

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

### **A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

All children have needs but some children have needs which are additional to those of their peers. Their special needs have to be met if they are to experience educational success. Children's education should promote their physical, mental, moral, cultural, spiritual, emotional and social development. It should enable them to develop as independent people. Children who are experiencing difficulties in any area of development need additional help, support and intervention if they are to achieve their potential.

Wirral Education Authority upon the advice of its Special Educational Needs Advisory Committee endorses the following statements from the 1994 UNESCO Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education:

Every child has the fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of learning.

Every child has unique characteristics, interests and abilities and learning needs.

Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take account of the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.

Every child with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting those needs.

In furtherance of these absolute principles, the Authority believes that:

Children have the right to be educated in a setting that is appropriate to their needs. The Authority will enable learners of all abilities and with different kinds of special needs to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their development.

Children have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum adapted where necessary to meet their particular needs.

The inclusion of children in mainstream schools will always be the first consideration, where parents want it and appropriate support can be provided.

Children whose special needs require the support and specialist provision available outside the mainstream school system are entitled to receive that provision until such time as, and if appropriate, they can return to a mainstream school.

The Authority will work in partnership with its mainstream and special schools and with non-maintained schools attended by Wirral children to promote the process of inclusion. It will enable staff in mainstream and special schools to work closely together in order to share expertise and to develop inclusive practices.

Parents have the right to be involved in the process of their children's education. Children will be educated in accordance with their parents' wishes as long as the nature of the education provided is appropriate to the individual child's age, aptitude, ability and special needs, and consistent with the efficient use of resources and the efficient provision of education to other children.

Children and young people are entitled to be consulted about their education where their views can be ascertained.

The Authority will maintain and develop procedures to identify children's special needs as early as possible.

The identification of children's needs will be undertaken through evidence based professional assessments which also take account of information provided by the child's parents, where feasible by the child, and by any others who have a knowledge of the child.

The contribution of other statutory and professional agencies will be actively sought and valued.

Voluntary organisations have an important role to play in supporting the education of children with special needs.

The Authority will promote and support partnership between all those agencies that are potentially involved in a child's education.

Teachers and support staff are entitled to appropriate training, guidance and advice in order to help them to meet children's needs.

The Authority and schools are fully accountable for the provision that they make for children with special needs. Their policies and practices will be regularly monitored, evaluated and up-dated.

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