**ST. MARY’S P.S. ALTINURE**

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# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

**Date Ratified by Board of Governors: 03/04/23**

**Date of Review: Term 3 - 2024**

**Special Educational Needs Policy**

**Rationale**

St. Mary’s Primary School, Altinure staff are committed to providing equal access for all our pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum including the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We recognise that some pupils during their school career may have special educational needs and/or a disability. In the interests of these children, we will endeavour to make every reasonable arrangement to provide for their individual needs. Staff realise the importance of a collaborative approach to achieve this.

**Definitions**

The Northern Ireland Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998) and the Supplement to the Code of Practice (2005) guide all our policies and practices in providing for children with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.

The term ‘Special Educational Needs’ is defined in the Code as ‘a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made.’ ‘Learning difficulty’ means that the child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his or her age, and/or has a disability, which hinders his or her use of everyday educational facilities. ‘Special educational provision’ means educational provision, which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age. (Code of Practice 1.4)

Under the provisions of the Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA), a person has a disability if ‘he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’ (Supplement to the Code of Practice 3.3)

**SEN Provisions of SENDO**

‘The new law will strengthen the right to an ordinary school place for children with a Statement, unless it is against the wishes of parents, or it is incompatible with the efficient education of others.’ ‘Children who have Special Educational Needs but do not have a statement, must, except in specific circumstances, be educated in an ordinary school.’ Article 3(1) SENDO 2005

**Key Principles of Inclusion**

'Inclusion is about the quality of children's experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school'. Removing Barriers to Achievement (2004)

In order to make sure that we meet our pupils’ needs and include them in all aspects of school life, this SEN policy links closely with all our other policies in supporting pupils such as Positive Behaviour, Child Protection, Intimate Care, Health and Safety and Medical Needs.

* A pupil may have a medical need which has an impact on their learning e.g., diabetes.

**The following areas encompass all aspects of SEN/Disability:**

**1. Cognition and Learning – Language, Literacy, Maths, Numeracy**

a) Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)

b) Dyscalculia / SpLD

c) Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

d) Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)

e) Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

**2.** **Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Wellbeing**

1. Social and Behavioural Difficulties
2. Emotional and Wellbeing Difficulties
3. Severe Challenging Behaviour with SLD

**3. Speech, Language and Communication**

1. Developmental Language Disorder
2. Language Disorder associated with a differentiating/ biomedical condition
3. Communication and Social Interaction Difficulties

**4. Sensory**

a) Blind

b) Partially sighted

c) Severe / profound hearing impairment

d) Mild / moderate hearing impairment

e) Multi-Sensory Impairment

**5. Physical Needs**

a) Physical

**6. Medical Conditions**

1. Epilepsy
2. Asthma
3. Diabetes
4. Anaphylaxis
5. Autism Spectrum Disorder
6. ADD/ ADHD
7. Dyspraxia DCD
8. Developmental Language Disorder (Medical)
9. Global Developmental Delay
10. Down Syndrome
11. Complex healthcare Needs
12. Anxiety Disorder
13. Depression
14. Eating Disorder
15. Psychosis
16. Other Mental Disorder
17. Cerebral Palsy
18. Spina bifida with Hydrocephalus
19. Spina bifida without Hydrocephalus
20. Muscular Dystrophy
21. Acquired Brain Injury
22. Visual Impairment
23. Hearing Impairment
24. Physical Disability
25. Other Medical Condition/ Syndrome

*Guidance For Schools Recording Children with Special Needs (Department of Education)*

*These changes used to describe a child’s Special Educational Needs are effective since 6th October 2018.*

Children’s difficulties in all these categories may vary in degree and some children could have more than one difficulty.

Only those children with a medical diagnosis and or physical conditions that requires SEN provision move into the SEN Framework and will be recorded on both the SEN and Medical registers.

**Policy Aims**

St. Mary’s Primary School, Altinure aims:

1. To identify pupils with SEN/Disability as early and thoroughly as possible using a variety of means and in consultation with appropriate personnel.

2. To ensure full entitlement and access for pupils with SEN/Disability to high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant, and differentiated curriculum.

3. To offer a broad curriculum which will promote intellectual, emotional, social, and physical progress in order that pupils can develop as valuable members of society both now and in the future.

4. To ensure that all pupils with SEN/Disability feel valued and that each child’s confidence and self-esteem are developed and protected.

5. To encourage parental involvement in all aspects of SEN provision.

6. To ensure that pupils’ have a voice and can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs, taking into account the child’s age and level of understanding.

7. To strive for close co-operation between all services and agencies concerned in order to achieve an effective multi-disciplinary approach to meeting Special Educational Needs.

8. To educate pupils with SEN/Disability, wherever possible, alongside their peers.

9. To develop a recording system so that each pupil’s performance can be monitored and reviewed appropriately.

10. To encourage a range of teaching strategies that embraces different learning styles and promotes effective learning.

11. To meet the needs of all pupils who have SEN/Disability by offering appropriate forms of educational provision and the most efficient use of available resources.

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

13. To work closely with Education Authority departments and other outside agencies in order to improve the quality of support available for each pupil with Special Educational Needs.

**Arrangements for Co-ordinating SEN Provision**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

SEN provision will be the overall responsibility of the Board of Governors and Principal of the school. However, to facilitate the day-to-day running of the provision the Board of Governors have delegated responsibility for pupils with special educational needs to **Mrs Anne Marie Hegarty (SENCo).**

**Board of Governors**

In ‘Every School a Good School’ (DE) – The Governor Role (2010) Chapter 12 of the document relates specifically to the Governor role for pupils with special educational needs.

The role of the Board of Governors of St. Mary’s Primary School, Altinure 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 has a statutory duty to:

* Take account of the provisions in the DE Code of Practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs;
* Use their best endeavors to provide for pupils identified with SEN and those parents are notified of their child’s special needs;
* Maintain and operate a policy on SEN;
* Ensure that where a registered pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them;
* Ensure that the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying those registered pupils with SEN and of providing appropriate teaching;
* Allocate funding for special educational needs and disability;
* Prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan when appropriate.

The Board of Governors, as a whole, monitors the school’s work for children with special educational needs.

**Principal** (Code of Practice 1998)

The Principal will:

* Keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN issues;
* Work in close partnership with the SENCo;
* Liaise with parents and external agencies as required;
* Request Statutory Assessment;
* Delegate and monitor the SEN budget;
* Ensure the SLT are actively involved in the management of SEN within the

school. SLT members should ensure consistency of practice and contribute

to the realisation of the SDP;

* Provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to Special Educational Needs.

**SENCo**

The SENCo will be responsible for:

* The day-to-day operation of the school’s special educational needs policy;
* Responding to requests for advice from other teachers and classroom assistants;
* Co-ordinating provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs;
* Maintain the school’s SEN register and oversee all the records on pupils with special educational needs;
* Liaison with parents of children with special educational needs;
* Establishing the SEN in-service training requirements of the staff, and contributing as appropriate to their training;
* Liaison with external agencies;
* Monitoring and evaluating SEN provision.

**Class Teachers**

The class teachers will:

* Be aware of current legislation;
* Make an initial assessment of a child’s special educational needs;
* Keep up to date with information on the SEN register;
* Gather information through observation and assessment;
* Devise, manage and review EPs in consultation with the SENCo;
* Develop an inclusive classroom;
* Work closely with other staff to plan for learning and teaching;
* Involve classroom assistants as part of the learning team.

**Learning Support Staff (See Appendix 1 – Learning Support Timetable)**

Year 1/2 teacher and classroom assistants form the learning support team and will:

* Provide additional support for pupils with SEN at Stages 1-3 SpEP;
* Contribute to education plans which inform learning and teaching;
* Implement education plans in conjunction with / under the direction of the class teacher
* Monitor and review progress, note relevant information and keep the class teacher / SENCo informed;
* Undertake professional development training as required.

Where appropriate, children will be provided with in-class support from learning support teachers. There are times though, when to maximise learning, children will be asked to work in small groups or in a one-to-one situation on a withdrawal basis.

**SEN Classroom Assistants (See Appendix 2)**

Classroom assistants assigned to specific pupils with SEN will:

* Work under the direction of the class teacher;
* Be involved in planning
* Provide practical support
* Carry out / record observations of the pupil;
* Play a key role in the social, emotional and behavioural development of the child, encouraging independence in both the classroom setting and among peers.

**Pupil**

*‘The child should, where possible, according to age, maturity and capability, participate in all the decision-making processes which occur in education.’*

(Supplement to the Code of Practice – pars 1.19) This guides current practice within St. Mary’s Primary School, Altinure.

Pupils will, at an appropriate level:

* Contribute to assessment;
* Discuss their preferred approaches to learning and help identify strengths and areas for development when compiling individual pupil profiles:
* Contribute to education plans through setting targets;
* Work towards achieving agreed targets and
* Contribute to the review of EPs, Annual Reviews and the Transition process in Year 7.

**Parent/Carer**

*‘The relationship between the parents of a child with SEN and their child’s school has a crucial bearing on the child’s educational progress and effectiveness of any school-based action....... Professional help can seldom be wholly effective unless it builds upon parental involvement and provides reassurance that account is taken of what parents say and that their views and anxieties are treated as intrinsically important.’ (Code of Practice 2.21)*

It is essential that parents inform the relevant school staff of any significant needs their child may possess. Parents should do this as early as possible. For example, during the Pre-school Induction Programme, parents are made aware of this and are encouraged to provide relevant information prior to / upon their child’s entry to the school.

The school will inform parents when staff are considering placing the pupil’s name on the SEN register or moving the child to a higher or lesser stage of need. Parents will be invited as necessary to:

* Meet with staff to discuss their child’s needs
* Support targets on EPs
* Attend review meetings
* Inform staff of changes in circumstances

**Admissions**

The admission arrangements with respect to the majority of pupils with SEN will be consistent with the school’s general admission arrangements for all other pupils. Within each criterion in the school’s admissions policy priority will be given to those pupils regarded by the Board of Governors, on the basis of supporting written evidence provided by parents and/or statutory agencies as having special circumstances, i.e. medical, social or security factors in line with SENDO.

Children with Statements of SEN are placed in schools at the request of the Education Authority.

When seeking to place a pupil with a Statement, the Education Authority will take into account the wishes of the child’s parents and the provision of efficient education for other children in the class or school and the efficient use of resources to determine the suitability of the placement.

This arrangement is in line with SENDO legislation.

**Accessibility**

• At present pupils with SEN/Disabilities have equal access to all areas of the school building.

• The school is accessible to wheelchair users;

• There are facilities for personal care, including a toilet adapted for use by persons with disabilities.

• Access to a broad and balanced curriculum can be facilitated appropriate to age, ability, aptitude and attainments.

**Annual Report**

The BOG should report each year on SEN provision in school. Information for this report should be collated by the SENCo and the Principal.

**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. Mary’s Primary School, Altinure the following will be used to assist in identification of pupils’ needs:

* Parental information
* Information from Playgroup or other transferring school
* Cognitive ability tests
* Attainment tests: Renfrew Vocabulary Scale (Year 1)

Linguistic Phonics assessments (Year 2)

Tricky Word / Keyword recognition

Knowledge of Sounds

Standardized tests

* Summative and formative assessment
* Teacher observation
* Professional Reports / Medical Reports
* Statements of Special Educational Need
* Care Plans
* Personal Education Plans for children looked after
* EP Reviews
* Annual Reviews

**The Management of SEN**

From October 2021 pupils with SEN in St. Mary’s Primary School, Altinure, are recorded under three stages of the Code of Practice regarding the identification, assessment of and provision for SEN pupils, as set out in The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016.

This approach recognises that there is a continuum of Whole School and SEN provision and that the requirements of most pupils with SEN lie at Stage 1 which means that their needs are met by school delivered special educational provision. A smaller number of children will access Stage 2 provision, school delivered special educational provision with the help of outside agencies and/or specialists being implemented. At Stage 3 the child has a Statement and receives special education provision.

**The 3 stages of Special Educational Provision (Proposed Code of Practice)**

**Stage 1 SpEP** (Stages 1 & 2 pre-Oct 2021)

• School delivered special educational provision

• PLP required (A Personal Learning Plan will in time replace an Education Plan. Pupils will continue to have an IEP until guidance from EA is in place.)

• The majority of SENs will be met through this stage.

• The responsibility lies with the school putting in place reasonable adjustments and additional strategies and approaches aimed at meeting and addressing the child’s SEN.

**Stage 2** (Stages 3 & 4 pre-Oct 2021)

• School delivered special educational provision plus external provision e.g., the EA or an HSC Trust

• PLP required (A Personal Learning Plan will in time replace an Education Plan. Pupils will continue to have an IEP until guidance from EA is in place.)

• A smaller number of children will need this provision.

• The responsibility lies with the school plus external provision from EA

• Reasonable adjustments, additional strategies and approaches plus resources, advice, guidance, support, and training provided through the EA SEN support services to address the child’s SEN.

**Stage 3** (Stage 5 pre-Oct 2021)

• Statement of SEN

• School and EA delivered special educational provision plus any relevant treatment or service identified by an HSC Trust

• PLP required (A Personal Learning Plan will in time replace an Education Plan. Pupils will continue to have an IEP until guidance from EA is in place.)

• A smaller number of children will need this provision

• The responsibility lies with the school and the EA – with input from an HSC Trust where relevant.

• Reasonable adjustments, school delivered special educational provision plus EA provision as set out in the Statement.

In the new Code of Practice, Stage 2 begins when external provision is put into place to supplement the provision already being made by the school rather than at the time of referral to an outside agency.

In the new Code of Practice, a pupil is not recorded as Stage 3 until the final Statement has been issued.

**Stage 1 SpEP**

Where initial intervention has not proved sufficient a more targeted action is required. Stage 1 begins when it is agreed by the teacher and SENCo, in consultation with those with parental responsibility, that school needs to make further special educational provision for a child despite implementing whole school educational provision in dealing with a concern that a child may have SEN. The class teacher maintains day-to-day responsibility for meeting the pupil’s SEN.

Assessments are carried out to identify the child’s learning difficulty. The teacher, in consultation with the SENCo, draws up and implements a specific and targeted programme of support, known as an Education Plan. All these operations should consider, as far as possible, the child’s views and the parents’ views. Parents will receive a copy of their child’s Education Plan. Progress is reviewed at the pre-determined date and a decision made as to the appropriate stage at which the child should continue.

The SENCo should:

* Ensure that parents are consulted, and agreement reached that the child’s name is included in the school’s SEN register.
* Ensure parents are made aware of the child’s targets and informed about how they could support their child at home
* Advise and support the class teacher.

**Stage 1SpEP Review**

* If progress has been satisfactory the SENCo and class teacher may decide that the child should continue at Stage 1 SpEP to consolidate gains. If the progress continues to be satisfactory, the SENCo may decide that the child no longer needs special educational provision at Stage 1 and may decide to move the child off the SEN register and continue to monitor performance.
* If deemed appropriate, the child’s name should be kept on the SEN register until there is no longer any significant concern about progress.

If the relevant and purposeful measures at Stage 1 SpEP does not result in adequate progress, the SENCo will, in consultation with the principal, teacher, parents and Educational Psychologist, where appropriate, request access to EA SEN services at Stage 2. At this Stage the SENCo, working closely with the child’s teacher will complete a referral form to draw on the expertise of relevant external support services. External support may include:

* Educational Psychologist
* Peripatetic Literacy Lessons
* Outreach Literacy or Mathematics lessons
* Emotional and Behavioural advice and/or support sessions (PBSP)
* Social skills advice and/or support sessions
* Advice or support for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (AAIS)
* Advice and support with visual or auditory impairments
* Speech and Language advice or referral to a Speech Therapist
* Occupational Therapy advice or support
* Inter-Disciplinary Support (RISE) advice or support
* Advice or support from Educational Welfare Officer
* Advice or support from Social Services.

**Stage 2 SpEP**

The child will move forward to Stage 2 SpEP once external special educational provision is being implemented.

The SENCo, working with the class teacher, and with the help of the external support services, should ensure that a Stage 2 SpEP Education Plan is drawn up. The child should be involved as far as possible. Together they should consider a range of teaching approaches and appropriate support materials, including the use of ICT. The Education Plan should set out revised strategies for supporting the child’s progress and arrangements for monitoring and review. It should be implemented, as far as possible, within the everyday classroom setting. Parents will be kept informed and receive a copy of the current Education Plan.

At Stages 1 and 2 of the Code of Practice the SENCo and class teacher should consider potential benefits of:

* + The Good Practice Guidelines.
  + SEN Resource File
  + Encouraging inclusive activities to ensure integration of the pupil.
  + Differentiated teaching.
  + Withdrawal for more intensive support.
  + SEN resources available within school; support programmes, ICT, etc.
  + Available staff skills which support pupils with SEN.
  + Implementation of any provision/strategies as a result of external advice, support and training provided by relevant EA / other services.

**Review of the Stage 2 Education Plan**

The review of the Stage 2 Education Plan will be conducted with consultation between the SENCo and class teacher and the child, parents, and relevant external support services as appropriate. The review will focus on the child’s progress and whether this has been adequate.

* If the progress has been satisfactory and intervention is no longer required, the SENCo, following consultation, may agree that the child no longer needs external support at Stage 2 SpEP and may decide to move the child back to Stage 1 SpEP and action appropriate to that stage will be taken.
* If the relevant and purposeful measures at Stage 2 SpEP have not resulted in adequate progress, following consultation with the SENCo, teacher, external support services and parents, the Principal may request consideration for a Statutory Assessment.

‘In some cases schools will conclude that the pupil’s needs remain so substantial that they cannot be effectively met within the resources normally available to the school.’ (Supplement to the Code of Practice – 4.64)

Following an application to the Education Authority from school’s principal or the parent, the Board will consider the need for Statutory Assessment. It should be noted that a request of this kind will not always result in Statutory Assessment, nor will Statutory Assessment always lead to a Statement of SEN.

In reaching a suitable decision, the Board will consider:

• The degree of the child’s difficulty

• The nature of the provision required

• Whether the child’s needs can reasonably be met by the resources normally available to the school and

• Use the EA Provisional Criteria for Statutory Assessment.

**Following Statutory Assessment**

***The EA will either:***

Make and maintain a Statement of Special Educational Needs and arrange, monitor, and review provision.

**or**

Provide a Note in Lieu of a Statement.

A Statement of Special Educational Needs sets out the child’s educational and non-educational needs, the objectives to be secured, the provision to be made and the arrangements for monitoring and review.

A Note in Lieu of a Statement sets out the reasons for the Board’s decision not to make a Statement of Special Educational Needs and includes supporting evidence from the Statutory Assessment.

**Stage 3 SpEP**

Once the statement has been made final:

• Provision and /or support will be arranged to meet the child’s needs. The school retains responsibility for the day-to-day learning of the child, sharing responsibility with the EA and, where appropriate, the HSC Trust.

• The SENCo ensures that a Stage 3 SpEP Education Plan is drawn up reflecting the content of the Statement, is implemented, monitored, and reviewed.

• The Annual Review and Transition processes will take place.

**The Annual Review**

Article 19 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 requires that any child 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 are still being met and to consider the appropriateness of the placement. Annual Reviews are seen as part of the process of continuous monitoring of the child's progress.

For children for whom the Education Authority is maintaining a statement of special educational needs, the school, on behalf of the Board, will conduct an annual review of their statement. The Review will take place in school, chaired by the Principal or SENCo. Parents and relevant professionals are invited to attend the review meeting.

Pupils with a statement of educational needs and who are due to transfer to post-primary schools will have a Transfer Review meeting carried out in the first term of Year 7.

**The Annual Review / Transfer Review will**

• Gauge the child’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 SEN.

**Exceptional Cases**

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

Education Plans

The strategies used to support the child will be recorded within an Education Plan. An IEP will show the short-term targets set for the child and the teaching strategies to be used. It will also indicate the intended resources, type of support and by whom, plus the review date for the plan. In addition to the signed copy of the IEP kept in the Individual Pupil Files, a copy is contained in the child’s SEN file for the class teacher, learning support teacher, classroom assistant, outside agency (if applicable) to access. Parents receive a copy of their child’s current IEP. The class teacher, SENCo and parent signs IEPs.

**Record Keeping**

The following SEN records are kept:

* SEN Register which is updated at the start of each term or more frequently if required
* Records of Concern
* Education plans/Reviews
* Statements/Annual Reviews
* Assessment results/data
* Individual Pupil Files
* Record of liaison/meetings with external agencies (Appendix 3)
* Minutes of meetings with parents
* Staff’s support, advice, and training records (Appendix 4)

Resources

In addition to resources in individual classrooms, a central store of SEN resources is available.

* Harberton Reading scheme
* First Words Series
* Trackers
* Jets
* Wellington Square
* Rapid Readers
* Wolf Hill
* Easy Learn Resources
* Primary Ed. Resources
* Numicon

A range of ICT SEN resources are available on the C2K system.

The school has purchased, Accelerated Reading and The Nessy Learning Programme to support SEN children to work at their own level in Literacy. The Complete Spelling Programme is used for Years 2 to 7, and this incorporates differentiated work for SEN pupils. Twenty i-Pads and ten tablets have also been purchased.

Close liaison exists between staff regarding the sharing of resources.

The SENCO is responsible for the management of resources for SEN provision within the school.

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with SEN

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to ensure that the progress of pupils on the SEN register is monitored.

* Ongoing monitoring sheets accompany IEPs in each child’s folder and are completed by those working with the child to provide evidence that the pupil is making progress.
* Assessment is carried out at the IEP review stage and the outcomes used to inform future planning and inform movement either up or down through the Code of Practice Stages.
* SEN pupil results are recorded on SIMS and individual pupil performance is tracked in June using stanine bands and analysis mark sheets for Year groups 2-7.

**Professional Development**

The Principal oversees the professional development of all staff in the school. Staff development in relation to SEN will be provided to:

* Ensure coherency and consistency in practice;
* Update, inform and improve confidence in relation to this policy;
* Induct new staff and staff whose roles have changed;
* Provide continuous professional development for staff involved in all levels of support.
* Relevant information from INSET will be disseminated with colleagues.

School based in-service training will be provided in identified areas of the Learning Support action plan based on the annual SEN audit.

A system is in place for recording training undertaken by staff and these records are updated regularly. The SENCo will keep a record of all training relating to SEN.

It is essential that all staff keep up-to-date with developments in the whole area of SEN in order to provide effectively for pupils.

**Complaints**

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

**SEN Advice and Information Service**

EA have set up an SEN Advice and Information Service to provide support in relation to children with Special Educational Needs.

Details of this service can be found on EA website.

**Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS)**

DARS was established in September 2005 as part of the implementation of the Special Needs and Disability Order (SENDO). It aims to provide an independent, confidential forum to resolve or reduce the areas of disagreement between parents and schools/Boards of Governors or EAs 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 separate venue from home or school) but do not have the authority to resolve a dispute. DARS is separate and independent from Special Education Section.

Involvement with DARS will not affect the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). Parents/Guardians may contact this service directly.

**Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)**

Where agreement cannot be reached between a parent and the EA with regard to a child’s special educational needs, legislation gives the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). This body considers parents’ appeals against decisions of EAs and deals with claims of disability discrimination in schools.

**Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

The SEN policy will be reviewed annually and in light of changes in legislation or practice following consultation with all staff members, parents and external agencies.

*Policy Date* **30th March 2023**

*Signature of Principal Mary Redmond*

*Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors Roisin McInroy*

*Review Date* **March 2024**