

Circular Number:
2018/10

Date of Issue:
19 June 2018

Subject:

Recording Children with SEN

Target Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of all grant-aided schools
- EOTAS settings
- Education Authority (EA)
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICE)
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG)
- Governing Bodies Association

Governor Awareness:
Essential

Status of Contents:
Guidance for Schools

Related Documents:

Superseded Documents:
None

Expiry Date: N/A

DE Website:

www.education-ni.gov.uk

Summary of Contents:

The purpose of this circular is to signal an upcoming change to the terms used within Schools Information Management System (SIMS) to record pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). It is anticipated that the changes will be in place for the **October 2019** school census. No changes will be made to the October 2018 census.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular or the descriptors for individual pupils can be discussed with your named educational psychologist in the EA during the SENCo consultation in the new school term and after the 4th September 2018.

Introduction

1. The purpose of this circular is to signal an upcoming change to one of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) categories currently used within the Schools Information Management System (SIMS.) Following the October 2018 census the SEN category 'MILD', as outlined in the current guidance, **will no longer be available for selection** and this will be removed from SIMS. This circular outlines the action you are required to take in advance of this particular change.
2. This change is one of a number of changes the Department of Education is making to the categories used to describe a child's Special Educational Needs (SEN). All of these changes will not be put in place until after the 2018 October census.
3. However, the Department strongly recommends that schools take action as soon as possible and before 1st December 2018 for those pupils who are currently categorised as 'MILD' within SIMS. Details of required action is outlined in paragraphs 8 to 11 of this circular.
4. More information will be provided concerning all of these changes via further circulars and bespoke training for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). The training will be organised and delivered by the Education Authority (EA) in partnership with C2k and schools will receive communication from the EA about this training by the end of June 2018.
5. As outlined in the current guidance for schools Recording Children with Special Needs <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/recording-children-special-educational-needs-guidance-schools> only pupils with an identified SEN should be placed on the SEN School Register as required under the SEN Code of Practice.

Required Action

6. Prior to the changes coming into effect, it is highly recommended that schools take this opportunity to review their SEN register and consider whether it appropriately reflects the current needs of all SEN pupils in the school.
7. If intervention/support is no longer required, consideration should be given as to whether the pupil should remain on the register and recorded on SIMS. If not, the pupil should be removed from both.
8. For those pupils who are currently categorised as 'MILD' and are recorded both in the school's SEN Register and SIMS and who are to remain on the SEN register, then consideration should be given to selecting another category instead of MILD, which better reflects the pupil's needs. The new category should be recorded both on the SEN Register and SIMS.
9. From immediate effect we recommend that for newly identified SEN pupils, the category 'MILD' is no longer used and a more appropriate category is selected and recorded.

SEN Code of Practice and Supplement

10. Schools are reminded that they have a legal duty, under Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, to have due regard to the provisions of the SEN Code of Practice and its Supplement. The Board of Governors and school leadership should ensure that they adopt a consistent approach to the identification, assessment and provision made for all children with SEN. School's workforce should continue to follow the guidance set out in the SEN Code of Practice and the Supplement to the Code.
11. Listed below are the links to the Code of Practice and Supplement:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/the-code-of-practice.pdf>

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/supplement.pdf>

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