

Scoil Naomh Phádraig Ballybryan



Special Educational Needs Policy

Contents

1. **Introductory Statement**
2. **Rationale**
3. **School Information**
4. **Aims of the Special Education Team (SET)**
5. **Enrolment of Children with
Identified Special Education Needs**
6. **Roles and Responsibilities**
7. **Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs**
8. **Information Gathering and Assessment**
9. **Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources**
10. **Timetabling**
11. **Health and Safety Issues**
12. **Supervision/Child Protection**
13. **Ratification and Communication**
14. **Implementation and Review**

1. Introductory Statement

This Policy was developed by the Special Education Team and all staff members during the 2024 / 2025 school year. This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices in dealing with Special Education Teaching in our school.

2. Rationale

The 'Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act', 2004 (EPSEN), Section 1, defines a special educational need as "a restriction in capacity to participate in and benefit from education due to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition".

The *Learning Support Guidelines, 2000*, refers to pupils whose achievement is at a very low level and who are at risk of not reaching adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

Our school has devised this policy to:

- Cater for the enrolment of pupils with special educational needs in a mainstream setting.
- To comply with legislation and department circulars
- To streamline the provision of special needs supports in the school and to formalise existing arrangements.

We believe that all our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their individual needs. This policy aims to enable children with Special Education Needs (SEN) and children whose first language is not English, to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

3. School Information

Scoil Naomh Phádraig Ballybryan, Rhode, Co. Offaly, is a co-educational primary school with 125 pupils on roll. There are five mainstream teachers (including the principal), two Special Education Team (SET) teachers - both currently full time and an EAL teacher (10 hours weekly).

4. Aims of Special Education

The principal aim of special education is to optimize the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy, oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and motor skills before leaving primary school.

- Subsidiary aims

- To enable pupils to participate in the school environment to the best of their ability.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy and numeracy, oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and motor skills.
- To involve parents in supporting their children through effective parent-support programmes.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for these pupils.
- To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to overcome/reduce difficulties in learning.

5. Enrolment of children with identified special educational needs

In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs the school will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available, will request that the child be assessed immediately. Parents are advised to inform the school in advance of enrollment or early in the enrollment process, of any special educational needs that their child

might have. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and care needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report, the school Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO) and principal, will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Where the school deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: SET teaching hours, special needs assistants, specialised equipment, resources or furniture, visiting teacher service, transport services or other.

The school may request to meet with the parents of the child and with the SENO to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability for meeting those needs. This will all be conducted in the child's best interests.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of Special Education is a collaborative responsibility shared by all

- a) Board of Management
- b) Principal
- c) SEN Co-Ordinator
- d) Class teachers
- e) Special Education Teacher
- f) Special Needs Assistants
- g) Parents and Guardians
- h) Pupils

a) Board of Management:

The Board of Management should:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of SEN support.
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for SET teachers.

b) Principal:

The Learning Support Guidelines (2000) outlined the principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the principal's leadership role is central and includes the following;

The school principal should

Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including Special Education Team (SET) roles.

Co-ordinate 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.

Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.

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.

Assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher.

Communicate with the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET.

Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.

c) SEN Co-ordinator:

The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) should:

Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis.

Liase with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs.

Liase with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments.

Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs.

Collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support.

- Co-ordinate with class teachers and SNA's in creating SNA timetables for children with SNA access

Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress.

Co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level.

Co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests.

Select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted.

Maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support.

- Update student's Personalised Pupil Plans (PPPs) in collaboration with class teachers, SNAs and parents.
- Organise School Support Meetings and Review Meetings in September / February each year.

d) Class Teachers:

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for additional support.

They should

Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils.

Create a positive learning environment within the classroom.

Differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class.

Administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines.

- Inform parents of any concerns regarding these facts

Discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SEN Class Co-ordinator to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching.

Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.

Gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support.

Develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support.

Meet with the Special Education Teacher, parents/guardians and other staff member to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of support.

Collaborate with Special Education Teachers and relevant staff to develop a School Support Plan.

Regularly meet with Special Education Teacher, and relevant staff to review School Support Plans.

Meet regularly with Special Education Teacher, relevant staff and parents to review School Support Plans.

Where applicable, collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching.

Co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned.

e) Special Education Teacher (SET):

The SET teacher should:

Familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs.

Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention.

Collaboratively develop School Support Plans for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff.

Meet with class teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of support.

Meet with class teachers, relevant staff and parents/guardians to review support plans.

Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support.

Provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis.

Support whole-school procedures for screening.

Administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes.

Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.

Co-ordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload.

Discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings.

- SET teachers may be required to cover mainstream classrooms as per principal's instruction.

f) Special Needs Assistant:

The duties of the SNA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills and under the direction of the principal/class teachers, the SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have

been assigned. (Circular 30/2014).

The SNA should:

Support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum

contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils

Support learning and teaching in the classroom.

attend, where possible, training courses/workshops funded by the Board Of Management from time to time.

Attend School Support Plan meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary.

Ensure the safety of the SEN pupils in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty.

Maintain a record of support provided to their SEN pupil.

Accompany SEN pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate.

g) Parents/Guardians:

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our SEN policy. Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning.

Parent/Guardian should:

Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage.

Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning.

Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team.

Support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities.

Inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage.

h) Pupils:

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term learning targets.

Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning.

Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.

7. Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term. Pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. It may be determined that support will discontinue for some children if the child's targets have been met. By using this framework, it also helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress. The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

8. Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the

curriculum.

In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening; including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupil's support plans

Assessment and Screening Tests:

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

Junior Infants: Observation, Checklists.

Senior Infants: Observation, Checklists, MIST.

1st class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra Reading Test, Sigma T.

2nd class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra Reading Test, Sigma T, NNRIT.

3rd class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra Reading Test, Sigma T.

4th class Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra Reading Test, Sigma T.

5th class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra Reading Test, Sigma T and NNRIT.

6th class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra Reading Test, Sigma T, Drumcondra Irish test.

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore, we may deviate from the above list.

Screening Tests

Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)

Drumcondra Reading Test / Micra

Sigma-T

New Non- Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)

Dyslexia Screening Test (DST - J)

9. Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

Once pupils' needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are 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.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the overriding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

At the end of an agreed time framework the SET teachers involved meet class teachers and review children's needs, the resources in place and progress made using the Continuum of Support. We 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.

10. Timetabling

The SET teacher along with the relevant class teachers are responsible for putting a timetable in place to meet the needs of the pupils. Provision will be made for individual, group and in-class support. Timetables may be reviewed and updated when necessary.

11. Health and Safety Issues

Every staff member and pupil are entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect.

All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. Such measures are under constant review and changes adopted if necessary. Reports will be maintained on the school's Aladdin system of incidents where health and safety were deemed to be at risk.

The Special Needs Assistants (SNA's) are present for the duration of yard breaks along with one teacher on yard. A supervision timetable has been devised and circulated among all staff.

The front yard of the school is segregated to minimize the risk of harm to pupils.

When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented collaboratively as a staff.

12. Supervision/Child Protection

- Parents of pupils who receive support are requested to consent to their child working in a 1:1 setting along with group settings in the school.
- All our classroom doors have a glass panel which ensures visibility at all times.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SET teacher should collect and return children to their classrooms.
- Where a child has access to SNA support, the SNA may

withdraw the child from the class to complete various activities. Such withdrawal will be planned and agreed collaboratively and in advance with the class teacher, SNA and school leaders and parents will be informed. The reason for withdrawal will also be agreed and may take the form of self-regulation, teaching and learning, sensory/movement breaks.

13. Reduced School Day

In the event that a Reduced School Day is deemed appropriate and in the best interests of the child, a plan will be developed in line with circular 0047/2021 and in collaboration with parents. This will be agreed in writing and be sent to TUSLA and all relevant bodies in advance, as determined by any Government instruction.

14. Ratification and Communication

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management in

14. Implementation and Review

This policy will be reviewed in October 2026 by the Special Education Team and all staff.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Principal

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

