

Special Educational Needs Policy

Definition of Special Educational Needs

Pupils have special educational needs if they have a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special educational provision* to be made for them.

Pupils have a *learning difficulty* if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age,
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority
- are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.

Pupils must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

For pupils of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area

This SEN policy details how this school will do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has special educational needs and those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them. The school will use its best endeavours to ensure that teachers in the school are able to identify and provide for those pupils who have special educational needs to allow pupils with special educational needs join in the activities of the school together with pupils who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the child receiving the special educational provision and the efficient education of the pupils with whom they are educated.

The school will have regard to the Code of Practice when carrying out its duties toward all pupils with special educational needs and ensure that parents are notified of a decision by the school that SEN provision is being made for their child.

Partnership with parents plays a key role in enabling children and young people with SEN to achieve their potential. The school recognises that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents of children with special educational needs will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valued role in their children's education.

Young people with special educational needs often have a unique knowledge of their own needs and their views about what sort of help they would like to help them make the most of their education will be ascertained. They will be encouraged to participate in all the decision-making processes and contribute to the assessment of their needs, the review and transition processes.

Identification, Assessment and Provision

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a matter for the school as a whole. In addition to the governing body, the school's head teacher, SENCO and learning support team, all other members of staff have important responsibilities.

All teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs.

Teaching such pupils is a whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response. Central to the work of every class and every subject is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation that takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the pupils. The majority of pupils will learn and progress within these arrangements. However, for pupils with special educational needs, there may be a need to provide an enhanced level of provision that supports and enhances their learning abilities.

Graduated response

Schools will adopt a graduated response to meeting special educational needs that requires the initial use of classroom and school resources before bringing specialist expertise to bear on the difficulties that a pupil is experiencing. When a young person is identified as having special educational needs, the school will intervene as described below at **School Action** and **School Action Plus**. Such interventions are a means of helping schools and parents match special educational provision to individual pupil needs. School will record the steps taken to meet the needs of individual children

If a pupil is known to have special educational needs when they arrive at the school, the head teacher, SENCO, literacy and numeracy coordinators, departmental and pastoral colleagues will:

- use information from the primary school to provide an appropriate curriculum for the pupil and focus attention on action to support the pupil within the class
- ensure that ongoing observation and assessment provides feedback about pupil's achievements to inform future planning of the pupil's learning
- ensure opportunities for the pupil to show what they know, understand and can do through the pastoral programme
- involve the pupil in planning and agreeing targets to meet their needs
- involve parents in developing a joint learning approach at home and in school.

Early Identification

Assessment is a continuing process that can identify pupils who may have special educational needs. The school will measure children's progress by referring to:

- evidence from teacher observation and assessment
- their performance against the level descriptions within the National Curriculum at the end of a key stage

- their progress against the objectives specified in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Frameworks
- standardised screening or assessment tools.

English as an additional language

The identification and assessment of the special educational needs of young people whose first language is not English requires particular care. Where there is uncertainty about an individual, the school will look carefully at all aspects of a pupil's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of the language that is used there or arise from special educational needs.

The role of the SENCO

The SEN Coordinator (SENCO), in collaboration with the head teacher and governing body, plays a key role in helping to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school to raise the achievement of pupils with SEN. The key responsibilities of the SENCO may include:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy
- liaising with and advising fellow teachers
- managing the SEN team of teachers and learning support assistants
- coordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs
- overseeing the records on all pupils with special educational needs
- liaising with parents of pupils with special educational needs
- contributing to the in-service training of staff
- liaising with external agencies including the LEA's support and educational psychology services, the Connexions PA, health and social services and voluntary bodies.

Monitoring pupil progress

Teachers may conclude that the strategies they are currently using with a pupil are not resulting in the pupil learning as effectively as possible. In these circumstances, they will consult the SENCO to consider what else might be done. The starting point will always be a review of the strategies being used and the way in which these might be developed. Evaluation of the strategies in place may lead to the conclusion that the pupil requires help over and above that which is normally available within the particular class or subject. Consideration should then be given to helping the pupil through *School Action*. The key test of the need for action is evidence that current rates of progress are inadequate. Adequate progress can be defined in a number of ways. It might, for instance, be progress which:

- closes the attainment gap between the pupil and the pupil's peers
- prevents the attainment gap growing wider
- is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers
- matches or betters the pupil's previous rate of progress

- ensures access to the full curriculum
- demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills
- demonstrates improvements in the pupil's behaviour
- is likely to lead to appropriate accreditation
- is likely to lead to participation in further education, training and/or employment.

School Action

When a pupil is identified as having special educational needs, school will provide interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum. This intervention will be described as **School Action**.

The triggers for intervention through *School Action* could be concern, underpinned by evidence, about a pupil who, despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities:

- makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in a pupil's identified area of weakness
- shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or mathematics skills that result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas
- presents persistent emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the school
- has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum.

If school concludes, after consulting parents, that a pupil may need further support to help them progress, they will consider their reasons for concern alongside any information about the pupil already available to the school. The school SENCO will support the assessment of the pupil, assisting in planning future support for the pupil in discussion with colleagues and monitoring the action taken. The pupil's subject and pastoral teachers will remain responsible for working with the pupil and for planning and delivering an individualised programme.

In some cases outside professionals from health or social services may already be involved with the child. In such instances it is good practice for these professionals to liaise with the school and keep them informed of their input. If these professionals have not been working with the school, the SENCO, with the parent's permission, will contact them.

Nature of intervention

The SENCO and the pupil's subject teachers should decide on the action needed to help the pupil to progress in the light of their earlier assessment. This might be:-

- to provide different learning materials or special equipment,
- to introduce some group or individual support,

- to devote extra adult time to devising the nature of the planned intervention and to monitoring its effectiveness
- to undertake staff development and training aimed at introducing more effective strategies.
- access to LEA support services for one-off occasional advice on strategies or equipment or for staff training may make it possible
- to provide effective intervention without the need for regular or ongoing input from external agencies.

Individual Education Plans

Strategies employed to enable the pupil to progress should be recorded within an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP should include information about:-

- the short-term targets set for or by the pupil
- the teaching strategies to be used
- the provision to be put in place
- when the plan is to be reviewed
- outcomes (to be recorded when IEP is reviewed).

The IEP will only record that which is additional to or different from the differentiated curriculum provision and will focus on three or four individual targets to match the pupils needs. The IEP will be reviewed at least twice a year when parents' views on their child's progress will be sought. The pupil also will be invited to contribute to the review process and be involved in setting the targets.

School Action Plus

School Action Plus is characterized by the involvement of external services such as special needs advisory teachers, educational psychologists etc. A request for help from external services is likely to follow a decision taken by the SENCO and colleagues, in consultation with parents, at a review of the child's IEP. At *School Action Plus* external support services will usually see the child, so that they can advise subject and pastoral staff on new IEPs, with fresh targets and accompanying strategies, provide more specialist assessments that can inform planning and the measurement of a pupil's progress, give advice on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials, and in some cases provide support for particular activities. The triggers for *School Action Plus* could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme and/or concentrated support, the pupil:

- continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period
- continues working at National Curriculum levels substantially below that expected of pupils of a similar age
- continues to have difficulty in developing literacy and mathematics skills
- has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with their own learning or that of the class group, despite having an individualised behaviour management programme
- has sensory or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits, providing direct intervention to the pupil or advice to the staff, by a specialist service

- has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

When school seeks the help of external support services, those services will need to see the pupil's records in order to establish which strategies have already been employed and which targets have been set and achieved. The external specialist may act in an advisory capacity, provide additional specialist assessment or be involved in teaching the pupil directly. The resulting IEP for the pupil will set out new strategies for supporting the pupil's progress with the strategies specified in the IEP, implemented, at least in part, in the classroom setting. Delivery of the IEP will remain the responsibility of subject teachers.

If the SENCO and the external specialist consider that the information gathered about the pupil is insufficient, and that more detailed advice must be obtained from other outside professionals, then the consent of the pupil's parents will be sought.

School request for statutory assessment

For a few pupils the help given by schools through *Action Plus* may not be sufficient to enable the pupil to make adequate progress. It will then be necessary for the school, in consultation with the parents and any external agencies already involved, to consider whether to ask the LEA to initiate a statutory assessment. Where a request for a statutory assessment is made to an LEA, the pupil will have demonstrated significant cause for concern and the school will provide written evidence to the LEA detailing :

- the school's action through *School Action* and *School Action Plus*
- individual education plans for the pupil
- records of regular reviews and their outcomes
- the pupil's health including the pupil's medical history where relevant
- National Curriculum levels attainments in literacy and mathematics
- educational and other assessments, for example from an advisory specialist support teacher or an educational psychologist
- views of the parents and of the pupil
- involvement of other professionals
- any involvement by the social services or education welfare service.

When the LEA receives a request for a statutory assessment, it must decide within six weeks whether to carry out such an assessment.

Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs

Statutory assessment involves consideration by the LEA, working co-operatively with parents, the child's school and, as appropriate, other agencies, as to whether a statutory assessment of the child's special educational needs is necessary. A child will be brought to the LEA's attention as possibly requiring an assessment through a request by the child's school, from a parent or a referral by another agency. Where the evidence presented to the LEA suggests that the child's learning difficulties have not responded to relevant and purposeful measures taken by the school and external specialists and may call for special educational provision which cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to mainstream schools, the LEA will consider the case for a statutory assessment of the child's special educational needs. The LEA may decide that the degree of the pupil's learning difficulty and the nature

of the provision necessary to meet the child's special educational needs is such as to require the LEA to determine the child's special educational provision through a **statement of special educational needs**.

A statement of special education needs will include:

- the pupil's name, address and date of birth
- details of all of the pupils special needs
- identify the special educational provision necessary to meet the pupil special educational needs
- Identify the type and name of the school where the provision is to be made
- Include relevant non-educational needs of the child
- Include information on non-educational provision

All children with statements of special educational needs will have short-term targets set for them that have been established after consultation with parents, child and include targets identified in the statement of educational need. These targets will be set out in an IEP and be implemented, at least in part and as far as possible, in the normal classroom setting. The delivery of the interventions recorded in the IEP will continue to be the responsibility of the class teacher.

Annual review of a statement of special educational needs

All statements will be reviewed at least annually with the parents, the pupil, the LEA and the school to consider whether any amendments need to be made to the description of the pupil's needs or to the special educational provision specified in the statement. The annual review should focus on what the child has achieved as well as on difficulties that need to be resolved. The annual review held in year 9 will be particularly significant in preparing for the pupil's transition to employment, the further education sector, work-based training, higher education and adult life. The aim of the annual review in year 9 and subsequent years is to review the young persons statement and draw up and review the Transition Plan. This must involve the Connexions Service. (Details 9:45 Code of Practice 2001)

The information in this policy is taken from
Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. DfEE 581/2001 November
2001 available from
DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley,
Nottinghamshire, NG15 0DJ 0845 60 222 60

This policy has been written by Carol Smart, editor of Special Needs Information Press www.snip-newsletter.co.uk to support colleagues in developing their own school/educational setting SEN policy. The information on procedure has been taken directly from *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* Revised Nov 2001 but should not be simply printed off and filed. This policy is a framework that SENCOs will need to read through and alter and add to, in order to fit their own specific requirements in their educational placement. The Code of Practice remains guidelines and the suggestions regarding action should not therefore be regarded as always appropriate or even correct in all circumstances for all educational situations. It is important that what is stated in your school policy is what actually takes place, so ensure that it is discussed with colleagues and the resulting policy **Identifies your schools practice**. The new Code suggests that SENCOs should be involved in assessing previous information, assessment, informing staff and parents of action, reviewing and monitoring all pupils with SEN –new entrants to the school school, those on School Action, School Action Plus and those with Statements. In some situations this is neither attainable nor practical due to lack of time. Many may consider it undesirable – class/subject teachers

themselves need to be empowered to identify and meet pupils needs. Therefore some SEN policies may state that the SENCo will be involved in providing advice but not until School Action Plus and above will be assessing, setting targets, reviewing, seeing parents etc.

Add details of any special arrangements you have in schools that may allow support of those pupils with SEN e.g. Nurture groups, Inclusion Units. You may have specific pastoral arrangements that promote inclusion of vulnerable pupils. Detail these.

It is also important to **keep the SEN Policy on the word processor** to ensure it is readily available to alter to fit changing situations. Details such as the school/educational settings name should be included, as should the name of the SENCo and the SEN Governor who should be the person to whom concerns relating to the application of the policy are addressed. As **Disability and Inclusion** legislation continue to make an impact upon schools, details will also need to be added to ensure the policy is kept up to date.

I hope this has reduced your workload a little!