



## **Scoil Maelruain Senior**

Old Bawn Ave,

Tallaght

Dublin 24

D24 EV18

Roll Number: 19463V

01 4510706

[www.scoilmaelruainsenior.ie](http://www.scoilmaelruainsenior.ie)



### **School Support for Children with Additional Needs:**

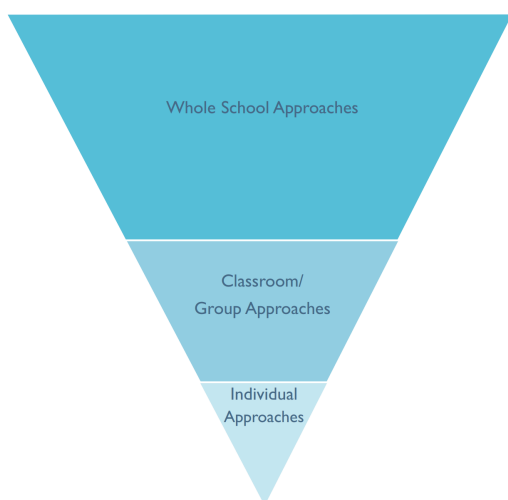
Scoil Maelruain Schools are inclusive and provide education for all children, regardless of their needs, following the Continuum of Support model set by the Department of Education

This model recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs.

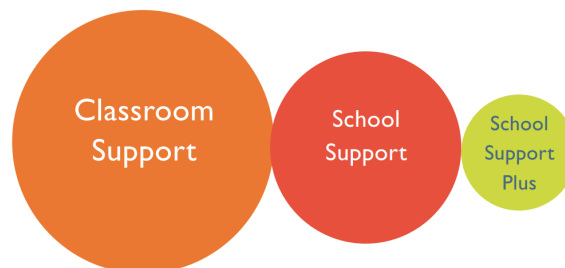
Support provided to pupils with special educational needs are based on identified needs and will be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines. Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support dependent on the staffing resources available in our school.

We have designated Support Education Teachers (SET) allocated by the Department, with the timetabling and duties of the SET team managed by our Deputy Principals and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SEN Co), Aileen Butler and Joanne Walsh.

As Teaching Deputies, they receive support from the school Principals, particularly for children with complex needs, and work closely with external agencies, parents, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), our Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO), Sinead Acres, and, when available, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).



Schools will organise the use of resources depending on the level of needs



There are three types of 'Support Plans' that we use in our schools:

### **Classroom Support Plan**

A Classroom Support Plan is created by the classroom teacher when a child is struggling with a particular area of the curriculum or school life. The teacher sets specific targets and strategies to help the child meet these goals, reviewing the plan after six to eight weeks. This plan may involve collaboration with the Support Education Teacher (SET), and the class teacher must inform SEN Co when it's in place.

Parents are notified about the plan, provided with a copy and updated on its outcomes. If the targets are not met by the end of the designated period, the teacher informs SEN Co, and additional support is considered. If specific group SET teaching cannot be provided, the SET will work with class teachers on an updated School Support Plan, and the child will receive in-class interventions.

### **School Support Plan**

A School Support Plan is developed for children who need targeted support from the SET team, typically after a Classroom Support Plan has not resolved their learning difficulties. This may include children who have a diagnosed need such as dyslexia. The plan is created collaboratively by the SET team member assigned to the child and the classroom teacher, with input from the parents. It often includes targets for classroom support, group work, and home activities.

Children receive this support in blocks ranging from 6 to 16 weeks, with the plan being reviewed at the end of the period. This support may be small group or in class support. If the child has met all their targets, they will no longer receive small group support, and classroom teachers will continue the support within the regular classroom, sometimes with assistance from the SET team. If the child has not met their targets, they may receive another block of small group support or potentially transition to a School Support Plus Plan for more intensive assistance.

## **School Support Plus Plan/Individual Education Plan (children in AS Class)**

A School Support Plus Plan is designed for children with complex needs, whether diagnosed or undiagnosed, who require ongoing one-to-one support. This plan is developed collaboratively by the assigned SET, classroom teacher, parents, and where necessary the SEN Co, Principal and/or any relevant outside agencies involved in the child's support.

The plan sets targeted goals and strategies to address the child's most immediate needs, incorporating recommendations from professional reports and outside agencies. Parents have input into the plan and must agree to its contents.

These plans are reviewed twice a year, with new targets added as needed. Children on a School Support Plus Plan typically require one-to-one, small group support or in class support throughout their time at school.

## **Pupil Care Plan/Pupil Personal Plan**

A Pupil Care Plan/Pupil Personal Plan is developed by the class teacher, SET, and SNA to address a child's primary and secondary care needs, including medical, feeding, toileting, mobility, supervision, sensory regulation, and communication needs. Recommendations from outside agencies or professional reports are incorporated into the plan to manage these needs. Parents are involved in the process and must agree to the plan.

School Support Plans and School Support Plus Plans are shared, with parental consent, with the Senior School when the child transitions or if the child moves to another school.

These plans are stored electronically on the Aladdin System, and hard copies are available to relevant staff members, kept in a secure, lockable space. Information is shared with substitute teachers only as needed.

## **Support for Parents:**

Both schools offer meetings with parents to support them in helping their children. These meetings may involve the class teacher, the class teacher and Support Education Teacher (SET), or the SEN Co and/or Principals.

The schools can also assist with referrals to Primary Care Services, Assessment of Need, and the Children's Disability Network Teams, based on the parents' requests and input.

## **Special Needs Assistants (SNA) Allocation:**

The NCSE is part of the Department of Education, providing support, training, advice, and SENO services, as well as allocating SNAs to schools. However, since 2019, there has been a freeze on new SNA allocations while a new model is being developed, meaning the school's SNA allocation has remained unchanged since then. Currently, if the school requires additional support, it must submit an Exceptional Review for extra SNAs or Special Education Teachers (SET). This process involves lengthy paperwork and data submissions from the school.

SNAs are assigned based on primary care needs (such as medical, mobility, and personal care), not on secondary needs like learning support. They are typically shared resources, meaning they support multiple children with

primary care needs. The Principal and SEN Co assess the overall primary care needs of students in the school and allocate SNAs to those with the most significant needs, regardless of whether the child has an official diagnosis.



## Quick Reference Guide to Care Needs - Circular 0030/2014

Care Needs that are consistent with the DES Circular 0030/2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assistance with feeding:</b> where a child with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Administration of medicine:</b> where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assistance with toileting and general hygiene:</b> (including catheterisation) where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assistance with mobility and orientation:</b> on an ongoing basis including assisting a child or children to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a child to access school transport), or helping a child to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds:</b> at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions:</b> such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential:</b> This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs</b> (See also section 9) and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.</li> </ul>

SNAs work under the direction of the class teacher and principal, following the targets outlined in the Pupil Personal/Care Plan. Their role focuses on addressing children's primary care needs, rather than teaching, and includes providing various supports to help children access the curriculum. This may involve:

- Assisting with specific feeding or medical needs.
- Supporting toileting or mobility needs, particularly for children with physical disabilities.
- Supervising children in the school building and during yard times to ensure safety.
- Providing proprioceptive and regulation breaks, such as movement or brain calm breaks, to help children regulate and focus.
- Supporting children with speech and language difficulties to communicate with their peers and teachers.
- Helping children follow a predictable routine/timetable to support learning.

When professionals like Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, or a Multidisciplinary Team assess a child, they may recommend exclusive access to an SNA. However, due to the current freeze on SNA allocations, this is unlikely. If necessary, schools can request an Exceptional Review of SNA allocation, a complex process that schools must undergo to increase their SNA support.

In the past two years, the Junior School has undergone two Exceptional Reviews and was successful in securing an increase in SNA support. However, it is rare for the NCSE to grant an increase twice, and it is unlikely they will approve further increases in the future.

### **The Special Educational Needs Officer's (SENO) Role:**

Our SENO is Sinead Acres, and she provides valuable advice and support to both the school and parents. Children with additional needs can be referred to her for guidance and assistance. Sinead is also knowledgeable about children who may have specific needs that go beyond what the school or local area can offer, and she helps connect families to appropriate resources.

The Department of Education has recently issued circular 0080/2024, titled *New Measures to Support the Forward Planning for Special Education Provision*. This circular requests that parents of children with ASD contact the NCSE through a portal on their website. This will help our SENO gain a complete understanding of the needs of children with ASD in our area.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/f16ca-new-measures-to-support-the-forward-planning-for-special-education-provision/>

### **National Educational Psychology Services (NEPS):**

NEPS provides educational psychology services to schools in Ireland, offering both assessments and advisory services. They are allocated a set number of assessments per year by the Department of Education, which are distributed to schools.

Both the Junior and Senior Schools typically receive two assessments and one advisory visit from their NEPS psychologist each year. Unfortunately, due to the current staffing issues within NEPS, our schools do not **currently** have assigned psychologists. However, we have secured the services of a psychologist to carry out assessments.

### Glossary of terms:

ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Complex Needs	A diagnosed complex needs is something like ASD, Down Syndrome, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Pathological Defiance Disorder, Sensory Processing Disorder or a specific learning disability
Down Syndrome	This is a complex additional need that can range from mild additional needs to very complex and severe additional needs.
Dysregulated/ion	This is when a child finds the classroom or environment overwhelming and displays certain behaviours showing this. It can also be when a child has not had its needs met, such as needing food, water, a quiet space, or is emotionally upset. These behaviours can be mild displays such as requests to stop the activity to challenging behaviours towards themselves or others.
Inclusive Education	<p>The Department of Education's policy aims to include all children in mainstream education as much as possible, as set out in the <i>Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN Act)</i> - currently under review. While the act is a significant step forward, many of its provisions have not been fully implemented by successive governments. Inclusive education is supported by specialist services, such as those from the NCSE and NEPS, but these supports are still being developed.</p> <p>One example of inclusive education is the <i>School Inclusion Model</i>, which brings professionals like Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, and Autism Specialists into schools to support teachers. However, this model has not been rolled out universally and depends on NCSE staffing.</p> <p>Despite these challenges, the EPSEN Act has led to the establishment of special classes in mainstream schools, such as AS Classes. These classes provide children with a smaller learning environment (maximum of 6 students), where they receive more</p>

	<p>adult support, including a class teacher and up to 2 SNAs. This approach helps children regulate their behaviour and stay engaged in learning. Over time, children in these classes integrate more with the mainstream class for subjects that interest them, with the goal of full integration as they become more regulated and ready for broader inclusion.</p>
<p>July Provision/School Summer Programme</p>	<p>The Department of Education funds a Summer Programme for children with additional needs, which can either take place at school as a summer camp or at home with a tutor.</p> <p>The <b>School-based Summer Programme</b> focuses on helping children build confidence and comfort in the school environment. Each year, the Department provides a theme for schools to follow, and Inspectors visit to ensure the programme is being delivered properly. Schools offer places based on need and apply for staffing and funding from the Department.</p> <p>The <b>Home-based Summer Programme</b> (formerly known as July Provision) is provided by a tutor, teacher, or SNA in the child's home. Families apply to the Department through their school and independently find a suitable tutor. The family and tutor collaborate to design a personalised programme for the child.</p>
<p>NCSE</p>	<p>National Council for Special Education. This body is designed to support schools in providing inclusive education through advice, CPD, support and access to services.</p>
<p>NEPS</p>	<p>The <b>National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)</b> is a group of educational psychologists that offers diagnostic services to schools. Typically, schools receive one advisory session with a psychologist and a maximum of one to two assessments per year.</p>
<p>Neuro Diverse</p>	<p>A child or person with a diagnosed additional need has neurodevelopmental differences in the brain, which result in brain pathways that differ from those of a 'neuro-typical' individual.</p>
<p>Oppositional Defiance Disorder</p>	<p>This is when a child/person feels compelled to do the opposite from the request that has been given. It can lead to challenging behaviours.</p>
<p>Pathological Defiance Disorder</p>	<p>Similar to above but is specific to children with ASD and tends to be a co-diagnosis.</p>

Primary Care Needs	Physical needs that a child may have to function on a day to day basis. See outline in the explanatory SNA section.
Regulated/ion	This is when a child is ready and able to learn. All their primary care needs have been met.
Reverse Inclusion/integration	This approach allows children who do not have a specific diagnosis required for entry into specialised classes (such as an AS Class or Speech and Language Class) to access certain services and resources offered in these classes for short periods. These visits could be daily, bi-weekly, or weekly. The smaller class size helps children stay more regulated. This type of targeted inclusion is for children with high needs within the mainstream school and is not always available, as the needs of children in specialised classes may take priority over those seeking 'reverse integration.'
SENO	The <b>Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO)</b> works for the NCSE and is responsible for assessing the special educational needs of the school. When additional resources are requested, the SENO visits the school, evaluates the needs, and reports back to their line manager, who makes the final decision regarding the allocation of resources.
SET	Special Educational Teacher. Works with children with learning and complex needs
SLT	Speech and Language Therapy
SNA	A Special Needs Assistant (SNA) supports children with complex needs, helping them with their primary care needs and daily activities. The SNA allocation is decided by the SENO and the NCSE based on the school's needs. However, the allocation process has been frozen since 2019, when a new model was expected to be introduced but never was. Currently, if the school requires additional support, it must submit an Exceptional Review for extra SNAs or Special Education Teachers (SET). This process involves lengthy paperwork and data submissions from the school.
Special Needs Phraseology (general)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Additional Needs:</b> This term is interchangeable with <i>Special Needs</i>, referring to children who require extra support in their learning or development.</li> <li>● <b>Specific Learning Disability:</b> This includes diagnoses such as <i>dyslexia</i> (reading difficulties), <i>dysgraphia</i> (handwriting difficulties), <i>dyscalculia</i> (maths difficulties), as well as challenges with memory, organisation, and understanding instructions.</li> </ul>

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Learning Needs:</b> Refers to children who have specific educational requirements within the general curriculum but may not have a formal diagnosis.</li><li>● <b>Complex Needs:</b> Children with more involved, specific needs such as <i>ASD</i> (Autism Spectrum Disorder), <i>ADHD</i>, <i>Mild General Learning Difficulties</i>, or <i>Down Syndrome</i>.</li><li>● <b>Challenging Behaviours/Behaviours of Concern:</b> Behaviours like throwing, kicking, spitting, or lashing out, typically due to high levels of dysregulation or difficulty managing emotions.</li></ul> |
|--|--|