

**ASSUMPTION GRAMMAR
SCHOOL
BALLYNAHINCH**



**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
AND INCLUSION POLICY**

February 2011

This school is committed to the promotion of inclusion. All reasonable steps will be taken to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to pupils with a disability. These pupils will be given support to develop relationships, understanding and respect.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch, is a Catholic Voluntary Grammar School for girls. It has an enrolment of 874 pupils and has a wide catchment area with approximately 41 feeder schools.

Our school draws its ethos from the gospel values on which it is founded and from "Fully Alive: A Vision of Education in Assumption Schools".

Each pupil is set the goal of becoming "Fully Alive", by reaching her full potential through all the educational means at her disposal.

Pupils are encouraged to explore all their gifts, spiritual, intellectual, physical, practical and social.

POLICY RATIONALE

Through our emphasis on personalised learning we aim to make sure that each child's needs are addressed and that they are supported in their learning. We aim to help every pupil make as much progress as possible. We are committed to ensuring that all our pupils make progress irrespective of their level of need and the barriers to learning they might encounter. Supportive working relationships with parents are also a vital component of Assumption's pastoral philosophy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to address the identification, assessment and provision made for all pupils who have special educational needs at some time during their education in Assumption Grammar.

This policy is designed for relevant pupils, parents, staff and Board of Governors.

This special educational needs policy will be compatible with the relevant legislation and guidelines listed below:-

- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996
- The Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998)

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005
- The Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005
- Supplement to the Code of Practice (2005)
- Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools
- Every School a Good School (2009)
- Other legislation and regulations that may be made during the life of this policy.

The Code of Practice and Supplement are substantial documents which address in fine detail many issues of relevance to the assessment and education of children with special educational needs. Where a topic is not dealt with in detail in this policy the reader may assume that the policy will have regard to any guidance given in the Code and Supplement.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy must be considered in the context of the school's aims and in the context of the Vision of Education in Assumption Schools "Fully Alive". In keeping with these aims, the identified special educational needs of a pupil will be met with the appropriate provision so that she can develop her full potential.

- To ensure that our pupils reach their potential
- To provide an environment that encourages co-operation and understanding
- To implement recommendations from the Code of Practice
- To develop commitment, knowledge and expertise of all staff
- To ensure close liaison with and between relevant staff
- To identify as early as possible the perceived special educational needs of a pupil
- To match the needs of the pupil with appropriate provision
- To record accurately the pupil's needs, the action taken and the outcomes
- To raise the status and formality of IEPs and develop effective and meaningful education plans
- To incorporate and build on assessment procedure
- To include IEPs as an integral part of school assessment policy
- To have parental involvement throughout the procedure
- To involve external agencies when necessary
- To consider the wishes and feelings of the pupil
- To ensure that the policy is available to all entitled parties

PRINCIPLES

- The needs of all pupils who may experience learning difficulties or have a disability must be addressed
- All pupils must have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- The knowledge, views and experience of the parents must be considered
- The wishes and views of the pupil should be considered
- Reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the pupil reaches her full potential
- The needs of most pupils will be met in the mainstream classroom

DEFINITIONS

A pupil is regarded as having special educational needs if she has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of her age or has a disability which hinders her use of everyday educational facilities.

A pupil is regarded as having a disability if she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

CATEGORIES OF SEN

- Communication and interaction: Dyslexia, Autism, Aspergers
- Cognition and learning
- Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SEN POLICY

The roles and responsibilities associated with the SEN Policy impinge on the work of many key people - Form Teachers, Subject Teachers, Heads of Department, Year Heads, Heads of Section, and Counsellors. For this reason no one person can adequately fulfil the demands of the day-to-day operation of the SEN Policy. Instead the operation of the policy is shared by all. A member of SLT is the school SENCO.

The effective delivery of this SEN Policy will be ensured by the close liaison between Heads of Section, Year Heads, Heads of Department, Form Teachers, Subject Teachers, Counsellors, Parents and External Agencies. The SENCO will maintain a SEN register and oversee records on all pupils with special educational needs. Liaison with parents will be through the SENCO or Heads of Section.

The SENCO will liaise with the Head of Section/Year Head who will coordinate the work of those departments or subject teachers who teach the pupil

with special educational needs.

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

The Board of Governors of Assumption Grammar School will consider for acceptance to Year 8, girls who have the academic ability to cope with grammar school education, irrespective of Special Educational Needs or Disability, as long as this is compatible with:

- The child receiving the special educational provision which her learning difficulty calls for
- The efficient education of children with whom she will be educated;
- The efficient use of resources

ACCESSIBILITY

The school will take all reasonable steps to provide appropriate access arrangements for disabled pupils and prospective pupils in terms of premises, the curriculum and information.

ANNUAL REPORT

BOG will report each year on SEN Provision in school.

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND PROVISION

The Code sets out a five stage approach to the identification of pupils with learning difficulties, the assessment of their needs and the making of the necessary special educational provision. Responsibility for pupils within stages 1 - 3 rests with the school with close involvement by the Board at stage 3. The Board shares responsibility with the school for stages 4 and 5.

Stage 1

This stage will be initiated by an expression of concern from a parent or teacher that a pupil may have SEN. The SENCO will then place the pupil on the school Special Needs Register and with relevant teachers, gather information on and assess the pupil's needs. The SENCO will assist the teachers to provide special help within the normal curriculum. If the pupil makes satisfactory progress her name will be removed from the Special Needs Register; if not, she will pass on to stage 2.

Stage 2

This stage is initiated either by a decision taken in the Stage 1 review or through initial concern. The SENCO will ensure that an Education Plan is drawn up in liaison with any relevant teachers. Teachers and SENCO will monitor and review progress. If the pupil makes satisfactory progress she will be removed from the Register. If not, the education plan will be extended or the pupil will pass on to stage 3.

Stage 3

This stage is initiated through a decision taken at Stage 2 review or initial concern. Here the SENCO will ask for assistance and guidance from outside agencies. The Education Plan will then be drawn up and the progress of the pupil will be monitored by both the class teacher, SENCO and outside agencies. If the pupil has made satisfactory progress, she may no longer need help or the Education Plan may be adjusted to suit her perceived needs. If satisfactory progress is not being made consideration may be given to referring the pupil for formal assessment.

Stage 4

This stage is initiated by a decision taken at Stage 3 review or through initial concern. Both school and parents will request a statutory assessment for the pupil and provide evidence for supporting the request. The Board will then consider the request and inform school and parents of their decision.

Stage 5

This stage is initiated by a decision taken at Stage 4 and the Board will advise parents and the school whether it will issue a statement of special educational need. The school will respond as fully as possible, either to this statement or a note in lieu of the statement.

Throughout all these stages, the Principal and parents will be regularly consulted and informed about the procedures.

CRITERIA

The criteria used by the school in deciding that a pupil should be considered to be added to the Special Needs' Register may include the following:

- Behaviour
- Concern – social / fitting in / coping with work
- Falling behind
- Reading score
- Delay in academic development compared to chronological peers.
- Failed to respond to meaningful and purposeful measures after a specified time.
- Recommendation from External agencies

THE EDUCATION PLAN

The Education Plan will contain a record of the pupil's academic achievements and any other relevant information. It will also contain information on the pupil's learning difficulties, special educational provision and liaison with other support systems. Targets, assessment and review arrangements will also be recorded as well as an outline of the role that parents can play at home to help the pupil.

ARRANGEMENT FOR COMPLAINTS

Our policy is to make sure that every opportunity is made available for parents to air any concerns they have regarding SEN issues.

As stated in the school prospectus "Parents may contact the school at any time on any matter of concern to them." This may be done by contacting the Principal.

SPECIAL EDUCATION, DISPUTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOLUTION SERVICE (DARS)

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) came into effect on 1st September 2005 as a result of Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO).

The DARS aims;

- to resolve disagreements between Education and Library Boards or Boards of Governors of schools and parents about the way in which they carry out their responsibilities towards children with Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- to resolve disagreements between parents and schools about the provision being made for children with Special Educational Needs.

The DARS is an independent, confidential, voluntary and informal service designed to provide an opportunity for identifying points of disagreement and finding ways forward that all parties are willing to accept.

There is a DARS contact, in each Education and Library Board area, who is independent of its Special Education section.

PARTNERSHIPS BEYOND THE SCHOOL

It is the policy of the school to enlist the help of specialist support services for every pupil with special educational needs where this is considered necessary and in the best interests of the pupil.

The school works with a variety of agencies to support all pupils. They include:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Education Welfare Service Social Services
- Health Professionals
- Careers Officers
- ELB Advisers

Recognising the importance of close communication between school and home, we take every opportunity to establish and maintain good relationships with parents. In addition to parent-teacher meetings, school reports are sent to parents twice yearly and interim reports are sent to parents of pupils whose progress or attitude is causing concern. Parents may contact the school at any time on any matter of concern to them. Parents will be consulted and informed throughout of any procedures involving special education needs. The parental role in the Education Plan has already been mentioned.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal has overall responsibility for the Policy.

The SENCO has responsibility for:

- Overseeing special educational provision and liaison with the Year Heads, Section Heads.
- Advising and reporting to the Principal on the development, co-ordination and implementation of the whole school policy for SEN
- SEN INSET requirements for staff ensuring that appropriate training is given in keeping with the school's Staff Development Policy
- Managing the team of teaching assistants
- Managing and developing appropriate resources
- Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's SEN Policy
- The day to day operation of the SEN Policy
- Helping to identify pupils with special needs
- Tracking the progress of pupils with SEN
- The co-ordination of SEN provision - liaising with colleagues, specialists and parents / guardians and providing support and advice
- Drawing up the education plan at Stage 2 and at Stage 3 in consultation with the relevant staff (particularly Heads of Department and Year Head)
- Supporting teachers with strategies and resources
- Chairing and co-ordinating the statement review process
- Co-ordinating and preparing the necessary literacy tests for access to special arrangements
- Administering literacy tests
- Maintaining a SEN register of pupils with special needs
- Advising and reporting to the Principal re pupils with SEN
- Informing all who need to know of the names of pupils with SEN in his /her section of the school

The **Head of Department** will have responsibility for curricular provision in his / her department and for keeping colleagues informed about all matters pertaining to SEN in that particular subject so as to ensure effective teaching. He/she will liaise with Heads of Section in identification, assessment and provision of SEN.

Quality assessment and record-keeping procedures should assist early identification. Each Head of Department at Departmental meetings should consider including indicators which would alert teachers to the need for investigation.

These might include:

- The parents / guardians have communicated a concern
- The pupil has difficulty in relationships with peers / adults
- The pupil presents behavioural problems
- The pupil is falling behind her peer group
- The pupil has had a lengthy period of absence

Each **Year Head** has responsibility for the pupils in his / her year group. This includes pupils with special educational needs. The Year Head will assist the SENCO in the following areas

- The day to day operation of the SEN Policy in his / her year group
- Helping to identify pupils with special educational needs
- The co-ordination of SEN provision
- Informing all who need to know of the names of pupils with SEN in his / her year group

The **Form Teacher** will:

- Help identify pupils with SEN
- Work with SENCO/Year Head / Head of Department in supporting pupils with SEN
- Work with SENCO/Year Head / Head of Department in monitoring progress

The **Subject Teacher** will:

- Plan and evaluate lessons in order to provide personalised learning
- Monitor and track progress
- Implement assessment for learning
- Work with the SENCO to deliver learning opportunities that are accessible and challenging
- Draw up and monitor individual education plans (IEPs)
- Implement the SEN policy
- Work constructively with external agencies and parents to improve outcomes for pupils

IEP (See Appendix)

The **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** includes

- 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
- Success criteria
- Outcomes

REQUESTING EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

If the SENCO feels that despite receiving an individualised programme and concentrated support a pupil continues to make little or no progress, a request for a statutory assessment of SEN will be made. The involvement of an educational psychologist will be utilised when appropriate.

ASSESSMENT

Assumption Grammar's assessment policy sets out the standard in terms of ensuring that we have a good understanding of what our pupils have learnt and how we can support them in the next stage of their learning.

We identify trends within year groups and track the progress of individuals, increasingly using data to check that all pupils are achieving their potential. Assessments are analysed to identify any emerging issues in relation to the performance of any pupil with SEN.

TRACKING PUPIL PROGRESS

Monitoring of pupil progress takes place through:

- Termly tracking after internal and external examinations
- Discussion during departmental meetings of individual pupil performance
- Involvement of the SENCO on the SLT

PUPIL INVOLVEMENT

The school realizes that pupils with SEN have a greater understanding of their own needs and circumstances. Discretion and sensitivity are important but pupils are encouraged to fully participate in the decision making processes that occur, including

- Setting of targets
- Contributing to their IEP
- Reflecting on the strategies that are most effective in helping them learn

ANNUAL REVIEWS

The Board is required to review all statements of special educational needs at least annually. -The review should be seen as part of the process of continuous assessment. The aims of the annual review are to:

- assess progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the statement
- collate information for planning future support for the child
- assess progress towards meeting targets
- review the special provision made for the child
- consider any additional needs which may become apparent and

whether or not it may be appropriate to amend or cease to maintain the statement

- where appropriate, set fresh targets for the coming year

CHILDREN NOT AGED 14 YEARS

The Board will initiate the annual review process by formally requesting the Principal to convene a review meeting and prepare a review report. The notification will be copied to the child's parents.

In preparing for the review meeting, the Principal must request written advice from the child's parents and any others who may have a contribution to make. If it is considered that the child's educational or medical needs may have changed significantly or where a change in provision is considered necessary, it is essential that advice is sought from the Educational Psychologist, the Senior Clinical Medical Officer and any other appropriate professionals.

Following receipt from the Principal of the report of the review meeting and any other relevant information or advice, the Board will review the statement.

THE FIRST REVIEW AFTER THE CHILD'S 14TH BIRTHDAY

The first annual review after the child's 14th birthday and any subsequent reviews should include a Transition Plan, drawing together information from a range of individuals within and beyond the school in order to plan coherently for the young person's transition to adult life.

The Board will delegate to the Principal responsibility for convening a review meeting to include:

- the child's parents
- a member or members of staff of the school who teach the child
- a representative of the health and social services authority
- a person providing advice under section 1 of the Employment and Training Act (Northern Ireland) 1950 (a)
- any other person whom the Board or the Principal considers appropriate.

The Board will delegate to the Principal responsibility for representing it at the review meeting and will wish to be advised of the date and time of any such meeting.

PROVISION OF HOME TUITION

In the case of prolonged absence due to illness, parents are advised to contact the Head of Section for information relating to the provision of home tuition by the relevant Education and Library Board. If appropriate the Schools' Medical Officer (SCMO) may recommend the provision of home tuition.

SPECIAL TRANSPORT

Parents should also be made aware that when recommended by the Medical Officer of the Education and Library Board, special transport to and from school may be provided. Parents contact their Doctor or Education and Library Board (Transport Section) for further information.

The Special Needs Policy is subject to an annual review.



Pupil's Name:
SEN Stage:
Subject:

Class:
Teacher's name:

Academic Year:

Nature of the pupil's difficulty:

For outcome please record one of the following:
Achieved/Partly Achieved/ Not Achieved

Teaching arrangements/methodologies to address difficulty:

Targets

Time

Outcome

Signatures

Teacher:

Head of Dept:

Date:

This policy has been agreed and formally adopted by the Board of Governors of Assumption Grammar School.

Signature: _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Governors)

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____