



**Policy for the Identification, Assessment
and Provision for children with
Special Educational Needs**



September 2017



‘Learning to be a wonderful me’

In Dunclug Nursery School we are committed to providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment to support young children’s learning and development.

We recognise that the children in our care have individual interests, characteristics and needs and aim to enable each child to develop positive attitudes about themselves and towards their learning by –

- providing experiences that extend learning and challenge thinking
- maintaining positive relationships as a staff team, with our children, their parents, the community, the Board of Governors and other relevant agencies
- promoting the health and wellbeing of our staff, children and their families
- inspiring and developing all members of our school community

Principles and Aims

In 'Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning' (DENI - October 2013), the Executive recognises –

“The need to identify and address potential barriers to a child’s development as early as possible, lay important foundations for lifelong learning and provide additional support to families, children and communities.”

Dunclug Nursery School aims to –

- ensure that each child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, irrespective of any barriers or challenges, by intervening at the earliest stage to identify and provide for Special Educational Needs
- educate all children, regardless of their needs, inclusively and where possible, alongside their peers
- provide a caring environment with equitable access to all aspects of the curriculum and other experiences
- promote a positive self-image for children with special educational needs, by providing affirming learning opportunities
- access, within our means, appropriate resources to support children with special educational needs in the most effective way
- maintain partnerships with parents and all other relevant sectors

In line with 'The Code of Practice' (1998) children will be identified as having a Special Educational Need if he or she has a significant cognitive, emotional, physical or medical need, which makes accessing the Curriculum more difficult for them than the significant majority of their peers.

We recognise that the term 'Special Educational Need' embraces a breadth of learning difficulties that vary in type, duration and severity.

DENI's 'Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education' states –

“some difficulties that young children experience are temporary and will be resolved as they develop. Others will have difficulties that are long term and will require additional support to ensure they make progress.”

Special Educational Needs may arise as a result of –

- Learning difficulties / specific learning difficulties
- Social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties
- Speech, Language or Communication difficulties
- Medical conditions
- Physical difficulties
- Sensory Impairment – (hearing or visual difficulties)
- Developmental delay

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who 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.

The purpose of the SENDO (Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order) is to –

- strengthen the right of pupils with Special Educational Needs to be educated in mainstream schools
- make it unlawful for schools to treat pupils with a disability and pupils with a prospective disability less favourably than other pupils in all aspects of school life
- place a duty on schools to work towards making school life more accessible to disabled pupils, in terms of premises, the curriculum and written information.

Admission of children with Special Educational Needs

Dunclug Nursery School welcomes admission requests from all children. The admission arrangements for the majority of children with Special Educational needs are consistent with the Nursery School's arrangements for all other children.

Children with statements of Special Educational Needs are placed in schools at the request of the Education Authority after taking into account the ability of the school to meet the child's special educational needs, the provision for efficient education for other children in the class or school and the efficient use of resources.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has a responsibility to :

- agree and keep under review the Nursery School's policy for SEN
- ensure necessary provision is made for children with SEN
- report annually to parents on steps taken to implement the Nursery School's SEN policy
- work in cooperation with the Principal to establish appropriate staffing and funding arrangements and maintain general oversight of the Nursery School's work
- have in place a designated Governor who will have contact with the Principal/SENCO and staff

Designated Governor for Special Educational Needs – Mrs. Ruth Rock.

Principal

The Principal has a responsibility to :

- oversee SEN provision
- inform Governors about SEN provision
- manage provision and appropriate staffing for pupils with SEN

Acting Principal – Mrs. Dionne Bishop

SENCO

The SENCO has a responsibility to :

- coordinate the implementation of the Nursery School's policy
- maintain the SEN register
- liaise with parents, other professionals and support agencies
- provide support and disseminate relevant information and training to staff
- coordinate and assist with annual review meetings
- report to the Designated Governor regarding SEN provision in Nursery School
- provide support on devising and implementing Education Plans to meet the needs of children with SEN

Acting SENCO – Mrs. Dionne Bishop

Teaching Staff

The Teaching Staff have overall responsibility for the pupils in their classes who have Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.

Class Teachers have a responsibility to :

- identify initial concerns about a child and act upon these concerns appropriately
- work in partnership with parents to plan for, support and review children's learning
- maintain records and education plans, along with evidence of a child's progress at each stage as outlined in the Code of Practice (1998)
- ensure that learning opportunities are appropriately differentiated to enable children with SEN to access play and other experiences as fully as possible

Nursery Assistants

Nursery assistants who are employed in a general role have responsibility to :

- assist with classroom set up and preparation for learning opportunities through play
- provide in-class pupil support under the direction of the class teacher
- undertake supervisory roles during outside play or during transitions between areas

Nursery Assistants who are employed to support an individual child have a responsibility to :

- provide in-class / individual support under the direction of the class teacher
- assist the pupil with self-care needs as appropriate
- assist with and contribute to planning, monitoring and reviewing Education Plans
- provide feedback to the class teacher about a child's progress and/or difficulties
- support the child to make choices, help him or her to develop independence and to work as part of a small group

Partnerships with parents

'Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning' (DENI 2013) states that early years settings should –

“encourage and support parents in their role as first and ongoing educators.”

In Dunclug Nursery School we value the knowledge, experience and views of parents. We operate an 'open door' policy with regards to communicating with parents, welcoming them in their role as partners in their child's education.

Parents will be kept well informed of their child's progress and will be included in the decision making and planning/reviewing processes regarding the SEN provision for their child.

Teachers who have initial concerns about the individual needs of a child will complete a Record of Concern. If this concern persists and it is felt that additional support is necessary, this will be discussed with parents in terms of the Code of Practice (1998).

Equally if parents have a concern regarding their child's learning or development, or if their child has involvement with other professionals e.g. Speech and Language therapist / Paediatrician, they should contact the class teacher, who will complete a Record of Concern.

Parents will regularly be invited to discuss Individual Education Plans (IEPs), where they are necessary, as well as having the opportunity to meet with teachers during consultations in October and March.

Annual Reviews will be held for children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs at Stage 5 of the Code of Practice. Parents will be invited to provide contributions to these meetings, which are normally held in our Nursery School and are attended by other professionals who are also contributing to the child's SEN provision.

External Agencies

A number of other Health and Educational agencies are available to support children who have Special Educational Needs in our Nursery School. The Principal/SENCO, Teachers and SEN Nursery Assistants of Dunclug Nursery School liaise closely with these agencies, including :

- Educational Psychology
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Early Years' Inclusion Service
- Community Paediatrician
- Health Visitors
- ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Support Service
- Behaviour Support Team
- Surestart
- Toybox Initiative
- Inclusion and Diversity service
- Castle Tower School
- Other agencies as appropriate

Identification , Assessment and Provision

In identifying, assessing and providing for children with Special Educational Needs, we will adhere to the principles outlined in :-

- The Education Order (NI) 1996
- The Code of Practice (1998)
- The Supplement to the Code of Practice (2005)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (2005)
- Learning to Learn (2013)

The Code of Practice (1998) states that –

“children with special educational needs should be identified as early as possible and assessed as quickly as is consistent with thoroughness.”

As part of our Induction programme, prior to the children starting Nursery, we send an SEN Questionnaire to parents, to seek information on any additional needs they may have prior to starting Nursery School. This enables us to facilitate a smooth transition into Nursery, to take all reasonable steps to liaise with professionals currently working with the child and to access appropriate resources / support to facilitate full access to learning opportunities through play.

Initial concerns may be raised by parents, teachers, play group leaders from a previous setting attended, or health professionals. Where concerns are raised regarding a child's Special Educational Need, the class teacher will make an initial Record of Concern.

In order to make the best possible provision for children with Special Education Needs, Dunclug Nursery School follows the following stages, as set out in the Code of Practice (1998) –

The Five Stage Approach

1.8 In recognising that there is a continuum of needs, the Code sets out a five stage approach to the identification of children having learning difficulties, the assessment of their special educational needs and the making of whatever special educational provision is necessary to meet those needs. The first 3 stages are based in the school, calling as necessary on external specialists;

at Stages 4 and 5 the Education Authority shares responsibility with schools.

Stage 1: teachers identify and register a child's special educational needs and, consulting the school's SEN co-ordinator, take initial action.

Stage 2: the SEN co-ordinator takes lead responsibility for collecting and recording information and for co-ordinating the child's special educational provision, working with the child's teachers.

Stage 3: teachers and the SEN co-ordinator are supported by specialists from outside the school.

Stage 4: the Board considers the need for a statutory assessment and, if appropriate, makes a multi-disciplinary assessment.

Stage 5: the Board considers the need for a statement of special educational needs; if appropriate, it makes a statement and arranges, monitors and reviews provision.

Stages 1 – 3 are school based and should be seen as a continuous and systematic cycle of planning, action and review. The Key Principles of these stages are as follows –

- early identification
- provision should match the needs of the learner
- needs, actions and outcomes should be carefully recorded
- reasonable adjustments and relevant purposeful measures should be taken at each stage for each child
- parents should be closely involved
- outside agency support should be sought as necessary

Stage 4

The needs of the greater majority of children with SEN will be met by the Nursery School, without the statutory involvement of the Education Authority. In a small minority of cases, however, a child's needs will be such that the Education Authority working with the Nursery School, parents and other agencies, will need to consider whether a statutory assessment of the child's SEN is necessary. Stage 4 of the Code of Practice involves reaching that decision and if appropriate, conducting the assessment.

In a small minority of cases, a child may demonstrate such significant difficulties that the Nursery School may consider referring him or her to the Education Authority for statutory assessment without fully progressing through the school-based stages. This may occur, for example, when a diagnostic assessment may have demonstrated a significant barrier to learning that would, without immediate intervention, lead to increased learning difficulties.

Stage 5

On receipt of a referral for statutory assessment and advice from all concerned, the Education Authority will decide whether the degree of a child's learning difficulty or disability and the nature of the provision necessary to meet their needs, constitute the need to make a statement. This statement of Special Educational Needs arranges, monitors and reviews provision.

Following the issue of a statement, the school will use the advice from the statement to formulate appropriate Individual Education Plans and will invite parents to attend an Annual Review meeting as part of the process of continuous planning, monitoring and reviewing.

Provision and Resources

Provision for Special Educational Needs in Dunclug Nursery School can be made in a variety of ways, depending on the nature and severity of difficulties a child is experiencing. The type of provision a child receives is reviewed regularly.

Provision may be organised in the following ways –

- Teacher and SENCO liaise with regards to resources, teaching strategies and access to the curriculum.
- Play opportunities are adapted to facilitate access for the child with SEN.
- Individual support given by a teacher or nursery assistant.
- Small group support.
- Support/advice from outdoor agencies implemented in classroom.

Dunclug Nursery School will take every reasonable step to access appropriate resources and staff development to help us to ensure the best outcomes for all children, regardless of their needs or potential barriers to learning.

Complaints Procedure

In the event of a complaint :

- ✿ Parent and class teacher will arrange to meet to discuss the parent's concerns. Teacher will inform SENCO.
- ✿ Teacher will attempt to allay concerns / resolve problem.
- ✿ Records of the meeting and subsequent actions will be maintained.
- ✿ If the problem persists, parent and / or teacher will discuss the matter with Principal / SENCO.
- ✿ Principal / SENCO will make a decision regarding next steps.
- ✿ If necessary and where appropriate, external agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist will be informed.
- ✿ Board of Governors will be informed.
- ✿ Review the situation with parent and class teacher.
- ✿ After all reasonable efforts to explore common ground have been exhausted, either party may wish to contact the DARS service. DARS – (Dispute, Avoidance and Resolution Service) provides an independent, confidential and informal route through which disagreements relating to Special Educational Needs and provision can be avoided or resolved.

