

Scoil Naomh Eoin, Killenard Co. Laois



Special Educational Needs Policy

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The School Setting

Scoil Naomh Eoin is a co-educational school located in the village of Killenard, Co. Laois. The school provides for 418 pupils, some of whom reside in the parish of Portarlinton while others come from outlying areas. The school staff comprises an administrative principal, sixteen mainstream teachers, five special educational teachers, six full and part-time special needs assistants, a secretary and a caretaker. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Respect for and appreciation of the worth and giftedness of every pupil are considered core values to be fostered in the pupils.

Introductory Statement :

This Policy on Special Education Needs was formulated in response to

- Directives contained in the 1998 Education Act;
- The Learning-Support Guidelines (2000);
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004;
- Education Welfare Act (2000)
- Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- Data Protection Acts (1988,1998 and 2003)
- GDPR 2018
- Recent DES Circulars - 02/05 & 0013/2017.
- Enrolment of children with special needs in the school - To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.

- This policy was reviewed during the 2020/2021 school year by the SEN Co-Ordinator, the Special Educational Team, the teaching staff and the Principal Mr. Donovan, ratified by the Board of Management and circulated to the parents via our website.

1. Policy Aims

- To enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.

- To enable children with Special Education Needs (SEN) to become fully integrated members of our school community
- To provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success.
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy and numeracy.
- To involve parents in the support of their child's education.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for pupils.
- To protect and enhance the self-esteem of the learner.
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
- To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning
- To provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.
- To fulfil DES circular 0013/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools).

2. Policy Principles Guiding the SEN Provision in Scoil Naomh Eoin

- Resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs are used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school and whole school community.
- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs are based on identified needs and are informed by regular and collaborative reviews of learning progress.
- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the learning progress and care of all pupils in his/her classroom including those with special educational needs.
- The revised SEN allocation model facilitates the school to deploy SETs according to identified needs rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. This gives the school greater autonomy and flexibility in how SET resources are allocated. The school deploys SETs in a variety of ways to effectively meet pupils' needs. These include in-class support, group and individual withdrawal.

- Special education teaching supports are used exclusively to support pupils with identified special educational needs, including those pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). The special education teaching supports are not used to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. They are not used to allow any special education teacher sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class.
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need have access to the greatest level of support.
- A mix of in-class and withdrawal support models are used depending on what is identified as most appropriate for the child.
- An emphasis on whole school/staff involvement in addressing special educational needs.
- Early Intervention is a priority in Scoil Naomh Eoin.
- Effective communication and engagement with parents is critically important in moving towards a needs-based approach to the allocation of additional teaching resources. This is enhanced when teachers consult with parents in relation to the drafting and review of pupil support plans. I also assists parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- The school maintains a team of special education teachers (SETs) to support the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs. All SETs are facilitated and encouraged to engage in continuing professional development to ensure that best quality support is available to meet the diverse needs of pupils.
- Flexibility in terms of SET resource allocation is recognised to allow for emerging needs during the school year.
- The Principal and S.E.N. co-ordinator endeavour to inform the S.E.N Team and whole staff of C.P.D. opportunities, especially when a training opportunity arises for their particular caseload.

3. Inclusive Education at Scoil Naomh Eoin

For the purposes of this document, the following definition by the NCSE, has been adopted. Inclusion is defined as a process of:

“addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and removing barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements, to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/ her attendance at school.”

Scoil Naomh Eoin has adopted a whole-school approach to inclusion. A positive ethos and learning environment is encouraged, whereby all students, including those with special educational and additional needs, feel welcome and experience a sense of community and belonging. The school community promotes the active engagement of each student in their learning and in the life of the school. There is a commitment to developing students' academic, social, emotional and independent living skills coupled with a focus on high aspirations and improving outcomes for all.

4. Inclusive Practice at Scoil Naomh Eoin

- Buddy System/ Yard Helpers: Yard helpers are on the infant yard each day. To enable the school to fulfil its policy with regard to the integration and inclusion of all pupils, a buddy system on yard will be perated according to the needs arising. This is to establish a welcoming and tolerant attitude towards difference within the school community.
- We recognise that the S.P.H.E. programme can play a valuable role in supporting inclusiveness when effectively delivered to all pupils. Circle time will be used to integrate and include all pupils with SEN.
- Celebrate achievements outside of academic performance.
- Mindfulness and meditation are also practised in our school, with a focus on well-being and the holistic development of the child.
- All pupils are entitled to their breaks and playtimes. Special Needs pupils are supported and monitored by the S.N.As and the Teacher on duty on the yard. Special arrangements and management programmes are supported by all staff.
- The Health and Safety Policy, available to all members of staff, is applicable to all school staff and pupils. Should the question of the administration of medication arise refer to the relevant policy.
- Special Needs pupils who have needs with regard to hygiene, toilet training and self-care issues are provided with a private changing room.

5. Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

In view of the substantial international evidence that early-intervention and prevention programmes can lead to improved outcomes for pupils,

school leaders should ensure that some teaching resources are used for this purpose. Scoil Naomh Eoin endeavours to develop and trial new approaches and to use assessment data to evaluate the efficacy of these interventions. We believe that developing and sharing successful practice has the potential to contribute to improvements in the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in language development and relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- At the Junior Infant induction meeting and during the first years at school, the encouragement of a parental involvement programme that focus on developing children's oral language skills, shared reading of books with children and developing their early mathematical skills.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Infant teacher and the learning support/resource team.

Scoil Naomh Eoin may deploy additional teaching resources in Junior classes to First, to strengthen station teaching approaches which target the promotion of language, literacy and numeracy skills. The use of early-intervention and prevention programmes helps mitigate the development of learning, social and emotional difficulties. Programmes and strategies such as Handwriting Without Tears, Sounds Abound Phonological Awareness, Numicon, Ready, Set Go Maths, Mata sa Rang, Precision Teaching for Literacy, Guided Reading with PM Readers are all utilised by the SEN Team working in these classes to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills of children in the younger classes.

All intervention programmes are carefully monitored to assess and record their impact on pupil progress, participation in learning and in school life. These programmes are implemented in an intensive manner, for the purpose intended and include frequent opportunities for pupils to practise skills. This involves collaboration of the SEN Team and class teachers to ensure constant assessment and reflection of practices which are being employed in these classes.

6. Implementation of the Revised Allocation Model (DES circular 0013/17)

Under the revised model, the Department provides special education teaching supports directly to schools based on their educational profiles (including a baseline component). A key principle underpinning this revised model is that all pupils, irrespective of special educational needs, are welcomed and enabled to enrol in their local schools. In addition, a fundamental objective is that special education teaching resources are utilised in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. The following principles are used by Scoil Naomh Eoin to guide the implementation of the revised model for allocating special education teaching supports. They form a whole-school approach to provision for pupils with special educational needs in our school:

- Resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs are used to facilitate the development of truly inclusive schools.
- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs are based on identified needs and are informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs.
- Special education teaching supports provided to schools are used solely for the support of pupils with identified special educational needs. The special education teaching supports are not used to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Neither are they used to allow any special education teacher sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class.

- **Pupils with the greatest levels of need have access to the greatest level of support**, and whenever possible, these pupils are supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.
- The school establishes and maintains a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All members have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs.

7. The Continuum of Support

Scoil Naomh Eoin uses the Continuum of Support framework set out by the Department of Education to assist in identifying and responding to pupils' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables the staff in Scoil Naomh Eoin to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

Identification of educational needs is central to the new model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, the staff in Scoil Naomh Eoin can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. The framework emphasises the importance of looking at a pupil's needs in context, and provides useful resources to support this (for example, Learning Environment Checklist, Basic Needs Checklist etc).

The Continuum of Support enables schools to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way. This means that needs can be responded to as early as possible. Of course, the principle that pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support is of primary importance. This approach is also supported by information and engagement with external professionals, as required.

7.1 Differentiation

Mainstream class teachers cater for pupils with a wide range of abilities and needs who have a diverse range of personal/home experiences. Pupils vary in their learning rates and styles. Differentiation is about matching teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in a mainstream class. The needs of the majority of pupils within a mainstream class can be met by differentiating teaching approaches for that class. There must be evidence of a differentiated classroom programme of a minimum of 6-8 weeks before a classroom support plan can be opened, unless a child has received a report from an outside agency.

7.2 Step 1: Classroom Support

Steps to be taken by the class teacher when drafting, implementing and reviewing a Classroom Support Plan:

1. Identify the issue.
2. Gather evidence of the pupil's baseline performance. Depending on the issue, one or more of the following evidence gathering methods will be used.
 - Parent/teacher consultation
 - Teacher observation records
 - Teacher-designed measures/assessments
 - Basic needs checklist*
 - Learning environment checklist*
 - Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist
 - Literacy and numeracy tests
 - Screening tests of language skills
3. Inform the class assigned SET to open a Student Support File (if not opened already for the pupil) and update the log of actions on the inside cover.
4. Draft the Classroom Support Plan using the agreed template in the Student Support File.

If needed, consult with assigned SET team member to provide practical support when drafting, implementing and reviewing Classroom Support Plan.
5. Finalise the plan in collaboration with the pupil's parent/s
6. Implement for an agreed period, time **the minimum being 6 weeks.**

7. Review the plan in February using the Review template in the Student Support File. Review this document in a collaborative manner with a focus on the extent to which the targets have been achieved by the pupil. Also consider if the pupil may move to the next stage of the continuum. If so, consult with the SEN CO-ORDINATOR.

7.3 Step 2: School Support

A Support Plan is required when interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet a pupil's special educational needs. The class teacher involves the **SET assigned to her/his class** in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

The process which is usually co-ordinated by the SET working alongside the class teacher. Interventions at this level will be additional to those provided through classroom support.

School Support Plans

For a pupil who has had a Support Plan from the previous year and this plan is continuing into the new school year:

- The School Support begins immediately in September utilising the existing Support Plan.
- This plan is reviewed and updated, based on consultation with the new class teacher and assessments administered by the SET.
- The review document and the new support plan are finalised at a meeting between the child's parents and relevant school staff members, this meeting will take place in October.

For a pupil enrolled during the previous school year who previously did not have a School Support Plan.

- Gather relevant data during September
- Draft and finalise the School Support Plan with consultation with the parents as soon as possible and not later than the end of October.

For a pupil not enrolled at the end of the previous school year and who presents as a new enrolment at the start or during the course of the new school year...

- Draft School Support Plans after a pupil has been in class for 6 weeks to allow for a settling in period.

Steps to be taken by the SET and class teacher when drafting, implementing and reviewing a School Support Plan:

1. Identify the issue.
2. Gather evidence of the pupil's baseline performance – strengths and concerns .
 - Teacher observation records
 - Teacher-designed measures/assessments
 - Parent and pupil interviews
 - Learning environment checklist
 - Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy
 - Formal observation of behaviour including Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence (ABC) Chart, frequency measures
 - Functional assessments as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
3. The assigned SET will open a Student Support File (if not opened already for the pupil) and update the log of actions on the inside cover.
4. The assigned SET will draft the School Support Plan using the template in the Student Support File. This will include priority learning needs, a small number of targets and a limited number of carefully chosen actions that will serve progression towards the targets. Identify suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual support.
5. Finalise the School Support Plan in consultation with the pupil's parent/s.
6. Provide all parties with a copy or access to the School Support Plan
7. Implement for an agreed period.
8. Provide for regular informal consultation between the class teacher and SET, and parent/s as deemed necessary
9. Review the plan in February using the Review template in the Student Support File. Review this document in a collaborative manner with a focus on the extent to which the targets have been achieved by the pupil.
10. End-of-Year review in early June.

7.4 Step 3: School Support Plus

School support plus applies to those pupils whose needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions detailed in Classroom Support and/ or School Support plans.

If a pupil's special educational needs are severe and/or persistent, they are likely to need intensive support. This support may take the form of small group work or individual teaching.

School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level.

Steps to be taken by the SET and class teacher when drafting, implementing and reviewing a School Support Plus Plan:

- The School Support Plus process will be initiated if, in reviewing the School Support Plan, it is agreed that the pupil is not making adequate learning progress.
- School Support Plus is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:
 - Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures
 - Parent and pupil interviews
 - Functional assessment
 - Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc.

Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.

It is a much more detailed plan and involves the same time line as the school support process.

8 Student Support File: Recording and Tracking School Support Plans

When a teacher or parent expresses concern about a student, a Student Support File is opened at Step 1 of the Continuum of Support. A Student Support File Template has been distributed to all teachers and a copy made available for download on the Staff Share Drive to enable the school to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. This stage of the process

is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress. This leads to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe.

Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support.

Monitoring outcomes is part of a dynamic process of identification, target-setting, intervention and review, which in turn leads to adjustments in support plans. The Student Support File provides the teachers in Scoil Naomh Eoin with a useful resource to support and record this process. It includes a Support Review Record to guide teachers when monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes with parents and pupils. We believe that such monitoring of progress, and subsequent adaptation of support plans, are key drivers of effective practice.

In addition to monitoring outcomes at the individual level, we believe that it is also important to review outcomes at group, class and whole-school level. This review includes measures of attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example, sense of belonging and connectedness to school) for pupils with special educational needs.

As special educational needs can vary from mild and transient to significant and enduring, educational planning should reflect the level of need of the individual pupil. In this regard, the Student Support File facilitates a graduated response across the different levels of the Continuum: Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus. For pupils with significant, enduring and complex needs, collaboration with external professionals, including multi-disciplinary teams, will be engaged to work with the child (for example, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and psychologist).

The Student Support File of each pupil is stored in a locked cabinet in the SENCO's room until that child has been assigned a member of the SEN Team at the beginning of the year, if it is deemed necessary that they require this level of support.

The SEN Co-Ordinator will update the whole school Continuum on a regular basis and ensure this is saved to the SET shared Drive in the school.

9 Target-setting

We believe that good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with special education needs. In Scoil Naomh Eoin targets are expressed in a way that is measurable and observable, and reflect the specific special educational needs of individual pupils (for example, focus on social and emotional difficulties if that is a primary area of concern). The teachers endeavour to set targets which are achievable within a specified time frame and also challenge and build on existing knowledge and address pupils' holistic needs.

Every target should include a **behaviour, condition and criterion**.

Examples: *When prompted with the initial letter sound (condition) Jane will decode unknown 1 syllable words (behaviour) within 1 minute (criterion).*

When eating lunch (condition) Jack will sit in his seat (behaviour) 3 out of 5 days a week (criterion).

Other effective behaviour words to include in targets include:

- *To write/ To list/ To match*
- *To describe/ To name (orally and/or in writing)*
- *To recite/ To say*
- *To identify (point/touch/circle)*
- *To differentiate by selecting, marking, separating into groups*
- *To compare/ To contrast*
- *To demonstrate (perform procedures with/without explanation)*
- *To classify/ To order*
- *To construct (draw/make/build)*
- *To solve*

Best practice indicates that targets should be:

- few in number
- strengths based
- informed by priority learning needs
- directly linked to suitable interventions
- based on the evidence collected through both formal and informal assessment approaches
- developed collaboratively - teachers in Scoil Naomh Eoin consult with parents when setting targets and reviewing progress. The views of pupils are also included in this process, through their direct involvement in the discussion or by gathering their views in advance of the review process. We believe that this collaboration will help ensure that targets are relevant, meaningful, realistic, and that they draw on the strengths and interests of pupils.

10 Roles in Supporting the Continuum of Support

The role of special education support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all. It is important that everyone contributes in the planning and implementation of our school policy on Special Education Needs.

10.1 Role of the Board of Management

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of this policy.
- Ensures that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided.
- Provides adequate funds for the purchase of materials.
- Provides a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of support.

10.2 Role of the Principal Teacher

“The principal teacher has overall responsibility for the school’s special education programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs”.

(Learning-Support Guidelines, p.38). The Education Act (1998) and the EPSEN Act (2004) have all reiterated this responsibility.

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

- Developing inclusive whole-school policies and monitoring their implementation
- Assigning staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinating teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- Ensuring that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Ensuring that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.
- 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.

While some of the duties listed above are delegated to a member of staff (Special Needs Co-ordinator) the principal retains overall responsibility for the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.

10.3 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's Role

In consultation with the Principal, the SEN co-ordinator's primary task is to foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each pupil. Duties to include:

- Provision of broad and balanced curriculum for pupils with SEN
- Plan for, promote and communicate the effective application of the 'Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools'
- Lead annual review of SEN policy to address priority needs in the school in a fair, effective manner
- Co-ordinate the implementation of whole school procedures for the selection of pupils for School Support and School Support Plus.
- Assist or arrange assistance from the SEN team for class teachers when drafting, implementing and reviewing a Classroom Support Plan
- Responsible for the updating of the Continuum of support for the school

- Co-ordinate effective filing and management of Student Support Files.
- Regular review of SET caseloads and allocation of resources available.
- Co-Ordination of In Class and Team Teaching support models.
- Co-ordinate the case-loads and timetables of SETs.
- Management and maintenance of SEN resources.
- Co-ordinate SEN Team review meetings at the agreed times throughout the school year, record these meetings and report to the Principal.
- Co-ordinate the co-ordination time permitted to SETs to liaise with one another and class teachers as they review actual pupil progress at any given time relative to the stated targets.
- Meet with parents on procedures for availing of special needs services as the need arises.
- Liaise with parents of children with special educational needs and with external agencies e.g. NEPS psychologists, therapists, SENO etc.
- Co-ordinate applications to the NCSE / SENO i.e. e.g. Assistive Technology
- Maintain effective links with feeder second level schools and, where appropriate, arrange meetings, hand-overs and follow-up to facilitate the transition of pupils with special educational needs.
- Identify, share and promote professional development opportunities relating to special educational teaching with SETs and class-teachers.
- Update regularly the whole staff on SEN related matters.
- Keep informed of current best practice for special educational needs.

10.4 Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher has **primary** responsibility for the progress of all pupils in her / his class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence are gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers regularly **differentiate lessons** by:

- Varying the level, structure and pace of lessons
- Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interest
- Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources including the use of technology.
- Providing learning activities and materials which are suitably challenging.
- Carrying out error analyses of a pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty, for particular attention in subsequent lessons.
- Providing lower-achieving pupils with strategies for reading, spelling and problem solving.
- Adapting learning materials for lower-achieving pupils.
- Implementing teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties.
- Creating a positive learning environment within the classroom.

The class teacher plays an important role in the initial identification of pupils who may have general or specific learning disabilities and in the creation and facilitation of these pupil's support plan's.

They can do this by:

- Gathering information through formal and informal means, in line with Continuum of Support Guidelines, with a view to informing interventions.
- Administering standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines.
- Discussing outcomes of standardised testing with SEN Class Co-ordinators to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching.
- Liaising with external agencies, when relevant.
- Meeting with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
- Liaise with the SET regarding the opening of a Student Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support.
- Regularly meeting with Special Education Teachers and with relevant staff to review Support Files.

- Collaborate with SET in developing classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support and to develop School support and School support plus plans where applicable.
- Collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching.
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session.

10.5 Role of the Special Education Teacher (SET)

The activities of the SET should include both teaching and non-teaching duties. Teachers should, where possible:

- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole-school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.
- Provide supplementary teaching commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.
- Research the pupil's specific learning difficulty, to become au fait with their impediment to learning.
- Implement recommendations from outside agencies, wherever possible, and liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children in their care.
- Develop a Support Plan for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class teachers and parents.
- Maintain fortnightly planning, progress record and Cuntas Míosúil for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of support.
- Upload and save these records onto the SET shared drive.
- Deliver intensive early intervention programmes and provide supplementary teaching in Literacy and / or Numeracy to pupils in the junior section of the school - (Junior Infants to 2nd Class), caseload permitting.
- Provide teaching in Literacy and / or Numeracy to pupils in the senior section of the school who experience low achievement and / or learning difficulties.

- Co-ordinate the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, giving due consideration to:
 - The selection criteria specified in this policy
 - Teachers' professional observations
 - Input from parents
- Contribute to the development of this policy at whole school level.
- Provide advice to Class Teachers (if requested) about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties in such areas as:
 - Individual pupil assessment
 - Programme planning
 - Curriculum differentiation
 - Approaches to language development
 - Approaches to reading/spelling /writing/Numeracy
- Meet with parents of each pupil who is in receipt of support to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
- Contribute at 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.
- Liaise with external agencies such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists etc. to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- The SET team should work closely with class teachers to implement school policies on preventing learning difficulties, screening pupils for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching and other forms of learning support, where it is deemed necessary.

The SET team plays an important role in co-ordinating the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching by -

- Co-ordinating the administration by class teachers of a whole-school screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and / or learning difficulties in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Consulting with class teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment, taking into account the pupils' scores on an appropriate standardised screening measure, agreed criteria for identifying pupils, teachers' own views of the pupils' difficulties and needs and the number of pupils to whom learning support can be provided.
- Carrying out a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and / or learning difficulties and, in consultation with the class teacher and parents, identify the type and level of learning support that is needed to meet the pupil's needs.

10.6 Role of the Parents.

“Parents through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child’s learning programmes”

(Learning Support Guidelines p. 52).

Parents can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy and mathematical activities in the early years before formal schooling.
- Supporting the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as:
 - Using Information and Communications Technology (ICT), where available, to support learning in Literacy and / or Numeracy
 - Book sharing / reading stories
 - Storytelling
 - Paired reading (listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading)
 - Discussions about school & other activities to build vocabulary/thinking skills
 - Writing lists and short accounts about children’s experiences

- Counting and measuring and other activities involving number

Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching,-

- Parents should implement home-based activities outlined in their child's Student Support File.
- Discuss the outcomes with their child's teachers.
- Talk positively about school and school work.
- Avail of real-life situations to discuss the importance of language, literacy and numeracy.
- Model involvement in language, literacy and mathematical activities at home by engaging in and talking about these activities.
- Parents should keep the class teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning.
- They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home.
- Discuss their child's progress with the SET team at the end of an instructional term.
- Where supplementary teaching is to be continued, they should discuss the revised learning targets and activities in their child's Student Support File.

If, following diagnostic assessment, the child has been identified as requiring supplementary teaching, consultation should take place with the parent re the following -

- The results of the assessment.
- The learning targets in the Student Support File.
- The actions to be taken by the school to meet those targets.
- The ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.

10.7 Role of the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

A Special Needs Assistant may be appointed to the school to support a child. Parents' permission is sought before an application is made to the SENO for a SNA. Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist pupils with disabilities in an educational context. The SNA works

under the direction and supervision of the class teacher in order to promote effective learning and teaching.

SNAs may be involved in supporting the student both in an academic context within the classroom and in the wider sphere of their personal and social education outside of the classroom. Their duties are assigned by the Principal. Their work is supervised by the Principal and the Principal has the sole responsibility of allocating SNA support throughout the school. The allocation will be reviewed annually.

The SNA should:

- Support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum.
- Contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils.
- Support learning and teaching in the classroom.
- Attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the BOM.
- Attend meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary.
- Ensure the safety of the SEN pupils in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty.
- Maintain a record of support provided to their SEN pupil.
- Accompany SEN pupil to and from supplementary lessons when appropriate.

10.8 Students with Special Educational Needs

A student in receipt of support teaching should, where appropriate:

- Be an active participant in developing his/her own Student Support Plan and become familiar with the learning targets that have been set for him/her.
- Contribute to the evaluation of his/her progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning.

11 Assessment & Referral Procedures

11.1 Initial Screening

In Junior Infants the *Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)* or the *Jackson's Skills Test* can be administered to pupils chosen by class teachers, based on their observations.

In Senior Infants the *Drumcondra Tests of Early Literacy* and *Early Numeracy* are administered by the class teachers and the SET team during the last block. These are then used to facilitate the early identification of learning strengths and/or difficulties. Further to these if the pupils fall below the cut off scores, the full diagnostic assessment of *Early Literacy or Numeracy* will be administered.

11.2 Standardised Testing:

In adherence with the Assessment policy, the *Drumcondra Primary Reading Test - Revised* and *SIGMA-T (Maths)* assessments are administered on a whole-school basis, on specified dates in May and June to classes from first to sixth. Class teachers administer, correct and record results for these standardised tests.

11.3 Diagnostic Assessment:

The SET team will discuss the recorded results with the class teacher, and carry out further screening tests and / or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary.

These tests may include:

- *WIAT- III. Wechsler Individual Achievement Test for Teachers 3rd Ed.*
- *New Non Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)*
- *Non-Verbal Reasoning Test (NVRT)*
- *Neale's Analysis Reading Test (NARA)*
- *Assessment of Comprehension and Expression (ACE)*
- *Teacher's Resource for Phonic Assessment*
- *Progress in Learning Assessment for Phonics*
- *Bangor Dyslexic*
- *Diagnostic Spelling Test (Nfer-Nelson)*

- *Maths Assessment for learning and teaching (MALT)*
- *Tried and Tested Maths Matters Diagnostic Assessments.*
- *Phonological Assessment Battery (Nfer-Nelson)*

11.4 Liaising & Referral to out of school agencies

In compliance with the Continuum of Support provided by NEPS, if a child's special educational needs are persistent, they are likely to need more intensive support. The school will refer to NEPS educational psychologists, Speech and Language therapists, Occupational Therapists, Early Intervention and School Age Teams.

- The special education teacher and class teacher will consult with the parents to discuss the need for referral and to seek their consent
- The class teacher and special education teacher will complete the necessary referral forms in consultation with the Principal and parents.
- A copy of these are given to the SENCO to add to the child's support file and the log of actions updated.
- Access to outside agencies will be dependent on resources made available by the DES and/or HSE.

12 Selection Criteria for Support Provision:

The following selection criteria encompass all current guidelines and general good practice. Pupils will be selected in accordance with these criteria, stopping at (1) if the caseload is full, but will continue on to point (2) caseload permitting, and so on through the selection criteria.

<p>1. <u>Children with identified complex needs by an external professional such as a:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical Disability ➤ Hearing Impairment ➤ Visual Impairment ➤ Emotional Disturbance ➤ Borderline/Mild General Learning Disability ➤ Moderate General Learning Disability ➤ Severe/Profound General Learning Disability ➤ Autistic Spectrum Disorder ➤ Assessed Syndrome ➤ Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment 	<p>School Support Plus Individual Planning</p>	<p>Type of Support In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal</p> <p>Personnel SET teacher Class Teacher Outside Agencies Parents</p>
<p>2. Pupils with severe behavioural/ emotional issues which it is deemed require intervention.</p> <p>3. Pupils scoring at/below the 16th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.</p> <p>4. Pupils scoring at/below the 16th percentile on standardised assessments in numeracy.</p> <p>5. Pupils diagnosed as having Specific learning disabilities scoring below the 20th percentile in standardised assessments in Literacy/Numeracy will be supported as advised by NEPS or other support agencies.</p> <p>6. Prevention and Early Intervention Programs in literacy:</p>	<p>School Support Planning Group or Individual</p>	<p>Type of Support In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal</p> <p>Personnel SET teacher Class Teacher Parents</p>

<p>Infants-1st Class.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Prevention and Early Intervention Programs in numeracy: Infants-1st Class 8. Pupils from 2nd to 6th class, scoring above the 16th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy, who continue to experience difficulty, despite Classroom Support interventions by the class teacher, will be offered support should the caseload allow. 9. Pupils from 2nd to 6th class, scoring above the 16th percentile on standardised assessments in numeracy, who continue to experience difficulty, despite Classroom Support interventions by the class teacher, will be offered support should the caseload allow. 10. Pupils diagnosed as having Specific learning disabilities above the 20th percentile in standardised assessments in Literacy/Numeracy will be supported as advised by NEPS or other support agencies. 11. Children requiring EAL support- (depending on level of need). 12. Students identified as exceptionally able, informed by standardised test results and teacher observations, where there are sufficient resources available to cater for this group. 13. Children who are fostered and who continue to experience difficulty, despite Stage One interventions by the class teacher, will be offered support should the caseload allow 	<p>School Support Planning Group or Individual</p>	<p>Type of Support In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal</p> <p>Personnel SET teacher Class Teacher Parents</p>
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13 Organisation of Special Education Provision

13.1 Mixed Model

Currently, we have a Mixed Model of Support in operation.

- Individual Withdrawal
- Small Group Withdrawal
- In-class support encompassing Station Teaching, Lead and Support Teaching, Parallel Teaching, Alternative and Teaming Teaching

13.2 Timetabling

- The special education team & class teacher will agree times for the withdrawal of pupils or for in-class support.
- The timetable will be drawn up in consultation with the SENCO and Principal
- The class teacher, the SENCO and Principal will be given a copy of each special education teacher's timetable.
- If pupils are being withdrawn, care must be taken to ensure that pupils are not missing the same subject on a regular basis.

13.3 Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

There are two instructional terms:

Block 1 – October to February, Block 2 – March through to the following September. Following the Review process at the end of each block, SET's and Class teachers will make a decision whether the pupil needs to remain at that level of the Continuum or move up or down on the Continuum depending on the pupil's needs. If there is any movement on the Continuum for that pupil, the assigned SET must notify the parents.

14 Staff Meetings/Croke Park Hours

Special Education provision will be included on the agenda for staff meetings /Croke Park hours at least once per instructional term. The special education support team will attend and contribute to these meetings when deemed necessary.

15 Code of Behaviour

In relation to our Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy, teachers are cognisant of the behavioural and emotional problems that may manifest in special needs children. These issues will be taken into account when dealing with behavioural problems and incidents involving these children. While we aim to promote a disciplined and respectful learning environment, we also accept differences in our pupils and endeavour to deal with the problems of special needs pupils in a caring and understanding way.

16 Provision for More Able Students

Support for more able students is given through the following approaches:

Learning tasks are differentiated by content, task and outcome.

- Content: depth, breadth and level of work. Teachers plan lessons to address all levels of ability in the classroom.
- Task: complexity and sophistication of the different tasks that are suitably challenging. The teacher plans tasks to help pupils achieve as well as providing a variety of tasks.
- Outcome: a common task perhaps in which pupils achieve different levels of success but where each child is challenged at some point in the activity.
- Students can experience different roles within the classroom via a variety of tasks/challenges/groupings etc. and thus develop their social skills.
- Extension/Enrichment Activities - providing extension work for pupils who finish work early, but not just more of the same.

17 Transition – Pre-school to Primary & Primary to Secondary

17.1 Enrolment of children with special needs

- Parents are given an enrolment application form to fill out prior to their child enrolling in the school. On this form parents are asked to give details of all assessments the child may have had. The school stresses the importance of parents informing the school of any 'special need' their child may have. If a pupil has an identified special need and is already receiving a service from another organisation, it is the responsibility of the parents to notify the school. If the child received support under the AIMS support scheme in Pre-school it is the responsibility of the parents to forward to the school the AIMS plan which was utilised in playschool for their child. The Special Education needs Organiser (SENO) is contacted at the earliest opportunity so as to apply for SNA assistance for the pupil, if deemed necessary. Parents will be informed at all times of progress and meetings are arranged with them to discuss concerns.
- The class teacher and SET team will read all current reports on the child prior to receiving the child in school.
- Having gathered the relevant information, the Board of Management will ensure that a child with Special Education Needs will be educated in an inclusive environment.

17.2 Special Needs Pupils transferring from another school

- Parents of a pupil with Special Needs transferring from another school are asked to provide the school with copies of all reports regarding the needs of the child.
- If resources have been granted to the previous school, for the benefit of the child a new application will be made to the SENO for those resources to be continued after the transfer. Pupils transferring who had been receiving support in the previous school will continue to get support if they meet the criteria set out in this policy.

17.3 Transfer to Post Primary

The SENO advises school and parents on the options available for post primary education. Parents may pass on reports and information. Reports and assessment results will be made available to secondary schools on request by the school, and provided parents give written consent for the information to be forwarded. The principal facilitates visits from local post

primary school staff and pupils, and informs the post primary school of any pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Discussions based on this transfer will take place in 6th Class. The SET will liaise with the support teacher of the local second level schools to try to ensure smooth transition of children from first to second level.

18 Liaising with Parents

18.1 Parent-Teacher Meetings with SET's

The nature of special education provision means that meetings with parents are on-going and regular. However the SET team will be available to meet parents on the designated days for P/T meetings outside of school hours in October.

18.2 Class Teacher Liaising with Parents.

It is accepted practice for class teachers to consult with the parents of all their pupils from time to time. However, for parents of pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching, additional time will be devoted to consultation and collaborative planning.

In the case of each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and / or a learning difficulty following administration of an appropriate screening measure, the class teacher will:

- Make parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress.
- Outline the school's practices regarding the administration of diagnostic tests by the special education team and seek the approval of the pupil's parents to proceed with such assessments.
- Outline the support that is available in the school to pupils who experience low achievement and / or learning difficulties.
- Indicate to the pupil's parents that a meeting with the SET will follow the assessment.
- After the diagnostic assessment, attend, if possible, the meeting between the pupil's parents and the SET and indicate how the pupil's class programme will be modified in order to achieve the agreed learning targets in the Student Support File.

19 Parental Permissions

- Written parental permissions are required for children to attend any supplementary teaching. When a child is selected the parents must accept or decline the place in writing.
- Parental permissions are also required for support to undertake individual, diagnostic testing (Circular 02/05).
- Copies/records of these permissions are kept in student support file.

20 Monitoring of this Policy

Monitoring the academic progress of the pupils in this school will be accomplished by:

- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties by the class teacher.
- Formal and informal testing and observation of work by the class teacher.
- Monitoring of the Special Education Policy is an ongoing and developmental process. The whole school staff will discuss this Policy at least once per year at a staff meeting, and review as necessary.

21 SEN Procedures for COVID-19

- To minimise the interaction SET's have with class bubbles throughout the Covid-19 epidemic, the withdrawal support model where possible will be prioritised as the mode of instruction for block one and will be reviewed for block 2.
- In-class support will continue in the early intervention classes if deemed necessary by the needs and profile within these classes.
- In-class support may be necessary in an older class where the priority needs within that class indicate that this model is the most appropriate mode of instruction for those pupils.

21.1 SET Procedures for moving pupils safely to and from SEN settings

- Aim: To ensure each child doesn't have contact with any un-sanitised surface which may have been touched by a child from another pod.

Hand sanitisation must be done on entry and exit of every room.

1. Sanitise hands before you depart your room.
2. Sanitise hands prior to knocking on & opening classroom door if doors are not opened.
3. Call pupil(s) from the door (agree with class teacher on the safest route out of the room, maybe child seated close to the door?)
4. Pupil sanitises hands before leaving the room.
5. Pupil carries own SEN folder. SET should not handle pupil folder at all, if possible.
6. SET opens and closes all doors.
7. On arrival at classroom SET sanitise hands.
8. When activity/classwork is finished the workspace should be sanitized. Anti-viral spray should be used on desks and chairs, chair backs and sides, used as well as any other surfaces/equipment that were handled.
9. Windows should be left open as much as possible to allow for ventilation. On colder days, windows should be opened between groups and during breaktimes.
10. SET and pupils sanitise hands before leaving the room.
11. SET must escort the pupil (s) back to their classroom. Again, opening all doors to minimise pupil contact with surfaces.
12. Pupils must sanitise hands before re-entering their classroom.
13. Folders should be placed straight into school bags by the pupils.

21.2 General Guidelines for SET teachers in the SEN room:

- Pupils should be seated 1m apart and 2m from the teacher, where possible. Where this is not possible staff are advised to wear a mask and visor.
- If possible, pupils attending the SEN room should have an individual tray in which to keep their books, copies, stationary etc.
- Pupils should have their own stationary for use only in the SEN room. This should be kept in their tray. This should never be used in the classroom.
- Pupil folders should be plastic so that they can be easily wiped down with sanitiser.

- Pupil copies should have plastic covers so that they may be wiped down with sanitiser.

21.3 Home/School Communication

- If a home/school communication journal is in use between SET and the parents, it will be placed in a zip lock bag and sanitised before it goes home each day.
- Parents will be asked to sanitise it again and the bag before returning it to school

22 Ratification & Reviewing this Policy

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 29th of September 2020.

It will be reviewed again in 2021-2022

Signed: Deirdre Doyle

Chairperson

