



**HUNTERHOUSE COLLEGE**

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS  
AND INCLUSION POLICY**

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**Previous:**

**Next Review due: TBC**

This policy is available in pdf format from the school website

[www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk](http://www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk)

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## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION POLICY**

Name of School:           **Hunterhouse College**

Mission Statement:           *UNA CRESCAMUS - "LET US GROW TOGETHER"*

Hunterhouse College strives to enable every girl to reach the highest academic and personal distinction of which she is capable.

### **AIMS:**

Hunterhouse College aims, in co-operation with parents\*, to stimulate, challenge and encourage self-discipline, organised study and enthusiasm for work and recreation. The College aims to provide an enriching whole school experience and to involve its girls actively in the learning processes within four broad areas - the academic, the personal, the social and the vocational.

#### **1.       ACADEMIC**

We aim to ensure that the aptitudes and abilities of each girl are discovered and developed to the full during her school career and that upon leaving she will:

- (a) have developed a wide range of recognised skills;
- (b) have attained publicly acknowledged standards in a variety of subjects;
- (c) be prepared through her experiences and achievements in school to proceed to higher or further education or employment according to her choice and talents.

#### **2.       PERSONAL**

We aim to provide an environment within which each girl will discover and develop her personal qualities and values, individual skills, independence of mind and self-esteem.

In developing and nurturing these values and standards we are aware that, for some, they will be rooted in religious conviction - both Christian and non-Christian - and, for others, in their sense of social and individual justice and well-being.

#### **3.       SOCIAL**

We aim to help each girl recognise, understand and develop her role in the school community and in society at large by:

- (a) promoting in her a sense of responsibility;
- (b) encouraging her to be aware of the differences between people and to respect those differences;
- (c) fostering a consciousness of her wider environment.

#### **4.       VOCATIONAL**

We aim:

- (a) to prepare each girl for commitment to the work place by developing the necessary practical and intellectual skills and insight into the world of work through participating in voluntary or paid work or leisure activities;
- (b) to help individuals evaluate their own suitability for specific careers and meet the needs of these careers;
- (c) to encourage adaptability in relation to school activities and ultimately to employment situations;
- (d) to foster the enjoyment of education and encourage its continuation throughout adult life.

\* Throughout this document and associated literature 'parents' means 'those with parental responsibility'.

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## **SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<b>Ethos</b>	<b>View of the Pupil</b>
Finaghy Belfast BT10 0LE	Voluntary Grammar	Cross- community	See Mission statement	See Mission statement

## **POLICY RATIONALE**

The Education (NI) Order 1996 requires all schools to operate a policy for pupils with special educational needs. This policy must be consistent with the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs in operation since September 1997. The Policy must also be consistent with the supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Needs, brought into operation in September 2005, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (January 2006).

The purpose of this policy is to:

- affirm that Hunterhouse College accepts the principles of the Code of Practice issued by DENI (March 1996) and therefore adopts the five stage approach to the identification of children with special needs which can be barriers to learning and participation. It will endeavour to make whatever special educational provision is necessary to meet those needs.
- set out clearly for all the interested parties the procedures for the for the identification, assessment and support for pupils with special educational needs.
- encourage open and consistent application of the procedures.

This policy is for:

- parents
- teaching and support staff
- governors
- external agencies

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To outline the arrangements for the identification of pupils with special educational needs and /or disability.
- To outline how the school will manage the school based stages of the Code of Practice.
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for students with special educational needs.

## **Principles**

- To enable pupils with special educational needs to benefit as fully as possible from their education within available resources at Hunterhouse College.
- To encourage pupils with special educational needs to achieve as much as they are able to.
- To allow pupils with special educational needs to be as fully integrated within the school community as circumstances allow.
- To satisfy the requirements of the Education (NI) Order 1996 and its Supplement 2005.
- To ensure an effective partnership takes place between the parents and staff in supporting the child's education.
- To create an understanding and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their learning needs and have an informed participation in decision making processes.
- To create procedures which are both manageable and effective for each person involved.
- To accept the need to seek appropriate external advice and, where necessary, external agencies.
- To recognise the importance of including SENDO issues in the school's Personal Development programme.
- To monitor the policy and procedures and keep them under review.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Special Educational Needs:**

“Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- a. have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- b. have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a type generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education and library board. *(SEN Code of Practice 2001)*

### **Special Educational Provision:**

Educational provision which is different from, or additional to, provision made generally for pupils of comparable age. *(SEN Code of Practice 2001)*

### **Disability**

A pupil is regarded as being disabled for the purpose of SENDO if she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long term is defined as lasting one year.

*(Disability Discrimination Act 1995)*

## **SCHOOL BASED STAGES - SEN**

### **IDENTIFICATION**

Pupils may be initially identified as having SEN in a variety of ways.

**a. On admission to the school.**

Notification of an existing need may be supplied through records and transfer documents received when a pupil transfers or evidence supplied by parents in the form of reports or professional assessments. This may include a statement of SEN or the pupil may be undergoing a process of Statutory Assessment.

**b. Class teacher concern**

On entry to the school her normal classroom work and/or behaviour indicates that she is performing at a level sufficiently below that of her peers to cause concern. The normal procedures relating to Stage 1 will then apply.

**c. Parental notification / concern**

Concerns may be raised by the parent who refers to the school for confirmation of difficulty or supplies the school with evidence from external professionals.

**d. Information from Primary School**

Primary Schools may supply information independently which will inform decisions taken to continue existing support or explore alternatives.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Needs identified at the point of admission to the school will be addressed by making appropriate provision to ensure continuity of support provided in former school. Where new or changing needs are identified the guidance outlined in the code of practice will be followed. Standardised assessments will be used as deemed necessary to provide objective evidence of attainment. Access to specialised personnel for advice and/or assessment will be used as appropriate.

## **DATA PROTECTION**

Parents can have copies of materials on request and access to information will be in accordance with the school's *Data Protection Policy*.

### **The Identification and Assessment of Special Education Needs at Hunterhouse College**

#### **A 5-Stage Model of Practice as Outlined in the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and the Supplement to the Order 2005**

1. The stages are a means of informing decisions to be made in school in consultation with parents as to what special education provision is necessary to meet the pupils' needs.
2. Stages 1, 2 and 3 draw on parents' own distinctive knowledge and contribute to their understanding of how best to help their child. Responsibility for the pupil at these stages lies within school (with close involvement by the Education and Library Board at Stage 3).
3. At stages 4 and 5, the responsibility lies with both the Education and Library Board and the school.
4. Progress in response to action taken at one of the first three stages may mean that a pupil does not need to move on to the next. Only for those pupils whose progress continues to cause concern at any one stage will the school need to move on to the next stage.
5. A relatively large proportion of pupils may be helped by Stage 1 procedures, with smaller proportions at Stages 2 and 3. Only when there is no progress, even with support at Stage 3, will referral to the Board with a view to statutory assessment be considered. The stages are not usually steps towards statutory assessment, nor are they hurdles to be cleared before statutory assessment can be made. They are, as stated above, a means of informing decisions.
6. Action at Stages 2 and 3 may be appropriate even if no action has been taken at Stage 1.

### Initial Concern and Referral

This is likely to be expressed by a Form Teacher, subject teacher, parent or others. There may be preliminary discussion between Form Teacher, subject teacher and the relevant Head of Department. Initial referral should be made in writing on the Internal Initial Concern Form to the appropriate Head of Year and the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO). There should be written evidence of the pupil's difficulties to support the statement of concern. Those raising the concern are required to provide that evidence. The SENCO will arrange for parents to be contacted to discuss the issues and to ensure that they are aware of procedures for Identification and Assessment of Special Needs.

### Stage 1

- The Form Teacher should collect and record information about the pupil, consulting other teachers as appropriate, and make an initial assessment of the pupil's special educational needs.
- The subject teacher, in consultation with the Head of Department, should provide or arrange special help within the normal curriculum framework, exploring ways in which increased differentiation of class work, alternative teaching and learning strategies or different classroom organisation might better meet the pupil's needs: at this stage departmental strategies for differentiation etc., should provide for a pupil's needs. Provision should include differentiation in learning styles, teaching styles, resources, content of the course, tasks and response to outcome.
- The Form Teacher, with the support of the Head of Year, should monitor and review progress.
- The SENCO, who has overall responsibility, should
  - ensure that the pupil is included in the school's SEN register
  - help the Head of Year and Form Teacher gather information and assess the pupil's needs
  - advise and support the pupil's teachers as necessary
  - inform parents.
- Information required about the pupil includes :  
***from the school :***
  - class records, including relevant records from all who teach the pupil and any from previous schools
  - attainments in relation to the Northern Ireland Curriculum
  - standardised test results or profiles
  - Progress Files, where appropriate
  - observations about the child's behaviour



***from the parent :***

- views on the pupil's health and development
- perceptions of the pupil's performance, progress and behaviour at school and at home
- factors contributing to any difficulty

***from the pupil :***

- personal perception of any difficulties and how they might be addressed

***from other sources :***

- any information already available to the school from health or social services or any other source.

**Stage 1 Record**

This information will identify the perceptions of those concerned with the pupil and should reveal any immediate educational concerns. The Form Teacher and Head of Year should consult the SENCO to determine whether to continue the existing educational arrangements, to seek advice and support, or to provide special help.

(a) Action to be taken

If it is decided that no further action is needed, the SENCO should record this and inform the pupil's parents. The pupil's name should still be kept on the SEN Register until progress no longer gives cause for concern. If it is clear at the outset that information additional to that available to the school is required or that action at Stage 1 would be inadequate, the pupil should move straight to the appropriate stage. If it is decided that the pupil could benefit from a period of special attention and, in particular, carefully differentiated teaching within the normal classroom work, the nature and aims of such provision should be recorded, together with a note of targets, monitoring arrangements and review date.

(b) Review

Parents should always be informed of proposed action and any Stage 1 review date. Review should focus on the pupil's progress, the effectiveness of the special help and possible future action. Parents should always be told of the outcome and of any steps they can take to help their child at home. It is particularly important for schools to discuss with parents any intention to move the child to Stage 2. The outcome of the review may be that:

- the pupil continues at Stage 1. If progress has been satisfactory, the class teacher should set targets to be achieved by the next review. If progress remains satisfactory after 2 reviews, the period between reviews may be extended, or,
- the pupil no longer needs special help

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If progress remains satisfactory for at least 2 review periods, the class teacher may decide that the pupil no longer needs special help, or,

- the child moves to Stage 2. If, the following one - or at most two - review period(s) at Stage 1, progress has not been satisfactory, the class teacher and SENCO may decide to move the child to Stage 2.

A copy of the Stage 1 Review Statement should be made available for parents.

### **Stage 2**

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

(a) Roles and responsibilities

The SENCO takes the lead in assessing the pupil's learning difficulty, and planning, monitoring and reviewing the special educational provision, working with the pupil's subject and Form Teachers who remain responsible for working with the pupil in the classroom.

(b) Information required

All the available information should be reviewed, including that gathered at Stage 1. The SENCO should seek medical advice from the school doctor or the pupil's GP, and advice on any involvement with the child or family by the HSS Trust and/or the Educational Welfare Service, and any other necessary information agencies closely involved with the child, including voluntary organisations. On this basis, the SENCO should consider whether to seek further advice before proceeding to draw up an education plan. If further advice is required on a particular area of the child's development, the SENCO should record the advice being sought and the interim arrangements made for the child. This is part of the Stage 2 Record.

(c) Education Plan

The SENCO, working with Head of Year and Form Teacher with subject teachers as appropriate, should ensure that an education plan is drawn up for the pupil, taking into account as far as possible the pupil's own views on his or her difficulties and the proposed provision. The education plan should build on the curriculum the child is following alongside other pupils and should make use of other, readily available materials. The plan should usually be implemented fully or at least in large part, in the normal classroom setting. The SENCO should, therefore, ensure close liaison with and between all relevant teachers. Parents should also be told of the action to be taken and advised how best to help their child at home.

For details of Education Plan see *paragraph 2.56 - The identification and Assessment of Special Needs Education (NI) Order 1996*.

(d) Review

The Stage 2 review should normally be conducted by the SENCO in consultation with Head of Year and where possible, parents. It should focus on the pupil's progress, taking account of his/her views and in particular the effectiveness of the education plan and the need for any further advice and future action.

The outcome of the review may be:

- The pupil continues at Stage 2
- The pupil reverts to Stage,1 or no longer needs special help
- The pupil moves to Stage 3.

A copy of the Stage 2 Review statement should be made available for parents. If a pupil is to move to Stage 3 then it is particularly important to talk to the parents in person.

### **Stage 3**

Stage 3 begins with a decision either at Stage 2 review, or following discussion about an initial concern between the SENCO, Principal, teachers and parents, that early intensive action with external support is immediately necessary.

#### (a) Roles and responsibilities

The SENCO continues to take a leading role, working closely with the pupils, teachers and sharing responsibilities for the pupil with the appropriate external specialist services. Part III of the Code of Practice recommends that Boards should obtain information from schools about the pupils who are at Stage 3. To ensure that such records are up-to-date, the Principal or SENCO should advise the Special Education section of the Board whenever a pupil moves to Stage 3. This is done with reference to all previous intervention and documentation on the pupil.

#### (b) Information required

On the basis of information and specialist views obtained at this stage, the SENCO should decide whether further professional advice is needed before drawing up a new education plan. The SENCO should record any further advice being sought and the interim arrangements being made.

#### (c) Education plan

The new education plan should set out reviewed strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and arrangements for monitoring and review. It should be developed with the help of outside specialists but should be implemented fully, or at least in major part, in the normal classroom setting. The SENCO should ensure close liaison with and between relevant teachers.

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The education plan should ensure a Co-ordinated approach which takes due account of the pupil's previous difficulties.

*See paragraph 2.63. The Identification and Assessment of Special Education Needs Education (NI) Order, 1996 and: Internal document, "Individual Education Plan"*

The SENCO, working with the Head of Year and other teachers as appropriate, and with the help of the external specialist(s), should ensure that the plan is drawn up. Together they should consider a range of different teaching approaches and appropriate support materials, including the use of information technology.

The specialist(s) may be involved in working with the child directly; may act in advisory capacity, supporting the class teacher or subject teachers in implementing the plan; or may recommend additional specialist support. In some instances medical treatment or different medical advice may considerably reduce the child's special educational needs. Medical advice may include advice from the school health service, the pupil's GP and from therapists.

Specific targets should be set for all aspects of the education plan and special monitoring and assessment arrangements made. Some of that assessment may be conducted by outside specialists, for example, educational psychologists. Parents should always be informed of the action the school proposes to take, and the pupils should be involved as far practicable, in the drawing up of the plan to meet his or her needs and the setting of educational targets.

### (d) Review

The SENCO should set a review date, normally within a term; should agree with the pupils, teachers, and the external specialists involved, the arrangements for monitoring progress against the targets established in the plan; and should inform the parents about any special arrangements that will apply to their child and for how long.

The SENCO should convene Stage 3 review meetings. The first Stage 3 review should focus on the pupil's progress, the effectiveness of the education plan, the need for any further advice and future action, in particular whether the pupil is likely to be referred in future for statutory assessment. At the review, external specialists should consider whether the analysis of the child by the school and the subsequent action is appropriate, and offer relevant advice. Other specialists may need to be brought in as a consequence of that advice.

The outcome of the review may be that:

- the pupil continues at Stage 3
- the pupil reverts to Stage 1 or 2
- the principal considers referring the child to the Board for statutory assessment

Parents should always be invited to and encouraged to attend Stage 3 Review. They should receive a copy of the Stage 3 Review Statement.

Where there is any question of the child being referred for a statutory assessment, parents should always be consulted in person.

## **BOARD BASED STAGES**

### **Stage 4**

In a small minority of cases there may be consideration of referral for statutory assessment. By the time the Principal considers referring the pupil for statutory assessment, there should be:

*written information on :*

- educational and other assessments, including any carried out by an advisory specialist support teacher or an educational psychologist
- views of the parents and of the child
- the pupil's health
- any involvement by social services or education welfare service

*written evidence of :*

- the school's action under the 3 Stages
- education plans for the child
- the outcomes of regular reviews
- the nature of the involvement of other professionals

Thus a multi-disciplinary assessment is possible.

### **Stage 5**

#### **Statementing**

This would be undertaken by the Education and Library Board with the support of information from all the previously named sources. The Board would make a statement and arrange, monitor and review provision.

A statement is reviewed annually after the pupil's 14th birthday, at which stage particular significance is given to preparing for her transition to further education and adult life. Thus when the Board convenes the meeting, parents and relevant staff representatives of the Careers Service and any one else the Board considers appropriate are invited to participate.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

The Board of Governors will report each year on SEN Provision in school in the Governors' report to parents.

### ACCESSIBILITY

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland Order) 2005 imposes a duty on ELBs to ensure that children with SEN have a right to be educated in mainstream schools. Hunterhouse College understands and accepts that:

- disabled pupils should not be treated less favourably for a reason which relates only to their disability.
- the school has a duty to plan strategically and make reasonable progress in increasing accessibility to premises and to the curriculum.
- children who have SEN but who do not have a statement and who apply for admission to the school must be treated in the same way as any other applicant.
- where a child has a statement of SEN and the parents want her to be educated at the school, the school will consult with the parents and ELB to assess the reasonable adjustments that can promote the child's inclusion without being harmful to the education of other children.

**Physical facilities:** Currently the school has ramps at the front entrance and at the Science Block, a lift for disabled access and special toilet, shower and changing facilities in the PE area. There are 3 other special toilet facilities.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this policy and its implementation will be kept under review by the SENCo who will regularly monitor and review arrangements and procedures as they apply to individual pupils. This will be discussed with the appropriate subject or pastoral staff and any recommendations for change will be considered and sanctioned by the Senior Team.

### COMPLAINTS

Parents wishing formally to complain about the Special Educational Needs Policy, or any aspect of its implementation, are initially requested to contact the Principal, who will investigate the circumstances and procedures surrounding the complaint. Central to the whole policy is the desire of all parties to make sure that the needs and best interests of the pupil are paramount.

### DARS

If a disagreement arises between a parent and the school or in relation to SEN provision and initial attempts to resolve them have not been successful, it may be appropriate to make a referral to the Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service as a facilitator in reaching agreement.

## **Appendix 1.**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS – RESPONSIBILITIES**

As stated in the Code of Practice 1997

#### **The Board of Governors** (para 2.3-2.9)

In co-operation with the Principal:

- determine, review and develop SEN Policy, establishing success criteria
- publish prescribed information on policy and provisions in respect of pupils with special educational needs
- report annually to parents on steps taken to implement SEN policy
- endeavour to ensure that the necessary special educational provision is made for all pupils on the school's SEN Register and that they have the greatest possible access to the full range of school activities
- establish appropriate staffing and funding arrangements and consider allocation of resources, including access to the school site
- ensure admissions and other policies are compatible with the Code

#### **Principal** (para 2.6, 2.12)

- determine, review and develop SEN policy and establish success criteria
- maintain responsibility for SEN provision
- agree responsibilities and teaching commitments of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- liaise with the Education and Library Board, Governors, SENCO, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and external agencies

#### **Vice-Principals**

- liaise with SENCO on issues relating to:
- co-ordination of SEN policy within the broader pastoral care arrangements of the school (para 2.34)
- available SEN specialist provision and INSET needs
- general School administration, eg., timetabling provision, staffing and accommodation

**Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator** (paras 2.6, 2.11, 2.39, 2.40, 2.45-2.74)

- determine day to day operation of SEN Policy
- co-ordinate the school's SEN provision
- respond to requests for advice from other teachers
- keep the Principal and Vice-Principals advised of SEN issues, including INSET
- maintain SEN Register
- liaise with subject teachers, Form Teachers and Heads of Year and take lead responsibility in :
  - arranging for the assessment of children identified as having special educational needs
  - co-ordinating these children's SEN provision and advising and supporting their teachers as necessary
  - overseeing the implementation of the 5 Stage Plan
  - liaising with parents of children with special educational need
  - liaising with external agencies

**Head of Year**

liaise with SENCO, Form Teachers and parents in :

- identification and making arrangements for the assessment of children with special educational need
- co-ordinating the child's SEN provision, monitoring and reviewing progress
- providing appropriate information with the young person's consent for Progress Files (para 6.44)

**Head of Careers** (para 6.43)

- liaise with Form Teachers, Heads of Year and SENCO on pupils with special educational need
- ensure Careers Officer is invited to annual reviews when appropriate as determined by the Code
- provide information in the context of Careers Education and available literature



**Heads of Department**

Liaise with subject staff, Form Teachers and SENCO in identifying, making arrangements for assessment of, and providing for and monitoring pupils with special educational needs.

**Form Teacher** (para 2.45)

- Liaise with subject staff, Heads of Year, SENCO, the child and parents to :
- respond to a concern that a child may have special educational need by collecting and recording information and making an initial assessment
- co-ordinate the child's SEN provision and monitor the child's progress

**Subject Teacher** (paras 2.6, 2.44, 2.53)

- be aware of the school's SEN Policy
- identify children who may have special educational need

## **Appendix 2**

### **Linked Documents**

1. Hunterhouse College Assessment, Recording and Reporting Handbook
2. Individual Departmental SEN Policies
3. Behaviour and Pastoral Care Policy – specifically Duties of Teachers; Health Education Policy (2005)
4. Careers Policy – specifically with regard to specialist Guidance and Counselling and work experience / work shadowing
5. The Identification and Assessment of Special Education Needs at Hunterhouse College
6. Criteria for Entry to Hunterhouse College (2005/06)
7. Policy for Exclusion and Suspension (2005/06)
8. Staff Guide Section 5 SEN (2005/06)