**Inclusion Programme Bulletin: September 2016**

**Part 3: SEN Support in Schools – Code of Practice, Chapter 6**

**Introduction**

1. Chapter 6 of the Code sets out how schools **must** use their best endeavours – i.e. do everything they possibly can - to make sure all pupils with SEN get the support they need. Amongst other requirements, it covers a school’s duties to employ a SENCO and to publish an SEN Information Report that **must** include the school’s arrangements for identifying and assessing need.
2. Schools should take a strategic, ‘whole school’ approach to ensuring all pupils with SEN are supported effectively, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and can access school activities alongside their peers. Quality of teaching and learning for SEN should be part of a school’s performance management arrangements and a member of the Governing body should have specific responsibility for SEND.
3. In addition to the SEND requirements, schools **must** have regard to the general duties under the Equality Act. In particular, they must make reasonable adjustments – including provision of auxiliary aids and services - for disabled children. Schools **must** also make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions as agreed in individual health care plans.

**Identifying Need**

1. Pupils have a special educational need when they require access to provision that is not normally available. Ensuring high quality teaching is available to the whole class means fewer pupils will need additional support. Improvements in whole class provision usually deliver cost-effective and sustainable approaches to support.
2. Where a pupil is identified as not making expected progress in attainment or other areas of their lives, high quality teaching should be targeted at their area of weakness. If there is no resulting improvement the SENCO should be involved in considering whether there is a special educational need. Parents and pupils must be involved in these conversations and their views, wishes and feelings taken into account.
3. Not all lack of progress will be due to SEN. It is important to consider other factors such as domestic issues in reaching a decision. In Sheffield, accessing early help and support advice through MAST and completing the Family Common Assessment Framework will help identify if there are needs other than SEN.
4. Where a SEN has been identified, it should fall within one or more of the following four areas:

	* Communication and Interaction;
	* Cognition and Learning
	* Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
	* Sensory and/or Physical Needs

**Agreeing SEN Support**

1. In all cases, high quality teaching differentiated for individual pupils is always the first step in providing support. Early discussion with parents and the pupil about support are important and should start with identifying shared outcomes around progress, attainment and aspirations.
2. Clear plans and review dates must be put in place and communicated to parents and clear records kept about support and progress. Where support requires effective coordination across the school and/or with external expertise, Sheffield’s My Plan provides a tool for schools to use with pupils and their parents to plan support, agree outcomes and monitor progress.
3. Where additional support is required, schools should use the graduated approach of assess, plan, do review. This ensures that an individual pupil’s needs are understood, plans are agreed and implemented to provide support and their effectiveness is reviewed regularly. This cyclical approach should also help plan for key transition points. In Sheffield, two cycles of assess, plan, do, review using My Plan provides the basis for requesting an EHC Plan when more specific, statutory support is required.
4. Reviews of progress must involve children and their parents and take place at least three times a year. These should be substantial, skilled conversations led by the SENCO and class teacher and allow time to explore the views, wishes and feelings of parents and pupils. Records of these meetings should be kept to enable clarity about what is agreed and to ensure effective monitoring of progress.

**Role of the SENCO**

1. All schools **must** appoint a SENCO who **must** be a qualified teacher. In addition, if they are newly appointed and have not been a SENCO for more than twelve months, they **must** achieve a National Award in SEN Coordination within three years of appointment.
2. Ideally, SENCOs should be part of the school leadership team to help determine strategic development of SEN policy. They are responsible for the day-to-day operation of SEN policy and coordination or provision. They should provide professional guidance to colleagues; work closely with staff, parents, pupils; and coordinate with external expertise that has been secured to help support individual children. SENCOs should be aware of what is in Sheffield’s Local Offer.

**Funding SEN Support**

1. Schools should take a strategic approach to planning SEN support from the resources they have available. The SEN Notional funding included in schools’ budgets assumes schools will provide up to £6,000 worth of additional support for individual pupils with SEN. In Sheffield, support required above this threshold will be provided through the school locality’s share of the high needs funding and/or central services provided by Sheffield City Council and its partners.