

# Belfast Model School for Girls



*Achievement for All*

## Special Needs Policy

**Agreed by Board of Governors: November 2006**

**To be reviewed: June '08**

### Rationale

In the Belfast Model School for Girls the term educational support is seen in its widest context. Our aim is to cater for the individual needs of every pupil within the caring yet challenging community of the school.

We believe that all pupils have the same entitlement to the full range of the school curriculum. However we recognise the need for specialised provision to ensure access to all aspects of the curriculum for all pupils without suffering disadvantages as a consequence of academic, social, physical or emotional difficulties.

### Purposes

1. To give all pupils the opportunity to develop as fully as possible their abilities, aptitudes and interests by providing additional support for those who are disadvantaged.
2. To develop self esteem and confidence in those pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties for whatever reason.
3. To ensure that those pupils with learning difficulties gain access to the required 'broad and balanced' curriculum.
4. To enable staff to meet identified pupil needs through appropriate support and in-service training.

### Guidelines

Special Needs provision in school pays due regard to the recommendations of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of pupils with Special Educational Needs and the SENDO 2005. All staff have received training on the implications of the SENDO legislation and a whole school inclusion policy will be written in Autumn 2006.

Pupils with special educational needs are taught in mainstream classes where the curriculum and teaching methods are tailored to meet their needs. Each subject department has a representative on the Special Needs Committee who co-ordinates special needs provision within their subject area and liaises with the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

Team-teaching, support-teaching and peer-tutoring are examples of the strategies used in school to enable pupils with learning difficulties to have access to the curriculum. Two Special Needs Classroom Assistants give support in-class to pupils in the Key Stage 3 Special Needs classes during practical subjects. Additional classroom assistants and a general assistant are employed to support individual statemented pupils.

Those pupils experiencing most difficulty are withdrawn to attend the Educational Support Unit for tutorials where programmes of support are drawn up to meet their needs. Teaching staff, classroom assistants and outside agencies work with these pupils individually or in small groups. These pupils are identified as being at Stage 2 of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Needs.

Pupils who are identified as being at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs receive regular support from Park Outreach Support or Secondary Pupil Support Service. A small number of pupils receive support from the Peripatetic Service for Pupils with Hearing or Sight difficulties.

Provision for statemented pupils who are Stage 5 of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Needs is co-ordinated by the SENCO in liaison with the educational psychologist. This provision is formally reviewed on an annual basis.

Procedures and practices for the Educational Support Unit are detailed in the Special Educational Needs Department Policy Handbook.

### **Access to Assessments**

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to assessment. Provision is made for any candidate who needs special arrangements in order to have equality of assessment opportunity. Such provision includes the following:

- The opportunity to take assessments privately under the supervision of a teacher or other qualified member of staff
- Extra time
- The assistance of a reader
- The assistance of a scribe/amanuensis
- The facility to take an exam outside the school under special and controlled circumstances
- Use of bi-lingual dictionaries
- Availability of rest breaks
- Use of assistive technology

Individual needs and circumstances are assessed and responded to sensitively when ensuring that all candidates have equal access to assessment.

***These policy guidelines are translated into action through other policies and procedures, for example:***

*Curriculum Policy*  
*Assessment Policy*  
*Examinations Policy*

*Pastoral Care Policy*  
*Inclusion Policy*