

Gateshead Local Authority

Inclusion Policy for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

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Introduction

Gateshead Council has based its policy for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) on the belief that all children, whatever their abilities, share common needs as learners and they should have access to a curriculum that responds to their individual needs.

The Council recognises that most children with identified SEND can, and should be, taught in mainstream schools but also recognises that some children may have needs which are exceptional and that arrangements may need to be made to ensure they reach their potential.

The Council will seek to ensure that its policies, procedures, advice, guidance and resources support a policy of inclusion where this best meets the needs of the child. This will include enabling Gateshead's special schools to increase the range of needs they are able to meet successfully and to contribute to the development of good practice in mainstream schools and settings. Enabling Inclusion will be the key goal in the SEND Strategy.

Aims

Gateshead Council aims to provide the highest quality of education for all young people and seeks to offer a continuum of provision which will enable:

- pupils' needs to be met in as inclusive a setting as possible;
- pupils to have access to the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to which they are entitled;
- high expectations to be set for all pupils including those with SEND;
- a focus on the participation of children and young people and parents in decision making at individual and strategic levels
- focus on high aspirations and improving outcomes for children and young people.

Continuum of Provision

The continuum of provision available within Gateshead Council includes:

- support from within the delegated resources of mainstream schools;
- provision of targeted support from centrally held resources for pre-school children;
- placement in additionally resourced provision in a mainstream school
- placement in a special school maintained by the Council.
- in exceptional circumstances, in order to meet a child's needs satisfactorily, the continuum may be extended to include:
 - placement at a special school maintained by another Council;
 - placement at a non-maintained or independent special school.

Definitions

The Council uses the terms “**special educational needs**”, “**special educational provision**” and “**learning difficulties**” in ways defined by the Children and Families Act 2014. The term “**disability**” is linked but distinct and is used as defined in the the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

The Council recognises that special educational needs can arise when the experience, skills, knowledge and abilities a child brings to school or educational setting require adjustment in any or all of the following:

- The physical environment;
- The social environment;
- The curriculum and how it is delivered;
- The nature and level of additional support available to the pupil, family, school or educational setting.

An **individual need** becomes a **special educational need** when a child requires different or exceptional provision from that which is generally available. The LEA is committed to increasing the range of what is generally available to ensure individual needs do not become special educational needs.

Exceptionally able or gifted children and those for whom **English is an additional language** are excluded from this definition, unless they have an identified special educational need.

The Council is mindful of the Equality Act 2010 which sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post 16 institutions and others have towards disabled children and young people.

Key Principles

- The special educational needs of pupils should normally be met in mainstream schools or settings unless it is necessary for special educational provision to be made for them.
- If a child’s parent or young person with an Education, Health and Care Plan makes a request for a particular nursery, school or post-16 institution, then the local authority must agree with this request unless:
 - it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEND of the child or young person, or
 - the attendance of the child would be incompatible with the efficient education of others or efficient use of resources.
- **In addition:**
 - All pupils should have access to a curriculum and teaching and learning strategies which maximise achievement.
 - The views of children and young people should always be sought and taken into account.
 - Opportunities should be taken to develop the role of parents in supporting their child’s education.
 - Children’s special educational needs should be identified as early as possible.

- Provision to meet children's special educational needs should ensure value for money and equality of opportunity.
- Effective partnerships should be established with key partners, including Social Services and Health, to develop policies and practices that are co-ordinated and best meet the needs of children, young people, parents and carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Council

The LEA/School Relations Code of Practice 2001 sets out guidance on the relationships between Councils, Governing Bodies and schools in seeking to ensure success for all children.

In Gateshead, the Council will provide leadership, challenge and support in order to:

- ensure the development of an inclusive educational system;
- ensure statutory frameworks are implemented efficiently;
- develop the knowledge and skills of all staff working with pupils with SEN to ensure children achieve their potential;
- ensure there is close co-operation between relevant external agencies and a multi-agency approach to meeting the needs of pupils with SEN;
- ensure arrangements for SEN are kept under review and publish information on how the Council is meeting its obligations under the SEN and Disability Regulations 2014;
- provide advice and guidance to schools to support the implementation of the SEND Code of Practice and SEND Regulations 2014;
- publish plans, strategies and targets in relation to the identification, monitoring, assessment and support for pupils with SEND.

Role of Schools

The vast majority of pupils identified as having SEND will be educated in mainstream schools. Responsibilities towards pupils with SEND are highlighted in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. The Council will work in partnership with schools to ensure these responsibilities are met.

Gateshead Council recognises the important part special schools play in the development of an inclusive education system and strives to support the development of strong partnerships between special schools, mainstream schools and other resourced provisions. The LEA will work closely with special schools to ensure specialist provisions can be offered to mainstream schools.

Governing Bodies of mainstream and special schools will need to:

- ensure that responsibility for meeting the needs of all children, including those with SEND, is shared by all in the school;
- ensure they are clear about their arrangements for co-ordinating special educational provision for those with and without Education, Health and Care Plans within school;
- determine the school's SEND policy and establish appropriate staffing and funding arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with SEND;
- promote high standards for pupils with SEND in line with the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- have regard to the SEND Code of Practice;

- ensure the curriculum addresses the needs of pupils with SEND;
- demonstrate that the funding, equipment and resources allocated for SEND are deployed effectively.

Role of Early Years Settings

- to develop, review and report on their SEND policy;
- to understand that the accountability for meeting the needs of all children, including those with SEND, is shared by all in the setting;
- to ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the early identification and assessment of individual needs.

Role of Support Services

- to enable schools to meet a wide range of special educational needs by providing advice, training and support, and, where appropriate targeted provision;
- to enable the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities towards children and young people with SEND, in conjunction with schools;
- to work closely with schools, parents, carers and other support services to ensure that high quality provision and resources are allocated equitably and efficiently;
- to contribute to the Council's Continual Professional Development Programme;
- to support the Council's procedures for monitoring processes for referrals, provision and pupil progress.

Arrangements for Identification and Assessment

The Council will seek to fulfil its duty to keep its procedures for assessing and meeting special educational needs under review and will ensure:

- a child's needs are identified as early as possible and interventions are reviewed regularly;
- assessment and intervention is based on partnership with those who have special educational needs and disabilities, together with their parents and carers;
- assessment and provision empowers young people, taking their views into account in order that they can make a contribution to decision-making;
- assessment and intervention involving multiple agencies should be co-ordinated rather than separately planned and delivered.

Decisions about placement will be made in a number of ways but always with the oversight of the SEND Panel. Decisions about the strategic development of SEN in Gateshead will be made in the SEND Strategy Group which meets on a termly basis to review all aspects of SEND provision.

SEN Policies in Early Years Settings and Schools

The LEA will seek to support all early years settings and schools with the implementation of an SEN policy which takes account of statutory requirements in the interests of ensuring co-ordinated SEN provision within the Borough as a whole. The LA will also ensure Pupil Referral Units have an appropriate SEN policy.

Arrangements for Co-ordination and Collaboration with Other Local Authorities

Pupils from Gateshead attend special school and units in other local authorities and children from other areas attend schools in Gateshead. Gateshead Council is committed to developing effective partnerships with other local authorities to ensure the needs of pupils

with SEND are met. Gateshead Council will seek to ensure all schools are supported in ensuring that the following are in place.

- Open and effective communication.
- Clear and agreed procedures.
- Arrangements for early review of placements should any difficulties arise.

Sharing Good Practice

Gateshead Council values the opportunity to celebrate success and will continue to support schools and settings with the identification and sharing of good practice. The Council seeks to build on and improve communication with and between schools and will maintain and develop an effective programme of continual professional development to ensure SEND issues and initiatives are discussed fully.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Council will continue to update and develop its procedures for monitoring the implementation of the SEND policy and evaluating its impact on provision for pupils with SEND.

The Council ensures the policy is subject to a regular cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review with reference to the following success criteria:

- an improvement in the quality of SEND policies as judged through systematic monitoring of a sample submitted to the Council;
- a year on year improvement in the quality of Support Plans as judged by a random sample submitted to the Council;
- significant progress towards ensuring statutory assessments are completed within prescribed time-scales;
- annual growth in the numbers of teachers and support staff completing relevant training with reference to the priorities of the Education Development Plan;
- an improvement in the quality of procedures for setting targets for pupils with SEND