

St. Joseph's National School



INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

St. Joseph's National School is a co-educational, mainstream primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Meath. The school caters for a full cross-section of children and the purpose of this Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective teaching and learning support to all pupils.

The school has the following provisions to cater for children with special educational needs:

- Three classroom teachers
- Two part time Learning Support/Resource Teachers
- One full-time Special Needs Assistant

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL:

St. Joseph's NS, Mulhussey strives to create learning opportunities which will help each child to achieve his/her individual potential. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice, which makes it possible. The provision of a quality system of Learning Support/Resource Teaching is integral to this commitment. 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.

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 – Early Learner Check-lists in Junior Infants and Mist Test 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 enable Special Needs pupils, in so far as possible, to monitor their own learning and strive to become independent learners.
- ✓ To develop a partnership with parents/guardians in order that their knowledge, views and experience can assist us in assessing and providing for their children
- ✓ To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policies on Special Education needs for these pupils.
- ✓ To ensure collaboration with the Department of Education & Skills in order to take effective action on behalf of children with special needs
- ✓ To monitor our effectiveness in achieving the above objectives.

INCLUSION:

'Special Educational Needs' is defined in Ed for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 – *"A special educational need refers to a person who has a restriction in capacity to participate in and benefit from education due to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition..."*

- ✓ Exceptionally able pupils are not specifically referred to in this policy though in St. Joseph's N.S. Mulhussey, we endeavour to differentiate the Primary School Curriculum so as to enable all pupils to access their full potential.
- ✓ Practical steps are in place to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included in the life of the school and the classroom e.g. circle time, P.E., GAA, talent shows, school performances, sports days, swimming etc.
- ✓ School employees are made aware of the special educational needs of pupils and strategies to include them in the life of the school. There are copies of The Draft Curriculum for Pupils with Mild Learning Disabilities available to staff.

ENROLMENT:

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education For Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that 'A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs'.

Parents are required to notify the Principal of their child's special needs in advance of enrolment through. The BOM will request a copy of the child's medical or psychological report.

No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

IDENTIFICATION OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- Pupils with Special Education needs are identified as those outlined in Appendix 1 of Special Education 02/05 and those with the following high incidences – borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability and specific learning such as disability, dyspraxia, ADD, ADHD.
- Children who have physical difficulties, e.g. deafness, sight impairment, cerebral palsy are usually allocated resource hours.
- Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be referred for assessment and may be allocated resource hours.
- The school will adhere to the Staged Approach to assessment, identification and programme planning as outlined in Appendix 3 page of Special Education Circular 02/05 and stated further on in this policy.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of the Special Education Policy in the school
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided
- Budget for on-going support for Professional Development in Learning Support for staff

The role of the Principal is to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Special Education in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children

- The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision.
- He will work closely with the SEN co-ordinator and will keep the BoM informed about the working of this policy.
- He will encourage members of staff to participate in training to help them meet the objectives of this policy.
- In consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, he will liaise with the SENO with regard to support hours and is responsible for personnel appointments.

The Special Needs Co-ordinator 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 SNA with regard to supporting children with special needs
- Liaising with parents of children with special needs
- Monitoring and evaluating SEN provision

The role of the Learning Support Teacher is to:

- Develop an Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents
- Maintain planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Learning Support
- To provide teaching in literacy, or maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school's selection criteria.
- Contribute to the development of policy on Special Education at whole school level
- Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Learning Support room
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychologist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapists, etc to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support

- Track the progress pupils who have discontinued Learning Support.
- Provide a report on every pupil receiving supplementary teaching in early June each year.

The Role of the Resource Teacher is to:

- provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having difficulties.
- Developing an individual education plan for each pupil in consultation with other partners in education
- Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress
- Setting specific, measurable, time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal
- Direct teaching of the child, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class
- Team teaching when the child concerned will derive benefit from it
- Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, ICT and other related matters
- Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
- Meeting with other relevant professionals, in the child's interests, e.g. psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teachers.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan the class teacher should:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and Maths by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the Learning Support Teacher in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities

Special Needs Assistants (SNA)

- The role of the Special Needs Assistant is to assist in the care of pupils with disabilities and to work under the guidance of the classroom teacher and learning support/resource teacher, in a non-teaching role.
- Their duties are assigned in accordance with circular 07/02 of the DES by the principal and in such a way as to support the child's right to acquire personal independence skills.

All staff is fully aware of the content of this policy and of the procedures described below. Appropriate in-service is made available through the Education Centre and SESS

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible, the following strategies are being implemented:

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to languages development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English
- Delay in introducing the formal process of reading as per the Revised Curriculum
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of Maths, e.g. our whole school approach to the Language of Tables and Subtraction
- Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings and the delivery of programmes for parents e.g. Forward Together.
- Whole school implementation of the Paired Reading Programme with the cooperation of parents, and monitoring of reading through the use of reading records.
- Class based early intervention by the Learning Support Teacher resulting in the provision of additional support. Learning Support teacher will teach a weaker Senior Infant group while the class teacher will teach the remainder of the class.
- On-going observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher in consultation with Learning Support Teacher.

EARLY INTERVENTION

The principle of '*early intervention*' applies to pupils from the Junior and Senior Infant classes.

- It is intensive in terms of the frequency of lessons (daily where possible) and the pace of instruction.
- They include a strong focus on the development of oral language, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and further development of language and comprehension.
- They emphasise the development of phonemic awareness and a range of other word identification skills.
- They stress the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- They engage pupils in frequent supervised oral and silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty and monitor their comprehension of these texts.
- It may take place in the classroom or learning support room/resource room depending on the group involved.

STAGED APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Stage One

If a class teacher (or parent) has concerns about the following aspects of a child's development and they should discuss their concerns with the child's parents.

- 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 teacher should then administer screening measures, which may include screening checklists and profiles for pupils in senior infants and first class, standardised, norm referenced tests for older pupils and behavioural checklists were appropriate.

The class teacher should then draw up a short, simple plan for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The success of the Classroom Support Plan should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If this strategy does not work at the end of a half term, then the teacher will consult with the SEN team about the desirability of intervention at stage 2

Stage Two

In cases where the Record of Differentiated Support indicates that progress has not been made, or if the results of standardised tests* (MIST, Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, Sigma T, Micra-T) and teacher observation indicate this to be the case, intervention in the form of a support teacher will be accessed. The pupil will be referred to the learning support teacher/resource teacher, with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing.

*Please note

- It is our policy to prioritise learning support to the children scoring below the 12th percentile rank in Literacy and Numeracy.

If the diagnostic assessment suggests that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this should be arranged. Again, class teachers will discuss their concerns with the child's parents. The action taken will be as follows:

- The class teacher and support teacher interpret the assessment outcomes and consider the most appropriate forms of intervention
- They will differentiate the curriculum in specific areas with achievable goals to be implemented by the class teacher and support teacher
- If there are others in the class with similar difficulties in one or more of the specific areas, then a group educational plan will be implemented
- These programmes will be planned and recorded on a weekly planning record, and reviewed and updated every term
- While every effort will be made to allow the SEN group/individual to remain included in class, there may be a need to work part of the programme in the support room with the support teacher or class teacher.
- 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.

- If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews and adaptations to the learning programme, then it may be necessary to provide interventions at stage 3.

In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases the pupil's needs should, with parents' permission, be discussed with the relevant NEPS psychologist and/or the case should be referred to the clinical services of the Health Service Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment stage 3.

Stage Three

Where the pupil fails to respond to Stage 1 & Stage 2 intervention the class teacher with the support teacher and SEN co-ordinator will seek advice from the SENO, in consultation with the child's parents.

1. A psychological assessment will be arranged (see Education for Persons with Disability Act 2004). Other outside agencies may need to be contacted, who will advise on a range of provision including IEP targets and strategies. The triggers for intervention for Resource could be that,
 - a. despite receiving an individualised programme the child; Makes little or no progress over a long period of time
 - b. Continues to work at Primary Curriculum levels substantially below that of children of a similar age
 - c. Continues to have literacy and numeracy difficulties
 - d. Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's learning, or that of other children, despite an appropriate behaviour management programme and IEP
 - e. Has sensory and/or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service
 - f. Has an on-going communication or relationship difficulty that prevents social development, and act as a barrier to learning.
2. When the special education needs of the child has been confirmed by the psychologist, an application for resource hours will be forwarded to the SENO.
3. The SENO will determine whether the child falls into the category of lower incidence or high incidence. Lower incidences will be awarded resource hours,

while the school makes provision for high incidence cases under the weighted system i.e. General Allocation

4. If it is felt by the psychologist that a child has care needs, a special needs assistant may be applied for
5. In circumstances where a child uses specialised equipment, consultants will be required to demonstrate how the equipment is to be used to at the SNA and either the class or support teacher. One of the SEN co-ordinators must also be present
6. If the psychologist recommends an exemption from Irish, the Principal will see to this under guidance from the Department of Education & Skills.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

IEP's are formulated in a process of collaboration between class teacher, SENO, parents and outside agencies. These IEPs, which employ a small – steps approach, feature significantly in the provision that we make in school. By breaking down the existing levels of attainment into finely graded targets, we ensure that the child experiences success. The strategies set out in the IEP will, as far as possible, be implemented in the normal classroom setting. The management of the IEP strategies will be the responsibility of the class teacher, support teacher and the SEN co-ordinator.

The plan includes:

- The nature and degree of the child's abilities and skills
- The degree and nature of the child's special needs.
- The child's present level of performance.
- The services to be provided
- The goals, which the child is to achieve over a period of half a year

REVIEW of IEP

The SEN co-ordinator will ensure that the review is conducted at the end of January and early June). The class teacher consults with the support teacher, the child (and SNA if appointed). They agree on the expected outcomes of the IEP. A draft copy is formulated and sent home to the child's parents. The parents are invited to attend a meeting to discuss or make recommendations to the draft review if they so wish. Again, outside agencies may play a part in formulating the final copy. The review will be recorded on the IEP Review form.

Depending on progress, it may be decided that the child remains in receipt of resource teaching. Where progress is satisfactory, and where the child is consistently achieving targets over the stated time, a decision will be made to revert

to School Action. The review in May will be to formulate an IEP, which will be part of the plan for the next teacher in September. It will be carried out as outlined above.

INDIVIDUAL PROFILE & LEARNING PROGRAMME (IPLP)

The IPLP will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines issued by the DES in 2000. The plan will address the pupil's full range of needs and will include:

- Details from class teacher
- Assessment results
- Other relevant information (e.g. reports from other agencies)
- Learning strengths and attainments
- Priority learning needs
- Learning targets
- Class based learning activities (if necessary)
- Supplementary support activities (including ICT)
- Home support activities

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback.

TIMETABLING

- The provision of supplementary teaching may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition
- In-class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the class teacher and learning support teacher
- If a pupil is receiving support from a resource teacher to address other needs such as behavioural problems, sensory difficulties etc it may be appropriate to provide supplementary teaching in the area of Numeracy & Literacy as well. The learning support and resource teacher will work together as support teachers to meet the needs of the pupils with learning difficulties.

LIAISING WITH PARENTS

- Effective communication with parents is critically important to the success of the Special Education policy.
- Teachers will take every opportunity to make parents familiar with the purpose and procedures of the school's Special Education team.
- Parents will be encouraged to support their child's learning through
 - Developing children's oral language through discussion

- Motivating children to read more and support shared/paired reading programmes, supporting school initiatives such as Reading challenges and reading passports.
- Supporting children's maths programmes through participating in maths activities such as, counting, measuring, weighing and maths challenge activities and projects.

RECORD KEEPING AND RETENTION OF DATA

- SEN files are maintained by the SEN team and stored securely in a locked cabinet in the support teaching room for the duration of the pupil's attendance in the school. These files include
 - Individual or Group Learning Plans
 - Individual Education Plans
 - Short-term planning and programme record
 - Attendance Records
 - Checklists
 - Teacher designed tasks and tests
 - Samples of written work
 - Reading analysis records

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

- An annual review and revision of Special Education policy will take place at the end of the school year. The BOM will ensure that SEN provision is an integral part of the school development plan and will evaluate the effectiveness and success of this policy by monitoring:
 - The standards obtained by children with special needs
 - The number of children at each of the three stages: Differentiation within Class, School Action and Resource
 - The level and pattern of help (i.e. average time allocated and the balance of in-class and withdrawal support)
 - Views of parents
 - Visits from specialist teachers
 - Staff views on in-service
 - Children's views

A comprehensive review and revision will take place every three years in accordance with the views of the Board, the principal teacher, the learning-support

teacher/resource teachers. The outcomes should lead to a revision of the school plan and changes in specific practices as appropriate.

This policy was ratified by Board of Management in _____

To be reviewed again by June 2016