

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

for

## Carrickfergus Academy



Version	Date	Revision Author	Summary of Changes	Ratified
1	Ratified by BOG 11/12/2019	H Boyd	None	
2	Ratified by BOG 20.04.2023	H Boyd		April 2023

## **Special Needs Policy**

For the purposes of this document the term SEN refers to those pupils who have Special Educational Needs and/or a disability which affects their learning.

### **Special Educational Needs (and Inclusion) Policy Rationale**

Carrickfergus Academy through this policy document, seeks to ensure that the needs of all the pupils with special educational needs and/or disability will be addressed and provision made available to them throughout or at any time during their school career. In addition the school acknowledges their right to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including maximum possible access to the NI Curriculum and accordingly we will endeavour to facilitate these opportunities.

## **Definitions**

### **Special Educational Needs**

‘Learning difficulty’ means that the 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’.

*Disability Discrimination Act (1995)*

### **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**

The following areas will encompass all aspects of SEN/Disability as laid out in the document RECORDING SEN AND MEDICAL CATEGORIES GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS January 2019

1. COGNITION AND LEARNING (CL) – Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Numeracy
2. SOCIAL, BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND WELL-BEING (SBEW)
3. SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (SLCN)
4. SENSORY (SE)
5. PHYSICAL NEEDS (PN)

*'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 embed an inclusive ethos within our school, this policy links closely with all other policies in supporting all pupils.

## **Gifted & Talented**

‘The term Gifted and Talented is used to describe those students who are achieving or who have the potential to achieve a level substantially beyond the rest of their peer group inside their particular school. Gifted and Talented pupils may also present with a learning difficulty.’

*(Guidelines for Teachers NCCA/CEA 2007)*

‘The term dual or multiple exceptionality (DME) is used to describe a group of educationally vulnerable pupils who belong characteristically to both the SEN and G&T groups. In many instances it is the features of SEN that are dominant and the other gifts, talents and exceptional abilities may be hidden or partially hidden.’

*(Guidance on preventing underachievement  
DCFS Ref: 00061-2007BKT-EN)*

## **Policy Aims**

1. To identify pupils with SEN/Disability as early and thoroughly as possible through a variety of means and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
2. To ensure full entitlement and access for pupils with SEN/Disability to high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
3. To ensure that all pupils with SEN/Disability feel valued and have a positive self-image. To offer curricular, pastoral and extra-curricular experiences and opportunities which allow pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills so ensuring progress, promoting success and self-confidence.
4. To encourage parental and pupil involvement in the identification, assessment and support for SEN and to strive for close co-operation between all agencies concerned for a multi-disciplinary approach.  
When considering the wishes of the pupil, his/her age and powers of understanding must be considered.  
The support of parents and pupils is crucial if a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) (previously Individual Education Plan IEP) is to be effectively implemented.
5. To educate pupils with SEN/Disability, wherever possible, alongside their peers within the curriculum of mainstream schools after giving due consideration to the appropriate wishes of their parents and the necessity to meet individual needs.
6. To develop a system for recording continued assessment so that each pupil's performance can be monitored and reviewed appropriately.
7. To stimulate and/or maintain pupil interest and enjoyment in their own education.
8. To encourage the use of a range of teaching strategies which incorporate different learning styles and ensure effective learning.
9. To create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs.
10. To develop and utilise all resources in support of pupils with SEN/Disability.
11. To enable pupils with SEN/Disability to be familiar with a body of knowledge, skills, principles and vocabulary in order for them to lead full and productive lives. The curriculum must be broad to promote intellectual, emotional, social and physical development in order that pupils can develop as valuable members of society both now and in the future e.g. pupils should develop a range of desirable qualities such as safety awareness, politeness, perseverance, initiative and independence.

12. To meet the needs of all pupils who have SEN/Disability by offering continual and appropriate forms of educational provision by the most efficient use of all available resources.

## **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’ (Paragraph 5.12 - page 44 - Supplementary Guide of the Code of Practice)*

In Carrickfergus Academy the following will be used to identify pupils’ needs: -

- Whole school assessment (e.g.CATS)
- Information from transferring school
- Parental information
- Teacher observation
- School assessment (e.g. Tracking assessments/School Exams)
- Standardised tests (e.g. SPARCS, Single Word Reading, Access Reading Test)
- Diagnostic assessment
- Psychological Reports
- COP Stage 3 Reports
- Statements of Special Educational Need
- Medical Advice
- Care Plans
- Key Stage 3 Assessments

It may also be appropriate to include information from social workers, health visitors, therapists and/or other supporting professionals.

## **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 practical day to day running of the provision the Board of Governors have delegated responsibility for pupils with special educational needs to

- Mrs Helen Boyd (LSC and Senior Teacher for Additional Educational Needs)
- Ms Stephanie Fox (Assistant LSC KS4)
- Mrs Alison Bloxsom (Assistant LSC KS5 Access Arrangements)

## **Board of Governors**

The BOG should:

- ensure that all pupils' special educational needs are addressed have regard for the Code of Practice have regard for the school's SEN (and Inclusion) Policy ensure the policy is kept under review
- ensure that appropriate funds and resources are delegated to SEN

## **Principal**

The principal should:

- keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN issues work in close partnership with the LSC where necessary liaise with parents and external agencies delegate and monitor the SEN budget
- ensure the 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 SDP.

## **Learning Support Co-ordinator**

previously known as (SENCO)

The LSC (and assistant) should:

- co-ordinate the day to day provision of the school's SEN (and Inclusion) Policy liaise with and delegate responsibility to Assistant SENCO liaise with and advise colleagues
- co-ordinate provision for children with special educational needs maintain the school's SEN register and oversee the records of all pupils with special educational needs
- organise necessary reviews and referrals
- liaise with parents
- liaise with external agencies
- contribute to the in-service training of staff
- utilise Learning Support Assistant expertise in staff development

## **Learning Support Teacher**

The Learning Support teacher will work under the direction of the SENCO.

He/she should:

- be aware of current legislation
- be familiar with the administrative process within the school
- be involved in testing and recording data in order to support the SEN Register
- work closely with all members of staff to identify pupils' needs throughout the school

- implement the delivery of suitable programmes for all identified pupils with SEN/Disability which promote progression within an inclusive setting
- contribute to PLPs which inform learning and teaching monitor and review progress
- be involved in the Annual Review process
- attend professional development training

### **Year Mentor**

A Year Mentor should:

- be aware of current legislation
- keep up to date with the SEN Register / SEN information lists
- liaise with Class Teachers/Subject Teachers regarding pupils on the SEN register who are experiencing difficulty
- work closely with the SENCO
- update records and PLPs as appropriate

### **Subject Leader**

Subject Leaders should:

- be aware of current legislation,
- keep up to date with the SEN Register/information lists and ensure new members of department are familiar with the SEN (and Inclusion) Policy
- ensure that practice and procedures within the department promote learning and teaching which is relevant and accessible to all pupils
- support subject teachers to enable them to provide an appropriate and differentiated curriculum
- ensure appropriate resources are available
- discuss issues with subject teachers through departmental meetings and forward appropriate information to the SENCO

### **Subject/Class Teachers**

Subject/Class Teachers should:

- be aware of current legislation
- keep up to date with information on the SEN Register/information lists
- know which pupils have a PLP
- plan lessons in accordance with any pupils with SEN/PLPs
- gather information through observation and assessment
- contribute to PLPs in consultation with the SENCO
- develop an inclusive classroom
- work closely with other staff to plan for learning and teaching
- work closely with and involve classroom assistants as part of the learning team
- liaise with Subject Leader/Year Mentors

## **Learning Support Assistants**

Learning Support Assistants should:

- work under the direction of the class teacher
- be involved in planning and contribute to the development of PLPs
- look for positives by talking to the pupil about his/her strengths
- provide practical support listen to the pupil/speak to staff on the pupil's behalf
- explain boundaries and operate these consistently and fairly
- keep records and attend meetings when appropriate including Annual Reviews
- assist with examinations
- share good practice

Reference should be made to the documents titled 'Guidance on the Management, Deployment and Development of Assistants in School'

## **Pupils**

'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 – para 1.19*)

Pupils should:

- engage in their learning
- contribute to the assessment of their needs
- contribute to education plans by the setting of learning targets
- work towards achieving agreed targets
- contribute to the review of PLPs, annual reviews and the transition process

## **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 the school's responsibility to inform parents when considering placing the child's name on the SEN register and invite them to meet with staff to discuss their child's needs, attend annual review meetings (for Statemented pupils), inform staff of changes in circumstances

Parents should:

- inform the school of any specific identified needs as early as possible on entry to the school.
- encourage pupils to engage in their own learning
- support targets and encourage children to meet their targets on PLPs

## **The Structure of SEN in Carrickfergus Academy**

Carrickfergus Academy will follow the 3 stage approach as set out in The Code of Practice.

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

In most cases any movement through the 3 Stage process will occur in a smooth linear fashion. However, in exceptional circumstances, pupils may demonstrate such significant or unforeseen difficulties that with multi-professional and parental agreement a move to a further stage is necessary immediately.

### **Identify need – In school provision Pre Code of Practice Registration**

When an initial concern is expressed following observation of classroom practice and on-going assessment **or** information is passed on from parent/Primary School

- LSCs will keep records of needs identified for any pupil pre-COP and on COP for staff to refer to when planning lessons.
- Subject teacher informs LSC/Subject Leader/Year Mentor following school procedure
- Subject Leader/Year Mentor may invite parent and pupil to a meeting/make contact by phone
- Subject teacher/Subject Leader/LSC provides the necessary information to set targets for individual pupils (e.g. on a focused report where appropriate or an IBP – Individual Behaviour Plan)
- Subject teacher organises class groupings/resources etc in order to help the child achieve the targets set
- Subject teacher will monitor and review progress
- Subject teacher will report back to LSC/Subject Leader/Year Mentor/Parent

### **Stage 1 – In school provision REGISTERED on the Code of Practice**

- Following a need being identified and action having been taken, or when a concern is expressed by several teachers, parent, Health or Social Services professional.
- Year Mentor discusses concerns with LSC who registers pupil's needs and agrees that Stage 1 support is appropriate
- LSC and relevant teachers work together using all available information to agree way forward
- LSC/Year Mentor and relevant teachers draw up PLP and discuss targets with pupil and parent
- PLP implemented and reviewed with pupil and parental involvement.
- After review and consultation with Year mentors/subject teachers/parent/pupil the LSC/SLT will decide whether to continue at Stage 1 or move the pupil back to Identify Need or on to Stage 2

### **Stage 2 – Refer to outside agencies**

- Following Stage 1 review or when further concern is expressed by teachers, parent, Health or Social Services professional LSC registers child's needs and agrees; having consulted with parent and Principal, that intensive action and specialist support is required
- LSC reviews available information, consults Support Services and contacts EPS
- Stage 2 Referral Form is completed following consultation with parent, pupil and Educational Psychologist
- Stage 2 assessment carried out and recommendations made
- PLP drawn up, implemented and reviewed with all involved
- Any issues discussed with Principal
- Following review, pupil remains at Stage 2/reverts to Stage 1 /Principal requests Statutory Assessment

#### Education Authority Stage 2 Support Services

all of which are ONLY accessible through Educational Psychology

- AIAS (Autism Intervention and Advisory Service)
- Audiology
- Post Primary behaviour Support and Provision
- LTSS (Literacy Teaching & Support Service)
- Speech and Language
- Visual Impairment

#### Support Services accessible ONLY through GP/Heath Trust

- CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Paediatric Autism Advisory Service
- BAS – Behaviour assessment Service

### **Stage 3 – Statement of Special Educational Needs**

Once statutory assessment has been completed and the statement has been finalised:

- provision and /or support will be arranged to meet the pupil's needs a Stage 3 PLP will be drawn up and implemented
- the Annual Review and Transition process will take place

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 assessment of the child's progress.

- The annual review will assess the pupil's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the statement will review the special provision made for the child, including placement will consider the appropriateness of maintaining the statement
- The school will undertake the Review on behalf of the Board.
- The review meeting will take place in school and will be chaired by the LSC or Assistant LSC.
- Annual Review form (AR) and Transition Plans will be forwarded to the Education Authority following this meeting.

### **Learning & Teaching**

All children have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum.

This involves all staff in utilising a range of teaching strategies and classroom management styles designed to take account of the differing abilities, interests and experiences of pupils.

In order to facilitate this:

- work should be stimulating
- it should be differentiated so that the pupils can experience success yet challenging enough to promote progression in learning
- work should allow pupils to progress at their own rate, yet encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning
- staff should give positive feedback and the achievements of pupils with SEN celebrated
- staff should be sensitive to pupils' literacy and numeracy difficulties and how this impacts on communication. This needs to be taken into consideration when giving instructions lessons should be structured in a series of simple clearly defined steps
- the classroom environment should be inclusive, stimulating and attractive, featuring as much pupil work as possible

## **Special Arrangements for Examinations**

Special Arrangements for Examinations are designed to provide access for pupils with specified learning difficulties

Pupils will be only considered in accordance with the national regulations agreed by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

Such arrangements should be the normal way of working

The final decision regarding this remains with the Principal

Once it has been agreed that a pupil qualifies for special arrangements it is the responsibility of the examinations officer to ensure these are implemented.

## **Continued Professional Development**

It is essential that all staff keep up to date with current developments in order to best provide for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

All INSET will be organised in consultation with the LSC

## **Annual Report**

The BOG will receive a report each year on SEN provision in Carrickfergus Academy.

## **Accessibility**

At present pupils with Special Educational Needs &/or Disabilities have equal access to all areas of the school building. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and contact made to EA as required.

## **Complaints**

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

## **Advice and Information Service**

An Advice and Information Service has been set up by the EA to support parents of children with Special Educational Needs. This can be accessed by telephoning 028 25661313

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

This service was established and came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005 as part of the implementation of the Special Needs and Disability Order (SENDO).

DARS works with schools and parents/guardians to avoid and resolve disagreements in relation to special educational needs and provision, within an independent, confidential and informal forum.

DARS aims to provide an independent, confidential forum to resolve or reduce the areas of disagreement between parents and schools/Boards of Governors or EA 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 neutral venue) but do not have the authority to resolve a dispute

Agreement can only be reached with the approval of interested parties

DARS is separate and independent from Special Education - involvement with the DARS will not affect the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

Parents/Guardians may contact this service directly.

As from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 provision of the DARS service has been transferred by the EA to Global Mediation, an independent organisation. This change in provision is in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 which requires EA to commission an independent DARS.

The legislation also requires the introduction of a new mediation service for all those who intend to appeal to the Special educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. This will be introduced at a later stage when the necessary regulations are approved.

**If you wish to access DARS please contact Global Mediation at  
Global Mediation**

**55-59 Adelaide Street, Belfast**

**Tel: 02890 726 060**

**Email: [DARS@globalmediation.co.uk](mailto:DARS@globalmediation.co.uk)**

**Website: [www.globalmediation.co.uk/DARS](http://www.globalmediation.co.uk/DARS)**

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

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) considers parents' appeals against the decisions of the Education Authority about children's special educational needs, where the parents cannot reach agreement with the Education Authority. It also deals with claims of disability discrimination in relation to children at school.

Further information regarding the appeals procedure can be obtained from:

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

*2nd Floor*

*Royal Courts of Justice  
Chichester Street Belfast  
BT1 3JF*

Tel: 0300 200 7812

Email: [tribunalsunit@courtsni.gov.uk](mailto:tribunalsunit@courtsni.gov.uk)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-and-disabilitytribunal-0>

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

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

Information will be discussed and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team. Any amendments considered necessary will be forwarded to the Board of Governors for approval.