Rationale

The inclusive ethos and philosophy of TRIM EDUCATE TOGETHER NS is to cherish all pupils equally and to aid and support them in achieving their true potential. Therefore, the school recognises the pivotal role of Special Education Needs (SEN) in pursuing its educational goals.

Aims

The principle aim of Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents/guardians on the provision of effective Learning Support and Resource Teaching (LSRT) to pupils diagnosed with Low Incidence Special Educational Needs (Circular 02/05) and/or children who are experiencing low achievement as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Welfare Act 1998. In addition, the policy will set out procedures for the enrolment of children with SEN.

In supporting pupils with special educational needs our aims are:

- To enable all pupils to participate fully in the curriculum for their class level. This is done through implementation of a differentiated curriculum for their specific class level.
- To develop self-esteem and positive attitudes towards school and learning.
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- To involve parents/guardians and other Outside Agencies (Department of Education and Skills Personnel/Psychologists/Occupational Therapists/Speech and Language Therapists etc.) in supporting children’s learning.
- To recognise the key role of class teachers.
- To establish specific models of support that are specifically designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.

1: Enrolment of children with identified SEN

In keeping with Section 2 of the EPSEN Act (2004), a SEN child is welcomed to the school and educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have SEN where this serves the best interests of all children involved.

Prior to a child’s enrolment, relevant staff in the school will familiarise themselves with the child’s particular needs as required, by:
• obtaining copies of reports, assessments, etc. from parents;
• meeting with parents/principal/class teacher/special needs staff;
• contacting the SENO, NEPS psychologist or other therapist or agency where applicable

To ensure a smooth transition to school for both the pupil and the school the following steps will be taken as appropriate:

Parental visit/s to the school, pupil visits to school and staff visits to special schools/special units.

Where health and safety issues may arise in relation to mobility, care or other needs, these will be identified and strategies developed to address them.

2: Children with emerging special educational needs:

Trim ETNS will follow the Staged Approach as outlined in Circular 02/05 and Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007.

Stage 1: Procedures for the early identification, screening and addressing of the SEN of certain children

Please refer to Appendix 1 for information on the observation process and personnel involved.

At Stage 1 Class teachers will document concerns on a standard template (See Appendix 3).

The following agreed screening measures are used in the school:

**Junior Infants:** Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP) where concerns have been noted by the class teacher.

**Senior Infants:** Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)

**First Class:** Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)
   - Drumcondra Standardised Test (English)
   - Sigma-T test (Maths)

**Stage 2:**

At Stage 2 when a referral has been made to the Special Educational Support teacher an IEP Individual Education Plan will be drawn up by the SEN teacher in consultation with the class teacher, parents, pupil and SNA (where applicable). The purpose of the IEP is to formulate a child-centred plan of action for the educational, social, emotional and physical needs for the individual child who is receiving school support.

The individual learning plan will be in accordance with criteria as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines (2000). The plan will address a pupil’s full range of needs and will be
devised between the class teacher, SEN teacher and SNA. Teacher’s observations are paramount to this process and are taken into careful consideration in the IEP. Once the plan is in place, it will be monitored by teacher observations, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil’s own feedback. A review will take place at the end of the instructional term. Teachers may meet parents, psychologists and SNAs to discuss the child’s progress throughout the school year. The class teacher has the responsibility of ensuring the pupil’s learning needs are met. This is achieved through collaboration with the SEN team, through in-class support as well as out of class support.

Please refer to Appendix 4

3: Assessment and selection of children with Special Educational Needs

Children with access to Resource Hours/ Low Incidence Teaching Hours (LITH)

- Children who have been assessed by external agencies such as Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist etc., and where LITH (Low Incident Teaching Hours) have been presented and sanctioned by the SENO (Special Educational Needs Officer) are eligible for access to Resource Teaching.
- Resource Teaching Hours may include in-class support, inclusion in group withdrawal and/or withdrawal on a one to one basis, depending on the recommendations contained within specific reports, consultation with parents and class teacher.
- All children will require written consent to be withdrawn from class to avail of Resource Teaching. This will be kept on file.

Children with access to Learning Support.

- Where in-class support is available, all children will have access to learning support.
- Learning support will be prioritised for children who score on or below the 12th Percentile on Standardised Tests in Literacy/Numeracy.
- Where a child scores on or below the 12th Percentile on Standardised Tests, the child may receive in-class support where appropriate or withdrawal as part of a smaller group, subject to permission from parent/guardian.
- If a child scores on or below the 12th Percentile the SEN/Class Teacher will seek written parental consent for further diagnostic assessment to take place. This will be kept on file.
- Parents must communicate their wishes in writing should they not wish their child to avail of Learning Support. In the event of a parent refusing consent to Learning Support, their choice will be respected, and the letter signed by the parents will be kept on file.
- The level of support given will be determined by the pupils needs.
Following a review, and in consultation with class teachers and parents, supplementary teaching may be discontinued. These pupils will continue to be monitored by the Class Teacher and SEN Teacher.

**Stage 3:**

Children with access to Resource Hours/ Low Incidence Teaching Hours (LITH)

- Children who have been assessed by external agencies such as Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist etc., and where LITH (Low Incident Teaching Hours) have been presented and sanctioned by the SENO (Special Educational Needs Officer) are eligible for access to Resource Teaching.
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- All children will require written consent to be withdrawn from class to avail of Resource Teaching. This will be kept on file.

**4: Integration of Children with a Disability and/or Special Education Needs in Trim Educate Together National School**

Trim Educate Together National School is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with Special educational needs. To ensure this, we require:

- A close level of co-operation between parents, the Class Teacher, SEN Teacher, SNA and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.
- To enable us to provide the best services for the pupil, and to access any additional support/s that may be available, we require parents to supply the school with copies of the most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrolment. These will be treated in the utmost confidence at all times.
- Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available, on an ongoing basis.
- An assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility as a school is primarily to ALL the children in our care, and that therefore if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the integration of an individual child with a disability and/or special educational needs is having an ongoing detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the enrolment of the individual child.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Management

The Board of Management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on Special Educational Needs (SEN). The Board of Management should:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy
- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, teaching resources are provided for the SEN team.
- Ensure a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils.

Principal

The Principal teacher has overall responsibility for the schools SEN program and for the provision of services for children with Special Educational Needs.

The Principal will:

- Help teachers/SNAs to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of Special Educational Needs teaching by encouraging them and providing opportunities for them to avail of relevant professional development. (See Policy on Professional Development)
- Meet regularly with the SEN Coordinator/SEN team.
- In conjunction with the SEN Coordinator, the principal will;
  - Liaise with outside agencies on SEN related matters
  - Review/monitor and apply for adequate resources for SEN children.
  - Review applications to outside Agencies for Special Educational Needs support.
  - Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with low achievement so that such pupils can be provided with the support that they need.
- Oversee SEN related policies and procedures.
- Be responsible for the allocation of SEN/SNA positions and class allocation within the SEN Department.

The SEN Co-ordinator:

- Works on the development of the school plan for Special Educational Needs.
• Oversees the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening program to identify pupils with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need. (See Assessment Policy)
• Collaborates with Principal, SEN Team, Class Teachers, SNAs, External Agencies and parents/guardians of SEN children.
• Keeps SEN Teachers/Class Teachers/SNAs and parents informed about relevant external assessment and Special Needs services that are available.
• Maintains a list of pupils who are receiving SEN support.
• Helps to co-ordinate the case loads / work schedules of the SEN Team.
• Liaises with external agencies such as Psychologists/Family Doctors/Speech and Language therapists/NEPS/SENO to arrange assessments and special provisions for pupils with Special Needs.
• Collaborates with SEN Team/Class teachers in the identification, screening and referral procedures.
• Maintains records and disseminates information to relevant school personnel.
• Orders, purchases, distributes and informs staff on class screening materials and procedures. (See Assessment policy)
• Ensure that all documentation relating to children who receive Learning Support/Resource is properly filed and secured.
• Facilitates regular meetings with SEN Team and SNA team.

The Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all the pupils in his/her class including those receiving Learning Support/Resource teaching. The class teacher:

• Liaises regularly with parents on children’s progress.
• Facilitates the implementation of various models of support provided by the SEN Team (See Appendix 1)
• Liaises initially with parents to make them aware of the difficulties their child may be experiencing.
• In conjunction with the SEN Team, uses class observations, standardised and diagnostic test results to highlight children’s specific required level of support.
• Collaborates with the SEN Team/teacher/SNA on an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for children with access to Low Incidence Teaching Hours (LITH: See Circular 02/05) and/or Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP).
• In conjunction with the SEN Team/Teacher/SNA, attends Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meetings.
• Meets with the SEN Team/Teacher on a regular basis to monitor progress and adapt the learning program as necessary.
• Purchasing of relevant/recommended Learning Support/Resource materials.
**SEN Teacher**

SEN Teacher refers to any teacher employed by the Board of Management in a Learning Support/Resource Teacher role. The SEN Teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having a specific disability as outlined in Circular 02/05 and/or children who are experiencing low achievement as documented in standardised/diagnostic test results.

The role of the SEN Teacher includes:

- Maintaining a file for each child with SEN containing, as appropriate: psychological reports, reports by other agent, diagnostic tests and work samples.
- Developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) to address the needs of children with specific disabilities (Circular 02/05) and/or children experiencing low achievement as reported in relevant standardised/diagnostic test results.
- Maintaining relevant monthly progress reports on children/groups of children in receipt of Resource Teaching/Learning Support Teaching.
- In conjunction with the class teacher, implementing various in-class models of support.
- In collaboration with the class teacher, gathering information/data on children to create a profile of children experiencing difficulties. (See SEN Continuum of Support)
- In consultation with the class teacher, administering relevant diagnostic tests to children who have been identified by the class teacher as experiencing difficulties.
- Liaising with outside agencies (Psychologists/Occupational Therapists/Speech and Language Therapists) on providing support and input on the teaching of children with Special Educational Needs.
- Setting specific targets for specific children and/or groups of children and agreeing these with the class teacher and parents.

**Special Needs Assistant SNA**

The role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is to provide schools with additional support in assisting children with Special Educational Needs who also have additional and significant care needs (Circular 07/02, Circular 0030/2014). Applications for SNA are based on recommendations from the professional who assessed the child and who diagnosed the child’s special educational needs. The Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) is responsible for SNA allocation.
The role of the SNA includes:

- Preparation and tidying up of classrooms in which the pupils with Special Educational Needs is/are being taught.
- Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing/writing.
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- Assisting on out of school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with Special Educational Needs during assembly/recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the discretion of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (SNA’s may not act either as substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class)
- Where a SNA has been appointed to assist a school in catering for a specific pupil, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of the pupil concerned.
- Attend and provide input into IEP meetings regarding specific child/children with whom they are assigned to.
- Liaise regularly with the class teacher/s who teach the specific children with whom they are assigned to.

Parents/Guardians

The role of the parent/guardian of a child with Special Educational Needs is important to their education. Specifically parents contribute through;

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and SEN Teacher.
- Creating a home environment where literacy/numeracy can thrive
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Attending IEP Meetings and providing input/feedback to Class Teacher/SEN Teacher/SNA.
- Collaborating with SEN/Class Teacher and SNA in writing and implementing an IEP and establishing specific goals and targets for their child.
- Sharing insights and feedback on their child’s development and learning difficulties. This information is obtained through school enrolment form information and consultation with parents.
- Collaborating in the generating of pupil profiles.
The Role of the Pupil

In recognition of the child-centred nature of the school’s ethos, we recognise the importance of the child’s own role in the provision of Special Education Support.

A child-centred approach will enable the SEN team to work with the child to:

- Help him/her to understand his/her own learning.
- Take ownership of his/her own learning – making it real and memorable.
- Recognise his/her own needs and strengths.
- Take on a responsibility for his/her achievements and work hard to succeed.
- Work together from a shared understanding of the difficulties the child is experiencing.
- Set clear realistic and achievable goals so that the child experiences a sense of achievement.

6: Record Keeping

Files for each child with SEN containing, as appropriate; psychological reports, reports by other agents (S&L etc.), IEP and reviews, diagnostic tests and work samples are stored in a locked filing cabinet. The SEN teacher working with a child is responsible for updating the child’s file and the class teacher will contribute to this. While records are secure to ensure confidentiality, they can be made available to relevant parties, Class teacher, SENO, psychologist, inspector or parents, on a need to know basis, via a member of the SEN team. In the case of personnel shared among a cluster of schools the individual SEN teacher is responsible for records of a child in their care and they will store these in the child’s own school.

Records for each child are retained in the school according to the school’s record retention schedule.

7: Other Relevant Policies/Circulars

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TRIM ETNS SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- NEPS Continuum of Support
- Learning Support Guidelines
- Assessment in the Primary School
- The Disability Act 2005
- Freedom of Information Act 1998
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004

This policy was implemented on May 16th 2016 and will be reviewed in May 2018.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16/05/2016.

Signed: Fionnuala Ennis
   Chairperson

Signed: Karen Reilly
   Principal