



BALLYORAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Special Educational Needs Interim Policy

May 2026

Rationale/Vision

Ballyoran Primary School staff are committed to providing equal access for all our pupils to a broad and balanced educational experience based on the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We recognise that some pupils during their school career may have special educational needs and/or a disability. In the interests of these children, we will endeavour to make every reasonable arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

A graduated response embeds a child-centred ethos, ensuring resources and expertise are matched to individual needs when and where they are needed most. The Graduated Response Framework (GRF) is a structured approach guiding schools in Northern Ireland to identify and support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It ensures that learners and their families are actively involved at every stage, with decisions documented through a Personal Learning Plan (PLP). The six-part IPAMER cycle – Identify, Plan, Action, Monitor, Evaluate, Review - provides the day-to-day steps through which the graduated response is delivered. Each stage in the IPAMER cycle translates the strategic goals of the Graduated Response Framework into concrete tasks and decisions within schools.

The legislation that currently governs practice regarding children and young people (C&YP) with special educational needs (SEN) is the Education Order (1996). The current Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of SEN provides guidance on how the legislation is to be delivered in schools and was published in 1998.

SENDO (2005) increased the rights of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities to be educated in mainstream schools and aimed to ensure that children with disabilities were not disadvantaged compared to their peers in school. This included the school being proactive in areas such as ensuring that the school is prepared with an adapted environment and differentiated curriculum for all children who may wish to attend, including those with SEN/Disabilities. The Supplement to the CoP was published in 2005 and updated parts of the 1998 CoP to reflect the changes following SENDO (2005).

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 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 include 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.

Definitions

For all involved in a child's education it is important that there is a clear understanding of the terms 'special educational needs,' 'learning difficulty' and 'special educational provision, as defined in Article 3 of the 1996 Order.

Special Educational Needs

A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made.

Learning Difficulty

A child has a learning difficulty if:

- (a) they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;
- (b) they have a disability which either prevents or hinders them making use of everyday educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in ordinary schools; or
- (c) they have not attained the lower limit of compulsory school age and is or would be if special educational provision were not made, likely to fall within (a) or (b) when of compulsory school age.

Special Educational Provision

Special educational provision (SpEP) is educational provision, which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in mainstream schools.

Disability

The following definition of disability is taken from the Disability Discrimination Act (1995): A disability is when someone has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. (Paragraph 2.3)

Key Principles of Inclusion

The Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (ECNI, 2006), states: "...all pupils have a right to the same opportunities in the whole of their educational life." All schools should have an inclusive ethos and actively seek to promote the inclusion of all children. Schools should approach inclusion as an integral part of all school policies including the school's SEN policy, school development plan, the school's accessibility plan and policies relating to e.g., discipline, bullying and pastoral care.

SEN and Medical Categories

The following is the list of the five overarching SEN categories and sub-categories taken from: Department of Education Northern Ireland (2019) Recording SEN and Medical Categories – Guidance for Schools, Bangor: DEND).

1. Cognition and Learning (CL) – language, literacy, mathematics, numeracy

- a) Dyslexia (DYL) or Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) - language/literacy
- b) Dyscalculia (DYC) or Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) - mathematics/numeracy
- c) Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- d) Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- e) Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)

2. Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Well-being (SBEW)

- a) Social and Behavioural Difficulties (SBD)

b) Emotional and Well-being Difficulties (EWD)

c) Severe Challenging Behaviour associated with SLD or PMLD (SCB)

3. Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

a) Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

b) Language Disorder associated with a differentiating/ biomedical condition (LD)

c) Communication and Social Interaction Difficulties (CSID)

4. Sensory (SE)

a) Blind (BD)

b) Partially Sighted (PS)

c) Severe/Profound Hearing Impairment (SPHI)

d) Mild or Moderate Hearing Impairment (MMHI)

e) Multi-sensory Impairment (MSI)

5. Physical Need (PN)

a) Physical (P)

Children with a medical condition

Children who have an identified medical condition will be recorded on the school's medical register. Those who do not require special educational provision will be recorded on the Medical register only and will not be placed on the SEN register. A pupil with a medical diagnosis or disability may or may not have a SEN but what is key is "does the pupil have a requirement for special educational provision to access the curriculum."

A pupil can be recorded on both the SEN register and medical register if they have both a medical need and require special educational provision to be made for them.

The Medical Register is the responsibility of the Principal.

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 taken from Department of Education Northern Ireland (2019) Recording SEN and Medical Categories – Guidance for Schools, Bangor: DENI).

- Epilepsy
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Anaphylaxis
- Autism
- 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
- 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

Policy Aims

1. To identify pupils with SEN/disability as early as possible using a variety of measures 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.
3. To ensure that all pupils with SEN/disability feel valued.
4. To offer curricular, pastoral, and extra-curricular opportunities that allow pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills so ensuring progress, promoting success and self-confidence.
5. To offer a broad curriculum which will promote intellectual, emotional, social, and physical progress in order that pupils can develop as valuable members of society both now and in the future.
6. To encourage parental partnerships in all aspects of SEN provision.
7. To consider the views of the child when planning and implementing SEN provision considering their age and capacity.
8. To strive for close cooperation between all services and agencies concerned to achieve an effective multi-disciplinary approach to meeting SEN.
9. To educate pupils with SEN, wherever possible, alongside their peers.
10. To develop a recording system so that each pupil's performance can be monitored and reviewed appropriately.
11. To encourage and/or maintain the interest of pupils with SEN in their education.
12. To encourage a range of teaching strategies that accommodate different learning styles and promote effective learning.

13. To create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs.

14. To meet the needs of all pupils who have SEN by offering appropriate forms of educational provision and the most efficient use of available resources recognising there is a continuum of needs and a continuum of provision.

15. To promote collaboration amongst teachers in the implementation of the SEN policy.

16. To work closely with the EA Local Impact Team (LIT), and other outside agencies as appropriate to support each pupil with SEN.

Arrangements for Coordinating SEN Provision

Although meeting the needs of pupils with SEN is a whole school issue, the overall responsibility for managing SEN provision resides with the Board of Governors and the Principal. However, to facilitate the day-to-day running, the Board of Governors has delegated responsibility to coordinate the provision for pupils with special educational needs to Mrs McGuire (Learning Support Coordinator).

Roles and Responsibilities

The following section highlights the key roles and responsibilities of all those involved in SEN provision:

Board of Governors

The role of the Board of Governors is to exercise its functions in relation to the school with a view to ensuring that provision is made for with special educational needs.

Mrs Sharon Douglas is our SEN Governor.

Chapter 12 of the document 'Every School a Good School' (DENI, 2010) relates specifically to the role of the governor in supporting pupils with special educational needs. Based on this information, The SEN Resource File (DENI, 2011) outlines that the Board of Governors has a statutory duty to:

- take account of the provisions in the DE Code of Practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs
- use their best efforts to provide for pupils identified with SEN and that parents are notified of their child's special needs
- maintain and operate a policy on SEN
- ensure that where a registered pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them
- check that the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying those registered pupils with SEN and of providing appropriate teaching
- allocate funding for special educational needs and disability and
- prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

Principal

According to the Code of Practice (1998) the Principal should:

- keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN issues
- work in close partnership with Mrs McGuire, the Learning Support Coordinator
- liaise with parents and external agencies as required
- delegate and monitor the SEN budget
- ensure the senior leadership team (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 school development plan and
- provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to special educational needs

Learning Support Coordinator (previously known as SENCO)

The Learning Support Coordinator should be responsible for:

- the day-to-day operation of the school's special educational needs policy
- responding to requests for advice from teachers and classroom assistants
- coordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs
- maintain the school's SEN register and oversee all the records on pupils with special educational needs
- working in partnership with parents of children with special educational needs
- establishing the SEN in-service training requirements of the staff and contributing as appropriate to their training and
- liaising with external agencies.

Class Teacher

- be aware of current legislation
- keep up to date with information on the SEN Register
- gather information through observation and assessment
- develop an inclusive classroom
- work closely with other staff to plan for learning and teaching
- contribute to, manage, and review PLPs in consultation with the Learning Support Coordinator and
- involve classroom assistants as part of the learning team.

SEN Support Staff/ Additional Adult Assistants

Support Staff/ Additional Adult Assistants should:

- work under the direction of the class teacher
- be involved in planning
- look for positives by talking to the child about his/her strengths
- provide practical support
- listen to the child/speak to staff on the child's behalf
- share good practice.

Pupil views

In school, as far as reasonably practicable, we seek and have regard to the child's views about their strengths, learning difficulties and education, considering their age and maturity. We seek and listen to their views about how they learn effectively and then focus on the strategies that work for them.

Key decisions for a pupil might include:

- contributing to the review of PLPs, Annual Reviews and the Transition process and
- involving and supporting the pupils to participate in making decisions about matters affecting them.

Parent/person with parental responsibility

At Ballyoran Primary School, we acknowledge that successful partnerships between parents, pupils and school play a key role in promoting a culture of cooperation, openness and transparency and have a crucial impact on the effectiveness of special educational provision. Seeking the views of the child or young person plays a key role in helping us understand individual needs.

Teachers and other school staff have a significant role in developing positive and constructive relationships with parents and pupils. We encourage this participation and value its contribution. It is the school's responsibility to inform parents when staff are considering placing the pupil's name on the SEN register or moving the child between stages. It is essential that parents inform the relevant school staff of any significant needs their child may possess. They should do this as early as possible. For example, essential information may need to be made available by a parent upon a child's entry to the school.

Parents should be invited as necessary to:

- meet with staff to discuss their child's needs
- discuss PLP reviews
- inform staff of changes in circumstances and
- support targets on PLPs.

Admissions

The admission arrangements with respect to most pupils with SEN must be consistent with the school's general arrangements for all other pupils.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO) (2005) legislation strengthened the right for children with a Statement to a mainstream school place 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 a mainstream school (Article 3(1) SENDO, 2005).

Children with Statements of SEN are placed in the school at the request of the Education Authority (EA). When seeking to place a pupil with a Statement, the EA will consider the wishes of the child's parents and the provision of efficient education for other children in the class or school and the

efficient use of resources to determine the suitability of the placement. This arrangement is in line with SENDO legislation.

Accessibility

The focus in the school's accessibility plan is to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum. By way of example, this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure, and cultural activities
- improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of the information which is provided in writing to pupils who are not disabled. This should be completed within a reasonable time and consider their disability and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

Special Facilities, Resources and Accommodation

We have two **Specialist Provision Classes** for Learning. The Caterpillar Room (Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1) and The Butterfly Room (Key Stage 1/2) The specialist provision classrooms provide a modified learning environment with an enhanced Pupil Teacher Ratio suited to the children's learning profiles. The children, where appropriate, will also benefit from experiencing a level of inclusion, commensurate with their level of need, within mainstream classes. This will provide the opportunity to experience social interaction and curricular activities alongside their peers.

Sensory Areas: We are committed to meeting the sensory needs of all children and providing appropriate spaces to support regulation and wellbeing. We have two dedicated sensory rooms, one located near the Caterpillar Room and one adjoining the Butterfly Room, both designed to offer calm, structured environments for children who require sensory support. In addition, we have a sensory corridor within Nursery and a sensory

corridor within the Foundation Stage, both of which are accessible to all children as needed. We recognise the importance of sensory experiences in supporting children's development and emotional regulation, and we ensure that all spaces are available flexibly to enable children to access the level of sensory input or calm that they require throughout the day.

Quiet Rooms: We provide dedicated quiet spaces to support children's emotional wellbeing and sensory regulation. There are two quiet rooms available within the school, one located in Nursery and one in Key Stage 1. Both spaces are accessible to all children and are designed to offer a calm, low-stimulation environment. They are equipped with soft furnishings such as bean bags, a range of fidget toys, and low lighting to help create a soothing atmosphere. These quiet areas enable children to take time to regulate, reflect, and manage their emotions or sensory needs, supporting their overall readiness to learn and engage in the wider school environment.

Annual Report

The Board of Governors report annually on all aspects of SEN provision in school. The SEN section in the Annual Report contains information on: the number of statemented pupils; pupils that received provision from EA Local Impact Team (LIT), EA Support Services or Health and Social Care Trust; and those that accessed school-delivered special educational provision. This report is made available at the beginning of September every school year.

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. (Supplementary Guide of the Code of Practice paragraph 5.12 - page 44)

In Ballyoran Primary School, the following may be used to identify pupils' needs:

- information from transferring school
- teacher observations

- standardised tests
- diagnostic assessments
- whole school assessment (e.g.: CAT/NGRT, MALT, CCEA Adaptive Assessments)
- key stage assessments
- personal learning plans (PLPs)
- care plans
- statements of special educational need
- annual reviews
- professional reports
- parental contributions
- pupil contributions

The Management of Special Educational Needs

In Ballyoran Primary School, we adhere to the **three stages of the Code of Practice**. These stages focus on the level of intensity of the special educational provision through a graduated response which is required for a child to make adequate progress commensurate with their abilities and improve their outcomes. Responsibility for pupils with SEN at each stage lies with the school, given the day-to-day role of the school in a pupil's teaching and learning, with increasing EA involvement when required. A summary of the three stages of special education provision is set out below:

Stage 1 includes:

- School delivered special educational provision (graduated response)
- A PLP is required
- Most special educational needs will be met at this stage
- The responsibility lies with the school
- Operates in mainstream schools
- Reasonable adjustments and additional strategies and approaches are implemented, aimed at meeting and addressing the child's SEN.

The PLP/IEP should contain the core information/evidence of the school's graduated response to inform a request for involvement (RFI), if considered necessary, for access to the EA Local Impact team (LIT) for input at Stage 2. The child will only move to Stage 2 once any external special educational provision is being implemented.

Stage 2 includes:

- School-delivered special educational provision plus external provision, for example, the EA or the HSC Trust
- A PLP is required. A smaller number of children will need this provision
- The responsibility lies with the school plus external provision from EA
- Operates in mainstream schools and classes (and by exception in special school or Learning Support Centre (LS Centre) for the purpose of assessment and
- Reasonable adjustments, additional strategies and approaches are implemented (in line with a graduated response) plus resources, advice, guidance, support, and training provided through the EA SEN support services to address the child's SEN.

In the event of a child not making progress, despite the external support from the EA, the child may require consideration for a statutory assessment. The pupil will remain at Stage 2 when a request for a statutory assessment is being considered, is being made and if appropriate until a Statement is made.

Stage 3 includes:

- Pupils with a statement of SEN
- School and EA delivered special educational provision (in line with a graduated response) plus any relevant treatment or service identified by the HSC Trust
- A PLP is required
- A smaller number of children will need this provision
- The responsibility lies with the school and the EA –with input from the HSC Trust where relevant
- Operates in mainstream schools and specialist provisions (as determined within the child's statement);

- Reasonable adjustments, the school delivered special educational provision are implemented plus EA provision as set out in the Statement (representative of a graduated response).

At Stage 3, the child has a statement and is receiving special educational provision (as set out in the Statement).

Exceptional Cases

In most cases transition through the three-staged assessment process occurs in sequence. However, in exceptional circumstances, pupils may demonstrate such significant or unforeseen difficulties that with multi-professional and parental agreement a move to a higher stage of need is necessary immediately.

The Annual Review

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 monitoring of the child's progress. The Annual Review procedure is designed to:

- gauge the child's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the Statement
- review the special provision made for the child, including placement and
- consider the appropriateness of maintaining the statement of special educational needs.

The annual review is carried out by the school on behalf of the EA.

The Review will take place in school and is chaired by Mrs McGuire, Learning Support Coordinator.

Relevant forms and the EA's guidance for this process are available by contacting Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SARS) of the Armagh EA office or they can be downloaded from the [EA website](#).

Record Keeping

Mrs McGuire, Learning Support Coordinator keeps the following records in school:

- SEN Register

- Records of concern
- PLPs
- Statements/annual reviews/transition plans
- Individual pupil files
- Record of liaison/meetings with staff from the Education Authority's SEN Support Services/Health and Social Care Trust
- Minutes of meetings with parents; and
- Support, advice and training provided to staff.

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

It is the responsibility of Mrs McGuire, the Learning Support Coordinator to ensure that the progress of pupils on the SEN register is monitored. This may be achieved by considering that:

- individual education plans are monitored and reviewed for quality, progression, and appropriateness through meeting with teachers on a regular basis
- evidence is collated to demonstrate whether the pupil is making progress; and
- information gathered is used in future planning for intervention and to inform movement either up or down through the stages of the Code of Practice adhering to a graduated response.

Professional Development

The Principal in consultation with the Learning Support Coordinator oversees the professional development of all staff in Ballyoran Primary School. Staff are kept up to date with SEN development. Following attendance at relevant internal or external education and training programmes, staff members are encouraged to disseminate the information provided to build the capacity of their colleagues.

Partnership working

In school we work with the EA Local Impact Team (LIT), where appropriate, to receive training and guidance in a multi-disciplinary capacity to support the school and parents in meeting the needs of children with special educational and medical needs. Other examples of EA Services include:

- Education Psychology Service;
- Nurture Advisory and Support Service;
- Sensory Service;
- SEND Local Impact Teams (LIT)
- SEN Inclusion Service (SENIS)
- Specialist Provision Service;
- SEND Implementation and Advice Service; or
- Statutory Advice and Review Service (SARS).

Other Support Services

- RISE NI
- Speech and Language Therapy (Southern Trust)
- Occupational Therapy (Southern Trust)
- Barnardo's
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Child Development Clinic (CDC)
- Learning Mentor and/or Independent Counsellors
- Middletown Autism Centre

Complaints

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

Any queries in relation to the special educational needs of a child with a Statement or who is currently being assessed for a statement of special educational needs, contact should be made with the SEN Link Officer at the EA Office in Armagh.

Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS)

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) provides an independent, confidential forum to resolve or reduce the disagreement, in relation to special educational provision, between parents and school/Boards of Governors or the EA for pupils who are on the Code of Practice where previous attempts to do so have been unsuccessful. Parents can contact the service which is provided by Global Mediation.

Involvement with DARS will not affect the right to appeal to the Special Education Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) considers parents' right to appeal against the decisions made by the Education Authority about their child's special educational needs whenever an agreement cannot be reached. This service also addresses claims of disability discrimination in school.

Monitoring and evaluating the SEN Policy

The SEN policy will be reviewed annually. It will be amended as appropriate considering changes in legislation or practice following targeted consultation with all staff members, parents, and external agencies.

Policy Date: 08/05/2026

Signature of Principal:.....

Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors:

Review Date: 08/05/2027

This policy takes into account the following legislation and documentation:

Legislation

- The Education (NI) Order 1996
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016

Documentation

- Department of Education Northern Ireland (1998) Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Bangor: DENI (PDF, 644KB)
- Department of Education Northern Ireland (2005) Supplement to the Code of Practice. Bangor: DENI (PDF, 801KB)
- Equality Commission, Northern Ireland (2006) Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (SEND0). (PDF, 761 KB)
- Department of Education Northern Ireland (2009) Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement, Bangor: DENI. (PDF, 706KB)