



Special Education Needs Policy



Introductory Statement:

This policy has been devised by a sub-committee of the staff, including Class Teachers, Special Education teachers and the Home/School/Community Liaison Co-Ordinator and has been endorsed by the full staff. A representative group of parents met with the sub-committee to endorse it prior to its submission to the Board of Management for its approval.

Rationale:

In light of the new Special Education Needs model of 2017 and in accordance with the Education Act and circular 13/17 it was decided to undertake the redevelopment of this policy in the summer of 2017.

Relationship to school ethos (characteristic spirit of the school):

This policy seeks to allow the pupils develop their full potential in a happy, caring and Christian environment as envisaged by Brother Rice.

Aims of Special Education:

The principal aim of Special Education is to optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties and complex needs to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literary and numeracy and in their areas of complex needs before leaving primary school.

Principles: Informed by Circular 13/17 – Continuum of Support

Effective Learning Programmes are based on the following principles:

- Pupils with the greatest levels of need should have access to the greatest level of support
- Effective whole-school policies and parental involvement.
- Prevention of failure.
- Provision of intensive early intervention.
- Direction of resources towards pupils on greatest based on identified need as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- Regular reviews based on the continuum of support record.

Subsidiary Aims:

- To enable these pupils to participate to the best of their abilities in the curriculum for their class level, where possible include support in context of peers, withdrawn if appropriate.
- To seek to develop positive self esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.
- To encourage these pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- To increase pupil engagement using, for example, 'My thoughts about school.'
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in many areas including English/Literacy and Maths/numeracy, social skills, emotional and behavioural, physical and sensory needs.
- To involve parents in supporting their children.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policies on learning support for these pupils.
- To establish intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.

- To support teachers accessing continuous professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs

Content of the Policy:

Whole School Strategies for preventing Learning Difficulties:

An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. Schools should aim to help children through classroom support initially and then strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support. When deploying teaching resources, schools need to maintain time for co-ordinating, planning and reviewing activities to ensure effective and optimal use of supports. Co-ordination time however, should be kept to a minimum in order to ensure that teaching time is maximised. Additionally, flexibility in terms of resource allocation is required to allow for emerging needs during the school year.

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties are:

- Classroom support for children with classroom support plan
- Active learning methodologies
- Early intervention initiatives; Literacy Lift Off, Maths Recovery, Friends for Life
- Development of agreed approaches to language development and to teaching other aspects of English in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class (c.f. Plean Scoile and D.E.I.S. plan).
- Provision of additional support in language development and relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- Implementation of a whole school parent involvement programme that focuses on developing children's oral language skills, shared books with children and developing their early mathematical skills.
- Implementation of paired reading programmes involving adults/parents and pupils in the school.
- Promotion of co-operation and communication with the feeder schools in order to ensure continuity in Special Education.

Procedures and criteria for identifying and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching:

- All children are observed by teachers; this may include Class teachers and Special Education teachers.
- All children will be screened by the Special Education and /or Class Teacher within a reasonable period of their arrival in the school. Annual School Standardised Tests, administered before the end of May will act as a further, annual screening. Incoming second class children and any other newly enrolled children shall be screened according to their standardised test results from the junior schools and also administered screening tests in September.
- Children identified as potentially needing supplementary teaching will be further tested by the Special Education Teachers using diagnostic tests.
- Once pupils are selected for supplementary teaching, parents are given the opportunity to contact the Special Education teacher. They are informed of the situation and their consent to their child receiving supplementary teaching sought.
- The 10th Percentile is the baseline for the provision of supplementary teaching but teacher observation and parental feedback will also inform the decision. The supplementary teaching programme should begin as soon as possible in September.
- A review of the child's progress is undertaken in January. This involves reviewing the child's targets set in September, assessing where possible with both class teacher and Special Education teacher observations, suitably deemed test(s), (standardised tests, teacher designed tests, class tests, termly assessment tests). There will then be a teacher consultation and progress review of pupil's support plan to decide if they should continue in learning support. .
- The results of the standardised tests in May/June will indicate whether or not a child will access Special Education the process will be reviewed in Jan/ Feb and timetables amended if necessary. All results shall be presented at a Special Education meeting and a decision will be taken by the team, in collaboration with the class teacher, on those most in need of supplementary teaching.

Order of priority to when providing supplementary teaching:

<i>Group A</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with the greatest identified needs with a diagnosis. • Children with the greatest identified needs on a waiting list/having been identified as having needs by the SET team. • Children performing below the 10th percentile in standardised tests of achievement in Language/Maths will be included on the Special Education timetable. • The provision of short term 6-9 weeks' educational interventions: targeted, time bound and evidence based eg Literacy lift off, maths station teaching,
<i>Group B</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of longer term 10-12 weeks' educational interventions: targeted, time bound and evidence based. Eg. Maths Recovery • Pupils performing between the 11th and 18th percentile in standardised tests of achievement in Language/Maths will be accommodated if possible prioritising II to IV class. • Children above the 80th percentile in Language/Maths will be given the opportunity to further develop their skills where possible. • Arrangements may be made to provide supplementary teaching to pupils in the senior section who experience very low achievement. and who have received in excess of three years supplementary teaching.
<i>Group C</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils performing between the 19th and 25th percentile in standardised tests of achievement in Language/Maths will be accommodated prioritising II to IV class • A limited number of EAL children to relieve the workload of the EAL teacher when numbers are so great in our school.
<i>Group D</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils performing between the 19th and 25th percentile in standardised tests of achievement in Language/Maths will be accommodated if possible prioritising V and VI class.

1. Children above the 25th percentile are not normally entitled to be included on the Special Education timetable however they will have access to team teaching/ Literacy Lift Off/ Friends for life programme and other interventions etc. where possible.
2. The duration of supplementary teaching should not exceed two to three years if possible.
3. Each Special Education Teacher will give supplementary teaching to groups of 4 or less. Priority will be given to those pupils in the lower classes whose achievement is lowest in agreed standardised tests.

Procedures for the provision of supplementary teaching by Special Education Teachers (c/f Roles and Responsibility, for development, implementation and reporting):

- The responsibility for planning the programme and its contents rests with the Special Education Team led by a coordinator, the S.E.T. Teacher, in consultation with the Principal, Class Teacher, parents/guardians and School Psychologist and H.S.E. (where applicable). Parents and children should also have an input in so far as it is practicable and appropriate. Schools should endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.
- The Principal has the final responsibility for the implementation of the programme and will have a flexible attitude towards withdrawal and in-class support or any other system deemed suitable.

- There will be a mid-year review and at agreed time intervals in which the Special education Teacher, in consultation with the Class Teacher, will evaluate and review the programme and will inform the Class Teacher, the Parents and the Principal of the outcome if there is a change. Some interventions will be very short, others longer.

Procedures for continuing/discontinuing pupils in receipt of supplementary teachingBased on this

review, and in consultation with the Class Teacher and the Principal, the Special Education Teacher will recommend the continuation/discontinuation of supplementary teaching. The parents will then be briefed.

Strategies for communicating information:

- Class Teachers and Special Education teachers will consult orally on students' progress.
- Parents will be invited by letter to contact the Class Teacher and/or Special Education Teacher for consultation.
- For the purpose of obtaining consent for supplementary teaching, parents will sign a letter of consent.
- A log of meetings with any service providers/external agencies working with the child and its family will be put on file in a confidential and secure manner as part of the pupil's profile document.

Approaches to involving parents:

Effective communication with parents is critically important to the success of a Learning Support Programme. Schools should consult with parents when developing and reviewing policies relating to the education of children with special educational needs. This helps to ensure that parents understand the school's approaches and better enables them to support their children in transitioning through the school. Activities that may be organised to increase the involvement of parents in supporting their children's learning include:

- Paired/Shared reading.
- Developing children's oral language through discussion.
- Motivating children to read more.
- Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive.
- Selecting books that interest children.
- Developing children's reasoning and problem solving.
- Counting, measuring and other activities involving numbers.

Procedures for referring pupils to out-of-school agencies:

The Principal has the final responsibility for initiating and overseeing all referrals to outside agencies. Following consultation with the Class Teacher, the Principal, the Special Education teacher or the Special Education co-ordinator, the class teacher and the lead S.E.T. will initiate contact with the relevant agency and with the parents to obtain their consent for the referral and will explain the implications and procedures involved in the referral. The class teacher has primary responsibility.

Procedures for the provision of resources for Special Education:

The Special Education Teacher within the allocated budget from the school is responsible for the provision of the resources he/she needs and is reimbursed on the provision of receipts. Special Education resources are available to all teachers on request.

Approaches to timetabling Special Education:

Special Education is available from 8.45a.m. To 10.40a.m., from 10.55 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 1.00p.m. to 2.20p.m. Supplementary Teaching is in addition to regular class teaching and class teacher's timetable will be designed to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they are withdrawn to receive supplementary teaching as far as possible. Supplementary Teaching may be provided in the classroom as well as/instead of withdrawal. There will be a parent/teacher consultation time for all Special Education teachers at 1.40 p.m. each Friday with a record of deliberations/activities maintained.

Roles and Responsibility for development, implementation and reporting:

The role of Special Education is a collaborative responsibility shared by all – The Board of Management, the Principal, Class Teachers, Special Education Teachers, parents and children. It is important that everyone contributes in the planning and implementation of our school plan on Special Education.

Role of Board of Management:

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision on Special Education in our school.
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Special Education Teachers.
- Provide secure facilities for storage of records in relation to pupils in receipt of Special Education services.

Role of the Principal:

Under the new allocation model the principal's leadership role is central and includes:

- developing inclusive whole school policies and monitoring their implementation,
- assigning staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles,
- co-coordinating teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils,
- Ensuring that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Ensuring that whole school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on Special Education and special needs.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan and D.E.I.S. plan on Special Education on an ongoing basis.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals.
- Oversee the completion of all relevant paperwork necessary to refer children to external agencies/ Special Needs Assistant access.
- Ensure behaviour logs are being kept by class teachers where applications are being made for Special Needs Assistant access or where referrals to C.A.M.H.S. are being made.
- The Principal, with the co-operation and support of the Special Education teachers will co-ordinate the progress of the policy, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation, and report to staff on findings. Depending on the school's size and context, some of these actions will be delegated to teams or other members of staff while the principal retains overall responsibility for the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Role of the Class Teacher:

- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in his/her classroom, including pupils with special educational needs. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that each pupil is taught in a stimulating and supportive classroom environment where all pupils feel equal and valued.
- In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on Special Education:
The Class Teacher should implement teaching programmes, which optimise the learning of all pupils to the greatest extent possible preventing the emergence of learning difficulties and ensure they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. The classroom teacher will initiate the continuum of support and will create a classroom support plan outlining what actions will be taken by class teacher to support their pupil, consult with SET and parents. Outline actions and set a review date.
- the Class Teacher should consult with the Special Education teacher(s) on each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching on a regular basis
- The classroom teacher will also make specific accommodations for a pupil within the class as a result of concerns about a pupil's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers and the development of a programme of differentiated instruction for that pupil.

- The Class Teacher should implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and in Mathematics from 2nd to 6th class by administering and scoring appropriate screening measures and provide the SET team with a set of results within a reasonable timeframe.
- To fill or update the continuum of support record at agreed times and in time for regular reviews.
- Class teachers must submit paperwork relevant to referrals/S.N.A. applications in to the appropriate Special Education teacher. Any child who receives S.N.A. access or for whom an S.N.A. access is being applied, needs a behaviour log and classroom support plan which details the nature, the frequency and the severity of the identified behaviour.
- To initiate the PPP with help from the SET in readiness for submission to the SENO before the due date in September
- The Class Teacher should consider with regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following recommended general approaches and methods:
 1. Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities and to differentiate appropriately.
 2. Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum.
 3. Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
 4. Setting learning targets at an appropriate level.
 5. Providing learning activities and materials which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress.
 6. Carrying out error analyses of a pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty.
 7. Setting up "buddy systems" in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers – peer tutoring – paired reading).
 8. Team Teaching in any/all forms following best practice (targeted, time bound and evidence based).

Role of the Special Education Teacher:

The activities of the Special Education teacher should include:

- Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching through the continuum of support record.
- Development of school support and school support plus plans as part of the N.E.P.S. continuum of support for pupils who are selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the class teacher (following on from the classroom support plan), parents and the Principal. Many different types of support plans can be included in the support file. A support plan can take the form of a general plan for support, a behavioural plan or contract, an individual profile and learning programme, an individual educational plan or a personalised plan. Our school and teachers may wish to modify and adapt, as appropriate while adhering to the spirit of the continuum of support as part of the pupils' profile.
- Selecting children in conjunction with the class teacher of the pupil, special needs assistants and the Principal who may meet the criteria of complex needs because of a diagnosis, being on a waiting list or having started on the continuum of support and who could benefit from extra help. They will contact the parents and organise classroom observations.
- Inviting parents/guardians of any pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching to a meeting in which a discussion of targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home as part of the continuum of support.
- Delivering intensive early intervention programmes and providing supplementary teaching in English, Oral Language and Maths to pupils in 2nd class.
- Providing teaching in English and Maths where possible to pupils in the senior section of the school who experience low achievement where possible.
- Co-ordinating the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in line with the selection criteria specified in our school plan and input from teachers and parents.
- Engaging with team teaching where necessary following best practice.
- Withdrawing pupils from the same classroom together within the one time block where possible to minimise disruption to class teaching.
- Providing advice to class teachers in such areas as individual pupil assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading and writing for pupils experiencing difficulties.

- Contributing at the school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the special education teacher's room.
- Assessing children in January at an agreed time and using an agreed standardised test and giving the results to the relevant teachers.
- Liaising with Home/School/Community Liaison Co-Ordinator and/or with outside agencies pertinent to the children in their care. Any meetings involving psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, etc. will be attended by any Special Education teachers working with that child and the class teacher.
- Ensuring that all necessary paperwork is completed and ensuring that all aspects have been addressed when applying to outside agencies for extra teaching time or S.N.A. access – namely the N.E.P.S. continuum of support or B.C.N. 1 form.
- Co-operating with the Principal, Class Teachers and external agencies such as N.E.P.S. and the H.S.E. to facilitate assessments and special provision for pupils with complex needs.
- The Special Education teacher should not have the sole responsibility for the delivery of a curriculum subject to any particular class.
- Ensure that all support plans are added to the pupil's profile on the School Data system twice yearly at agreed times.
- Each SET who is responsible for a class group ensures that the continuum of support record is submitted to the school data system and updated regularly.
- Ensure that all contact with outside agencies and other pertinent information is added to the monthly log in a timely manner.

Assessment measure.

WHAT	WHEN	WHO
Monitoring of implementation:	Termly	Principal and/or Special Ed. Coordinator
Cúntas Míósúil/ an assessment and an observation element in the weekly plan	Termly	Principal and/or Special Ed. Coordinator
School support plus plan	Twice yearly	Principal and/or Special Ed. Coordinator
School support plan	Twice yearly	Principal and/or Special Ed. Coordinator
SET Team Meeting with minutes taken by team on rotation.	At agreed times and as when deemed necessary.	Principal and/or Special Ed. Coordinator
SET Teacher Planning:	Weekly or fortnightly	Principal and/or Special Ed. Coordinator
Timeframe to meet class teacher to discuss progress:	Once a term	Lead SET.

Success Criteria, (by which policy will be judged):

The criteria, on which the success of this policy will be measured include:

- Teacher observations, current and progressive.
- Test results/ checklists of pupils.
- Parent/pupil/community feedback.
- Inspector's Report.
- Second level feedback.

Timeframe for implementation:

This policy will be implemented by September, 2020

The policy was circulated to all school personnel and the parents' association.