

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy 2024

1. Context

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál is a DÉIS Band 2 mainstream mixed vertical school that caters for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th Class and is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school currently has a Principal, a Home School Community Liaison Teacher (H/S/C/L), 16 Mainstream Class Teachers and 8 Special Education teachers.

The school has 6 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). The allocation of both Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistants is annually subject to review.

The school is one in which a Christian attitude is fostered, where there is a mutual respect between teachers and pupils, where the full talents of each individual pupil are allowed to blossom and where parents are very much a part of the process.

The purpose of this policy document is to provide information to school personnel and parents on how we organise provision for teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs in our school.

The term Special Educational Needs are broad and include pupils who have difficulty acquiring literacy and/or numeracy skills, pupils who have difficulties with fine or gross motor skills, pupils who have English as an additional language (if that impacts on their progress), pupils with emotional/ social/ behavioural difficulties and pupils who have diagnosed disabilities. In this document, SEN can be taken to be Special Educational Needs in this broad sense.

Our SET team encompass what were previously termed Learning Support Teachers, Resource Teachers and Teachers for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL teachers).

In this document we will use the term Special Education teachers (SETs) for all 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).

2. Rationale

The rationale for our school's SEN policy comes from 'Rationale for Whole School Approach' (DES 2017). 'A whole-school approach involves collaborative action by the school community (in consultation with parents and pupils) to improve pupil learning, behaviour and well-being. It encompasses a process of reflection, planning and review of policies and practices, and includes an evaluation of how pupils with special educational needs are identified by the school, the interventions that are put in place to meet their needs and how the outcomes of those interventions are measured and monitored.'

3. Guiding Principles

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál believes that all pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) should be given the opportunity to maximise their potential in an environment of inclusion. All pupils are encouraged and facilitated to participate in the life of the school to the best of their ability.

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice that makes it possible. Our policy as set out in this document aims to enable all pupils to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful considerations of the needs of each pupil and by modifying activities or by providing support that will help the pupil to participate in the various aspects of school life.

4. Aims of SEN Support

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 Special Educational Needs Policy we aim to:

- Support the inclusion of pupils with SEN in our school.
- Develop positive attitudes about school and learning in our pupils and to provide for the acquisition of life skills, thereby enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Ensure that the Staged Approach/Continuum of Support is implemented (see below).
- Optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school (Guidelines for Schools, p15).
- Enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum.
- Support appropriate differentiation in the classroom.
- Enable pupils to understand themselves as learners.
- Involve parents in supporting their children.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for our pupils.
- Provide opportunities for teachers and SNAs to engage in continuing professional development by informing about/ organising available courses or other training opportunities (e.g. in school, online, attending courses and conferences, etc.).
- Promote early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.
- Liaise with and seek guidance for best practice from relevant state agencies (e.g. NEPS) in the provision of SEN in our school.

5. Principles of SEN Support

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

1. Quality of teaching.
2. Effective whole-school policies.
3. Direction of resources towards pupils who the school has identified as having the greatest needs. Supports to be informed by regular reviews of progress as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
4. Implementation of a staged approach to support provision at Class Support/School Support/School Support Plus levels (see below). For 'Parents', please read 'Parents/ Guardians'.
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

‘Teachers and School Principals will use their professional judgement in applying the principles and practices set out in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.’ (Circular 0013/2017)

Stage 1. Classroom Support

If a class teacher or parent has concerns about the academic, physical, social or emotional development of a pupil, the class teacher (with the possible assistance of the SET) will then construct a simple, individual plan of support **to be implemented in the normal class setting**. The SET is not involved in in-class support at this stage of the Continuum but may be in an advisory capacity. This plan will form the 1st instructional page of the pupil’s Continuum of Support and will be based on screening measures/ observation administered by the teacher. This plan is for pupils who may need a short intervention plan provided by a differentiated approach accommodated by the class teacher. The plan should contain a small number of targets to be met and will be reviewed after each instructional term (using the Review Page from the Continuum of Support document). If the plan is working well for the pupil, it may be decided to continue with it or, indeed, the pupil may be successfully discontinued from the additional support if it has been deemed that the pupil has responded well to the interventions put in place. If insufficient progress is made and the pupil is still having difficulty, then Stage 2 (School Support) is implemented.

Stage 2. School Support

If further intervention is deemed necessary (after diagnostic testing/ screening tests/ observation by the class teacher or SET) and the pupil is to receive supplementary teaching at School Support Level, then the parent(s) of the pupil will be informed (by phone call, face to face, Aladdin message/ email - the school’s administration platform). The class teacher and SET then draw up a plan of appropriate learning outcomes for the child (targets and strategies are designed collaboratively by the teacher and SET) with assistance from the parents and possibly the pupil themselves. This plan will form the 2nd instructional page of the pupil’s Continuum of Support and will be implemented. The pupil’s parents/guardians will be informed that the plan is to be implemented and may be invited to contribute to it. This plan will be reviewed in both February and June and if significant concerns remain, it may be necessary to involve outside agencies e.g. NEPS, HSE, CAMHS, Speech and Language/ Occupational Therapists, etc. (Stage 3)

Stage 3. School Support Plus

The school may formally request a consultation from other professionals outside the school (see above) in respect of pupils 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, audiologists, occupational therapists, etc. This is carried out in consultation with and with the permission of the pupil’s parents/guardians. Following the consultation, the class teacher, SET, parents and possible outside professional (if available) will draw up a Learning Programme for the pupil – a detailed and specific plan. This plan will form the 3rd instructional page of the pupil’s Continuum of Support. In the case of pupils identified early on or at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at Stage 3 will be necessary on their entry to school or as a first step in the case of the individual pupil. 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 designated SET.

Note: The 'Running Records' in the pupil's Aladdin file (the school's administration platform) will be added to as appropriate (e.g. after a decision has been made, after a meeting has been held, after a significant event). These additions may be made by the Class Teacher or the Special Educational Needs Teacher, Principal, Deputy Principal/ SENCO or H/S/C/L Teacher.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all the school community: The Board of Management, 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 for SEN support.
- Provide secure facilities for the storage of records and sensitive data relating to children in receipt of SEN support.

Principal

The Principal will have overall responsibility for the day to day school's provision for children with SEN. The principal will work closely with the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) and will keep the BOM informed about the workings of this policy. The Principal may also have a role in keeping a record of referrals made to NEPS and other outside services. The Principal will also:

- Encourage the development of inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including SET roles.
- Encouraging the SET team to organise the timetabling for SEN teaching.
- Monitor teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.
- Log actions on the pupils' Running Records using the Aladdin platform.
- Liaise with the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) regarding all aspects of special education provision.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers and other school personnel in relation to the education of pupils with SEN and to ensure that all school staff are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.

Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

At the beginning of each school year, the SENCO meets (by phone, face-to-face, online or otherwise) with the NEPS psychologist to formulate a plan for the year, including assessments of pupils and professional supports for teachers. Given the school's size and situation, some of the duties associated with this responsibility may be delegated to other members of staff as appropriate. The SENCO will also:

- Oversee the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy.
- Organise regular reviews of the policy including identifying areas for development and improvement and lead the updating of the policy.

- Organise and lead regular SET staff meetings (if possible, bi-monthly but also as needs be) and to follow up these meetings with a report of what was discussed and any decisions taken. All reports/ minutes of meetings to be password protected before being forwarded to fellow members of the SET Team.
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils with SEN and that progress is monitored.
- Co-ordinate provision for pupils with SEN.
- Encourage the SET team to organise the timetabling for SEN teaching.
- Liaise with and advise fellow teachers and contribute to in-service training of staff.
- Liaise with and advise SNAs with regard to supporting pupils with SEN.
- Organise the timetabling for SNA support for pupils with SEN.
- Liaise with parents of pupils with SEN.
- Monitor and evaluate SEN provision.
- Log actions on the pupils' Running Records using the Aladdin platform.
- Keep a list of pupils who are receiving SEN support.
- Support the implementation of a tracking system at a whole-school level to monitor the progress of pupils who avail of additional support.
- Ensure that whole school SEN procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/ agencies.
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals.
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
- Select pupils for psychological assessment in consultation with class and SET teachers (and other school personnel (e.g. Principal) and with the NEPS psychologist.
- Liaise with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of pupils with SEN.
- Liaise with the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) regarding all aspects of special education provision.
- Store in a secure manner confidential information (Psychological Assessment Reports etc.) regarding SEN pupils and sharing same with principal, class teachers, the SET team, SNAs, and other agencies where appropriate.
- Participate in and oversee the drafting and updating of Continuum of Support plans.
- Assist with, in co-ordination with the School Principal, arrangements for exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils for whom this is appropriate.

Class Teacher

The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all children in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. (Guidelines 2017)

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, classroom teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. This will include adapting their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. This may require targeted interventions to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs. All mainstream class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

The Class Teacher will:

- Provide effective teaching and learning opportunities.
- Support the identification of learning difficulties.
- Provide Classroom Support at the Continuum of Support Stage 1 stage by drawing up a Classroom Support Plan and providing a differentiated report for the pupil.
- Log actions on the pupils' Running Records on the Aladdin platform.
- Communicate with parents/ guardians.
- Liaise with external agencies such as speech and language, occupational therapists, NEPS personnel, etc. and implementing suitable recommendations, wherever possible.
- Collaborate with the SET 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. This will be achieved through informal consultation as the need arises.

Special Education Teachers (SET)

Special education teachers should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at School Support or School Support Plus levels and through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

In our school, the SET model of teaching is that SETs, while being assigned to a particular class level, will be involved in a whole-school SET timetable to be created where the highest priority pupils are accommodated first and, possibly and probably, shared among SETs. This could mean that a SET could be working with, for example, a Junior Infant, a 2nd class and a 6th class pupil (among others). This may involve a lead SET being assigned a particular high priority pupil with other members of the SET team also working with that pupil.

This does not phase out being involved in team teaching, working with literacy/ numeracy groups or station work. In-class support can continue until 10.45. Thereafter, the prioritised pupil model from 11.00 – 1.30 (Junior Infant/ Senior Infant level) or 2.30 (all other classes) where the needs of the children on the greatest levels of needs lists are met first. After that is met, groups/ individuals from the SET's assigned class level can be withdrawn.

The SET will:

- a) support the class teacher in optimising teaching and learning opportunities and
- b) provide specialised teaching to those pupils with identified with SEN.

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

These will include:

- Providing supplementary teaching commensurate with the pupil's particular and individual needs.
- Researching the pupil'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).
- Developing a Support Plan for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with Class Teachers, Parents, and, as appropriate, SNAs and pupils.
- Maintaining a Short-Term Plan and Progress Record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of pupils withdrawn for support teaching. Maintaining a Short-Term and Progress Record (together with the Class Teacher) for in-class support.
- Administering a range of formal and informal assessments and maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments.

This will involve:

- Conducting an initial diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having low achievement and/or a learning difficulty, based on results of an appropriate screening measure and record the findings of the assessment in the pupil's Support Plan/ Running Record.
- Monitoring the ongoing progress of each pupil in receipt of supplementary teaching in relation to the attainment of agreed learning targets and short-term objectives that arise from them and recording the observations in the Short-Term Plan and Progress Record, or equivalent.
- Reviewing the progress of each pupil in February and June and recording it on the pupil's Support Plan.
- Providing supplementary teaching in English and/or Mathematics to children who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties at School Support/School Support Plus (as per selection criteria). Supplementary teaching will also, according to school capacity, be provided for children whose social skills, emotional/behavioural skills, gross/fine motor skills and English language skills (EAL) need further development.
- Logging actions on the pupils' Running Records using the Aladdin platform.
- Delivering early intervention programmes.
- Assisting the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Contributing to the development of SEN policy.
- Providing advice to the Class Teacher (if requested).
- Meeting with parents of pupils who are in receipt of support teaching where a concern is ongoing.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language, occupational therapists, NEPS personnel, etc. and implementing suitable recommendations, wherever possible.
- Implementing school policies on preventing learning difficulties, screening children for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching, where it is deemed necessary.

Role of SNA

In our school, SNAs are deployed as identified by the needs of the school. As schools are no longer required to submit individual applications for SNA support, the individual pupil no longer requires a diagnosis of disability to access SNA support.

When identifying and selecting pupils for SNA support, pupils with the greatest level of need will have access to the greatest level of SNA support.

A timetable constructed in September regarding which pupils have SNA support is responsive to change and is adaptive as the year goes on. Allocation and deployment of supports is flexible and responsive to pupils' needs and is focused on delivering the right supports to meet additional care needs at the right time.

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

The primary care support tasks may include:

- Administration of medicine.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
- Assistance with feeding.
- 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 pupils 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 pupil from a classroom when essential.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of pupils, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with use of assistive technology.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils 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 pupil 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 pupils with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans (the Class teacher/ SET to lead on this).
- Assistance with maintaining a journal and care monitoring system for pupils 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-ordinator (SENCO); National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/ SET/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 appropriate personnel.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities e.g walks or visits where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

Role of Parents/Guardians

The central role of parents/guardians of pupils with SEN is the same as all parents/guardians, i.e. to communicate with the school, to make the school aware of any concerns or issues regarding their child's progress, to support the work of the school and to optimise teaching and learning opportunities for their child at home.

The Parents/Guardians of the pupils of Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.
- Reading and telling stories to their child/children.
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Signing and returning consent forms for activities where such are required.
- Talking positively about school and schoolwork.
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- Helping children to develop their organisational skills.
- Helping children to look after schoolbooks and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

Role of Children

The role of the child with SEN will be that of an active participant in their own learning and to communicate their needs. The extent and nature of this will depend on the individual child's strengths, needs and ability to do this and the school will be cognisant of this.

Role of External Bodies and Agencies

Our school liaises with, among others, external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive), Early Intervention Teams, School Completion Teams, Tusla, Visiting Teachers for children with Vision Impairment, Visiting Teachers for children with Hearing Loss and the Inspectorate.

We acknowledge that the needs of many pupils 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.

In the case of dealings with outside agencies in the case of any pupil, the Class Teacher/ SET/ SENCO must inform parents/ guardians if doing so and to also keep a copy of any official documents being filled out to be filed in the SENCO office.

7. Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

- Differentiation of the curriculum by the mainstream class teacher to cater for individual strengths and needs.
- Development and implementation of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics to ensure progression and continuity from class to class, including incorporating play in all subjects in the Infant classes, the Ready, Set, Go Maths programme in the Infant classes, Guided Reading using the PM Readers and phonic readers from Junior Infants to 3rd class (and thereafter the graded class novels and whole class novels as appropriate) and the whole school promotion of the Write to Read programme from Junior Infants to 6th class.
- Careful development of phonological awareness, rhyming skills and oral language skills using the Jolly Phonics programme in a print rich environment, before formal reading of words and books.
- The use of concrete materials as much as possible and as appropriate.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Class-based early intervention by the class teacher focusing on the provision of additional individualised support, as and when required (following the Classroom Support Continuum of Support process).
- Provision of additional support in language development/ early literacy/ early mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- Support (including movement breaks) for pupils experiencing social/emotional difficulties and problems with concentration.
- Provision of Assistive Technology as appropriate.
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents/guardians of incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings.

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 Teacher and the SET should identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of pupils for early intervention programmes at Classroom Support/School Support level.

Early intervention programmes may include:

- Implementation of an English language programme for Junior Infant and Senior Infant pupils who have English as an additional language, with emphasis on basic vocabulary. Intensive language programme for such pupils in more senior classes with emphasis on basic vocabulary and the language of Maths. This acknowledges the literacy skills already acquired in their mother tongue.

- Active learning programme for all Junior Infant pupils with specific emphasis on oral language development, underpinned by incorporating play in all subjects and the new Language Curriculum.
- Early intervention literacy and language support programme (Guided Reading using PM Readers) in Junior Infant to 3rd classes daily.
- Withdrawal of pupils to a support teaching room, in-class support, team teaching, group work and individual support will be provided, as appropriate and if it is in a pupil's best interest

And all of the below might also be taken into account:

- School breakfast
- School hot lunches
- Healthy eating policy
- Nutrition course for parents - H/S/C/L led
- Filtered water in all classrooms
- Wake Up Shake Up/ Let's Dance daily activities
- Active parental involvement – in class activities (Maths for Fun, Science for Fun, Literacy projects) classes/ activities for parents in school, active Parents' Council
- HSCL support for parents
- DEIS planning - Attendance, Transition, Retention, Literacy, Numeracy & Parental Involvement – data gathered, analysed and targets set/ initiatives launched for each area on a 3 yearly basis. Ongoing review. Whole staff buy-in.
- Positive behaviour policy in place
- KOAR (Kindness, Obedience, Attentiveness, Respect) values reward system- focus on catching positive behaviour
- Whole school focus on rewarding positive behaviour, principal's office for 'good news', ringing parents with good news
- Effective teaching & learning – range of methods and assessment methods used
- Ongoing CPD for staff in range of areas as appropriate
- New initiatives across all subjects going on e.g. Write to Read project, Modern Languages, Junior Achiever, Science Week, Maths week etc
- School assemblies
- Monthly Full Attender certificates and Punctuality Prize winners
- Awesome Attenders' party
- SET, Continuum of Support, in class differentiation
- Focus on enjoyment of learning
- SPHE Policy, Child Protection Policy, Safe-guarding risk assessment reviewed annually
- SPHE & Child- protection Level 3 inspection 2022 – school fully compliant in all areas.
- Children exposed to range of physical activities to engage all
- All Strands of PE curriculum covered, links with local sporting clubs (Liffey Gaels GAA, St. Pat's soccer, local boxing club, basketball hall, local youth clubs, Glee club, local dance clubs). Visiting sports coaches. Daily Mile School, Active Week every year.
- Policy & planning – Wellbeing incorporated into every plan/policy
- Creative Arts Week – Erasmus + initiative
- Sensory room/ LS Rooms/ space for parents in school
- Weaving Wellbeing programme as a resource
- Roots of Empathy (different classes chosen each year)
- Life Skills programme (4th & 5th classes)

- Rainbows
- School Completion Programme
- Transition to Secondary School
- Mentoring for new staff/ peer tutoring
- Student council
- Science Week/ Maths week/ Engineering week
- Internet Safety week
- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Green schools
- DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Summer camps
- July Provision
- Holiday camps e.g. Hallowe'en, Easter
- SMGS Got Talent Show
- Christmas Concert
- After School clubs including Homework Club
- Wide range of trips/ tours/ annual beach & mountain trips, outside speakers in to talk to classes
- School garden (Gardening Club) and use of Rosary Walk grounds
- Children, young people, and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported – evidence from parents' survey and feedback from children. Feedback from questionnaire to parents showed that the vast majority of parents reported that their child was happy at school, their child felt safe and well looked after in school, and their child felt respected at school. Also, majority of parents reported that they knew what to do if they had a safety concern about their child or another child. All parents surveyed felt welcomed in our school. (School Improvement Plan research – commenced September 2022)

8. Selection criteria

When identifying and selecting pupils for additional teaching support, pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of supports.

The following criteria will be used by our school to select pupils for supplementary teaching in line with the new model of Special Education Teaching (Circular 0013/2017). The class teachers, SETs, SNAs, H/S/C/L teacher and principal may also professionally discuss the individual pupils to ensure that they have been correctly identified as requiring supplementary teaching.

These criteria are open to change as, some years, the school may have a very high level of caseloads so the school would have to set the criteria that bit higher as support would not be available for every pupil that presents with needs.

1. Pupils scoring at or below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Numeracy.
2. Pupils scoring at or below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Numeracy (to allow for a margin of error) and, after that, pupils with the next lowest scores (according to capacity).
3. Pupils with significant Special Educational Needs. For example, pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs. These pupils need additional teaching support because they require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are tailored

to their needs. Our school will also take into account needs set out in professional reports, where available.

4. Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties. Pupils who have specific learning disabilities. Our school will also take into account needs set out in professional reports, where available.

5. Pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and whose English needs further support.

6. Pupils who were previously in receipt of supplementary teaching from a SET and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.

7. Early intervention in Literacy and/or Numeracy - 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 Classroom Support Plan document and recorded the interventions in it.

8. Pupils experiencing serious difficulties with oral language or social or emotional development or 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 document and recorded the interventions in it.

9. Exceptionally Able/Gifted Children. 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 Classroom Support Plan document and recorded the interventions in it. Support from Centre for Talented Youth Ireland (CTYI) is accessed as appropriate.

9. Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching.

In February and June, the progress of each pupil who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the pupil's class teacher and where appropriate, the pupil's parents/guardians and the pupil themselves.

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 pupils when satisfactory progress has been made and targets have been met.

The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some pupils who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support. However, if both the class teacher and SET feel such a pupil needs scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group.

10. Monitoring Progress

Monitoring outcomes is part of a dynamic process of identification, target-setting, intervention and review, which in turn should lead to adjustments in support plans. The Student Support File provides schools with a useful resource to support and record this process. It includes a Support Review Record to guide teachers when monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes with parents and pupils. Such monitoring of progress, and subsequent adaptation of support plans, are key drivers of effective practice.

In addition to monitoring outcomes at the individual level, it is also important to review outcomes at group, class and whole-school level.

Monitoring/ Assessment tools may include:

- Teacher observation and self-reflection.
- Weekly Test results if applicable (e.g. Friday Spelling Show Off/Tables).
- Termly Assessments if applicable (teacher designed or from publishers).
- Work samples and portfolios.
- Project work.
- Class/ homework copies.
- Standardised Tests in May each year (1st – 6th) English and Maths.
- Administering the Belfield Infant Assessment Programme (BIAP) with the Junior Infant Classes.
- Administering the Drumcondra Early Numeracy and Literacy Screening Tests with the Senior Infant classes.
- 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.

The Support Review Record on the Continuum of Support will be completed by the SET and, where appropriate, in collaboration with the Class Teacher. This will be carried in February and June or if an incident occurs that highlights that the plan is not working. The completed review will be saved on Aladdin, the school's administration platform.

11. Record Keeping

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

A file for each pupil receiving supplementary teaching is kept in a locked filing cabinet in the SENCO's office and the data contained is only accessible by those who need to access it. If a file needs to be borrowed, it must be signed out by the staff member and again signed when returned. Relevant pupil data may include professional reports, assessments, interviews and observation notes. SNA records are also significant including daily notes, the Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) and review of the PPP. Much of the data is also available on Aladdin, the school's administrative platform, under the pupil's name.

School Support and School Support Plus Files are completed on Aladdin. Targets for September to February are included using black font. The targets and their success are reviewed in February and this is completed on the review document of the file. If new targets are to be set, they are typed using blue font on the pupil's file. When the targets are reviewed in June, the results should also be typed in using blue font on the pupil's review record.

Important: The Support File is opened when the pupil is identified as having needs and having need of support. Into that file goes the support plan, the review of that plan and any other information relevant to the pupil e.g. NEPS report. A new file is **NOT** opened each year for a pupil. Once a support file has been opened in the case of an individual pupil, it acts as a repository where all the information and relevant documentation belonging to the pupil is stored collectively in one place and where it is easily accessible. Even if a file becomes dormant, it needs to stay in existence.

The 'Running Records' in the pupils' Aladdin files will be added to as appropriate (e.g. after a decision has been made, after a meeting has been held, after a significant event). These additions may be made by the Class Teacher or the Special Educational Needs Teacher, Principal, Deputy Principal or H/S/C/L Teacher.

Diagnostic Assessments and other checklists administered by the SET will be put in the child's file in the SENCO's office where appropriate.

Personal Pupil Plans/ Care Targets for children with SNA access will be completed by the Class Teacher, SET and SNA where possible and will also be kept in the child's file in the SENCO's office.

Psychological Reports that are active at any given time are kept in a locked cabinet in the SENCO's office.

Results of Completed Standardised Tests will be uploaded to Aladdin. The Standardised Tests currently used in our school are – Drumcondra Primary Reading and Primary Maths tests (1st – 6th). The Belfast Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP) is administered on the junior infant pupils and the Drumcondra Early Numeracy and Literacy Screening Tests on the senior infant pupils.

End of Year school Report will be issued to parents/guardians in June. These reports are saved in Aladdin.

Monthly Reports (Cuntaisí Míósúla) from the SET will be sent to the Principal. These reports outline the work undertaken by the support Teacher with groups or individual children and are posted on Aladdin.

12. Liaising with Parents/Guardians and Communicating Information

Please note: Below, where the term 'parents' is used, it implies 'Parents/ Guardians'.

Class teachers have the option to organise a class meeting for the parents at the beginning of the year where they can introduce themselves to the parents and where they can outline any important information pertaining to the class for them.

Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning and will be informed of upcoming events on the school website e.g. Maths Week, World Book Day, etc.

Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November for the pupils of Junior Infants to 6th Class.

An information meeting and infant reception day is held for the parents of incoming Junior Infants in June.

An end-of-year report goes home in June each year. The report contains a designated area for the SET to give an update on the pupil's progress. All the information is included on the one report card but the SET has the option to include additional information on a separate sheet. Opportunities to discuss this report are made available before the end of term.

In the case of a pupil presenting with special educational needs, the class teacher meets with parents initially to discuss concerns and outline supports available in the school.

SET and Class Teacher meet with parents to agree a School Support Plan for their child. As time goes on, the Class Teacher and SET can meet the parents together, but they also have the option to meet them separately.

SET liaises with parents of pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching to explain targets and plans for the year (all relevant parents of the individual SET's cohort of SEN pupils to have been contacted by the Hallowe'en break each year). The SET may also demonstrate methodologies that could be useful at home to further the pupil's learning.

In the case of dealings with outside agencies in the case of any pupil, the Class Teacher/ SET must inform parents if doing so and also keep a copy of any official documents being filled out to be filed in the SENCO office. It may be requested that the external agency contacts both the parents and the school regarding any upcoming appointments – SETs can then be proactive in reminding the parents that an appointment has been arranged to ensure that it is attended. Teachers can no longer make a referral to CAMHS – the parent must do this through their GP. However, they will likely require school guidance and advice to do so.

13. Timetabling

Supplementary teaching that children receive is in addition to their regular class programme in English and Maths, in so far as is practicable.

The Class timetable is set up first and then the SET timetable adapts and adjusts to this.

Co-teaching, where two teachers work together to plan to team-teach, work with literacy/ numeracy groups or station work, may take place with the teachers sharing the same classroom. In-class support may continue until 10.45 each morning. 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.

As far as is practicable, the Class Teacher should inform the SET about any upcoming interruptions to the SET timetable (e.g. class being taken by a visiting coach, class on a school trip, etc.) so that alternative arrangements can be put in place.

The SET Team will review the timetable at the end of each of their instructional blocks.

14. Attendance

An attendance record of pupils who are withdrawn to the SEN rooms will be kept by each SET. If a SEN pupil is absent, the SET should elect to work with a different SEN pupil/ group.

15. Monitoring and Reviewing of the SEN Policy

The Principal and Deputy Principal/ SENCO will monitor and review this policy. This review will be initiated by the SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO).

16. SEN Policy Success Criteria

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

- Ensure that pupils 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, pupils and parents/ guardians, pupils' achievements and ongoing analysis of pupils' academic performance and attainment of personal targets. (The SSE Process)

17. Ratification

This Special Educational Needs Policy will be reviewed at least every three years or as soon as practicable after there has been a significant material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

This SEN Policy was reviewed by the school staff on 28th August 2024.

This SEN Policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 15th October 2024.

Signed: 

Mary O' Brien
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: 

David Gough
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 15th October 2024

Date: 15th October 2024

18. Acknowledgements

Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (Department of Education & Skills)

Circular 30/2014 Special Needs Assistants

Circular 13/2017 Special Educational Needs – New Model

Useful websites:

- Department of Education & Skills: www.education.ie
- National Council for Special Education: www.ncse.ie
- National Council for Curriculum Assessment: www.ncca.ie
- Health Service Executive: www.hse.ie

19. Appendices

- [Classroom Support File and Review \(stand-alone\)](#)
- [NEPS Cork Classroom Checklists document](#)
- [My Thoughts About School/ 'All About Me' questionnaire](#)
- [Parental Input form](#)
- [Register of SEN pupils document](#)
- [Irish Exemption Circular 0054/2022](#)
- [Irish Exemption Form](#)
- [Examples of discrete Irish Exemption tests](#)
- [Assistive Technology Form](#)
- [CDNT District Area document](#)
- [CYPSC Support Pathways for Children with Additional Needs](#)
- [SMGS School Support File \(Classroom Support/ School Support/ School Support Plus\)](#)

