

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

2023

1. Context

St. Brigid's NS, Errew caters for children from Junior Infants to 6th Class and is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. The allocation of Special Education Teacher posts and the Special Needs Assistant post is subject to review.

The purpose of this policy document is to provide information to school personnel and parents on how we organise provision for teaching and support of children with special educational needs. The term special educational needs is broad and includes children who have difficulty acquiring literacy and/or numeracy skills; children with difficulties with fine or gross motor skills; children who have diagnosed disabilities; and especially-able children whose needs are not met within the context of the Classroom Support Plan. In addition, SEN provision encompasses Early Intervention strategies. In this document, SEN can be taken to be special educational needs in this broad sense.

The policy is based on Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (Department of Education & Skills; Circular 13/2017)

The school provides an FAQ document at the end of this policy document to assist in understanding any terms or acronyms.

2. Aims of SEN Support

Our school is committed to equity; to helping our pupils to achieve their full potential. The provision of a quality system of SEN support teaching is integral to this commitment. Through the implementation of our SEN policy we aim to:

- Support the inclusion of children with SEN in our school,
- Develop positive attitudes about school and learning in our children,
- Ensure that the Staged Approach/Continuum of Support* is implemented,
- Optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable children with different learning needs to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school (Guidelines for Schools, p15)
- Enable children to participate in the full curriculum,
- Support appropriate differentiation in the classroom,
- Support children's development both socially and emotionally,
- Enable children to understand themselves as learners,
- Involve parents in supporting their children,
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on SEN support for our pupils,
- Promote early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.
- Promote wellbeing and inclusion for newly-arrived children.

3. Principles of SEN Support

The provision of SEN support in our school is based on the following principles:

1. Quality of teaching,
2. Effective whole-school policies,
3. Direction of resources towards children in greatest need,
4. Implementation of a staged approach to support provision at Class Support/School Support/School Support Plus levels,
5. Provision of the model(s) of intervention appropriate for the child, including the withdrawal model, in-class support model, individual or group work, etc.

***Continuum of Support – Staged Approach**

Stage 1. Classroom Support – Should a concern arise about the academic, physical, social or emotional development of a child, the class teacher will then construct a simple, individual plan of support to be implemented in the usual class setting. This plan will form the first and primary instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support and will be based on screening measures administered by the teacher. The plan will be reviewed after each instructional term (usually six to eight weeks, using the Review Page from the Continuum of Support document). If the plan is working well for the child it will be continued or discontinued. If insufficient progress is made and the child is still presenting with difficulties Stage 2 (School Support) is implemented. The parents will be involved at the Classroom Support Stage; in both identifying strengths and needs of the child in question.

Stage 2. School Support – The SET will begin a period of screening and testing. A letter of consent will be sent to the parents of the children involved. However, as part of our enrolment package, we ask for parental permission to complete our historic screening and diagnostic assessments – such as MISTs/BIAPs/Schonnel or BAS word reading tests etc. As such, children will attend the SET for our usual screening and testing; testing at School Support level will involve the school seeking additional permission for the necessary assessments. The class teacher and SET then draw up a plan of appropriate learning SMART targets and outcomes for the child. This plan will form the second instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support. The child's parents/guardians will invited to contribute to this plan, and asked to sign it. This plan will be reviewed at the end of each instructional term and if significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to involve outside agencies such as NEPS or the HSE. (Stage 3)

Stage 3. School Support Plus – The school may formally request a consultation from other professionals outside the school in respect of children who fail to make sufficient progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of behavioural programmes, as appropriate. Such professional advice is sought from psychologists, speech therapists, audiologists, occupational therapists etc. This is carried out in consultation with the permission of the child's parents/guardians. Specific permission is sought to discuss any child with the NEPS Psychologist. Following the consultation, the class teacher, SET, parents and

outside professional (if available) will draw up a Learning Programme for the child. This plan will form the third instructional stage of the child's Continuum of Support. In case of children identified at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at Stage 3 will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such children and primary responsibility for the child will remain with the class teacher. The SET will be in regular contact with the parents of children on their caseload and outside agencies as necessary.

Note: The 'Log of Actions' in the Continuum of Support will be added to as appropriate (after a decision has been made or a meeting held). These additions will be made by the SET as appropriate.

4. Roles and Responsibilities – The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all the school community: The Board of Management, Principal Teacher, Parents, Class Teachers, SET, SNAs, Children and external bodies and agencies.

Board of Management – The Board of Management will:

- Be informed of the reviewed SEN policy and any updates to it,
- Ratify the SEN policy,
- Ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation and teaching resources are available, and minute instances where capacity of resources cannot meet the needs of the child.
- Provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to children in receipt of SEN support.

Principal Teacher – The Principal Teacher will have overall responsibility for the school's provision for children with SEN.

- The Principal ensures records are kept of referrals made to NEPS and other outside services.
- The Principal meets with the NEPS psychologist when necessary; seeking advice; formulating plans; discussing assessments and professional supports for teachers.

- The Principal reviews Student Support Files and Short-term planning documents including targets during Principal Release Time and during SEN planning time.
- The Principal ensures the SET observes Circular 13/17 and subsequent guidelines – SET to ensure equity.

Class Teacher – The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all children in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. (Guidelines 2017) The

The Class Teacher will

- Provide effective teaching and learning opportunities,
- Support the identification of learning difficulties,
- Provide Classroom Support/Stage 1 - communicate with parents/guardians - draw up Classroom Support Plans (Stage 1 Continuum of Support) “Interventions with children at stages 2 and 3 should include a classroom support plan to ensure that the children’s needs are met for the whole school day” (Guidelines 2017 p7) - collaborate with the Support Teacher in the development of a Support Plan for each child who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support/School Support Plus Level on the Continuum, by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets. A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and cooperation between the Class Teacher and the Support Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of support plans. This consultation will be achieved through formal timetabling at least once per instructional term, and through informal consultation as the need arises.

Special Education Teacher – The central role of the SET will be to

- a) support the class teacher in optimising teaching and learning opportunities including their skillset, knowledge and expertise from their CPD etc and
- b) provide specialised teaching to those children with identified special educational needs. These will include:

- Providing supplementary teaching commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.
- Researching the child's strengths and their learning needs and preferred learning methods.
- Becoming familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs (Guidelines 2017 p.13).
- Developing a Student Support File for each child who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with Class Teachers and parents.
- Maintaining a weekly Short-Term Plan and Progress Record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of children on file.
- Administering a range of formal and informal assessments and maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments. This will involve conducting an initial Diagnostic Assessment of each child who has been identified as being in need, as a result of an appropriate screening measure, and record the findings of the assessment in the child's Support Plan.
- Monitoring the ongoing progress of each child in receipt of supplementary teaching in relation to the attainment of agreed learning targets, recording the observations in the Short-Term Plan and Progress Record, or equivalent.
- Reviewing the progress of each child at the end of an instructional term and recording it on the child's Support Plan at each review.
- Providing supplementary teaching in Literacy and/or Numeracy to children who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties at School Support/School Support Plus (as per selection criteria).
- Providing supplementary teaching to those whose gross motor or fine motor skill needs support.
- Providing supplementary teaching to those who have social or emotional needs; this includes social bonding group-work and support with the Aistear programme, Brick Club and other social provisions for newcomers to the school.
- Providing supplementary teaching to those especially-abled whose needs are not being met by their Classroom Support Plan. The selection criteria for those in an

especially-able category includes class teacher observation and teacher-designed tests, and consistent scores of 9 or 10 in standardised STEN scores. Every effort will be made at classroom level to facilitate these children in our multi-grade classrooms.

- Providing supplementary teaching in Early Intervention categories from Junior Infants through to Second Class. This includes in-class support and withdrawal of groups depending on the needs of the group and the strategies being used – such as station teaching or active work outside.
- Logging actions in the Support Plan,
- Assisting the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of children for supplementary teaching.
- Contributing to the development of SEN policy.
- Providing advice to the Class Teacher.
- Planning SMART Targets or similar for each child in receipt of SEN support.
- Meeting with parents of children who are in receipt of support teaching where a concern is ongoing.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc., and implementing suitable recommendations, wherever possible.
- Implementing school practices on preventing learning difficulties, screening children for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching, where it is deemed necessary.
- Recording screening and diagnostic test results and tabling same for the Principal and appropriate Class Teacher. Recording standardised test results on the appropriate graphs for the BOM annually.
- The SET will be afforded the opportunity to use their specific skillset and strengths with the whole school or groups of children/classes throughout the year, as per Looking at our School, a Quality Framework, 2022.

Role of SNA – The role of an SNA will be to carry out duties based on the care needs of the child. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature. (Circular 0030/2014)

The primary care support tasks may include:

- Administration of medicine and observation and recording of screening devices.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds, and at recreation, assembly and dispersal times.
- Assisting children while on outings, trips, tours etc.
- Assisting children while at play as appropriate. Provision of care needs associated with specific medical conditions; diabetes. Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a child from a classroom when essential.
- The SNA may be re-deployed by the CT in consultation with the Principal when medical needs have been attended.

The secondary care support tasks, depending on the needs of the child, may include:

- 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.
- Assistance with the development of Student Support File for children with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the child concerned and the review of such plans. The class teacher may ask for assistance in this area.
- Assistance with maintaining a journal and care monitoring system for children including details of attendance and care needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities.
- Attending meetings with Parents, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENO); National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS); or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.
- Assistance with enabling a child to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of appropriate personnel.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, outings, school trips and tours, football and sport activities, religious ceremonies, etc, which may

occur outside the usual school day but in which the school community historically participates.

Role of Parents/Guardians – The central role of parents/guardians of children with SEN is the same as all parents/guardians, i.e; to support the work of the school and to optimise teaching and learning opportunities for their child at home.

The school asks that parents are honest with the school if their child has received paperwork, psychological assessments etc which will likely help the school in preparing support plans for the child. The school acknowledges that parents do not have to provide such paperwork, however, with these supports the school can provide a better service.

Instructional terms for support provision are 6-8 weeks in duration. It is envisaged that children who are in receipt of a successful 6-8 week instructional term in School Support would move back onto a Classroom Support Plan. If SMART-target supports were not successful, the child may move onto a new 6-8 week instructional term with School Support. It is not envisaged that a child would remain in School Support in a long-term capacity unless complex special needs require additional supports to help the child cope in the mainstream classroom. High-incidence issues do not necessarily qualify for long-term School Support unless the SET pyramid in a specific school year allows for same.

Role of Children – The role of the child with SEN will be that of active participant in their own learning; the extent and nature of this will depend on their strengths and needs. Independence is core to the child's role in this context.

Role of External Bodies and Agencies – Our school liaises with external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive), Tusla and the Inspectorate. We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and

education services. We therefore liaise with and facilitate meetings between parents and various support services if/when necessary. We also incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals if applicable, when developing our student support files.

5. Prevention and Early Intervention – Prevention Strategies

- Differentiation of the curriculum by the mainstream class teacher to cater for individual strengths and needs,
- Development and implementation of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics to ensure progression and continuity from class to class, including the Aistear programme. This varies from year to year depending on the needs of the children and encompasses station-teaching work; small group work; in-class support for a few; team-teaching and withdrawal,
- The school targets specific skill acquisition in phonological awareness, rhyming skills including on-set and rime work, and oral language development throughout the child's career in the Junior Room. The SEN teacher supports the class teacher in the development and execution of these programmes and strategies.
- A multi-sensory approach is central to Early Intervention work in the school – the use of concrete materials and resources is employed regularly and as appropriate to the needs of the children.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of children in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties – we assess regularly throughout the year and also administer BIAP screening assessments and MIST tests in the infant classes as appropriate.
- Class-based early intervention and differentiation by the class teacher through the use of the Classroom Support Plan, focusing on the provision of additional individualised support, as and when required.
- Support for children experiencing social/emotional difficulties and problems with concentration and focus – based on their specific needs in individual or group-settings and facilitated by the SEN teacher in conjunction with the class teacher.

- Provision of Assistive Technology as appropriate.
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents/guardians of incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings/phonecalls. Meetings are organised via email and may be in-person or by phonecall. Parents are made aware of staff emails at the beginning of each year, and throughout the year as necessary. The secretary can be contacted in the event that a teacher is absent for a sustained period of time.
- Parents are involved in the development of the Student Support File as it applies to their child – from the early development of the classroom support plan, to the review at the end of each instructional term.
- Early Intervention Strategies Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class teacher and/or the SEN teacher, in accordance with the Staged Approach (NEPS Continuum).
- Collaboration and consultation between the class teachers and the SEN teacher should identify children who may be in need of early intervention.
- Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of children for early intervention programmes at Classroom Support/School Support level.
- Early intervention programmes will include –
 - An active learning programme for all children in the Junior Room, with specific emphasis on oral language development, underpinned by the principles of the Aistear programme and the new Language Curriculum.
 - Early intervention literacy and language support programmes (Shared Reading and Literacy Lift-Off in the future)
 - Withdrawal of children to a support teaching room, in-class support, team teaching, group work and individual support will be provided, as appropriate to the child's needs and strengths.

6. Identifying and selecting children for additional teaching support

- Children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of supports.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used by our school to select children for supplementary teaching in line with the new model of Special Education Teaching (Circular 13/2107).

1. Teacher observation of the child at work; in the context of their classroom and daily lives. The class teacher is usually the first to identify emerging needs, and will plan a Classroom Support Plan accordingly. When this plan fails to deliver expected improvements, the SEN teacher's services and expertise will be availed of and a period of support will be planned. This may involve additional work at Classroom Support level, or the development of a School Support Plan. On occasion a parent may approach the class teacher regarding the option of access to support; such cases will involve classroom/yield observation, the emerging needs of the child alongside the pyramid of needs in the school.
2. Children scoring at or below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Numeracy.
3. Children experiencing serious difficulties with oral language or social or emotional development or application to learning, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher may have opened a Classroom Support Plan and recorded the interventions within.
4. Children scoring at or below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Numeracy (to allow for a margin of error) – in addition with the observations of the class teacher.
5. Children who are new to the school/country, possibly without English. These children will have access to support time to facilitate additional work, wellbeing work etc. (Where EAL hours are granted in most cases since 2022, acquiring a teacher EAL hours may prove challenging and the school endeavours to be a welcoming environment).
6. Children diagnosed as having Low Incidence Learning Disabilities since 2017 where appropriate.
7. Children diagnosed as having High Incidence Learning Disabilities where appropriate.

8. Children scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy and/or numeracy and who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Classroom Support Plan and recorded the interventions within.
9. Exceptionally Able or Gifted and Talented Children – Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Classroom Support Plan and recorded the interventions within. Criteria for access to this support includes firstly teacher observation within the context of the classroom and may be specific to one subject area; STEN scores on standardised tests of 9 or 10. In addition, it may be preferable to undertake individualised strengths-based programmes in class, supported by the SET, particularly at senior level.

7. Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching.

- At the end of each instructional block/term the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the child's class teacher and where appropriate, the child's parents/guardians.
- A decision will be made regarding their continued level of support and revised or developed targets will be set in their Support Plan.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when satisfactory progress has been made and targets have been met. A classroom support plan will likely replace a school support plan at this stage.
- The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support; however, if both the class teacher and support teacher feel such a child needs scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group.

8. Monitoring Progress

- The Support Review Record on the Continuum of Support will be completed by the Support Teacher in collaboration with the Class Teacher. This will be carried out at the end of each instructional period. The completed review will be saved in Aladdin (our school Administration System). A paper record will be kept in the child's file.
- Self-Reflection (by the child) – as part of the Support Review Record and regularly throughout the year using tools such as Rubrics. The children are encouraged to reflect on their own progress and self-evaluate their own work throughout each term.
- Termly or Weekly Assessments if applicable including teacher designed tests; observation or from publishers. Records of these are kept by each class teacher in their Assessment Folders.
- Standardised Tests during Term Three of each academic year (1st – 6th) English (MICRA T) and Maths (SIGMA T).
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) for Senior Infants during Term Three of each academic year.
- Bellfield Infant Assessment Programme (BIAP) for Junior Infants during Term Three of each academic year to screen for issues before the child may realise they may have an issue.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the children in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties – the Reading Recovery Battery of Tests is used with the senior infant class and for any others for whom the test may help develop strategies to meet their needs.
- British Assembly Scales biannually at the start of each year and again at the end of each year; to acquire a Word Reading Age (alternative to that proffered by the MICRA T) across the school.
- Children may be assessed with other tests where suitable – eg. GIN Numeracy Assessments.
- Children may participate in additional testing to monitor progress as appropriate.
- Children may participate in an assessment if they have moved to the school from another area or country as appropriate.

9. Record Keeping

- Class Teachers will keep a record of teacher designed tests, end of term tests and checklists in an Assessment Folder for their class. This may include the children's own opinions and self-assessments such as Rubric criteria and scores.
- A file for each child in the class is kept in a locked filing cabinet in the classroom and passed on from teacher to teacher as the child moves through the school. This file contains parent-teacher meeting notes, if not saved on Aladdin, copies of their past reports and various other elements of significance. A secondary sub-element of this folder will file correspondence from the child's parents/guardians and any relevant correspondence relating to the child.
- Diagnostic Assessments and other checklists administered by the Support Teacher will be put in the child's file in the classroom.
- A copy of the child's Student Support File is kept in the child's file in the classroom and on file in the SET filing cabinet. This may be transferred to Aladdin in the future.
- Plans for children with SNA access will also be kept in the child's file in the classroom and the SET filing cabinet where appropriate.
- Psychological Reports that are active at any given time are kept in a locked filing cabinet. Copies may be held by the class teacher in the child's file.
- Results of Completed Standardised Tests will be uploaded to Aladdin where possible. A copy will be held in the Support Room locked filing cabinet. The Standardised Tests currently used in our school are – MICRA T (English) and SIGMA T (Maths). The SWST (Spelling Test) / BAS, the MIST (Senior Infant Test) and BIAPs are also administered.
- End of Year School Report will be issued to parents/guardians in late May/June. These reports will be saved in Aladdin, a copy will be kept in the child's file. All procedures will be followed regarding 6th class passports.
- Monthly Reports from the SET will kept staff monthly reports on a digital storage device in the staffroom filing cabinet.

10. Liaising with Parents/Guardians, Communicating Information

- Class teacher meets with parents/guardians initially to discuss concerns and outline supports available in the school.
- SET meets with parents to agree a School Support Plan for the child.
- SET liaises with parents of children in receipt of supplementary teaching to demonstrate methodologies that could be useful at home to further the child's learning where appropriate.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning. Formal meetings are made if a child's progress is of concern. Teachers regularly check homework journals. Phone calls, emails and/or meetings are scheduled when a child is in receipt of support – acquiring information, reviewing, updating parents on the child's programme etc.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in Term One of each year; usually October or November.
- Informal information meetings are held for the parents of incoming Junior Infants at our enrolment day in Term Two each year – the Class Teacher and SET are available to discuss our school and its culture. The Principal will be available to meet with and welcome the new children and their parents when cover can be provided.
- On the infant day in June of each year, the Class Teacher with support from the SET, will welcome the infants. Siblings or neighbours from across the school will be made available to buddy with the new infants for a small amount of time on this special day.
- As the end-of-year report goes home in late May/June each year, opportunities to discuss this report are made available before the end of term should a parent wish to discuss their child's report. Parents are asked to email their child's class teacher or the secretary in the event of a prolonged staff absence, to organise a meeting/phonecall to discuss same.
- A NEPS transferral form is completed by the SET/Class Teacher when a child in receipt of support transitions to secondary school. The parents of the child are involved in filling this form along with the SET and CT as appropriate. The school can pass this directly to secondary school with parental permission.

11. Timetabling

- Supplementary teaching that children receive is in addition to their regular class programme in English and Numeracy, in so far as is practicable; the programme which they receive will reflect their needs.
- Co-teaching or Team-Teaching, where two teachers work together to plan, organise, instruct and make assessments on the same group of students, sharing the same classroom, can operate during English and Numeracy times in class (such as in Station Teaching). If deemed more beneficial to the group being taught by the SET, the group may be withdrawn to a quiet space.
- In so far as is practicable children should not miss out on the same curricular area each time they receive supplementary teaching. The school is flexible in rolling the SET timetable within any given week, to allow for expected or unexpected changes such as pupil absenteeism; cover for religious ceremonies; favourite subject (or identified strength area) clashes etc. The SET in conjunction with staff, will review the timetable at the end of each instructional term/block.

12. Attendance

- An attendance record for each week will be kept by the SET.

13. Monitoring and Reviewing the SEN Policy

- The Principal and Deputy Principal in conjunction with the SET and staff, will monitor and review this policy. This review will be initiated by the SET at the end of each SEN cycle.

14. SEN Policy Success Criteria

A whole school approach to the implementation of our SEN policy will:

- ensure that children with the greatest need gain access to a broad, balanced curriculum and have opportunity of access to an appropriate education,
- develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning among our pupils, we build firstly on our pupils' strengths,
- improve standards of academic performance and achievement,
- enhance parental involvement in supporting their child's learning where appropriate,
- increase collaboration between staff – we work together to target the outcomes for each child in receipt of SEN support.

The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through:

- feedback from teachers, children and parents/guardians;
- child's achievements and ongoing analysis of children's academic, emotional, or behavioural performance as appropriate;
- attainment of personal the child's personal targets.

Acknowledgements

1. Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (Department of Education & Skills)
2. "Managing the Transition to the New Model of Special Education" (Dr. Mairéad De Búrca / INTO 2017)
3. Circular 30/2014 Special Needs Assistants
4. Circular 13/2017 Special Educational Needs – New Model
5. <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/a-new-model-for-allocatingspecial-education-teachers-to-mainstream-schools.pdf>

Useful websites:

1. Department of Education & Skills: www.education.ie

2. National Council for Special Education: www.ncse.ie
3. National Council for Curriculum Assessment: www.ncca.ie
4. Health Service Executive: www.hse.ie
5. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

List of additional documents used in SEN planning:

- Basic Needs Checklist,
- Learning Environment Checklist,
- Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support (Overview Page),
- Student Support File, St Bridget's NS, Errew (2018),
- Permission for child to attend Support Teaching/Parents' Consent Form,
- Permission for teacher to administer screening/diagnostic test letter,
- Permission to discuss your child with the psychologist letter,
- SEN notes and timetables.
- Please note this list is not exhaustive.

FAQs to accompany SEN policy

1. What is SEN?

SEN means special educational needs. Under the new model of allocation, the term special educational needs is broad and includes children who have difficulty attaining literacy and/or numeracy skills, children with fine or gross motor skills in so far as they impact on the children's progress, children who have English as an additional language (if that impacts on their progress) and children who have diagnosed disabilities. It also includes children with social or emotional needs and may include newly arrived children to the school.

The new model of allocation for SEN teaching provides for appropriate teaching for these children using what is called a staged approach.

2. What do you mean by a staged approach? We take a step-by-step approach to understanding and supporting children who are presenting with a special educational need. There are three main stages and they are outlined in the policy document under the heading Continuum of Support. The Continuum of Support is developed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and is used in all primary schools. Children receive a 6-8 week instructional term and the progress is reviewed.

3. Who decides which teacher works with my child? It is the Principal's responsibility to allocate teachers to classes. The Principal is mindful of the needs of our pupils and the particular strengths and interests of our teachers. Our SEN allocation is not permanent, and this is of consideration when allocating a teacher to the SEN role. All of our current permanent staff have experience in the SEN role.

4. Who has access to my child's reports? Professional reports are often provided to the Principal to assist us in planning appropriately for your child. The reports are confidential and are only shared with the teachers of your child.

5. What is Aladdin? Is it secure? Aladdin is our Information Management System. It is cloud based and secure. It is GDPR compliant (data protection regulations). Only teachers and ancillary staff (secretary) have access to records for pupils in their current class.

6. What is an SNA? An SNA is a Special Needs Assistant who is employed to assist with the care needs of a specific child or children while in the care of the school. The allocation of SNAs is governed by DES Circular 30/2014.

7. What is a Personal Pupil Plan? A Personal Pupil Plan outlines a pupil's special care needs and shows how the SNA will be deployed to assist the pupil. The plan is developed with the parents and teachers of a pupil, and refers to the pupil's support plan (based on the Continuum of Support).

8. Can my child have support from an SNA? If your child has a medical need, or diagnosed disability and/or has complex care needs please talk to the class teacher to discuss an application for SNA access. Please note the school must be made aware of medical needs as this is a health and safety issue.

9. What is NEPS? NEPS is the National Educational Psychological Service and is a service of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and aims to support the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education. It has particular regard for children with special educational needs.

10. What is NCSE? The National Council for Special Education. It was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special education needs. The NCSE is responsible for the allocation of teaching supports and SNAs to support children with special education needs. This is organised locally through Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOS).

11. What is the HSE and why is it involved in schools? The HSE is the Health Service Executive and part of its duties concern the care and welfare of children. The HSE provides services to children through its Early Intervention Teams, its School Age Teams, its Speech & Language and Occupational Therapy services etc. The HSE also offers vision and hearing screening to pupils in our school, and it also offers booster vaccinations to those in the junior infant class.

12. What is a screening measure or test? Screening tests are easy to administer, contain relatively few items, and can be completed in a relatively brief time, sometimes only a few minutes per child. They can be paper and pencil tests, rating scales, checklists or observations of skills/abilities. They are used to alert the school to a possible areas of concern. These concerns can then be explored with in-depth assessments. Screening tests are especially useful in identifying an issue a child may have, before the child even realises it themselves. Therefore the school can help target needs before they become an issue of negative self-concept for the child.

13. What is a diagnostic test? A diagnostic test or assessment can provide a profile of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses and can help the teachers develop appropriate teaching plans for the pupil. These plans form part of the Student Support File.

14. What is a STen score? A STen score is a number used as a marker to compare children's results, on a standardised test, within a national average.

The numbers include a range of up to ten; but these are not equal numbers – they are not fractions of a whole number, as is commonly misunderstood. The child does not receive a rating out of 10.

About 68% of children score between 4 and 7 as this is the average range. Only 2% of children nationally score a STen of 10. Only 4% of children nationally score a STen of 9.

15. What is a percentile score on a test? A percentile score compares a child's test score with other children who took the same test. For example, a child who scores the 60th percentile has done better on the test than children who score 59th percentile or below on the same test. Standardised tests give teachers norms to compare scores with, so that we know how children score compared to other children in Ireland taking the same test.

16. What is meant by Low Incidence Learning Disability? Low incidence learning disability refers to disabilities which occur less frequently in the general population. These include moderate, severe or profound general learning disability; significant physical or sensory impairment (eg: vision or hearing); severe emotional or behavioural problems; autistic spectrum disorder; and other diagnosed syndromes.

17. What is meant by High Incidence Learning Disability? High incidence learning disability refers to disabilities which are seen more frequently in the general population. These include specific learning disability (dyslexia and dyscalculia) and mild general learning disability.

18. What is EAL? EAL means English as an Additional Language. Teaching supports are provided to children who have English as an Additional Language in so far as it impacts on their educational progress. Many of our pupils who have English as an Additional Language have well developed literacy and numeracy skills which transfer onto their learning of English. EAL can be provided pending DES approval and if staff can be secured to provide the service.

19. What is Aistear? Aistear is part of the National Curriculum framework for early childhood education. In our school, Aistear takes the form of structured play-based learning around

chosen themes in the Junior Room. It is a priority in the Junior Years; Junior Infants to Second Class.

20. What is Shared Reading? What is Buddy Reading? These are reading approaches which allow our younger children to partner with an older child or reading buddy. The children have the opportunity to read aloud, discuss contextual cues, illustrations, make predictions and talk about the stories they are reading. The older partners, and buddies, avail of the opportunity to hone their questioning skills, their critical thinking skills; and allows for a culture of care and respect to grow in our school.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Signed hardcopy at school.