

Special Education Needs Policy

Situation: Holy Family School is an urban, mixed school catering for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th class.

Beliefs & Principles: The Special Education Needs service is designed to ensure that all pupils achieve basic literacy and numeracy skills by the time they complete their primary education through effective whole school policies in a team approach involving pupils, class teachers, learning support and resource teachers, principal and parents.

SEN Support

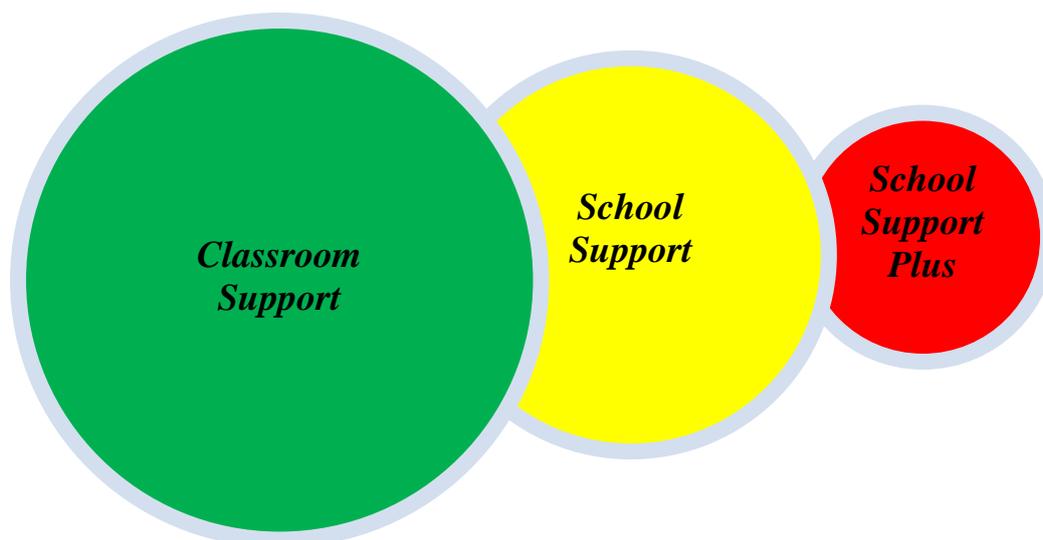
The spectrum of pupils with SEN ranges from under achieving pupils to high achievers. A range of assessment methods are used to ensure that pupils who require intervention receive it.

The Continuum of Support identifies different levels of support for pupils with SEN that build on each other. There are 3 stages in this process.

Stage 1 is the Classroom Support level and involves the teacher, parent and pupil.

Stage 2 is the School Support level and involves the teacher, parent, pupil and Learning Support Teacher.

Stage 3 is the School Support Plus level and involves the teacher, parent, pupil, Educational Psychologist, other professionals, Learning Support Teacher or Resource Teacher Support



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

- Support and monitor school policy.
- Oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy.
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and resources are provided.
- Provide secure storage for records.

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

- The Principal has overall responsibility for the SEN school policy.
- He should monitor the implementation of whole school screening tests in May.
- Maintain tracking systems at whole school level to monitor progress of all pupils.
- Maintain list of pupils receiving supplementary teaching.
- Liaise with psychological services to arrange assessments for pupils with special needs.

THE ROLE OF THE CLASS TEACHER

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

The class teacher should:

- Create a classroom environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated e.g. adapting learning materials for lower achieving pupils, 'buddy' system for paired reading.
- Implement school policy in Screening e.g. Micra/Drumcondra and Sigma Screening tests in May.
- The class teacher will be able to confirm whether the score achieved by a pupil is an accurate reflection of the pupil's ability in class.
- Inform parents of concerns regarding child's progress in the screening tests.
- Seek approval of parents regarding diagnostic testing by Learning Support teacher, who may then provide supplementary teaching, if feasible.
- Develop and implement a support programme, in consultation with the Learning Support teacher for those children who cannot be provided with supplementary teaching.
- Collaborate with the Learning Support teacher in planning and developing IPLP targets for pupils attending supplementary teaching.

Supplementary teaching should be in addition to pupils' regular class programme in English and/or Maths.

Pupils should not miss out in the same curricular area each time they receive supplementary teaching.

THE ROLE OF THE SNA

The role of the Special Needs Assistants involves tasks of a non-teaching nature and are supervised by either the Principal or the Class Teacher.

These include:

- Preparation and tidying of classrooms in which the special needs child is/are being taught.
- Assisting children to board and alight from the school bus.
- Special assistance for pupils with physical difficulties.
- Assisting with toileting.
- Assisting with out of school visits, walks or similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who have to be withdrawn temporarily from the class.
- General assistance to the class teachers under the direction of the principal with duties of a non-teaching nature.

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

Aims:

1. Provide supplementary teaching in English and Maths for low achieving pupils especially those on or below the 12th percentile in 'Micra-T'/Drumcondra English Screening tests and 'Sigma-T' Maths Screening Tests.
2. Provide early intervention to pupils at risk in junior classes in English and Maths.
3. Develop self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.

THE ROLE OF THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER

The main focus of this role is:

- The provision of supplementary teaching in English and Maths to pupils on or below the 12th percentile, from 1st – 6th classes
- Provide early intervention in English and Maths to pupils at risk in the junior classes
- Junior classes take precedence over senior classes
- English takes precedence over Maths
- Flexibility in the deployment of Learning Support Teachers will only be possible if there is spare capacity in caseload

Supplementary Teaching: Selection and Implementation:

Learning Support teachers will:

- Screen new pupils and absentees June/Sept.
- Provide updated list results to class teachers in September.
- Consult with class teachers about the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Administer diagnostic tests to pupils at risk in June/Sept.
- Discuss the results with class teachers and parents.
- Provide supplementary teaching, if necessary.
- Request parent to sign a non-consent form if they do not wish to avail of Learning Support.
- Develop IPLP in consultation with class teacher and parent, for pupils attending Learning Support.
- Maintain weekly planning and progress record for each group.
- Maintain attendance record.
- Review pupil progress at the end of each instructional period e.g. February/June.
- Consult with class teacher and parents when supplementary teaching is to be discontinued and identify ways in which pupil's learning can be supported in class or at home.

IPLP Guidelines:

The **LST** (Learning Support Teacher) is responsible for drawing up an **IPLP** (Individual Profile and Learning Programme) for each pupil in the group.

IPLPs are developed in consultation with the class teacher and parents for pupils receiving supplementary teaching. The IPLP will have the pupils name, class teacher, LST as well as the date on which the pupil first joined the supplementary teaching programme.

The second part is used to record information obtained through screening and diagnostic assessment. Additional information from parents, pupils themselves, the class teacher or other professionals is also recorded before planning the IPLP.

Following the completion of the assessment/information sections the pupils strengths/attainments and priority learning needs can be stated. Learning targets are now set for the specific period of time and the date on which the pupil is considered to have achieved a particular target is noted under "Date Achieved".

Internal Provisions: Prevention Strategies:

Early Intervention:

We identify pupils at risk in Junior Infants each June through consultation with class teachers and through the use of MIST (Middle Infants Screening Sub-tests) e.g. listening skills and initial letter sounds/writing skills. The MIST programme is used to identify learning targets for supplementary teaching in Senior Infants and First classes.

Reading Supports:

Literacy Lift-Off

The Literacy Lift-Off Programme was initiated in the 2012/13 school year. This is an intervention during which a six week intensive reading programme will be administered to prioritised class groups. It is a daily literacy session where resource teachers in collaboration with class teachers will work in the classroom each morning from Monday to Thursday for six weeks in five eight minute rotating sessions on a range of literacy activities.

All pupils are assessed before the intervention to establish their Instructional Level and Reading (entry score). They are then grouped according to their reading ability. The school uses specially graded PM⁺

Readers which are also read at home with a parent. At the end of the programme pupils are re-assessed to establish their new levels of literacy (exit score).

Paired Reading advice leaflets and Home Reading Library lists are used in junior classes.

Library Books:

- Each class has its own individual library
- Oxford Literacy Web, Story Rhyme Books are used in Jnr./Snr. Infant classes to develop phonological/rhyme awareness
- Oxford Reading Tree – Floppy Phonics and Songbirds in Snr. Infants class
- ‘Storyworld’ Library Books and Software (Infants to 2nd class)
- ‘Sails’ Library Series (Infants to 3rd class)
- PM⁺ Series Levels 1 – 30 (Literacy Lift-Off Groups)

Jolly Phonics Programme: Jolly Phonics is used in our school as a thorough foundation for reading and writing. Children learn the 42 letter sounds of the English Language. They are then taken through the steps of blending and segmenting words to develop reading and writing skills. The programme continues through the school enabling the teaching of essential grammar.

RESOURCE SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

OBJECTIVES:

- To ensure early identification of any special educational needs
- To ensure access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- To make a flexible response to individual needs and make efficient use of resources
- To work together with other organisations with the aim of making best use of resources
- To ensure that provision is regularly monitored and evaluated

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

All pupils attending Resource Teaching will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is a mechanism of review as well as assessment and planning.

Input to an IEP is made by:-

- Pupil
- Class teacher
- Resource teacher
- Parents
- Principal
- Partner agencies e.g. Speech & Language, Physio, O.T., Social Worker, Psychologist etc. where appropriate
- Any relevant personnel e.g. Special Needs Assistant

Meetings are held in the school. Targets with specified time limits are set. The IEP also helps to identify resource implications for the school. IEP's will be reviewed on a regular basis.

RESOURCE TEACHING

Resource teachers are appointed to “meet the needs and abilities of children assessed as having disabilities” and “to provide additional teaching support for these children who have been fully integrated into mainstream schools”. (DES 8/99)

The advent of Resource Teaching reflects the movement of children across the spectrum of education, from isolation and exclusion to acceptance and integration.

The nature and extent of disabilities which entitle pupils to resource hours is very broad so the age and ability differences of those attending is also broad. Consequently, individual work is very important.

It is important therefore, that time with a resource teacher is positive and successful. Time is needed for the pupil and teacher to get to know each other. The child must learn to trust another adult and get to know a new environment. He must learn a new timetable and a new way of relating to a teacher.

That teacher must make the child feel that attending resource sessions is not another sign of failure, rather that it is recognition that the child has a potential that can be developed.

It is also important that the resource teacher has as much information as possible about the child. This involves interviews with parents, pupils and teachers, as well as extensive data collection from teachers.

The child's medical history may be relevant to the resource teacher. Extended absences from school affect performance. It is also useful to know if the child has stress related problems such as asthma or psoriasis. Domestic situations such as bereavements and separations can affect learning.

Success at school builds esteem, confidence and self-belief. The objective of resource teaching is to provide the experience of that success.

REFERRAL TO RESOURCE TEACHING

A child already in school, who is showing signs of needing extra resources, is referred to NEPS, as already outlined. On completion of this assessment, the Dept. SENO will allocate a set number of hours of Resource Teaching for the child.

A child assessed by an agency other than NEPS e.g. Southern Health Board Speech & Language Therapist, will be referred directly to the SENO by the school, for approval for Resource Teaching hours.

A child commencing school who has already been assessed as having special needs will be referred to the SENO for approval for Resource Teaching hours.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

Assessments in the school are carried out by the NEPS psychologist.

Generally, children referred to NEPS fall into specific categories:-

1. Visual/Hearing Impairment/Physical Disability
2. Mild General Learning Disability – the pupil cannot keep up with large amounts of class work
3. Emotional Disturbance – This includes Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It could also refer to children exhibiting high levels of anger and aggression. It may also refer to boys who seem sad or depressed
4. Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This is a complicated disorder but within school, some of the warning signs would be poor social interaction with peers, resistance to change, odd but well developed language, good rote memory, poor motor co-ordination, lack of imagination in play, fixation on certain topics
5. Specific Speech & Language disorders – Indicated by poor articulation, slowness to respond to questions, though appearing to know the answer.
6. Specific Learning Disability – Pupil copes overall but has difficulty in one or more areas e.g. Literacy & Maths if the child is dyslexic.

This is a very basic guide to the criteria for referring to NEPS. Children can have symptoms of any of the above and function normally. If the symptoms interfere with school work, then there may be cause for concern.

If in the opinion of the teacher any child would benefit from a referral to NEPS, the principal must be informed in writing giving the following information:-

- ❖ Child's name, class, teacher, date of birth and brief reason for referral.

When referrals are received, they are prioritised by the Principal in consultation with class teachers. The principal then meets with the parents of those pupils prioritised and outlines the situation to them. They are then asked to complete the appropriate consent form.

When a pupil is awarded Resource Hours the information is given to the class teacher to facilitate planning.

To the class teacher:

Children who are approved for hours with the resource teacher may attend for up to 4.25 hours per week. In allocating time for pupils, every effort is made to avoid withdrawing them during specific activities i.e. music, P.E., art, as these activities are particularly important for social skills development.

Please fill in the following to assist timetable planning:-

Teacher: _____

Pupil: _____

P.E. Time/Day: _____

Art Time/Day: _____

Music Time/Day: _____



BOOKS IN RESOURCE/SPECIAL NEEDS

Dyslexia

- How to detect and manage Dyslexia
- Lost for Words
- Dyslexia - A Teaching Handbook
- Teaching reading and spelling to Dyslexia children
- Maths for the Dyslexia
- Dyslexia - a staff handbook
- Dyslexia, bullying and other issues

Autism & Related Issues

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Asperger Syndrome
- The self help guide for special kids and their parents
- Teaching Children with Autism

Dyspraxia

- Dyspraxia in the early years
- Dyspraxia Handbook
- Helping Children with Dyspraxia
- Dyspraxia
- Developmental Dyspraxia
- The out of Sync child has fun

Visual Impairment

- Teaching Children with Visual Impairment
- When you have a visually impaired child in your class

Reading

- Key Stage 2: Helping with Reading Difficulties
- Games to Improve Reading Levels

General

- Essential Guide to Special Education in Ireland
- Controversial issues in Special Education
- Investigations & Problem Solving
- Integrating pupils with disabilities in mainstream schools

- Special Education in Irish classrooms
- Let me speak
- What to do about your brain injured child
- Teaching gifted children in the regular classroom
- Getting it right - a behaviour curriculum
- How to use contingency contracting in the classroom
- SNA's - working in partnership
- Working with challenging behaviour

ADD/ADHD

- Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder

