

St. Patrick's SNS

Special Education and Learning Support Policy

Reviewed in line with current Department of Education guidelines and circulars
(September 2025)

1. Policy Formation

This policy was developed collaboratively by the Principal, Special Education Teaching (SET) Team, and staff of St. Patrick's SNS. It was last updated in September 2025 and reviewed in line with Department of Education Circulars and guidelines on Special Education and Learning Support.

2. School Context

St. Patrick's SNS is a senior mixed primary school in Corduff Parish. The school:

- Has DEIS Band 1 status.
- Serves pupils from the travelling community and a high proportion of children from the international community.

3. Ethos, Beliefs and Principles

St. Patrick's SNS is a Catholic co-educational school committed to providing a well-ordered, caring, secure environment. We aim to foster the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral, social, and cultural development of every child. We value inclusivity and equality of access, and we support the holistic development of all pupils.

4. Rationale

This policy ensures compliance with current legislation and Department circulars, and provides a clear framework for identifying, supporting, and monitoring pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Relevant legislation and guidance include:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The EPSEN Act (2004)
- The Disability Act (2005)
- Circular 0013/2017 – Special Education Teaching Allocation
- Circular 0054/2022 – Exemptions from Irish
- Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2017)

5. Aims of Learning Support and Special Education

Our aims are to:

- Identify pupils with learning needs at the earliest possible stage.
- Provide targeted supplementary teaching and resources in literacy and numeracy.
- Support pupils to achieve success and progression in line with their abilities.

- Adapt the curriculum to meet individual needs.
- Foster self-esteem, independence, and resilience.
- Enable full participation in the mainstream curriculum where possible.
- Collaborate closely with parents/guardians as partners in their child's education.
- Promote teacher collaboration in planning and delivery.
- Facilitate access to external professional services where appropriate.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Management	Oversees the implementation and review of the policy.
Principal	Overall responsibility for policy development and implementation; ensures compliance with Department guidelines.
Class Teacher (Classroom Support – Tier 1)	Primary responsibility for progress of all pupils; differentiates curriculum; works with SET to devise and implement Student Support Files.
Special Education Teacher (School Support – Tier 2 & Tier 3)	Coordinates screening and assessment; administers diagnostic tests; collaborates with class teachers on Student Support Files; provides supplementary teaching; monitors progress; liaises with parents, teachers, and external professionals; supports pupils with complex needs; ensures regular monitoring and review of interventions.

7. Identification and Selection of Pupils for Support

Annual standardised testing (Drumcondra Reading and Mathematics) is carried out from 3rd–6th Class. New admissions are tested where previous results are not available. Additional diagnostic assessments **may** include CTOPP, YARC, WRAT-4, NVRT (English) and WRAT-4, Drumcondra, Westwood Number Facts (Maths).

Pupils scoring ≤ 10 th percentile are prioritised, with emphasis on early intervention in 3rd and 4th class. Teacher observation and professional judgement are integral to selection.

Group sizes are ideally 3–4 pupils where possible, with individual support provided if required.

8. Early Identification and Referral

Teacher observation and formative assessment are central. Standardised test results and checklists inform referrals. Parents are consulted at all stages. Referrals may be made to NEPS for psychological assessment where appropriate.

9. Provision of Support

Support is provided in literacy and numeracy through withdrawal, small-group teaching, individual sessions, or in-class support/co-teaching. Grouping is flexible and based on pupil needs.

10. Duration, Review and Discontinuation

Interventions run for 12–20 weeks. Progress is monitored and reviewed by the Class Teacher, SET, and Principal. Teaching is continued, adapted, or discontinued as appropriate. Parents are kept informed.

11. Record Keeping

Each pupil in receipt of support has a Student Support File containing assessments, plans, and progress notes. Files are securely stored in line with GDPR.

12. Liaising with Parents and External Agencies

Parents are partners in planning and review. With consent, the school liaises with NEPS, SLT, OT, CAMHS, Tusla, and other agencies. HSCL supports communication with families as needed.

13. Exemptions from Irish

Exemptions are granted only in line with Circular 0054/2022. Categories include pupils newly arrived in Ireland (12+), pupils with significant literacy difficulties, pupils with multiple/complex needs, pupils in special schools or classes, and children of diplomatic/consular staff. Substantial evidence of interventions and reviews is required. Where possible, pupils are encouraged to engage with oral Irish.

14. Monitoring and Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SET Team, Principal, and Board of Management. Adjustments will reflect Department guidelines and circulars.

15. Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's SNS on _____ . It is available on the school website or by appointment with the Principal.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____