

2013

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

Antigua and Barbuda

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Draft Special Educational Needs Policy for Antigua and Barbuda

Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children have special educational needs if they have a *learning difficulty or challenge with using the regular school plants, or difficulty or challenges learning with the regular school curriculum* that calls for *special educational provision* to be made for them through inclusive learning.

1.0 Children have a *learning challenges* if they:

- Have a significant need for accommodation and adaptation to learn than the majority of children of the same age.
- Have a disability that challenge the access and use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in primary and secondary schools provided by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definitions above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.

1.1 Children must not be regarded as having a learning challenge solely because The first language (L1 or native language) or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

For children of two or over, educational provision is that, which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the Ministry of Education of Antigua and Barbuda, other than special schools, in the nation.

1.2 This SEN policy details how the Ministry of Education (MOE) will do its best to ensure that the necessary provisions are made for ALL children to benefit from education through **INCLUSION**, and their needs are made known, and training will be facilitated, to all who are likely to teach them. The MOE will use its best endeavours to facilitate inclusive learning, and ensure that teachers in the schools are able to identify and provide for those pupils who have special educational needs to allow pupils with special educational needs join in the activities of the schools together with pupils who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the children receiving the special educational provision and the efficient education of the pupils with whom they are educated.

1.3 The schools will have regard to the **Special Educational Needs Code of Practice** when carrying out its duties toward all pupils with special educational needs and ensure that parents are notified of a decision by the school that SEN provision is being made for their children. Partnership with parents plays a key role in enabling children and young people with SEN to achieve their potential as they have rights as outlined under the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child and the rights of persons with disabilities. The MOE recognizes that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of their children's needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents of children with special educational needs will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valued role in their children's education.

1.4 Children and young people with special educational needs often have a unique knowledge of their own needs and their views about what sort of help they would like, to help them make the most of their education will be ascertained. They will be encouraged and supported to participate in all the decision-making

processes and contribute to the assessment of their needs, the review and transition processes.

2.0 Identification, Assessment and Provision

Provision for children with special educational needs is a matter for the government of Antigua and Barbuda as a whole. In addition to the MOE, the Education Officer for Special Needs, the Coordinator of Special Needs, schools' Principals, all other members of staff who has important day-to-day responsibilities.

2.1 *All teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs.*

Teaching such children is therefore a whole school responsibility.

At the heart of the work of every primary school class is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and assessing which takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of children. The majority of children will learn and progress within these arrangements. Those children whose overall attainments or attainment in specific subjects fall significantly outside the expected range may have special educational needs.

3.0 Provision

The EO for Special Needs will aim to facilitate the identification, and assessment each child's current levels of attainment on entry in order to ensure that they build upon the pattern of learning and experience already established during the child's pre-school years. If the children already have an identified special educational need, this information may be transferred through *our centre to the schools so that they can be supported with an Individualised Education Plans (IEP)* and appropriate curriculums, and the children's class teachers will use this information to:

- . provide starting points for their daily lesson plans .
- identify and focus attention on action to support the children within the class
- use the assessment processes to identify any learning challenges
- . identify, support, modify and accommodate where necessary to support maximum potential for learning.
- . use alternative forms of assessments for children who cannot be evaluated using traditional methods.
- ensure ongoing observation and assessment provide regular feedback about the children's achievements and experiences to form the basis for planning the next steps of the children's learning
- involve parents in implementing a joint learning approach at home.

3.1 The identification and assessment of the special educational needs of children whose first language is not English, requires particular care. Where there is uncertainty about an individual child teachers will look carefully at all aspects of a child's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of the language that is used there or arise from special educational needs.

3.2 In order to help children who have special educational needs, the MOE will adopt a graduated response that recognises there is a continuum of special educational needs and brings increasing specialist expertise to bear on the challenges that a children may be experiencing to participate in education. The MOE will record the steps taken to meet the needs of individual children. The EO-SEN will have responsibility for ensuring that the records are kept and available as needed. If schools refer a child for a statutory assessment, they should provide the MOE with a record of their work with the child including the arrangements they have already made.

4.0 The role of the EO-SEN in mainstream primary schools

The EO-SEN responsibilities may include:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the schools in adhering to the SEN policy
- assisting principals and teachers with moving their schools towards **inclusive learning**
- training all school employees in accommodating different learning needs.
- coordinating provision for children with special educational needs
- liaising with and advising, principals and teachers
- managing learning support assistants
- overseeing the records of all children with special educational needs
- liaising with parents of children with special educational needs
- facilitating the in-service training of staff
- liaising with external agencies including the Ministry of Health, Wealfare Department, Probation Department, Community Centres, Community Clinics etc to help in identifying, and obtaining support for special needs children (psychology services, health and social services, and voluntary bodies, family support, and therapeutic services).

5.0 Monitoring children's progress

The MOE's system for observing and assessing the progress of individual children will provide information about areas where a child has special needs, satisfactorily. Under these circumstances, teachers may need to consult the EO-SEN to consider what else might be done. This review may lead to the conclusion that the pupil requires help over and above that which is normally available within the particular class or subject. The key test of the need for action is evidence that current rates of progress are inadequate. Adequate progress can be defined in a number of ways. It might be progress which:

- closes the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- prevents the attainment gap growing wider
- is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers
- matches or betters the child's previous rate of progress
- ensures access to the full curriculum
- demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social, interpersonal or personal skills
- demonstrates improvements in the child's behaviour.

6.0 School Action

When a class teacher or any educator identifies a child with special educational needs, the class teacher will provide interventions that are additional to from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum. This will be called ***School Action***. The triggers for intervention through *School Action* will be concern, underpinned by evidence, about a child who despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities makes

- little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in a child's identified area of weakness
- shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or numeracy skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas
- presents persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the school
- has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum.

6.1 In some cases outside professionals from health or social services may already be involved with the child. Where these professionals have not already been working with the MOE, the EO-SEN may contact them if the parents agree. The EO-SEN will support the further assessment of the child, assisting in planning future support for them in discussion with coordinator, principals, teachers and parents and monitoring the actions taken. The child's class teacher will remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis and for planning and delivering an IEP. Parents will always be consulted and kept informed of the action taken to help the child, and of the outcome of this action.

7.0 Nature of intervention

The EO-SEN and the child's class teacher will decide on the action needed to help the child to progress in the light of their earlier assessment. This may include

- different learning materials or special equipment
- some group or individual support;
- extra adult time to devise the nature of the planned intervention and to monitor its effectiveness;
- staff development and training to introduce more effective strategies.
- access to MOE support services for one-off or occasional advice on strategies or equipment
- analyse points of learning in the standard curriculum and how they can be developed functionally to support the learning needs of children

8.0 Individual Education Plans

Strategies employed to enable the child to progress will be recorded within an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP will include information about:

- the short-term targets set for the child
- the teaching strategies to be used
- the provision to be put in place
- when the plan is to be reviewed
- outcomes (to be recorded when IEP is reviewed).

8.1 The IEP will cover that which is additional to, or different from, the differentiated curriculum and will focus upon three or four individual targets that match the child's needs and have been discussed with the child and the parents. The IEP will be reviewed each school term and parents' views on their child's progress will be sought. Wherever possible, the child will also take part in the review process and be involved in setting the targets.

9.0 School Action Plan

The EO-SEN will request additional support from external services once it is needed in order to support a child's specific condition. This is done in consultation with parents, at a review of the child's IEP.

9.1 A *School Action Plan* will include the identification of the child's challenges to work within normal range of peers and age level based on the same teachings. The class teacher will employ strategies to specifically help the individual child. If met with challenges after a full term, the teacher will discuss with Principal who will provide more support, according to resources available, to inform planning and the measurement of a pupil's progress, give advice on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials, and in some cases provide support for particular activities.

The referrals after *School Action Plan* will be that, despite receiving individualised support under *School Action*, the child:

- continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period

- continues working at National Curriculum levels substantially below that expected of children of a similar age-we understand that some children will always work below expectation but those children can still learn in a functional way.
- continues to have difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills
- has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's own learning or that of the class group, despite having an individualised behaviour management programme
- has sensory or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits by a specialist service
- has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

9.2 When schools recognize the need for the intervention of external support services, the EO-SEN, will enlist those services and will need to see the child's records in order to establish which strategies have already been employed and which targets have been set and achieved. The external specialist will act in an advisory capacity, or provide additional specialist assessment for the teaching of the child directly. The resulting IEP for the child will set out fresh strategies for supporting the child's progress. These will be implemented, at least in part, in the normal classroom setting. The delivery of the interventions recorded in the IEP continues to be the responsibility of the class teacher.

10.0 School request for a statutory assessment

Where a request for a statutory assessment is made by the school to the EO-SEN, the child will have demonstrated significant cause for concern. The EO-SEN will need information about the child's progress over time, and will also need documentation in relation to the child's special educational needs and any action

taken to deal with those needs, including any resources or special arrangements put in place. The school will provide this evidence through *School Action Plan*. This information may include:

- individual education plans for the pupil
- records of regular reviews and their outcomes
- the pupil's health including the child's medical history where relevant
- National Curriculum levels attainments in English and Mathematics
- educational and other assessments, for example from a clinic, or counsellor
- views of the parents and of the child
- involvement of other professionals such as health, social services or education welfare service.

11.0 Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs

Statutory assessment involves consideration by the EO-SEN, working co-operatively with parents, the child's school and, as appropriate, other agencies, as to whether a statutory assessment of the child's special educational needs is necessary. A child will be brought to the EO-SEN attention as possibly requiring an assessment through a request by the child's school, from a parent or a referral by another agency. Where the evidence presented to the EO-SEN suggests that the child's learning difficulties have not responded to relevant and purposeful measures taken by the school and external support and may call for special educational provision which cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to mainstream schools, the EO-SEN will consider the case for a statutory assessment of the child's special educational needs.

11.1 The EO-SEN may decide that the degree of the pupil's learning difficulty and the nature of the provision necessary to meet the child's special educational needs is such as to require the EO-SEN to determine the child's special educational

provision through a statement. **A statement of special education needs** will include:

- the pupil's name, address and date of birth
- details of all of the pupils special needs
- identify the special educational provision necessary to meet the pupil special educational needs
- Identify the type and name of the school where the provision is to be made
- Include relevant non-educational needs of the child
- Include information on non-educational provision
- Include parent and family interview on the capabilities, likes and preferences of the child

11.2 All children with statements of special educational needs will have short-term targets set for them that have been established after consultation with parents, child and include targets identified in the statement of educational need. These targets will be set out in an IEP and be implemented, at least in part and as far as possible, in the normal classroom setting. The delivery of the interventions recorded in the IEP will continue to be the responsibility of the class teacher.

12.0 Annual review of a statement of special educational needs

All statements must be reviewed at least annually with the parents, the pupil, the EO-SEN, the school and professionals involved invited to consider whether any amendments need to be made to the description of the pupil's needs or to the special educational provision specified in the statement. The annual review should focus on what the child has achieved as well as on any difficulties that need to be resolved. At the review in year 5, the aim should be to give clear recommendations as to the type of provision the child will require at the secondary stage. It will then be possible for the parents to visit secondary schools and to consider appropriate

options within the similar timescales as other parents. The principal of the receiving school should be invited to attend the final annual review in primary school of pupils with statements, to allow the receiving school to plan an appropriate IEP to start at the beginning of the new school year and enable the pupil and the parents to be reassured that an effective and supportive transfer will occur. The secondary programme for the special needs child will report to the EO-SEN in a similar method as far as possible and EO's for the various subject areas will consult with the EO-SEN on providing instructions in their respective subject areas for special needs children. Reports will also be submitted termly to the EO-SEN for review and consultation.

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Antigua and Barbuda

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The information in this policy is adapted from

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