

# Special Educational Needs Policy

## All Children Learn Differently

Our school aims to ensure that each pupil is given the maximum opportunity and support to develop her full potential and to foster her positive self-esteem.

‘We strive to develop each child to her full potential...’ (School Vision Statement).

## Special Educational Needs Policy:

This policy has been devised in order to update and review the existing policy, in accordance with recent Department Circulars regarding Special Education Needs (SEN). It will also act as the source of information for the parents and staff of our school as to how children with special needs are supported in Scoil Mhuire. The line of communication between the school and parents for Learning Support and Resource needs is always the Principal according to the Department of Education and Skills Guidelines. The Principal will convene meetings with parents, mainstream teachers and LS/RT teachers to assess needs and when developing an Individual Educational Plan or an Individual Behaviour Plan (IEP/ IBP). Subsequent meetings may not always require the Principal to be present, but copies of meetings should be lodged with the Principal.

Special Educational Needs and Behavioural Needs are dealt with in the documents from the Department of Education and Skills, the Special Education Support Service (SESS) and the National Council for Special Needs in Education, (NCSE) :

### Learning Support Guidelines

### Special Educational Needs – A continuum of support

Each child is the responsibility of the mainstream class teacher and when the mainstream curriculum is proving too challenging – the teacher will follow the continuum of support:

- In class differentiation and support – contact parents and see what can be done in class
- In school differentiation and support – in consultation with parents, Special Education teachers and the Principal, a programme of in-school support will be set up.
- Out of school support – engaging support through assessment by a psychologist, a speech and language therapist and others, depending on the age of the child and the nature of the support required.

## Aims of Special Education Teaching:

The principal aims of Special Education teaching is to :

- optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils to reach their full potential at every level
- support pupils to access all areas of the curriculum and to enjoy learning
- support pupil’s development both socially and emotionally
- support pupils to attain satisfactory levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy and

life skills before leaving primary school

- collaborate with teachers and parents/guardians to support the learning needs of each pupil
- to develop wellbeing, positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils
- promote early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and prevent/reduce difficulties in learning

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Support Team**

### **The Principal Teacher:**

The Principal has overall responsibility for the school's support programme and for the operation of services for children with additional support needs.

The Principal in collaboration with the in school management team (ISM):

- Maintains a list of pupils attending support and acquires a timetable from each support teacher
- Helps to co-ordinate the caseloads of support teachers where necessary
- Supports the implementation of continuous assessments at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties
- Advises parents on procedures for availing of additional needs services
- Ensures that liaison with external agencies to arrange assessments is fulfilled by the relevant teachers and that any necessary follow-up contact is made with these agencies
- Arranges for classroom accommodation and resources, as appropriate
- Consults with class teachers on how they can contribute to the implementation of the school plan on support
- Ensures that the class teacher takes responsibility for planning and directing the appropriate learning activities for each pupil in his/her class who is in receipt of support teaching
- Supports the professional development of all staff members and encourages ongoing professional development in the area of additional support needs, particularly for those working in this area
- Facilitates parent/teacher meetings to ensure communication between class teachers, support teachers and parent/guardians of pupils in receipt of support teaching
- Ensures consultation takes place between support staff and the principal on a regular basis
- Encourages consultation with parents/guardians and outside agencies in the support process
- Informs parents/guardians of new-comers to the school of our selection policy for support

### **The Class Teacher:**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the class, including those selected for supplementary teaching.

The Class Teacher is required:

- To differentiate the class curriculum appropriately so as to optimize the learning of all pupils within the class and to help the pupils with special needs to achieve success at their own levels in class.
- To provide learning activities which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and

progress in order to build self-esteem.

- To consult and co-operate with assigned support teacher(s) regarding priority needs, instructional activities progress of pupils receiving school support teaching.
- To administer screening tests : Drumcondra Primary Tests, MICRA-T, SIGMA-T and NNRIT where appropriate.
- To correct all standardised tests and record results on the Aladdin system and file pupil's tests in their folders.
- To discuss with the Special Education teacher the results of assessments and to decide the type of intervention required to best meet the needs of the pupil.
- To review with SET, pupil's progress at regular intervals, provide input for the updating of the continuum of support (COS) document (November and June) and update Log of Actions in real time.
- To make initial contact with parents to discuss concerns about their child's progress and to seek the approval of the parents to proceed with further support/intervention/assessment.
- To contact parents/guardians if support is to be discontinued
- To be aware of, to be kept updated and to consult with relevant professionals about the special needs of children within their class.

### **The Special Education Teacher**

The Special Education Teacher provides support for children with additional needs. The Support Teacher:

- Consults on a regular basis with classroom teachers
- Assists class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of ICT and suitable software and range of other related material used in the classroom
- Identifies pupils, in collaboration with the principal and class teacher, who require additional support
- Develops - in consultation with class teacher and parents/guardians - a School Support Plan for each pupil receiving learning support. A copy of which is filed in the Class Folder in the Learning Support Room and online on the SET Drive.
- Develops - in consultation with class teacher and parents/guardians - a School Support Plus Plan for each pupil on Stage Three of the Continuum of Support. A copy of which is filed in the Class Folder and online on the SET Drive in the Learning Support Room.
- Carries out and interprets diagnostic assessments on pupils in collaboration with the class teacher as required
- Maintains a weekly planning and progress report for each individual or group of pupils
- Maintains an attendance record for each individual attending support classes
- Reviews pupil progress regularly in conjunction with class teachers and parents to update the Continuum of Support (COS) document in November and June in each year
- Ensures Log of Actions is completed in real time
- Provides early intervention programmes for younger pupils
- Makes necessary contact with speech therapists and/or psychologist regarding pupils in support programme
- Meets, consults with and advises parents, accompanied by the class teacher, and principal when necessary, but in particular when meeting parents of new children on Stage Three of the

#### Continuum of Support

- Meets with relevant professionals, e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists etc. and informs class teacher of outcome

### **The Board of Management**

The Board of Management:

- Will be informed of and ratify the Special Educational Needs Policy
- Ensure secure facilities for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SEN support are provided

### **Staged Approach to Learning Support: Continuum of Support**

Our approach to learning support is a staged approach suggested by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). This is known as the Continuum of Support.

#### **Stage 1: Classroom Support**

Classroom support is the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for a pupil's individual needs and those who require approaches to learning/ and or behaviour which are additional or different from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level begins when a parent/guardian or class teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The class teacher and parents/guardians discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. The Classroom Support Plan process that occurs during Stage One provides a record of intervention(s) that take place in the classroom and informs future teaching and learning in relation to the child with emerging needs. This plan will form the first intervention in support for pupils.

At Stage One the following process takes place:

1. Class teacher or parents/guardians identifies need
2. Class teacher meets with the parents/guardians to discuss needs and consider suitable strategies to be adopted. Other personnel will be consulted as appropriate
3. A Classroom Support Plan will be created, outlining approaches and targets and will be signed by parents/guardians with a review date
4. Following the outcome of the review, the necessary course of action for the pupil is agreed by the class teacher and parents/guardians

#### **Stage 2: School Support**

Where interventions at classroom support level are not sufficient to fully meet the pupil's needs School Support may, therefore, be required. This level of support requires collaboration between class and special education teachers in the problem-solving process. School Support involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan. The class teacher, special education teacher and parents/guardians collaborate to create a School Support Plan for the pupil. This plan will form the second intervention in support for pupils.

#### **Stage 3: School Support Plus**

If a pupil's needs are severe and/or persistent, they may need an increase in support/interventions. A School Support Plus Plan (SSPP) should expand and enhance further on previous School Support Plans implemented for the pupil. An SSPP is created in collaboration with the class teacher, special

education teacher, principal and parents/guardians. School Support Plus may involve personnel outside the school team to input into the planning of targets, methodologies and supports required for a pupil. This plan will form the third intervention in support for pupils.

In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at Stage Three will be necessary on their entry to school.

### **Exceptionally Able Pupils**

In Scoil Mhuire differentiation is central to our teaching methodologies and in the case of pupils with exceptional ability, all teachers differentiate upwards and provide more challenging and sometimes additional work for pupils in their classes.

Where timetabling permits it may be feasible to create an exceptionally able group withdrawal for 4th Class, 5th Class and 6th Class. Pupils identified for an exceptionally able learning group should achieve a standard score of 130+ on either the Micra-T or Sigma-T standardised tests. A class teacher may also make a recommendation to the principal for the inclusion of a pupil where they have not achieved a score of 130+.

### **Timetabling**

The principal oversees timetabling in the school and support for pupils with additional support/educational needs is allocated based on DES circular 07/2019. Special Education timetables are drawn up by the Special Education Teacher once classes and pupils have been allocated. SET liaise with class teachers to engage in the most optimal support for pupils in the class teacher's class. Once finalised, a copy is given to the principal and the class teacher. A copy is also uploaded to the school SET Google Drive.

Class teachers will make every effort to ensure that pupils who are withdrawn from the classroom for support will not miss out on the same curricular area each time they receive support teaching.

### Calendar for Support

Month	Week	
September	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Review and decide on support groupings</li><li>● Send home Parents/Guardians SSPP input forms to parents/guardians of children on Stage Three of the Continuum</li><li>● Add newly received reports and information to existing Student Support Files</li><li>● Identify and assess (if necessary) newcomers</li><li>● Share COS document with class teacher to make them aware of the needs identified in June</li><li>● Facilitate Class Teacher reviewing reports and relevant documentation</li></ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Meet with children on Stage 3 of the Continuum and complete Child Input form. Begin to build a rapport with the children</li><li>● Read and analyse all information pertaining to children in receipt of SSPPs</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate teachers to complete Running Records for pupils in their class from Senior Infants to 2nd/3rd Class</li> <li>Organise resources</li> <li>Draft timetables</li> <li>Meet with Class Teachers to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the needs of the pupils</li> <li>nature of support to be provided eg. team teaching, stations, small group instruction, withdrawals etc.</li> <li>groupings</li> <li>timetable</li> <li>provide class teacher with SSPP input form</li> </ul> </li> <li>Send home consent for support forms</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class teacher, SET and parents/guardians consultation meetings</li> <li>SET meet new class groupings</li> <li>Support classes commence during Week 3</li> </ul>

<b>October</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get to know class groupings</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with class teachers to agree on : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengths, needs and home/school targets for SSPP pupils</li> <li>support for pupils in the classroom and School Support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise SSPP's and provide all relevant personnel with a copy and upload a copy to the SET Drive</li> </ul>

<b>November</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with class teachers to prepare for p/t meetings</li> <li>Provide support to class teachers completing standardised testing</li> <li>Update the COS document to reflect current information and allocations</li> </ul>
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<b>May</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with class teachers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise in relation to school reports</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<b>June</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with class teachers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review SSPs and SSPPs</li> <li>confirm updates to the COS document</li> </ul> </li> <li>Update the COS document</li> <li>Support class teacher in the filing of relevant documentation into pupil's file</li> <li>Update files in the SET drive as necessary</li> </ul>
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## Assessment and Reporting

**Standardised tests** are administered to pupils in Senior Infants to Sixth Class each year. Class teachers administer, correct, score and file standardised tests for their class.

Class	Test	Month	Results Given to Parents
Senior Infants	Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy	May May	School Report School Report
1st Class	MICRA - T SIGMA - T Drumcondra Test of Spelling	May May May	School Report School Report School Report
2nd Class	NNRIT GL Assessment - Dyslexia Screener MICRA - T SIGMA - T Drumcondra Test of Spelling	November November May May May	Parent Teacher Meeting Parent Teacher Meeting School Report School Report School Report
3rd Class	MICRA - T SIGMA - T Drumcondra Test of Spelling	May May May	School Report School Report School Report
4th Class	GL Assessment - Dyslexia Screener MICRA - T SIGMA - T Drumcondra Test of Spelling	November May May May	Parent Teacher Meeting School Report School Report School Report
5th Class	NNRIT MICRA - T SIGMA - T Drumcondra Test of Spelling	November May May May	Parent Teacher Meeting School Report School Report School Report
6th Class	GL Assessment - Dyslexia Screener MICRA - T SIGMA - T Drumcondra Test of Spelling	November May May May	Parent Teacher Meeting School Report School Report School Report

The Class Teacher will record the results of the standardised tests on Aladdin. The administering of standardised tests may take place on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday (mornings only). Standardised tests may be administered for an individual pupil if deemed appropriate.

Parents will be personally notified if there is a notable change in their child's scores.

**Diagnostic Testing** is carried out by SET in collaboration with the Class Teacher where concerns have been identified.

1. Aston Index
2. YARC (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension)
3. Non Word Reading Test (Hodder and Stoughton)
4. Single Word Reading Test (Hodder and Stoughton)

All assessment records are kept securely in line with GDPR. These files are available for class teachers to read, but should not be taken out of the designated room. In the interests of pupil confidentiality, test results, psychological assessments and progress reports are made available to the teachers working with the child, the parents/guardians and the principal.

### **Review of Progress**

The principal, class teacher and SET in consultation with the parents/guardians will to the best of their ability provide the most suitable support for each pupil. Each pupil's progress will be reviewed at appropriate intervals during the school year according to their support plans. This progress will then be evaluated and reviewed by SET and the class teacher to determine the level of support to be provided. If a child is deemed ready for support to be discontinued the pupil's parents/guardians will be notified and the matter discussed with them. If supplementary support is to be continued previous targets may be extended or new targets established and type of support to be provided (in class or withdrawal) will be determined.

### **Enrolment of Children with Special Educational Needs**

Scoil Mhuire is an academically non-selective school and welcomes children of any abilities, including those with special educational needs and the exceptionally able. We seek to provide for the needs of each individual child, accepting that children with special educational needs learn at a different pace and in a different way to other children. They should belong to a peer group and mix with children of different abilities in a variety of situations. Pupils will be catered for by their class teacher but may be withdrawn in small groups for additional support, with parental permission.

### **Transfer to Secondary School**

Consultation takes place between our school and the second-level school when a child is transferring. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the secondary school of their child's special educational needs and furnish them with all of the relevant information about their child, including psychological reports, when available.

Scoil Mhuire will make every effort to facilitate the transition from primary school to secondary school and when requested will supply the Education Passport to the secondary school.

### **Evaluation and Review**

This policy was created and reviewed in 2003, 2008, 2014, 2017, 2023


Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024

Signed:



Principal

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024

Date of next review: January 2025