



## **Policy on Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

### **Introduction/Rationale**

Muire gan Smál is a mainstream and inclusive primary school, catering for a full cross section of children. The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties. It reflects the New Special Education Teacher (SET) Allocation Model. It also ensures that 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 participate in the normal activities of the school along with children who do not have special educational needs. We are fully committed to the principles of inclusion outlined below and the good practice which makes it possible.

### **Three Principles of Inclusion**

#### **Setting Suitable Learning Challenges**

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to reach his/her full potential.

#### **Responding to Children's Diverse Learning Needs**

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

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

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

#### **Access to and participation in SEN support is governed by the following policies**

- SEN Policy
- Admissions and Participation Policy
- Special Education Teacher (SET) Allocation Model
- Intercultural Education Policy

### **Relationship to School Ethos**

Our school aims to provide a holistic approach to the needs of all our pupils including those with special educational needs (SEN), Additional learning needs (ALN) and English as an Additional Language (EAL). We aim to provide equality for all pupils recognising the right of each child to a quality education, as far as possible and in accordance with their potential, while endeavouring to foster an appreciation of individual talents and gifts.

### **Aims**

- To ensure that all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to have an equal opportunity to receive an education that is appropriate to their needs.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in all of our pupils.
- To provide supplementary teaching, in-class support and resources for pupils, according to their individual needs - ensuring that the children with the greatest need receive the greatest level support.
- To enhance each pupil's basic skills and learning strategies to a level to enable them to participate to their full potential in their classroom curriculum.
- To involve parents in supporting their child's learning.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policies in the provision of supplementary teaching for these pupils.

### **Inclusion**

Inclusion for children with special needs will be defined as the full participation in the same school activities as the child's peer group in so far as that is possible, and the provision of whatever supports the school can provide or whatever strategies can be employed to facilitate this participation.

### **Sample Strategies for Inclusion**

- Seating placement within the classroom to accommodate a child's learning needs.
- Provision of low tech/high tech solutions where appropriate e.g. non-slip material for table surface, calculator with large buttons and display, laptop computer etc.
- Establishment of a buddy system where appropriate
- Withdrawal of pupils on a rota basis (to minimise the withdrawal time for non-SEN students) from the class group to participate in an activity which has been identified by the resource teacher as meeting the needs of a child with SEN- an example of this would be the withdrawal of pupils to participate in a sporting, social or play activity with the target child
- Co-teaching and team teaching within the classroom to provide additional support to children identified with SEN
- Allowing more thinking/processing time for a pupil with SEN to respond to a question/instruction/request.
- Allowing time out/exercise breaks from the class routine.
- Provision of a quiet space during playtime which the child with SEN may require.
- Teachers/SNAs to intervene during playtime when the child with SEN may wish to participate in a play activity with peers.
- If weather conditions prevent children from going outside to play, alternative arrangements may be made for the child with SEN.

## **Differentiation**

### **Differentiation Strategies to Promote Inclusion in the Classroom**

Differentiation is concerned with ensuring that all pupils are given tasks that match their level of attainment (manageable tasks). It is about presenting tasks so that pupils are able to demonstrate what they know (achievable tasks). It is also about allowing pupils to achieve success and feel that the learning experiences have been worthwhile (motivating tasks).

Here in Muire gan Smál, we acknowledge the ways in which individual children may differ as they approach learning (e.g. cognitive ability, prior knowledge, skill level, learning rate, learning style preference, motivation, attitude, effort, interest, strength, talent).

The classroom teacher can differentiate in a variety of ways:

### **Differentiating Content**

- Using reading materials at varying readability levels
- Putting text materials on tape
- Using spelling or vocabulary lists at readiness levels of students
- Adapting worksheets
- Using concrete materials
- Using a variety of resources and linking with outside experiences-guest speakers, field trips etc.

### **Differentiating Process**

- Using tiered activities- all learners share initial instruction on a topic and then proceed with different levels of support, challenge or complexity.
- Providing centres of interest which encourage students to explore subsets of the class topic of particular interest to them.
- Vary the length of time a student takes to complete a task in order to provide additional support for a struggling learner, and to encourage an advanced learner to pursue a topic in greater depth.

- Meeting with small groups to re-teach an idea or skills to struggling learners or to extend the thinking skills of advanced learners
- Permitting the use of a calculator where a child may have difficulties with computation.

### **Differentiating Product**

- Provide students with varying options to record their work- written, picture, graphic organiser, word processor, oral or taped presentation
- The teacher to have different expectations for the volume or quantity of work that is produced
- Cloze Procedure
- Yes/No, True/False answer
- Drawing lines to match question to answer
- Drawing the main idea
- Verbal responses to partner/ teacher
- Dictate to digital recorder/ to another child

### **The Learning Environment**

- The teacher may use a variety of groups in different settings -
  - a. Mixed ability groups to promote co-operation, social skills etc.
  - b. Ability groupings
  - c. Working in pairs, groups of three students
  - d. Matching up the SEN child with a 'learning buddy'
- Seating arrangements that minimise distraction but also allow for ease of access, e.g. *seating the child in front of teacher/ at screened off work station etc. while ensuring a clear path to teacher, classroom door or toilet)*
- Provision of suitable writing materials.
- Provision of suitable furniture

This list is not exhaustive.

### **Guiding Principles** (DES: 2017)

*In Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, the teachers will be guided by the six guiding principles outlined below in relation to the implementation of the Special Education (SET) Allocation Model.*

1. Resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs should be used to facilitate the development of truly inclusive schools.
2. Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs should be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
3. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs.
4. Special education teaching supports provided to schools is used for the support of pupils with identified special educational needs, including those pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL) by means of in class support and withdrawal. The special education teaching supports cannot be used to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Neither can they be used to allow any special education teacher sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class.

5. 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 of support.
6. Schools with more than one support teacher should establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All members should have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs.

### **Example of Prevention Strategies**

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

- Engagement with the New Primary Language Curriculum Infants – Sixth class.
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to languages development, e.g. phonological awareness – We implement the Jolly Phonics Programme in Junior and Senior Infants. This programme is further supplemented by Sounds Make Words and Newell Literacy etc.
- The Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar Programme is continued in First and Second Class.
- 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 provision of the Tips for Parents booklet, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings, and provision of a regular school newsletter, as well as ongoing collaboration with Parent Body.
- Implementation of Guided Reading in Senior Infants and First Class with the possibility of being extended to other classes.
- Implementation of Building Bridges Reading Comprehension strategies throughout the school: Infants to Sixth Class.
- Explicit teaching of writing genres using the seven-step writing process throughout the school: Infants to Sixth Class, over a two-year cycle.
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher.

This list is not exhaustive and may change as the needs of the school change.

### **Guidelines for the Hierarchy of Criteria for the Selection of Pupils for Support**

In this school pupils will be selected for support in accordance with these criteria bearing in mind that *"Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support"* (2017 Guidelines: p. 19).

- 1 Pupils diagnosed as having significant and enduring complex needs.
2. Pupils scoring at/below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
3. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy (to allow for a margin of error).
4. Pupils scoring at/below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics.
5. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics (to allow for a margin of error).
6. Early intervention in literacy - Infant class pupils 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 the interventions in it.
7. Early intervention in Mathematics - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early numeracy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support
8. Pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) i.e. (a) pupils who arrive to our school without any English (b) pupils who have lived in Ireland less than two years, and whose English

needs further support.

**9.** Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy, who continue to experience difficulty, 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 Classroom Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.

**10.** Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in mathematics, who continue to experience difficulty, 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 Classroom Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.

**11.** Pupils experiencing serious difficulties with oral language / social interaction / behaviour / emotional development / application to learning, 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 Classroom Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.

**13.** Gifted Pupils (those scoring above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments and / or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a "superior IQ. Interventions will be made in the first instance 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 the interventions in it.

### **Procedure for Continuum of Support**

#### **Pre- Continuum:**

The class teacher groups the children according to ability for literacy and numeracy. The class teacher works with each group differentiating by task, pace, learning style, resource and learning outcome.

It is essential that the class teacher works with the group with most need because potentially a child in need of continuing support will come from this group. If each child in this group is progressing satisfactorily at their own pace no further intervention is needed. (*The continuum of support document is not used at this stage*)

If a class teacher has concerns about a particular child from this group, the class teacher initiates the continuum of support with the support of the parents.

#### **Stage 1: (Classroom Support)**

The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of this pupil. A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for this pupil who has not responded appropriately to the differentiated programme. This is informed by:

- 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

A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

During a review a decision is made to

- (a) Support within original class group.
- (b) Continue current level of support (*Classroom Support*)
- (c) Proceed to Stage 2 (*School Support with involvement of S. E. T.*)
- (d) Request consultation with other professionals.

## **Stage 2: (School Support)**

At this level a Support Plan is devised by the **S.E.T.** in consultation with the class teacher. It is informed by:

- 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

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 twice yearly: February and June.

At this stage some children may need to progress to Stage 3.

## **Stage 3: (School Support Plus)**

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:

- 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.

## **Storage of Continuum of Support Documents**

Up to and including the school year 2019-2020 **Stage 1** or any **closed** Classroom Support Plan documents are to remain in classroom files.

From October 2021 onwards, Classroom Support Plans will be opened and stored on Aladdin.

### **Stage 2 and Stage 3:**

Up to and including the school year 2019-2020 School Support and School Support Plus Plans were stored in S.E. T. Rooms and a copy of the plan was given to the class teacher. Logs of Actions for individual students were stored and can be found as hard copies in the pupil's Support File.

From October 2021 onwards, these documents are stored on Aladdin. Class teachers can access these documents on Aladdin. From September 2021 onwards, Logs of Action are recorded and stored on Aladdin.

In late June, in preparation for the next school year, each SET will meet with the pupil's current class teacher(s) and ensure that the child's support file is fully updated and that all relevant documents are in their file and/or on Aladdin, ready for the receiving class teacher and SET.

Each SET will continue the evidence gathering and assessment process in September. They will start to compile a new Support Plan in early October in consultation with parents, class teachers and other relevant bodies. The document should be completed and a copy given to parents by the end of October. Parents can be asked to sign the Support Plan in October (if complete) or at the Parent Teacher meeting in early November **or** parents may be asked, through Aladdin, to confirm that they have been consulted about their child's support plan and that they have read and agree with the contents of the plan.

This plan will be reviewed in February in consultation with parents and class teachers. Further targets will be set as required.

In February it may be considered suitable to have the child return to Classroom Support if in consultation with the class teacher they are considered to be accessing their class curriculum without difficulty and this is reflected in appropriate tests. Parents will be informed of this.

Similarly, following standardised testing in May and in consultation with the class teacher it may be considered suitable to have the child return to Classroom Support. Parents will be informed of this.

The SET will inform the SENCO of this change and this will be recorded on the SEN Pupil List for the relevant year.

When a pupil from **Stage 2** or **Stage 3** leaves the school, their files are stored securely in alphabetical order in the

basement.

Hard copies of SEN files will be kept in the basement in class year order, once pupils leave the school.

Classroom files of First-Class boys and Sixth Class girls will be stored in locked filing cabinets in the staffroom in class year order, once these pupils leave the school. From October 2021, files will be stored electronically on the Aladdin database.

The following **only** are kept in the classroom files:

- Infant Screening Tests
- Standardised Testing
- NNRIT
- End of Year Reports
- Closed Student Support File (Stage 1)
- Classroom Support Plan (Active)

The following documents are kept in the Continuum of Support files:

- The Classroom Plan (From Stage 1)
- The School Support Plan
- The School Support Plus Plan
- IPLP's and Diagnostic tests

**Examples of Standardised Tests used by teachers in Muire gan Smál**

- Drumcondra Reading Test
- Sigma T/Drumcondra Maths Test
- MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test)
- Drumcondra Spelling Test
- NNRIT
- CAT4

Also - *Muire gan Smál Teacher Designed Junior Infant Assessment*

**Examples of Diagnostic Tests used by Learning Support/Resource Teachers in Muire gan Smál**

- Drumcondra Diagnostic Literacy Test
- TOWRE 2
- BIAP
- Schonell Reading Test
- Schonell Spelling Test
- Jackson Phonic Test
- Rain Sentence Reading Test
- Neale Analysis of Reading Ability
- Error Analysis
- Aston Index
- Test of Phonological Awareness (*Sound Linkage*)
- Jolly Phonics Assessment
- Dolch Sight Words 200

**Special Education Literacy Sessions focus on the following: (as appropriate)**

- Development of oral language – guided by the New PLC
- Development of phonemic awareness  
Instruction in letter names, letter sounds and blending skills (*Using Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar, supported by Orton and Gillingham, Toe By Toe etc*)
- Application of phonic skills to word attack when reading.
- Development of reading skills and strategies *e.g.* Using context, picture cues, prediction, semantic and syntactic cues *etc.*
- Development of sight vocabulary
- Development of reading comprehension strategies *e.g.* Building Bridges strategies, sequencing events, characterisation *etc.*
- Engagement of children in reading continuous text (*Easy level text*) for pleasure.
- Linking of reading, oral language and writing.
- Self paced instruction in the areas of sight vocabulary, phonemic awareness, listening and reading

comprehension, through use of computer software packages.

### **Special Education Maths Sessions focus on the following:**

- Priority is given to the Number Strand - Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication and Division and problem solving.
- In so far as possible the SET works in conjunction with the children's class syllabus, dealing with topics as they are being introduced in class and aiming to teach the basic concepts involved.
- Emphasis on use of concrete materials and worksheets specially developed for use with children experiencing learning difficulties in maths. (*"Maths Zone" and "Maths Together" by Florence Gavin*)
- Reinforcement of tables, number facts and other mathematical concepts through use of computer games/websites/apps.

### **Homework**

Allocation of homework is based on consultation between the classroom teacher and the SET. Children receiving supplementary teaching should not be over burdened with homework but given minimum targeted work to complete at home.

### **Older IEP documents such as the Individual Learning Plan/Group Education Plan are being used in 6<sup>th</sup> Class only in 2021-22. From Sep. 2022 onwards these will no longer be use.**

The Individual Learning Plan/Group Education Plan 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 pupils' full range of needs and will include:

- Details from the 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
- Supplementary support activities to include 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.

### **Provision of Resources/Materials**

Rooms have been designated in the school to cater for pupils who have Special Educational Needs. General school resources are also available for use in these support rooms as required. Resources and materials found appropriate for use with children having special educational needs by the special education teachers, are recommended and made available to class teachers.

### **Referral to out of School Agencies**

- The SET or class teacher, with consent of the principal and the parent, can refer a pupil for Speech and Language. The SET/ class teacher can follow up on recommendations.
- The SENCO co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist. Oral permission must be received from the parent in the first instance. A Request for Involvement form is then sent to the school. This is filled out by the class teacher and SET in conjunction with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and returned to the psychologist. A meeting will then be organised between the class teacher, SET, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the psychologist and SNA where necessary.
- An assessment is carried out at a later date.
- This is followed by a return visit at which the findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.
- Where concern arises regarding the manner or speed of the follow-through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal with the out of school agency concerned.

### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

Special Education Teaching is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experiences. It is important that all partners contribute to the planning and implementation of our school's SEN Plan.



In Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál, the Deputy Principal has the role of the SEN Co-Ordinator (SENCO).

### **SENCO**

The Role of the SENCO includes:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy and ensuring that it is up to date.
- Supporting the identification of children with SEN.
- Co-ordinating provision for children with SEN in conjunction with the SET.
- Liaising with other providers, outside agencies, educational psychologists and external agencies.
- Ensuring that the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEN up to date.

### **Role of S.N.A.**

The duties of the SNA are of a non-teaching nature Ref: Circular 07/02. 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).

The primary care support tasks may include:

- 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 prepare and tidy a workspace, 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.
- Attending meetings with Parents, Special Educational Needs Co-coordinator (SENO); National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS); or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.
- 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

### **Special Education Teacher**

The role of the Special Education Teacher is to:

- To carry out a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties and then in consultation with the class teacher and parents, identify the type and level of learning support that is needed to meet the child's needs.
- To develop a Support Plan or Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class teacher and parents.
- Maintain the planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Supplementary Teaching.
- To provide intensive early intervention and supplementary teaching in English and Maths.
- To provide supplementary teaching in English and Maths to pupils.
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support.
- To track the progress of pupils who have discontinued learning support.
- To monitor and review attainment of targets in learning plans with a view to continuing or discontinuing

learning support.

- To assist in the screening of Junior and Senior Infants and in selecting children for learning support.
- To inform staff of developments in the area of learning support.
- To consult with parents.
- To consult and collaborate with other professionals e.g. Speech Therapists, Psychologists.
- To collaborate with principal, resource teacher and classroom teachers in the deployment of special needs resources.
- To screen children who enroll during the school year.
- To order and distribute standardized tests, co-ordinate testing and collate results.
- Contribute to the development of policy on Special Education Teaching at whole school level.

### **The Role of the EAL Teacher**

The EAL teacher assists in providing additional EAL support teaching for pupils for whom English is not a first language. The EAL pupils remain the responsibility of the mainstream class teacher. In collaboration with parents and the mainstream class teacher, EAL support teachers;

- identify pupils requiring additional language support,
- assess pupil's proficiency in English using assessment materials,
- devise appropriate language programmes,
- deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils progress
- share their expertise with mainstream class teachers
- assist in developing and disseminating good practice to support the development of students' English language proficiency.

### **EAL Curriculum**

The EAL teacher follows a specific EAL curriculum called 'Up and Away' which focuses on the following 13 themes;

1. Myself
2. Our School
3. Food & Clothes
4. Colours, Shapes & Opposites
5. People who help us
6. Weather
7. Transport & Travel
8. Seasons, holidays & festivals
9. The local and wider community
10. Time
11. People and places in other areas
12. Animals & Plants
13. Caring for my locality

The teaching of EAL is divided into two categories:

1. **Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)**
2. **Cognitive Academic Language Skills (CALP)**

It is recognised that in the younger classes, where the gap between the EAL learner and their same age/same stage peers is still very small and where play based learning is evident in most learning, it isn't necessary for as much direct teaching of CALP.

It is equally recognised that in higher classes where the gap between the EAL learner and their same age/same stage peers is much greater, direct teaching of CALP is necessary.

Other factors, apart from age and class, will also be considered include:

- experience of schooling
- language competence in home language
- prior knowledge of subject being taught
- language of schooling literacy levels,
- has the child had interrupted education and/or trauma

### **Use of Translating Apps**

A two-sided approach will be adopted in relation to EAL learners' use of translating apps.

1. In the acquisition of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) learners are not encouraged to rely on translating apps or peers. Exceptions to this are for early days in a new school, when essential information needs to be imparted or when a child is in distress.
2. Translating apps may be used in the acquisition of Cognitive Academic Language Skills (CALP) in higher classes in certain situations.

In higher classes in instances where the pupil may have the content language in their home language, and possibly know the concepts, a **plurilingual approach** is used in which “Teaching and learning should draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners” (Language and Languages in the Primary School). The learner can use their home language to access the content (using apps such as Google Chrome Extension for Google Translate). Examples of when this may happen include problem solving in Maths, project work, SPHE and some elements of SESE.

### Assessment of EAL

The primary assessment kits are used to determine the initial language proficiency of each pupil and to evaluate how well pupils are progressing with their language skills in English. These tests help to;

- establish a pupil’s level of English on arrival in school,
- monitor progress over time in language support
- Identify the point at which a pupil no longer requires additional language support.

### 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 for Special Education Teaching the class teacher should:

- Collaborate with the SET when planning for in-class support.
- Liaise with SET in relation to children accessing support.
- Differentiate the curriculum based on the needs of the pupils in their class.
- If the class teacher has concerns about a specific child, he or she should open a Classroom Support File for that child and liaise with the SET about this file. Appropriate SMART targets should be set. The PLC progression steps can be used as a guide in this instance.

### Parents

The role of parents supporting the Learning Support for their children is vital to its success.

Specifically, parents contribute through:

- Communication with the Class Teacher and SET **as necessary**
- Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive.
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child.
- Participation in shared reading programme.
- Encouraging the child to visit library.
- Developing the child’s oral language.
- Developing the child’s social mathematics.

### Principal

The role of the principal is to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school’s policy on Special Education Teaching in co-operation with the Board of Management, teachers, parents and children.
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support in the context of Special Needs Education.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on an ongoing basis.
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that the children with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support.
- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordination learning support in the context of Special Needs Services.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment service that are available and the procedure to be followed in initiation referrals.
- Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support.

### Board of Management

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs in light of current department circulars.
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Special Educational Needs teachers.
- Provide a secure facility for storage or records in relation to pupils in receipt of Special Education Teaching.
- Budget for ongoing support for Professional Development for staff and purchasing of resources.

**With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods will be followed:**

- Children who are experiencing low achievement will be prioritised when accessing information from previous class teacher.
- Priority will be given to these children – greatest need greatest level of support.
- Group teaching.
- In class support through Team Teaching and Station Teaching
- Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximize the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities.
- Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum.
- Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Setting learning targets at an appropriate level.
- Providing learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress.
- Carrying out error analyses of pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty.
- Setting up 'buddy systems' in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers, e.g. peer tutoring/paired reading).
- Applying assessments and tests which offer challenge and opportunities for success to children of all levels of achievement.
- Consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the Special Educational Needs teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of a Student Support File

### **Communication Strategies**

The operation of an effective communication system between all the parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential. The various strands of the system include:

- Regular communication between the Learning Support Teacher and the Class Teacher
- Class Teacher and the SET following up a low score on a screening test.
- Communication between the SET and parents **as necessary**

### **Meeting with Parents/Concerned others:**

- Croke Park Hours are allocated during the year for staff collaboration and meetings regarding SEN pupils
- Short meetings can also be timetabled at other times if necessary, when convenient to parents and class teacher.

### **Transition to Secondary School and for Boys Moving to Second Class**

The principal of Mount St. Michael Secondary School usually visits the school to speak to sixth class pupils in February/March. The principal of our local Boys' School visits the school after Easter each year to meet with the 1<sup>st</sup> class teachers. During these visits learning support/resource teachers are available for discussion about special needs pupils and to complete profile forms. Providing copies of educational assessments and other assessments (*e.g. speech language*) to the secondary school is the prerogative of parents. However, at parents' request, we make such reports available. We also provide the Secondary School and the Boys School with the results of Standardised Tests for the pupils transferring.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing the SEN Policy**

- The Principal and Deputy Principal and the SEN team will monitor and review this policy in conjunction with other staff teachers and SNAs.

### **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.

*This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2004.*

*It was reviewed and amended in March 2007, January 2009 & Sept 2012*

*This policy was amended and updated in October 2014.*

*This policy was discussed, review and updated in September 2016*

*This policy was amended and updated in September 2018*

*This policy was discussed, reviewed and updated in February 2020 and March 2022.*

*This Policy was reviewed and ratified by the BoM on the 4th May 2022.*

*This Policy was reviewed and ratified by the BoM on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

**Signed:**

Chairperson of Board of Management

**Date:**

**Signed:**

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

**Date:**