the necessary provision.

NB The statutory period for review of each of the first three stages is within three months of the child being registered at that stage.