



SEN Policy 2024

Revision. 5

Table of Contents:

No.	Item	Page
1	Context	3
2	Aims of SEN Support	4
3	Principles of SEN Support	5
4	Roles & Responsibilities	6
5	Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy	11
6	Selection Criteria	14
7	EAL	14
8	ASD Class	16
9	Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching	18
10	Monitoring Progress	18
11	Recordkeeping	18
12	Liaising with Parents/Communicating Information	19
13	Timetabling	19
14	Monitoring & Reviewing the SEN Policy	19
15	SEN Policy Success Criteria	20
16	Transitioning to Secondary School	20
17	List of Appendices	21
18	Bibliography	45

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy 2023

St. Mary's N.S. Cobh

Implementation and Review

The implementation of this policy commenced in September 2008. It was reviewed in June 2009, February 2011 and September 2015.

This policy on Special Education Needs Provision was updated in 2024 by the Special Education Team and the Principal, and in consultation with the staff and the Board of Management. The policy was revised in line with the Education Act (1998), the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Equal Status Act (2000), the Disability Bill (2002) and the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (E.P.S.E.N) 2004. The school adheres to the terms of current circulars on special education provision published by the Department of Education and Skills including the most recent Circular 13/2017- on the New Model of Special Education Needs.

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 Section 1 (EPSEN), Section 1, defines 'special educational needs' as "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".

1. Context

St. Mary's is an All Girls' Primary School catering for children from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds from Junior Infants to 6th Class, and is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cloyne.

We have one Autism Class with a Class Teacher and two SNAs. The children who attend here have an ASD diagnosis and recommendation from an educational psychologist that they access an Autism class in order to help them reach their full potential. This placement '....in the special school/special class is subject to continual review by the school at a minimum once per year to ensure that it continues to be the most appropriate educational setting.'(as per NCSE form 7)The allocation of both Special Education Teachers (SET's) and Special Needs Assistants (SNA's) is subject to review.

The term *special educational needs* (SEN) is broad and includes children who have difficulty acquiring literacy and/or numeracy skills, children who have English as an additional language, and children who have diagnosed disabilities. In this document, SEN can be taken to be special educational needs in this broad sense.

Our SEN team encompass what were previously termed *Learning Support Teachers, Resource Teachers* and teachers for children with English as an Additional Language (*EAL teachers*). In this document we will use the term Special Education Teachers (SETs) for all of the SEN teachers.

The policy is based on *Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational*

Needs in Mainstream Schools (Department of Education & Skills, 2017).

The purpose of this policy document is to provide information to school personnel and parents on how the school organises provision for teaching and support of children with special educational needs.

2. Aims of SEN Support

In St Mary's, we value the individuality of all of our children. We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that our school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

Inclusion

'Addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities and removing barriers within and from education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school.' (Winter & O' Raw, 2010)

Our school is committed to helping our pupils to achieve their full potential. The provision of a quality system of SEN support teaching is integral to this commitment.

Through the implementation of our SEN policy we aim to:

- support the inclusion of children with SEN in our school
- develop positive attitudes about school and learning in our children
- involve parents in supporting their children
- ensure that the Staged Approach/Continuum of Support is implemented (see below)
- optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable children with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school (*Guidelines for Schools*, p15)
- support children to participate in the full curriculum
- support appropriate differentiation in the classroom
- support children's development both socially and emotionally
- support children's behavioural needs
- enable children to understand themselves as learners
- promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for our pupils
- promote early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.

3. Principles of SEN Support

The provision of SEN support in our school is based on the following principles:

1. Quality of teaching and learning.
2. Effective whole-school policies.
3. Direction of resources towards children in greatest need.
4. Implementation of a staged approach to support provision at Class Support/School Support/School Support Plus levels.
5. Provision of the model(s) of intervention appropriate for the child, including the withdrawal model, in-class support model, individual or group work, etc.

Continuum of Support – Staged Approach

Stage 1. Classroom Support

If a class teacher has concerns about the academic, physical, social or emotional development of a child, the class teacher will then construct a simple, individual plan of support to be implemented in the normal class setting. (see appendix 7a) This plan will form the 1st instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support and will be based on screening measures administered by the teacher. The plan will be reviewed. If the plan is working well for the child it may be decided to continue with it. If insufficient progress is made and the child is still having difficulty, then Stage 2 is implemented.

Stage 2. School Support

If further intervention is deemed necessary (after further diagnostic testing by the Support teacher) and the child is to receive supplementary teaching at School Support Level, then a letter of consent will be sent to the parents/guardians by the SET in question. (letter kept in SEN folder as part of the pupil file). The class teacher and SET draw up a plan of appropriate learning outcomes for the child (see appendix 7b). This plan will form the 2nd instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support and will be implemented in conjunction with the child's Classroom Support Plan. The child's parents/guardians will be informed of this plan, invited to contribute and asked to sign it. This plan will be reviewed at the end of each term and if significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to involve outside agencies such as NEPS or the HSE. (Stage 3)

Stage 3. School Support Plus

The school may formally request a consultation from other professionals outside the school in respect of children who fail to make sufficient progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme, as appropriate. Such professional advice is sought from psychologists, speech

therapists, occupational therapists etc. This is carried out in consultation with, and with the permission of the child's parents/guardians.

Following the consultation, the class teacher, SET, parents and outside professional (if available) will draw up a School Support Plus Plan for the child. (see appendix 7c). This plan will form the 3rd instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support.

In the case of children identified at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at Stage 3 will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such children and primary responsibility for the child will remain with the class teacher in consultation with the designated Support teacher.

Note: The 'Log of Actions' in the Continuum of Support will be added to as appropriate. These additions will be made by the class teacher and the SET.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all the school community: The Board of Management, the Principal, Parents, Class Teachers, SETs, SNAs, Pupils and external bodies and agencies.

Board of Management

The Board of Management will:

- be informed of the reviewed SEN policy and any updates to it.
- ratify the SEN policy.
- ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation and teaching resources are available.
- provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to children in receipt of SEN support.

Role of the Principal

The Principal will have overall responsibility for the school's provision for children with SEN as per *Learning Support Guidelines* p38.

At the beginning of each school year, the Principal, together with the SEN Coordinator, will meet with the NEPS psychologist to formulate a plan for the year, including assessments and supports for pupils, and professional supports for teachers.

SEN Coordinator - duties include the following as delegated by the Principal:

The SEN Coordinator will promote a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in relation to the organisation, co-ordination and management of Special Education Needs Provision as a core resource area in the school community.

The Coordinator will meet with the Principal on a regular basis to agree SEN pathways, support, resources, outside agency communications, caseload and any other items for escalation.

The Coordinator will also communicate with staff regarding SEN and arrange meetings as required.

Role of Class Teachers

The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all children in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. (Guidelines 2017) "*Mainstream class teachers have first line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes*".

The Class Teacher will -

- provide effective teaching and learning opportunities.
- support the identification of learning needs through differentiation.
- provide Classroom Support/Stage 1 and draw up a classroom support plan.
- record actions in the Log of Actions.
- communicate with parents/guardians.
- collaborate with the Support Teacher in the development of a Support Plan for each child who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support/School Support Plus Level on the Continuum, by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.

A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and cooperation between the Class Teacher and the SET. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of support plans.

Role of Special Education Teachers (SETs)

The central roles of the SET will be to

- a) support the class teacher in optimising teaching and learning opportunities
- b) provide specialised teaching to those children with identified special educational needs.

SET responsibilities will consist of both teaching and non-teaching duties.

These will include:

- Providing supplementary teaching commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.
- Researching the child's learning difficulty/SEN, to become familiar with their needs and their preferred learning methods.
- Being familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs (Guidelines 2017 p.13).
- Administering a range of formal and informal assessments and maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments.
- Developing a Support Plan for each child who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with Class Teachers and Parents.
- Reviewing the progress of each child and recording it on the child's Support Plan.

- Maintaining a Progress Record/Reflection as part of the Cuntas Míósúil, for each individual or group of children withdrawn for support teaching.
- Creating a timetable and planning framework and communication of same to the principal and SEN post holder.
- Logging actions in the Support Plan on Aladdin.
- Delivering Station Teaching.
- Supporting Diagnostic Testing-BIAP/MIST/NNRIT/Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test.
- Assisting the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of children for supplementary teaching.
- Contributing to the development of SEN policy.
- Meeting with parents of children who are in receipt of support teaching where a concern is ongoing.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc., and implementing suitable recommendations, wherever possible.

Role of Special Needs Assistants (SNA's)

The role of an SNA will be to carry out duties based on the care needs of the child. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature. (Circular 0030/2014)

Primary Care Associated Tasks (SNA Tasks) may include:

- Assistance with feeding
- Administration of medicine.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds, and at recreation, assembly and dispersal times.
- Assisting children while at play as appropriate.
- Provision of non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a child from a classroom when essential.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for children with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties.

The secondary care support tasks may include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another.

- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans (PPP) for children with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the child concerned and the review of such plans.
- Assistance with maintaining a journal and care-monitoring system for children including details of attendance and care needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities.
- Assistance with enabling a child to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of appropriate personnel.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

Role of Parents/Guardians

“Parents through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child’s learning programmes” (Learning-Support Guidelines, p.52). “Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs” (2017 Guidelines: p. 23).

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.

Supporting the work of the school by e.g.:

- Talking positively about school and school work.
- Availing of real-life situations to discuss the importance of language, literacy and mathematics.
- Supporting your child’s homework
- Modelling involvement in language, literacy and mathematical activities at home by engaging in and talking about these activities.
- Working on agreed targets at home.
- Keeping the Class Teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child’s learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home or inform the school of any contact/developments regarding Outside Agencies.
- Working co-operatively with the school to improve the child’s outcomes.
- Adhering to Code of Behaviour, Homework Policy.
- Send paperwork and forms via the class teacher.
- Parents will follow through recommendations from ‘Outside Agencies’

Role of Children

The role of the child with SEN will be that of active participant in their own learning; the extent and nature of this will depend on their strengths and needs.

Role of External Bodies and Agencies

Our school liaises with external professionals including NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive), CDNT, Tusla and the Inspectorate.

We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and education services. We therefore liaise with, and contribute to, health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and facilitate meetings between parents and various support services. We also endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support as far as is practicable.

5. Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

Early intervention programmes may be provided by the Class Teacher and/or the SET, in accordance with the Staged Approach (NEPS Continuum). Collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the SETs, should identify children who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of children for early intervention programmes at Classroom Support/School Support level.

Early intervention programmes depend on resources and may include –

- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings.
- Structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of children in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Careful development of phonics skills and oral language skills using eg. Phonics programme before formal reading of words and books.
- Active learning programme for all Junior Infant children with specific emphasis on oral language development, underpinned by the principles of the Aistear programme and the new Language Curriculum.
- Early intervention literacy and language support programme (Guided Reading (CAPER) in Junior Infant to 2nd classes).
- Withdrawal of children to a support room, in-class support, team teaching, group work and individual support will be provided, as appropriate and if it is in a child's best interest.
- Decodable reading to take place in Junior and Senior Infants.
- Use of the Wellbeing Programme 'Weaving Wellbeing' *as a means of preventing the emergence of behavioural difficulties*; (2017 Guidelines, p.15).

- Differentiation of the curriculum by the mainstream class teacher to cater for individual strengths and needs.
- Implementation of an English language programme for Junior Infant and Senior Infant children who have English as an additional language, with emphasis on basic vocabulary.

Policy regarding Permissions; Screening; Assessment; Caseload; Selection; Allocating Additional Teaching Supports; Time Management and Review.

Parental Permissions:

Written parental permissions are required for children to receive School Support / School Support Plus.

Initial Screening:

Class Teachers will carry out initial screening tests and standardised assessments. The Support Teachers will administer further screening tests, if deemed necessary.

Diagnostic Assessment:

The Support Teacher will discuss each class's recorded results with the Class Teacher, and carry out further screening tests and/or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary. The results of these tests will inform the caseload selection process. The Principal Teacher and post holder will be kept informed at all times during this process.

Caseload Decisions:

Large caseloads have led to a dilution of SEN support provision, and this is to be avoided, as is the inclusion of average-achieving pupils on the Support Teachers caseload. The Staged Approach (Appendix 1), together with current guidelines (2017), and DES Circulars will inform all decision-making regarding the Support Teachers' caseloads.

Standardised Assessment:

Standardised Assessments provide us with standardised information on a child's ability level and is one of the factors used by the Principal, SEN Coordinator, class teachers and support teachers in identifying children who need support and intervention. Some other factors in deciding which children need support are the teacher's own observations from knowing the child, class tests and corrections along with reports from other professionals.

The following are carried out annually in May/June from First to Sixth Class in the areas of Numeracy, Literacy and Spellings.

- Drumcondra Primary Reading Test – May (First to Sixth Classes)

- SIGMA-T Maths Test – May (First to Sixth Classes)
- Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test(DPST) – June (First to Sixth Class)

Screening Tests: The following tests are used to screen in St Mary’s:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| • Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test (First Class). | September |
| • BIAP (Junior Infants). | January |
| • NNRIT (Non-Reading Intelligence Test) (First and Fifth Classes). | February |
| • MIST (Senior Infants). | March |

Other Tests Available include:

- Jackson Phonics
- Quest – Reading and numeracy ages 6 – 8
- Dyslexia Portfolio Aston Index
- Neale Analysis
- YARC
- Running Records - Reading Fluency Test – number of words read in one minute minus the number of errors made
- PEP 3
- VB-MAPP
- PSAK-EAL Children

Tests are administered by the class teacher and support teacher.

Exclusion from Tests

Every effort will be made for all pupils to attempt the standardised test for their level. In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be exempt if their ability is such that they cannot attempt the test.

Recording:

- Test results will be recorded electronically (via the school data system ‘Aladdin’).
- A class score sheet is generated and given to the principal.
- Results of tests are tracked from year to year using percentile scores and recorded on file by the relevant SEN Teachers.

Storage:

- Test results are stored digitally, using the school data system ‘Aladdin’.
- Test booklets are stored for 12 months in the pupil’s folder in a secure filing cabinet (Photocopier Room) until replaced by the following year’s test. The test booklets are then shredded.
- Results are kept electronically as per St Mary’s Data Protection & Record Keeping Policy and kept for a minimum of 7 years after the child’s 18th birthday.

Reporting of Results:

- Results of standardised tests are reported to parents via the end of year School Report Card.
- Results are given in terms of STen Scores and are accompanied by the teacher's interpretation of their meaning.
- The principal sends a copy of the end-of-year report card (including the information from standardised tests) to the primary or second-level school to which a student transfers.
- The school will report aggregate standardised test results for 2nd, 4th and 6th Class (via Esi-Net) once annually to the Department of Education & Skills.
- At the end of each year Class Teachers meet with the Support Teacher for their level to discuss the results of the tests and the strengths and weaknesses of each child. This feeds into the SEN caseload for the following year.

Test Analysis:

Test results will be analysed by the Class Teachers and the Special Education Teachers. These results will be used to both monitor the child's progress and to inform classroom planning.

The Class Teacher and Support Teacher review the Standardised tests to see if there appears to be a marked discrepancy between perceived ability and actual performance. (NRIT Standardised Score and Drumcondra Standardised scores). The SEN Coordinator is informed of same.

6. Selection Criteria

The selection criteria in St Mary's is guided by the following principle:

"Pupils with the greatest levels of need should have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils should be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity and support. "(DES 2017, p 5)

The following criteria will be used by our school to select children for supplementary teaching in line with the new model of Special Education Teaching (Circular 13/2017).

NOTE: These selection criteria are an aspiration and are dependent on the school's capacity to cater for these needs.

Selection criteria is a dynamic process and depends on factors such as pupil development, pupil needs, assessment results, etc. The decision to provide or stop support is based on factors such as Class Teachers, SET and Principals professional judgements and also the schools capacity to provide beneficial supports.

1. Children scoring at or below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy & Maths. (If capacity allow children at or below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy & Maths).
2. Children with significant special educational needs as per (Appendix 1 Definitions of Special Educational Needs NCSE-A Booklet for Parents) See appendix 10. We will endeavour to provide support to pupils as per the recommendations indicated in their professional reports subject to the school's capacity and staff expertise.
3. Children who need Additional English Language support. (EAL)

4. Early intervention in literacy supported by booster sessions – infant class children who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded interventions in it. At infant level where standardised tests are not available we aim to ensure those with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support based on teacher observation, checklists, assessment results and school's capacity.

In St. Mary's we recognise the importance of supporting pupil's wellbeing (physical and emotional) and where resources allow we endeavour to provide targeted support in this area.

7. EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE)

A number of our children have particular learning and assessment requirements, which are linked to their progress in learning English as an additional language. We encourage all our children to achieve to the highest possible standards. We do this through taking account of each child's life experience and needs. In general children who are receiving language support have skills and knowledge about language similar to Irish children speaking English.

Organisation of EAL Language Support

Recent Department of Education & Science Guidelines have directed that specific Language Support be subsumed within general resource allocation. "Schools now have the autonomy on how to deploy resource between language support and learning support depending on their specific needs". (Circular 07/2012). Decisions regarding language teaching for EAL students will be made on a yearly basis with due regard given to the needs of students and available resources.

Staff Role and Responsibilities

The teaching of English as an Additional Language and the celebration of ethnic and cultural diversity is a collaborative responsibility shared by all including: Parents, Children, The Board of Management, Principal, Class teachers and Special Education teachers.

Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his/her class including those in receipt of EAL support. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan for EAL support, the class teacher should:

- Work in collaboration with the SET to identify the language needs of the individual child.
- Set learning targets at an appropriate level and differentiate the classroom programmes for the EAL child in keeping with the agreed targets and activities.
- Where possible, incorporate visuals into daily lessons to maximise the involvement of children with English as a second language.
- Place emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum.
- Maintain lines of communication between parents, class teacher and EAL/SET teacher.

- Promote the self-esteem and confidence of EAL pupils by ensuring that all languages of pupils in the classroom are visible, heard and respected.

Role of the SET in teaching EAL Pupils:

The responsibility of the SET is to deliver a English language programme which is based on the primary curriculum and which prepares and supports the pupil in accessing classroom learning and in socialising with peers. “The principle objective of the language support programme is to integrate the student as quickly as possible into all mainstream learning and activities of the school.” (Up and Away 2006 pg 20).

Recording of Students’ Progress

EAL Support Plans are attached to student files on Aladdin. A hard copy of plans and assessments is also kept in the pupil’s SEN Folder.

Assessment and Review

When new EAL pupils arrive to the school, a period of adjustment and integration into her new environment takes place before any formal testing begins.

An interview with parents to establish the child’s proficiency in her first language is an important element of this initial assessment.

Assessments used with EAL pupils are taken from The Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK).

Standardised Testing:

In general, EAL pupils sit the yearly standardised tests.

Decisions re: standardised testing for EAL pupils will follow the most up to date guidelines from the DES.

8. ASD Class

St Mary’s has one autism class, providing education within a mainstream setting for children with a diagnosis of autism and who meet the enrolment criteria.

According to the NCSE, ‘Special Classes are part of a continuum of educational provision that enables students with more complex special educational needs to be educated, in smaller class groups, within their local mainstream schools. They offer a supportive learning environment to students who are unable to access the curriculum in a mainstream class, even with support, for most or all of their school day.’

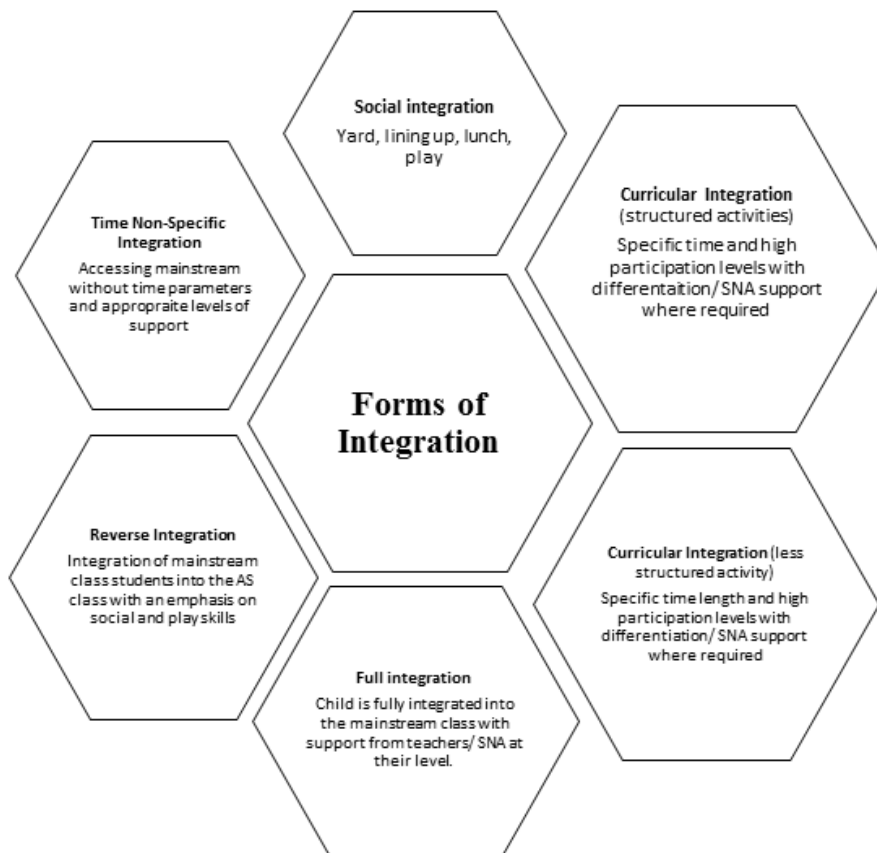
APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

The children in the autism class will access an education based on the Primary School Curriculum,

adapted according to their individual needs and capabilities through carefully planned differentiation and appropriate teaching methodologies. Many teaching approaches including play-based learning, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), TEACCH, Blue Breaks, Social Stories and Sensory Regulation are used.

APPROACHES TO INCLUSION

The primary aim of the autism class is to provide an education to children with autism which includes integration with mainstream classes. Children in the autism class will have opportunities to learn alongside peers in the mainstream classroom environment as much as is possible. There will be agreement between the autism class teacher and the mainstream class teacher and parents on the educational purpose of integration to ensure it is meaningful and beneficial to the child. The level of SNA involvement will vary according the changing needs of the child at the discretion of the teachers involved along with the Principal and in consultation with the parents. All children take part in whole school activities as suits their needs.



Strategies used to help facilitate inclusion include:

- Similar visuals and visual schedules across both autism class and main class setting.

- SNA as a facilitator in the transition and/or integration of the child in the mainstream classroom is invaluable.
- Adherence to timetables/schedules. When changes do occur both teachers should communicate same in advance to avoid unsettling the child.
- Use of social stories.
- Differentiation where possible in the main classroom.
- Scheduled meetings between teachers (Autism Class and Mainstream Class) to discuss strategies.

Children are included in the mainstream class according to their ability and current need. Sometimes it may be appropriate to reduce integration dependent on the needs of the child. The autism class teacher, mainstream teacher, principal and parent will have input in regard to the form of integration.

9. Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching:

- At the end of each instructional block/term, the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the child's class teacher and where appropriate, the child's parents/guardians.
- A decision will be made regarding their continued level of support and revised targets will be set in their Support Plan.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when satisfactory progress has been made and targets have been met.
- The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children who are performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support.

10. Monitoring Progress:

- The Support Review Record on the Continuum of Support will be completed by the SET in collaboration with the Class Teacher. This will be carried out by the end of February. The completed review will be saved in Aladdin (our school Administration System).
- Weekly Tests if applicable (eg. Spellings for Me/Tables).
- Termly Assessments if applicable (teacher designed or from publishers) e.g. Planet Maths
- Standardised Tests at end of year (1st – 6th) English and Maths.
- Junior Infant -Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)
- Senior Infant end of year test –Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST).
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the children in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.

11. Record Keeping:

SEN pupils have two folders, a Pupil Folder (photocopier room) and an SEN Folder (with SET)

- Class Teachers will keep a record of teacher designed tests, end of term tests and checklists.

- A Pupil Folder for each child in the class is kept in a locked filing cabinet in the photocopying room. This folder contains Standardised Test booklets, NRIT test paper, reports from outside agencies and any relevant correspondence relating to the child.
- Diagnostic Assessments and other checklists administered by the SET will be kept in the child's SEN folder.
- Continuum of Support documents for Children with SEN are kept in the child's SEN folder.
- Personal Pupil Plans for children with SNA access are attached with the child's SEN Folder.
- Psychological Reports that are active at any given time are kept in the child's Pupil folder.
- Results of Completed Standardised Tests will be uploaded to Aladdin.
- End of Year School Report will be issued to parents/guardians in June. These reports are saved in Aladdin.
- At the end of each month, Cuntas Míosúil to be uploaded on to G Suite and a hardcopy provided to the Principal. These reports outline the work undertaken by the support teacher with groups or individual children and a reflection.

12. Liaising with Parents/Communicating Information

- Permission for SEN support is sought at the beginning of the year or before withdrawal.
- SET, Class Teacher and parents agree a School Support Plan for the child.
- SET liaises with parents of children in receipt of supplementary teaching to demonstrate methodologies that could be useful at home to further the child's learning.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning. Activities are organised in St Marys throughout the year to support this eg. CAPER, Maths Week, Science Week etc.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held before October midterm for Junior Infants to 6th Class.
- SEN reviews are held before the midterm and also before the end of February.
- An information meeting is held for the parents of incoming Junior Infants in September.
- An end-of-year report is sent home in June each year. Opportunities to discuss this report are made available before the end of term.
- Information is communicated regularly on school website, termly newsletter and through social media.

13. Timetabling

- Supplementary teaching is in addition to a child's regular class programme in English and Maths, in so far as is practicable.
- Co-teaching, where two teachers work together to plan, organise, instruct and make assessments on the same group of students, sharing the same classroom can operate during English and Maths times in class. If deemed more beneficial to the group being taught by the Support Teacher, they can be withdrawn to a quiet space.
- In so far as is practicable, children should not miss out on the same curricular area each time they receive supplementary teaching.
- The Support Teaching Team will review the timetable at the end of each instructional term/block and adjust as necessary.
- A daily slot is timetabled from 11.45 - 12.30 for station teaching.

14. Monitoring and Reviewing the SEN Policy

- The Principal and Deputy Principal will monitor and review this policy. This review will be initiated by the SEN Co-ordinator.
- Updates will be made and ratified by the BOM.
- The contents of the policy are to be made available to the whole school community.

15. SEN Policy Success Criteria

A whole school approach to the implementation of our SEN policy will:

- ensure that children with SEN gain access to a broad, balanced curriculum and have opportunity of access to an appropriate education.
- develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning among our pupils.
- improve standards of academic performance and achievement.
- enhance parental involvement in supporting their child's learning.
- increase collaboration between school personnel.

The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through:

- feedback from teachers, children and parents/guardians
- child's achievements and ongoing analysis of child's academic performance
- Achievement of personal targets.

16. Transitioning to Secondary School

The school uses the NCCA developed suite of materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools. The materials are presented under the umbrella title of Education Passport and include:

6th Class Report Card

My Profile Sheet (for children)

My Child's Profile (for parents)

A Special Educational Needs Summary Form is included to support the sharing of information for children with identified learning needs.

In St Mary's we use a padlet which includes a suite of resources for teachers, parents and pupils.

<https://padlet.com/stmarysncobh/transition-to-secondary-school-87bpg06ros1nsyyd>

17. List of Appendices.

Appendix 1. The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning (Appendix 3 of Circular 02/05).

Appendix 2. The 2017 Guidelines presentation of the NEPS Continuum of Support levels of support.

Appendix 3. Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) template.

Appendix 4. Transition from Primary to Post-Primary School.

Appendix 5. Table 1: from the 2017 Guidelines. Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process.

Appendix 6. Template: Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework.

Appendix 7. Educational Planning (2017 Guidelines).

- Classroom Plan
- School Support Plan
- School Support Plan +

Appendix 8. Appendix 1 from the 2017 Guidelines: Target-setting as part of the problem-solving framework.

Appendix 9. Table 2: from the 2017 Guidelines Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Appendix 10. NCSE-Children with Special Educational Needs (A Booklet For Parents) -Appendix 1

Appendix 1.

The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning (Appendix 3 of DES Sp Ed Circular 02/05).

Stage I

A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. 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 where 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 concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the special education support team or the learning support/resource teacher in the school may be consulted about the desirability of intervention at stage II.

Stage II

If intervention is considered necessary at stage II, then the pupil should be referred to the learning support/resource teacher, with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing. In the case of pupils with learning difficulties, if the classroom support plan fails to achieve the desired outcome the pupil should be referred to the learning support teacher/resource teacher, with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing. If this diagnostic assessment suggests that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this should be arranged. The parents and the class teacher should be involved with the learning-support/resource teacher in drawing up the learning programme, which

would include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom, and during supplementary teaching.

The learning support/resource teacher and the class teacher should review regularly, in consultation with the parents, the rate of progress of each pupil receiving supplementary teaching. 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 III.

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 Services 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 III).

Stage III

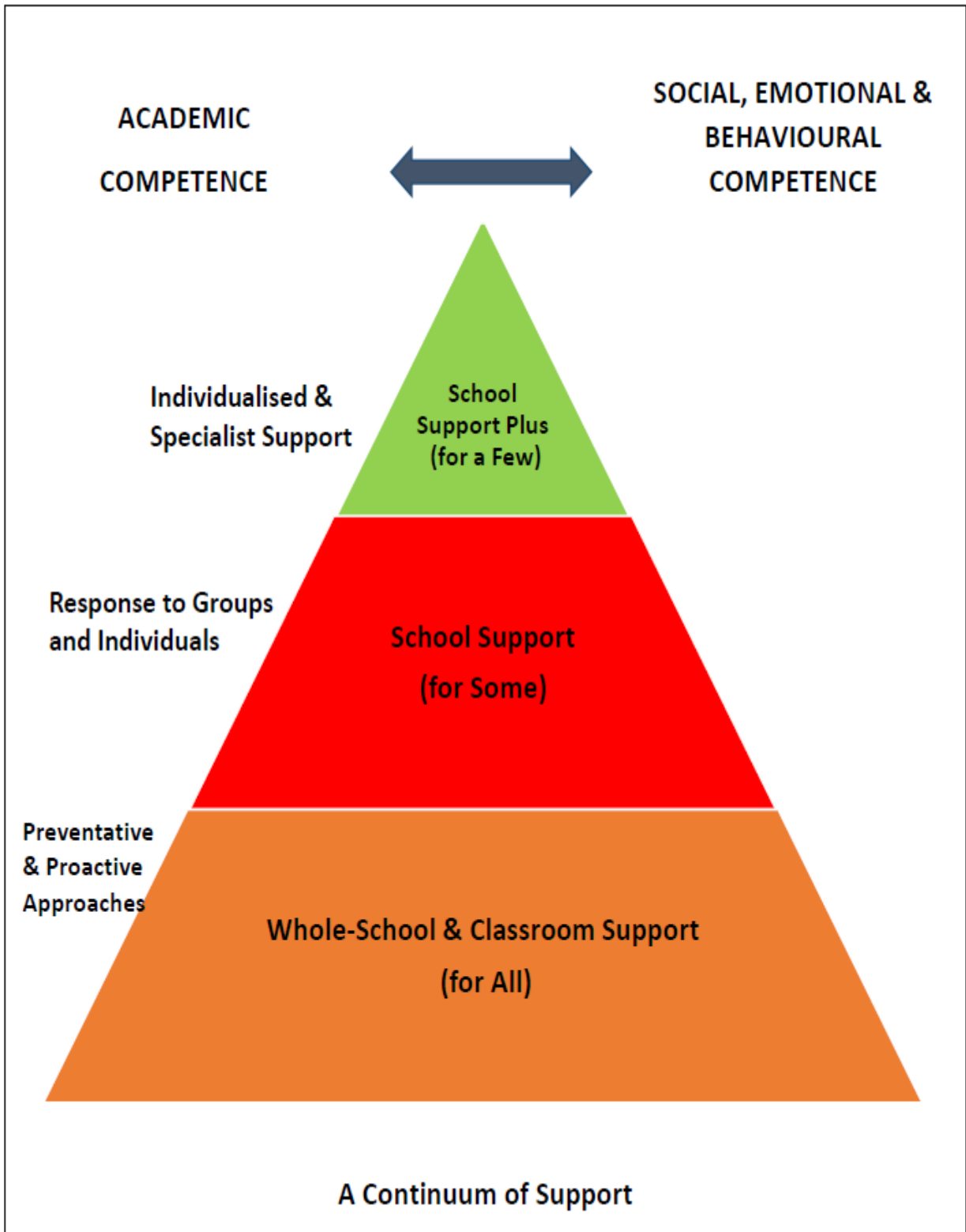
Some pupils who continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at stage III. The school may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems (or both) who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme and in respect of pupils with serious emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc.¹

The learning support/resource teacher, resource teacher, if available, and the class teacher, in consultation with the relevant specialist or specialists should then draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. The parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This programme should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary.

In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant special educational needs, intervention at stage III will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such pupils, and primary responsibility for the pupil will remain with the class teacher, in consultation with the learning support/resource /or resource teacher

Appendix 2.

The 2017 Guidelines (p. 8) present the NEPS Continuum of Support as follows -



The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

The 2017 Guidelines (p. 11-12) describe the NEPS' three tiers of support as follows - "*As special educational needs can vary from mild to transient to significant and enduring, educational planning should reflect the level of need of the individual pupil. In this regard, the Student Support File facilitates a graduated response across the different levels of the Continuum: Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus. For pupils with significant, enduring and complex needs, collaboration with external professionals, including multi-disciplinary teams, is advised (for example, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and psychologist)*".

Appendix 3.

Personal Pupil Plan (PPP)

Personal Pupil Plan for _____ SNA support is vital in all of the areasticked	
1. Primary Care Needs SNA Tasks (as per Circular 30/2014):	√
Assistance with feeding: Where a pupil with special needs requires adult assistance & where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.	
Administration of medicine: Where a pupil requires adult assistance to administer medicine & where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.	
Assistance with toileting & general hygiene: Where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, & until such time as they are able to do so.	
Assistance with mobility & orientation: On an ongoing basis including assisting a pupil or pupils to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a pupil to access school transport), or to help a pupil to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards.)	
Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground & school grounds: At recreation, assembly, & dispersal times including assistance with arriving & departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision.	
Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: Such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.	
Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a pupil may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.	
Assistance with moving & lifting of pupils, operation of hoists & equipment.	
Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs & those with significant, & identified social & emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.	
2. Secondary Care Associated Tasks (SNA Tasks) (as per Circular 30/2014):	
Preparation & tidying of workspaces & classrooms or assisting a pupil who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare & tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.	

Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned & the review of such plans.	
Assist teachers & / or Principal in maintaining a journal & care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance & care needs. Assist in preparation of school files & materials relating to care & assistance required in class by students with special needs.	
Planning for activities & classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with Class Teachers & other Teachers such as the Resource Teacher & School Principal, attending meetings with Parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement & guidance of class Teacher/Principal.	
Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel,	
including class teachers or support teachers.	
Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.	
<u>3. Other Vital SNA Tasks:</u>	
Preventing the child from harming self	
Preventing the child from harming other children	
Preventing the child from harming staff	
Preventing the child from destroying property	
Careful supervision of the child to prevent the child from climbing / squeezing into tight spaces etc...	
Supervising the child who is a flight risk	
Accompanying the child to and from Learning Support / Resource	
Removing the child from whole school activities, if the child becomes distressed / Overwhelmed	
Removing the child from the classroom when meltdowns occur	
Assisting the class teacher to raise the alarm if dangerous situations occur (children cannot be left alone)	
Assisting the class teacher to comfort other children who are injured / frightened by explosive behavior	

Appendix 4.

Transition from Primary School to Post-Primary School

Taken from the 2017 Guidelines:

Good planning and support for transition helps to ensure the successful transfer of pupils from pre-school to primary school, from primary school to post-primary school and between special and mainstream settings. Effective transition support and planning can enhance the educational experience of the child and help reduce potential anxiety. Many schools already have excellent practices in place to support pupils at various transitional points.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has developed a suite of materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post- primary schools. The materials are presented under the umbrella title of Education Passport and are available at www.ncca.ie/transfer. They include:

- 6th Class Report Card
- My Profile sheet (for children)
- My Child's Profile sheet (for parents)
- A Special Educational Needs Summary Form is included to support the sharing of information for children with identified learning needs.

Since the 2014/15 school year schools have been required to use the Education Passport materials detailed above and forward to the relevant post-primary school, following confirmation of enrolment, ideally by end of June (Circular 45/2014).

Additional resources for schools in planning for effective transitions are available at the Department of Education and Skills and NCSE websites.

Appendix 5.

Table 1: from the 2017 Guidelines. Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process.

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
Classroom Support	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. 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>
School Support	<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 measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition. 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.

Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.

*These checklists are available in the *Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers*

Appendix 6.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework⁵

Classroom Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard
School Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support
School Support Plus				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support

Appendix 7.

Educational Planning (2017 Guidelines).

Educational planning

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process. The process involves the class teacher, special education teachers, parents, the pupil and relevant professionals. Interventions should draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers. These interventions should reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests. Support plans should set out the agreed targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and a time-frame for review.

Student Support File

A Student Support File has been developed to enable schools to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support.



Classroom Support Plan

Name: _____

DOB _____

Class _____

Date _____

OUR CONCERNS ARE	REVIEW - DATE & COMMENTS
WE THINK IT MAY BE HAPPENING BECAUSE:	
SOME STRATEGIES WE WILL ADAPT ARE:	
WE WILL KNOW THINGS HAVE IMPROVED WHEN?	

WE WILL REVIEW (date, time and convenor)	

Signed: Teacher _____

Parents _____

FIRST REVIEW DATE ATTENDING	
SECOND REVIEW DATE	



School Support Plan

Focus Group:			
Name:	DOB:	Name	DOB
Start Date:		SET Teacher:	

Priority Needs / Concerns:	
Sept - Feb	
Feb - Jun	

Sept - Feb Targets		Achieved	On-Going
Target 1			
Target 2			
Target 3			
Feb - Jun Targets		Achieved	On-Going
Target 1			
Target 2			
Target 3			

Sept - Feb Strategies	
Strategy 1	
Strategy 2	
Strategy 3	
Feb - Jun Strategies	
Strategy 1	
Strategy 2	
Strategy 3	

School Support Plan Review	
February Review	
Parent's Signature & Date	

Signatures

Parent.....

Class Teacher.....

SET.....



STUDENT SUPPORT FILE	
Name of Student	
Date of Birth	
School	
Date File Opened	
Date File Closed	

SUPPORT PLAN* <i>Support</i> <i>(Support for SOME)</i> <i>(Support for A FEW)</i>	<i>Classroom</i>
	<i>School Support</i>
	<i>School Support Plus</i>

To be completed by the teacher(s).

Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
Priority concerns			
Possible reasons for concerns			
Targets for the student			
Strategies to help the student achieve the targets			
Staff involved and resources needed			
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)			
Signature of teachers			

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this plan.

SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD*

Classroom Support
School

Support (Support for SOME)

School Support Plus

(Support for A FEW)

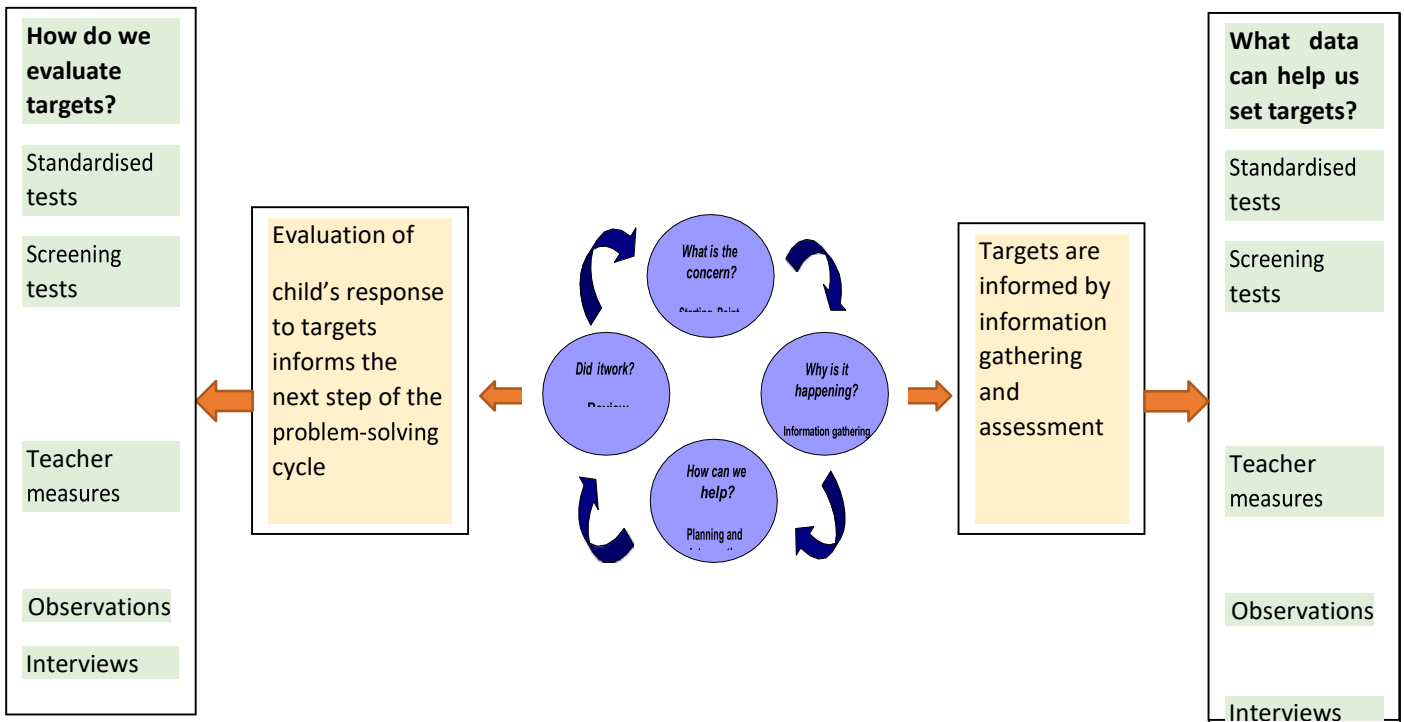
Student's name	Class/ Year
Names of those present at review	Date of Review
What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?	
Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?	
Have the student's needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how?	
Recommended future actions – <i>what, how, who, when?</i>	
Any comments from the student?	
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?	
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)	
Signature of teacher(s)	

Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/ Classroom Support OR Support for Some/ School Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Progress to next level of support- Support for Some/ School Support OR Support for a Few/ School Support Plus
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue at Current Level of Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Request consultation with other professionals

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other profession

Appendix 8.

From the 2017 Guidelines Appendix 1: Target-setting as part of the problem-solving framework



Targets are written as desired skills which are:

- Specific**
- Measurable**
- Achievable**
- Relevant**



- Time Limited**

Targets should be written in definitive language to facilitate monitoring and review of progress, for example:

John will correctly identify the first 50 Dolch Words with 80% accuracy

Sean will speak in a full sentence which includes a subject, verb and object

Anne will use her PECS to request an activity break

Appendix 9.

Table 2: from the 2017 Guidelines - Planning the allocation of special education teachingsupports

Table 2: Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs	
Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs	Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data, and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests). Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.
Action 2: Setting targets	Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the Continuum of Support.
Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches	Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the Continuum of Support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.
Action 4: Organising early-intervention and prevention programmes	Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early-intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.
Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources	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. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place. Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.

**Action 6:
Tracking,
recording
and
reviewing
progress**

Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:

- At **Whole-school and Classroom Support** level by all teachers
- At the **School Support and School Support Plus** levels by classteachers and special education teachers

Appendix 10

NCSE-Children with Special Educational Needs (A Booklet For Parents) -Appendix 1

Definitions of Special Educational Needs

Borderline mild general learning disability

This category consists of children who have been assessed by a psychologist as having a borderline mild general learning disability (DES Circular Special Education 08/02).

Mild general learning disability

This category consists of pupils who have been assessed by a psychologist as having a mild general learning disability (DES Circular Special Education 08/02).

Specific learning disability

This category includes children who have been assessed by a psychologist as:

- being of average intellectual ability or higher
- having a degree of learning disability specific to basic skills in reading, writing or mathematics which places them at or below the 2nd percentile² on suitable, standardised, norm-referenced tests.*

Children who do not meet the above criteria and, who in the opinion of the psychologist, have a specific learning disability are more properly the responsibility of the learning support teacher and/or the class teacher (Circular Sp Ed 08/02).

Physical disability

Pupils have permanent or protracted disabilities arising from such conditions as:

- congenital deformities
- spina bifida
- dyspraxia
- muscular dystrophy
- cerebral palsy

- brittle bones
- severe accidental injury.

Because of the impairment of their physical function they require special additional intervention and support if they are to have available to them a level and quality of education appropriate to their needs and abilities.

Many require the use of a wheelchair, mobility or seating aid, or other technological support.

They may suffer from a lack of muscular control and co-ordination and may have difficulties in communication, particularly in oral articulation, as for example severedyspraxia.

Pupils with a physical disability who have learning difficulties arising from the disability *may* need resource teaching where there are consequent significant learning difficulties. Others may need assistive technology only (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

- 1 Percentiles represent a way of measuring a child's performance in a standardised test and comparing it to all others of the same age or stage of education who have taken the test at the same time. If a child is at the second percentile, it means that 98 per cent of the results of children of that age or at the same stage of education were higher. If a child is at the twenty fifth per- centile, it means that 75% of the results were higher than the child's and so on.

Hearing impairment

This includes pupils who have a hearing disability that is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to hear and understand human speech. This prevents the child from participating fully in classroom interaction and from benefiting adequately from school instruction. The great majority of these children have been prescribed hearing aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher.

This category is not intended to include pupils with mild hearing loss (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Note: Hearing loss is measured in decibels and can be mild, moderate, severe or profound (Special Education Review Committee (SERC) Report, 1993).

Levels of hearing loss as defined in the SERC report are illustrated in the following table:

Minimum audible intensity	Level of impairment
---------------------------	---------------------

20-30 decibels	Mildly Hard of Hearing
30-60 decibels	Moderately hard of hearing
60-89 decibels	Severely hard of hearing
90 decibels or over	Profoundly Deaf

Blind/visual impairment

Pupils have a visual disability which is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to see, thus interfering with their capacity to perceive visually presented materials, such as pictures, diagrams, and the written word. Some will have been diagnosed as suffering from conditions such as congenital blindness, cataracts, albinism and retinitis pigmentosa. Most require the use of low-vision aids and are availing of the services

of a Visiting Teacher (*This category is not intended to include those pupils whose visual difficulties are satisfactorily corrected by the wearing of spectacles and/or contact lenses*) (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems

Pupils are being treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist for such conditions as neurosis, childhood psychosis, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorders that significantly impair their socialisation and/or learning in school. (*This category is not intended to include pupils whose conduct or behavioural difficulties can be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures on discipline*).

Some pupils in this category may need resource teaching support. Care support from a special needs assistant may be required where a pupil's behaviour is a danger to himself or others or where it seriously interferes with the learning opportunities of other pupils. In certain circumstances, some pupils may require both supports (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems (severe EBD)

A child with severe EBD must be in the care of a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist for a severe clinical disorder. A very small number of pupils would be expected to fall within this category.

Moderate general learning disability

This category includes pupils who have been assessed by a psychologist as having a moderate general learning disability (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Severe and profound general learning disability

This category includes pupils who have been assessed by a psychologist as having a severe or profound general learning disability. In addition, such pupils may have physical disabilities (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Autism/autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)

This category includes pupils who have been assessed and classified by a psychiatrist or psychologist as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM-IV, DSM-V or ICD-10 criteria.

In the interest of the pupil with an ASD and in order that the needs of the pupil are adequately addressed, it is important, where feasible, that for a definitive assessment of ASD, a multi-disciplinary assessment team should be involved. The need for a

multi-disciplinary assessment is also in keeping with NEPS policy (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Pupils with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome

The level of additional support to be provided for pupils who present with a particular syndrome, for example Down syndrome, William's syndrome and Tourette's syndrome, will be determined following consideration of psychological or other specialist reports which describe the nature and degree of the pupils' special educational needs (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Specific speech and language disorder (SSLD):

This category includes:

- pupils assessed by a psychologist on a standardised test of intelligence that places non verbal or performance ability within the average range or above
- pupils assessed by a speech therapist on a standardised test of language development that places performances in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development at two standard deviations or more below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level

- pupils whose difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; where the pupil is affected to some degree by hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for the speech-related frequencies should be 40Db
- pupils whose emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes of the difficulty experienced.

This category is not intended to include pupils with speech and language delays and difficulties. Two assessments, a psychological assessment and a speech and language assessment are necessary in this case (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Multiple disabilities

Pupils assessed with multiple disabilities meet the criteria for two or more of the low incidence disabilities describe above (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

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