

**HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL
MAGHERAFELT**



**SPECIAL NEEDS & INCLUSION
POLICY STATEMENT**

Rationale

Holy Family Primary School is committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, which offers equal access for all children. As a school we recognise that some pupils during their school career may have special educational needs and/or a disability and we will make every possible arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

Definitions

“ ‘Learning difficulty’ means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of educational facilities. ‘Special education provision’ means educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age”.

(Code of Practice 1998 paragraph:1.4)

Disability

At Holy Family we adhere to the following as an accepted definition of the term disability:-

“Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

(Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

The following areas will encompass all aspects of SEN/Disability and all staff will be aware of how each of these difficulties may affect the learning and teaching of each child.

Learning Difficulties

Children with learning difficulties will in general have a level of academic attainment that is significantly below that of their peers. In most cases they will have difficulty acquiring basic Literacy and Numeracy skills and in some cases they will have significant speech and language difficulties. Some children may also have poor social skills and may show signs of emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Specific Learning Difficulties

Some children may have significant difficulties in reading, writing, spelling or manipulating numbers, which are not typical of their general level of performance, especially in other areas of the curriculum. They may gain some skills in certain subjects quickly and demonstrate a high level of ability orally, yet they may encounter sustained difficulty in gaining Literacy or Numeracy skills.

Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties

Pupils with EBD may have learning difficulties as defined above. They may fail to meet expectations in school and in some cases may disrupt the education of others. EBD may become apparent in a wide variety of forms – including disruptive and unco-operative behaviour, anger and threat of actual violence and in some instances withdrawn and unresponsive behaviour.

Physical Disabilities

A child's physical disability may be the result of an illness or injury, which might have short or long term consequence, or may arise from a congenital condition. Some children with physical disabilities may also have sensory impairments, neurological problems, behavioural problems and/or learning difficulties.

Sensory Impairments

Hearing Difficulties – Temporary hearing loss is usually caused by the condition known as “glue ear” and occurs most often in the early years of childhood. Such hearing loss may fluctuate and may be mild or moderate in degree. This impairment can seriously compound other learning difficulties.

Permanent hearing loss can vary from mild through moderate, to severe or profound loss.

Visual Difficulties – Visual difficulties can take many forms with widely differing implications for a child's education. They range from relatively minor and remedial conditions to total blindness. In some cases visual impairment is one aspect of multiple disability. Whatever the cause of the child's visual impairment, the major issue in identifying and assessing the child's special educational needs will relate to the degree and nature of functional vision, partial sight or blindness, and the child's ability to adapt socially and psychologically and progress academically.

Speech And Language Difficulties

Some children with significant speech and language delay or difficulties may limit and impair their ability to participate in the classroom. This may in turn have serious consequences for a child's academic attainment and also give rise to emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Medical Conditions

Some medical conditions may have a significant impact on a child's academic attainment and/or may give rise to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Conditions such as epilepsy, allergies, asthma, diabetes, eczema, rheumatoid disorders and many other conditions may impair the child's ability to participate fully in the curriculum and the wider range of activities in the school.

Definition of Inclusion

Staff at Holy Family P.S will endeavour to create an inclusive ethos that seeks to identify and remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude a child with SEN. Staff will be positive and proactive when establishing and implementing this policy.

Aims Of SEN And Inclusion Policy

- To provide a broad, balanced relevant and differentiated curriculum as a right for all children.
- To identify children with SEN/Disability as early as possible through a variety of means and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
- To ensure that all children with SEN/Disability feel valued and have a positive self-image.
- To encourage parental involvement and co-operation between various external agencies in the diagnosis and treatment of pupils with SEN/Disability.
- To offer experiences and opportunities which allow pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills which ensure progress, promote success and develop self-confidence.
- To develop a system for recording continued assessment so that each pupil's performance can be monitored.
- To promote the inclusion of all pupils with SEN/Disability into the mainstream classroom.
- To encourage the use of a range of teaching strategies which incorporate different learning styles and ensure effective learning for all.
- To create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs.
- To develop and utilise all resources in support of pupils with SEN/Disability.

Identification And Assessment Of SEN

“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 professionals involved with their development.”

(Code of Practice 1998)

The following strategies are used as a means of identifying children with special needs in our school.

- Observation by class teacher of the child's academic, social and personal development
- Formative Assessment – running records, topic tests, half term class tests
- Standardised Tests – PIE & PIM/NRIT
- Key Stage Results
- Communication with parents

On some occasions it may be appropriate to include information from the educational psychologist, social workers, health visitors, doctors and therapists.

Arrangements For Co-ordinating SEN Provision

The Board of Governors have delegated responsibility for pupils with special educational needs to Mrs Mulholland. She is responsible for the daily operation and co-ordination of the SEN provision within the school. She will liaise with class teachers, parents and other agencies.

Role of the Board of Governors

The BOG should:

- Ensure that all pupils special educational needs are addressed;
- Have regard for the Code of Practices;
- Have regard for the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy;
- Ensure the policy is kept under review.

Role of the Principal

The Principal should:

- Keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN/Disability issues;
- Work in close partnership with the SENCo;
- Where necessary liaise with parents and external agencies;
- Delegate and monitor the SEN budget.

Role of the SENCo

The SENCo should:

- Co-ordinate the day to day provision of the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy;
- Liaise with and advise colleagues;
- Co-ordinate provision for children with special educational needs;
- Maintain the school's SEN/Disability register and oversee the records of all pupils with special educational needs;
- Liaise with parents of children with special educational needs;
- Contribute to the in-service training of staff;
- Liaise with external agencies.

Role of Special Needs Teacher

The special needs teacher should:

- Be aware of the staged approach to special needs as outlined in the Code of Practice;
- Liaise with the SENCo and the class teacher to ensure that the needs of the pupils with SEN are being met;
- Provide extra support for pupils who are on Stage 2 – 4 of the Code of Practice.

Role of Class Teacher

The class teacher should:

- Be aware of the staged approach to special needs as outlined in the Code of Practice
- Gather information through formal and in-formal assessment/observation;
- Develop an inclusive classroom;
- Write and review education plans in consultation with the SENCo;
- Liaise with the Special Needs teacher;
- Manage Stage 1 of the Code of Practice.

Role of the Learning Support Assistant

To liaise with the class teacher to support and implement the targets set out in the pupils IEP.

Role of the Pupil

Depending on the age and the ability of the child, he/she will be encouraged to work with the class teacher to set targets and be involved in the reviewing process.

Role of the Parent

Parents will be informed of their child's special needs when the child's name is placed on the SEN/Disability register. All parents will be invited to the reviews and discussion of the child's individual educational plan. This will happen three times in the year.

The Structure of SEN in Holy Family PS

Stage 1 - class teacher identifies pupil with special needs and informs SENCo, who adds child's name to SEN register. Stage 1 targets are devised.

Stage 2 - an individual plan is drawn up for child and the targets are conveyed to parents and to the child (if age appropriate). This is reviewed twice a year.

Stage 3 - teachers and the SENCo are supported by specialists from outside the school.

Stage 4 - the North Eastern Education and library Board considers the need for a statutory assessment.

Stage 5 - North Eastern Education and library Board considers the need for a statement of special educational needs.

A SEN register will be kept and updated appropriately. Individual pupil plans and reviews will be kept by the SENCo. We will try to ensure that SEN pupils are given extra support from either the special needs teacher, P1 & P2 teachers, the SENCo or from designated classroom assistants.

A variety of teaching strategies will be adopted to cater for the various learning styles. Pupils' work will be differentiated to take into account pupil age and ability.

The Code of Practice sets out a five stage approach which Education and Library Boards, schools and all others, should have regard to when identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with SEN. Responsibility for pupils within Stages 1-3 lies

with the school (with close involvement of external agencies at Stage 3) and with the Board and school at Stage 5.

The school will follow the five staged model as outlined in The Code of Practice.

Accessibility

Holy Family P.S will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the school environment is conducive to meeting the needs of all its pupils. Holy family P.S aims to provide for each child access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their potential in terms of age and ability, aptitude and any SEN that he/she may have.

Advice and Information Services

Refer Appendix 1

Policy Review and Further Information

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to take in to account changes in legislation or practice. This will happen in consultation with all members of staff.

If you require further information regarding the school's Special Needs and Inclusion Policy or you have any issues or concerns you wish to discuss please contact the Principal, Mr Donnelly or the Special Needs Co-ordinator, Mrs Mulholland.

Advice and Information Service

An Advice and Information Service has been set up by the NEELB to support parents of children with Special Educational Needs. This can be accessed by telephoning 028 25662407.

Dispute Avoidance and Reconciliation Service (DARS)

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

DARS aims to provide an independent, confidential forum to resolve or reduce the areas of disagreement between parents and schools/Boards of Governors or ELBs for pupils who are on the Code of Practice, in relation to special educational provision. Where interested parties have made an attempt to resolve a disagreement and this has been unsuccessful, a referral may be made to DARS.

Members of the DARS team will facilitate the possible resolution of disagreements (in a neutral venue) but do not have the authority to resolve a dispute. Agreement can only be reached with the approval of interested parties. From referral to conclusion is approximately 40 working days. DARS is separate and independent from Special Education Branch.

Involvement with the DARS will not affect the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

Parents/Guardians may contact this service directly:

DARS NEELB
County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1HN
028 25662391/028 25662387
Email: dars.enquiry@neelb.org.uk

DARS Officer : Miss Frances McKinney (AAO Nursery & Primary)

Inter-board DARS Manager: Oliver Sherry

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

Where agreement cannot be reached between a parent and the ELB with regard to a child's special educational needs, legislation gives the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal or SENDIST.

SENDIST considers parents' appeal against decisions of ELBs and also deals with claims of disability discrimination in schools.

There is a two month time limit from the notified date of 'disputed decision' to appeal to the tribunal.

Various time limits apply for :

- Board Compliance with Orders of the Tribunal
- Boards to Comply with in Unopposed Appeals

(www.education-support.org.uk)

Further information regarding the appeals procedure can be obtained from:

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal
Secretariat
2nd Floor
Albany House
73-75 Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7AF
028 90322894
Email: secretary@sentribunal.co.uk