



ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

Greystones, Co Wicklow

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Chairperson of Board of Management – Canon David Mungavin

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) SUPPORT



school policy

2020

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1. Introduction

The school's *Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy* was reviewed in 2019/20 following consultation between the Principal, Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, parent representatives and the Board of Management. It was decided to rename the document as the *Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy*.

In St Patrick's National School, we value the individuality of all our children. We are committed to giving each of them every opportunity to achieve the highest standards within an inclusive, positive setting, offering a broad and balanced curriculum and with high expectations for all the children, where the achievements, attitudes and wellbeing of all our pupils matter.

2. Rationale

In the context of the school's promotion of the individuality of all our pupils, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background, this policy was devised in order to record the school strategy in catering for pupils with special educational needs, to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills circulars and to streamline the provision of support for pupils with special educational needs thereby making the maximum use of the resources available to the school.

- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) 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
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support

3. Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

This policy is in line with the school's *Mission Statement*.

Individuality

Uniqueness is valued through each child's personality, intelligence and developmental potential. Throughout the curriculum and beyond, individual talents, interests and potential are recognised, encouraged and celebrated, while children are taught the value of mutual support and encouragement. In addressing the individual needs of each child, teachers endeavour to support and help those who find achievement to be more challenging.

Educational proficiency

Pupils are encouraged to reach their full educational potential, by developing intellectual skills combined with a spirit of enquiry and the capacity to analyse issues critically and constructively, while developing expressive, creative and artistic abilities. Children are encouraged to be active in their

own learning. Pupils' achievements and development are constantly monitored and assessed throughout the school and regular parent/teacher consultation is promoted. Children's additional needs are prioritised and given the maximum possible attention.

4. Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, St Patrick's NS aims:

- to be an inclusive school, which enables all pupils (irrespective of ability, ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender, or background) to avail of, and benefit from, a curriculum suitable for their ability level;
- to clarify procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs (SEN);
- to outline the level of assessment, teaching and other resources to be made available by the school system to meet the needs of pupils with SEN;
- assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their children with SEN in the school;
- establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with SEN.

5. Policy content

This policy is laid out as follows:

- 5.1 Enrolment of children with identified special educational needs
- 5.2 Provision for children with emerging SEN (the Staged Approach)
 - 5.2.1 [Stage 1](#) procedures for the early identification, screening and addressing of SEN
 - 5.2.2 [Stage 2](#) referral to SEN teacher
 - 5.2.3 [Stage 3](#) consultation or referral for assessment to outside specialist/s
- 5.3 Drafting an implementing a Student Support Plan
- 5.4 Inclusion
- 5.5 Deployment of staff
- 5.6 Collaboration and communication
- 5.7 Resources
- 5.8 Transfer to post primary school or to another primary school
- 5.9 Record keeping
- 5.10 Safe Guarding
- 5.11 Related policies, which include *Code of Behaviour; Anti-Bullying Policy; Assessment Policy* and *Equality of Access and Participation Policy*.

5.1 Enrolment of children with identified special educational needs (SEN)

(ref *Enrolment Policy*)

Legislation that is relevant to this policy includes:

The *Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004)*, Section 3 provides that:

“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 degree of those needs of the child are 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 this Act, or
- b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.”

The *Education Act (1998)*, 15.2 (d) states that:

“A board shall... publish the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to... the participation of students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy, principles of equality and the rights of parents to send their children to a school of the parents’ choice are respected...”

Prior to enrolment at St Patrick’s National School, it is essential that all parties involved meet to discuss the child’s individual needs. The school makes every effort to become acquainted with a child’s additional needs by endeavouring to:

- facilitate meetings between the child’s parents, Principal, Class Teacher, SEN staff and the NCSE Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO), as appropriate;
- obtain copies of reports, assessments, etc from parents, SENO, previous school;
- engage with SENO, psychologists, psychiatrists, speech therapists, occupational therapists and/or other specialists or agencies, as appropriate.

To ensure a smooth transition into the school for both the pupil and the school, some or all of the following steps are followed, as appropriate:

- parental visit(s) to the school
- pupil visit(s) to the school
- staff visit(s) to special school/ unit
- awareness-raising to school personnel regarding inclusion
- liaison with SENO
- arrangements for provision of adequate mobility and care needs for individual child within the resources available, should the need arise.

5.2 Provision for children with emerging special educational needs (Staged Approach)

The decision must be made as to whether the child should receive support at the level of **Stage 1**, **Stage 2** or **Stage 3** of the Staged Approach (ref *Special Education Circular 02/05, Appendix 3* and *Special Educational Needs, a Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007*)

Early Intervention

In order to maximise opportunities to identify SEN at the earliest possible opportunity, the school follows a programme of Early Intervention with the junior classes. (Junior Infants – 2nd) This allows for additional teaching resources to strengthen station teaching approaches which target the promotion of language, literacy and numeracy skills. All pupils initially avail of this additional support (re appendix x for general Parental Permission Letter). From (usually) the second term of Junior Infants more specific intervention may be required for some pupils. Stage 1 Classroom Support will be put in place.

5.2.1 Stage 1 (Classroom Support)

Procedures for the early identification, screening and addressing of special educational needs

The triggers for this intervention could be;

- The child makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are directed at an identified area of weakness
- The child shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills, which result in poor attainment
- Persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behaviour management techniques used by the school
- Has sensory or physical difficulties
- Has communication and/ or relationship difficulties

The Junior Infant class teacher initially discusses their concerns with the child's parents, completes a Stage One Classroom Support form and monitors the intervention for an agreed period. The success of the classroom support plan should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If concern remains after reviewing and monitoring, intervention may move on to Stage 2.

A Student Support File (on Aladdin) will be opened during the 3rd term for those pupils only who will continue receiving additional support in Senior Infants.

The special educational needs of some children, including new entrants to the school, may not be apparent until they are in more senior classes. As before, when a class teacher identifies a child who requires interventions that are ADDITIONAL TO or DIFFERENT FROM those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum, then the teacher discusses their concerns with the child's parents, opens a Student Support File and begins Stage One Classroom Support intervention.

Results gathered from tests are used in helping to identify pupils with SEN.

The school adheres to a variety of assessment practices outlined in the NCCA's *Guidelines for Assessment*. Teachers administer screening measures, which may include teacher-designed screening checklists and profiles, review of work portfolios, norm-referenced tests and behavioural checklists where appropriate from Senior Infants upwards.

Diagnostic teaching, screening and assessment/diagnostic measures used in the school may include:

- Class Teacher and SET observation
- administration of *Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)* (Junior Infants pupils whose overall performance is of concern)
- administration of *Bracken (Receptive and Expressive) Tests* (Senior Infants)
- annual mid-year administration of *Middle Infants' Screening Test* (Senior Infants) or T2R)
- annual administration of *Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy* (beginning of 1st Class)
- annual administration in May of standardised school tests
 - *Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy (DTEL)* (Senior Infants)
 - *Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (DPRT)* (1st – 6th Class)
 - *Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test (DPST)* (1st – 6th Class)
 - *Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test (DPMT)* (1st – 6th Class)
- administration 3 times per year (December, March/April, June) of *Ballard and Westwood Tables Test* (2nd – 6th Class),
- annual administration of *Non-Reading Intelligence Test - new version (NNRIT)* (2nd Class, new entrants and /or child about whom there may be concerns)
- administration of *Non-Reading Intelligence Test 'old' version (NRIT)* (sometimes requested by NEPS psychologist, prior to formal assessment)

5.2.2 Stage 2 (Classroom Support Plus)

Referral to Special Education (SET) Teacher

Following the screening procedures and consultation with the Class Teacher and parents, the SEN Teacher will proceed with the administration of diagnostic tests. These may consist of:

- *YARC: York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (Early Reading)*
- *YARC: York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (Passage Reading)*
- *Neale Analysis of Reading Ability*
- selected *Daniels and Diack Tests*
- *Aston Index Phonemic Awareness Test*

Other pupils who require intervention at Stage 2 School Support are those who in the past were eligible for supplementary teaching by the Special Educational Teacher (with priority been given to pupils whose achievement is at or below the 12th percentile on standardised tests of Reading or Mathematics). Assessment will also identify children with exceptional ability, for whom support will include differentiated learning opportunities and challenging tasks within the mainstream classroom and for homework. The school is aware that some pupils may present with 'dual exceptionality', ie a child who is exceptionally able but has additional learning difficulties or a disability that can make it difficult to identify their high intellectual ability.

Support at Stage 2 is offered through

- in-class support
- withdrawal for small group support
- withdrawal for individual support.

A Student Support Plan (classroom support plus) must be completed for each child at Stage 2, usually at the beginning of the school year and is reviewed again early in the New Year (usually February).

The responsibility for the preparation of the SPP lies with the SET teacher in collaboration with the Class Teacher, parents, SNAs and outside specialists and/or agencies if relevant. A copy of the SPP is kept in the Student Support Folder of the relevant class. This folder is stored securely in the classroom and passes on to the incoming teacher the following year. A copy of the SSP may be given to the parents of the pupil and it will also be kept in the Student's Support File on Aladdin. In addition to the SSP, monthly forward planning, in weekly format (done in consultation with the Class Teacher), and monthly progress reports based on the planning, will be in place.

5.2.3 Stage 3 (School Support Plus)

Consultation, or referral for assessment to outside specialist

Pupils who are considered to require support at Stage 3 include:

- children who have significant special educational needs and who have been identified as being at Stage 3 through the application of the Staged Approach to intervention;
- children who have significant special educational needs arising from high-incidence disabilities (borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability, and specific learning disability).

An Information booklet for Parents of children and young people with Special Educational Needs is available here: <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Web-Ready-03178-NCSE-Children-SEN-InfoBook-Parents2-Proof17-VISUAL-ONLY.pdf>

The class teacher, SET and/or Principal will consult with the parents to explain the assessment services and options available to their child – both public and private. Some assessments (eg educational psychological assessments by NEPS) will take place in an appropriate setting in the school, while others may take place in a local HSE clinic or elsewhere.

In the event of limited availability of assessments through NEPS, priority will be agreed through consultation between the relevant teachers, the Principal and the NEPS psychologist.

If parents decide that they would prefer to take their child to a private specialist to avoid the long waiting lists of the public system, the responsibility lies with them to arrange assessment.

Parents who do not agree to a referral will be asked to complete a form stating that they do not wish to have their child referred for assessment at that time.

5.3 Drafting and implementing a Student Support Plan (formerly IEP)

The SSP serves two main purposes (*Lerner, 2005*):

- to provide a written plan or statement for a particular pupil, providing specific educational objectives for the individual student
- as a management tool for the entire assessment/teaching process.

Identification of strengths is based on teacher, SNA and parent observation, and may include pupil participation as appropriate.

Needs analysis is based on assessment reports (eg psycho-educational, occupational therapy, speech and language), teacher, SNA, parent and pupil input.

Each SET teacher will use an agreed format for the SSP under the following headings:

- Student's Strength and Interests
- Priority concerns
- Possible reasons for concerns
- Targets for the student
- Strategies to help the student achieve the targets
- Care Plan (if relevant)
- Staff involved
- Resources needed
- Home targets for the student

A SSP (School Support Plus) must be completed for each child at Stage 3 at the beginning of the school year. It will be monitored through teacher observation, planning, and progress records, as well as through the Class Teacher's, pupil's and parents' feedback. A detailed review will take place early in Term 2, at which time parents are invited to discuss their child's progress.

The responsibility for the preparation of the SPP lies with the SET teacher in collaboration with the Class Teacher, parents, SNAs and outside specialists and/or agencies. A copy of the SSP is kept in the Student Support Folder of the relevant class. This folder is stored securely in the classroom and passes on to the incoming teacher the following year. A copy of the SSP may be given to the parents of the pupil and it will also be kept in the Student's Support File on Aladdin. In addition to the SSP, monthly forward planning, in weekly format (done in consultation with the Class Teacher), and monthly progress reports based on the planning, will be in place.

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process

<p>Classroom Support</p>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Basic needs checklist * • Learning environment checklist* • Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
<p>School Support</p>	<p>At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition.</p> <p>A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>

School Support Plus	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc <p>Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>
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5.4 Inclusion

Each child is equally valued at St Patrick’s National School, and has the opportunity to take part fully in all activities. SNAs are unobtrusively present at all break times for safety reasons, and to encourage all children to take part in games with their peers.

SPHE classes can serve to make children aware of the differences in ability, appearance and behaviour which can occur in the mainstream school, and to address these differences in a positive and appropriate way.

5.5 SEN support personnel

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for overseeing SEN support in the school, including

- ongoing consultation with parents, colleagues and external specialists /agencies
- overseeing the planning and implementation of the school’s SEN programme with staff and other education partners
- coordinating the cluster model with other schools, as applicable on a year-by-year basis
- ongoing review, evaluation and planning for SEN support and resources.

The revised allocation process for Special Education Teachers to mainstream primary schools from the 2017/18 school year (ref DES Circular 13/17)

The new Special Education Teaching allocation introduced by the DES in 2017 provides a single unified allocation for special educational support teaching needs to each school, based on that school’s educational profile. This single allocation is to allow schools to provide additional teaching support for all pupils who require such support in their schools. Schools will deploy resources based on each pupil’s individual learning needs.

The new Special Educational Post is a combined post which allows schools to provide for all of their special education teaching needs from within this single allocation. The distinction between what were previously Learning Support Posts, or Learning Support/Resource Teaching/EAL posts under GAM, and NCSE allocated Resource Teaching Posts no longer applies from September 2017

Special Educational Needs Teachers

The number of teachers in the SEN team may vary from year to year, depending on the annual allocation of resources by the DES. In recent years, the school's allocation has varied from 4.5 to 5.5 teachers.

The training, experience and expertise of teachers is taken into account by the Principal when allocating teaching responsibilities in respect of pupils with SEN at Stages 2 and 3. Teachers' engagement with CPD is encouraged and supported by the Board of Management.

Logistical factors, such as timetabling for in-class additional teaching support and for withdrawal of pupils from mainstream classes, is considered in order to ensure an inclusive approach to the education of the pupils to the greatest extent possible. Whether a teacher is full or part-time may also be a relevant consideration.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

The Board of Management, teaching staff, parents and pupils recognise the important role and functions of the SNA within the school. Appointment of SNA staff takes place in accordance with DES guidelines.

The nature of the work to be performed by the SNA is at the direction of the Principal or another person acting on behalf of the Principal and/or the Board of Management. SNAs are required to do break-time supervision duty in the playground (and in the classroom on wet days). SNAs should not have full supervision responsibilities of a class at any time. The Board of Management may redeploy SNAs within the school, to respond to demands and to cover for periods of absences of SNA colleagues. Where work requirements arise during non-instruction days, the Principal (on behalf of the Board of Management) has discretion to deploy SNAs to appropriate school duties. SNAs are expected to maintain and treat all matters relating to school business and his/her work in the school as strictly confidential. All parental queries and concerns should be directed to the Class Teacher.

Parents

Parents have a major role in providing the best help and support to children with additional educational needs. This includes

- regular communication with Class Teacher or SEN Teacher
- supporting any individually-designed programme for their child
- creating a home environment that supports learning and literacy

- encouraging visits to the library
- developing oral language
- supporting homework and shared reading programmes.

5.6 Collaboration and communication

Annual standardised assessment-based data is communicated to parents in children's End-of-Year Reports in June, following administration of the tests in May (ref *Assessment Policy*, NCCA *Information for Parents - your child's school report* https://www.ncca.ie/media/1432/your_childs_school_report_parents.pdf and NCCA *Information for Parents - your child and standardised testing, understanding the STen score*. https://www.ncca.ie/media/1429/understanding-standardscores_eng.pdf)

Parents are consulted as soon as the Class Teacher is aware that their child may need extra help, and collaboration is an integral part of any assessments or plans that arise as a result.

Beginning with the assessments provided for the pupil, the SEN Teacher builds up a profile of the child's strengths and needs. At this point the Class Teacher, SEN Teacher and parents collaborate in order to identify these strengths and needs. Arising from this consultation, the SPP and monthly planning and progress record can be formulated.

It is helpful for the SEN Teacher and Class Teacher to liaise in adapting the curriculum implementation programme for the pupil. This may include planning and implementing differentiation in school assignments and/or homework, eg reducing the amount of reading of textbooks, allowing the child to answer fewer written questions, learning fewer or more targeted spellings, etc.

The SEN Teacher meets parents before the formulation of an SSP and again when 1:1 Parent/Teacher consultations take place. Otherwise, appointments may be made where necessary at a mutually convenient time.

Open communication between all those parties involved with the education of the pupil with special needs is encouraged. The Class Teacher and SEN Teacher will meet as often as necessary to review and discuss appropriate planning, while meetings of various elements of the SEN support team are held on a regular basis, ie the Principal, SEN Teachers, and SNAs. These meetings include termly reviews of the teaching and learning programme and the best use of the resources available to the school.

Links with external professionals who are working with pupils who have additional needs are critical to on-going progress. Meetings and telephone communication are both useful.

5.7 Resources

Resources for SEN teaching may be found in the school's Teacher Resource Library, and also in the SEN support classrooms. They can be accessed by SEN Teachers, Class Teachers and SNAs. SEN Teachers and Class Teachers are responsible for sourcing and acquiring additional resources as the need arises, with the approval of the Principal.

5.8 Transfer to secondary school or another primary school

Particular support is required for all children in the context of inter-school transfer. With the consent of parents and in consultation with the Principal, the Class Teacher and SEN Teacher may consult with a Form Tutor, Year Head, SEN Teacher, and/or the Principal of a secondary school regarding the needs/strengths of a child. The introduction of *Education Passports* (ref DES Circular 0045/2014) resulted in a more formal process for transfer of pupil information from primary to secondary school. This sharing of information is aimed at ensuring that a rounded picture of children's ability and achievement at primary school is available to their new school, and is designed to ensure continuity and progression for students while also alerting secondary schools if any child will need additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

In cases of low-incidence disabilities, secondary schools must contact primary schools early in the calendar year of transfer in order to ensure relevant supports are in place. The role of the SENO in this case will be to support both schools in ensuring that the child with special needs gets the relevant support that he/she needs in post primary.

Information regarding a child, including assessment results, will only be transferred with the written consent of parents.

5.9 Record keeping

All confidential reports and correspondence are retained in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal's office. Staff may access files with the Principal's consent. All access to confidential files must be recorded by signing and dating the cover page of the file. The addition of new documents to a file must also be recorded, signed and dated on the cover page. Professional Reports are also uploaded to the Student's Aladdin document file with access limited to those working with the student. Files are stored in accordance with the school's *Record Keeping and Data Protection Policy* and in line with current legislative requirements.

The SEN Teacher maintains

- records of all diagnostic assessments
- SPFs
- individual plans and progress reports

(copies of these documents are uploaded to Aladdin under the Student's Documents)

- additional records of pupil's progress such as records of oral language, records of oral reading errors and work samples that can be used to track a pupil's progress and learning needs over time.

5.10 SafeGuarding

- One-to-one teaching has been categorized as an area of HIGH risk to pupils with SEN. To mitigate this risk the following applies: (Re Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment)
- comprehensive *AEN Support Policy* and procedures in place;
- glass panels in doors of AEN Support rooms;
- table between Teacher and Pupil

5.11 Related policies

Some aspects of this policy may impact upon, or be affected by, other policies in the school, including

- *Code of Behaviour*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Assessment Policy*
- *Equality of Access and Participation Policy*
- *Homework Policy*
- *Record Keeping and Data Protection Policy.*

The school's curricular and organisational policies and plans take into account the needs of pupils with additional needs through differentiation of content and methodologies in curriculum areas.

6. Success criteria

The success of the implementation of this policy will be measured by

- the level and quality of inclusion of pupils with special needs into the school
- the level and quality of progress of pupils with special needs in the school
- feedback from teaching staff, SNAs and pupils
- feedback from parent/teacher meetings
- Whole-School Evaluation (WSE) and DES Inspector's reports
- feedback from external professionals and agencies.

7. Ratification and communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management. A copy was given to all staff and the policy was made available to parents on the school's website and through the school office.

8. Implementation

8.1 Roles and responsibilities

The people and agencies who have responsibilities relating to aspects of this policy are:

- Principal, teaching staff and SNAs
- Board of Management
- Parents
- DES
- NCCA
- NCSE
- Psychologists and other specialists, eg NEPS.

8.2 Timeframe

This policy was implemented immediately following its ratification by the Board of Management.

9. Review

9.1 Roles and responsibilities

Under the leadership of the ISM team, those involved in review of this policy include representatives of SEN Teachers and SNAs, Class Teachers, parents, Board of Management and pupils (where appropriate).

9.2 Timeframe for review

It is necessary to review this plan on an ongoing basis to ensure optimum implementation of Special Education Needs (SEN) support in the school and to reflect ongoing changes in DES and NCSE resources, etc. A comprehensive review of the policy is scheduled for 2023. However, the policy may be reviewed and revised at any time by the Board of Management, should such a need arise.

Signed: _____

Canon David Mungavin
Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: _____

Rachel Harper
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Letters to parents regarding access to supports (templates)

Re: Early Intervention Programme 20 /20

To the parents of Junior Infants

_____ has been assigned to work with Junior Infants this year, for the Early Intervention Programme for Literacy/Numeracy and Social Skills.

While the idea of Learning Support at this stage of your child’s education usually means in-class support, there will be times when children might benefit from being withdrawn from the classroom, to work in a small group.

If you are in agreement with this, and you would like your child to avail of this additional support, please sign the consent form below and return it to _____ by <date> _____. Should we feel that your child needs particular attention in any area, we will contact you directly.

Kind regards

Special Education Teacher

Class Teacher

St. Patrick’s National School

I/We give our consent for our child _____ to receive additional educational support during the School year 20__ -20__ .

Signed: _____
Parents/Guardians

Date: _____

Re: Special Educational Needs Programme 20 /20

To the parents of _____ ,
I have been assigned to work with _____ for Special Educational Support teaching this year. I am preparing her Support Plan in consultation with her teacher. This routinely includes diagnostic testing to help inform how best to support your child.

I would be grateful if you would sign the consent form below and fill in the attached information sheet. I will be in touch with you in the next few weeks to discuss _____ 's Support Plan for the coming year.

We look forward to working closely with you in the months ahead.

Special Education Needs Teacher(s)

St. Patrick's National School

I/We give our consent for our child _____ to receive Special Educational Needs Teaching during the School year 20__ -20__ .

Signed: _____
Parents/Guardians
Date: _____

Re: Special Educational Needs Programme 20 /20

To the parents of _____ ,

I have been assigned to work with _____ for Special Educational Need’s provision this year. I am preparing his Support Plan in consultation with his teacher. This routinely includes diagnostic testing to help inform how best to support your child.

I would be grateful if you would sign the consent form below and fill in the attached information sheet. I will be in touch with you in the next few weeks to discuss _____’s Support Plan for the coming year.

We look forward to working closely with you in the months ahead.

Special Education Teacher(s)

St. Patrick’s National School

I/We give our consent for our child _____ to receive Special Educational Needs Teaching during the School year 20 -20 .

Signed: _____

Parents/Guardians

Date: _____

Appendix 2

Classroom Support Plan/Review							
<i>(Essential references: SEN- A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers, pages 11 to 19)</i>							
Name :		Class:		SET:			
Class Teacher:		Age:		Today's Date:			
Student's Strengths/Progress Made:							
Concerns/Continued Concerns:							
Possible Reasons (We think it may be happening because...) <i>(Essential references: SEN- A Continuum of Support: Resource Pack for Teachers (pages 2 to 16); BESD: A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers (pages 64-69))</i>							
Targets we want to achieve:							
Strategies we will use: <i>(SEN- A Continuum of Support- Guidelines for Teachers p14; BESD: A Continuum of Support-Guidelines for Teachers (pages 110-122))</i>							
Signed:							
Parents: _____ Teacher(s): _____							
Review date and outcomes (targets met and unmet):							
Outcome of Review:							
New Classroom Support Plan to be agreed	tick	Classroom Support Plan no longer necessary	tick	School Support Plan to be initiated	tick	Request consultation with other professional e.g. NEPS psychologist or S & L Therapy	tick

_____ Date: _____

Appendix 3

Staged Approach: Supporting Learning at Stage 1

(suggested strategies for Class Teachers)

1. ATTITUDES TO LEARNING

Concentration/attention

Try:

- Different seating/group
- A quiet working area where child can be encouraged to go to work
- Establishing the child's best concentration time – make most demands then
- Varying the nature/length of task(s) – practical, paper/pencil, problem solving, physical
- Using music as a 'background' to working
- A reward system – child's choice of rewards for completed task(s)
- A private signal between you/child to help him/her re-focus on task.
- Quiet work area, work station
- Time out, 'Brain Gym' type activity
- Find source of reluctance of child to stay on task

Working independently

Try:

- Seating beside a work 'buddy'
- Use of a timer and personal task chart – each task timed and ticked as completed –
- record also time taken to complete task chart – can improve on this – set target then beat personal 'best'
- Strategies to cope when stuck
- Reduce/alter the appearance of task – more visual, only try every second question
- Give responsibility/ownership e.g. independent activity as follow up to collaborative task

Organising self/belongings

Try:

- Rehearsing the daily routine
- Ensuring classroom organisation uses labels and notices for routine and to highlight forthcoming events
- To have a remembering 'blitz' for whole class – with rewards for remembering
- Allowing 5 minutes for child to organise him/herself before 'work' begins
- Using checklists – devised with the child – he/she collects and ticks equipment listed –
- concentrate on one curricular area/task at a time
- Having a 'Friday tidy time'
- Encouraging the child to evaluate and review organisation skills – and set self-targets for improvement.
- Keep to a class/group routine
- Use a visual timetable

- Provide rewards for consistency

Learning Style

Try:

- Reviewing your teaching approaches/strategies – does your teaching reflect **your**
- preferred learning style or do the teaching strategies you use reflect the range of learning styles within your class? Learners whose style does not match yours may be ‘turned off’ and this could be happening to up to 75% of the class. Find out about the child’s learning style and consider how you can adapt your teaching to accommodate this.
- Involving the child in reviewing/evaluating how he/she learns best – and in considering
- what changes he/she - and you – could make to support this. Provide element of choice too.
- Ensure teaching strategies incorporate VAK – Visual, auditory and kinaesthetic modes.
- Neuroscientists have proved that different sensory inputs utilise different neural
- processing structures. Ensure good mixture throughout the day.
- Learning is most natural and therefore best when the senses are engaged – see it, hear it, do it.
- Collaborative work.

Difficult Behaviour

Try:

- Observing classroom behaviour, ask the children to observe, then using observations as
- a **positive** class activity, negotiate classroom rules with the class, display on classroom
- wall and re-visit periodically;
- Have a ‘rule of the week’ as a means of reinforcing rules agreed with the children –
- praise/recognise children who follow the rule;
- Catching the child being good – see *‘50 things to catch them being good at’*;
- Separating the child from the behaviour – label the behaviour, not the child;
- Rewarding ‘good’ behaviour – student awarded with 1 minute ‘free time’ vouchers that
- can be collected and once eg 10 minutes have been accrued, can be swapped for a
- privilege – the child chooses from a list of privileges discussed and agreed with you;
- Finding out more about behaviour that is problematic – when does it occur, how often,
- where, with whom, doing what, etc. – is there any pattern / does anything start it off / what keeps it going / what stops it?
- Alternatively – looking for exceptions – when / with whom / where / doing what?
- Decide what you want the child to do instead – be specific – ‘I would like you to complete
- the maths worksheet staying in your seat and without speaking to ...’;
- Target **one** behaviour at a time – and start with something that is achievable – or limit the time you expect the child to – eg sit in his/her seat;
- Success is a powerful motivator – but you need to allow the child to succeed in order to be able to build on his/her success by setting bigger targets to achieve;

- Agreeing a contract for behaviour in the classroom – specify what you expect from the child and what he/she can expect from you;
- Reflection time to think about what they have done and its impact on self and others. Thank them when appropriate behaviour and routines are followed. Focus on what has gone well. Have a positive conclusion to the end of each day with a statement emphasising desired outcomes.

2. LITERACY & NUMERACY

Following instructions

Try:

- Checking the child's hearing;
- Making sure you have eye contact with the child before giving instructions or information;
- Demonstrating what to do;
- Breaking up long or complex instructions – open your maths textbook, find page...etc;
- Stressing/repeating key words;
- Asking the child to repeat what he/she has to do;
- Using curricular resources such as 'Listen and Do';
- Teaching listening skills – looking, sitting still, thinking etc;
- Checking the child's understanding – does he/she understand the vocabulary used?
- Visual prompt, wait time.

Comprehension of written information

Try:

- Working on text which is easier for the child to decode;
- Using picture comprehension resources – 'Looking and Thinking';
- Using sequencing cards, cloze activities;
- Creating topic specific vocabulary lists;
- Checking understanding of key vocabulary.

NB: If a child has difficulty in following instructions and comprehension of written information he/she can 'decode' – consider whether referral for speech and language therapy assessment might be appropriate.

Decoding text

Try:

- Considering the optimum teaching level for test – 15% errors is appropriate – use ORT assessment sheets/miscue analysis – establish what strategies the child is using to identify words – what strategies does he/she need to develop?
- Teaching key vocabulary Wellington Square information sheet for general reading strategies;

- Using computer software – Phonic Code Cracker;
- Referring to teacher handbooks for reading/language scheme.

Spelling

Try:

- Providing the child with a list of key vocabulary;
- Encouraging the child to proof read writing – using a highlighter to identify any words he/she thinks are spelt incorrectly;
- To ensure that **Look – Cover – Write – Check** is being used to learn words;
- Using a spell checker or word processing package which highlights wrongly spelt words;
- Marking writing for content;
- Using computer programmes such as *Starspell*;
- Using acronyms to aid spellings;
- Word of the week;
- Teach how to use dictionary, thesaurus;
- Peer support – ‘Spell Friend’;
- Common words reinforced through class display.

Copying

Try:

- Checking the child’s eyesight;
- Teaching the child to proof-read using a highlighter;
- Considering the purpose of a writing task that requires copying from a textbook – word only answers may be enough to allow you to check his/her understanding;
- Limiting the copying you ask the child to do – don’t ask him/her to copy from the board – are there other ways he/she could receive information you need others to copy eg photocopied notes from another child?

Handwriting

Try:

- Checking the child’s pencil hold;
- Considering if this is part of a wider problem with coordination, visual/spatial skills, movement, etc.
- Using a pencil grip;
- Checking individual letter formation – sand trays, play dough, whiteboards
- Using a computer or scribe for extended writing;
- Considering the purpose of a writing task – if it is to check understanding – could the child answer verbally?
- Offer choices within tasks.

Numeracy

Try:

- Using concrete materials or a number line;
- Interactive games and activities;
- Cooperative learning approaches, group tasks with built in individual accountability;
- Repetition in various forms;
- Explanation of strategies, by children to other children;
- Reinforce relevance by linking to practical everyday experiences;
- Pair checking;
- Breaking down instructions into simple language, asking child or young person to repeat the instruction;
- AfL strategies to check for understanding eg traffic lights, thumbs up etc.;
- Rhymes and singing for times tables, odds and evens;
- ICT extension and consolidation, use of interactive SMART board;
- Visual displays to help learners and remind them of processes;
- Display strategies for pupils to refer to and scaffold learning;
- Cross-curricular links;
- Easy access to number squares and multiplication grids;
- Story books for learning numbers;
- Verbalising own thought processes to others;
- Guess, check, improve;

50 things to 'catch them being good' at

- Coming into the classroom quickly and quietly
- Looking at the teacher quickly and quietly when asked to listen
- Following an instruction the first time they are asked
- Helping a classmate
- Being polite
- Tidying and cleaning up
- Working hard on a piece of work
- Putting their hand up and waiting to be asked to speak
- Holding the door open for someone
- Handing homework in on time
- Catching up with unfinished work or work missed due to absence
- Saying 'please' and 'thank you'
- Asking for help when they need it
- Walking quietly around the school
- Listening well in assembly
- Providing a good idea or suggestion in a discussion
- Working well with a group of classmates
- Listening to another's point of view
- Telling a school helper or a teacher of a problem in the playground rather than trying to sort it out by fighting
- Letting a teacher know if someone is bullying another child
- Carrying out a classroom task willingly and doing it well
- Looking after a younger child or new pupil at the school
- Offering help without being asked
- Taking turns, waiting for their turn
- Treating school books and equipment carefully
- Starting work quickly
- Keeping own books and possessions tidy
- Keeping own physical appearance tidy
- Moving from one task to another without teacher reminders

- Getting all equipment needed for a task without being told
- Telling the truth
- Listening quietly, looking at the speaker ('paying attention')
- Lining up quickly and quietly
- Being a good friend
- Willing to answer questions and make contributions to group discussions
- Remaining calm during a difficult situation
- Sharing equipment or activity with a classmate
- Taking a lot of care with/putting a lot of thought into a piece of work
- Finding something appropriate to do when they have finished their work early
- Speaking well in the school play or assembly
- Being willing to try something new or difficult
- Asking before they 'borrow' something
- Remembering to do something (eg taking a message home)
- Taking a visitor to their destination rather than just directing them
- Bringing appropriate books and equipment to the lesson.