

Dúnghaois Riachtanais Speisialta (agus Chuimsithe)

Ghaelscoil an Chaistil

Rationale/Vision

Gaelscoil an Chaistil staff is committed to the provision of equal access for all of our pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC). As a school, we recognise that some pupils during their school career may have special educational needs and/or a disability and we will endeavour to make every reasonable arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

Definitions

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

(Code of Practice 1998 paragraph: 1.4)

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

(Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

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 our other policies in supporting pupils such as; Positive Behaviour and Child Protection.

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

1. Cognitive and Learning

- Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulty
- Dyscalculia (DYC)
- Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder
- Mild Learning Difficulties (MILD)
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)

- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
- Unspecified learning difficulties (U)

2. Social, Emotional and Behavioural

- Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)
- Attention Deficit Disorder / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

3. Communication and Interaction

- Speech and Language Difficulties (SL)
- Autism (AUT)
- Asperger's Syndrome (ASP)

4. Sensory Difficulties

- Severe/profound hearing loss (SPHL)
- Mild/moderate hearing loss (MMHL)
- Blind (BL)
- Partially sighted (PS)
- Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

5. Physical

- Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- Spina Bifida and/or Hydrocephalus (SBH)
- Muscular Dystrophy (MD)
- Significant Accidental Injury (SAI)
- Other (OPN)

6. Medical Conditions/Syndromes

- Epilepsy (EPIL)
- Asthma (ASTH)
- Diabetes (DIAB)
- Anaphylaxis (ANXS)
- Down's Syndrome (DOWN)
- Other medical conditions/syndromes (OMCS)
- Interaction of Complex Medical Needs (ICMN)
- Mental Health Issues (MHI)

7. Other

- Other (OTH)

Policy Aims

1. To identify pupils with SEN/Disability as early and thoroughly as possible through a variety of means and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
2. To ensure full entitlement and access for pupils with SEN/Disability to a high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum.
3. To ensure that all children with SEN/Disability feel valued. To offer curricular, pastoral and extracurricular opportunities which allow pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills so ensuring progress, promoting success and self-confidence.
4. 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.
5. To encourage parental involvement in all aspects of SEN provision. To avail of support of parents and pupils to effectively implement Individual Education Plans and SEN provision, whilst taking into account the age and level of understanding of the pupil.
6. To strive for good co-operation between the various services and external agencies in order to achieve an effective multi-disciplinary approach to meeting special educational needs.
7. To educate pupils with SEN/Disability, wherever possible, alongside their peers.
8. To develop a system for recording continued assessment so that each pupil's performance can be monitored and reviewed appropriately.
9. To encourage and/or maintain interest of pupils with SENs in their education.
10. To encourage use of a range of teaching strategies, which accommodates different learning styles and promotes effective learning for all.
11. To create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs.
12. 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.
13. To promote collaboration amongst teachers in the implementation of the SEN policy.
14. To work closely with all ELB departments and other outside agencies in order to improve the quality of support available for each pupil with SENs.

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, Brídín Ní Dhomghaile. However, in order to facilitate the day-to-day running of the provision, the Board of Governors have delegated responsibility for pupils with special needs to Brídín Ní Dhomghaile (SENCo) and the Learning Support Co-ordinator.

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 following section provides an overview of Governor's responsibilities from this document as highlighted in the SEN Resource File (2011):

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 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 endeavours 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;
- 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; and prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

Gaelscoil an Chaistil's Board of Governors take account of this guidance and have established a sub-committee to monitor the school's work for all children.

Principal (Code of Practice 1998)

The Principal should:

- Keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN/Disability issues
- Work in close partnership with the SENCo
- Liaise with parents and external agencies as required
- Delegate and monitor the SEN budget
- Ensure the SMT are actively involved in the management of SEN within the school. SMT 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

In all mainstream schools, a designated teacher should be responsible for:

- The day-to-day operation of the school's Special Educational Needs and Inclusion policy;
- Responding to requests for advice from other teachers;

- 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 (DENI, 1998, p7)

Class Teacher

The class teacher 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
- Work closely with other staff to plan for learning and teaching
- Manage and review IEPs in consultation with the SENCo & Learning Support Co-ordinator
- Involve classroom assistants as part of the learning team

Learning Support Co-ordinator

The Learning Support Co-ordinator will work under the direction of the SENCo.

She should:

- Be aware of current legislation
- Be familiar with the administrative process within the school
- Be involved in testing and recording data of SEN pupils
- Work closely with all staff members to identify pupils' needs
- Be involved in the delivery of suitable programs for all identified pupils with SEN/Disability which promote progression within an inclusive setting
- Contribute to IEPs which inform learning and teaching
- Be involved in monitoring and reviewing progress
- Attend professional development training

SEN Support Staff

Support Staff should

- Work under the direction of the class teacher
- Be involved in planning
- 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
- Share good practice

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 – para 1.19)

Key decisions for a particular pupil might include:

- Contributing to the assessment
- Contributing to education plans through target setting
- Working towards achieving agreed targets
- Contributing to the review of IEPs, Annual Reviews and the Transition process in Rang 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 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. They should do this as early as possible. For example, important information may need to be made available by a parent upon a child’s entry to the school.

In our school, the child’s class teacher 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 to:

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

Parents will be encouraged to:

- Work with the child at home using any strategies recommended by school
- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and completes homework to the best of his/her ability
- Encourage a love of literacy and instil a value for education within their child

Admissions

The admission arrangements with respect to the majority of pupils with SEN are consistent with the school’s general arrangements for all other pupils.

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

Accessibility

- At present pupils with SEN/Disabilities have equal access to all areas of our school buildings
- Our school is fully accessible to wheelchair users
- We have a SEN teaching room and facilities for personal care, including a toilet adapted for use by persons with disability

Special Facilities

Our school has:

- Learning Support room
- Additional monies in school budget for SEN

Annual Report

Our BOG reports each year on SEN provision in school. Information for this report is collated by the SENCo/ Principal.

Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs

“It is vitally important that children with SEN are identified as early as possible and that 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’

(*Paragraph 5.12 – page 44 – Supplementary Guide of the Code of Practice*)

In Gaelscoil an Chaistil, the following will be used to identify pupils’ needs:

- Parental information
- Information from Naíscoil or other transferring school
- Formative assessment
- Key Stage Assessments
- Observation by class teacher of the child’s academic, social and personal development;
- Professional Reports
- Statements of Special Educational Need
- Care Plans
- Personal Education Plans for looked after children
- IEP Reviews
- Annual Reviews

Arrangements for Co-ordinating SEN provision

The Board of Governors have delegated responsibility for pupils with special educational needs/disabilities to **Brídín Ní Dhonnghaile** and the Learning Support Co-ordinator.

In our school, both Naíscoil and Gaelscoil, we follow the five stage approach as set out in The Code of Practice (1998).

This approach recognises that there is a continuum of SEN and that the requirements of the majority of pupils with SEN lie at Stages 1, 2 or 3. This means that their needs are met by the school with the help of outside agencies and/or specialists as required.

The Structure of SEN in Gaelscoil an Chaistil

Stage 1

Stage 1 begins with a concern that a child may have special educational needs, normally expressed either to or by the class teacher. The class teacher maintains day-to-day responsibility for meeting the pupil’s SENs, informs the SEN co-ordinator/Principal and Learning Support Co-ordinator and consults the pupil’s parents. In addition, the class teacher will:

- Collect and record information about the child and complete a Record of Concern
- Use differentiation of class work when appropriate, alternative teaching and learning strategies to help meet the pupil’s needs
- Record the nature and aims of provision, along with the targets, monitoring arrangements and review date.

- Monitor and review progress and report back to SENCo.

The SENCo will:

- Ensure that parents are consulted and together decide that the child's name is included in the school's SEN register.
- Help the class teacher gather information and assess child's needs
- Advise and support the class teacher

Stage 1 Review

- Parents will be informed of proposed action and any review date. Following review outcomes, the SENCo will decide whether to remove pupil's name from the register, keep the pupil at Stage 1 or move the child to Stage 2.

Stage 2

Stage 2 begins with a decision either at the Stage 1 Review, or following discussions between teachers and parents to proceed with more intensive action.

The SENCo:

- Takes the lead in assessing the child's learning difficulty
- Working with the class teacher, ensures an Education Plan is drawn up for pupil
- All operations take child's and parents' views into consideration

Stage 2 Review

Stage 2 review will be conducted by the SENCo, in consultation with the class teacher and, when possible, child and parents. The child's progress will be discussed.

If progress has been satisfactory the SENCo may decide that the child should continue at Stage 2 in order to consolidate gains.

If progress continues to be satisfactory, the SENCo may decide that the child no longer needs special educational provision at Stage 2 and may decide to move the child to Stage 1.

The child's name will be kept on the register until there is no longer any significant concern about progress.

If measures taken at Stage 1 and 2 do not result in adequate progress the SENCo should move the child forward to Stage 3 and referral may be made to special support services/agencies outside the school.

Stage 3

Stage 3 begins with a decision either at Stage 2 review or following discussions between the SENCo, Principal, teachers and parents, that early intervention with external support is necessary.

At this stage the SENCo takes a lead role, working closely with the child's teacher and drawing on the expertise of relevant external services.

The SENCo and class teacher, with the help of external support services, will ensure that a Stage 3 Education Plan is drawn up. A range of teaching approaches, support materials, including use of ICT will be considered. The Education Plan will set out strategies for supporting the child's progress, monitoring and review. The SENCo will ensure close liaison with the child's teacher. Parents will be kept informed and the child will be involved as far as possible.

At Stage 2 and 3 of the Code of Practice, the SENCo and class teacher should consider potential benefits of:

- The Good Practice Guidelines
- Encouraging inclusive activities to ensure integration of the pupil with SEN with others in his class
- Differentiated teaching
- Withdrawal for more intensive support

- SEN resources available within school; support programs, ICT etc.
- Available staff skills that support pupils with SENs
- Implementation of any provision/strategies as a result of external advice, support and training
- General advice and support requested from relevant ELB support

Review of the Stage 3 Education Plan

The review of the Stage 3 Education Plan will be conducted by the SENCo, in consultation with the class teacher and where possible parents and child. Relevant external support service may also wish to be present, and in particular if the pupil's progress has not been satisfactory. The review will focus on the child's progress and whether adequate.

If progress has been satisfactory, the SENCo in consultation with the teacher will decide that the child should remain at Stage 3.

If this progress continues to be satisfactory, the SENCo may decide that the child no longer needs external support at Stage 3 and may decide to move the child back to Stage 2 and appropriate action taken at that point.

If measures at Stage 3 have not resulted in adequate progress, and following consultation with SENCo, teacher, external support service and parents, the Principal may request a Statutory Assessment.

Stage 4

'In some cases schools will conclude that the pupil's needs remain so substantial that they cannot be efficiently met within the resources normally available to the school'

(Supplement to the Code of Practice – 4.64)

Following an application to the ELB from school principal or the parent, the Board will consider the need for transition to Stage 4. 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 SENs.

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
- Use of the 5 Board Provisional Criteria for Statutory Assessment

Following Statutory Assessment

The Board will either:

- Make and maintain a Statement of Special Educational Needs, 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.

Once the statement has been made final:

- Provision and/or support will be arranged to meet the pupil's needs
- The SENCo ensures that a Stage 5 Education Plan is drawn up, implemented, monitored and reviewed
- The Annual Review and Transition process will take place

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 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 SENs

The relevant school staff undertakes the Review on behalf of the Board.
The review meeting takes place in school and is chaired by the Principal.

Exceptional Cases

In most cases transition through the five 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.

Record Keeping

The following are records that the SENCo and Learning Support Co-ordinator keep in our school:

- SEN Register
- Records of Concern
- Education Plans
- Statements/Annual Reviews
- Assessment results/data
- Liaison/meetings with Board/Health Services
- Minutes of meetings with parents
- Staff's Support, Advice and Training Records

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with SENs

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

- Targets of IEPs are monitored for quality, progression and appropriateness through meetings with teachers and Learning Support Co-ordinator on a regular basis
- Class teachers regularly update SENCo and Learning Support Co-ordinator when pupil's class work and/or social skills are progressing
- Quality reviews of IEPs take place and other purposeful measures that focus on educational outcomes and inform future planning, and inform movement either up or down through the Code of Practice stages
- Assessments are scrutinised for evidence of progression

Professional Development

The Principal/SENCo oversees the professional development of all staff in our school. The SENCo should keep a record of all training relating to SEN

It is essential that all staff keep up-to-date with developments in the SEN field in order to provide for affected pupils.

Any staff attending INSET will disseminate the training with colleagues who did not attend courses.

Complaints

All complaints regarding SENs in Gaelscoil an Chaistil will be dealt with in line with the school's existing complaints procedures

SEN Advice and Information Service

ELB have set up an SEN Advice and Information Service to support parents of children with Special Educational Needs. Details of this service can be found on ELB 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 ELBs for pupils who are on the Code of Practice, in relation to special educational provision. Where interested parties have made an attempt to resolve a disagreement and this has been unsuccessful, a referral may be made to DARS.

Members of the DARS team will facilitate the possible resolution of disagreements (in a 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 ELB with regard to a child's special educational needs, legislation gives the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal or SENDIST. This body considers parents' appeals against decisions of ELBs and also deals with claims of disability discrimination in schools.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

Our policy is reviewed regularly and in light of changes in legislation or practice following consultation with all staff members, parents and external agencies.

Naíscoil an Chaistil

Special Needs Appendix to school Policy.

Our aim at Naíscoil an Chaistil is to provide a warm, safe, caring, stimulating, motivating and confidence-building learning environment conducive to positive learning experiences which will encourage each individual child to achieve his/her full potential.

Through sensitive observation, coupled with daily monitoring/assessment, we endeavour to build up a holistic picture of each child so that he/she can facilitate maximum possible access to the curriculum, a curriculum which is carefully tailored to suit the needs of every individual child.

Within our work with the SEN Early Years pilot we continually observe and gather information about the children in our care. Our approach to early intervention is centred around in-class support strategies, should an expression of concern be articulated or result from observations by staff.

We work closely with our Principal/SENCo and any external support agency personnel, including the SEN staff at Antrim Board Centre and Early Years group Altram, to ensure that the needs of our children are met. We work closely with our parents and value their input and insightful observations in helping us get to know and build up positive relationships with our children.