

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 th July 2003	MEETING NAME Executive
Report title:		REVISION OF SEN POLICY STATEMENT	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From: Gloria Gray		Professional Manager, SEN and Transport	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to approve the revised policy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The SEN policy for Southwark requires revision. Such policies need to be regularly revised, and the revisions can only be undertaken through consultation with a range of stakeholders. It is important to ensure that those upon whom the policy most impacts i.e. children and parent/carers and those most closely involved in much of its delivery – schools - have sufficient opportunity to shape developments.
3. The Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (January 2002) requires LEAs, in partnership with schools, to place the highest priority on their statutory duty to promote high standards of education for all children, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
4. This policy expresses the LEA's vision for SEN within the framework of inclusive education. On the 18th February 2001 the Education Sub- committee approved a new Inclusion statement, and it is within this context that this policy is written. This policy intends to provide a framework in which the LEA will develop its SEN strategy and evaluate its implementation. (See strategy for Educational & Social Inclusion June 2003).
5. The LEA and WS Atkins also need to take into account the changes made in the SEN Code of Practice which is now linked to the Disability Act 2001. This must be reflected within the revised policy statement in areas such as those in which the stages of SEN have changed to a graduated approach using the expressions 'school action' and 'school action plus'.
6. The following are the main changes expressed within the Code of Practice:
 - It further emphasises the right of children to be educated in a mainstream school
 - It highlights the now statutory need for the LEA to provide advice and information to parent\carers and children and a means of resolving disputes
 - It contains separate chapters on provision within the Early Years, Primary and Secondary phases and new chapters include working in partnership with parent\carers, pupil participation and working in partnership with other agencies.
7. The Code has a considerable amount of guidance attached to it which is invaluable in reviewing assessment, statementing, consultative and support arrangements, and the proposed reductions in beaurocracy and clarity of roles are welcomed.
8. The implications of the disability elements of the Act, in force from September 2002, have been reported separately (See Accessibility Strategy, April 2003)

because the strategy encompasses all children, not just children with Special Educational Needs.

9. Implementing new arrangements generally requires significant training, and it has been helpful to combine training necessary anyway to improve service delivery with training for the Code of Practice. The DfES Senior SEN Adviser has supported this process in Southwark, and this policy builds on the advice, guidance and training received.
10. The Code stresses the need for evaluating outcomes, not just outputs, and the objectives set here include success criteria. It is felt that these targets are realistic as well as being challenging and will be carefully monitored through a range of processes – annual reviews, monitoring visits and joint link visits with School Improvement Advisers.
11. The revised financial strategy places greater emphasis on schools having more responsibility for allocating support to individual children, the LEA through WS Atkins taking the role of monitoring and evaluating the provision.
12. The revised policy statement provides a framework to support equal opportunities, anti-discrimination and inclusion within the context of Children with SEN.

KEY ISSUES

13. Please note the additional appendices. They are designed to support the objectives in the main policy.
14. Please consider the revised policy for SEN Home to School Transport. It is felt that it is appropriate to include this in the appendices and not as a 'stand alone' policy. Again this policy emphasises and enhances the objectives in the SEN policy.
15. Appendix 5 seeks to include and focus on early years providers.
16. Please find the Strategy for Educational and Social Inclusion – June 2003 which encompasses the objectives set out in the SEN policy.

RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

17. The Code does not, per se, bring with it increased financial responsibilities. However, it needs to be borne in mind that the emphasis on openness, transparency, equality of opportunity and raising of attainment almost certainly lead to issues in respect of children arguably not yet fully resourced – those with autism and specific learning difficulties, for example.
18. In conjunction with the policy, therefore, it will be necessary to review specialist teams and resource base provision, being mindful of the Southwark LEA Ofsted of 1999 which encouraged a more rapid expansion in school-based units/facilities.

CONSULTATION

19. An in-depth and extensive consultation process is being conducted in parallel with the presentation of this document. The following stakeholders are involved:
 - Headteachers, Governors and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) will be consulted in all schools.

- Parents\carers have been consulted in partnership with Contact-a-Family.
- Health and Social Services representatives will be consulted.
- Colleagues within the Education Central Service will be included in the consultation.
- Colleagues from the Trade Unions will be consulted.
- Colleagues from Early Years will be consulted.

20. Borough Solicitor and secretary.

To follow

Lead officer: Roger Smith, Strategic Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Southwark Council

Report Author: Gloria Gray, Professional Head of SEN and Transport

Background papers:	Held at	Contact
SEN & Disabilities Act 2001	John Smith House	Daniel Northover 0207 525 2712
Revised Code of Practice (SEN)	John Smith House	Daniel Northover 0207 525 2712
Lead Officer	Maureen Eade	
Report Author	Gloria Gray	
Version	Complete	
Dated	10-6-2003	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	No	No
Chief Finance Officer	No	No
<i>List other Officers here</i>		
Executive Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services		