

Special Educational Needs Policy

St. Joseph's N.S., Granagh

Roll Number: 099271

1. Introduction

St. Joseph's N.S. is a rural co-educational Catholic primary school. It is a mainstream primary school, catering for all children. The school has approximately 70 pupils, 3 class teachers including Principal, 1 full time SEN teacher, one full time SNA and one part-time SNA.

The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for effective provision for pupils with special educational needs which is situated within an inclusive whole-school framework and which emphasises effective teaching and learning for all and good collaboration and engagement between schools, parents/guardians and pupils.

This policy was formulated taking cognisance of directives contained in the 1998 Education Act; The Learning Support Guidelines (2000); The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004; DES Publications Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support & Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Continuum of Support, and recent Circulars 02/05, 30/2014, 70/2014, 13/2017 and the Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.

2. School Philosophy

St. Joseph's N.S. has a Catholic ethos but welcomes children from all faiths and none. We aim to provide a holistic approach to education taking account of individual needs, abilities, interests and social and cultural backgrounds. We strive to create a positive and caring, inclusive environment conducive to learning, enabling each child reach his /her full potential with confidence and enthusiasm. We promote an atmosphere in which staff and pupils respect themselves and others and where each person takes responsibility for his/her actions.

3. Aims of the Policy

The principle aim of Special Education Teaching Support in St. Joseph's N.S. is to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for pupils with SEN, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with learning difficulties and enable each to realise their individual potential. Special Education Needs Support provision also seeks to:

- Enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.
- Provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success.
- Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy and numeracy.
- Involve parents in the support of their child's education.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for pupils.
- Protect and enhance the self-esteem of the learner.
- Early Intervention and Prevention of Learning Difficulties.

The school aims to:

- Guide the implementation of the revised model for allocating special education teaching supports.
- Include the most recent best practice in SEN.
- Reflect the most recent recommendations, most particularly the Continuum of Support in Primary Schools (NEPS).
- Outline our whole school approach to teaching/ learning in relation to pupils with SEN.
- Set out procedures for the enrolment of students with SEN in the school.
- Assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- Ensure that students with SEN are educated in an inclusive environment.

- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
- Ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- Identify educational needs through the Continuum of Support process
- Include class-based planning interventions/intensive and individualised support
- Ensure that students with SEN are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Set high standards for students with SEN and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with SEN.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to ensure appropriate support at school and at home.
- Establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with SEN.
- Set out procedures for monitoring progress and tracking a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support.

Admission Policy for Pupils with SEN

The Department of Education acknowledges the very significant progress made by schools in developing inclusive practices and provision whereby the vast majority of pupils with special educational needs now attend mainstream schools. It also recognises that a small minority of pupils with significant and enduring needs may require a more specialist setting (for example, special class or special school placement). St. Joseph's N.S. aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education For Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that '*A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs*'. No child will be refused admission to St. Joseph's N.S. solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

Arrangements for the admission of pupils with SEN are as follows:

- The BOM, through the Principal, has the right to request a copy of the child's medical/psychological report or where such a report is not available to request that the child be assessed immediately.
- The purpose of this assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the education and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability and special needs and to profile the support services required.
- Following receipt of the report the Principal will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report.
- Where the Principal advises the BOM that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment request the Department. of Education and Science (DES) or National Council for Special Education (NCSE see Circular 01/05)) to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include for example access to or the provision of any of a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, S.N.A., specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other. It will be necessary for the BOM of St. Joseph's N.S. to identify health and safety issues arising from the enrolment of a special needs child, for example, access, toilets, supervision and administering of medicine.
- The school will meet with the parents and if necessary, a full-case conference involving all parties will be held.
- It may be necessary for the BOM to decide to defer enrolment of a particular child pending the provision of appropriate resources (EPSEN Act 2004).
- SEN children will be fully integrated unless it is inconsistent with the best interests of the child with effective educational provision for other children. (EPSEN 2004)

- The Education Act 1998 states that the BOM must ensure that the educational needs of all students must be identified and provided for
- Under the Disability Bill 2004 schools must ensure to promote equality and social inclusion for all. It is important to promote and foster in school communities an environment that encourages pupils to attend school and to participate fully in school life. (Education Welfare Act 2000)

4. The Main Features for Allocating Special Education Teaching Supports (Special Education Circular 0013/2017)

Under the revised model for the allowance of SET, the Department provides special education teaching supports directly to schools. It offers schools greater autonomy to allocate teaching resources flexibly based on pupils needs without the requirement of a diagnosis of disability. 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.

5. Implementation of the Revised Allocation Model

The following principles are used by St. Joseph's N.S. 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.

Principles to guide the Implementation Process

- 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, including those pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). The special education teaching supports cannot be 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 should 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.
- Schools with more than one support teacher shall establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All members should have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs.

6. A Three-Step Process to Support Pupils with Special Educational Needs

In St. Joseph's N.S. a three-step process is in place to guide identification, intervention and monitoring of outcomes for pupils with special educational needs.

Step 1 – Identifying Needs using The Continuum of Support

St. Joseph's N.S. 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 St. Joseph's N.S. 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 St. Joseph's N.S. can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social, behavioural, 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, Teacher Checklist for Whole-class Structures and Supports).

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. Provision is made for the delivery of three levels of Support:

Level 1 - Classroom Support (Support for All)

Level 2 - School Support (Support for Some)

Level 3 - School Support Plus (Support for a Few)

Level 1 - Classroom Support (Support for All)

The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in their class.

A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This plan is reviewed every 6-8 weeks. A review at classroom support level may result in:

- a. the pupil no longer needing a Classroom Support Plan
- b. the pupil continuing to have a Classroom Support Plan
- c. the initiation of a School Support Plan.

The decision to initiate a School Support Plan is usually taken as a result of a review of classroom support plan by the class teacher and parents/guardians in collaboration with SEN teacher. The Classroom Support Plan is drawn up and signed by class teacher/SEN teacher and child's parents/guardians.

The classroom support plan is informed by:

- Parental 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 (Literacy/Numeracy)
- Screening tests of language skills
- A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review on an ongoing basis.

The triggers for the intervention at Level 2 could be;

- The child makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are directed at an identified area of weakness
- The child shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills, which result in poor attainment
- Persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behaviour management techniques used by the school
- Has sensory or physical difficulties which are not being met by the class teacher after differentiation
- Has communication and / or relationship difficulties after intervention by the class teacher.

Level 2 - School Support (Support for Some)

At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures / assessments
- Parent and pupil interviews
- Learning environment checklist
- Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy
- Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures
- Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual teaching. A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

In identifying pupils for school support the following into account:

- Standardised tests can be used to screen and identify pupils' performance in reading and mathematics. Those pupils performing below the 12th percentile should be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils who were previously in receipt of supplementary teaching from SEN teacher and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties- based on standardised test results, teacher observations, evidence from support plan reviews, psychological reports, health reports etc
- Pupils who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention as set out in the Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2017). This will be evidenced through school-based assessment of attainment, and behavioural, social and emotional functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes. Schools should also take into account needs set out in professional reports, where available. Relevant Support Plans must be completed and reviewed as appropriate so that children can be identified at each stage of the Continuum and progress to the next level, as appropriate.
- Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties. Pupils who have specific learning disabilities.
- Pupils with significant Special Educational Needs. For example, pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs. These pupils need additional teaching support because they require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are tailored to their needs.
- Pupils who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those pupils who need additional English Additional language Support.
- Early Intervention and Prevention.

The intensity of additional support that is provided for pupils with low achievement and pupils with special educational needs should be based on their needs and should be provided differentially through the continuum of support process.

The children with the greatest level of need will receive the greatest level of School Support:

1. Children in Senior Infants and 1st Class- Literacy & Numeracy- evidence of classroom support required.
2. Pupils scoring at or below the 12th percentile on a standardised test in literacy
3. Pupils scoring at or below the 12th percentile on a standardised test in Maths.
4. Children who perform between the 13th and 25th percentile in Literacy and/or Numeracy and who need to move from Classroom Support to a higher level of support namely School Support for some.
5. Children whom have completed Stage 1 following concerns by the class teacher, which may be separate to standardised test results.
6. Pupils who have been identified as being exceptionally able by the Class Teacher
7. The staff will consult in relation to interim measures, at least at the end of each school term and respond accordingly to emerging needs.

A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time (review sheet at the end of Term 1 & 2 and full report for pupils at the end of June) and is subject to review.

A review at school support level may result in

- a. the pupil no longer needing a School Support Plan
- b. the pupil continuing to have a School Support Plan or
- c. the initiation of a School Support Plus Plan.

Level 3 - School Support Plus (for a few)

This level of the Continuum 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.

A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.

A School Support Plus Plan operates for an agreed period of time (review sheet at the end of Term 1 & 2 and full report for pupils at the end of June) and is subject to review.

Checklists for support planning in relation to all three levels are available in the Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers.

Educational planning

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs.

Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process. In St. Joseph's N.S., the process involves the class teacher, special education teachers, special needs assistant, parents, the pupil and relevant

professionals. Interventions draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers. These interventions reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests.

Support plans set out:

- Details from the Class Teacher
- Assessment Results
- Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
- Learning strengths and attainments
- Priority Learning Needs
- Strengths
- Agreed Learning Targets
- Resources required
- Strategies for implementation
- Class based Learning Activities
- Supplementary support activities to include ICT
- Home Support Activities.
- Time-frame for review

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

Student Support File

A Student Support File Template has been developed by the staff in St. Joseph's N.S. 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.

Following a period of intervention and review of progress

- Every 6-8 weeks for Classroom Support (L1),
- At the end of Term 1, 2 & 3 for School Support (L2) unless
 - a. a child is commencing supplementary support.
 - b. If the child is discontinuing supplementary support a completed review will be drawn up
- At the end of Term 1, 2 & 3 for School Support Plus (L3) 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.

As special educational needs can vary from mild to 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, assistance with external professionals, including multi-disciplinary teams, may be sought (for example, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and psychologist).

Step 2 - Meeting the Needs of a pupil through teaching and learning strategies

Having identified a pupil's needs and the educational planning required to meet those needs, this second step emphasises the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies.

The role of the class teacher

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. Mainstream class teachers

have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, classroom teachers plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. They adapt their teaching approaches as the need arises for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. This may require targeted interventions to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs. All mainstream class teachers in St. Joseph's N.S. implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

Every pupil in St. Joseph's N.S. needs to be enabled to access 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 their lessons. This is achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests
- Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Teachers in St. Joseph's N.S. ensure lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, in-class support, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This, at times, requires environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

The role of the Special Education Teacher (S.E.T.)

Special education teachers in Joseph's N.S. are familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions are based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment, when necessary.

Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant Continuum of Support plan. Short-term planning reflects the Support Plan targets and break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each pupil's specific needs on a weekly basis. Outcomes for pupils are routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress. These outcomes are also used to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.

Early intervention and prevention

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. After engaging in a process of self-reflection and review, the school will

become aware of whole-school issues that may be addressed through early-intervention programmes, which are evidence-based and which are responsive to the local context.

St. Joseph's N.S. 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 i.e. Friends for Life.

At times, St. Joseph's N.S. may deploy additional teaching resources in junior classes 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. i.e. "A Balanced Approach to Literacy Development"

St. Joseph's N.S. recognises the importance of seeking advice and training in well-validated programmes to address behavioural and emotional needs for example, the Incredible Years – Teacher Classroom Management programme as a means of preventing the emergence of behavioural difficulties; FRIENDS for Life as a means of preventing anxiety and building resilience, or similar evidence-based programmes. 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.

Strategies for Implementing Early Intervention Programmes:

- Supplementary teaching usually begins in infants with help provided in both Numeracy and Literacy i.e. Literacy Lift Off, station teaching, team teaching.
- Junior infants to Second Class are given priority when timetabling.
- Progress is reviewed each instructional term (September- Christmas/ January- Easter/ Easter – end of June)
- Pupils are taught in small groups, whole class or individually in some cases.
- There is a strong focus on oral language, development of emergent reading, pre-reading/writing activities, development of language and comprehension skills, phonics and phonological awareness. It reflects the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Tasks are designed to improve social skills and overall motor development.
- There is also an emphasis on language development in numeracy, and the development of mathematical procedures, concepts and skills.
- Children experience success reading simple texts, suited to their ability and self-esteem is enhanced.
- In class support is provided by the special education team as appropriate.

Target-setting

We believe that good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with special education needs. In St. Joseph's N.S. 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.

Best practice indicates that **targets** should reflect the specific educational needs of individual pupils and be

- SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic & timely)
- 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 St. Joseph's N.S. 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.

Step 3 - Monitoring and recording outcomes for pupils with special educational needs

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.

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 St. Joseph's N.S. 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.

7. Allocating Special Education Teaching Resources to Effectively Meet Needs

Special education teachers must be deployed to address the needs of pupils with special educational. An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. This gives schools greater autonomy and flexibility in how they allocate special education teaching resources. Schools may deploy special education teachers in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs (for example, in-class support, group withdrawal).

In St. Joseph's N.S., we believe that 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 we consult parents in relation to their child's needs, support plan, and are involved in regular reviews of progress.

When allocating teaching resources, the management and staff of St. Joseph's N.S. are mindful of the benefits of early-intervention and prevention programmes and allocate teaching resources as required, based on identified needs and school context. St. Joseph's N.S. aims to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support. Importantly, the level and type of support reflects the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are also informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

When deploying teaching resources, St. Joseph's N.S. recognises the essential need to maintain time for co-ordinating, planning and reviewing activities to ensure effective and optimal use of supports. Co-ordination time is, however, kept to a minimum in order to ensure that teaching time is

maximised. Additionally, St. Joseph's N.S acknowledges that flexibility in terms of resource allocation is required to allow for emerging needs during the school year.

Considerations when devising the timetable:

- The provision of School Support and School Support Plus by the SEN Teacher is in addition (in so far as possible) 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 for support.
- A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher, though class disruption must be minimised.
- The provision of SEN Teaching 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.

Planning the allocation of special education teaching supports

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning.

The following actions are used in St. Joseph's N.S. to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs:

Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs

- Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data, and any information from parents and external professionals.
- If necessary, the child will be tested using an appropriate diagnostic test. Records of all interventions will be kept.
- Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests)
- Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school.
- Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support (Registrar of SEN).

Action 2: Setting targets

- Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the Continuum of Support.

Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches

- Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the Continuum of Support.
- Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching.
- They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.

Action 4: Organising early- intervention and prevention programmes

Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early- intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required. Early intervention is part of our policy and priority is given to lower classes when timetabling.

Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources

Cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place. Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support.

Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress

Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:

- Classroom Support level by all teachers
- At the School Support and School Support Plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers

8. A Whole-School Approach

Good practice in the identification of need, education planning, and allocation of special education teaching is supported through effective whole-school planning.

Inclusive Education

The NCSE (2011) described inclusion as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners. It involves removing barriers so that each learner will be enabled to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her schooling. We believe that the whole-school approach to special educational needs provision in St. Joseph's N.S. should reflect the Department's commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. The whole school approach adopted by St. Joseph's N.S. for special educational needs provision endeavours to foster an inclusive culture characterised by:

- A positive ethos and learning environment whereby all pupils, including those with special educational needs, feel welcome and experience a sense of community and belonging
- An emphasis on promoting pupils' participation and active engagement in their learning and in the life of the school
- A commitment to developing pupils' academic, social, emotional and independent living skills
- A focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for all pupils

Roles and Responsibilities

The provision of support for children with special educational needs is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in education. It is important that all involved in children's education contribute to the planning and implementation of our school plan on Special Educational Needs.

Board of Management

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy in special educational needs provision, to ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for support teacher and to provide a secure facility for the storage of records.

Principal

The *Learning Support Guidelines* (2000, p.39) outlined the Principal teacher's overall responsibility for the education of children with special educational needs. 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
- Ensure 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 carefully monitored

- 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
- Assuming responsibility for the implementation and review of school policies on SEN
- Manage a tracking system at whole-school level to identify and monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties and of high achieving children
- Maintain the listing and safe storage of psychological reports on children with special needs and also arrange for the confidential disposal of records when the need arises
- Consult with SEN teacher & class teacher at the end of each term to discuss support plan for whole class, recording recommendations on a shared document
- Coordinate the implementation of whole school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in line with school policies and the continuum of support practice
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services
- Prepare and apply for supports for children with SEN – access to SNA support, Assistive Technology, specialised equipment and furniture and Irish exemptions
- Complete NCSE forms and applications such as School Care Needs Profile, School Leavers and Confirmation forms, school transport, BCN1 forms and SNA appeals when required
- Liaise with parents of children with special needs and with external personnel –psychologists, therapists, SENO etc and arranging and accommodating meetings when required
- Maintain established links with feeder secondary schools and arrange meetings, handovers and follow up to facilitate the transition of SEN pupils
- Remain informed of current best practice within the Special Needs area
- Trigger the provisions pertaining to assessment by the Council/HSE in line with EPSEN Act where appropriate

Some of the Principal's actions may be delegated to a member of staff. The Principal retains overall responsibility for the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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 Special Educational Needs, 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 and tests
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, collaborate with the SEN Teacher in the development of a Student Support Plan by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
- Agree a plan of work in English and Maths with the SEN Teacher
- Provide a differentiated learning environment for the pupil with SEN as appropriate
- Liaise with parents to obtain permission for diagnostic testing and school support if required
- Adopt the staged approach to identification of educational needs through the continuum of support process.

With regard to teaching pupils with special educational needs, 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 aspect of successful SEN Teaching is the development of 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 Student Support Plans.

In the Classroom

- Pupils with SEN require an environment which is well organised and predictable and a programme which is clearly presented with plenty of opportunities for success.
- Pupils with SEN will participate and be facilitated to access all areas of the curriculum. Realistic learning goals and expectations will be adopted in relation to the pupil's overall progress.
- The curriculum and presentation of the curriculum will be adapted and differentiated as needed.
- The Teacher will vary the use of strategies to meet the learning needs of the pupils with SEN.
- Where the pupil is unable to participate in the class curriculum, an individual programme of work will be designed for the pupil in consultation with the SEN teacher.
- Depending on the level of need an SNA may be assigned to the child at certain times of the day. The teacher will encourage active participation by the pupil in the class.
- There will be a balance between the provision for the pupil's academic and social needs. ICT may be used to further facilitate support and consolidate the pupil's learning.
- Certain pupils may have a recommendation for an exemption from Irish; however, parents must request this exemption and give their consent in writing to the Principal. S.E.N. children granted an exemption from Irish will continue to participate in all Oral Irish lessons.
- Homework is allocated by the class teacher. The SEN teacher may also set homework for the pupil, in consultation with the class teacher.

Special Education Needs Teacher

- Supports the class teacher and parents in providing for child with learning difficulties/special needs
- Develops in collaboration with Principal, class teacher, parents, SNA, outside consulting agencies and pupils, the Student Support Plans at School Support and School Support Plus Stages
- School Support Plans are prepared at the start of each school term (Sept/Jan/after Easter) and reviewed at the end of each instructional term.
- The preparation of the Support plan shall commence, following consultation between Principal, teachers and parents, within one month of the date of receipt of an assessment and no later than 3 months.
- Maintains a Weekly Planning and Monthly Progress Record (Cúntas Míósúil) for each individual or group of individuals in receipt of SEN teaching.

- Assess children using a variety of diagnostic tests as part of the staged process and in order to gather information prior to application for psychological assessment.
- Monitors and reviews attainment of learning targets
- Communicates regularly with parents regarding progress of children and any difficulties they may encounter.
- Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement as well as following the model of early intervention, in accordance with the school's selection criteria in the format of withdrawal of one-to-one, small groups or whole class (where appropriate) as well as in-class support
- Contribute to the development of policy on Special Educational Needs 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 SET room.
- Perform a defined role in co-ordinating the provision of Special Educational Need 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
- Track the progress pupils who have discontinued support at school and school plus levels.
- Liaise with secondary school (when necessary) to assist a smooth transition to post primary education.
- Liaise with parents to obtain permission for diagnostic testing and permission to contact outside agencies.

SNA

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.
- Assistance with the development of Support Plans and Personal Pupil Plans/Care Plans for children with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
- Escorting pupils to and from activities, withdrawal from class etc as appropriate
- Assist teachers and/or Principal in maintaining a journal or care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with class teachers and other teachers such as the resource teacher and school principal, attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal
- Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including class teachers or support teachers.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.
- The S.N.A. attends meetings with the Principal to discuss matters relevant to her role.
- The S.N.A. participates in meetings/ in-service dealing with matters pertaining to a child/children assigned to her care.
- The role of the S.N.A. is clearly outlined in any Personal Pupil Plan/Care Plan pertaining to a child/children assigned to her care.

Parents

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
- Parental consent is always sought prior to commencement of supplementary teaching (at Class Support, School Support and School Support Plus level). If parents decline supplementary support, the Principal contact parents to discuss and a letter will be forwarded to parents, outlining their position with regards to not availing of the support offered. The letter will be signed by parents, returned to school and kept on record in the pupil's file.

Pupil Engagement

Good engagement and participation in their own education has many associated benefits for pupils. This is particularly important for pupils with special educational needs and can help enhance their academic and social and emotional outcomes.

Engagement is enhanced when schools listen to and build on pupils' interests, aspirations and strengths when developing educational interventions. This involves actively including pupils in a shared assessment for learning process, setting shared learning objectives, and jointly reviewing progress. Pupil participation is supported through teaching that is responsive to the personal needs of the learner, and is further enhanced by structuring and pacing learning experiences that are challenging, engaging and enjoyable. The Student Support File offers a useful framework for promoting pupil engagement and participation at all stages of educational planning and review.

At the whole-school level, St. Joseph's N.S. encourages pupil engagement and participation so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have opportunities to share their views on issues that affect them in school, and so contribute to reviews of relevant policies and practices in our school.

Other Professionals

Other professionals such as the SENO, NEPS, Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Behavioural Therapists, HSE and HSE funded services, Visiting Teachers etc., may be involved indirectly, offering consultation and support.

Transitions

Good planning and support for transition helps to ensure the successful transfer of pupils from primary school to post-primary school and between special and mainstream settings. Effective transition support and planning can enhance the educational experience of the child and help reduce potential anxiety, particularly for the S.E.N. pupils. Links are already established with 'transition' schools in the area for our pupils. Arrival meetings with these schools have helped ease the anxiety levels for the children in our school.

To support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools St. Joseph's N.S. utilises

- 6th Class Report Card
- My Profile sheet (for children)
- My Child's Profile sheet (for parents)
- A Special Educational Needs Summary Form (NEPS) is included to support the sharing of information for children with identified learning needs.

Whole school Prevention Strategies

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

- The Staged Approach to supplementary/additional teaching support is followed.
- Differentiation: Access to the schools broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher.
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language 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 teaching of aspects of Maths, e.g. our whole school approach to the Language of Mathematics
- 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 on going collaboration with Parents' Association.
- Implementation of Buddy Reading Programme from Junior Infants to 6th Class
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher
- The Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T.) is administered in the 2nd term of Senior Infants in order to identify children in need of early intervention. Pupils who present with scores below a given point are selected to participate in the 'Forward Together Programme'. The parents of these pupils are invited to attend a meeting with the SEN teacher who explains the programme. The programme is run with the children by the SEN teachers. At the end of the 8-10 weeks, every participating pupil is re-tested (using MIST) to measure progress made as a result of this early intervention.
- The Micra T and Sigma T are administered to all children from 1st-6th in May of each year.
- Early intervention supported by the SEN Teacher from Infants to Second class.
- The implementation of Shared Reading Programme from Junior Infants to Sixth class
- The Jolly Phonics Programme is taught
- Phonological awareness is emphasised in all classes.
- There is a strong focus on the development of oral language
- The school has adopted a whole school approach with a framework of instruction for the writing genres and comprehension strategies
- Whole school approach for problem solving in Maths
- ICT plays an important role in the classroom
- Co-teaching
- Aistear in the infant classes.

Screening and Testing

- In Junior Infants pupils are screened using class teacher and SEN Teacher observation.
- Children are observed by the class teacher and SEN teacher to identify milestones and inclusion on the continuum for the Primary Language Curriculum.
- Children in Senior Infants are screened half way through the second term using the MIST.
- Children from 1st-6th are screened using teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests along with the standardised tests including the Micra T and Sigma T.
- Assessment/ screening tools used may include:
 - Teacher Observation
 - Teacher designed tasks and tests
 - Portfolios
 - Project work
 - Class/homework copies
 - Standardised tests

- Diagnostic tests
- Discrepancies between Micra T and Sigma T

9. Provision of Resources

- Resources for the provision of SEN Teaching include a variety of didactic materials, textbooks, library books 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 additional equipment may be provided from DES grants and/or funding from the Board of Management

10. Referral to out of School Agencies

- The School Support Plus (for a few) process will be initiated if, in reviewing the Support Plan, it is agreed that the student is not making adequate progress, despite purposeful efforts. This process may involve external professionals and support services in a more detailed problem-solving process. It is expected that the students who are receiving support at the level of School Support Plus, will be those with greatest need.
- The class Teacher, in consultation with the Special Education Teacher, recommends an Assessment to the Principal.
- The Principal/SET contacts the NEPS Psychologist and makes a request for involvement. The psychologist then issues a 'Request for Involvement' form to the school. The request is made to NEPS within one month of forming the opinion that the pupil requires external support and an assessment (if warranted) should be completed within 3 months.
- The Class Teacher and SET complete the form, in consultation with the parents. If parents are unwilling to allow their child to be assessed then it is school policy to ask parents to confirm same in writing.
- The Principal forwards the form to the NEPS Psychologist.
- The NEPS Psychologist will meet with staff and/or parents, before observing the pupil and carrying out the assessment, when appropriate. A report is issued to the school following the visit(s).
- The Psychologist will follow-up on the report with the parents and school staff.
- The results of assessments will guide the drafting of a Support Plan for the pupil if appropriate. It determines the level of intervention by the SET.
- The relevant provisions of the Epsen Act apply for children who have an assessment by or on behalf of the HSE and/or the NCSE.
- If parents are not in agreement with the outcome of the assessment and/or the content of the education plan, they are made aware of the appeals procedure and may appeal to the appeals board in accordance with the provisions of the EPSSEN Act 2004 Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
- Students needing support at this level will have their needs and interventions detailed and monitored in a School Support Plus Plan. A review of work already done at the levels of Classroom Support/ Support for All and School Support/ Support for Some, and contained within the student's Student Support File, will provide important information for this School Support Plus Plan.
- The School Support Plus Plan, together with reports from other professionals, consultation records and other relevant documents, will add to the body of information that is already contained within the Student Support File – allowing the school to continue to track the student's progress and needs over time.

11. Special Education Team Meetings

The SEN team (Principal, SEN Teacher, SNA, class teacher) meet regularly with individual mainstream teachers to discuss progress of children currently receiving additional support from the SEN team. The SEN Teacher will record the minutes/outcomes of these meetings. Support Plans are drafted, reviewed or updated following these meetings. Parent Teacher meetings are held in November each school year. However, parents of SEN pupils may be invited to attend meetings at other times of the year to discuss progress and /or concerns and when devising a Support Plan.

12. Communication

Communication with Class Teachers

- The SEN teacher will be in regular informal liaison with the class teacher.

Communication with Parents

- Parent meetings will be held at least twice a year to meet with parents of children on the SEN register
- If a parent or teacher has any concerns, an appointment can be made to discuss these concerns
- Communication will be between Parents and Class Teacher / SEN Teacher / Principal. The SNA must refer all matters on curriculum, classroom management, discipline etc. to the classroom teacher. SNA and teacher should be alert to parent seeking educational type information on a casual basis. All such information should only be given out by the teacher. Communication between the SNA and parent during the morning and afternoon handover should be brief in nature and only relating to the wellbeing of the pupil. SNAs will refer Parents to the Class Teacher if Parents attempt to communicate with them regarding children for an extended length of time.

Communication with BOM

- The BOM will be kept informed of the SEN provision on a regular basis by the Principal.

Whole-School Collaboration

- SEN issues will appear on the agenda of staff meetings and Post holders meetings when necessary. The SEN Teacher will co-ordinate this process.

Communication with Outside Agencies

- Regular liaison with outside agencies will be maintained by the Principal and the SEN teacher.

Communication with Principal

- The Principal will be in regular contact with the SEN Teacher.

13. Record-Keeping

A full record of psychological reports, other reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual student's file in a central, secure location (the office-in a locked press or cabinet) in the school. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

14. Exemptions from Irish

The School Management of St. Joseph's N.S. is required to observe the following prescribed procedures in relation to granting pupils exemptions from Irish:

- Circular 54/22 outlines the principles underpinning the granting of an exemption from Irish.
- A written application for exemption will be made by a parent or guardian to the Principal of the school. This application will specify the grounds on which the exemption is sought. It will

be accompanied by documentary evidence of age and previous schooling as appropriate to the grounds cited.

- The school authorities will satisfy themselves as to the documentary evidence submitted.
- A decision to grant exemption will be conveyed to the parent or guardian by way of a written certificate, signed by the school Principal, that the exemption has been given in accordance with this Circular. The certificate will also cite the name, address and type of school, the student's name and date of birth, the sub-paragraph under which the exemption is being granted and the specific grounds for exemption.
- The application, school report, psychologist's report, report of medical specialist, copy of certificate of exemption and other relevant documents will be retained by the school and will be made available for inspection by authorised officers of the Department.
- A copy of the exemption certificate will be given to the parent or guardian of the pupil being exempted
- A copy of the exemption certification should be sent to the relevant second level school when the pupil in question has completed her/his primary education.

15. Success Criteria

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

- Improved standards of literacy and numeracy
- Full integration and social inclusion of all children
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's needs

16. Staff Development

Teachers will continuously up skill in the following ways:

- Attend summer courses.
- Attend evening and in-service courses.
- Teachers will be afforded a time slot at staff meetings to share the benefit of their learning and expertise with other staff members.
- Liaison between Class Teachers and the SEN Teacher.

Ratification & Communication

This amended policy supersedes the policy drawn up in 2017. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S. on the 5th of December 2022.

Each teacher and SNA will have a copy of this policy and it will be made available to the parents through the school office and school website.

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years' time (or sooner if need be) and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Signed:

David Leahy
Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 05/12/2022

Appendix 1

The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning

Stage I- Classroom Support

A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. Classroom Support is the first response to emerging needs. It involves the class teacher supporting a pupil's learning in his/her own classroom. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning that are additional to or different from those required by other pupils in their class.

After consulting with the principal and parents, the class teacher is required to complete the relevant Classroom Support Paperwork (see Appendix 2 & 3) for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management and maintain a record of the strategies utilised. These will be shared with the principal and parents, with a view to them also helping at home. The success of the classroom support plan will be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan the Principal and the SEN teacher in the school will be consulted about the desirability of intervention at Stage II.

In class support by the SEN Support teacher could be used at this stage through small group/ team teaching.

Stage II- School Support

In some cases interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs (SEN) school support may be required. The class teacher, having consulted with the Principal, involves the SEN teacher in the problem solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information. If intervention is considered necessary at stage II, then the pupil may, with parental consent, undergo diagnostic testing. Following consultation with the principal and parents, the class teacher and the SEN teacher will draw up a school support plan which may include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom, and during supplementary teaching. The class teacher will continue to support the pupil in-class.

The rate of progress of each pupil receiving supplementary teaching is reviewed regularly. If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews and adaptations to the learning programme, then it may be necessary to provide interventions at stage III.

In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases the pupil's needs should, with parents' permission, be discussed with the NEPS psychologist and/or the case will be referred to the clinical services of the Health Services Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment (stage III).

Stage III- School Support Plus

Some pupils who continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at stage III. The Principal may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems (or both) who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme and in respect of pupils with serious emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc.

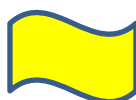
Following assessment it may be necessary for the Principal to apply to the National Council for Special Education for additional resources for the child. This may be in the form of SNA support, assistive technology or resource teaching hours. Parental consent will be sought before any such application is made. Where a child is granted resource hours, the resource teacher, the class teacher, in consultation with the relevant specialist or specialists where available, will then draw up a School Support Plus learning plan (IEP) that includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. The parents will be consulted throughout this process. This programme should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary.

In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant special educational needs, intervention at stage III will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme.

Note:

While most pupil's needs should be met through classroom based intervention, a small number of pupils may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan. Most of the pupils to whom this applies will be new to the school. However, it may also apply for some pupils following an event which impacts significantly on them in school.

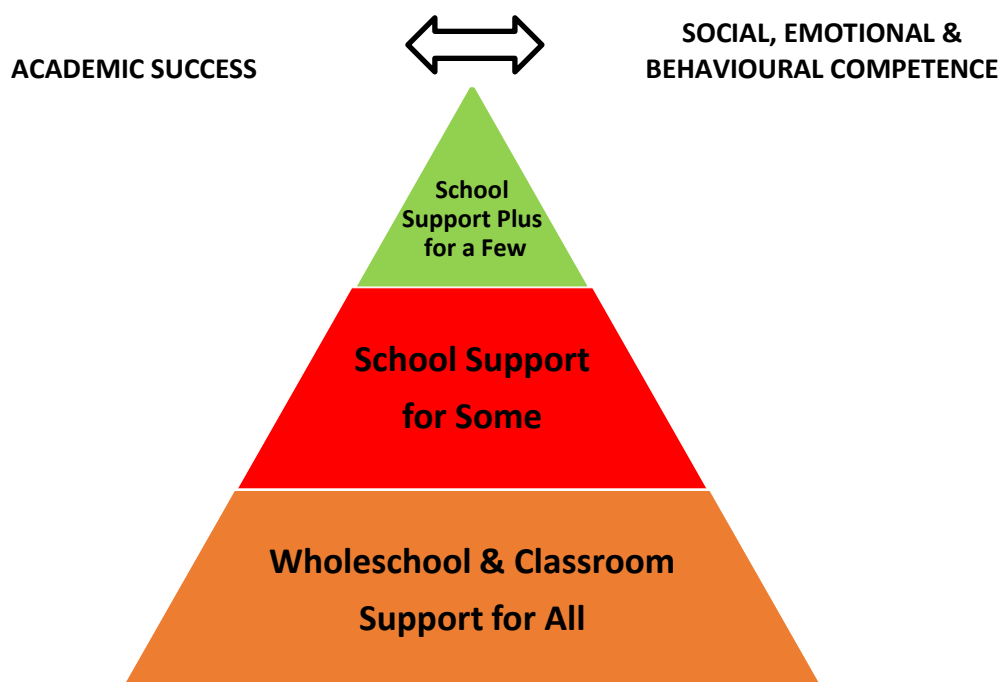
Granagh N.S.



STUDENT SUPPORT FILE

STUDENT SUPPORT FILE	
Name of Student	
Date of Birth	
School	
Date File Opened	
Date File Closed	

A Continuum of Support



Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

Support Checklist

Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information	Date Checked	Comments
1. Parents/ Guardians Consulted		
2. Information from previous school/preschool gathered		
3. Hearing		
4. Vision		
5. Medical Needs		
6. Basic Needs Checklist completed		
7. Assessment of learning- screening		
8. Observation of learning style/approach to learning		
9. Observation of behaviour		
10. Interview with pupil		
11. Classroom work differentiated?		
12. Learning environment adapted?		
13. Yard/school environments adapted?		
14. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
15. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
16. Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed		
<i>Helpful references: SEN: A Continuum of Support: Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 13-16, 18 to 20; BESD: A Continuum of Support, p 7; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp32-36; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools, pp20</i>		

SUPPORT PLAN*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s).

For help, see *SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers*; *BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers* pp.71-74; *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers*, pp. 51, 53, 54, 57.

Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
Priority concerns			
Possible reasons for concerns			
Targets for the student			
Strategies to help the student achieve the targets			
Staff involved and resources needed			
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher			

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this plan.

SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

For help, see *SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers*; *BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers*; *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource pack for Teachers*; *Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools*.

Student's name	Class/ Year	
Names of those present at review	Date of Review	
What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?		
Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?		
Have the student's needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how?		
Recommended future actions – <i>what, how, who, when?</i>		
Any comments from the student?		
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s) comment?		
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)		
Signature of teacher(s)		

Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)			
	Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/ Classroom Support OR Support for Some/ School Support		Progress to next level of support- Support for Some/ School Support OR Support for a Few/ School Support Plus
	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this review.

Appendix 2: School provision plan for pupils with special educational needs

School: Granagh N.S.

Roll No: 09927I

School Year: _____

Reviewed: _____

Special Educational Needs Teaching: _____ hours

Teacher	Hours	Brief Description of role and duties

Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework 5

Classroom Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard

School Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In- class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard

School Support Plus				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In- class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard