Scoil Chaitríona Naofa

Additional Needs Policy

School Information

Scoil Chaitríona Naofa is a mainstream primary school catering for a full cross section of children. We endeavour to create a positive and inclusive atmosphere that respects all children, regardless of their religious, social, cultural background or special educational needs.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.
- outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.
- comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000)
- fulfil DES circular 0013/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools).

Belief Statement

Our school is dedicated to the implementation of an effective system for meeting the needs of all our pupils in accordance with our mission statement, the resources provided by the DES and the Board of Management.

We believe that all our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their individual needs. We strive to ensure that all our children feel that they are a valued part of our school community. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion. This policy aims to enable children with Special Education Needs (SEN) 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 the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- identify additional needs that our pupils may have
- allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of children with additional needs
- divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with additional needs
- track, monitor, review and report on the progress of children with additional needs
- communicate information between the Principal, SET teachers staff and parents/guardians

Support is provided to pupils with special educational needs based on identified needs and is informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with Principal, Class Teachers, SET teachers, parents and pupils where appropriate)

Pupils with the **greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support,** in accordance with the Staged Approach outlined in the Continuum of Support.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN. They also ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space, effective teaching resources and support for the continued professional development of teachers in this area are provided.

Principal:

The *Learning Support Guidelines (2000, P.39)* outlined the principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the principal's leadership role is central and includes the following;

The school principal should

- Implement and monitor the school's Additional Needs policy on an on-going basis.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme
- allocate time within the school timetable for the SET teachers to plan and consult with class teachers and parents
- inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- Upload all meeting notes to the child's record of parental contact section on Aladdin.
- Inform Class Teacher and /or SET Teachers of any correspondence or meetings with parents (when related to SET matters)

Class Teacher:

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of **all** pupils in his/her class, including those selected for additional support. They should

- implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- create a positive learning environment within the classroom
- differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class
- administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines
- discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SET teachers to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- Upload all meeting notes to the child's record of parental contact section on Aladdin.
- gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- open a Pupil Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support and upload it to the child's record on Aladdin
- develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support and upload the document to Aladdin
- adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session
- co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned

Special Education Teacher (SET)

The SET teacher(s) should:

- familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of need
- assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- Have access to all children on Aladdin on all stages of the continuum of support
- where requested by the class teacher, meet parents to discuss moving a child from classroom support to school support or when referring to an outside agency (all meeting notes to be uploaded to the child's record on Aladdin)
- collaboratively develop School Support Plans for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers at the start of the academic year
- meet with class teachers to review School Support Plans in January/February (parent teacher meeting time)and June to discuss needs and progress and record such meetings under the child's profile on Aladdin
- Meet with class Teachers, Principal parents/guardians and/or external agencies to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus at the start of the academic year and record such meetings under the child's profile on Aladdin
- meet with class teachers to review School Support Plus Plans in December, January / February (parent teacher meeting time)and June to discuss needs and progress and record such meetings under the child's profile on Aladdin
- Provide class teacher with a copy of recommendations from external assessments for children in their class
- update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support and School Support Plus
- provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and / or in-class support basis

- administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- Upload all meeting notes to the child's record of parental contact section on Aladdin.
- liaise with external agencies and NEPS Psychologist about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- Upload all meeting notes to the child's record of outside agency contact section on Aladdin.
- Offer advice and support, to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload
- buying or advising on materials or specialised equipment for SEN children
- provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school Support Plus once a transfer letter has been received

Special Needs Assistants:

The duties of the SNA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills and under the direction of the principal/class teachers, the SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned. (Circular 10/76).

The SNA should

- support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils
- support learning and teaching in the classroom
- attend, where possible, training courses/workshops
- may attend support plan meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, (when necessary)
- ensure the safety of the SEN pupils in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty
- accompany SEN pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate

Role of Parents/Guardians

The central role of parents/guardians of children with SEN is the same as all parents/guardians, i.e to support the work of the school and to optimise teaching and learning opportunities for their child at home. The Continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provides valuable opportunities to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning.

When we identify a child as having additional needs we expect the child's parents/guardians to help us to explore all possibilities to help the child to achieve their potential.

The classroom teacher is the first point of contact for a parent who has concerns about their child.

Parents /guardians can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- sharing any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage
- supporting the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning

- attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET teacher to identify and agree targets for their child
- support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities
- inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage
- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.

- Reading and telling stories to their child/children.
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading.
- Talking positively about school and school work.

- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors/ changes which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- Helping children to develop their organisational skills.

- Helping children to look after school books and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school

Pupils:

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, **as appropriate**:

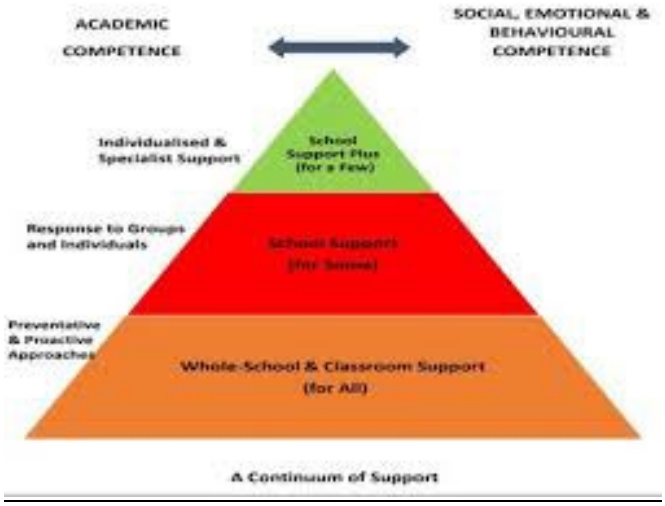
- be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term learning targets
- become familiar with the targets that have been set for them
- develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment

Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs.

We recognise 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 additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.
The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

We identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.



The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

STAGE 1 - CLASSROOM SUPPORT (Class Teacher Role)

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. This level typically begins when a parent or Class teacher who has concerns about an individual pupil. The class teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective Classroom Support and it incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs, which culminate in developing a Student Support File which is uploaded to Aladdin including all meeting notes for further reference.

STAGE 2 - SCHOOL SUPPORT (SET Teacher Role in conjunction with the Class Teacher following on from details in the Classroom Support Plan)

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. If standardised test results and Class teacher observation indicate this to be the case, School Support may, therefore, be required. The problem-solving process at this point involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan, all of the details of which are uploaded to Aladdin including all meeting notes for further reference .

Where progress is such that the child is no longer giving cause for concern, the child will revert to the usual differentiated curriculum available to all children.

STAGE 3 - SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS SUPPORT (SET Teacher Role in conjunction with the Class Teacher)

If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. If interventions at classroom support and school support levels are not enough to fully meet the child's special education needs, a School Support Plus plan is required and is then uploaded to Aladdin including all meeting notes for further reference School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. An assessment may be arranged at this point

from a relevant and suitably qualified professional to provide more information to help the school and parents to meet the needs of the child.

Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does daily for all children. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening, including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupil's support plans

Assessment and Screening Tests:
In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- Junior Infants: Observation, Early Literacy Test
- Senior Infants: Observation, Wordlists, MIST
- 1st class: Observation, Drumcondra Reading & Maths
- 2nd class: Observation, Drumcondra Reading & Maths NRIT 2
- 3rd class: Observation, Drumcondra Reading & Maths
- 4th class Observation, Drumcondra Reading & Maths
- 5th class: Observation, Drumcondra Reading, & Maths & NRIT3
- 6th class: Observation, Drumcondra Reading, & Maths

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore, we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date.

Inventory of Test Materials

These tests are currently stored in the Support Room in Halla Clodagh. Drumcondra tests and manuals are also stored in the Support Room

Screening Tests

Early Literacy Test – Junior Infants

- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) - Senior Infants
- Drumcondra Reading Test - 1st – 6th class
- Drumcondra Maths Test - 1st – 6th class
- New Non- Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) 2nd& 5th classes

Further Testing Materials:

- WIAT

Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period

of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning
We cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

Monitoring Progress

- Classroom Support Plans are reviewed termly (approximately)
- School Support Plans will be reviewed in September/October and January/February, culminating in an end of year review in May/June.
- School Support Plus Plans will be reviewed in September/October and December at the end of Term 1 . Then in February , culminating in an end of year review in May/June.
- Termly Assessments if applicable (teacher designed or from publishers).
- Standardised Tests at end of year (1st – 6th) English and Maths
- The ELT (Early Literacy Test) is administered to all pupils in Junior Infants during the second half of the school year.
- The M.I.S.T. (Middle Infants Screening Test) is administered to all pupils in Senior Infants during the second half of the school year.
- NRIT (Non Reading Intelligence Tests) they are administered each year in term 2 or 3 (2nd Class & 5th Class)
- When a child has been in receipt of a School Support Plan School Support Plus plan for a number of years by the time that they are in the 2nd term of 3rd Class then the WIAT may be administered by the SET teacher to see if there may be a specific area of learning that requires further support.

SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUPPORT

1. **SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS** - Children with identified complex needs by an external professional such as a

- Physical Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Severe/Profound General Learning Disability
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Assessed Syndrome
- Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment
- *Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, bearing in mind the guiding principle that support should be provided "for the needs of pupils withlow achievement rather than those within the average range" DES Learning Support Guidelines*
- *pg.56 Sect 4.2. The guidelines "strongly discourage the practice of including pupils with average attainment".*
- Or, EAL children who join the school

2. SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Prevention and Early Intervention Programme results (Early Literacy Testing MIST, 1st Class Screening)
- Children who score <10th percentile – As directed in the DES Learning-Support Guidelines, priority will be given to pupils who are performing lower than the 10th percentile in English and/or Maths (there is v limited flexibility to support pupils performing above these levels).
- Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are not on or below the 10th percentile in Literacy such as

1. Borderline Mild General Learning Disability
2. Mild General Learning Disability
3. Specific Learning Disability
4. Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
5. Social and Emotional Needs

The Principal and SET Teachers meet to review the allocation of support at the end of the academic year, following SET teacher meetings with Class Teachers. A list of potential children to receive support in the following academic year is created.

The assigning of allocation of support for the upcoming academic year is based on all the above points in the policy . The Principal has the overall responsibility for allocation of support

Timetabling

- timetables are continually reviewed
- the provision of supplementary teaching is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths and English language support where applicable
- where possible, children **do not miss the same subject** each time they are withdrawn
- where possible, children **do not miss music, art or P.E. lessons** when they are withdrawn.
- children participate in **all extracurricular activities** with their peers in the classroom
- interruptions to classes/classrooms are be kept to a minimum.

Health and Safety Issues

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

Supervision/Child Protection

- Where pupils receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both themselves and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SET teacher should collect and return younger children to their classrooms.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

Ratification and Communication

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented from September 2024. It will be reviewed in June 2025 by all staff at Scoil Chaitríona Naofa.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson)