**Special Educational Needs Policy Galbally NS**

**Note**

(We are currently reviewing our SEN policy following recent changes by the DES .Our existing policy continues on page 2Below is a brief summary of recent developments.)

**A New Model to Support Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

From September 2017, there is a new model in place to support pupils with special educational needs in all mainstream primary schools as per the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the National Council for Special Educational Needs (NCSE). While the full details of this model may be downloaded from www.education.ie (DES website), The following information will be of use to you as a reference guide to this new model.

**What is the goal of this new model?**

The goal of this new model is to allocate and deploy additional teaching resources for students with special educational needs in a fair and more equitable way.

**Who decides on how teaching supports are allocated?**

Schools are responsible for deciding how additional teaching supports are deployed in a way that facilitates the development of inclusive schools and caters for all students who require additional supports. The deployment of resources is based on pupils’ identified needs and is informed by regular reviews of their progress, in consultation with their parents and external professional bodies where applicable.

**How are students identified for additional support?**

The professional judgment of teachers based on school assessments (class work, homework, general class interaction); standardised test results and other forms of assessment; input from parents as well as information from professional reports (where available) inform all decisions in relation to identifying pupils for additional supports.

**Who are the students that will receive additional support?**

The individual needs of all students are catered for through differentiation in the classroom. Students with significant difficulties in the areas of Academic Competence, Social, Emotional and Behavioural Competence, Physical and Sensory Competence will receive additional support. Those with the greatest level of need, particularly pupils with Complex Needs, will receive the greatest level of support.

**What type of support will pupils receive?**

Differentiation has always been a key factor in an effective learning environment. The class teacher has responsibility for all pupils. Strategies used in the classroom to cater for the needs of all students and the wide variety of learning styles include tiered assignments, the use of technology, varied questioning and flexible grouping. Differentiation strategies promote inclusive learning and apply to all curricular areas.

Team Teaching

Small Group Teaching (inside or outside the classroom)

One to one teaching

While some pupils will require ongoing support, others may require support in a specific area for a shorter period of time. Progress will be monitored carefully and the level and type of support will be adjusted accordingly.

**What if my child has already been in receipt of support under the old model?**

All pupils identified as having additional needs will continue to receive the appropriate level of support. No child will be disadvantaged by this new model.

**The new Student Support File**

Teachers plan carefully and they track and review the progress of all pupils.

In the case of pupils with additional needs, Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) will continue to be used in our school but will be incorporated into a template recommended by this new model called the Student Support File. The class teacher, support teacher, parents, pupil, external support services (where applicable) will all be involved in this process. Ongoing, meaningful engagement between the school, parents and external support services is essential in supporting all pupils, particularly pupils with additional needs.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to meet with you to discuss further.

**Introduction**

Galbally National School is co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Cashel and Emly. It is a mainstream primary school, catering for a full cross section of children. The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parents on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and / or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.

Galbally NS is an inclusive environment which embraces and celebrates the uniqueness of every pupil. We strive to nurture and cater for the needs of all pupils within the school. Pupils with SEN are integrated into mainstream classes; they receive instruction in all areas of the Revised Primary School Curriculum and receive additional support where necessary.Appropriate terminology will be used when referring to the pupil with SEN; for example “The child has Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The child has a mild general learning disability. The child has a specific speech and language disorder.”

The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Education Needs:

* One Learning Support Teacher
* 1.5 Resource Teachers for children with Special Educational Needs
* 2 .5 Special Needs Assistants.

**Special education team meetings:**

Teachers on the Special Needs team meet regularly to plan, share practice and discuss the learning outcomes of the children on their caseload. Class teachers have regular informal discussions with SEN teachers with regard to the progress of the children in their care. Time-tabled meetings are arranged, when required. The SEN team meets formally, twice yearly (September and Jan) with individual mainstream teachers during school hours, to discuss the progress of children currently receiving additional support from the SEN team and other children in their classes who they feel are at risk and may benefit from extra support. The SEN team will arrange the dates for these meetings. Teachers prioritise pupils for the new school year at a June meeting based on standardised tests and other criteria.

**Enrolment of children with special educational needs:**

All parents are given an application form to fill in, 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. Parents are also given basic information on the school, stressing the importance of parents informing the school of any ‘special need’ their child may have. The school will use this information to make informed decisions, on how able the school is, to meet the child’s needs. If resources are required an application is made to the DES before the closing date in March.  Resources are sanctioned by the DES before the end of June. The BoM will make every effort to ensure adequate resources are in place for the enrolled child, before they are admitted to the school.

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 parents withhold information and/or do not notify the school of behaviour needs/special needs/assessments and/or services received by their child, the BoM (having carefully considered the safety of the child and the resources in the school available to meet the child’s needs) may delay admitting the enrolled child to the school until they can ensure the safety of the child and other children attending the school. The BoM will act promptly to address the needs of the child, with the intention of admitting/re-admitting the enrolled child as speedily as possible.

The Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) is contacted at the earliest opportunity so as to apply for resource teaching/SNA assistance/technology etc. for the pupil. In line with the School Enrolment policy, if the resources specified in reports are not sanctioned by the SENO, the BoM may appeal the decision of the SENO. If deemed a health and safety issue, the BoM may decide not to admit the enrolled child into the school environs until it is safe to do so. Each case will be examined individually. As noted above, the BoM will act promptly to address the needs of the child, with the intention of admitting the enrolled child as speedily as possible. Parents will be informed at all times of progress and meetings arranged with them to discuss concerns etc. The class teacher and SEN teacher will read all current reports on the child, prior to receiving the child in school.

**Enrolment of children with a disability and/or special education need**

Application for all children, including children with a disability and/or other special education needs, is governed at all times by the school’s current Enrolment Policy. However, the attention of parents of children with a disability and/or other special education needs is also drawn to the following points:

* Any National School is an ‘ordinary’ mainstream school, and has higher pupil/teacher ratios such as those that apply in ‘special’ schools
* In general, the teachers in our school are trained and qualified to teach in mainstream education. They do not, in general, have any Special Education Needs Teacher Training, experience, or Qualifications, such as teachers in special schools have
* While pupils with special needs can be integrated into a mainstream class, and may be supported by a Special Needs Assistant and Resource teaching, as allowed by the DES, this is not the same as the intensive one to one teaching s/he would enjoy in a special school
* An ordinary mainstream school does not have ancillary services enjoyed by special schools, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy
* The school does not currently have facilities specially adapted for pupils with physical disability, although the school is fully committed to the provision of these, should any pupil need same, and subject to funding by the DES
* A child with special needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will by the nature of such integration experience the normal day to day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices. Every child in the school, including those with a disability and /or special educational needs is bound by school policies both in existence and those developed from time to time by the Staff and Board of Management. The school cannot offer any additional tuition, support and supervision beyond that which is offered to any other pupil in the school, at times other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year. The Class Teacher, Resource Teacher (if any) and Special Needs Assistant (if any) will periodically be required to participated at Staff Development and Curriculum Training Courses, Such professional development events take place within the existing school year, and all the children, including pupils with a disability and/or special educational needs are in the care of their parents at the times. Such extraordinary closures will be notified to parents of all pupils through the medium of the school newsletter, as well as through regular notices to parents.
* A child with a disability and/or special educational needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will not have any separate or additional provisions put into place from his peers in the event of staff illness, absences or whole school events such as school visits, parish liturgy etc
* From year to year the allocation of teachers to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school, and consequently the school cannot guarantee long term continuity or predictability in personnel.

Notwithstanding the above points, the school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with a disability/ special educational needs. To ensure this, we require:

* A close level of co-operation between parents, the Class Teacher, and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.
* To enable us to provide the best services for the pupil, and to access any additional support/s that may be available, we require parents to supply the school with copies of the most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrolment. These will be treated in the utmost confidence at all times
* Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available, on an ongoing basis
* An assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility as a school is primarily to ALL the children in our care, and that therefore if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the integration of an individual child with a disability and/or special educational needs is having an ongoing detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the enrolment of the individual child.

**Specific Objectives**

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

* Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
* Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning
* Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability
* Involve parents in supporting their children’s learning
* Promote collaboration among teachers.

**Guiding principles**

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

* Effective whole-school policies
* Whole school involvement
* Prevention of failure at infant level
* Provision of intensive early intervention up to and including second class
* Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

**Prevention Strategies**

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible, the following strategies are being implemented:

* The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to languages development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English
* Delay in introducing the formal process of reading as per the Revised Curriculum
* The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of Maths, e.g. our whole school approach to the Language of Tables and Subtraction
* Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the provision of the Tips for Parents booklet, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings, and provision of regular school newsletter, as well as ongoing collaboration with Parents’ Association
* Class based early intervention by the SEN team from Infants to Rang 4 resulting in the provision of additional individualised support. In JI this will be primarily focused at identification of pupils who may be in need of support.
* Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher.

**The staged approach:**

The SEN team with the principal, assistant principal assigned responsibility for the co-ordination of Special Needs in the school and relevant teachers adopt a staged approach to intervention (see model of Staged Approached on following page). If concern remains after intervention and additional support from the teacher and SEN team, the school may request a consultation and assessment of the pupil’s need from a specialist outside the school. Where this is the case, the parents’ permission in writing will be sought to do so. If the parents refuse to give their permission for a pupil to receive extra support, a written record of their decision, signed by parents will be kept in the child’s file. Following meetings with staff, should parents continue to refuse to give their consent to have a pupil assessed, the Board of Management may apply to the Circuit Court for an order to have the pupil assessed (Education Welfare Act). Every effort is made in the school to develop strong, high-trust relationships with parents. For this reason an application to the Circuit Court has to date never been required.

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| **A Staged Approach to Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Special Educational Needs** | | |
| **Observation** | **Process** | **Personnel Involved** |
| **Stage 1: Class support**  Class teacher/parent has concerns regarding a pupil’s academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development | Class teacher informs one of the teachers on the Special Needs team and in consultation with this teacher administers appropriate screening measures. Class teacher devises a plan, which aims to meet pupil’s identified needs within the normal classroom setting. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents and termly with the Special Needs team. | ·        ***Class teacher***  ·        ***Parent***  ·        ***Special Needs team***    ***Additional Supports Available***  ·        ***Principal***  ·        ***NEPS Psychologist*** |
| ***If concern remains after a number of reviews, the Special Education Support Team in the School may make a decision to move to Stage 2*** | | |
| **Stage 2: School support**  Child is referred to learning support teacher, with parental permission for further diagnostic testing. | If diagnostic testing indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged. Parent, class teacher and learning support teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil’s learning plan. | ·        ***Class teacher***  ·        ***Parent***  ·        ***Special Needs team***  ***Additional Supports Available***  ·        ***Health Board***  ·        ***NEPS Psychologist***  ·        ***Other Support Staff and Services available to school*** |
| ***If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3*** | | |
| **Stage 3: School support +**  School formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school. | A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. Parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary.    **Any private practitioner engaged by Scoil Mhuire at Stage 3 will have the relevant Department of Education and Science Circulars and guidance notes drawn to their attention.** | ·        ***Class teacher***  ·        ***Parent***  ·        ***Special Needs team***  ·        ***Relevant Specialist***    ***Additional Supports Available***     * ***NEPS Psychologist*** * ***Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments*** * ***Speech and Language Therapist*** * ***Occupational Therapist*** * ***Psychiatrist*** * ***Paediatrician*** * ***Art Therapist etc.*** |

**Selection of Pupils for Learning Support**

* The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils from Senior Infants to Second Class are given priority in the allocation of Learning Support
* In Junior infants pupils are screened using teacher and SEN teacher observation
* From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.
* Priority for Learning Support is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 12th Percentile, excluding in the main pupils who receive Resource Teaching.
* In the case of pupils performing at or below the 12th percentile, the screening process is followed by a consultative meeting between the Class Teacher, the SEN Teacher and the parents concerning the pupil’s performance, and supplementary teaching is offered
* In the allocation of places for Learning Support, the following are prioritised:

1. Senior Infants identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation as having difficulty in literacy
2. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 12th percentile in literacy
3. Children from Rang 3-Rang 4 at or below the 12th percentile in literacy
4. Senior Infants, identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher observation as having difficulty in numeracy
5. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 12th percentile in numeracy
6. Children from Rang 3 and Rang 4, at or below the 12th percentile in numeracy
7. In class support for children presenting at 12th to 20th percentile in literacy and numeracy in all classes.

**Provision of Supplementary Teaching**

* The primary work of the SEN team is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above
* The school year will be divided into 2 Instructional Terms of approximately 20 weeks each.
* Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency
* A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the individual pupil
* The Class Teacher and the SEN Teacher will meet to devise an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Group Education Plan (GEP), in consultation with the Principal and parents. The pupil involved can also contribute to setting their own short-term targets
* If a pupil is receiving support from Resource Allocation in English Maths, s/he will not normally be provided with supplementary teaching from the Learning Support as well.
* If the pupil is in receipt of support from Resource Allocation to address other needs, e.g. behavioural problems, sensory difficulty, it may be appropriate for the SEN Teacher to provide supplementary teaching as well
* The SEN Teachers will maintain the following documentation in individualised files:
  1. Individual Profile and Learning programme
  2. Short term planning and programme record
  3. Samples of written work
  4. Reading analysis records.

**Entitlement to Resource Teaching**

Pupils are allocated resource hours from the SENO using the low incidence model. The SEN teacher in consultation with the parents, class teacher and other professionals working with the child designs an IEP. The IEP will identify specific areas of need for the child and these will be incorporated into his/her scheme of work. The child is timetabled for resource teaching in September in consultation with the class teacher. Resource teaching may be conducted either out of class or in class using a one-to-one model or group model depending on the needs of the child.

When a child continues to experience difficulty and is not making progress above the 12th percentile in literacy and numeracy, the child will normally be referred for psychological assessment, in consultation with parents.

Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be referred for assessment and may be allocated resource hours.

Children with learning difficulties who are integrated into mainstream education may also be allocated resource time.

Children who have physical difficulties, e.g. deafness, sight impairment, cerebral palsy may be allocated resource hours.

**Individual Learning Plan / Group Education Plan**

Individual Educational Programmes are drafted/reviewed/updated in September and January. Parents Teacher meetings are held in the first term (November/December) of each school year. Parents are invited to meet with the SEN teacher. However, meetings are arranged to facilitate parents wishing to discuss their children’s progress, at any time during the year.

The Individual Learning Plan / Group Education Plan will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000.

The plan will address the pupils’ full range of needs and will include:

**Page 1:**

Name of child

Date of birth

Address

School, Class & Class Teacher

People involved in constructing the IEP

Contact information,

Additional information and concerns

Commencement date/Review date

**Page 2:**

Summary of available information (formal/informal)

Strengths

Needs

2-3 Priority Learning Needs (long term learning goals)

**Page 3 & Subsequent pages:**

Learning targets related to the priority learning need

Target date/Date achieved

Learning outcomes

Teaching strategies

Materials/Resources

Other staff involved in implementing IEP targets

Home activities

Timetable

***Group Educational Plans:***

The SEN teachers for children who have been selected for learning support, language support or additional support will design group Educational Plans. A template will be used consisting of:

Names of children

Class & Class Teacher

Learning Period

Priority Learning Needs

Learning Targets

Learning outcomes

Learning Support Activities and Strategies

Materials

* Details from the Class Teacher
* Assessment Results
* Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
* Learning strengths and attainments
* Priority Learning Needs
* Learning Targets
* Class based Learning Activities
* Supplementary support activities to include ICT
* Home Support Activities.

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation; the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil’s own feedback.

A detailed review will take place at the end of each Instructional Term. The Learning Support Teacher and/or the Class Teacher will meet the parents to discuss the child’s progress in the light of the review.

**Timetabling**

* The provision of Learning Support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths
* Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular each time they attend Learning Support. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher, though class disruption must be minimised.
* The provision of Learning Support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition
* In class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and the SEN Teacher.

**Provision of Resources**

* Resources for the provision of Learning Support include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading experience, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.
* Following consultation between the SEN Teacher, Principal and Class Teacher, funding for materials may be provided from the learning support Grant, materials Grant, and/or funding that may be available through the Board of Management
* Learning Support resources will be primarily be used in the learning Support Room. These resources may be made available to Class Teachers following consultation with the SEN Teacher.

**Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching**

* In general, children should not stay for more than 2 years in Supplementary Teaching, unless they are still at or below the 12th Percentile
* Following the end of Instructional Term review as detailed above, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of Supplementary Teaching.
* The decision making process involves consultation between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher, and the pupil’s parents, and account is also taken of the overall Learning Support demands in the school.
* The criteria on which the decision will be made include:

1. A consideration as to whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets set
2. A consideration as to whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi independently in the classroom learning context

* A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil’s IEP.

**Referral to out of School Agencies**

***OUTSIDE AGENCIES***

External agencies that support practice in the school and advise staff include the Brothers of Charity, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), HSE, NEPs, NEWB, PDST, SESS (Special Education Support Service), Hospital Family Resource Centre, the Gardaí the local play group directors and the Children and Young Peoples Services committees (CYPSC).

***Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service(this service operates from East Limerick):***  When there are concerns about a child’s behavioural needs (including select mutism) and/or a query of ADD, ADHD, and/or emotional behavioural disorder, the principal and the Special Needs co-ordinator advise parents to seek a referral to CAMHS via the child’s GP. The CAMHS team may seek advice from the principal/class teachers and/or special needs team when deciding whether or not to accept a child, referred to them. If the child is put on CAMHS caseload a request may be made to observe the child in the class/school setting. This is always facilitated, with parents permission.

***National Educational Psychological Service:*** When children are at stage 3 (see below) the principal seeks advice and support from the NEPS psychologist.  Sometimes, it is deemed appropriate for a child to have a psychological assessment. The psychologist timetables the pupil for assessment. On the day of the assessment the psychologist discusses the preliminary findings with the child’s parents and a member of the Special Needs team. When the assessment is completed the parents, principal and teacher are informed of the results. If the child has a special need under the low incidence category, the Special Needs co-ordinator will apply to the SENO for resource teaching hours with parents’ consent. In the case of a referral for a speech and language or occupational assessment, the class teacher will obtain permission from the parents and refer the child to the appropriate service in writing.

***HSE:*** The public health nurses support staff in identifying the needs of the children. Early intervention is key here with teachers and public health nurses working together to identify concerns with regard to hearing, sight, motor skills etc. The public health nurse visits the school regularly and the team do thorough checks on infants early in the school year. A room is provided for HSE staff in the school. When there is a concern, the public health nurse refers the child for further investigation to the HSE.

***Child Protection Conferences:***The principal as the designated liaison person (DLP) for child protection attends conferences on individual children when invited to do so by the HSE. The principal receives a report from the class teacher on the child concerned and shares relevant information with the HSE. The HSE sends the principal a copy of the team plan of intervention and actions agreed by the different agencies supporting the child. The principal shares relevant information with the class teacher. The principal reports to the BoM the number of conferences attended since the previous meetings, number of phone calls she has made seeking advice from the HSE with regard to child protection issues and the number of new child protection cases opened and closed. The deputy principal has been appointed as the deputy DLP.

***National Education Welfare Board***: We liaise with the National Education Welfare officer regularly and report on school attendance. The Education Welfare Officer visits the school occasionally. When children miss 15 days or more, a letter is sent to parents inviting them to meet with the principal and give reasons as to why their child is not attending school. If a child misses 20 days or more, the non attendance is reported to the Education Welfare officer. A court order has been issued on some parents for non-attendance at school. However, it is noted that attendance has improved in the school over recent years.

* The SEN team co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist
* The Principal and/or Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent
* The Class Teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
* The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, Class Teacher and the SEN Teacher as appropriate, and the assessment is conducted
* This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.
* Where concern arises regarding the manner of speed of the follow-through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal with the out of school agency concerned.

**Training for teachers/staff:**

Staff are encouraged to partake in various in service and evening courses which we organise through Limerick Education Centre.

**Approaches to timetabling:**

The SEN team liaise with the class teachers in June to draw up a timetable for provision of resource, learning support, language teaching. The following September some minor adjustments may/may not be made. This will be reviewed regularly. Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss on the same curricular area each time they attend special education.

**Work Schedule of the SEN teachers:**

The caseload for additional resource, learning support, and language support will be divided and decided on by the SEN team following analysis of standardised test results in June and may be revised early September.

**Health and Safety:**

All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. Depending on the severity of need all staff members will be informed and alerted to possible hazards. To ensure the safety of pupils with SEN on the schoolyard, the Special Needs Assistants are present for the duration of yards breaks along with the teachers on duty. Should a pupil with acute safety needs enrol in the school, the health and safety policy will be reviewed for that pupil. SEN teachers will collect pupils who are withdrawn from classroom and later will return the children to their class.

**Code of Behaviour: (see the policy)**

In general pupils with SEN will follow the code of behaviour throughout the school. In extenuating circumstances where a pupil has a behavioural disorder, an individual behaviour management plan will be drawn up by the principal, class teacher, SEN teacher, SNA, parents and if deemed necessary advice will be sought from outside expertise working with the child. The team when implementing the personal behaviour plan may devise personal rewards and sanctions.

**Transfer to post-primary:**

Information on all children in 6th class is transferred to the relevant post-primary school using the DES transfer form. It is also the duty of the parents of the pupil(s) with SEN to inform the post-primary school of their child’s needs. Written consent from the parents will be sought prior to forwarding of assessments such as psychological assessments, to the post-primary school.

**Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

Learning Support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experiences. It is important that all partners contribute in the planning and implementation of our school plan on learning support.

**Board of Management**

The role of the Board of Management is to:

* Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of SEN in the school
* Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the SEN Teachers
* Provide a secure facility for storage or records in relation to pupils in receipt of Learning Support and Resource
* Budget for ongoing support for Professional Development in SEN for staff.

**Principal**

The role of the principal is to:

* Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school’s policy on SEN in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children
* Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support in the context of Special Needs Education
* Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN on an ongoing basis
* Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with lowest levels of achievement
* Assume direct responsibility for co-ordination of learning support in the context of Special Needs Services
* Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identity 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 service that are available and the procedure to be followed in initiation referrals
* Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of SEN.

**Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on SEN, the class teacher should:

* Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
* Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and Maths by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures
* For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the Learning Support Teacher in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets
* For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
* Weekly plan of work in English and Maths to be provided to the SEN Teacher in advance.

With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:

* Such children should be prioritised when accessing information from previous class teacher
* Priority when establishing parental contact
* Group teaching
* Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
* Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
* Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
* Setting learning targets at an appropriate level
* Providing learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
* Carrying out error analyses of a pupil’s work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty
* Setting up ‘buddy systems’ in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers, e.g. peer tutoring / paired reading
* Applying assessments and tests which offer challenge and opportunities for success to children of all levels of achievement.

A key role of successful SEN Support is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the SEN Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Individual Profile and Learning Programmes.

**SEN**

**Learning Support Teacher**

* Develop an individual profile and learning programme for each pupils who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents
* Maintain and planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Learning Support
* Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school’s selection criteria
* Contribute to the development of policy on Learning Support at whole school level
* Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
* Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Learning Support room
* Perform a defined role in co-ordinating the provision of Special Needs and Learning Support services in the school
* Liaise with external agencies such as psychologist to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs
* Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support
* Track the progress pupils who have discontinued Learning Support.

**The Role of the Resource Teacher**

The Resource Teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having difficulties. In addition, the Resource Teacher should advise and liaise with other teachers, parents and other professionals in the children’s interests. More specifically, the Resource Teacher has responsibility for:

* Developing an individual learning programme for each pupil in consultation with other partners in education
* Assessing and recording the child’s needs and progress
* Setting specific, time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal
* Direct teaching of the child, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class
* Team teaching when the child concerned will derive benefit from it
* Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, ICT and other related matters
* Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
* Meeting with other relevant professionals, in the child’s interests, eg psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teachers.

**Role of the special needs assistant(SNA):**

The SNA’s work is under the direction and supervision of the class teachers, in order to help promote effective learning and teaching. Their role is as follows:

·         To contribute to the effective organisation and use of resources

·         To contribute to the quality of care and welfare of pupils

·         To support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum

·         To support the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom

Depending on the level of need in a classroom, an SNA will be assigned to a class at certain periods to assist the class teacher in his/her efforts to meet the needs of the children identified at stages 1, 2 and/or 3 (for example when a child who has access to an SNA is with the resource teacher).

**Parents**

The role of parents supporting the SEN of their children is vital to its success. Specifically, parents contribute through:

* Regular communication with the Class Teacher and SEN Teacher
* Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive
* Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
* Participation in shared reading programme
* Encouraging the child to visit library
* Developing the child’s oral language
* Developing the child’s social mathematics

**Record keeping:**

Each child’s psychological, speech and language, occupational or other assessments are kept in Principal’s filing cabinet and may be accessed by relevant personnel on request.

**Communication Strategies**

The operation of an effective communication system between all the parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential. The various strands of the system include:

* Class Teacher and the SEN Teacher following a low score on a screening test
* Principal and/or SEN Teacher and/or Class Teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval of further diagnostic assessment and/or provision of supplementary teaching
* Regular communication between the SEN Teacher and the Class Teacher, through the weekly completion of the Classroom Work Schedule in English and Maths and the participation in formal and informal meetings
* Regular communication between the SEN Teacher and parents

**Success Criteria**

The school wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupils learning in the following ways:

* Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil’s individual learning programme
* Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of Learning Support based on positive assessment results
* Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child’s learning needs
* Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupil’s progress
* Learning Support provision focused on children from Junior Infants to Rang 2.

**Role of Class Teacher, Parents, Principal, Board of Management**

The role of all the above in the education of children who have been allocated resource teaching is as in the preceding section, i.e. the section on Learning Support.

**DIFFERENTIATION**

**Definition**

The term differentiation is used to describe the various strategies teachers use to enable groups of students with diverse learning characteristics to participate in the mainstream programme.

(*Westwood, 2003, P.202)*

…teaching things differently according to observed differences among learners

(*Westwood, 2003, P.202)*

The term ‘differentiation’ refers to the method whereby the teacher varies content, activities, methodology and resources when taking into account the range of interests, needs and experience of the students. It is a process that allows for variation in pace, amount, content, level and method of curriculum presentation to ensure that learning experiences are appropriate for all students. It is particularly important in meeting the challenges of those with special educational needs. (*NCAA 2002, Draft Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Mild General Learning disabilities, P.20)*

**Planning Differentiation**

* Select the topic to be taught
* Identify the specific content to be included
* Identify learning goals and objectives for the majority of students in the class
* Decide on the way the lesson will be organised and conducted for most students
* Identify students who will need modifications to the general lesson format
* Prepare any necessary adaptations
* Teaching the lesson, and making any necessary additional changes while teaching
* Providing extra assistance to certain students while the lesson is in progress
* Planning appropriate methods for assessing students’ learning, based on the goals and objectives.

When planning the differentiated objectives, it is usually helpful to have in mind the following three sentence starters:

* All students will…
* Some students will…
* A few students might…

This helps teachers to identify the essential core of knowledge *all* students will master through differentiated activities.

*Some*students will achieve more than this

*A few* may carry out extended activities to increase learning

**Modification of Curriculum Content**

* Students with learning difficulties are required to cover less material
* The tasks or activities they complete may be easier to accomplish
* More able students may cover more material and in greater depth
* The nature of learning tasks set for students will be matched to their learning rate hand abilities
* Differentiated content for homework can be used as one way of meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities

**Differentiation by resource**

* Simplify language when necessary
* Provide illustrations or diagrams
* Remove unnecessary detail
* Use cues or prompts where responses are required from students

**Adapting Instruction**

As a result of differentiation, there will be changes in both teaching and learning polices. Some of the following strategies may be used:

* The teacher may give more or less assistance to individual students, depending on their needs
* The teacher may re-teach some concepts to some students using simpler language and more examples
* Questions asked during the lesson may be pitched at different levels of difficulty for different pupils
* Closer monitoring of the work of some pupils may take place throughout the lesson
* The teacher may use particular tactics to gain and maintain the interest of poorly motivated pupils
* Feedback may be given in more or less detail, according to the students’ needs
* The rate at which the students are expected to work may be varied, with extra time allowed for some students to complete tasks
* Extension and independent work may be set for more able students

**Assessment:**

See policy on Assessment.

**Implementation and Review**

The implementation of this Policy will commence immediately. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

We will review and update our SEN Policy to include a Policy for the provision of Traveller Education and Educational Provision for Overseas Children in the event of those children seeking to enrol in our school.

**Communication**

This policy will be available on our school web site. All school policies will also be disseminated to parents through the medium of the school newsletter.

**Ratification and Communication**

This updated Policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

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CHAIRPERSON DATE

**APPENDIX A**

**Letter of Consent for Additional Support**

Dear Parents,

Any National School maintains a strong focus on the belief that early intervention is crucial for children's educational development.

Your child has been identified as someone who would benefit from additional support teaching. This takes place in class through station teaching and occasionally through small group or individual withdrawal when necessary.

Please sign below giving permission for this to take place.

I give my consent for my child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to receive learning support as deemed necessary by Any National School.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

I/We have discussed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ progress and educational needs with the class teacher and teacher for special educational needs and ***do not give***consent for him/her to receive additional support from the special education teacher.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_           Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Parent/Guardian)                                            (Parent/Guardian)

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_