

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, which was part of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 addressed the identification, assessment and provision made for all children who may have special educational needs at some time in their school career. The term “Special Educational Needs” is defined in the legislation as a “learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made”. A child has a ‘learning difficulty’ if:

- He/she has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his/her age;
- He/she has a disability which either prevents or hinders him/her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his/her age in ordinary schools.

In addition, in Omagh Academy we recognise that we have a number of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. The needs of these pupils are met in the classroom by individual target setting and differentiated tasks.

Areas of Special Educational Need

The seven main areas of special educational need or difficulty are:

- Cognitive and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Behavioural
- Communication and Interaction
- Sensory
- Physical
- Medical Conditions/Syndromes
- Other

Rationale

Omagh Academy is a controlled grammar school which acknowledges that some pupils may have Special Educational Needs either throughout or at any time during their school careers. The Board of Governors accept that all children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have a right to a broad and balanced curriculum, matched to their needs, abilities and aptitudes and seek to promote the integration of children with physical or mental disabilities into the mainstream curriculum provision offered by the school.

Omagh Academy aims to address these Special Needs and, in partnership with parents, we aim to promote a sense of self-esteem and a sense of achievement through academic and non-academic experience. This experience should be broad, balanced, relevant and stimulating.

Aims of the SEN Policy

- To ensure that pupil’s with Special Educational Needs at any point during their school career are identified as early as possible.
- To ensure that parents and other key professionals are involved in the identification and support of pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- To create good quality learning conditions which meet statutory requirements.
- To encourage high level achievements by pupils within their potential.
- To make the curriculum accessible to all pupils.

- To enable members of staff to meet identified pupil needs and to keep up with developments in the areas of Special Educational Needs.
- To promote inclusion of and offer support to pupils identified with Special Educational Needs.

Identification of Need

The Five Stage Approach - The Code of Practice sets out a five stage approach to the identification of children having learning difficulties, the assessment of their special educational needs and the making of whatever special educational provision is necessary to meet those needs. The first 3 stages are based in the school, calling as necessary on external specialists; at Stages 4 and 5 Western Education and Library Board shares responsibility with schools.

Stage 1	Class teachers identify and register a child's special educational needs and, consulting the SENCO, take initial action.
Stage 2	The SENCO takes lead responsibility for recording information and for co-ordinating the child's special educational provision.
Stage 3	Teachers and SENCO are supported by specialists from outside the school.
Stage 4	The Board considers the need for a statutory assessment and, if appropriate makes a multi-disciplinary assessment.
Stage 5	The Board considers the need for a statement of special educational needs; if appropriate, it makes a statement and arranges, monitors and reviews.

Within each stage there is a continuous cycle of planning, action and review. Ongoing communication with the parents and child is of utmost importance.

Support for Pupils

Within the mainstream of learning problems, the subject department caters for the additional support needed by pupils who are underachieving. The progress of the pupil in a subject is reviewed by the class teacher and the Head of Year. All Departmental Schemes of work should provide for appropriate action to take account of the underachievement of pupils outside special educational needs. The use of differentiated worksheets and exercises is appropriate in all subjects and the use of group work is encouraged to allow the more able to assist in the learning process for those less able.

Following identification through the use of Level D CATs pupils who are experiencing literacy or numeracy problems are offered Learning Support through the peer tutoring and Literacy Support Programmes, organised by the Maths and English Departments.

Additional Provision

- Support in Maths, English and Science is offered to pupils at Key Stage 4 in extra classes.
- Pupils are encouraged to attend Extra-Curricular Clubs and Societies, all of which assist in furthering skills and developing talents in a wide range of curriculum based areas.
- Selected Key Stage 3 pupils take part in the Better Reading and Writing Partnership Programme: working one-to-one with a Classroom Assistant or Librarian, they attend 2 short weekly sessions for a 10 week period to focus on

improving accuracy, writing skills, vocabulary development, comprehension and general interest in reading.

- Under the supervision of the Form Teacher Year 14 prefects assist KS3 pupils with a range of academic concerns, including organisation, homework and preparation for examinations.
- Within the school's enrichment programme, the Mathematics department and Year 13 students act as Peer Mentors in Mathematics, supporting pupils' learning at lunchtime.
- Classroom assistants will work in conjunction with teachers to provide a learning environment suited to specific pupils with special educational needs.

Classroom Practice

The general practice within Omagh Academy is to combine whole class teaching with group work and active learning strategies. Differentiated teaching and flexible learning is an integral part of Key Stage 3 delivery within the school.

Teachers are advised of their role with regard to SEN provision, and provided with detailed information within the Education Plans which outline strategies and techniques to assist special needs pupils in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to seek advice from the SENCO regarding any aspect of SEN.

In Omagh Academy we aim to deliver an inclusive curriculum to which all pupils, regardless of their Special Educational Need or disability, have access to the full range of experiences. In order to achieve this, the school has structures in place, including the use of classroom assistants, to support pupils.

The classroom assistant's responsibilities will depend on the need of the pupil but may include:

- Enlarging notes / accessing audio tapes for visually impaired students.
- Photocopying of the notes for dyslexic pupils / slow writers.
- Supervision of a physically vulnerable pupil during break-times.
- Acting as scribes.
- Carry school bags from class to class.
- Collect lunch trays for pupils.

In line with the pastoral policy and ethos of the school, emphasis will be placed on the pastoral support of the pupil, by subject and form teachers, Head of Year and SENCO. This will include;

- Celebration of individual success orally.
- Telephone calls/letters to parents/guardians to acknowledge success and progress.
- Providing the pupil with roles and responsibilities that will allow him/her to maintain high levels of self esteem.

SENDO POLICY

Following the publication of the Draft Code of Practice for Schools as part of The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 the Academy has added a new SENDO policy. This in line with the Department's policy of

‘inclusivity’ which has SEN pupils educated as far as possible in mainstream schools. Omagh Academy recognises its obligation to ensure that disabled pupils have the same education as pupils who do not have a disability.

A disabled student only has special educational needs if he/she needs additional support to access facilities available to other students in the school. Where any disability is identified, the SENCO will meet with parents and pupil to discuss requirements at any early stage. The SENCO will also seek expert advice both internal and external to the school. The parent or pupil has the right to request confidentiality regarding the disclosure of any such disability or special needs; in such instances, the Principal and SENCO will respect that right in so far as they are able to maximise best provision for the pupil. Where this is endangered, the principal will inform parents before any disclosure is made to others.

It is the aim of Omagh Academy that pupils with physical or mental disabilities are fully integrated in the daily curriculum of the school and all reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate this. The school provides wheelchair access (via ramp or lift) to all areas. The three classroom assistants have been trained in First Aid Procedures.

The school does not discriminate against a disabled pupil in its admissions policy and, subject to normal health and safety concerns, disabled pupils are actively encouraged to participate in the school’s PE/Games programme.

Finally, this policy is kept under review and all changes to the school environment are governed by the ‘inclusion’ principle.

Involvement of Parents

The SENCO works hard to make all parents feel welcome and to make them aware of the school’s commitment to meeting the special educational needs of its students.

The SENCO recognises the importance of a partnership with parents which includes:

- Arrangements for recording and acting on parental concerns.
- Procedures for involving parents when a concern is expressed in school.
- Arrangements for involving parents in drawing up and the implementation of strategies to meet the pupils needs
- Communication of the Special Education Needs Policy to parents.

Examination Arrangements

In keeping with Examination Boards’ policy of provision of extra examination time for pupils with Special Educational Needs, the Academy provides an additional 25% in time for all internal examinations to those pupils on the SEN register where it is appropriate to their needs. Otherwise, all pupils are expected to work at the same rate and complete the same home and class study.

Other special provisions which may be provided include:

- Computer
- Amanuensis
- Modified papers
- Alternative venue
- Prompter
- Transcription

Success Criteria

The school's success in meeting the special educational needs of its pupils will be measured by the SENCO using the following performance indicators:

- Pupil progress in terms of gains in reading and spelling
- Success rate in meeting targets identified in IEPs and Annual Reviews
- Parental satisfaction
- Movement of pupils from stages 3-2, 2-1; or removal from SEN register
- Participation rates of pupils with SEN in extra curricular activities
- KS3, GCSE, A-Level and other external examination results
- Post 16 destinations.

S.Davidson
SENCO

Appendix 1

Identification, Assessment and Management of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

At Stage 1 and Stage 2 there are a number of ways by which a pupil may be identified as having a possible Special Educational Need. These include;

- Information from feeder Primary Schools
- Statement of Special Educational Need from ELB
- Reports from external agencies e.g. Educational Psychology Service
- Ranking as a result of an examination series
- Parent referral
- Teacher referral (e.g. Subject teacher, Form Teacher, Head of Year)

As a result of an identification of a possible Special Educational Need, the SENCO will contact parents/guardians to inform them that an academic or behavioural difficulty exists. The SENCO will seek permission to place the pupil on the SEN register and to carry out testing, if appropriate.

Subject teachers, Form teachers and Heads of Year will be involved in the gathering and collation of information which may include;

- Internal or external exam results
- Continuous monitoring assessments
- Samples of the pupil's class work
- Observations regarding behaviour in the classroom

Assessment

In consultation with parents, the SENCO may carry out one or more assessments to gain further information regarding the possible Special Educational Need of the pupil. These tests may include:

- Vernon Graded Spelling test
- Handwriting speed
- Kirklees Reading test
- Self-esteem questionnaire
- Behavioural assessment
- Pupil interview

In line with the Code of Practice, the pupil may then be placed on the SEN register Stage 1 or 2.

Management of a Pupil with Special Educational Needs

At Stage 1 of the Code Practice the SENCO will support the subject teacher, form teacher and Head of Year in the co-ordination and management of the pupil with Special Educational Needs.

At Stage 2 of the Code of Practice the SENCO will:

- Formulate an Individual Education Plan. This may be informed by the results of any tests carried out with the pupil and may be as a result of consultation with the school's Educational Psychologist. Input from the parents/guardian and, where possible, the pupil themselves will be sought.

- Forward a copy, of the IEP to all subject teachers of the pupil, the Form Teacher, Head of Year, V.P. (Pastoral) and Principal.
- Provide advice regarding the implementation of the IEP where required.
- Update SEN register.
- Convene and chair a review meeting, inviting parents to attend and seek input from the pupil. After initial placement on the SEN register, the first review meeting will take place at least within three months and thereafter at least once per academic year.

At Stage 3 of the Code of Practice, the SENCO will enlist the help of outside agencies such as the Educational Psychologist in the further testing of the pupil and the SENCO will then formulate an IEP.

Stage 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice are the formal assessment of special educational needs and may lead to the issuing of a statement. The WELB has responsibility for these stages.

The Academy seeks to involve all pupils on the SEN register in the drafting of Education Plans and in the evaluation of progress towards specified targets. In helping these pupils the school works in partnership with parents.

Appendix 2

Special Educational Needs Coordinator

The SENCO has the following duties in addition to those of a classroom teacher:

1. To take responsibility for the day-to-day operation of SEN provision, particularly the identification, assessment and subsequent support offered to pupils.
2. To maintain the SEN register and implement the procedures required by the current Code of Practice.
3. To communicate and liaise with relevant staff regarding the Statements of Need, IEPs, SEN policy and the referral of pupils in need of assessment.
4. To create, maintain, review and distribute IEPs for all pupils with Special Educational Needs at appropriate intervals.
5. To monitor and review the progress of pupils with an IEP.
6. To assess pupils for special arrangements for examinations (internal and external) and liaise with the Examinations Team to ensure suitable arrangements are put in place.
7. To draw up Transition Plans for pupils at Stage 5 of the Code of Practice and complete the Annual Review Documentation.
8. To liaise with relevant agencies regarding SEN, e.g. the Educational Psychology Service, Education Welfare Service, the Behaviour Support Unit etc. as necessary.
9. To attend meetings regarding Looked After Children.
10. To allocate, manage and supervise the work of the classroom assistants regarding SEN, including any related liaison with the WELB Special Education Department.
11. To coordinate arrangements to ensure appropriate provision is made for statemented pupils when participating in extra-curricular activities or visits.
12. To provide or facilitate training for teaching and non-teaching staff regarding the needs of pupils on the SEN register.
13. To attend relevant courses and cluster group meetings.
14. To liaise with parents of pupils on the register.

This job description will be reviewed periodically and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post holder. It is not a comprehensive statement of procedures and tasks but sets out the main expectations of the School in relation to the post holder's professional responsibilities and duties.

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