

Subject:
**PUBLICATION OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS (SEN) POLICY STATEMENT**

DE Circular Number: 2025/08

Date of Issue: 28 August 2025

Target Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors (BoG)
- Education Authority (EA);
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS);
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG);
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE);
- Controlled Schools' Support Council; (CSSC);
- Catholic Schools Trustee Service
- Governing Bodies Association
- Transferors Representatives' Council
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA);
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI);
- Teaching Unions
- EOTAS Centres
- Pre-school education settings
- Department of Health (DoH), Public Health Agency (PHA) and Local Health & Social Care (HSC) Trusts; and
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Summary of Contents:

This circular, issued by the Department of Education, sets out to clarify the current policy and legislative position on supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs / Disability in Northern Ireland and the roles and responsibilities of the Department, the Education Authority (EA), schools Health authorities and others.

Governor Awareness:
Essential

Status of Contents:
For information and action by
schools

Related Documents:
[SEN Reform Agenda and Delivery Plan](#)
[SEN Reform Outcomes Framework](#)
[Code of Practice on the Identification & Assessment of SEN \(1998\)](#)
[Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification & Assessment of SEN \(2005\)](#)

Superseded Documents:
N/A

Expiry Date: N/A

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the SEN Reform Agenda and five-year Delivery Plan published in February 2025¹, the SEN Reform Outcomes Framework published in June 2025, the Code of Practice on the Identification & Assessment of SEN (1998) and the Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification & Assessment of SEN (2005).

Enquiries:

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¹ [SEN Reform Agenda | Department of Education](#)

Introduction

1. The End to End (E2E) Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN), concluded by the Department of Education (DE) in October 2024, determined a key action to provide clarity on SEN legislation and policy.
2. The department has not previously articulated its policy for children and young people with SEN/Disability (SEN/D), rather relying on the legislation and the accompanying [Code of practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs](#) (1998), including the [Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification & Assessment of SEN \(2005\)](#).
3. The [SEN Reform Agenda and five year Delivery Plan](#), published in February 2025, sets out the actions necessary to reform the education system for children with SEN and to deliver on the [Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government \(PfG\) 2024-2027](#) priority for 'Better Support for children and young people with SEN'. One of the enabling actions within the SEN Reform Delivery Plan is the publication and application of a SEN Policy Statement.
4. Our overarching policy aim is for children and young people with SEN to benefit from greater inclusion and receive the **Right Support**, from the **Right People**, at the **Right Time** and in the **Right Place**.
5. This SEN Policy Statement does not signify a new policy direction but responds to the recommendations from SEN scrutiny reports (including the E2E Review of SEN) that call for clarity on policy and legislation. It sets out clearly the existing SEN policy and provides clarity on the department's SEN policy position, the legislation that underpins it and outlines the key players their roles and responsibilities.

6. A copy of the SEN Policy Statement is attached and can also be found at this link: [SEN Policy Statement Aug 2025 0.pdf](#)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Scallion'.

JANIS SCALLON

Director of SEN Reform & Inclusion Development

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) REFORM POLICY STATEMENT



SEN Policy Statement
Aug 2025.pdf