

Guidelines on Producing A Policy on Special Educational Needs

The school's SEN Policy should contain the following sections (Education (Special Educational Needs) (Information) Regulations, Regulation 2 and Schedule 1): A school's SEN Policy should also have due regard for following the Code of Practice and Disability Discrimination Act (Guidance for schools) as well as the Tool Kit for practical guidance.

The school's SEN policy should contain information relating to:

1. Basic information about the school's special educational provision:

1.1 The school's objectives for pupils with SEN;

1.2 Inclusion.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

This section should provide an introduction to the principles underpinning the school policy. Some useful publications, which could help, are the Warnock Report, page 41, NCC Circular No 5 and NCC. Booklet 2 "Education for all". The 1981 Education Act gives an explanation of a "learning difficulty" and reference should also be made to relevant sections of the 1996 Education Act to be found in the DFEE Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Pupils with Special Educational Needs. The aim of the school policy in identifying need and providing equal access to all children to a broad and balanced curriculum should also be explained.

Type of special educational need included in the policy

This section might outline different kinds of special educational need and the objectives for each of them. If relevant, it needs to include both general and specific learning difficulties, physical disability and medical conditions, sensory impairment, communication difficulties and behavioural difficulties.

1.3 The name of the school's SEN co-ordinator

All schools should have a named SEN co-ordinator who should have expertise and interest in this area. In some schools,

particularly Primary or smaller schools, the Head teacher may take this responsibility (see Code of practice 4:15 for the role of the SENCo in the Early Years 5:30 and 6:32 for Primary and Secondary phase).

1.4 The arrangements for co-ordinating educational provision for pupils with SEN

This section should describe how the school translates the functions of SEN co-ordination into practice. These functions are described in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Pupils with Special Educational Needs:

- the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy;
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers;
- co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs;
- maintaining the school's SEN register and overseeing the records on all pupils with special educational needs (no longer a statutory requirement);
- liaising with parents of children with special educational needs;
- contributing to the in-service training of staff; and
- liaising with external agencies including the Educational Psychology Service and other support agencies, medical and social services and voluntary bodies.

Schools may also wish to describe any other key roles in relation to SEN, for example those of governing body or Headteacher. (see Code of Practice1: 39 2:31 for other roles and responsibilities).

1.5 Admission arrangements

These will be in accordance with LEA arrangements and should be as for other

children. Where a school has a designated resource for a particular type of SEN, admission arrangements may be specific to that particular resource. Where a child has a statement a consultation should take place in order to ensure that the school receiving a pupil can meet the major needs in an appropriate way.

1.6 Any SEN specialism and any special resources

This will usually relate to resource bases and units developed in collaboration with the LEA, although it may refer to particular areas of expertise developed by the school itself from within its own resources.

1.7 Any special facilities

This will include adaptations and facilities related to particular designated LEA resource schools and to those that the school has had for particular pupils or in the context of general building work or redevelopment.

2. Information about the school's policies for identification, assessment and provision for all pupils with SEN:

2.1 Identification, assessment, monitoring and review procedures

- i) Use of all approaches to identifying and meeting SEN

This may refer to the requirements at school action and school action plus described in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Consideration also needs to be given to the organisation of the special educational needs summary record for children needing school based support or an external referral.

- ii) Identification and Assessment Procedures

It is important that any assessment is carried out in a structured and systematic manner. It may be helpful to devise checklists, which focus on observation. Staff need to agree the range of identified needs, which should lead to inclusion on the school record of children with special needs who need additional support.

- iii) Developing clear lines of communication

It is essential that procedures are laid down so that key people involved in the education of pupils with SEN, such as the named co-ordinator for special educational needs, the Headteacher, parents and the class teacher, know what is expected of them. Before consulting with other professionals it is necessary to collect and prepare relevant information. This includes the importance of including dates on all information, giving factual evidence and relating it to the context in which pupils work. Evidence of the pupil's level of skill is also necessary.

- iv) Recording, monitoring and review procedures

This section should refer to the assessment and recording system for all children and its strength/weakness in identifying needs. It might be helpful to list those aspects which would indicate the need for further observation such as:

- withdrawn behaviour;
- undue aggression;
- attention seeking;
- lack of concentration;
- suspected hearing impairment or loss of vision;
- other medical concerns;
- learning difficulty.

- v) Schools must outline the procedure for the conduct of annual reviews, including phase transfer reviews and transition reviews.

Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 should describe policy and practice guidance for teachers and others related to within school provision and resources for children with SEN.

The curriculum content and its delivery should be outlined with the school's policy for enabling all children with SEN to have equal access to the entire curriculum.

2.2 Policy on access to a broad and balanced curriculum including the National Curriculum

The Policy should contain reference to National Literacy and Numeracy strategies, including appropriate access to

ICT and any other curriculum initiatives. All school arrangements should ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all aspects of the life of the school and are enabled to have an equal voice.

2.3 Policy and priorities for the allocation of resources to pupils with SEN

All resources for children and staff, including the levels and deployment of any SEN support should be cited. It would also be helpful for the document to give guidance on differentiated planning, teaching and resourcing

2.4 Inclusion arrangements

Details of classroom organisation and management of children with SEN should be included with reference to ensuring inclusion, and access. Special routines to allow inclusion and access may also be mentioned.

In Wakefield Inclusion Now is at the heart of the Inclusion strategy for schools. In the near future the plan is that all schools will have participated in the Inclusion Now. Plans on how a school will proceed with this and ways in which inclusive practices will continue following an Inclusion Now review.

The national curriculum inclusion statement reaffirms that all teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs and must:

- set suitable learning challenges;
- respond to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

2.5 Criteria for monitoring the success of the school's SEN policy

Strategies for monitoring and reviewing policy should be described.

This section should describe strategies employed within the school for monitoring the implementation and effects of the school's SEN policy.

The arrangements for considering complaints about special educational provision within the school.

All schools have procedures for dealing with complaints by parents about aspects of the school's functioning. Complaints in relation to SEN provision should be in line with these.

3. Information about the school's staffing policies and partnership with bodies beyond the school e.g. use of advisory teachers, advice from outreach services or specialist resources or special schools.

3.1 The school's SEN in-service training policy

In describing the SEN training policy it is necessary to take account of the different roles and responsibilities of school staff and governors.

The Governing Body and each member staff involved in any aspect of SEN needs to be quite clear about their own role and responsibilities and those of others involve.

The Governing Body and the Headteacher are essentially responsible for ensuring the development and the refinement of the policy and in monitoring arrangements for identification and assessment and programmes of support. They are also responsible for the provision of staff training. The Governing Body duties in relation to SEN are described in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Pupils with Special Educational Needs.

- ii) The named co-ordinator for Special Educational Needs, who may be the Headteacher or the deputy, must ensure co-operation with other agencies, may continue to maintain a register of children with special needs (no longer a statutory requirement) and ensure that action is being taken.
- iii) The class teacher, subject teacher and form teacher need to ensure consultation with the SEN co-ordinator and co-ordinate support from support assistants. They also need to maintain clearly focused teaching plans which target skills and concepts.

Other personnel who may be involved in any particular school are support teachers, nursery nurses and any school assistant for special educational needs.

The training provided should target the roles described above. This training must include ensuring awareness of the school's overall SEN policy.

3.2 Arrangements for partnership with parents

The policy must describe arrangements for partnership with parents. Parents play a major part in providing information to the school before children are admitted and there are several ways in which a two-way sharing of information between schools and parents can be encouraged. Meetings might be held to discuss records of achievement, formal reports, target setting on IEP's and progress notes and much can also be gained from informal contact. The school should also encourage parents to be involved in learning programmes in school and at home. Parents should always be invited to annual review meetings if their child has a statement. The LEA has a Parent Partnership Service, which will help with developing parental communication on an individual or group basis

3.3 Use made of external support services including links with medical and social services and any voluntary organisations

The school SEN policy must describe use made of external support services and links with medical and social services and any voluntary organisations.

The Headteacher will naturally maintain an overview of developments, helped by the co-ordinator or other key worker, who should keep a list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of professionals involved.

3.4 Links with other mainstream schools and special schools

Links with other mainstream schools and special schools is an important component of the inclusion agenda. Schools should consider the individual pupil's needs and liaise with other schools; resource bases

and services provided to meet those needs.

This information should be available to the receiving school when children transfer to the next phase of education or when they change schools.