



**Harmony Hill Primary School
and Nursery Unit**



Special Needs Policy

2022-2024

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Rationale/Vision

Mission Statement

'We are committed to providing high quality learning in a safe, caring and happy environment based upon respect for all. In partnership with parents and the local community, we aim to provide positive and stimulating experiences which enable children to be lifelong learners in a changing world'.

Harmony Hill Primary School and Nursery Unit staff are committed to providing equal access for all our pupils to a broad and balanced educational experience based on 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.

The legislation that currently governs practice regarding children and young people (C&YP) 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.

SEND0 (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 curricula for all children who may wish to attend, including those with SEN/Disabilities.

The Supplement to the CoP was published in 2005 and updated parts of the 1998 CoP to reflect the changes following SEND0 (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 SEND0 (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 include 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.

Definitions

For all involved in a child's education it is important that there is a clear understanding of the terms 'special educational needs,' 'learning difficulty' and 'special educational provision,' as defined in Article 3 of the 1996 Order.

Special Educational Needs

A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made.

Learning Difficulty

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 is 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 mainstream 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 his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

(Paragraph 2.3)

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."*

At Harmony Hill, we seek to have an inclusive ethos and actively seek to promote the inclusion of all children. This is reflected in our school's SEN policy, school development plan and policies relating to e.g. Positive Behaviour and Assertive Discipline policy, Anti-bullying Policy and Child Protection.

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)
- b) 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)

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 but what is key is "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.

The Medical Register is the responsibility of Mrs. Eileen McKee.

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, Bangor: 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

Policy Aims

1. To identify pupils with SEN/disability as early as possible using a variety of measures and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
2. To ensure as full entitlement as possible and access for pupils with SEN/disability to high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant, and differentiated curriculum.
3. To ensure that all pupils with SEN/disability feel valued and have a sense of positive self esteem fostered.
4. To offer a broad curriculum which will promote intellectual, emotional, social, and physical progress in order that pupils can develop as valued and valuable members of society both now and in the future.
5. To strive for close co-operation between all services and agencies concerned to achieve an effective multi-disciplinary approach to meeting SEN.
6. To work closely with EA services and other outside agencies as appropriate to support each pupil with SEN.

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. Thelma McCauley (LSC / SENCo).

Roles and Responsibilities

The following section highlights the key roles and responsibilities of all those involved in SEN provision:

Role of the 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.

Within the Board of Governors, Mrs. L. Crosby has SEN responsibility and can liaise with the SENCo, Mrs T. McCauley.

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) 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 efforts to provide for pupils identified with SEN and that 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;
- check 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; and

- prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

Role of the Principal

Principal – Mrs Hilary Johnston

According to the Code of Practice (1998), Mrs Johnston :

- keeps the board of governors informed about SEN issues;
- works in close partnership with the SENCo;
- liaises with parents and external agencies as required;
- delegates and monitors the SEN budget;
- ensures the senior leadership team (SLT) are actively involved in the management of SEN within the school;
- works with SLT members to ensure consistency of practice and contributes to the realisation of the school development plan; and
- provides a secure facility for the storage of records relating to special educational needs.

SENCo / LSC

The SENCo/LSC in Harmony Hill Primary and Nursery Unit is Mrs Thelma McCauley

Mrs McCauley works in partnership with the principal (Mrs H Johnston) and the Board of Governors and endeavors to ensure:

- the day to day operation of the school's special educational needs policy;
- responds to requests for advice from other teachers;
- co-ordinates provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- maintains the school's SEN register and oversees all the records on pupils with special educational needs;
- works in partnership with parents of children with special educational needs;
- establishes the SEN in-service training requirements of the staff, and contributes as appropriate to their training; and
- liaises with external agencies.
- Oversees and coordinates the SEN Literacy and Numeracy support staff, namely Mrs Rachel Fraser (Literacy Support) and Mrs Stephanie Thompson (Numeracy Support).

Class Teachers

In Harmony Hill Primary and Nursery Unit, class teachers endeavor to :

- 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;
- work closely with other staff to plan for learning and teaching;
- contribute to, manage, and review IEPs in consultation with the SENCo;
- involve classroom assistants as part of the learning team; and
- fully embrace the school's internal SEN system including appropriate record keeping and liaison with parents, as appropriate.

SEN Support Staff/ Additional Adult Assistants

In Harmony Hill Primary and Nursery Unit, support staff/ additional adult assistants:

- work under the direction of the class teacher;
- strive to help the pupil achieve the IEP / PLP targets
- record observations of progress
- look for positives by talking to the child about his/her strengths;
- provide practical support;
- listen to the child/speak to staff on the child's behalf;
- explain boundaries and operate these consistently and fairly;
- keep records and attend meetings.

Pupil views

In Harmony Hill Primary School and nursery unit, as far as reasonably practicable, we seek to have regard for the child's views about strengths, learning difficulties and education, taking into account both age and maturity. We seek and listen to pupil 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 the review of IEPs, Annual Reviews, and the Transition process; and involving and supporting the pupils to participate in making decisions about matters affecting them.

We believe that seeking pupil views and supporting pupils to participate in making decisions about their learning is good practice and endeavour to do this through the review of IEPs / PLPs, Annual and Transfer Reviews, as well as through School Council and conversations with class teachers / adult assistants.

Parent/person with parental responsibility

At Harmony Hill Primary and Nursery Unit, we acknowledge that successful partnerships between parents, pupils and school play a key role in promoting a culture of co-operation, openness and transparency and have a crucial impact on the effectiveness of special educational provision. Seeking the views of the child or young person also plays a key role in helping us understand individual needs.

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

At Harmony Hill Primary and Nursery Unit, we inform parents when staff are considering placing the pupil's name on the SEN register or moving the child between stages. We liaise closely with parents so that they can inform the relevant school staff of any significant needs their child may possess. This is done as early as possible and may be during the Nursery year or Primary 1.

Parents are given opportunity to:

- meet with staff to discuss their child's needs;
- attend review meetings;
- inform staff of changes in circumstances; and
- support targets on IEPs.

Admissions

At Harmony Hill Primary and Nursery Unit, the admission arrangements with respect to the majority of pupils with SEN is 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 mainstream school place unless it is against the wishes of parents, or it is incompatible with the efficient education of others. We acknowledge that 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 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

In Harmony Hill Primary School we aim to:

- meet the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum, including teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs; and
- ensure the physical environment of the school allows disabled pupils to participate in education and associated services provided or offered by the school

Due to the stairways that are an inherent part of the layout and physical structure of Harmony Hill Primary School, provision for learning and teaching may need to be facilitated by moving a class to a room that is easily accessed i.e. on the ground floor. The installation of lifts by the Education Authority does not cover every area of the school building: the P4 area cannot be accessed.

At present:

- a lift has been installed in the Foundation Stage to ensure pupils with disability have access to this area of the school;
- a lift to the Key Stage 2 corridor;
- there are well-equipped facilities for personal care; and
- access to a broad and balanced curriculum can be facilitated appropriate to age, ability, aptitude, and attainments.

At Harmony Hill Primary and Nursery Unit, provision for children with SEN / Disability includes:

- Learning Support for both Literacy and Numeracy (Mrs Fraser – Literacy, Mrs Thompson – Numeracy)
- Sensory Room
- Specialist lifts in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 corridor for children with barriers to mobility

Annual Report

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 that received provision from EA Pupil Support Services or Health and Social Care Trust; and those that accessed school-delivered special educational provision.

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 Harmony Hill Primary School, the following may be used to identify pupils' needs:

- information from transferring school;
- teacher / LSC observation;
- standardised tests for P3 – P7 pupils (CAT, PTE, PTM);
- Formative, summative and diagnostic assessments;
- class tests;
- individual education plans (IEPs/ PLPs);
- care plans;
- personal education plans for children who are looked after;
- statements of special educational need;
- annual reviews;
- professional reports; (e.g. Educational Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language)
- parental contributions; and
- pupil contributions.

The Management of Special Educational Needs

The Three Stages of Special Education Provision

In Harmony Hill Primary School and Nursery Unit, 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 education provision is set out below:

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; 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, if considered necessary, for access to EA SEN services 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; and

- Reasonable adjustments, additional strategies and approaches are implemented plus resources, advice, guidance, support, and training provided through the EA SEN support services 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) is 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 is to provide; and any additional school provision or modifications to the curriculum, as itemised in the statement; the pupil's PLP (IEP) is subject to regular monitoring, review and evaluation and forms the key basis of educational information to inform the annual review of the statement.

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.

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 progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the Statement;
- review the special provision made for the child, including placement; and
- 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.

Record Keeping

The following records are kept in school (within classes and with LSC) :

- SEN Register;
- records of concern;
- individual education plans/(PLP)reviews;
- statements/annual reviews/transition plans;
- assessment results/data;
- individual pupil files;

- record of liaison/meetings with staff from the Education Authority's SEN Support Services/Health and Social Care Trust
- minutes of meetings with parents; and
- support, advice, and training provided to staff.

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Mrs McCauley (LSC) monitors the progress of pupils on the SEN register in the following ways:

- IEPs/ PLPs are monitored and reviewed for quality, progression, and appropriateness a minimum of three times during the school year;
- evidence is scrutinised with the class teacher (and 1:1 adult assistant if appropriate) to assess pupil progress; and
- information gathered is used in future planning for intervention and to inform movement within the stages of the Code of Practice.

Professional Development

The principal, Mrs Johnston, in consultation with the SENCo/ LSC oversees the professional development of all staff in Harmony Hill Primary School and Nursery Unit. Staff are kept up to date with SEN developments to provide effective teaching and support for pupils through training sessions by LSC / SENCo or outside agencies.

Following attendance at relevant internal or external education and training programmes, staff members are given opportunity to disseminate the information provided to further embed the professional development of all staff. Every effort is made to provide appropriate training for temporary members of staff.

Partnership working

At Harmony Hill Primary School and Nursery Unit, we work with a range of EA Pupil Support Services, where appropriate, to receive training and guidance to support the school and parents in meeting the needs of children with special educational and medical needs. Pupil support services include:

- Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS)
- Special Educational Needs Inclusion Service (SENIS)
- Literacy Service
- SEN Early Years Inclusion Service (SENEYIS)
- Language and Communication Service
- Education Psychology Service
- Behaviour Support Service

Other Support Services we may use include

- RISE NI
- Barnardo's
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Child Development Clinic (CDC)
- School based counselling service

Complaints

All complaints regarding SEN in your school will be dealt with in line with school's existing complaints procedures.

If you have 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, you can contact your local EA office. Please contact your SEN Link Officer in the first instance. Contact details should be on the EA documentation issued to you alongside your 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 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 can contact the service which is provided by [Global Mediation](#).

Involvement with DARS will not affect the right to appeal to the Special Education Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

The [Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal \(SENDIST\)](#) considers parents' 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 following targeted consultation with all staff members, parents, and external agencies. This policy will be brought to the Board of Governors for final approval.

Policy Date: 20/12/2022

Signature of Principal:.....

Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors:

Review Date: __/__/____