

# Transition Policy for Children with Special Educational Needs



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## Rationale

At Coleraine Grammar School our vision is:

A caring, respectful and supportive environment where all pupils and staff feel safe and secure and aspire to excellence in every area of life, now and in the future.

We undertake to create an inclusive school identity where respectful relationships underpin our efforts to apply effective, restorative, positive behaviour management.

Provision is **Child-centred** with our focus on individual improvement, including addressing and removing barriers to learning through **high quality teaching and learning**. Pupils will achieve high levels of academic performance, acquire valuable skills and be good citizens.

We aim to support pupils as they develop into independent and self-motivated pupils who have a positive sense of self and belonging, are provided with the opportunities to develop the necessary skills to make informed decisions about their life choices, to have high aspirations and be inspired to achieve their potential.

Whole school improvement will be achieved through self-evaluation and **effective leadership** which, at all levels, listens to and communicates ideas clearly to the whole school community.

In our school we believe that strong, mutually respectful relationships and a cohesive **community** are the foundations on which good learning and teaching can flourish. Our pupils are given a voice in the running of the school and there are strong and effective links between school, parents, families and local community.

It is recognised by Coleraine Grammar School that although transitions are a regular process rather than a single event in school life and can be exciting for some pupils with special educational needs (SEN); others will find the experience of moving between the various phases more challenging and will require extra support to enable them to make progress within their education.

Therefore, this transition policy will outline the roles and responsibilities involved in ensuring a whole school approach which is designed to support pupils with SEN in adapting to their new learning environment, so that they can show progress in all aspects of their learning.

## Definition

For the purpose of this policy, transition will be defined as the “means by which children experience a smooth passage from one setting or stage to another” (Department of Education, 2015).

## **Policy Aims**

This transition policy aims to outline the high quality teaching, learning and assessment strategies identified through whole school planning and advice received from external agencies where appropriate, to support the unique challenges that may be faced when trying to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEN at the following phases:

- primary school to Year 8;
- year group to year group, especially year 10 – 11 as that includes changing school campus;
- newly-enrolled pupils with SEN throughout the school year; and
- preparation for leaving school.

A successful experience of transition at each of these distinct stages will help children with SEN to settle well into the routines and organisation of school life at Coleraine Grammar School. The pace and quality of the teaching delivered will ensure that children continue to build upon their prior knowledge and experience so that they can make progress in all aspects of learning and reach their potential.

## **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

At Coleraine Grammar School, the views of the pupil with SEN, their parents and staff regarding their thoughts and concerns about transition are actively sought, acknowledged and valued.

By involving pupils and taking into account the individual needs of the pupil from their perspective, as well as information obtained from parents, school staff and other agencies, a well-planned and co-designed transition process will help to outline what is expected of them ahead of transition to the next chapter in their learning. This will provide an opportunity to help the pupil to develop independence and confidence in their ability to manage change within a supportive environment.

Staff at Coleraine Grammar School are committed to listening to and working in partnership with parents. Staff aim to support them in preparing their child with SEN for either beginning or leaving school as well as the movement into the next year group.

Transition is a process that may pose additional challenges and barriers for pupils with SEN. Teachers at Coleraine Grammar School aim to use their professional judgement, skills and expertise in assessing, planning for and using a range of strategies and activities in the best interests of the child. Information, including medical or social service reports, may be shared with relevant staff, in a sensitive manner and in the strictest of confidence. Transfer of information will be in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Additional adult assistants are also included in the development of the transition processes and policy as they play a valuable role in supporting the individual needs of pupils with SEN.

## **Transition Activities**

Coleraine Grammar School has identified the following activities as the best practice that they can offer to support the transition for pupils with SEN at each of the key phases of transition which are outlined below:

### ***Primary School to Year 8***

*Lead responsibility – Mrs Smith – Pastoral Leader and Mrs S. Taggart - SENCO*

This phase of transition is important in creating a positive experience for children with SEN who are starting their post primary education at our school.

Parents are encouraged to talk to their child about their feelings regarding school in a constructive manner. They are also advised to help their child set good routines in order to establish independence in preparing for school each day, completing homework and revision so that they enjoy a better school/life balance.

The following activities, alongside the Year 8 Pastoral Leader led provision for all year 8 pupils, put the child with SEN at the centre of assessing and planning to build upon the learning experiences that pupils have brought with them from primary school:

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| <p><b>Statements from EA “SEN Planning for Transition” resource. A successful transition should:</b></p>   | <p>(This plan is cognisant of the ten key principles that align with the DENI school improvement policy (DENI, 2009a; DCSF, 2008; Evangelou et al., 2008).)<br/> <b>How CGS ensures successful transition of year 8 SEN pupils:</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Be child-centred, engaging pupils in the transition process, meeting the needs of individuals and enabling them to develop fully;</b></p>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENCO meets all new intake SEN pupils in June/August to chat through their needs before school starts;</li> <li>• Pupils invited to tour the school before starting;</li> <li>• Specific IEP targets drawn up after these meetings based on the information given and collated;</li> <li>• SENCO has prompt cards available at these meetings (for pupils with ASD, but any can avail of these if needed), to explain some of the procedures in Coleraine Grammar School in a simple and easy to remember way.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Focus on improving standards, in particular standards in literacy and numeracy;</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEP targets are focused on individual needs and specific literacy and numeracy targets are devised in collaboration with CGS Litco and Numco when required, plus pupil and parent input.</li> <li>• Use of data from PS eg on IEP/CTF or SENCO can test pupils for literacy needs using standardised test in order to establish a baseline if needed. Or uses EP report as baseline if recent enough.</li> <li>• LS support offered for literacy and numeracy needs and included as a strategy on IEPs;</li> <li>• SENCO and Year 8 PL continue to keep in contact as and when any further support is needed for SEN pupils or those who begin to exhibit needs via CGS cause for concern forms.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Support collaboration between teachers from primary and post-primary schools to share best practice and expertise;</b></p>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 8 PL and SENCO meet to discuss pupils’ needs and communicate with Pastoral VP re any medical needs;</li> <li>• SENCO will then contact necessary primary schools to gather more information (along with CTF files) on the pupil to ensure a fuller picture of their needs. SENCO will also contact any relevant external agencies eg EPS.</li> <li>• Any pupil with a statement will meet with SENCO, PL and CA before the start of term – if necessary, decisions about timetable or LS support can be made.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Engage parents in the transition process;</b><br/> <b>• build relationships based on a common vision, co-operation, shared responsibility and trust;</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/carers are sent data capture sheet in May/June in their application pack for CGS to fill in and any that include SEN sent to SENCO. On this we ask for any information about the pupil that is relevant to SEN eg EP reports, PS IEPs, medical needs, pastoral information.</li> <li>• SENCO collates relevant data sheets and then phones all the parent/carers who have listed any SEN and discusses the pupil’s background and needs, these calls usually take place in June before the pupil starts school. In these calls, if the pupil has needs that require a visit to the school, that is booked in for August.</li> <li>• Meeting in August with SENCO, parent and pupil in order to draft IEP;</li> <li>• Once all the new IEPs are drafted in August, these are emailed home to the parent/carer and pupil so they can confirm they are content with the targets and strategies.</li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>Establish and develop an effective communication network and clear channels of communication;</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant parent/carers are contacted in August to arrange a meeting time for the pupil and parent/carer to meet with the SENCO, SENCO to hear the pupil's views and draft an IEP, gather any other pertinent paperwork and let the pupil see round the school – this can be very important for pupils with ASD needs.</li> <li>• SENCO ensures all parents of SEN pupils have contact email address to communicate with SENCO whenever needed.</li> <li>• On a staff development day in August, SENCO will disseminate all the information about new year 8 pupils will SEN to the staff via a presentation and explain their needs or take any questions.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Ensure coherence, continuity and progression of the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• share and use assessment and other information to plan progression</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENCO and Year 8 PL continue to keep in contact as and when any further support is needed for SEN pupils or those who begin to exhibit needs via CGS cause for concern forms.</li> <li>• All new year 8 IEPs are stored in the electronic staff SEN folder for teachers to access;</li> <li>• Bi-annual IEP reviews are based around teacher review comments recorded and collated in sims;</li> <li>• LS teachers' data used to track progress in half termly meetings.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Support pupils to develop the confidence, understanding and skills they need to become increasingly independent learners.</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENCO will also offer each SEN pupil some nurture/well-being support – depending on needs. This can be accessed once a week with the school nurture teacher from when they start the school term. If this is accepted, then SENCO will work with Nurture teacher to outline the pupil's needs and a timetable slot.</li> <li>• All SEN pupils are monitored via reviews and teacher/SENCO feedback.</li> </ul>  |

### ***Year group to year group***

*Lead responsibility – Mrs S. Taggart - SENCO*

Transitioning to the next class group in September can be a time of anxiety and worry for many pupils with SEN as they need to get used to new routines, change in some members of staff and the increasing level of difficulty in the work provided as well as expectations about how work should be completed or behaviours accepted within the classroom setting.

The following activities aim to build upon the knowledge of the pupil and consolidate their attainments to ensure that they enjoy continued success in their learning:

- An IEP review meeting is held during the summer term between the SENCO, parent and pupil, during which various areas discussed may be some of the following: peer relations, classroom layout, seating arrangements, issues with completing tasks, following instructions etc.
- All subject teachers provide tracking and assessment data about the pupil's attainments and needs as well as their progress towards meeting the targets on Individual Education Plans. This information, which is collated by the SENCo helps to inform the process of planning for and setting targets for the following year.
- Pupils in year 10 may visit the Castlerock Road campus at the end of June.
- Parent-teacher meetings are held during the month of January so that parents can meet the SENCo and new teachers. Targets for their child's individual education plan as well as an outline of work which will be covered during the school year are discussed.
- Pupils with a statement of SEN will be invited to attend their annual review along with their parents and any relevant external agencies.

### ***Newly enrolled SEN pupils throughout the school year***

*Lead responsibility – Mrs S. Taggart – SENCO and relevant Pastoral Leader*

Coleraine Grammar School offers a warm welcome to pupils with SEN and their parents who choose to join our school throughout the year.

The following activities aim to provide a supportive environment so that the pupil feels included and happy about coming to school and parents will feel confident in the knowledge that their child will be encouraged to reach their potential:

- An initial meeting is held between the SENCo, parents and the pupil to be enrolled.
- IEP meeting will be scheduled in order to draft appropriate targets and strategies for the pupil's needs.
- Individual tours of the school are offered to incoming parents and pupils.
- Parents are provided with a copy of the school prospectus.
- Pupils are given time to settle into their new routines. They will be observed and assessed as necessary by the subject teacher or SENCo.
- Parental permission to access pupil records from previous school is sought.

- SIMS data passed on from previous school (CTF file).
- Pupil meets with new class and Form Teacher.
- Consent is sought to follow-up with any services currently involved with the child or to make an onward referral for advice and support. Parents will be made aware of the purpose and expected outcome of each request.

### ***Preparation for leaving school***

*Lead responsibility – Mrs S. Taggart – SENCO and Dr G. Hull Head of Careers*

At Coleraine Grammar School, we recognise that some of our pupils with SEN may face additional challenges in the preparation for leaving school.

The following activities aim to guide the pupils with SEN through the process as effectively and efficiently as possible so that any concerns can be addressed in a timely manner:

- Pupils with SEN will be offered early Career's appointments and advice via school Careers department.
- For pupils with a statement of SEN (Stage 3 of the Code of Practice), the Education Authority will allocate a Transition Co-ordinator during Year 10 who will support the pupil and their parents to help prepare them for making positive choices for the future.
- At any Transition meetings for pupils with a statement, the Careers Service will also be represented for advice and guidance.
- During Year 11 and/or 13, pupils will have the opportunity to undertake 'work experience'. Staff will work closely with SEN pupils to support them in seeking out an appropriate placement. If deemed appropriate, information about how to support the pupil will be shared with consent with the prospective employer.
- Pupils with SEN will be given additional support, if necessary, to help them complete application forms and their personal statement by the Careers department in school.
- In Year 12, the careers co-ordinator will provide extra support and guidance sessions if required to assist with interview preparation for jobs and courses of further study that the pupil with SEN may decide to pursue once they finish their compulsory education. Mock interviews will be scheduled during Term One.

### **Link with other policies**

This transition policy links with the following school policies:

- Access Arrangements
- Accessibility
- Admissions
- Assessment
- Child Protection
- Data Protection
- Pastoral Care
- Special Educational Needs

- Teaching and Learning
- Work Placement

### **Monitoring and review**

At Coleraine Grammar School, members of the teaching staff have been allocated key responsibilities for each phase of transition. They will collaborate with Mrs Taggart the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, to ensure that the processes are supportive and enable transition for pupils with SEN to be as smooth as possible.

The transition policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if required by the senior leadership team to ensure that it reflects examples of best practice in meeting the needs of the pupils with SEN.

Where reasonably possible, the views of the pupil with SEN and parents as well as school staff will be sought to highlight areas that are working well together with those which may need strengthened.

This policy is available on the school's website. A hard copy or one in an alternative format can be made available upon request by contacting the school office.

### **Useful Publications/Resources**

Coleraine Grammar School found that the following publications and resources were useful in the development of this transition policy:

Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

- [Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 Transition Guidance \(2015\)](#)

Department of Education

- [The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational \(1998\)](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order \(SENDO\) \(NI\) \(2005\)](#)
- [The Supplement to the Code of Practice \(2005\)](#)
- [A Resource File for Schools to Support Children with Special Educational Needs \(2011\)](#)
- [Guidance on Induction and Transition in Pre-School Education and Year One \(2015\)](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability \(NI\) Act \(2016\)](#)

Education Authority

Education Welfare Service

- [Moving Forward](#)

SEND Implementation team

- Transition training (2019)
- Seeking the View of the Child (2019).