Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna



Legislation:

- The Education (NI) Order 1996
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016

Documentation:

- Department of Education Northern Ireland (1998) Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Bangor: DENI
- Department of Education Northern Ireland (2005) Supplement to the Code of Practice. Bangor: DENI
- Equality Commission, Northern Ireland (2006) Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (SENDO).
- Department of Education Northern Ireland (2009) *Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement*, Bangor: DENI.

Rationale

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

Helen Keller

Overall improvements in educational 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 agus Naíscoil na Móna, we are committed to providing the highest standard of education for every child and ensuring equal access to a broad, balanced and enriching educational experience based on the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We believe it is our responsibility not only to catch children before they fall but also to create a school culture, policies and practices that enable every learner to participate fully, thrive and reach their individual potential.

Every child is at the heart of our school community. We recognise and celebrate the unique strengths, experiences, abilities and needs of each learner. Diversity enriches our school just as it enriches society, and we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where all children, staff, parents and visitors are valued, respected and supported. Our aim is to maximise participation in the curriculum, culture and life of the school while identifying and removing barriers to learning, achievement, wellbeing and personal development.

We recognise that some children and young people may experience Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities during their school career. In the interests of these pupils, we endeavour to make every reasonable adjustment and provide the support necessary to meet their individual needs. We believe that effective inclusion is achieved through early identification, collaborative working with families and external agencies, and a graduated, child-centred response that matches support, resources and expertise to need.

The Graduated Response Framework (GRF) provides the structure through which we identify, assess, plan and review support for children with SEN and/or disabilities. Through the six-part IPAMER cycle - Identify, Plan, Action, Monitor, Evaluate and Review - learners and their families are actively involved in decision-making, ensuring that support is personalised, purposeful and responsive. Individual needs and agreed outcomes are documented through appropriate planning tools, including Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) where required.

Our practice is underpinned by the principles and requirements of 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 Order (SENDO) (NI) 2005, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016. These frameworks affirm the rights of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities to access high-quality education and participate fully in

mainstream school life. They also place responsibilities on schools to provide appropriate support, make reasonable adjustments, and work in partnership with parents, carers and relevant agencies.

As a school community, we are committed to continuous reflection and development to ensure that our provision remains effective, inclusive and responsive to the evolving needs of our learners. We believe that every child brings value to our community and that by recognising, supporting and celebrating individuality, we strengthen our school and contribute positively to the wider local and Irish-medium education communities.

This policy provides the framework through which we fulfil these commitments, ensuring that every child is supported, included, respected and empowered to achieve their full potential.

Policy Aims

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, we are committed to providing an inclusive, nurturing and stimulating learning environment in which every child is valued, respected and encouraged to achieve their full potential. Through high-quality teaching, effective assessment, early intervention and collaborative working, we seek to identify and address barriers to learning, participation and achievement, ensuring that children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have equitable access to all aspects of school life.

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

1. **To identify children with SEN and/or disabilities as early as possible** through effective observation, assessment, screening and consultation with parents, staff and relevant agencies.
2. **To provide high-quality, inclusive education** that enables all children to access a broad, balanced, relevant and appropriately differentiated curriculum in line with the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
3. **To implement the Graduated Response Framework (GRF)** and the IPAMER process (Identify, Plan, Action, Monitor, Evaluate and Review) to ensure that support is carefully planned, monitored and reviewed according to individual need.
4. **To ensure compliance with current SEN legislation and guidance**, including the Education Order (NI) 1996, SENDO (NI) 2005, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016, and the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.
5. **To create a happy, caring, safe and supportive learning environment** in which every child feels valued, included and able to participate fully in school life.
6. **To provide curricular, pastoral and extra-curricular opportunities** that promote intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual and physical development and encourage success, confidence, independence and resilience.

7. **To educate children with SEN and/or disabilities alongside their peers wherever possible**, promoting inclusion, belonging and equal access to all aspects of school life.
8. **To ensure that every teacher takes responsibility for the learning and progress of all pupils**, including those with SEN and/or disabilities, through high-quality teaching and appropriate differentiation.
9. **To enable all children to access learning through a range of teaching approaches and strategies** that accommodate diverse learning styles, strengths and needs.
10. **To ensure that appropriate support, provision and resources are matched to individual needs**, recognising the continuum of SEN and the continuum of provision required to meet those needs effectively.
11. **To involve children in decisions about their learning and support**, taking account of their age, stage of development, views and aspirations.
12. **To promote strong partnerships with parents and carers**, recognising their central role in supporting their child's learning, development and wellbeing.
13. **To work collaboratively with external support services, the Education Authority, Health and Social Care services, statutory agencies and other professionals** to secure the best possible outcomes for children with SEN and/or disabilities.
14. **To maintain effective systems for recording, monitoring and reviewing progress**, ensuring that interventions and support remain appropriate, effective and responsive to changing needs.
15. **To foster collaboration among staff** in planning, delivering and evaluating provision for children with SEN and/or disabilities.
16. **To encourage and sustain children's engagement in learning**, developing positive attitudes, motivation, self-esteem and confidence.
17. **To work in partnership with the Irish-medium sector, the wider education community and the local community** to ensure that every child benefits from a coordinated and holistic approach to support.
18. **To make the most effective use of available resources** in order to meet the needs of all children and maximise educational outcomes.

Through these aims and objectives, Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna seeks to ensure that every child is supported, included and empowered to participate fully in school life and to achieve their individual potential.

Definitions

Special Educational Needs

A child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made.

Learning Difficulty

A child has a learning difficulty if:

(a) they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than **the majority of** children of the same age;

(b) 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; or

(c) they have not attained the lower limit of compulsory school age and is or would be if special educational provision were not made, likely to fall within (a) or (b) when of compulsory school age.

Special Educational Provision

Special educational provision (SpEP) is educational provision, which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in ordinary schools.

Disability

The following definition of disability is taken from the Disability Discrimination Act (1995):

A disability is when someone has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

(Paragraph 2.3)

Key Principles of Inclusion

The Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (ECNI, 2006), states: *"…all pupils have a right to the same opportunities in the whole of their educational life."*

Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna is committed to fostering an inclusive ethos in which every child is welcomed, valued and supported to participate fully in all aspects of school life. Inclusion is viewed as a fundamental principle that underpins the vision, values and daily practice of our school community. We actively promote the inclusion of all children and recognise that diversity enriches the educational experience of everyone.

Inclusion is embedded across all school policies, procedures and planning processes, including this Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy, the School Development Plan, Accessibility Plan, Positive Behaviour Policy, Addressing Bullying Behaviour Policy, Pastoral Care, Safeguarding and Child Protection policies. Through a whole-school commitment to inclusion, we strive to identify and remove barriers to learning, participation and achievement, ensuring that every child has equitable opportunities to realise their potential and make a positive contribution to school life. Partnerships with parents, carers, external agencies and the wider community are central to achieving this vision and ensuring that all children experience a sense of belonging, wellbeing and success within Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna.

SEN and Medical Categories

The following is the list of the five overarching SEN categories and sub-categories taken from: Department of Education Northern Ireland (2019) *Recording SEN and Medical Categories – Guidance for Schools,* Bangor: DENI).

1. Cognition and Learning (CL) – language, literacy, mathematics, numeracy

a) Dyslexia (DYL) or Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) - language/literacy

b) Dyscalculia (DYC) or Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) - mathematics/numeracy

c) Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

d) Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)

e) Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)

2. Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Well-being (SBEW)

a) Social and Behavioural Difficulties (SBD)

b) Emotional and Well-being Difficulties (EWD)

b) Severe Challenging Behaviour associated with SLD or PMLD (SCB)

3. Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

a) Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

b) Language Disorder associated with a differentiating/ biomedical condition (LD)

c) Communication and Social Interaction Difficulties (CSID)

4. Sensory (SE)

a) Blind (BD)

b) Partially Sighted (PS)

c) Severe/Profound Hearing Impairment (SPHI)

d) Mild or Moderate Hearing Impairment (MMHI)

e) Multi-sensory Impairment (MSI)

5. Physical Need (PN)

a) Physical (P)

Children with a medical condition

Children who have an identified medical condition will be recorded on the school's medical register. Those who do not require special educational provision will be recorded on the Medical register only and will not be placed on the SEN register.

A pupil with a medical diagnosis or disability may or may not have a SEN but what is key is "does the pupil have a requirement for special educational provision to access the curriculum."

A pupil can be recorded on both the SEN register and medical register if they have both a medical need and require special educational provision to be made for them.

The Medical Register is the responsibility of the Medical Needs Coordinator.

The following is the list of the key medical diagnoses as commonly identified and agreed by the Department of Health which occur within the school population taken from Department of Education Northern Ireland (2019) *Recording SEN and Medical Categories – Guidance for Schools,* Bangor: DENI).

- Epilepsy
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Anaphylaxis
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- Dyspraxia/ Development Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)
- Developmental Language Disorder (Medical) (DLD)
- Global Developmental Delay
- Down Syndrome
- Complex Healthcare Needs
- Anxiety Disorder (includes social anxiety, phobia, school refusal, obsessive compulsive disorder)
- Depression
- Eating Disorder
- Psychosis
- Other Medical Disorder
- Cerebral Palsy
- Spina Bifida – with Hydrocephalus
- Spina Bifida – without Hydrocephalus
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Acquired Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Physical Disability
- Other Medical Condition/Syndrome

Arrangements for Co-ordinating SEND Provision

Although meeting the needs of pupils with SEND is a whole school issue, the overall responsibility for managing SEND provision resides with the Board of Governors and the principal of Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna. However, to facilitate the day-to-day running of the provision the Board of Governors has delegated responsibility to co-ordinate the provision for pupils with special educational needs to Gerard Larkin (SENCo).

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors of Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna has a statutory responsibility to ensure that appropriate provision is made for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. In carrying out its functions, the Board is committed to promoting an inclusive school environment and ensuring that all pupils, regardless of ability or need, have access to high-quality educational opportunities and support that enable them to participate fully in school life and achieve their potential.

The Board of Governors monitors the implementation and effectiveness of the school's SEN provision and ensures that the requirements of relevant legislation and guidance are met. This includes overseeing the allocation of resources, supporting staff in meeting pupils' needs, and ensuring that

appropriate policies and procedures are in place to identify, assess and support children with SEN and/or disabilities.

To support this work, the Board has appointed a Designated Governor for Special Educational Needs, who liaises with the Principal and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and reports to the Board on SEN matters. The Designated Governor assists the Board in monitoring the effectiveness of SEN provision, ensuring that the needs of children with SEN and/or disabilities remain a key priority within school development and improvement planning.

Where appropriate, the Board may establish a committee or working group to consider matters relating to SEN, inclusion and pupil support. However, responsibility for ensuring effective SEN provision remains with the full Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors is committed to working in partnership with staff, parents, pupils, the Education Authority and other relevant agencies to promote positive outcomes for all learners and to ensure that Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna remains an inclusive and supportive learning community.

Chapter 12 of the document '*Every School a Good School*' (DENI, 2010) relates specifically to the role of the governor in supporting pupils with special educational needs. Based on this information, The *SEN Resource File* (DENI, 2011) outlines that the Board of Governors has a statutory duty to:

- take account of the provisions in the DE Code of Practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs;
- use their best efforts to provide for pupils identified with SEN and that parents are notified of their child's special needs;
- maintain and operate a policy on SEN;
- ensure that where a registered pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them;
- check that the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying those registered pupils with SEN and of providing appropriate teaching;
- allocate funding for special educational needs and disability; and
- prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

Principal

In accordance with current SEN legislation and guidance, the Principal of Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna provides strategic leadership for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and inclusion throughout the school. The Principal plays a key role in ensuring that all children, including those with SEN and/or disabilities, receive appropriate support and have equitable access to high-quality learning experiences.

The Principal will:

- Keep the Board of Governors fully informed of developments, priorities and issues relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) within the school.
- Work closely with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) to ensure the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SEN provision.
- Promote a whole-school approach to inclusion and ensure that SEN is a shared responsibility across all staff.
- Liaise, where appropriate, with parents/carers, the Education Authority, external support services and other relevant agencies to support the needs of individual pupils.
- Ensure that available resources and funding allocated to SEN are deployed effectively and monitored appropriately to maximise positive outcomes for children.
- Ensure that members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) play an active role in supporting, monitoring and evaluating SEN provision throughout the school.
- Promote consistency of practice across the school and ensure that SEN and inclusion priorities are reflected within the School Development Plan and wider school improvement processes.
- Support staff in accessing appropriate professional learning and development opportunities to enhance inclusive practice and meet the diverse needs of learners.
- Ensure that effective systems are in place for the identification, assessment, monitoring and review of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.
- Maintain secure, accurate and confidential records relating to pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in line with data protection requirements and school procedures.
- Foster a positive, inclusive school culture in which every child is valued, supported and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

Through these responsibilities, the Principal helps to ensure that Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna remains an inclusive learning community where the needs of all learners are recognised and appropriately supported.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) plays a key role in leading and coordinating the school's provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The SENCo works closely with the Principal, staff, parents, pupils and external agencies to ensure that children receive appropriate support and that inclusive practice is embedded throughout the school.

The SENCo is responsible for:

- Leading the day-to-day implementation, monitoring and review of the school's Special Educational Needs Policy.
- Coordinating provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities and ensuring that support is appropriate, targeted and responsive to individual needs.
- Providing advice, support and guidance to teachers and classroom assistants regarding SEN identification, assessment, planning and intervention strategies.
- Supporting staff in implementing the Graduated Response Framework (GRF) and the IPAMER process (Identify, Plan, Action, Monitor, Evaluate and Review).
- Overseeing the identification and assessment of pupils who may have SEN and ensuring that concerns are addressed at the earliest possible stage.
- Maintaining the school's SEN records and register and ensuring that information relating to pupils with SEN is accurate, up-to-date, secure and confidential.
- Coordinating the development, implementation and review of Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and other relevant documentation.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers, ensuring they are fully informed and actively involved in decisions relating to their child's learning and support.
- Ensuring that the views, strengths and aspirations of children are considered when planning and reviewing provision.
- Liaising with the Education Authority, Health and Social Care services, external support services and other relevant agencies to secure appropriate advice, assessments and interventions.
- Monitoring the progress and outcomes of pupils with SEN and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and support programmes.
- Identifying professional learning and development needs relating to SEN and contributing to the training and support of staff.
- Supporting the Principal and Board of Governors in the strategic development and evaluation of SEN provision across the school.
- Promoting a whole-school culture of inclusion in which every child is valued and supported to achieve their full potential.

Through these responsibilities, the SENCo helps to ensure that Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna provides effective, child-centred and inclusive provision that enables all learners to participate fully and make progress in line with their individual needs and abilities.

Role of the Class Teacher

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, every teacher is a teacher of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Class teachers have primary responsibility for the learning, progress and wellbeing of all pupils in their care and play a central role in identifying, planning for and supporting individual needs within an inclusive classroom environment.

The class teacher will:

- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of current SEN legislation, guidance and best practice.
- Be familiar with information relating to pupils on the school's SEN Register and use this information to inform planning and teaching.
- Identify and monitor pupils' needs through ongoing observation, assessment, screening and review.
- Create and maintain a positive, inclusive and supportive classroom environment where all children can learn, participate and achieve success.
- Plan and deliver high-quality, differentiated teaching that meets the diverse needs of learners.
- Work collaboratively with the SENCo, colleagues, classroom assistants, parents and external professionals, where appropriate, to support pupils effectively.
- Contribute to the development, implementation, monitoring and review of Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and other agreed support plans.
- Monitor pupil progress and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching approaches, interventions and support strategies.
- Ensure that children are encouraged to participate in discussions about their learning and that their views are considered when planning support.
- Effectively deploy classroom assistants and other support staff as part of the learning team to maximise pupil engagement, independence and achievement.
- Maintain appropriate records relating to pupil progress, interventions and outcomes.

Role of SEN Support Staff / Classroom Assistants

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, SEN Support Staff and Classroom Assistants play an important role in supporting the learning, participation and wellbeing of pupils. They work as valued members of the school team under the direction of the class teacher and contribute significantly to the inclusive ethos of the school.

SEN Support Staff and Classroom Assistants will:

- Work under the guidance and direction of the class teacher and in collaboration with the SENCo, where appropriate.
- Contribute to planning discussions and support the implementation of agreed learning activities, interventions and support programmes.
- Build positive relationships with pupils and recognise and promote their strengths, interests and achievements.
- Provide practical, academic, social and emotional support to help pupils access learning and participate fully in school life.

- Encourage the development of independence, confidence and self-esteem while providing appropriate levels of support.
- Listen to and support pupils, helping them to express their views, feelings and needs.
- Reinforce expectations, routines and boundaries in a fair, consistent and supportive manner.
- Observe and record information that contributes to the monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress and wellbeing.
- Attend relevant meetings and contribute information to reviews and planning processes as required.
- Work collaboratively with teachers and other professionals to support agreed outcomes for pupils.
- Share effective practice and engage in ongoing professional learning to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- Support the school's commitment to inclusion by promoting participation, respect and positive relationships for all children.

Together, teachers and support staff contribute to creating a nurturing, inclusive and child-centred learning environment in which every pupil is supported to reach their full potential.

Pupil Voice and Participation

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, we recognise that children should be active participants in their own learning and development. We are committed to listening to, respecting and valuing the views of pupils and, where appropriate, involving them in decisions about their education and support. We seek to understand each child's strengths, interests, aspirations and any barriers they may experience in learning, taking account of their age, maturity and individual circumstances.

As far as is reasonably practicable, children will be encouraged and supported to:

- Share their views about their learning experiences, strengths and areas where they may need additional support.
- Contribute to discussions about targets, strategies and support arrangements that affect their learning and wellbeing.
- Participate in the development and review of Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and other support plans, where appropriate.
- Contribute to review meetings, transition planning and other decisions affecting their educational journey.
- Reflect on their progress and identify strategies that help them learn effectively.
- Express their wishes, feelings and aspirations in a way that is meaningful and accessible to them.

We believe that children are more likely to achieve positive outcomes when they understand their learning goals, feel listened to and are empowered to contribute to decisions about their education. Seeking and responding to pupil voice is therefore an important aspect of our inclusive, child-centred approach to SEN provision.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, we recognise that parents and carers are their child's first and most important educators. Positive partnerships between home and school are essential in promoting children's learning, wellbeing and achievement. We are committed to developing relationships with parents that are based on mutual respect, trust, openness and effective communication.

Parents and carers have unique knowledge of their child and play a vital role in helping the school understand their child's strengths, needs, interests and aspirations. We value their views and encourage their active involvement in all aspects of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) process.

The school will:

- Work collaboratively with parents and carers when concerns about a child's progress or development arise.
- Inform parents when a child is being considered for inclusion on the SEN Register or when there are significant changes to the child's level of support.
- Ensure that parents are involved in planning, reviewing and evaluating support for their child.
- Share relevant information about progress, interventions and outcomes in a timely and accessible manner.
- Seek parental views when developing, implementing and reviewing Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and other support arrangements.
- Provide opportunities for parents to meet with teachers, the SENCo and other relevant staff to discuss their child's needs and progress.
- Liaise with parents and carers when working with external services or agencies involved in supporting their child.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Share relevant information about their child's strengths, needs, health, development and wellbeing.
- Inform the school of any significant changes in circumstances that may affect their child's learning or support needs.
- Attend meetings and review discussions relating to their child's progress and provision.
- Contribute to the setting and review of targets and outcomes.
- Support agreed strategies and learning targets at home, where appropriate.
- Work in partnership with school staff to promote positive outcomes for their child.

Through strong collaboration between pupils, parents, staff and external agencies, Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna aims to ensure that every child receives the support, encouragement and opportunities they need to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

Admissions

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, we are committed to providing an inclusive educational environment in which all children are welcomed, valued and supported to achieve their potential. Our admissions arrangements for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are consistent with the school's admissions criteria and reflect our commitment to equality, inclusion and participation.

We recognise the right of children with SEN and/or disabilities to be educated alongside their peers in mainstream schools whenever appropriate and in accordance with current legislation. Children with SEN and/or disabilities are considered for admission on the same basis as all other applicants, while taking account of any additional support or reasonable adjustments that may be required to enable them to access learning and participate fully in school life.

Where a child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, placement decisions are made by the Education Authority (EA). In considering such placements, the EA will take account of the wishes of parents/carers, the needs of the child, the efficient education of other pupils and the effective use of available resources.

The school works closely with parents, pre-school settings, the Education Authority and other relevant agencies to ensure appropriate transition arrangements are in place and that any necessary support is identified at the earliest opportunity.

Accessibility

Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna is committed to ensuring that pupils with disabilities are able to access and participate fully in all aspects of school life. In line with statutory requirements, the school maintains an Accessibility Plan which is reviewed regularly and is available through the school.

The aims of the Accessibility Plan are to:

- Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate fully in the curriculum and all aspects of school life, including educational visits, extra-curricular activities, cultural events and wider learning opportunities.
- Improve the physical environment of the school, where appropriate, to enhance access to education and associated services for pupils, parents, staff and visitors with disabilities.
- Improve the accessibility of information provided by the school, ensuring that information can be made available in formats that meet individual needs and preferences.

Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna strives to identify and remove barriers to participation and works proactively to make reasonable adjustments where required. The school seeks to ensure that:

- Pupils with disabilities can access learning opportunities alongside their peers wherever possible.
- Appropriate arrangements are made to support pupils' individual medical, physical, sensory, communication and learning needs.

- The learning environment is inclusive, safe and accessible.
- Educational resources, teaching approaches and communication methods are adapted where necessary to support participation and achievement.
- Information can be provided in alternative formats upon request, where reasonably practicable.
- Accessibility considerations are incorporated into school development planning and ongoing improvement processes.

Through careful planning, partnership with parents and collaboration with relevant agencies, the school aims to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in the curriculum, school activities and the wider life of the school community.

Special Facilities, Resources and Accommodation

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, we are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment where all children can access high-quality education and appropriate support to enable them to achieve their full potential. The school has invested significantly in additional facilities, staffing, resources and accommodation to meet the diverse needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Smaller Class Sizes

The school operates with intentionally smaller class sizes than those typically found in mainstream settings. This enables teachers to provide more personalised instruction, increased monitoring of progress, and greater opportunities for individual support and differentiation within the classroom.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

The school employs a dedicated SENCo who has no classroom teaching commitment. This allows the SENCo to focus fully on coordinating SEN provision, supporting staff, liaising with parents and external agencies, monitoring pupil progress, overseeing intervention programmes, and ensuring the effective implementation of Individual Education Plans and SEN support processes.

Seomra Tacaíochta (Support Room)

The school has a dedicated Seomra Tacaíochta (Support Room) which provides a quiet and supportive environment for individual and small-group teaching. The room is used for targeted interventions, assessment activities, pastoral support, and personalised learning programmes.

An Seomra Dearg (Dedicated Interventions Classroom)

A dedicated interventions classroom, An Seomra Dearg, is available exclusively for the delivery of literacy, numeracy and learning support programmes. This space allows pupils to access focused intervention programmes in a calm and purposeful environment with minimal distractions.

Specialist Intervention Staff

The school provides additional specialist staffing to support pupils with identified learning needs:

- A **Classroom Assistant trained** in literacy and numeracy interventions who works exclusively with individual pupils delivering targeted intervention programmes.
- A **Special Educational Needs Teacher** trained in literacy and numeracy interventions who provides individualised support and specialist teaching programmes for pupils requiring additional intervention.

These staff members work closely with class teachers and the SENCo to ensure interventions are tailored to pupils' identified needs and that progress is regularly monitored and evaluated.

Áischeantar (Resource Area)

The school maintains an Áischeantar (Resource Area) which provides a flexible space for:

- Individual and small-group interventions;
- Targeted learning support;
- Emotional regulation activities;
- Calm and reflective time for older pupils;
- Reintegration support following periods of emotional dysregulation or anxiety.

This area promotes pupils' wellbeing while enabling them to remain engaged with learning.

Sensory Provision

The Naíscoil benefits from a dedicated Sensory Room, providing a carefully designed environment to support children who may experience sensory processing, communication, emotional regulation or developmental difficulties. The sensory room is used to help children develop self-regulation skills, reduce anxiety, improve concentration and support emotional wellbeing.

Additional Resources and Funding

The Board of Governors and school leadership team prioritise the allocation of resources and budgetary provision to support pupils with SEN. This includes:

- Specialist teaching and intervention resources;
- Assessment and screening materials;
- Sensory and therapeutic equipment;
- Professional learning and training for staff;

- Additional staffing to deliver targeted interventions and support programmes.

Through these facilities, resources and accommodations, Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna seeks to ensure that every pupil is supported appropriately and has equitable opportunities to participate fully in school life, achieve success and develop independence.

Annual Report

The Board of Governors report annually on all aspects of SEN provision in school. The SEN section in the Annual Report contains information on: the number of statemented pupils; pupils that received provision from the EA Local Impact Team (LIT), EA Support Services or Health and Social Care Trust; and those that accessed school-delivered special educational provision.

Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs

> *It is vitally important that children with SEN are identified as early as possible and that an awareness of their possible difficulties is clearly communicated between all the professionals involved with their development.*
>
> (Code of Practice 1998, paragraph 2.14)

> *Children with SEN should be identified as early as possible and assessed as quickly as is consistent with thoroughness.*
>
> (Supplementary Guide of the Code of Practice paragraph 5.12 - page 44)

In Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna, the following may be used to identify pupils' needs:

- information from transferring school;
- teacher observation;
- standardised tests;
- diagnostic assessments;
- whole school assessment (e.g.: CAT/PTE/PTM);
- key stage assessments;
- class tests/school examinations;
- personal learning plans/individual education plans;
- care plans;
- personal education plans for children who are looked after;
- statements of special educational need;
- annual reviews;
- professional reports;
- parental contributions;
- pupil contributions;

The Management of Special Educational Needs

The Three Stages of Special Educational Provision

At Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, we are committed to identifying and supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) as early as possible. We follow the graduated approach outlined within the Northern Ireland Code of Practice, ensuring that support is tailored to each child's individual strengths, needs and learning profile.

Our approach is child-centred, inclusive and collaborative, involving pupils, parents/carers, teachers, the SENCo and, where appropriate, external agencies. The level of support provided is determined by the nature and complexity of the pupil's needs and is reviewed regularly to ensure progress is being made.

Stage 1: School-Based SEN Support

Most pupils with SEN will have their needs met effectively at Stage 1 through high-quality classroom teaching and targeted school-based interventions.

At this stage:

- The school identifies and assesses the pupil's additional needs.
- A Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is developed in consultation with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil.
- Support is delivered by class teachers, the SENCo and intervention staff.
- Reasonable adjustments, differentiated teaching approaches and targeted support programmes are implemented.
- Pupils may access additional support through the Seomra Tacaíochta, Áischeantar, An Seomra Dearg, sensory provision or individual intervention programmes.
- Progress is monitored regularly and support is reviewed and amended as necessary.

Within our school, many pupils at Stage 1 benefit from specialised literacy and numeracy interventions delivered by our trained intervention teacher and intervention classroom assistant, classroom-based assistants, alongside support within their mainstream classroom.

The responsibility for planning, delivering and monitoring provision at Stage 1 rests with the school.

Where a pupil continues to experience significant difficulties despite targeted interventions and a sustained graduated response, the school may seek additional advice and involvement from external services.

Stage 2: School and External Agency Support

A small number of pupils may require support beyond that available within the school's own resources. In these circumstances, external specialist services may become involved.

At this stage:

- A current **PLP** remains in place and is reviewed regularly.
- The school continues to deliver SEN provision while working closely with external professionals.
- Support may be provided through services such as:
    - EA SEN Support Services;
    - RISE NI;
    - Educational Psychology;
    - Speech and Language Therapy;
    - Occupational Therapy;
    - Physiotherapy;
    - Health and Social Care Trust services; or
    - Other specialist agencies.

External professionals may provide:

- Advice on teaching strategies and interventions;
- Specialist assessments;
- Staff training;
- Additional resources;
- Recommendations for reasonable adjustments and support programmes.

The SENCo coordinates communication between parents, school staff and external agencies to ensure recommendations are implemented effectively and reviewed regularly.

If a pupil continues to experience significant barriers to learning despite sustained intervention and specialist support, the school, in consultation with parents and external professionals, may consider requesting a Statutory Assessment from the Education Authority.

The pupil remains at Stage 2 throughout this process until a decision is reached regarding a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Stage 3: Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

Stage 3 applies to pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs issued by the Education Authority.

At this stage:

- Provision is delivered in accordance with the special educational provision specified within the Statement.
- The school works closely with the Education Authority, parents/carers and any relevant Health and Social Care professionals.
- A PLP is maintained and reflects the objectives, provision and outcomes identified within the Statement.
- Teaching approaches, interventions, support arrangements and reasonable adjustments are tailored to meet the pupil's identified needs.
- Progress is monitored continuously and reviewed formally through the annual review process.

Pupils at Stage 3 may access a range of supports available within the school, including:

- Individualised intervention programmes;
- Support from the SENCo;
- Access to the Seomra Tacaíochta and Áischeantar;
- Sensory provision where appropriate;
- Targeted literacy and numeracy interventions;
- Additional adult support where specified.

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils with a Statement are fully included in the academic, social and cultural life of Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna, with adjustments as necessary, and are supported to achieve their full potential.

Exceptional Cases

While the graduated approach generally progresses from Stage 1 to Stage 3, there may be exceptional circumstances where a pupil presents with significant, complex or emerging needs that require immediate involvement from external services or consideration of a higher stage of provision.

In such circumstances, the school will work closely with parents/carers, relevant professionals and the Education Authority to ensure that appropriate support is put in place as quickly as possible.

At all stages, Gaelscoil agus Naíscoil na Móna is committed to working in partnership with families to ensure that every child receives the support, encouragement and opportunities necessary to learn, thrive and participate fully in school life.

The Annual Review

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 monitoring of the child's progress. The Annual Review procedure is designed to:

- gauge the child’s progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the Statement;
- review the special provision made for the child, including placement; and
- consider the appropriateness of maintaining the statement of special educational needs.

The Annual Review is carried out by the school on behalf of the EA.

The Review will take place in school and is chaired by the principal (or another person as delegated by the principal).

Relevant forms and the EA's guidance for this process are available by contacting Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SARS) of the school's local EA office or they can be downloaded from the EA website.

Record Keeping

The SENCo keeps the following records in school:

- SEN Register;
- records of concern;
- Personal Learning Plans/PLP or Individual Education Plans reviews;
- Statements/Annual Reviews/transition plans;
- assessment results/data;
- individual pupil files;
- record of liaison/meetings with staff from the Education Authority's SEN Support Services/Health and Social Care Trust

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

It is the responsibility of the SENCo (LSC) to ensure that the progress of pupils on the SEN register is monitored. This may be achieved by considering that:

- Personal Learning Plans are monitored and reviewed for quality, progression, and appropriateness through meeting with teachers on a regular basis;
- evidence is collated to demonstrate whether the pupil is making progress; and
- information gathered is used in future planning for intervention and to inform movement either up or down through the stages of the Code of Practice, adhering to a graduated response.

Professional Development

The principal in consultation with the SENCo (LSC) oversees the professional development of all staff in his/her school. It is essential that all staff are kept-up-to date with SEN developments to provide effective teaching and support for pupils.

Following attendance at relevant internal or external education and training programmes, staff members are encouraged to disseminate the information provided to build the capacity of their colleagues.

The SENCo (LSC) keeps a record of all training attended by or delivered to staff in relation to SEN.

Partnership working

In Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna, we work with the EA Local Impact Team (LIT), where appropriate, to receive training and guidance in a multi-disciplinary capacity to support the school

and parents in meeting the needs of children with special educational and medical needs. Other examples of EA Services may include:

- Education Psychology Service;
- Sensory Service;
- SEND Implementation and Advice Service; or
- Statutory Advice and Review Service (SARS).

Other Support Services

- RISE NI;
- Barnardo's;
- NSPCC;
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- Child Development Clinic (CDC);
- Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS);
- FSCN IME outreach teacher

Complaints

All complaints regarding SEN in your school will be dealt with in line with school's existing complaints procedures.

If you have any queries in relation to special educational needs of a child with a Statement or who is currently being assessed for a statement of special educational needs, you can contact your local EA Office. Please contact your SEN Link Officer in the first instance. Contact details should be on the EA documentation issued to you alongside your child's Statement.

Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS)

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) provides an independent, confidential forum to resolve or reduce the disagreement, in relation to special educational provision, between parents and school/Boards of Governors or the EA for pupils who are on the Code of Practice where previous attempts to do so have been unsuccessful.

Parents can contact the service which is provided by Global Mediation.

Involvement with DARS will not affect the right to appeal to the Special Education Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) considers parents' right to appeal against the decisions made by the Education Authority about their child's special educational needs whenever an agreement cannot be reached.

This service also addresses claims of disability discrimination in school.

Monitoring and evaluating the SEN Policy

The SEN policy will be reviewed annually. It will be amended as appropriate in light of changes in legislation or practice following targeted consultation with all staff members, parents, and external agencies. This policy will be brought to the Board of Governors for final approval.

Policy Date: _ _/_ _/_ _ _ _

Signature of Principal:……..

Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors: ……

Review Date: 01/_09/2027 or following significant change