

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy

Gaelscoil na Móna



“Striving Together for Achievement”

October 2010

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Context

Gaelscoil na Móna was established in September 2000 to provide Irish medium education to the Turf Lodge/Upper Springfield area of West Belfast. This was a response to growing demand from the local Irish medium nursery school *Naíonra na Móna*. At that time, in the absence of a local Irish medium primary school, the nursery fed into the three closest Irish Medium Schools. Initially *Gaelscoil na Móna* was situated in the same small building as the nursery school, the newly renamed *Naíscoil na Móna*. A growing nursery enrolment required *Naíscoil na Móna* to hold two daily sessions; at the same time increasing admissions meant that the school, *Gaelscoil na Móna*, would have to seek new premises. In 2004 *Gaelscoil na Móna* moved to its present site in a two classroom mobile building. Increasing numbers soon required the addition of a further mobile building and subsequently the addition of another more permanent school building which now houses Key Stage One and Two classes. There are plans, upon reaching capital status, to build a further more extensive school building to help meet the ever-increasing demand for local Irish medium education.

Gaelscoil na Móna takes its name from the Irish name for Turf Lodge, *Lóiste na Móna*. It is a community which, despite a very high level of social deprivation, is thriving and cohesive. High unemployment has not prevented the local people from developing their community; many people own their own homes and contribute to their community through small businesses, community groups, youth centres, community centres and through our school. Our ethos includes children from a range of backgrounds and we envision and endeavour that all our children receive the highest possible standard of education.

Rationale

To treat everyone the same, we must treat them differently.

[Helen Keller](#)

Overall improvements in education outcomes will only be secured through the improvement in outcomes for individual children and young people with the help of individual teachers and school leaders.

[Every School a Good School \(2009\)](#)

At *Gaelscoil na Móna* we are committed to providing the highest standard of education to every child. We believe that it is our duty not only to *catch them before they fall* but also to ensure that our school culture, policies and practice provide the framework by which every child in our community can be supported to reach their potential.

Each child is a central member of our school and each member of our school community is equally valued and nourished, child and adult alike. We have a responsibility to every child to develop *Gaelscoil na Móna* for their sake and for the sustenance and development of the local community and the wider Irish language community. We are committed to providing the excellent school to which children are entitled in their local community.

Diversity enriches our communities; the same is true in our schools. We strive to include every child and adult in our school, not regardless of their diversity, but in celebration and in recognition of the value that diversity holds in making a society and school stronger. To this end, our priority in every aspect of *Gaelscoil na Móna* is to ensure maximum participation in the curriculum, culture and life of our school and to minimize any barriers to learning, participation and growth. We are committed to the continuous development that is necessary to achieve this.

We believe that all children, staff and visitors to our school realise the intrinsic worth of building a school community comprising the diverse range of humanity and utilizing this diversity to build a better, stronger school. This is a philosophy which we actively endeavour to nurture in the wider communities to which we belong. Every child is the centre of our school. This policy provides the practical framework to ensure that we support and celebrate every child's individuality and unique needs.

Objectives

To outline:

- the arrangements for the identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or disability
- how the school will manage the school based stages of the The Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1995)

To Provide:

- a happy learning environment which nourishes the children's interest
- an environment in which every child can develop, with direction and good example, spiritually, intellectually, socially and physically
- an extensive, challenging and enriching curriculum for every child which meets every child's needs

To attend to every need of every child by working collaboratively and productively with:

- the Irish Language community
- external support services
- statutory agencies
- the education community
- Parents
- The local community

To ensure that every teacher:

- takes responsibility for Special Educational Needs
- delivers programmes of study which meet the individual needs of every child
- ensures that every child has equal access to the curriculum
- creates a safe physical learning environment which takes account of the needs of every child (as guided by *the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998)* and *SEND0 (2005)*)
- identifies children who have Special Educational Needs as early as possible by efficient assessment and screening
- provides for children who have Special Educational Needs in school and/or with outside agencies.

Inclusion Principles

- to value all children and staff equally;
- to increase the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the curriculum, culture and life of our school;
- to review our policies and practices so that they respond to the diversity of all;
- to reduce barriers to learning and participation for all children, not only those who are categorised as having Special Educational Needs;
- to help children and staff to view the differences between people as resources to support learning, rather than as problems to be overcome;
- to acknowledge the right of children to an education in their local community
- to develop Gaelscoil na Móna for the good of staff as well as for children;
- to be active in our role in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement.
- to foster mutually sustaining relationships between with our communities.
- to help children and staff to build an inclusive school and to bring those values and practices into the community
- to nurture the spiritual, physical, emotional, moral, social and academic development of all children
- to provide a caring environment in which every child can be happy and confident and in which they enjoy learning
- to nurture a positive, confident and self-respecting self image in all children
- to provide all children with equal access to a broad and nourishing curriculum
- to provide a differentiated curriculum in which all children can reach their potential and can learn according to their individual learning styles
- to employ a range of appropriate resources and strategies which support all children's learning
- to develop a system of assessment and identification which will help us ensure each child's progression
- to develop effective, positive collaborative and communicative working relationships within the school, both adults and children, and with parents, governors and external support providers
- to nurture a positive attitude to learning in all children

Definitions of Special Educational Needs

This school will continue to follow the guidance of the *The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (1998)

Special educational needs (SEN)	a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made
Learning difficulty	the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of everyday educational facilities
Special educational provision	educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age.
Disability	a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Gaelscoil na Móna currently meets the needs of children with a range of learning difficulties.

We will continue to pay due regard to:

- The Education Order (NI) 1996
- *The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (1998)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005
- The Supplement to the Code of Practice Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (2005)

Admission arrangements

The same admission criteria exist for the admission of children with Special Educational Needs and/or a disability as for those without. The school will continue to pay due regard to:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005
- The Supplement to the Code of Practice Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (2005)

The 5 Stage Approach

Gaelscoil na Móna's follows the guidance the Code of Practice Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998)

Identification and Provision
School-based stages
STAGE 1: teachers identify and register a child's special educational needs and, consulting the school's SEN co-ordinator, take initial action.
STAGE 2: the SEN co-ordinator takes lead responsibility for collecting and recording information and for co-ordinating the child's special educational provision, working with the child's teachers.
School-based stage (with external support)
STAGE 3: teachers and the SEN co-ordinator are supported by specialists from outside the school.
Belfast Education and Library Board-based Stages
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 provision.

Code of Practice Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998)

Identification

Pupils will be identified as having Special Educational Needs when:

- admission information states/indicates an SEN
- a teacher raises a concern (Record of Concern)
- a parent raises a concern (Parental Record of Concern)
- nursery/primary school information states/indicates an SEN
- levels of attainment are below a school-set level
- the child is undergoing Statutory Assessment upon admission to school
- the child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs on admission to school

Criteria and Provision

	Criteria	Provision
Level A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Record of Concern • Standard school devised observation which indicate SEN • Discrepant of 1 year between CA and standardised scores. • Discrepant of 1- 10% between child's score and class mean in formal school devised assessments 	Stage 1 1. Action Plan -Differentiation in class from class teacher.
Level B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of response to Level A provision • Teacher Record of Concern • Standard school devised observation which indicate SEN • Discrepant of at least 2 years between CA and standardised scores. • Discrepant of more than 10% between child's score and class mean in formal school devised assessments. 	Stage 2 IEP: 1. SENCO support for teacher plus 2. differentiation in class plus 3. access to individual/group support for one term. 4. diagnostic assessment in school
Level C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of response to Level B provision 	Stage 3 IEP: 1. SENCO support for teacher plus 2. differentiation in class plus 3. access to individual/group support for one term, reviewed termly. 4. External support.
Level D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of response to Level C provision • Lack of response to external intervention • Results of in-school diagnostic assessment • 	Stage 3 IEP: 1. SENCO to provide 6 weeks intensive withdrawal plus 6 weeks embedding plus 2. differentiation in class plus 3. access to individual/group support for one term, reviewed termly.

		4. External support.
Level E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of response to Level D provision • Lack of response to external intervention • Statutory Assessment/ Statement of Special Educational Needs Provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 4/5 IEP • Strategies/targets to relate to those on Formal Statement of Special Educational Needs if in place 	Stage 4/5 IEP (Strategies/targets to relate to those on Formal Statement of Special Educational Needs if in place) : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SENCO to provide termly withdrawal if appropriate plus 2. differentiation in class plus 3. access to individual/group support for at least one term (subject to termly review). 4. External support. 5. Annual review.

Accessibility

Gaelscoil na Móna is situated on entirely single level accommodation. Each of the three buildings has ramp access. Each building has a disabled toilet. The school site has no obstacles to physical movement on foot or in a wheelchair. Each classroom is arranged so that all children and adults can move freely and safely whether they have a disability or not.

Assessment

In addition to the assessments used throughout the school for summative and formative assessment, the following assessment arrangements are in place for children with Special Educational Needs:

If scores and observations suggest a SEN, the SENCO or class teacher uses the following tools:

- Diagnostic Spelling Tests
- Young Diagnostic Reading Analysis
- Young Non-verbal IQ
- Dyslexia Portfolio
- Dyscalculia Screener

The School has also developed a number of SEN specific observations/checklists:

- General SEN observation
- Attention Difficulties Observation
- Dyslexia Indicators Checklist
- Sensory Motor Observation
- Social and Emotional Observation
- Speech and Language Observation

The School has also developed a number of standard tools for assessment and provision:

- Parent/carer Interview Proforma
- Irish Word Spelling Proforma
- English Word Spelling Proforma
- Running Reading Records (for use in both languages)
- Miscue Analysis (for use in both languages).

In assessing children with SEN, due care is taken that the assessment process does not negatively affect the child. On the basis that children with SEN must be helped to raise their self-esteem, some children may be excused from undertaking certain in-school assessments if it is unlikely that the score achieved will be measurable, and that the value of undergoing the assessment is superseded by protecting the child's emotional wellbeing. The Principal's decision to do this is informed by the SENCO in collaboration with the class teacher. Certain children may be exempt from undertaking statutory assessments as is set out each year in guidance from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

In Gaelscoil na Móna, the following adaptations are employed in supporting children with SEN to accurately show their ability in assessments:

- Large print assessment papers
- Use of a reader/writer
- Additional time
- Separate room
- Headphones to eliminate noise
- ICT

Parental Concerns Arrangements

(Refer to Contact with Parents Policy and Parental Complaints Policy)

We hope to continue to foster positive collaborative relationships with all our parents. To ease this process, if a parent does have a Special Educational Needs concern about their child they should follow these procedures:

1. Arrange a meeting with your child's teacher - in this meeting the teacher will fill in a Parental Concern Form, in which your concerns are outlined and meeting outcomes recorded.

If you are still concerned.

2. Arrange a meeting with your child's teacher and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)- in this meeting the teacher/SENCO will fill in Parent/carer Interview Form

If you are still concerned.

3. Arrange a meeting with the School Principal indicating the nature of your concern.

This procedure refers only to the identification of, and/or provision for, Special Educational Needs.

Child Protection concerns should be addressed to the Designated or deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Any other concerns should be addressed according to the procedures laid out in the Contact with Parents Policy.

Gaelscoil na Móna recognises the essential role of the parent/carer in the decision making process in regard to the identification of, assessment of, and provision for, their child's SEN. To facilitate this, the School has the following arrangements:

- ❖ Annual progress meetings with all parents
- ❖ Termly meetings with children identified as having a Special Educational Need
- ❖ Annual Review meetings for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs
- ❖ Parental Concern Procedure (outlined above)
- ❖ Collaborative IEP development process

If a parent feels unhappy with any aspect of the School's provision and has exhausted the Parental Concern procedure, they may contact the BELB and request that the BELB chairs a meeting between the parents and the School to resolve a concern.

If a parent is unhappy with the BELB's provision; for example in relation to a Board's decision: not to make an assessment; not to issue a Statement; on a proposed or final Statement; amendments to a Statement; or ceasing to maintain a Statement, they may contact BELB to request a meeting with BELB to discuss this.

If a parent has an unresolved concern in relation to provision for a child who has a disability they may contact The Equality Commission to request the independent conciliation. Both the School/BELB must agree to this. Information regarding the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) can be obtained from The Equality Commission.

If a parent has an unresolved concern about the School's or BELB's Special Educational Needs provision they may contact Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) which is an cross-Board service to resolve disputes.

*Article 5 of the SENDO 2005 amends the 1996 Order by inserting a new Article 21(B)
Code of Practice: 3.28–3.29 (Decision Not To Make a Statement), 4.12-4.15*

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will initially be evaluated and reviewed in June 2011 and biennially thereafter. Each area will be audited and a SWOT analysis carried out with School Staff. Pupils' and parents' input will be facilitated.

Ultimately the success of this policy will be measured by increased attainment throughout Gaelscoil na Móna, by increased attainment by pupils with Special Educational Needs and by earlier and more effective identification of those pupils with Special Educational Needs.

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Categories of Special Educational Needs

Cognitive and Learning

Dyslexia/SpLD (DYL)
Dyscalculia (DYC)
Dyspraxia/DCD (DCD)
Mild Learning Difficulties (MILD)
Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
Unspecified Cognitive and Learning (U)

Social, Emotional and Behavioural

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)
ADD/ADHD (ADD)

Communication and Interaction

Speech and Language Difficulties (SL)
Autism (AUT)
Aspergers (ASP)

Sensory

Severe/Profound Hearing Loss (SPHL)
Mild/Moderate Hearing Loss (MMHL)
Blind (BL)
Partially Sighted (PS)
Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)
Physical
Cerebral Palsy (CP)
Spina Bifida and/or Hydrocephalus (SBH)
Muscular Dystrophy (MD)
Significant Accidental Injury (SAI)
Other Physical (OPN)

Medical Conditions/Syndrome

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

Other (OTH)

(Guidance for Schools: Recording Children With SEN. DENI)

Parental Record of Concern Gaelscoil na Móna

Name of child	
Date of birth	
Year	
Teacher	
Date	

Area of concern	
Speech and Language (including Literacy)	
Numeracy	
Learning	
Communication and Interaction	
Social, Emotional and/or Behavioural	
Physical	
Motor/Sensory	

Details

Outcome of meeting

Signed: _____
(Teacher)

Signed: _____
(Parent)