

Special Educational Needs

Policy

Policy Number: 2022/01

Revision: 4

Previous Revision: 2019/15

2017/11

2013

Summary:

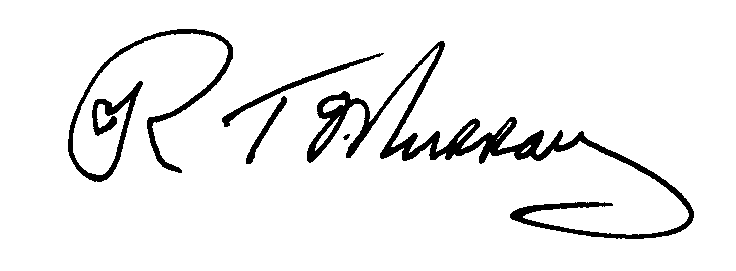
Our aim is to secure inclusion at the heart of Strangford College, permeating all policies and practices to maximise the participation, learning and well-being of all students. We will ensure that every student reaches his or her potential by encouraging students to develop wherever they enjoy success and by working with the students, their teachers and their parents to overcome potential barriers to learning.

Board of Governors

Submission for Ratification:

April 2022

**Chairperson:**



**Principal:**



This policy replaces any previous policies and is valid from:

31st March 2022

To be reviewed & updated by:

Mr M Kirkham

By 1st September 2024



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1. **School Mission Statement and Aims**

Strangford College offers students of different abilities, religions and cultural backgrounds the opportunity to be educated together in a caring, trusting and inclusive community, which seeks to maximise their full potential and celebrate their achievements.

The College seeks to prepare students for adult life by developing:

* self-esteem;
* respect for others and the environment;
* ability to work both independently and in co-operation with others;
* physical, spiritual, emotional and moral well-being;
* social and communication skills;
* a sense of fairness and mutual understanding which will enable them to be valuable and effective members of society;
* ability to make informed and appropriate decisions.

We believe that every student will realise their full potential by experiencing:

* positive relationships;
* innovative and creative teaching strategies;
* an open and honest discussion in a stimulating and safe environment;
* a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which meets the needs of individual students;
* an enriching programme of extra-curricular activities.

Above all we believe that young people entrusted to our care can achieve their full potential through an open and transparent partnership between the students, parents / carers and staff of the College.

**2**. **Aims of SEN Policy**

Our aim is to secure inclusion at the heart of Strangford College, permeating all policies and practices to maximise the participation, learning and well-being of all students. We will ensure that every student reaches his or her potential by encouraging students to develop wherever they enjoy success and by working with the students, their teachers and their parents to overcome potential barriers to learning.

**3**. **Legislative framework and context**

This Policy has been developed within the context of current legislation, policy, guidelines, and Education Authority advice.

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 established a framework for SEN into four main areas:

* Defining students who have SEN
* Establishing procedures for identifying and assessing students with SEN
* Determining appropriate educational provision
* Enabling parents / carers to be involved in decisions regarding their student’s education.

The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. (DE, Operative date: 1st September 1998)

Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO) (DE, Operative date: 1st September 2005)

* Strengthens the rights of students with SEN to be educated in mainstream schools
* Prohibits disability discrimination
* Requires responsible bodies to prepare accessibility strategies and plans for improved access to curriculum, premises and information for students.

Post-SENDO, schools have a duty of care in planning to take reasonable steps to ensure that:

* All students have access to the curriculum;
* That the physical environment of the school caters to the needs of all students and prospective students;
* That communication between the school and the student, and between the school and the home, is via a suitable medium (i.e. if a parent is unable to accurately read English, the school must communicate with the home in a more suitable fashion).
* Under Article 4 of SENDO (2005), The Education Authority is required to provide information to parents of children with SEN. Therefore, the EA has an Advice and Information Service (AIS).
* Under Article 5 of SENDO, the EA has an additional means of avoiding and resolving disagreements with parents of students who are on the SEN register (DARS), i.e. Dispute Avoidance Resolution Service.
* Under Article 9 of SENDO, Governors of grant aided schools must inform the parents if they are making SEN provision for their child. Also the Governors must inform parents about the AIS.

The Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification of Special Educational Needs (DE, 2005)

Guidance for schools: Recording Students with Special Educational Needs (DE, 2005)

Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (Equality Commission, 2006)

“Supporting Students with Medication needs”, guidance document from the Department of Education and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2008)

Provisional Criteria for Initiating Statutory Assessments of Special Educational Need. (ELBs Regional Operative date: 1st September 2009)

Good Practice Guidelines (ELBs Regional Operative date: 1st September 2009)

The Resource file to support students with Special Educational Needs (DE 2010)

ASPIRE (Self Study Module to support the implementation of the Resource File), (2012)

The SEN Review

The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion (DE 2009) Proposals

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion (The Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education Official Report (Hansard), January 2012).

(The development of the SEN Review proposals).

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion (The Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education Official Report (Hansard), May 2012).

(The development of the SEN Review proposals).

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016.

DE Circular 2019/03; SEN and Medical Needs Categories – Guidance for Schools, January 2019.

DE Circular 2021/06 - Three Stages of Special Educational Provision.

**4. Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and other terms**

The Code of Practice 1998 was issued by the Department of Education under Article 4 of the Education (NI) Order 1996 and became operative in September 1998.

The term “**Special Educational Needs” (SEN)** is defined as “a learning difficulty which calls for Special Educational provision to be made.” Special Educational Needs may be permanent or temporary and may change over time.

**“Learning Difficulty”** means that the student has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of his/her age, and / or has a disability which hinders his or her use of everyday educational facilities. A learning difficulty does not mean the young person has a Special Educational Need if their needs can be met through differentiation by the class teacher.

**“Special Educational provision”** does not include differentiation by the class teacher. It means educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for students of comparable age. Special Educational provision may include withdrawal from class for extra work on literacy, numeracy, social skills or Learning support mentoring; in class support from learning support staff; use of technology such as ICT; adult attention e.g. teaching and learning assistant support; access to Education Authority Outreach Services for behaviour, Autism etc. (Ref: Code of Practice 1998, page 1)

**“Inclusion”** is the process whereby integration is achieved. Inclusion is about minimising all barriers to education for all students.

**“Learning difficulty”** means that a student has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of comparable age, or has a disability which hinders his or her use of the kind of facilities generally provided in ordinary schools. A “specific learning difficulty” relates to a learning difficulty in one particular area e.g. a student with dyslexia has a specific learning difficulty with regard to literacy.

**“Additional educational provision”** means educational provision which is different from or additional to, provision made generally for students of comparable age.

**“Access Arrangements”** refer to special exam arrangements put in place for students in order to demonstrate their understanding of the curriculum.

The term **“disability”** refers to someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Ref: Disability Discrimination Act (1995), SENDO (NI) (2005). Long term means a period of more than 12 months)

**5. Categories of special educational needs**

The Department of Education has identified seven “areas” of special educational need. Within each area there are a number of SEN categories which are as follows:

1. Cognitive and Learning – language, literacy, mathematics and numeracy.
   1. Dyslexia/SpLD
   2. Dyscalculia/SpLD
   3. Moderate Learning Difficulties

f) Severe Learning Difficulties

g) Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

1. Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Wellbeing
   1. Social and behavioural difficulties
   2. Emotional and wellbeing difficulties
   3. Severe challenging behaviour with SLD and or/ PMLD
2. Speech, language and Communication
   1. Developmental language disorder
   2. Language disorder associated with a differentiating/biomedical condition
   3. Communication and social interaction difficulties
3. Sensory
   1. Blind
   2. Partially sighted
   3. Severe/profound hearing impairment
   4. mild/moderate hearing impairment
   5. multisensory impairment
4. Physical needs
   1. Physical

There is also another category of Under Assessment. It is not anticipated that this will be frequently used.

(Ref: DE’s SEN and Medical Needs Categories – Guidance for Schools, January 2019.)

**6. Admission Arrangements**

Admissions with respect to students with SEN are consistent with the school’s general admissions policy. Strangford College is an inclusive, all-ability 11 to 18 school. Students with statements of special educational need are placed in schools at the request of the Education Authority.

For students with a statement of special educational need, the Principal and the Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSCo), in consultation with school staff, EA officers, parents / carers and other relevant professionals, make decisions regarding whether the school can meet the student’s needs, and whether educating the student at Strangford College would be compatible with the provision of efficient education for the students with whom she or he would be educated. Students with SEN are supernumerary.

**7. Identification and assessment of needs**

Early identification of SEN is important for the student. To that end we gather information from various sources as detailed below, and the LS department co-ordinates action between staff, students and parents / carers in response:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Data from:** | **Gathered by:** |
| Key Stage 2 Individual Education Plans; primary school records; previous post-primary school records | Head of Year , Year 8 and LSCo / Assistant LSCo. |
| IEPs and previous school’s records. | Head of Year of relevant year and LSCo / Assistant LSCo. |
| Transfer data forms; parental replies to draft IEPs; parental written contributions to annual reviews; assessments and reports from medical and other professionals. | Head of Year of relevant year and LSCo / Assistant LSCo. |
| Staff circular; Record of Concern (Stage 1); school trackers / reports. | Form tutor and LSCo / Assistant LSCo. |
| Progress in English tests;  Blackwell Spelling Tests; Group Reading Assessments;  Progress in Maths tests | Subject teachers and LSCo / Assistant LSCo. |
| Standardised literacy assessment results, e.g. Accelerated Reader,, Diagnostic Reading Analysis, SPaRCS (Spelling, Processing and Reading Comprehension) assessment, and New Group Reading Test results. | Literacy Co-ordinator and LSCo / Assistant LSCo. |
| GL Dyslexia and Dyscalculia screener results | LSCo / Assistant LSCo |
| Maths Mastery results. | Numeracy Co-ordinator and LSCo . |
| Reports, e.g. from educational psychologists, occupational therapists, health professionals, social services, private tutors, CAMHS, social services and others. | Heads of Year, Form Tutors and LSCo / Assistant LSCo . |
| Behaviour reports and records; links with outreach services, social services &c. | Year Group Head of Years, Senior Leadership team, LSCo / Assistant LSCo |

**8. Arrangements for co-ordinating provision**

Board of Governors have a responsibility to:

* determine and keep under review the school policy for special educational needs;
* fully implement its policy to ensure that the students’ special educational needs are met;
* provide opportunity for the LSCo / Assistant LSCo to report annually;
* inform parents / carers if making SEN provision for a student (delegated to LSCo / Assistant LSCo);
* report annually to parents / carers on SEN;
* ensure that all statutory requirements regarding SEN are met;
* appoint a Governor with responsibility for SEN.

The Principal has a responsibility to:

* manage provision for students with special educational needs, including co-ordinating staff training;
* keep governors fully informed about additional educational provision, including new Governors by inclusion of this policy in their induction pack;
* keep informed of statutory developments regarding SEN;
* ensure links between SLT and LSCo / Assistant LSCo;
* fulfil statutory responsibilities, delegating as appropriate, e.g. annual reviews for students with statements of SEN.

Senior Teachers and Core Leadership Team have a responsibility to:

* To have SEN as a standing item at Senior Leadership Team meetings;
* To work with the LSCo / Assistant LSCo on aspects of their individual roles which have a SEN dimension, e.g. SEN is considered in teaching and learning, there is full data on SEN available to staff &c.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has a responsibility to:

* oversee and co-ordinate the day-to-day operation of school policy for SEN;
* liaise with and provide support and advice for colleagues;
* co-ordinate the identification of the needs of students with SEN;
* report to the Governors, Principal and SLT regarding provision for students with special educational needs, and advising the Principal and SLT on an ongoing basis;
* provide and co-ordinate support for students with SEN, including management of learning support team, and review and evaluate this provision;
* maintain the SEN register, including SIMS data;
* liaise with parents / carers of students with SEN and with external agencies;
* co-ordinate staff development and INSET for SEN;
* liaise with exams officer regarding access arrangements;
* keep informed of statutory developments regarding SEN and ensure that the College meets its obligations.

The Assistant LSCo has a responsibility to:

* assist LSCo with the above;
* work with teaching staff, support staff, parents / carers, students and appropriate external agencies and experts to draw up educational plans, including targets, for students with SEN;
* timetable the work of classroom assistants and co-ordinate their day-to-day deployment;
* co-ordinate the assessment of students’ literacy and provision to meet their literacy needs.

The Teaching and Learning Assistant has a responsibility to:

* be familiar with the needs of their student(s);
* meet the needs of these students with the direction and support of the LSCo / Assistant LSCo.

The Year Group Learning Co-ordinator has a responsibility to:

* liaise with the LSCo / Assistant LSCo and the pastoral team regarding students’ educational, learning and pastoral needs;
* work with the LSCo / Assistant LSCo using dashboards to support and advise tutors and teachers;
* maintain SEN as a standing agenda item for pastoral team meetings.

The Form Tutor has a responsibility to:

* work with the Year Group Learning Co-ordinator and LSCo / Assistant LSCo to gather information regarding students;
* liaise with parents / carers as appropriate.

The Subject Leader has a responsibility to:

* ensure work is differentiated to meet the needs of all students as appropriate, consulting LS staff where necessary on differentiated resources;
* work with LS staff to use dashboards to support and advise subject teachers;
* maintain SEN as a standing agenda item for departmental meetings.

The Subject Teacher has a responsibility to:

* ensure that appropriate differentiation to enable students to overcome barriers to learning
* notify the LSCo / Assistant LSCo the students who still present with barriers to learning after differentiation.
* use a wide range of strategies, effective differentiation, and a variety of learning opportunities
* have effective classroom practice to support the ability range of the students in the class
* provide help within the normal curricular framework
* use alternative teaching approaches and learning strategies
* plan the classroom organisation to accommodate all learners
* complete Records of Concern for those students who face barriers to learning which are not overcome by the above strategies and approaches
* complete each student’s dashboard to show what targets the student is working towards, strategies the teacher is using, meetings with colleagues and parents / carers, and students’ progress towards targets;
* participate and contribute to reviews regarding a student’s progress;
* discuss each student’s dashboards with parents / carers at consultation evenings &c;
* work with Learning Support Assistants to address students’ needs.

The role of the Learning Support Teacher for students with statements of SEN.

* in consultation with the LSCo / Assistant LSCo and external agencies, identify students’ needs;
* provide tuition to meet these needs;
* draw up dashboards to meet these students’ needs;
* provide support and advice for colleagues;
* liaise with external professionals;
* support, advise and contribute to professional develop for staff;
* keep informed of statutory developments regarding SEN;
* participate in and contribute to reviews of progress for students with SEN.

In carrying out these roles we will all promote the shared values of Strangford College.

Staff development and training takes place regularly to ensure the effective implementation of this policy.

**9. Stages of the Code of Practice**

Stage 1: School-delivered special educational provision. Students receive support from Learning Support staff / pastoral staff extra to the normal classroom or pastoral differentiation.

Stage 2: School-delivered plus external special educational provision, from Education Authority SEN Services and/or Health and Social Care Trust.

Students receive support from Learning Support staff / pastoral staff extra to the normal classroom or pastoral differentiation, plus support from agencies external to school.

Stage 3: School-delivered plus special educational provision as set out in a Statement of Special Educational Need.

All students at Stages 1 to 3 have an Individual Education Plan, soon to become a Personal Learning Plan when the EA makes this change.

**10. Accessibility**

The school / college will make reasonable adjustments and take relevant and purposeful measures to ensure accessibility for all members of the school / college community in relation to accessing the premises, accessing the curriculum, and accessing information.

For students with statements of SEN starting the school, the LSCo / Assistant LSCo and Year 8 Learning Co-ordinator will meet with the student, their parents / carers, the primary / previous school, EA officers and other relevant professionals to plan for the student’s starting and to ensure that reasonable accessibility adjustments are made ahead of the start date.

**11. Access arrangements**

In exams, students’ needs may be such that alternative arrangements have to be made for their College and external tests and examinations, in order for their understanding to be shown. These arrangements might include extra time, rest breaks, alternative rooming, readers, use of IT, amanuenses (scribes), modified papers for the visually impaired, and other arrangements as appropriate. The LSCo / Assistant LSCo and the exams officer implement these arrangements strictly in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations. Students are assessed as early as practicably possible, which may mean during Key Stage 3. If a special assessment need is identified, access arrangements are put in place for school tests and exams as required by JCQ, in order to establish these arrangements as the student’s normal way of working.

As required by JCQ the school has a policy regarding the use of laptops in exams, which also covers some other arrangements delegated to centres.

**12. Partnerships with parents / carers**

We value the support, knowledge, experience and views of parents / carers and will maintain the College’s record of close partnership with parents / carers in making appropriate provision for all students.

Parents / carers are informed by the LSCo / Assistant LSCo of assessments of their child’s needs, including how these affect provision and their child’s status with regard to the SEN register. Dashboards / Educational Plans are drafted in consultation with parents / carers. There is a section for parental support in each Educational Plan.

Parents / carers of students with a statement of SEN are fully involved in the regular target setting and review meetings. Before each review meeting, parents / carers are contacted and asked to make a written submission if they wish.

The EA provides the following services to parents / carers:

* Advice and Information Service (AIS) (Ref: Supplement to Code of Practice 2005, pp 22 – 24)
* Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) (Ref: Supplement to Code of Practice 2005, pp 25 – 29)

Under Data Protection legislation, parents / carers may have copies of all SEN records concerning their child on request, including assessment results.

**13. Concerns and procedures**

For parents / carers:

* If I have a concern about my child’s SEN provision, I can talk to the Form Teacher or Learning Co-ordinator. If necessary, they will gather data from my child’s teachers.
* If I am still concerned, I can talk to the LSCo / Assistant LSCo. If necessary, they will carry out assessments.
* If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Vice Principal or Principal.
* If I am still concerned, I can write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

**14. Links with other schools / external agencies / community**

Contacts with schools to aid student transition.

School staff meet with teachers from our feeder primary schools in the term before transfer. Information gathered includes the names of students on a primary school’s SEN records, along with their Education Plans, files, and primary school records.

When students transfer from other post-primary schools, the Year Group Learning Co-ordinator enquires as to any SEN and if appropriate ask the College’s LSCo / Assistant LSCo to follow up with information gathering from the previous school’s LSCo / Assistant LSCo.

Reciprocally, our LSCo / Assistant LSCo passes on our SEN records to schools and colleges to which our students transfer. Consent in writing is gathered from parents / carers of year 12 and 14 students with Statements of SEN at Annual Review.

Contacts with schools to share best practise.

The EA provides our LSCo / Assistant LSCo with regular opportunities to meet with other LSCo / Assistant LSCos, receive training and share expertise. Informal contacts are maintained with LSCo / Assistant LSCos and special needs staff in neighbouring post-primary schools.

Contacts with other agencies.

Transition plans for students aged 14+ and 16+ with statements of SEN involve the College’s staff working in conjunction with careers support services.

The college’s staff are in contact with a range of external agencies providing expert advice on students with particular needs. Some externally employed professionals work with students in the college on a weekly or monthly basis. In the year to the last revision of this policy (May 2017) these have included peripatetic teachers for students with hearing impairment, EA dyslexia specialist teachers, and the schools support service for students on the autistic spectrum.

The EA Curriculum Advisory and Support Service for SEN is available to the College.

**15. Links with other policies**

This policy is integral to all school policies. It has key links with policies such as Student Protection, Anti Bullying, Health and Safety, Positive Behaviour and a number of curriculum policies such as Literacy, Numeracy and Assessment.

**16. Development, monitoring, review and evaluation of policy**

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff, parents / carers and students and will be monitored, evaluated and updated annually to take cognisance of future developments, changes in legislation et cetera.

The policy will be posted on the school website.

The staff body, the Students’ Council and the Board of Governors will be informed of amendments, and a notice will be posted on the school website to inform parents.

Staff, parent / carers, students, governors and external professionals are welcome to make suggestions at any time.

A formal policy review will take place three years after its adoption by the Board of Governors.

It has been adopted by the Board of Governors, February 2022.

It will be reviewed by September 2024.

**17. Glossary**

ICT Information and Communication Technology.

INSET In-Service Training.

JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications – i.e. the exam boards

EA Education Authority

SEN Special educational needs

LSCo Learning Support Co-ordinator

SIMS The school’s computerised data system

SLT Senior Leadership Team.