



Special Educational Needs Policy

Guiding Principles

All our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. As far as possible, therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

Inclusion

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice, which makes it possible. Our policy, as set out in this document, aims to enable children with SEN, children from the travelling community, and children whose first language is not English, to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

Three Principles for Inclusion

Setting Suitable Learning Challenges

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible as laid out in Inclusion policy.

Responding to Children's Diverse Learning Needs

We take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning.

Overcoming Potential Barriers to Learning and Assessment for Individuals and Groups of Children

We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning if we do not address them through special arrangements.

In making provision for children with special needs our policy objectives are:

- To ensure that our duties, as set out in The Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Education Welfare Act 2000 and Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004, are fully met, to enable children with special educational needs to join in the normal activities of the school along with children who do not have special educational needs
- To ensure that all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have an equal opportunity to receive an education that is appropriate to their needs
- To identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible – Junior Infant checklist (unless earlier assessment has been carried out) and Early Literacy and Numeracy tests in Senior Infants.
- To use our resources as efficiently and equitably as possible when assessing and meeting the special educational needs of our children
- To provide a graduated approach in order to match educational provision to children's needs
- To develop a partnership with parents/carers in order that their knowledge, views and experience can assist us in assessing and providing for their children
- To take into account the ascertainable wishes of the children concerned and, whenever possible, directly involve them in decision making in order to provide more effectively for them
- To ensure collaboration with the Department of Education & Skills in order to take effective action on behalf of children with special needs
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities towards children with special needs and are able to exercise them
- To monitor our effectiveness in achieving the above objectives.

Responsibilities

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BoM, Principal, Special Needs Team and class teachers will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

1. Board of Management

The BoM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of the school development plan. Members will be knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision – funding, equipment and personnel.

2. Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. She will work closely with the SEN team and will keep the BoM informed about the working of this policy. She will encourage members of staff to participate in training to help them meet the objectives of this policy. In consultation with the SEN team, she will liaise with the SENO with regard to support hours and is responsible for personnel appointments. She will also inform parents of relevant courses available.

3. Special Needs Team

Special Educational Needs will be co-ordinated by the SEN team. They will meet regularly and will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEN Policy
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers and contributing to in service training of staff
- Liaising with and advising SNAs with regard to supporting children with special needs
- Liaising with parents of children with special needs
- Monitoring and evaluating SEN provision
- Facilitating planning for class teacher with support teacher
- Fulfilling requirements within the Continuum of Support framework including maintaining of continuum of support plans.

4. Class teachers

Class teachers will be responsible for:

- Opening a student support file in consultation with pupil's parents when necessary.
- Informing SEN Team of any new Student Support Files opened.
- Implementing classroom support plan.
- Liaising with and advising SNAs with regard to supporting children with special needs in their class.
- Liaising with parents of children with special needs in their class.
- Monitoring and evaluating SEN provision for children in their class.

Early Intervention

We believe it is very important to identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible, so that effective interventions can be put in place. Junior Infants will be assessed using a teacher-designed checklist. Other screening/diagnostic tests may be used if necessary. An Early Literacy and Numeracy test is administered to all pupils in Senior Infants during the third term of the school year. Junior Infants will receive in-class support as part of our literacy and numeracy team teaching initiatives.

Stages of Intervention and Provision

We as a school acknowledge that all children are unique and special education needs can occur on a continuum from mild to severe and from transitory to enduring. Therefore, a graduated approach to identification and programme planning is recommended. This approach has formed the basis for the three-staged approach to assessment and intervention described in the NEPS Learning Support Guidelines and in the Department's recent special education circulars.

The Three Stages:

1. Classroom Support: is an intervention process coordinated by the class teacher and usually carried out within the classroom. A classroom support checklist and plan will be drafted and implemented by class teacher in consultation with parents
2. Following the implementation of a Classroom Support Plan, it may be decided that a student would progress to School Support level. This is an assessment and intervention process which is usually coordinated by the SEN team working alongside the class teacher. Interventions at this stage will be additional to those provided through classroom support. The continuum of Support Plan will be maintained by the SEN team within the Pupil Support File.
3. School Support Plus: is generally characterised by the school requesting the involvement of relevant external services in more detailed assessment and development of intervention programmes. This level of intervention is for children with complex and enduring needs and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned interventions at the previous levels.

Assessment

The assessment practices of our school are outlined in the assessment policy

1. Pupils at and below the 10th percentile will automatically be offered learning support in literacy and/or numeracy
2. Pupils attaining above the 10th percentile may be offered Learning Support at the discretion of the school and dependant on resources available.
3. The school will provide support to SEN pupils in line with its NCSE allocation.
4. Where an implemented classroom support plan is deemed unsuccessful a school support plan may be drafted resulting in additional group or in-class support
5. When concerns are raised in relation to a child's standardised test results a decision may be made by SEN Team to offer additional support

Where progress is unsatisfactory it may be decided that the child remains in Learning Support or may be referred for educational assessment. Where progress is satisfactory, and where the child is consistently achieving targets over the stated time, a decision may be made to revert to Classroom support.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The BoM will ensure that SEN provision is an integral part of the school development plan. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

End of year transition

In order to facilitate an easy transition for our pupils on the ASD spectrum we will endeavour where possible to do the following;

1. We will try to introduce their new class teacher /resource teacher to them prior to the holidays in so far as is possible
2. Visits to their new classroom and yard area will be arranged
3. Some social interaction between the pupil and their new teacher will be scheduled e.g. Taking a message to the new teacher

In certain years, information regarding your child's new teacher is not known until the appointment procedure has taken place. The website will be updated as soon as the appointment has been filled.

Your child will be involved in drafting a simple transition project under the guidance of their teachers in school. Please make sure to have conversations around this project to help prepare your child in advance of the new school year. Amongst the topics covered will be:

- Classroom
- Yard area
- Class teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- SNA(if assigned)

Parents are most welcome to visit with their child during the summer months if you see staff members in the school or by appointment.

References

The procedures outlined in this policy result from consultation with:

1. NEPS psychologist
2. Special Educational Needs Organiser
3. Staff of Scoil Mhuire Naofa
4. Dept of Education and Skills Inspectorate
5. CPD given to Teachers from SESS, PDST, Midletown Centre for Autism and other external agencies.