



# Victoria College Belfast

## Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy

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Drafted by K.Goddard

# VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & INCLUSION POLICY

### 1. Rationale

Victoria College, through this policy document, seeks to ensure that the needs of all the pupils with special educational needs and/or disability will be addressed and provision made available to them throughout or at any time during their school career. In addition the College acknowledges their right to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including maximum possible access to the NI Curriculum and accordingly we will endeavour to facilitate these opportunities.

### 2. Definition

#### Special Educational Needs

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

A child has a learning difficulty if they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, and/or 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.  
(*Draft Code of Practice, 2023 paragraph 1.19*)

#### Disability

'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 The Special Education Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (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

The following areas will encompass all aspects of SEN/Disability as highlighted in the Code of Practice (*Appendix - page 69 of Code of Practice 1998*)

- Learning difficulties
- Specific learning difficulties
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Physical disabilities
- Sensory impairments
- Speech and language difficulties

- Medical conditions

*'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 embed an inclusive ethos within our school, this policy links closely with all other policies in supporting all pupils, including those with Additional Needs who may also have Special Educational Needs.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

- To identify children with SEN/Disability as early and thoroughly as possible through a variety of means and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
- To ensure full entitlement and access for pupils with SEN/Disability to high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self esteem.
- To ensure that all children with SEN/Disability feel valued and have a positive self-image. To offer curricular, pastoral and extra-curricular experiences and opportunities which allow pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills so ensuring progress, promoting success and self-confidence.
- To encourage parental and pupil involvement in the identification, assessment and support for SEN and to strive for close co-operation between all agencies concerned for a multi-disciplinary approach. When considering the wishes of the child, his/her age and powers of understanding must be considered.
- To educate pupils with SEN/Disability, wherever possible, alongside their peers within the curriculum of mainstream schools after giving due consideration to the appropriate wishes of their parents and the necessity to meet individual needs.
- To develop a system for recording continued assessment so that each pupil's performance can be monitored and reviewed appropriately.
- To stimulate and/or maintain pupil interest and enjoyment in their own education.
- To encourage the use of a range of teaching strategies which incorporate different learning styles and ensure effective learning.
- To create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs.
- To develop and utilise all resources in support of pupils with SEN/Disability.

- To enable pupils with SEN/Disability to be familiar with a body of knowledge, skills, principles and vocabulary in order for them to lead full and productive lives. The curriculum must be broad to promote intellectual, emotional, social and physical development in order that pupils can develop as valuable members of society both now and in the future e.g. pupils should develop a range of desirable qualities such as safety awareness, politeness, perseverance, initiative and independence.
- To meet the needs of all pupils who have SEN/Disability by offering continual and appropriate forms of educational provision by the most efficient use of all available resources.

#### **4. Procedures**

Victoria College follows the three stage approach as set out in The Code of Practice (see Appendix 1).

This approach recognises that there is a continuum of Special Educational Needs and that the requirements of the majority of pupils with SEN lie at Stage 1. This means that their needs are met by the school with the help of outside agencies and/or specialists as required. In most cases any movement through the 3 Stage process will occur in a smooth linear fashion. However, in exceptional circumstances, pupils may demonstrate such significant or unforeseen difficulties that with multi-professional and parental agreement a move to a further stage is necessary immediately.

#### **Transferring to the College**

Information should be made available to the College prior to the pupil's arrival. On the 'Pupil Information Sheet' parents or guardians should indicate what a pupil's need is and provide any accompanying information to support the College in preparing to meet the needs of their child.

Pupils on Stage 1 or 2 of the Code of Practice at Primary School will be monitored for the first term to see how the child is managing the school environment. This will be reviewed at the end of Term 1 and those who are identified as needing a PLP will be placed on Stage 1 of the register. During term 2 their PLP will be developed. This will allow for meaningful 'Expected Outcomes' to be identified from the pupil's experience of the curriculum offer from their first term. PLPs will be completed on SIMS so staff can have an overview of pupil needs and strategies to support.

Pupils on Stage 3 of the Code of Practice at Primary School will meet with the SENCo prior to coming to the College for a familiarisation visit and to discuss support within the College. Their progress will be monitored for the first term to inform their PLP.

If access arrangements are a pupil's only intervention they will be recorded on the 'Access Arrangements Register', not the SEN Register, and will not require a PLP (see Appendix 2).

## **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**

The College follows the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) policy for applying access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. It should be noted that this policy is updated annually, by JCQ, and therefore is subject to change. The 2023 policy can be found at [https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/AA\\_reqs\\_22-23\\_May23\\_revision\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/AA_reqs_22-23_May23_revision_FINAL.pdf)

### **Access arrangements**

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

An awarding body is required to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. For centres in Northern Ireland the definition of disability is defined in:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) (“the 1995 Act”)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (“the 2005 Order”)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (General Qualifications Bodies) (Relevant Qualifications, Reasonable Steps and Physical Features) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 (“the 2008 Order”).

The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not ‘reasonable’.

The following points regarding access arrangements at post-primary should be noted:

- P7 AQE & GL Transfer Tests are not regarded as regulated exams, so access arrangements given to a pupil for these exams do not automatically continue to apply post-primary.
- A private educational psychologist's report submitted for transfer purposes cannot be used as evidence to support access arrangements in post primary.

The College uses a combination of data and teacher feedback throughout Year 8 to identify pupils who may be eligible for extra time. There will be a designated assessment day once a term to assess for pupil eligibility for access arrangements. Due to changes in JCQ regulations pupils are most likely to be assessed for this in Year 10 so that an application for access arrangements can be made for their GCSE studies. Pupils will be identified for this by the School Based Care Team.

### **Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs**

A number of processes are followed at Victoria College for the identification of pupils with possible special educational needs (see Appendix 2).

- 1 The process is started with a 'Record of Concern'. This is completed by a member of staff and accompanied by examples of a pupil's work.
- 2 The SENCo requests feedback for the identified pupil to provide an overview of performance across all subjects.

Additional data is collected from data captures (test results, school reports, CAT data and most recent PTM and PTE scores).

- 3 The SENCo presents the information about the pupil to the School Based Care Team.
- 4 A decision is made regarding whether the pupil will be assessed by the College and/or referred to Educational Psychologist. Please note, there is limited availability for access to the Educational Psychologist and this must be facilitated through the Education Authority.

### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

SEN provision will be the overall responsibility of the Board of Governors and Principal of the school. However, in order to facilitate the practical day to day running of the provision the Board of Governors have delegated responsibility for pupils with special educational needs to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). It is vital that all staff work together for the benefit of pupils. Pastoral and Curriculum Co-ordinators also have key support roles.

## **Board of Governors**

The BOG should:

- ensure that all pupils' special educational needs are addressed
- have regard for the Code of Practice
- have regard for the school's SEN (and Inclusion) Policy
- ensure the policy is kept under review
- report annually to parent/carers of all pupils of SEN
- ensure that appropriate funds and resources are delegated to SEN

## **Principal**

The Principal should:

- keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN issues
- work in close partnership with the SENCO
- where necessary liaise with parents and external agencies
- delegate and monitor the SEN budget

## **SENCO**

The SENCO should:

- co-ordinate the day to day provision of the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy
- liaise with and advise colleagues
- co-ordinate provision for children with special educational needs
- maintain the school's SEN register and oversee the records of all pupils with special educational needs
- organise necessary reviews and referrals
- liaise with parents
- liaise with external agencies
- contribute to the in-service training of staff
- utilise Classroom Assistant expertise in staff development.

**School Based Care Team\* should:**

- Discuss pupils that will require intervention including referral to external agencies.
- Identifying which pupils will be prioritised for the Education Psychologist.

**Head of Year should:**

- be aware of current legislation
- keep up to date with the SEN Register
- liaise with Form Teachers and subject teachers regarding pupils on the SEN register who are experiencing difficulty
- work closely with the SENCO
- update records as appropriate.

**Head of Subject should:**

- be aware of current legislation, keep up to date with the SEN Register and ensure new members of department are familiar with the SEN (and Inclusion) Policy
- ensure that practice and procedures within the department promote learning and teaching which is relevant and accessible to all pupils
- support subject teachers to enable them to provide an appropriate and differentiated curriculum
- ensure appropriate resources are available

- discuss issues with subject teachers through departmental meetings and forward appropriate minutes to the SENCO.

*\*The School Based Care Team includes the Pastoral Vice Principal, Senior Leader with responsibility for Richmond, the SENCO, Learning Support Mentor and the School Nurse.*

### **Subject Teachers 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
- contribute to, manage and review PLPs in consultation with the SENCO
- work closely with and involve classroom assistants as part of the learning team
- liaise with Head of Department/Head of Year.

### **Classroom Assistants should:**

- work under the direction of the class teacher
- be involved in planning
- Encourage pupil by highlighting their 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
- assist with examinations
- 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 –pars 1.19)*

This includes:

- contributing to the assessment of their needs
- contributing to education plans by the setting of learning targets
- working towards achieving agreed targets
- contributing to the review of PLPs, annual reviews and the transition process

### **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 therefore essential that parents inform the school of any specific identified needs as early as possible on entry to the school.

It is the school's responsibility to inform parents when considering placing the child's name on the SEN register and invite him/her to:

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

## **6. Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed in light of changes in legislation or practice following consultation with all staff members, parents and external agencies. In addition feedback will be sought on an annual basis.

Information will be discussed and reviewed by the Senior Management team. Any amendments considered necessary will be forwarded to the Board of Governors for approval.

## APPENDIX 1

### CODE OF PRACTICE

#### Stage 1

##### School delivered special educational provision.

- PLP required.
- The majority of SENs will be met through this stage.
- The responsibility lies with the school.
- Pupils will be in mainstream schools and classrooms.
- Reasonable adjustments and additional strategies and approaches aimed at meeting and addressing the pupil's SEN.

#### Stage 2

##### School delivered special educational provision plus external provision e.g. the EA or a HSC trust.

- PLP required.
- A small number of pupils will need this provision.
- The responsibility lies with the school plus external provision from the EA.
- In mainstream schools and classes (and by exception in a special school or Learning Support Centre (LS Centre) for the purpose of assessment).
- 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

##### Statement of SEN.

- School and EA delivered special educational provision plus any relevant treatment or service identified by HSC Trust.
- PLP required.
- A smaller number of children will need this provision.
- The responsibility lies with the school and the EA – with input from a HSC Trust where relevant.
- In mainstream schools, LS Centre attached to mainstream schools or special schools (as determined within the Statement).
- Reasonable adjustments, school delivered special educational provision plus EA provision as set out in the Statement.

#### Stage 3 Support Services

- ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder)
- Audiology
- Behaviour Support
- LTSS (Literacy Teaching & Support Service)
- Speech and Language
- Visual Impairment

### **Other Support Services**

- CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- CDC (Child Development Clinic)

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 assessment of the child's progress.

The annual review:

- will assess the child's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the statement
- will review the special provision made for the child, including placement
- will consider the appropriateness of maintaining the statement.

The school will undertake the Review on behalf of the Board.

The review meeting will take place in school and will be chaired by the SENCo. Annual Review form (AR) and Transition Plans will be forwarded to the EA following this meeting.

# APPENDIX 2 – Identification of SEN

