



Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Four Masters National School



Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Introductory Statement

This policy was initially formulated on 16th June 2006 and reviewed by the Special Education Support team in June 2018. This policy was comprehensively reviewed and updated in May 2025.

Rationale

- Because of continuing changes in Special Needs Policy from the Department of Education and Skills, a unified policy is required for both low incidence and high incidence pupils.
- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- To have clear procedures within our school for meeting the needs of our pupils with SEN.
- We opened a Special Class for children with ASD in September 2023 and a second Special Class in 2025 and continue to develop our inclusion of ASD pupils in our school.
- In line with updated guidelines and the statements of effective practice and the promotion of wellbeing within our school, this policy takes a positive and inclusive approach for the holistic development of all of our pupils.

Aims

- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
- To outline our whole –school approach to teaching/learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
- To enable pupils with disabilities to avail of and benefit from appropriate learning experiences in order to reach their full potential.

Relationship to the Ethos of the School

All in the Four Masters National School community fully support the ideal of inclusion. We believe that where practicable, children should be educated with their peers. We acknowledge that this may not be the best setting for all children, but for the majority and given suitable resources, inclusion is the practice our school follows.

Change in allocating special teaching supports

The Department has introduced a revised allocation model for all mainstream schools with effect from September 2018 *Special Education Circular 0013/2017*. This circular has now been superseded and we are working with the Guidelines for Primary Schools- Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes and the Indicators of Effec-

tive Practice for Primary Schools along with the recent NCSE Toolkit for Deployment of SNA Resources. (2024) We are also guided by the Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools. (2022)

A key principle underpinning this revised model 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.

Implementation of the 2024 Guidelines for Primary Schools

The following principles are used by Four Masters' 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 and the Four Masters National School adopt the principles underpinning the Special Education Teaching Model, as outlined in the 2024 Guidelines, as follows:

- **Inclusive Education System**- An education system which embraces diversity, is responsive to and values difference. It is one that identifies and removes barriers to access, participation and achievement.
- **Inclusive School Culture**-In the Four Masters National School, we pride ourselves on our inclusive school culture, where, to the greatest extent possible, our pupils can be present, participate, achieve and be supported in mainstream education. Our SEN team and our Solas class ensure that all of our pupils experience full inclusion into our school community and that all children thrive and flourish in our school regardless of any challenges they may face.
- **Collaboration**-Staff, parents and pupils work together collaboratively in our school to support pupils with special educational needs.
- **Wellbeing**-We very much embrace and value that the wellbeing needs of children are central to education provision. Evident from our SSE planning and SIP, wellbeing is a central focus in our school and our SEN policy is closely linked with our wellbeing plan in this regard.
- **Engagement and Participation**-The views of children are sought and considered. Evidence of pupils surveys can be viewed within planning documents in our school.
- **Child Centred and Needs Based**- In the Four Masters N.S, we use the Continuum of support framework and the problem-solving process to identify and respond to the special educational needs of our pupils.
- **Evidence-Informed Practice and Outcomes**-All interventions and supports provided to pupils are evidence-informed and based on strengths and needs.
- **Governance and Accountability**-The Four Masters National School complies with all relevant departmental circulars and relevant legislation in the correct deployment of special education teaching resources.

Principles to guide the Implementation Process

- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs are based on identified needs and are informed by reviews of progress 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). However, with the increasing numbers of pupils with EAL needs in our school, we also have access to an EAL teacher (2024/25 and 2025/26).
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need 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.
- The school establishes and maintains a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs. All members have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs.

A three-step process to support pupils with Special Educational Needs

In the Four Masters' 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 - THE CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

The Four Masters' N.S. uses the Continuum of Support framework set out by the Department of Education to assist in identifying and responding to pupils' needs. The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables the staff in the Four Masters' 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 the Four Masters' N.S. can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, overall wellbeing, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. The Continuum of Support enables schools to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

Level 1 - Classroom Support (Classroom Support-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, adapted, monitored and reviewed over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.

This is informed by:

- Parental consultation
Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures /assessments
Student Consultation and input

A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

Level 2 - School Support (Support for Some)

At this level a School Support Plan is devised and informed by:

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures / assessments
- Parental consultation and Student Consultation and Input

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

Level 3 - School Support Plus (Support for 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 consultation including 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.

Educational planning

Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process. In Four Masters' N.S., the process involves the class teacher, special education teachers, parents, the pupil and relevant professionals. These interventions reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests.

Support plans set out

- Strengths and Needs of Pupil
- Priority Concerns
- the agreed targets
- the resources required
- Personnel Involved
- the strategies for implementation, timeframe and review.

Student Support Plan

A Student Support Plan enables the staff in the Four Masters' N.S. 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, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue this level of support and revert to class-room support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support.

STEP 2 – MEETING THE NEEDS

The role of the class teacher

Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. All mainstream class teachers in the Four Masters' 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
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence. 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

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

The activities of the Special Education Teacher should include both teaching and non-teaching duties. The special needs teacher should include where possible:

- Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole-school strategies designed to enhance early learning and prevent learning difficulties. (Early Intervention)
- Developing student support plans for those selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with class teacher, parents and pupils.
- Maintaining weekly planning and progress records / evaluations for groups or individuals.
- Delivering intensive early intervention programmes, supplementary teaching including 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.

- Providing teaching in English and /or Mathematics to pupils who experience low achievement and /or learning difficulties.
- Co-ordinating the implementation of whole school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching giving due consideration to:
 - The selection criteria specified in this Special Needs policy
 - Teachers' professional observation including evidence from relevant tests and checklists
 - Input of parents and pupils
- Providing advice to class teachers regarding Special Education Needs pupils in areas such as:
 - Individual pupil assessment
 - Programme planning
 - Curriculum differentiation
 - Teaching methodologies
- Contributing at school level to decision-making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books, games and ICT for use with children with special needs.
- Liaising with external agencies (NEPS Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, CAMHS, SENO etc:) to arrange assessment and provision for pupils with special needs.
- Collaborating with the Principal to discuss issues relating to the development and implementation of the school plan on special needs education and the provision of supplementary teaching.
- Coordinating the administration by class teachers of a whole-school screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties in English/Mathematics.
- Consulting with class teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment following Level 1 classroom support.

STEP 3 - MONITORING AND RECORDING OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Target-setting:

- This stage of the process is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests (Drumcondra Tests, NRIT, Alpaca) and other methods of assessment (teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress.

- 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.
- In Four Masters' N.S. targets are expressed in a way that is measurable and observable, and reflect the specific special educational needs of individual pupils.
- 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.
- 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. This leads to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe.

Monitoring

- 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 Four Masters' 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.

Allocating special education teaching resources to effectively meet needs

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. The key premise of the special education teaching allocation is that resources are deployed to support children's special educational need. Importantly, those with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support.

Schools may deploy special education teachers in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs (for example, in-class support, team teaching, group withdrawal, individual withdrawal). Four Masters 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, thus progressing to the next level. Additionally, Four Masters' N.S. acknowledges the fact that flexibility in terms of resource allocation is required to allow for emerging needs during the school year. In Four Masters N.S., the Principal informs the S.E.T. Team and whole staff of C.P.D. opportunities, especially when a training opportunity arises for their particular caseload.

Procedures for the identification of children who will receive supplementary teaching support in literacy and numeracy within the school.

Literacy

The following procedures are in place to help teachers identify/screen pupils who may have special educational needs or learning difficulties:

- Upon enrolment of pupils to the Four Masters National School, the Principal liaises with pre-schools and parents regarding pupils with additional needs. Where concerns are raised and/or additional needs are identified, including children in receipt of AIMS support in pre-school or children with a diagnosis of complex needs requiring additional support, those with priority needs are identified. The Principal will discuss these needs with the SEN team and a provisional plan is put in place in order to accommodate these needs in advance of the pupils starting school. Where relevant, the Principal will also discuss with the SENO.
- The Alpaca Assessment Junior Infant Test is administered at three different stages throughout the year in Junior Infants in order to identify pupils who may need additional support. The results of each of these period assessments are uploaded to the school's Aladdin database. At the end of the school year (June), the SEN team will analyse the data from this assessment and discuss with the Junior Infant teachers. Pupils identified as scoring between 0 and 20% will be included for additional support in literacy in the first term of Senior Infants. (these scores will be highlighted on the Alpaca report by a red flag). Pupils scoring between 21 and 40% on this assessment will also be prioritised for additional support. These scores will be highlighted by a yellow flag on the Alpaca assessment report. This additional support will be provided until Christmas. After Christmas the Literacy Lift Off Intervention will commence. All of these children will continue to be closely monitored at classroom level. They may also need to be differentiated for at classroom level. Children in ASD classes will have their needs catered for in their special classes.
- At Senior Infant Level, the whole class literacy intervention, "Literacy Lift Off" takes place in the second term. This literacy intervention avails of additional support from class and SEN teachers. Pupils are tested using the BAS 2 Test pre and post intervention and a running record is administered based on the PM readers pre intervention. While criteria may vary from year to year depending on available resources and level of need within the school in each given year, when the intervention is complete and post testing is finished, pupils scoring a reading age of at least one year (12 months) behind their chronological age, will receive a further 6 week intervention in a small group setting with an SEN teacher. If, in a given year, that level of need in the school is lower and resources allow, consideration may be given to supporting pupils scoring slightly higher than the cut-off point. Following review and post intervention by a member of the SEN team, feedback is provided to the class teacher and pupils are supported in their classroom by their class teacher.
- The Alpaca Assessment Senior Infant Test is administered at three intervals throughout the school year. The SEN team will analyse results at the end of the school year (June) in collaboration with the Infant teachers. Pupils scoring between 0 and 20% (highlighted by

a red flag) will receive supplementary intervention in First Class in literacy with an SEN teacher until reviewed in February. Pupils scoring between 21% and 40% (yellow flag) will also receive supplementary support until February. All First Class pupils will also participate in this Literacy Lift Off whole class intervention with additional support from class and SEN teachers. This intervention will take place at the beginning of October for a duration of 6 weeks. Pupils are tested using the BAS 2 Test pre and post intervention and a running record is administered based on the PM readers pre intervention. While criteria may vary from year to year depending on available resources and level of need within the school in each given year, when the intervention is complete and post testing is finished, pupils scoring a reading age of at least one year (12 months) behind their chronological age, will receive a further 6 week intervention in a small group setting with an SEN teacher. If, in a given year, that level of need in the school is lower and resources allow, consideration may be given to supporting pupils scoring slightly higher than the cut-off point. Following review and post intervention by a member of the SEN team, feedback is provided to the class teacher and pupils are supported in their classroom by their class teacher. Following this six week post Literacy Lift Off intervention, children who are still experiencing difficulty and falling significantly behind will continue to be catered for by the SEN team until the end of the school year.

- The New Drumcondra Primary Reading/Screening Test (Level 1) is administered at First Class on an annual basis, mid to late May. Results are analysed based on the following criteria- Criterion reached, approaching criterion and Criterion not reached. Any pupils who have not met the criteria or are approaching criteria will receive supplementary intervention in Second Class in literacy with an SEN teacher until reviewed in February.
- The Drumcondra Primary Reading and Spelling Tests are administered to all classes from 2nd to 6th, mid-late May. Results are analysed and any children scoring at or below the 14th percentile in the Drumcondra Reading Test or at or below the 10th percentile in the Spelling Test will receive supplementary teaching. In a particular year, if the level of need across the school is lower and there is additional capacity available within the SEN team, consideration may be given to children attaining a slightly higher score in the Drumcondra Reading Test.
- The NRIT is administered in second class, mid-February. These scores are recorded in the school and are used to ensure that each child is performing to their full potential.
- The above criteria are the sole criteria used by the school to determine supplementary teaching support in literacy for pupils in the Four Masters National School.

Numeracy

- The Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test is administered at Senior Infants on an annual basis, mid to late May. Results are analysed based on the raw score. Pupils scoring at or below 17 raw score will qualify for supplementary teaching in maths.
- The New Drumcondra Primary Numeracy/Screening Test (Level 1) is administered at First Class on an annual basis, mid to late May. Results are analysed based on the following criteria- Criterion reached, Approaching criterion and Criterion not reached. Any pupils who have not met the criteria or are approaching criteria will receive sup-

plementary intervention in Second Class in Maths with an SEN teacher until reviewed in February.

- The Drumcondra Primary Maths Tests are administered to all classes from 2nd to 6th, mid-late May. Results are analysed and any children scoring at or below the 14th percentile in the Drumcondra Maths Test will receive supplementary teaching in maths. In a particular year, if the level of need across the school is lower and there is additional capacity available within the SEN team, consideration may be given to children attaining a slightly higher score in the Drumcondra Maths Test.
- The following criteria is used by SEN teachers at the February review point to determine whether a child needs to continue with supplementary support or has progressed significantly to be discharged from supplementary teaching: an alternative standardised test (New Micra-T and Sigma T Tests) are administered to review progress.

In Class Support

In class support programmes are also facilitated throughout the school. Decisions in relation to In Class Support Programmes are based on level of need from year to year. Examples of such programmes are Literacy Lift Off, Team teaching in maths and spelling. Cognisance is also given to split classes and very large classes and extra support may be allocated to such classes.

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.

Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs contains the following areas:

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.
- 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.

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

- The level and type of intervention required is identified to meet targets for each pupil on the Continuum of Support.
- Methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching are taken into consideration.
- The interventions and supports used are evidence-informed, when possible.

Action 4: Organising early- intervention and prevention programmes

When allocating teaching resources, the management and staff of Four Masters' 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. Based on identified needs, evidence-informed early- intervention/prevention programmes are chosen to address concerns. Time needed is identified and staffing commitment required. All early 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 includes frequent opportunities for pupils to practise skills

Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources

The needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels are cross-referenced and higher incidence needs that can be met by grouping are considered to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. The teacher(s) that will cater for these groups/individuals are agreed and when and where the teaching will take place. When possible, pupils with the greatest level of need will receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.

Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress

The progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:

- At Whole-school and Classroom Support level by all teachers
- At the School Support and School Support Plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers. A record is kept of all pupils who receive supplementary teaching of any kind.
- Records of assessments will be kept in child's file in the SET's filing cabinet.
- Psychological reports exemptions from Irish certificates and standardised test results will be kept securely in Principal's office.

This following section outlines the key elements of the inclusive whole-school approach to supporting pupils with special educational needs in Four Masters' N.S

Special Classes for pupils with Autism

The Four Masters National School has two classes for pupils with Autism. Each class caters for 6 pupils. A baseline staffing level of a teacher and 2 Special Needs Assistants are attached to each class. Pupils can apply for a place in the class following the clear guidelines in our enrolment policy. All applications are sent to the SENO who makes the final decisions

in respect of the allocation of places. Every effort will be made to ensure the integration of pupils into their mainstream classes and timetabling for this will be carried out in consultation between class teachers and the special class teacher.

Whole School Planning

When implementing the revised allocation model to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs, Four Masters' N.S. has adopted a whole-school approach to programme planning and to the implementation of early-intervention and prevention programmes. In order to achieve this, Four Masters' N.S. has adapted their existing special educational needs policies to guide the new approach to the allocation of resources. A whole-school approach involves collaborative action by our school community (in consultation with parents, pupils, SNAs, class teachers, SETs, Principal) to improve pupil learning, behaviour and well-being. It encompasses a process of reflection, planning and review of policies and practices, and includes an evaluation of how pupils with special educational needs are identified by the school, the interventions that are put in place to meet their needs and how the outcomes of those interventions are measured and monitored.

Other Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all: the Board of Management, Principal teacher, class teachers, special needs teachers, special needs assistants, parents and children.

The Role of the Board of Management

- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for special needs teachers.
- Provide adequate funds for the purchase of special needs materials.
- Provide a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of special education

Role of School Principal

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 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.

Role of Special Educational Teachers

- Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress
- Setting specific, time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal
- Teaching the children, either with the rest of the child's class or in a separate room
- Advising class teachers about differentiating the curriculum to suit different children
- Meeting with and advising parents, accompanied by the class teacher, as needed
- Meeting other professionals such as psychologists, speech and language therapists, visiting teachers in relation to a child's special educational needs.

The Role of the Special Needs Assistant

- Attend to the care needs of the Special Education Needs child and help the child to become as independent and responsible as possible.
- Assist class teacher in implementing the learning plan as laid out in the Student Support File.
- Contribute to the Student Support File and participate in (some of the) review meetings for resource children.
- Preparation organisation and tidying of classroom/resource room and or other rooms used by Special Education Needs pupils.

The Role of Parents

In Four Masters' 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 and support plan. The Continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provides valuable opportunities for school personnel to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

Parents are consulted

- in relation to their children's needs and strengths
- on the supports and strategies being developed to support their children
- and when they are involved in reviews of progress.

Parents are expected to:

- Provide a home environment where there are opportunities to participate together in language, literacy and mathematical activities.
- Support the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as writing, shared reading, counting and measuring and maintaining a positive attitude towards school and school work.
- Ensure that their child is at school every day except if sick or for some other urgent reason.

The Role of the Pupil

In order to involve the pupils in their own assessment (pupil self-assessment) and depending on the maturity of the child, children would be included in setting short-and long-term learning targets and contribute to review of their progress.

Engagement with External Bodies and Agencies

Support and guidance is available to teachers from external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the NCSE Support Service, the Inspectorate, and allied health professionals. The staff in Four Masters' N.S. also endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

Transitions

Good planning and support for transition helps to ensure the successful transfer of pupils from primary school to post-primary school and pre-school and mainstream settings. Links are already established with 'transition' schools in the area for our pupils. Meetings with these schools have helped ease the anxiety levels for the children in our school. Where appropriate parents of pupils with special needs are reminded at the beginning of Fifth Class to identify a Secondary School that would accommodate their child's needs.

Continuing Professional Development (C.P.D.)

Four Masters' N.S. has established and intends to maintain skilled Special Education Support Teams to guide provision. Since all teachers have responsibility for teaching pupils with special educational needs, the management of Four Masters' N.S. encourages all staff members to engage in appropriate CPD to develop the capacity of our school to meet the educational needs of all pupils. Any teacher who wishes to become a Special Education Teacher must have a Higher Diploma in Special Education or be willing to take part in the Higher Diploma in Special Education course (e.g. St. Angela's College).

Enrolment of Children with Special Needs (refer to enrolment policy)

Parents are requested to fill in a section on the enrolment form to indicate any special needs their child may have of which they are aware. The parents then meet with the Principal who requests copies of reports, assessments, etc. The school will contact the SENO, NEPS Psychologist and any other relevant agency to ensure that the school is prepared to meet the individual child's needs

"A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or the degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with –

- a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under the EPSEN Act, or

- b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.” (EPSEN ACT).

Therefore, the Board of Management shall decide, taking into consideration the education of children already in the school, if the school can provide adequately for additional children with special needs in the current situation. Any health and safety issues arising from the enrolment of a child with special needs will be dealt with under school policy on these issues and amended as the need arises.

Record Keeping

A full record of psychological reports are kept in a locked cabinet in the Principal’s office. Other reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual student’s file in a secure location (in a locked filing cabinet) in the store room across from Principal’s office. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Communication

BOM will be kept informed of the SEN provision on a regular basis by the Principal. **SEN** issues will appear on the agenda of staff meetings and Post holders meetings when necessary.

Parents - When pupils are selected for supplementary teaching (level 2) it is necessary to advise parents of this:

- To clarify the child’s learning needs
- To clarify the role of the parent in relation to those needs
- To obtain a signed consent form

This communication may take the form of a letter or a meeting. At the meeting, the parents will be given the opportunity to discuss progress and teachers will outline ways to support the child’s learning and to give parents an opportunity to contribute to the Student Support File. The following are ways the parents can support their child:

- Developing child’s oral language through discussion
- Motivating child to read more
- Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive
- Selecting books that interest child
- Counting, measuring and other activities involving number

The Special Education Needs teachers will formally meet the parents for a second time at the Parent/Teacher Meetings.

Class Teacher -It is necessary to create a regular time slot for collaboration with the class teacher:

- Drawing up Student Support File
- Discussing progress/lack of progress

- Application of learning targets to classroom situation
- Carry out error analysis to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty
- Setting up prevention /intervention systems e.g. shared reading or reading buddies

(Ideally the principal will arrange class supervision cover to allow this collaboration to happen and SET will draw up timetable).

One-to One Teaching Activities

Any activity which involves a child to staff member (teacher or SNA) ratio of 1:1, should take place in a room with a glass panel window on the door for visibility. Otherwise, the door of the room in which they are working should be left open for the duration of the session/ lesson. Any blinds etc, on the glass panel on the door, should be opened for the duration also. Only staff members (who are all vetted appropriately), should engage in 1:1 activities. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that any visitors who are to work with children on a 1:1 basis are appropriately vetted (e.g. HSE nurse, Psychologist, Photographer etc.). The procedure outlined above will be followed in these cases also.

Timetable:

The SET in consultation with the class teacher draw up the timetable at the beginning of the school year. Changes have to be accommodated every term due to choir practise, sporting activities and school events. Consultation and collaboration time is included in the timetable.

Resources:

- A good supply of resources has been built up over the past number of years which are added to on an annual basis.
- An audit of resources is done on a regular basis.
- It is policy to keep a record of materials borrowed from the SET room by the SET team.
- It is policy that class teachers have limited access to reading books so that SEN pupils do not identify reading books with different age groups or levels.
- Appendix 1 includes a list of all testing materials held in the school, for use by all SEN teachers.

Communication, Monitoring and Reviewing of SEN policy

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to regular review. In accordance with the systematic cycle of review of policies adopted in Four Masters' National School, it will be reviewed initially after one year and then every three years, unless there is a compelling reason to review it earlier.

Ratification and review

This policy will be reviewed once every year or more often if deemed necessary.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting in June 2025.

Signed:  (Principal) Date: 08.10.2025

Signed:  (Chairperson) Date: 8.10.2025