



Support Policy

Introduction

Scoil Chualann endeavours to foster a happy and inspiring atmosphere, caring for the child's overall development - intellectual, physical, cultural, moral, spiritual, social and emotional. This practice is a collaborative, consultative process. We understand that every child has talents and we want to build on those talents. Adhering to the school spirit helps all students reach their full potential. Every effort is made to create a safe, happy environment in which positive self-esteem is promoted.

Objectives for the implementation of our policy to support children with special needs:

- Ensure that all children access a broad and balanced curriculum and have equal opportunities to an education appropriate to their needs
- Identify and evaluate children with special needs as soon as possible
- Use our resources as efficiently and fairly as possible in assessing and meeting our children's special educational needs
- Provide a phased approach to matching educational provision with children's needs
- Develop a partnership with parents/guardians so that their knowledge, opinions and experiences can help us assess and provide for their children
- Take into account children's wishes and, where possible, involve them directly in decision-making to provide them more effectively
- Ensure co-operation with the Department of Education and Skills to effectively implement on behalf of children with special needs
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and are able to exercise their responsibilities towards children with special needs
- Monitor our effectiveness in achieving the above objectives

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management, the Principal and the staff will make all reasonable efforts within the limits of the resources available to meet the requirements set out in this policy in an attempt to achieve the above objectives.

Board of Management

The Board of Management shall carry out its statutory duties in respect of pupils with special needs. The provision required will be ensured as an integral part of the school development plan. Board members will be aware of the provision of the school's Special Education - funding, equipment and personnel.

Principal - Michelle Ní Thuama

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of special education. She will work closely with a Support team and keep the Board of Management informed of the operation of this policy. She will encourage staff to participate in training to help them achieve the objectives of this policy. In consultation with the Special Education team, she will be in contact with the SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser) on support hours and is responsible for personnel appointments.

- Oversee the day-to-day operation of the Support Policy
- Co-ordinated provision for children with special educational needs

- Liaising and advising other teachers and enhancing staff service training
- Liaising and advising SNAs (Special Needs Assistant) on supporting children with special needs
- Liaising with parents of children with special educational needs
- Monitoring and evaluating the provision of Special Education
- Facilitating planning for a class teacher with a Support teacher

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are fully aware of the content of this policy and the procedures described below. An appropriate service is provided through the Education centre and SESS (Special Education Support Service). All teachers involved in Special Education are known as Support Teachers.

The Support team is deployed in accordance with relevant needs and expertise and commitment. The support teacher works closely with the class teacher who provides in-class support for literacy and numeracy. Students can be withdrawn from mainstream class for a specific purpose (e.g. IT (Information Technology), support in Béarla, Gaeilge, Mata) or for a specific period of time.

Revised Model Allocated (revised allocation model)

Since September 2017, the Department of Education has decided to introduce a revised allocation model for all mainstream schools. Under the revised model, the Department provides special supports to schools based on their educational profiles. This gives stability to school staffing arrangements over a number of years. It provides schools with greater autonomy to flexibly allocate teaching resources, based on pupils' needs, without the need to make a diagnosis. *More information at Circular 0013/2017.

	Setting out the Special Education Needs Policy:
1	Enrolment of Children with Recognised Special Educational Needs
2	Children with Special Needs Revealed After Registration (Phased Approach)
	Step 1: The gradual approach to assessment, identification and programming of the special educational needs of certain children
	Step 2: Teacher Approach to Special Educational Needs
	Step 3: Consult with or redirect to a specialist outside the school for assessment
3	Preparation of an Individual Profile Learning Plan (PFPA) & Individual Education Plan (POA)
4	Inclusion
5	Staff Distribution
6	Collaboration and Communication
7	Resources
8	Transfer of Children to Secondary School
9	Record Keeping
10	Policies involved in this policy

Registration of Children with Recognised Special Needs

The Management Board shall take into account the following acts:

1. Special Educational Needs Education Act 2004
2. Education Act 1998
3. Equal Status Act 2000
4. Disability Education Act 2004

The school will inform itself about the special needs of the child, and the category of these needs - High or Minimum Frequency, by organising the following strategies:

1. Meeting between parent / guardian / principal / class teacher / special needs team and SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser), as appropriate
2. Copies of reports, of assessments etc. from SENO, parents
3. Contact SENO, NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) Psychologist or other psychologist/speech therapist/OT's (Occupational Therapist), document from other Organisations e.g Enable Ireland, HSE (Health Service Executive), Lucena Clinic
4. Children who have received a report before registering will receive support at Stage 3 of the Phased Approach (Circular 02/05)

The school endeavours to facilitate as comfortable a transition to starting in school as possible for the child. If health and safety issues arising from the child's lack of mobility or attention - strategies will be developed to address them. To date the following health and safety issues have been addressed: access, toilets, supervision, administration of medicines and personal care.

2.Children with Special Needs Disclosed after Registration:

(See Circular 02/05 / Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007 / Appendix 1)

Gradual Approach:

Step 1: Identification, Assessment and Programme Planning for pupils with special needs.

Scoil Chualann's Policy is that the Support Team will intervene early. Early intervention has proven to reduce the need for later withdrawal. The class teacher and support teacher meet with parents to discuss concerns.

1. Children in infants classes may be given the B.I.A.P (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile Profile) exam if the class teacher/parents have concerns.
2. First Class children are presented with the MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) exam at the beginning of the school year for assessment.
3. The standard Contract Examinations (Gaeilge, Béarla, Mata) are administered to 1st to 6th classes in the third term.
4. The NNRIIT (New Non-Reading Intelligence Test) is administered in the first term in Rang 3.

Emphasis is placed on both early interventions so that difficulties are resolved early. To this end, there is an emphasis on co-teaching in infant and 1st and 2nd classes. The Support team can provide in-class support. This supports the national literacy and numeracy strategy.

Assessment Strategies:

- Teacher observation
- Tasks and tests designed by teachers
- Examples of work, portfolios and projects (Teachers combine portfolios of examples of pupil assignments (work sheets, projects and classroom examinations). They are placed in a folder and held in the Principal's office. They are signed in by the class teacher at the end of the year and out at the beginning of the school year. Any examples that are not included in the folder are sent home at the end of the term/school year.
- Checklists and profiles
- Assessment Week at the end of each term.
- A 6th Class teacher fills out information on the Standard Passport to be forwarded to secondary school.

If the class teacher has doubts about a particular child during the year, they consult with the principal and learning support staff. If significant concerns have continued to be reviewed on a number of occasions a meeting between the class teacher and parents is organised to discuss an assessment.

A meeting is organised with the Support teacher and parent/guardian before the child moves on to Phase 2.

Step 2: Identify the appropriate support

(ROS Guidelines Learning Support p. 57 and Special Needs Education Support Continuum, Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), 2007)

Diagnostic tests are used in Scoil Chualann (Gaeilge, Béarla, Mata). Diagnostic tests are given to all selected pupils (with the parent's permission) to identify the pupil's strengths and needs. The Support teacher gets the parent's written permission on the standard form for diagnostic tests and withdrawal from class if necessary. If parents refuse permission they will have to confirm this in writing on the standard form. All signature forms will be kept on file.

The principal, classroom teachers and support teachers consult each other to explore and discuss the results of the examinations. Additional teaching is given in consultation with the class teacher. Children can be withdrawn for additional support in English, Math's and Irish. English is taught through the medium of English and Math's through the medium of Irish. Additional support from staff will be given to learning for any child under the 16th percentile.

Withdrawal is continuous or graduates as appropriate. The student's progress is reviewed twice yearly. This review is carried out by the Support team and the class teacher. If the targets set in the IPLP (PFPA) have been achieved additional teaching can be reduced or completed. A decision is made on the reduction or completion of further teaching following an assessment by the Support team and in consultation with the class teacher. Parents are kept informed of any change.

Step 3. Support Team

(See Circular 02/05 and Special Educational Needs Support Continuum - Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007)

Parents participate in the decision to apply for an external specialist assessment. If parents give permission for an educational assessment the child's name is placed on a waiting list. This duty can be delegated to members of the Support team or class teacher. The class teacher will fill out the standard form issued by external organisations in consultation with the Support team and parents.

School applications and reports are written in English to be clear to parents and external services. The principal is responsible for the referral of a pupil and for communicating with external organisations. Assessments are carried out through NEPS according to the order in which the children are on the waiting list. In exceptional cases the principal can prioritise another child if absolutely necessary.

The class teacher discusses the outcomes of these standard examinations with the principal and learning support team to select children for learning support. Priority is given to children at the **16th** or **under the 16th** percentile in the standard examinations.

Class reports, class tests, and professional reports are stored in the school office. An original of the IPLP (PFPA) / IEP (POA) is stored in the office.

3. Preparation of a Individual Profile Learning Plan (IPLP) & Individual Education Plan (POA)
(for pupils of low incidence at Stage 3) see Chapters 2 and 3, Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process, NCSE (National Council for Special Education).

Individual Profile Learning Plan (IPLP)

IPLP is written for children who receive additional support under the general allocation. The Support team is responsible for preparing and co-ordinating this plan (along with the class teacher). Learning plans can be prepared for groups seeking to achieve the same goals.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The provision of education plans for individual pupils is mandated by the EPSEN Act (Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act), 2004. A written document is prepared for a designated pupil using the learning goals of the pupil and the timeline. It also lists teaching strategies, resources and the necessary supports to achieve these goals. An agreed structure for the Individual Education Plan is in use throughout the school. The File for Scoil Chualann is available in school. Information contained in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is available. See page 11. 29 of Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process, NCSE

4 Inclusion

Practical steps are in place to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are as much part of school and classroom life as much as possible. Informal friend system - SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) classes are used to promote inclusiveness, in religion classes we are all taught that we are all special.

5 Staff Allocation

The school endeavours to ensure that the most effective staff allocation has been made to meet all school Special Educational Needs (Circular 02/05 - p. 7, p. 23). Teaching resources have been distributed to pupils according to their needs. Circular 07/02 describes the role of the Special Needs Assistant in supporting pupils with special needs in the school. They are assisted by the Principal.

6 Co-operation and Communication

All school staff will work together for the good of the child - Board of Management, principal, Support team, SNA, class teachers. Parents participate in the process along with the child.

Contact between The Support Team and Class Teachers:

The Support team will work closely with classroom teachers. All support staff will endeavour to consult with school staff as a group, on a regular basis, but at least once a year on issues such as:

- Implement programmes to support learning difficulties
- Selection of pupils for additional teaching
- Interpretation of results of diagnostic assessments
- Plan classroom activities based on agreed learning goals set out in the Individual Learning Profile Programme of each student receiving additional teaching
- Monitor and record students' progress in achieving agreed learning goals
- Support children with learning difficulties who are unable to receive additional teaching or those who have had additional teaching but a decision has been taken to reduce or complete this
- Procedural changes
- Changes in departmental guidelines
- New innovations

- Latest Research
- Listen to and take into account the thoughts, opinions and concerns of staff

Consult with individual classroom teachers regularly to discuss issues such as:

- Implement and design class programmes to enhance learning and prevent learning difficulties.
- Screening of pupils for learning difficulties so that diagnostic assessments can be carried out if necessary.
- Identify students for additional teaching based on results from appropriate screening and diagnostic assessments.
- Develop and implement activities in the classroom as set out in the Individual Profile Learning Plan for each student receiving additional teaching
- Monitor and review the achievement of learning goals set out in the Individual Profile Learning Plan for each student receiving additional teaching
- Provision of ongoing classroom support to pupils not receiving additional learning support.
- Support students with learning difficulties if the school is unable to provide additional teaching (i.e. parents are not satisfied with formal intervention)
- Identification of children with general or characteristics of learning difficulties

Meetings between the Support team and mainstream teachers will be facilitated regularly and oversight will be provided where necessary.

Contact between the special needs team and other professionals

The principal will be responsible for engaging with professionals and external agencies. The principal can coordinate this themselves or nominate a teacher on the team to have contact with external agencies, i.e. psychologists' services to organise assessments and special provision for pupils with special educational needs. The principal is responsible for sending all applications to the Department of Education and Skills with the assistance of the classroom teachers and the learning support team.

7 Resources

The resources used by the Support team are retained in the Learning Support Rooms. Members of the Support team, in consultation with, and with the permission of the principal, can find and purchase additional equipment as required. A certain amount of money has been given to staff learning support to purchase appliances and support materials. These resources are available to the Support team. Classroom teachers can borrow resources in consultation with members of the Support team.

8 Transition to Post-Primary

To assist pupils with special needs to transition smoothly to post-primary education the principal/Support team will meet with the learning support teacher or Support staff co-ordinator from the relevant secondary school. Reports of assessments carried out by educational psychologists and other professionals are transferred to secondary school. Written permission is sought from parents to transfer the documents. Sometimes it's the parents who transfer them.

9 Storage of Records

The Support team will be responsible for recording information about special educational needs. All reports will be stored in the locked office. The records will be private and confidential and permission to view documents or folders will be strictly on request on a need to know basis. Parents will be informed of and have access to documentation contained in the child's file. (Freedom of

Information Act). The reports shall be kept for the time legally set out in the Data Protection Act. (Boards of Management are obliged to send details of pupil attendance and information about their progress between schools when a pupil moves from one school to another Section 28, Education (Welfare) Act 2000).

- A written account of the progress of children is retained by learning support which is forwarded to the principal at the end of the year
- This is also provided to the relevant class teacher
- Children's progress is reviewed at regular intervals and a meeting with classroom teachers is facilitated as part of the follow-up assessment
- Where a child does not need additional assistance outside of class anymore this is discussed with the parents and this is written
- Parents/parents must give written permission if additional outside the class support is required
- If the assistance required is not permitted by the parent/guardian, the 'refusal form' is to be signed

10 Other policies related to this policy

The needs of children with Special Educational Needs are recognised in the curriculum and administrative policies of the school. Each curriculum plan contains a section on differentiation and material and methodology differentiation is an integral part of each individual teacher's long-term and short-term planning. All curriculum and organisational plans contain a section on equality of participation and differentiation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each member of the school staff will be responsible for the successful implementation of the Support / special educational needs policy.

***NOTE: Implementation of learning support has changed during the Covid pandemic (2020/2021)**

Signed: Máire Uí Airmhighe	Signed: Michelle Ní Thuama
Chairperson, Board of Management	Principal
Date: 3 rd October 2021	Date: 3 rd October 2021

Appendix 1

Graduated Approach to Catering for Pupils with Special Educational Needs		
Observing	Process	Participating Persons
<p>Step 1 A teacher/parent has reason to worry about a pupil's academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development.</p>	<p>The class teacher carries out appropriate evaluation steps. The class teacher carries out a plan, with the aim of meeting the pupil's identified needs within a mainstream classroom setting. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents.</p>	<p>Class Teacher Parent Additional Support Available School Home Relations Teacher NEPS Psychologist</p>
<p>If there is still a worry following a number of reviews, the Support Team for special education at the school on adaptation may be consulted on moving on to Phase 2.</p>		
<p>Step 2 The child is passed on to the learning support teacher, with the parent's permission, for further diagnostic testing.</p>	<p>If the diagnostic test indicates that the child would benefit from additional support, additional teaching is organised. The parent, class teacher, and learning support teacher consult with each other to draft, implement and review the student's learning plan.</p>	<p>Class Teacher Learning Support Teacher Parent Additional Support Available School Home Relations Teacher NEPS Psychologist Other staff and support services available to the school</p>
<p>If there is still significant worry following a number of reviews, there may be a need to move on to Phase 3</p>		
<p>Step 3 The school formally applies for consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of a need from an external specialist.</p>	<p>The participating team contributes to a individual learning plan, including the recognition of additional resources designed to implement the plan. Parents should be fully consulted throughout the process. This learning plan should be delivered with regular reviews, resulting in appropriate changes to the plan (special review where necessary). Any private practitioner employed should be directed towards the Circulars of the Department of Education and Science and relevant guidance notes.</p>	<p>Class Teacher Parent Learning Support Teacher Resource Teacher (if any) Relevant Specialist Additional Support Available NEPS Psychology Commissioning of Psychological Assessment Speech and Language Therapist Play Therapist Psychologist Hearing Specialist Pediatrician</p>

Appendix 2 Continuum of School Support

Rationale

1. Tracking students through the continuum of support
2. Record keeping over a period of time
3. Ensuring a continuum of support for the child
4. Encourage parental co-operation and participation in children's learning

Students' initial needs will be catered for through classroom-level interventions - such as differentiated teaching, learning environment or teaching style amendments.

Class Support (orange form)

If a child encounters learning difficulties, difficulties associated with social development or behavioural difficulties, the teacher will commence a continuum of support file.

In some cases the class teacher will have to consult with the learning support team and a home support plan will be developed.

In other cases a class support plan will be more appropriate.

School Support (red form)

The class teacher discusses the results of standard examinations with the principal and learning support staff to select children for learning support. Priority is given to children who are 16th or below the 16th percentile in the standard exams as stated in "School practice on learning support for pupils".

The teacher will provide learning support in consultation with the classroom teacher and parents to develop a school support plan. It is signed by the class teacher, support teacher and principal and a summary of the plan will be given to the parents to sign and bring with them.

The plan is reviewed at regular intervals.

The school support plan will allow the school to record the child's progress and need over a period of time.

School support Plus (green form)

This support begins if it is agreed that students are not making enough progress when reviewing the school support plan. The school may seek assistance from external agencies and support services if any.

This support will be aimed at the most acute children of need and the children who are in receipt of resource time. The School Support Plan plus/Individual Education Plan (IEP) will provide a description of the needs of these children and the interventions they need.

Note 1

The school may seek advice from the NEPS psychologist on a child even if the child is not at school support level/school support plus.

Note 2

A meeting will be held with the NEPS psychologist if possible to discuss cases (plus school support) and ask them to give advice. Priority is given to those who have received assistance and have made little progress.