

St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

'Achieving Excellence Together'

September 2026

"All teachers are teachers of pupils with SEN."

"It is therefore a whole school responsibility, requiring a whole school response"

(DENI Code of Practice 1998)

Rationale

In St. Patrick's Academy, we adopt a child-centred approach where all learners are encouraged, supported, challenged and valued. This includes meeting the needs of our students with Special Educational Needs, so that they can overcome any barriers to their learning and achieve their potential academically, whilst also ensuring their physical, social, emotional and spiritual development. Knowing and understanding the needs of each of our learners is of paramount importance. Our SEN team liaises with our young people, parents/carers and staff to implement strategies to support the developing and changing needs of the individual pupil. Every member of staff shares responsibility for supporting our pupils with Special Educational Needs, to ensure their full access to the curriculum, to foster their sense of self-worth and well-being, while also developing their resilience to adapt to an ever-changing society.

In St. Patrick's Academy, our SENCo manages the SEN provision within the school and liaises with relevant outside agencies, when necessary. Pupils who have been identified as having a Special Educational Need are added to the school's SEN Register and will benefit from additional support, as appropriate. For pupils with Special Educational Needs, an Individual Education Plan is created to support them. Pupil progress will be closely monitored, and targets reviewed on a regular basis, in partnership with parents/carers.

St Patrick's Academy promotes an inclusive ethos; all pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum. Every pupil is entitled to opportunities to allow them to develop their full potential while being educated alongside their peers. We strive to provide educational experiences which celebrate all achievements and recognise individuality.

We recognise that some pupils may have special educational needs and/or a disability. In the interests of these young people, we will endeavour to make every reasonable arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

Aims

In St Patrick's Academy, we aim to provide high-quality SEN provision by:

- Developing a whole-school approach to special needs provision;
- Supporting school staff in getting to know, understand and meet the needs of all learners;
- Ensuring that all pupils with SEN have a positive self-image and feel valued within our school;
- Ensuring early identification of SEN through a variety of means including use of data generated from baseline testing;
- Ensuring full entitlement and access for pupils with SEN/disability to high quality education, within a broad, balanced, relevant, and differentiated curriculum;
- Providing pupils with opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and understanding which ensure progress, promote success and develop self-confidence;
- Enabling pupils to be participative learners;
- Offering curricular, pastoral, and extra-curricular opportunities that allow pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills so ensuring progress, promoting success and self-confidence;

- Offering 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;
- Encouraging parental partnerships in all aspects of SEN provision;
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that the pupil's inclusion is compatible with the efficient education of other children;
- Establishing links between home and school to ensure a coherent approach to the promotion of effective learning;
- Liaising with outside agencies to provide support for pupils and staff to help best meet the needs of the individual child;
- Providing staff training;
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities;
- Considering the views of the child/young person when planning and implementing SEN provision, taking into account their age and capacity;
- Supporting the child/young person in participating in making decisions in all aspects of their learning;
- Working in collaboration with all relevant services and agencies to achieve an effective multi-disciplinary approach to meeting SEN;
- Educating pupils with SEN, wherever possible, alongside their peers;
- Encouraging a range of teaching strategies that accommodate different learning styles and promote effective learning;
- Creating a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs;
- Meeting the needs of all pupils who have SEN by offering appropriate forms of educational provision and the most efficient use of available resources;
- Promoting collaboration amongst teachers in the implementation of the SEN policy;
- Working closely with EA services and other outside agencies, as appropriate, to support each pupil with SEN.

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. The SENCo will need to consider: 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.

A report or diagnosis alone is not a reason to place a pupil on the SEN Register; support follows the pupil's need in school.

Neither teachers nor educational psychologists are qualified to diagnose a pupil's medical or physical condition. A diagnosis is normally recorded on the Medical Register only when evidence has been provided by the parent/carer, forwarded by the EA (for example in a Statement), or received from a Health and Social Care Trust practitioner. Pupils who receive

therapeutic or other health-related services from external agencies, but are not on the SEN Register, are not recorded as having SEN (Department of Education, SEN and Medical Categories – Guidance for Schools, January 2019; www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/sen-and-medical-categories-guidance-schools).

Medical information is recorded on the Medical Register and shared first with the relevant members of the Pupil Support Team. Relevant details, including any need for reasonable adjustments, are then shared with the relevant members of staff on a need-to-know basis.

Ensuring the Medical Registers are updated is the responsibility of Mrs Mary Barnard, our Student Support Administrator, and Mrs Sarah Moertl, our School Health Officer.

The following is the 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, DENI:

- Epilepsy
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Anaphylaxis
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- 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
- Other Medical Disorder
- 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

Learning and Teaching

All children have the right to access a broad and balanced curriculum, taking into account the entitlement framework. This involves all staff in utilising a range of teaching strategies

and classroom management styles designed to take account of the differing abilities, interests and experiences of pupils. In order to facilitate this:

- Staff working with our young people with SEN will know, understand and meet the needs of our learners, prioritising their emotional health and overall well-being, in order to facilitate learning taking place within the classroom;
- The teacher/assistant should employ the relevant strategies as outlined in the young person's PLP (IEP);
- Reasonable adjustments should be applied, giving consideration to the young person's needs and/or challenges;
- Encouragement should be given to pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour in the classroom;
- Staff working with our young people with SEN should take into account that all behaviour is a form of communication;
- Sensitivity should be shown by staff to pupils' literacy and numeracy difficulties and how these impact on communication. This needs to be taken into consideration when giving instructions. This should also be considered regarding impact on the pupil's ability to access the curriculum;
- Work tasks and activities should be stimulating and differentiated so that pupils experience success; yet they should also be challenging enough to promote progression in learning;
- Pupils should be set work which allows them to progress at their own rate;
- Positive feedback should be provided by staff and the achievements of pupils with SEN celebrated;
- The classroom environment should be inclusive, stimulating and attractive, with pupil work on display;
- The class teacher and assistant should provide feedback on pupil progress to the SENCo on request. For example, when a concern has been raised, during IEP review phases, in advance of annual reviews, during the statutory assessment process or to meet requests from outside agencies e.g. the EA Local IMPACT Team or Educational Psychology.

Arrangements for Co-ordinating 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 of the school. However, to facilitate the day-to-day running of the provision, the Board of Governors has delegated responsibility to co-ordinate the provision for pupils with special educational needs to Mrs A Mitchell (SENCo), supported by Miss Donaghy (Assistant SENCo).

The SENCo is supported with the administration of SEN processes by the Student Support Administrator.

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 of a mainstream school is to exercise its functions in relation to the school, with a view to ensuring that provision is made for registered pupils with special educational needs.

- The Board of Governors is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the SEN policy as outlined in the Code of Practice (Para 2.3 – 2.6).

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;
- make every effort to ensure the highest possible provision for pupils identified with SEN and to ensure that parents/carers are notified of their child's special needs, as well as any subsequent arrangements;
- maintain and operate a policy on SEN;
- ensure that, where a registered pupil has special educational needs, staff who teach or support the pupil are fully updated on those needs;
- ensure that all staff within the school know the importance of identifying those registered pupils with SEN and ensure the provision of appropriate teaching and other supports;
- allocate funding for special educational needs and disabilities;
- prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

Principal and SLT

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

- keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN issues;
- work in close partnership with the SENCo;
- 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;
- ensure SLT members adopt consistency of practice and contribute to the successful implementation of the school development plan; and
- provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to special educational needs.

SENCo/Assistant SENCo

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's special educational needs policy; ensuring that the Code of Practice containing procedures for and guidance on the Identification, Assessment and Review of pupils' special educational needs is adhered to. This includes:

- liaising with pupils and their parents/carers to devise individual targets for Education Plans (IEPs);
- assisting teachers in the design and evaluation of PLPs (IEPs) or other curriculum supports that may be required;

- working with relevant colleagues to use data to identify educational need and put in place appropriate strategies;
- co-ordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- maintaining the school's SEN register and overseeing all the records on pupils with special educational needs;
- working in partnership with parents/carers of children with special educational needs;
- dealing with all relevant correspondence;
- liaising with the Examinations Officer to ensure appropriate examination arrangements are made;
- responding to requests for advice from other teachers;
- ensuring staff are aware of the procedure for making a SEN referral to the SENCo (see Appendix 1 - SEN Referral Procedure);
- ensuring that the procedure for referrals to the SEN department is effective; this process will be reviewed regularly;
- ensuring all relevant documentation is available for statutory assessment;
- submitting Requests for Involvement to the EA (Local IMPACT Team and/or Educational Psychology) via the online portal, and ensuring that advice from the EA and other services is shared with staff and built into IEPs;
- line managing the classroom assistants and the Student Support Administrator;
- creating the classroom assistant timetable and putting a daily rota in place to cover classroom assistant absence, so that pupils with Statements and EA-funded hours continue to receive their support;
- overseeing the sensory room, which is managed by Mrs M Barnard;
- conducting annual reviews;
- attending relevant INSET;
- establishing the SEN in-service training requirements of all staff and contributing to their training, as appropriate;
- liaising with external agencies;
- disseminating appropriate information on SEN to all relevant personnel;
- devising and implementing strategies to identify and provide for the needs of those with special educational needs;
- acting as an advocate for children with special educational needs.

Subject Teacher/Form Tutor

The subject teacher/form tutor should:

- 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 - provide a classroom environment that is caring, supportive and conducive to learning;
- work closely with other staff to plan for learning and teaching, including regular communication with the relevant classroom/general assistant;
- contribute to, manage, and review IEPs in collaboration with the SENCo;
- follow the procedures in the school policy on special educational needs;
- be responsible for meeting the needs of all pupils in their class;

- identify barriers to learning;
- implement IEP recommendations and review progress;
- suggest a new relevant target, as part of the review process, for the next IEP;
- discreetly discuss IEP target(s) with the pupil;
- present materials appropriate to the pupil's age, maturity, learning need/disability;
- monitor progress and feedback to HoY/HoD, if need arises;
- put in place teaching strategies to assist the pupil in the development of skills which will allow them to progress towards achieving their target;
- keep evidence of pupil's progress towards achieving their target – including evidence to support access arrangements for formal examinations;
- provide accurate information to the SENCo for purposes such as annual review meetings, stage 3 referrals, access arrangements etc;
- review pupil's progress and suitability of targets before updating the SENCo (and parents/carers at their annual PTM);
- ensure the relevant staff are aware of any concerns regarding a student;
- be familiar with the SEN referral procedure and refer pupils causing concern to the SENCo for review of their needs (see Appendix 1 SEN Referral Procedure).

Head of Year

The Head of Year (HoY) should:

- be aware of current legislation;
- keep up to date with pupils on the SEN Register;
- liaise with other staff regarding pupils who are experiencing difficulty;
- work closely with the SENCo;
- update records as appropriate.

Head of Department

The Head of Department (HoD) should:

- be aware of current legislation;
- keep up to date with the SEN Register;
- ensure new members of department are familiar with the SEN Policy;
- ensure that practice and procedures within the department promote learning and teaching that is relevant and accessible to all pupils;
- support subject teachers to enable them to provide an appropriate and differentiated curriculum;
- ensure appropriate resources are available;
- discuss issues with subject teachers through departmental meetings and forward minutes to the SENCo when appropriate.

SEN Support Staff/Additional Adult Assistants

Support Staff/Additional Adult Assistants should:

- work under the direction of the subject teacher;
- be involved in planning;
- look for positives by talking to the child about their strengths;
- provide practical support;
- listen to the child/young person and speak to staff on the pupil's behalf;
- explain boundaries and operate these consistently and fairly;

- keep records and attend meetings;
- share good practice.

Parents/Carers will:

- Provide the school with details of their child's diagnosis, as well as any supporting information/guidance, as a matter of urgency;
- Attend review meetings and contribute to the completion of IEPs/PLPs;
- Support the school's policies and procedures at all times;
- Support their child's learning by taking an active role in attending PTMs, assisting with the completion of homework etc;
- Update the school on any changes to their child's SEN or if they have any other concerns.

Pupils will:

- participate in decision making;
- take responsibility for learning;
- review their progress.

Other staff

- Relevant personnel such as the School Health Officer, School Business Manager, catering, caretaker and supervisory staff will be made aware of an individual's needs, where relevant – this will be strictly on a need-to-know basis and may be of particular relevance during the unstructured part of the school day.

Pupils' views

In school, as far as reasonably practicable, we seek and have regard for the pupils' views about their strengths, learning difficulties and education, taking into account 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 particular pupil might include:

- contributing to their own assessment, provision, and progress;
- working towards achieving agreed targets;
- contributing to the review of IEPs, annual reviews, and the transition process;
- involving and supporting the pupil to participate in making decisions about matters affecting them.

Seeking their views and supporting them to participate in making decisions about their learning is good practice. The young person's progress will be more effective when both they and, where appropriate, their parents/carers are involved, and consideration is given to their wishes, feelings, and perspectives.

Confidentiality

Pupil confidentiality is of paramount importance. All teachers have access to the school's SEN Register, which gives a brief description of the pupil's specific need, as well as a copy of the document 'Background Information for Staff', which includes a more detailed

description of each child's needs. These documents can be located in RMStaff in the SEN and Medical Folder.

Teachers covering for an absent colleague are required to familiarise themselves with the SEN Register, as well as 'Background Information for Staff', and to deal sensitively with all issues which arise in the classroom. The SENCo will meet with long-term substitute teachers to provide them with relevant documentation (SEN register, Background Information for Staff, relevant IEPs/PLPs and action plans, as well as SEN resource cards).

Information on SEN pupils is shared on a need-to-know basis.

Correspondence relevant to SEN

All significant correspondence relating to SEN students (from parents/carers, pupils or external agencies) is to be recorded and sent to the SENCo and relevant members of the pastoral and Pupil Support team, via email, within a week of the correspondence being received, especially if an action has been agreed.

Parent/Carer responsibility

At St. Patrick's Academy, we acknowledge that successful partnerships between parents/carers, pupils and school play a key role in promoting a culture of co-operation, openness and transparency, as well as having a crucial impact on the effectiveness of special educational provision. Seeking the views of the child or young person is integral to helping us understand their individual needs.

Teachers, pastoral staff, SENCos, and other school staff all have a significant role in developing positive and constructive relationships with parents/carers and pupils. We encourage this participation and value its contribution.

It is the school's responsibility to inform parents/carers when staff are considering placing the pupil's name on the SEN register or moving the child between stages. It is essential that parents/carers 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/carer upon a child's entry to the school.

Legislation

The legislation that currently governs practice regarding children and young people 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 Code of Practice was published in 2005 and updated parts of the 1998 Code of Practice 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 school's 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 includes 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.

Current EA Guidance and SEND Transformation

The Education Authority's SEND Transformation programme has introduced new ways of supporting pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. St Patrick's Academy follows the EA Graduated Response Framework (Primary & Post-Primary) (2025) and the EA Guidance for Writing a Special Educational Needs Policy – Post-Primary (September 2025).

The Special Educational Needs Regulations (Northern Ireland), which will bring the new statutory Code of Practice into operation, are now expected to commence in September 2027. Until then, the school continues to follow the Code of Practice (1998) and its Supplement (2005), recording pupils under the three stages. In line with EA guidance, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will continue to be used until Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are introduced, and the SENCo role will become that of Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC) when the new framework commences. This policy will be fully revised in advance of the new Regulations.

Definitions (as in Article 3 of the 1996 Order)

Special Educational Needs

'Special Educational Needs' is defined as 'a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made'.

'Special educational provision' means educational provision, which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age.

Learning Difficulty

'Learning difficulty' means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age, and/or has a disability which hinders their use of everyday educational facilities.

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 are, 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 ordinary 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 their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. (Paragraph 2.3)

This definition may include pupils with a wide range of physical and learning disabilities, mental health or medical conditions (including cerebral palsy, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, autism, depression and ME), although this list is neither definitive nor exhaustive.

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."

Our school has an inclusive ethos and actively seeks to promote the inclusion of all children through our school vision of 'achieving excellence together'.

SEN and Medical Categories

The school will consider 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: DENI (see Appendix 3 for the full list).

Admissions

The admission arrangements with respect to the majority of 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 an ordinary school place, unless it is against the wishes of parents/carers, 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 an ordinary 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 take into account the wishes of the child's parents/carers, 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

In 2018, we moved into a new state-of-the-art building, complete with three passenger lifts, including one to the rear of the stage. The building's low-level access makes it wheelchair compliant and features six disabled parking spaces at the front of the school. In addition, we have nine accessible toilets spread throughout the building, with a further two positioned in our sports pavilion. Our two accessible showers are fitted with hoists and railings, while our SEN department includes a small nurture space at the rear of the building.

The school also has a sensory room, managed by Mrs M Barnard and overseen by the SENCo.

The school's Emergency Evacuation Plan takes account of the needs of pupils who have restrictions with their mobility.

These pupils follow a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). This is tailored to their needs and reviewed annually by the school's Health and Safety Officer, in consultation with the pupil, the pupil's parent/carer, Classroom Assistants (if required), SEN Co-ordinator, Principal and School Business Manager. The PEEP is explained to the pupil in detail; hard copies are given to all interested parties and kept on record.

The school has six refuge points located at the top of stairways. During an emergency evacuation, the elevators cannot be used and if a pupil is unable to descend the stairs, their PEEP will instruct them to make their way to the nearest refuge point to their location and wait here for the duration of the evacuation.

Reporting

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 who received provision from the EA Local IMPACT Team (LIT), EA Pupil Support Services or Health and Social Care Trust as well as those who accessed school-delivered special educational provision. Provision for and updates on SEN pupils are a standing item on pastoral agendas.

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 St. Patrick's Academy, the following may be used to identify pupils' needs:

- information from transferring school;
- teacher observation;
- standardised tests;
- diagnostic assessments;

- whole school assessment;
- key stage assessments;
- class tests/school examinations;
- individual education plans;
- care plans;
- personal education plans for children who are looked after;
- statements of special educational need;
- annual reviews;
- professional reports;
- parental contributions;
- pupil contributions;
- internal common testing.

Common Internal Testing

Attainment and ability testing (CAT) will be completed in Year 8 – students achieving a standardised score of 85 or less will be identified as possibly having additional needs and may be placed on the SEN register (supported by teacher evidence and parental input).

Literacy and Numeracy

Underachievers receive support through the Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators. Pupils achieving a standardised score of 85 or less, or who continue to underachieve once whole-school interventions have been explored, will be referred to the SENCo.

Diagnostic testing

The SENCo will have access to the diagnostic testing materials. Access to these materials can be obtained on completion of the Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (CCET) training.

The Management of Special Educational Needs

The Graduated Response

The school uses the EA Graduated Response Framework to identify and support pupils with SEN. The Graduated Response is a continuous cycle known as IPAMER:

- **Identify** – recognise indicators of need through observation, assessment data and professional judgement;
- **Plan** – agree strategies, provision and intended outcomes;
- **Action** – put in place high-quality teaching, reasonable adjustments and planned interventions;
- **Monitor** – track progress within agreed timescales;
- **Evaluate** – consider the impact of the provision;
- **Review** – decide next steps, in consultation with the pupil and their parents/carers.

Support is provided along a continuum. Whole School Educational Provision – high-quality teaching, differentiation and reasonable adjustments – are available to all pupils. Where a pupil requires support beyond this, they may be placed at Stage 1, 2 or 3 of the Code of Practice. Pupils and parents/carers are involved at each stage, including before a pupil is placed on the SEN register or moves between stages. Evidence of each stage of the cycle is recorded on the pupil's IEP.

The Three Stages of Special Education Provision

In St. Patrick's Academy, we adhere to the three stages of the Code of Practice. These stages focus on the level of intensity of the special educational provision 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 educational needs is in Appendix 4.

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/carers 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/young person's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the Statement;
- review the special provision made for the child, including placement;
- 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 the Principal (or the SENCo as delegated by the Principal). Relevant forms and the EA's guidance for this process are available by contacting the Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SARS) of the school's local EA office or they can be downloaded from the EA website. All relevant correspondence is sent to the parent/carers by the school in advance of the annual review meeting. Parents/carers are invited to attend.

Record Keeping

The SENCo (Learning Support Co-ordinator) keeps the following records in school:

- SEN Register;
- records of concern from staff;
- individual education plans/IEP reviews;
- statements/annual reviews/transition plans;
- assessment results/data;
- individual pupil files;
- record of liaison/meetings with staff from outside agencies;
- minutes of meetings with parents;
- support, advice, and training provided to staff.

Access Arrangements for Examinations

“Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working.” (Joint Council for Qualifications)

There are two types of Access Arrangements:

- arrangements put in place by schools (delegated to centres); and
- arrangements that require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries may need Access Arrangements to allow them to access the assessment. These arrangements are put in place without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes, prompters, enlarged question papers and the provision of extra time.

Being on the SEN Register is not a requirement for access arrangements.

Visual Impairment

If a pupil on the SEN register has a visual impairment, they may need to have resources enlarged. The EA's Sensory Services Team will provide a sizing and quality recommendation. When this is required, it is the responsibility of the subject teacher to provide this access arrangement or make arrangements with the relevant assistant to support with this. Where a student has been provided with an iPad, where possible, e-copies of booklets should be emailed to the SENCo by the subject teacher.

Responsibility for Access Arrangements

- The SENCo, Mrs Mitchell, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the Senior Leadership Team, leads on the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process within the school and is responsible for decisions on access arrangements.
- Miss Donaghy (Assistant SENCo) is the school's authorised in-house assessor and will assess candidates for GCSE and/or GCE qualifications. Applications are currently processed online by the Examinations Officer, Mrs A Farrell, in conjunction with the SENCo, who holds the evidence for inspection purposes.
- The SENCo must work with teaching staff, support staff (such as assistants) and exams office personnel to ensure that approved access arrangements/reasonable adjustments are put in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations.

Further detail is set out in the school's Access Arrangements Policy and Word Processor Policy (Exams & Assessments), which are reviewed annually in line with the current JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments regulations.

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

It is the responsibility of the SENCo, Heads of Achievement and pastoral teams to ensure that the progress of pupils on the SEN register is monitored. This may be achieved by considering that:

- individual education plans (IEPs) or Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) 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;

- 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.

Professional Development

The Principal, in consultation with the SENCo, oversees the professional development of all staff in their school. It is essential that all staff are kept up-to-date with SEN developments, in order to provide effective teaching and support for pupils. Following attendance at relevant internal or external education and training programmes, staff members should be encouraged to disseminate the information provided to build the capacity of their colleagues. The SENCo should keep a record of all training attended by or delivered to staff in relation to SEN.

Partnership working

In school, we work with the EA's SEND services, where appropriate, to support pupils, parents/carers and staff in meeting the needs of children with special educational and medical needs. These include:

- EA Local IMPACT Team (LIT) – multi-disciplinary support with specialists in Cognition and Learning; Autism; Language and Communication; and Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Well-being needs;
- Educational Psychology Service;
- Sensory Service;
- Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SARS).

Other agencies may include Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the Health and Social Care Trust and the Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS).

Request for Involvement (RFI): Where a pupil continues to experience difficulties despite school-delivered provision at Stage 1, the SENCo may submit a Request for Involvement to the EA Local IMPACT Team and/or Educational Psychology through the EA's online portal. Written consent from parents/carers is obtained beforehand and held on the pupil's file. The request must include evidence of the school's graduated response, including the pupil's IEP, the strategies and interventions used and their timescales, progress data, and the views of the pupil and parents/carers. A pupil moves to Stage 2 once external provision is being implemented.

Requests are considered by an EA panel, which decides the level of support to be provided. If a request is not accepted, or a lower level of involvement is offered, the school will continue to provide support through its own graduated response, review the pupil's IEP and keep parents/carers informed of the outcome.

Risk Assessments/Risk Reduction Action Plans (RRAPs)

If an SEN pupil is at a greater danger of harming or damaging themselves, other pupils, staff or school property, a risk assessment plan will be put in place. This process may involve consultation with external agencies, such as the EA Local IMPACT Team. The parents of the pupil will be consulted about this process.

Other Educational Settings

Under the entitlement framework where links are established with other schools, Further Education Colleges and/or work placements, it is essential that all relevant information

pertaining to pupils with SEN is communicated effectively, in order to ensure the best outcomes for each pupil.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies:

- Access Arrangements Policy;
- Word Processor Policy (Exams & Assessments);
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Accessibility Plan;
- Complaints Procedure.

Complaints

All complaints regarding SEN in our school will be dealt with in line with the school's existing complaints procedures. If anyone has any queries in relation to special educational needs of a child with a Statement, or who is currently being assessed for a statement of special educational needs, they can contact the local EA Office. Please contact your SEN Link Officer in the first instance. Contact details should be on the EA documentation issued to parents/carers of an SEN pupil alongside their child's statement.

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/carers 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/carers can contact the service which is provided by Global Mediation. Involvement with DARS will not affect the right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) considers parents/carers' 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, in light of changes in legislation or practice.

Reviewed: September 2026

To be reviewed: June 2027

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - SEN Referral Procedure and Referral Form

SEN Referral Procedure

Below is the general procedure for making a referral to the SEN department. However, please feel free to contact the SENCo/Assistant SENCo at any time to discuss your concerns in advance of completing a referral or to seek advice on the best course of action moving forward.

Where a teacher has a concern about a **learning need and there is emerging underachievement**:

- Teacher decides on appropriate support/intervention in the classroom and sets specific targets to the student's needs.
- Teacher implements relevant strategies to achieve set targets (showing evidence of differentiation). Strategies may be obtained from the Good Practice guidelines.
- Teacher seeks in-school support (where relevant) – HoD, Pastoral Team, Learning Support Co-ordinator, referral to Literacy or Numeracy Co-ordinator.
- Targets/Interventions are time-bound (normally 4–6 weeks).
- Review effectiveness of strategies and interventions. Continue interventions for no more than two terms.
- Inform Learning Support Co-ordinator, SENCo, HoD, HoY and tutor of outcomes. Seek advice on how to proceed.
- Decide whether whole-school provision has been effective or ineffective.

Where there is ***continuing underachievement (following intervention) and whole-school provision has been ineffective***:

- The class teacher who initially raised the concern should complete a **SEN teacher referral form (in RM Staff- SEN and Medical Folder 2026-27)** with evidence of the concern and evidence of intervention that has been employed to address the issue.
- Outcomes and results should be included in the referral, including the student's CAT, PTE and PTM scores.
- For external help (through SENCo – a Request for Involvement to the EA Local IMPACT Team or Educational Psychology) all reasonable steps must have been taken, records kept and evidence that targets have been set and reviewed.

Medical Conditions

Where you have a concern about a student in relation to a medical condition e.g. ASD, DCD or ADHD, please inform the relevant members of the pastoral team and the SENCo who will advise accordingly. A teacher referral will be required outlining your concerns and the evidence you have gathered to support these, before contact is made with parents, but the steps outlined above will not always apply in these instances.



TEACHER REFERRAL

Pupil: _____ Class: _____ Subject: _____

Please indicate the nature of your concern and outline the support received/sought from whole-school provision to date.

Please outline the strategies you have already employed (from the Good Practice Guidelines document) to address this concern.

Time frame: Strategies implemented on _____ until _____

Please indicate and/or attach evidence (if possible) of progress / or lack of progress made following teacher intervention (for example, a spelling test). Also include the student's current standardised scores (CAT, PTE and PTM).

Teacher signature _____ Date _____

*Please forward to SENCo and copy to
M Barnard, Year Head, HOD and Form Tutor

Appendix 2 - SENCO Procedure for Receipt of a Referral



ST PATRICK'S ACADEMY

PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW ON RECEIPT OF A REFERRAL

All steps to be carried out by either SENCo or Assistant SENCo

Review the success of the intervention already carried out from employing strategies from the Good Practice Guidelines (this should be indicated in the referral form received).



If the concern is a literacy concern, has the student been referred to the Literacy Co-ordinator? Explore the possibility of participating in a relevant literacy programme such as the Reading Partnership Programme.



Collect evidence:

CAT, PTE, PTM scores. SIMS report. Assessment Phase Results. Gather feedback from subject teachers, Form Tutor, Head of Year, Vice Principal via a Record of Concern form. Administer screening tests (if applicable). Seek advice from Educational Psychologist regarding suitable tests.



Contact (either phone or meet with) parent to discuss the evidence gathered. Request permission to carry out testing. Send out relevant form to get written permission. If EA involvement is needed, obtain written parental consent for a Request for Involvement.



If the concern is related to a medical condition, or to behaviour, suggest to parents that they should make an appointment with their GP to discuss these issues, as there may need to be involvement from other agencies, for example an assessment by CAMHS/an OT.



Analyse the evidence gathered, consult with the Educational Psychologist.



If there is enough evidence to support the need to go onto Stage One of the Code of Practice, complete the application for the SEN register. Send this to the parents to request permission for their son/daughter to go onto Stage One of the SEN register.



Complete a Stage One Action Plan. Distribute this to subject teachers, Form Tutor, Head of Year and Vice Principal.



Update SIMS (name should be changed to capital letters, update status).



Update the document 'Background information on SEN students for Staff', update the SEN register. Email this information to teaching staff.

Appendix 3 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: DENI.

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)

Appendix 4 Summary of the Three Stages of Special Educational Needs

Stage 1 includes:

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

The PLP (currently IEP) should contain the core information/evidence of the school action to inform a Request for Involvement (RFI), if considered necessary, to the EA Local IMPACT Team or Educational Psychology 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 (currently IEP);
- 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);
- Reasonable adjustments, additional strategies and approaches are implemented plus resources, advice, guidance, support, and training provided through the EA Local IMPACT Team 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. A new online form designed to guide the user through the process is used to make a request for statutory assessment. The PLP (currently IEP) contains the core school information the EA will use to consider and if appropriate make, 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 plus any relevant treatment or service identified by the HSC Trust;
- A PLP is required (currently IEP);
- 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;
- Reasonable adjustments, the school delivered special educational provision are implemented plus EA provision as set out in the Statement.

At Stage 3, the child has a statement and is receiving special educational provision (as set out in the Statement). The pupil's PLP (IEP) should be revised, to reflect the content of the statement (as it relates to the PLP (IEP)) including the SEN category (or categories); setting intended outcomes based on the objectives of the special educational provision and the nature and extent of the EA's provision including any relevant service and treatment the HSC Trust are to provide; and any additional school provision or modifications to the curriculum, as itemised in the statement; the pupil's PLP (IEP) will be subject to regular monitoring, review and evaluation and will form the key basis of educational information to inform the annual review of the statement.