



Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore NS

Rathmore, Naas, Co. Kildare

Telephone: 045 862145

Fax: 045 862952

Email: office.rathmorens@gmail.com

Web: www.rathmorens.ie

Principal: Mr. Robbie Jameson

Deputy Principal: Ms. Caitriona Lancaster

Special Educational Needs Policy

Introduction

Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore National School is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. It is an 'ordinary' mainstream primary school, catering for a 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, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.

The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Education Needs:

- ❑ 2 Learning Support (GAM)
- ❑ 1 Fulltime Resource Teacher
- ❑ 1 Resource Teacher (based in Rathmore N.S. shared with St. Brigid's N.S. Manor Kilbride)
- ❑ 1 Full Time SNA

Implementation and Review

The implementation of this Policy will commence in May 2016. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

Communication

This policy will be available to view in the school on request.

Aims

The principal aim of Learning Support is to optimise the teaching and learning process so as to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

Our aim is to meet the needs of all children in an inclusive way, irrespective of whether they have physical, sensory, emotional, behavioural, specific or general learning needs.

Specific Objectives of Learning Support/Resource

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- ❑ Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
- ❑ Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning
- ❑ Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability
- ❑ Involve parents in supporting their children's learning
- ❑ Promote collaboration among teachers.

Guiding Principles

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- ❑ Effective whole-school policies
- ❑ Whole school involvement
- ❑ Prevention of failure at infant level
- ❑ Provision of intensive early intervention up to and including second class

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

Learning Support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experiences. It is important that all partners contribute in the planning and implementation of our school plan on learning support.

Board of Management

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- ❑ Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of Learning Support in the school
- ❑ Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Learning Support/Resource Teachers
- ❑ Provide a secure facility for storage of records in relation to pupils in receipt of Learning Support
- ❑ Budget for ongoing support for Professional Development in Learning Support for staff.

Principal

The Principal Teacher has overall responsibility.

The role of the principal is to:

- ❑ Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Learning Support/Resource 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 Learning Support on an ongoing basis
- ❑ Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- ❑ Assume direct responsibility for co-ordination of 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 services that are available and the procedure to be followed in initial referrals
- ❑ Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support.
- ❑ Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and/or special educational services.
- ❑ Help to co-ordinate the caseloads/work schedules of special education teachers.
- ❑ Support the implementation of a tracking system at whole school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties. (Through Aladdin)
- ❑ Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
- ❑ Liaising with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- ❑ Arranging for classroom accommodation and resources as appropriate.
- ❑ Facilitate the implementation of an IEP for students who have been granted low incidence teaching hours by the SENO, through a meeting with a class teacher, special educational teacher(s), Special Needs Assistant(s), parent(s) and possible members of outside agencies.

Class Teacher - First Line of Responsibility

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 on Learning Support/Resource, the class teacher should:

- ❑ Begin to provide Supplementary Teaching (Stage 1) in the classroom. After an initial classroom support plan has failed to address concerns, school support shall be sought.
- ❑ As part of our stage 1 approach to special needs, teachers will complete a Student Support Profile (as designed by NEPS) for any child the teacher has concerns about and who needs a differentiated programme in the classroom. This will be completed in consultation with the child's parents. Parents will be invited in to discuss this support file. They may be requested to complete extra/differentiated work at home as part of the child's homework. This file will be stored with the child's profile folder in the

classroom. It will document all interventions and will be used if the child moves on to stage 2. (See Appendix 1)

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties.
- Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and Maths by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures and by discussing the outcomes with the Special Education Teacher in the context of each pupil's general performance in class.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary/resource teaching, to collaborate with the Learning Support/Resource Teacher in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary/resource teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities.
- Any child who has been diagnosed as having special needs (eg. Educational or clinical psychologist's report/ speech and language report/ O.T. report/psychiatrist's report) should have a differentiated plan of work in place. Mostly, this will be in the form of their I.E.P/I.P.L.P., but it may be in the form of the Student Support File mentioned above.

With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:

- Such children should be prioritised when accessing information from previous class teacher
- Priority when establishing parental contact
- Putting a Student Support Profile in place.
- Group teaching
- Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise 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 a 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.

The Class Teacher - in collaboration with the Learning Support/Resource Teacher

A key element of successful Learning Support is consultation and co-operation between the class teacher and the special education teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of I.P.L.P/I.E.P.s.

Learning Support Teacher

The role of the Learning Support Teacher is to:

- ❑ Conduct an initial assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having low achievement and/or a learning disability.
- ❑ Develop an individual profile and learning programme for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents
- ❑ Maintain a planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Learning Support
- ❑ Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school's selection criteria
- ❑ Contribute to the development of policy on Learning Support at whole school level
- ❑ Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- ❑ Communicate details of reports and Irish exemptions to class teachers each September.
- ❑ Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Learning Support room
- ❑ Perform a defined role in co-ordinating the provision of Special Needs and Learning Support services in the school
- ❑ Liaise with external agencies such as psychologist to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs
- ❑ Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support
- ❑ Track the progress of pupils who have discontinued Learning Support, in consultation with the class teachers.

Special Needs Assistant

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist schools in providing the necessary non-teaching services to pupils with assessment needs. Their duties are assigned by the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management. Their work is supervised either by the Principal or another teacher as determined by the Principal. Those duties

involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

1. Preparation and tidying up of classrooms.
2. Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required.
3. Special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs pupils with typing or writing or computers or other use of equipment.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil.
5. Assisting on out of school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal with duties on a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class or group of children).
9. Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
10. Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.
11. Other duties appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. Special Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the grade when special needs pupils are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise. (see appendix 1)

Prevention Strategies

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

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of Maths, e.g. our whole school approach to the Language of Tables and Subtraction
- Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings, as well as ongoing collaboration with Parents' Association.

- To provide opportunities for parents to understand the various approaches the school uses in the teaching of reading and maths; e.g., phonics, subtraction etc., resulting we hope in continuity between home and school. Meetings, information leaflets etc.
- Some in-class based early intervention by the Learning Support Team.
- Some in-class support, especially in senior classes, to assist with Station Teaching/Literacy Hour.
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher.

Whole School Procedures and Criteria for Identifying and Selecting pupils for Supplementary Teaching

Selection of Pupils for Learning Support

- The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils, up to and including Second Class are given priority in the allocation of Learning Support
- In Junior infants pupils are screened using teacher observation.
- Stage 1 in the provision of Supplementary Teaching shall begin in the classroom. If an initial classroom support plan has failed to address concerns, school support shall be sought (Stage 2).
- From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests and diagnostic tests. These include Drumcondra Reading Tests and Sigma-t Maths (Rang1 to Rang 6), Micra-T Reading (First term First Class), Quest English and Maths (February First Class), M.I.S.T (5th term of School) and N.R.I.T (Third Class). For further information see School Assessment Policy.
- In the allocation of places for Learning Support, the following are prioritised:
 1. Infant pupils identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in literacy.
 2. Priority for Learning Support in literacy and numeracy is given to those pupils Rang 1 to Rang 6 who perform at or below the 12th Percentile, excluding in the main, pupils who receive Resource Teaching.
 3. Where the class teacher has implemented a behaviour programme (Behaviour Checklist AD2, page 83-86 Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties Guidelines) and a pupil's behaviour continues to impact on the learning within a classroom, it may be deemed necessary to offer assistance in the form of withdrawal or in class support.
 4. Children from First and Second class at or below the 25th percentile in literacy.

5. Children from First and Second Class at or below the 25th percentile in numeracy.
6. Children from 3rd to 5th class at or below the 25th percentile in literacy.
7. Children from Rang 3 to Rang 5, at or below the 25th percentile in numeracy
8. Recommendations based on psychological reports, where appropriate, will be taken into account when considering children for Learning Support.
9. Senior Infants, identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in numeracy for the second block.
10. In-class support, especially in senior classes, to assist with Station Teaching/Literacy Hour.
11. If there is a space available in Learning Support, accommodations will be made for pupils who may score above the 25th percentile but who are experiencing difficulties in class. These pupils will be identified by the class teacher through continuous assessment, teacher observation and performance in standardised tests. Other considerations such as Speech and language will also be taken into account.

Provision of Supplementary/Resource Teaching by the Special Education Teacher

The provision of supplementary teaching is the main role of the Special Education Teacher.

- The primary work of the Learning Support/Resource Teachers is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above
- The school year will be divided into 2 Instructional Terms of approximately 18 weeks each.
- The maximum case load at any one time shall be 30 pupils.
- Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency and duration.
- A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the individual pupil.
- The Class Teacher and the Learning Support/Resource Teacher will meet to devise an Individual Education Plan (in consultation with the Principal and parents) and Individual Pupil Learning Profiles.
- If the pupil is in receipt of Resource teaching to address other needs, e.g. behavioural problems, sensory difficulty, it may also be appropriate to provide supplementary teaching.
- Maintain a record of the attendance of pupils at supplementary teaching sessions.
- The Learning Support/Resource Teachers will maintain the following documentation in individualised files/folders:
 1. Individual Profile and Learning programme/Individual Educational Plan
 2. Short term planning and programme record
 3. Samples of written work (in each child's folder)

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) / Individual Pupil Learning Profile (IPLP)

The Individual Educational Plan / IPLP will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000.

The plan will address the 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
- ❑ Home Support Activities.

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation; the keeping of planning and progress records.

A detailed review will take place at the end of each Instructional Term. The Learning Support/Resource Teachers are available to meet the parents to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review.

Criteria for Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

- ❑ Following the end of Instructional Term review as detailed above, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of Supplementary Teaching.
- ❑ The decision making process involves consultation between the Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher and account is also taken of the overall Learning Support demands in the school.
- ❑ The criteria on which the decision will be made include:
 1. A consideration as to whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets set
 2. A consideration as to whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi independently in the classroom learning context
- ❑ A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's IEP / IPLP.
- ❑ Parents will be informed if their child will exit from supplementary teaching.

Whole School approach to Timetabling for Supplementary Teaching

The school plan indicates when supplementary teaching can be provided to pupils during the school day.

- ❑ The provision of Learning Support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths

- Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend Learning Support/Resource. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher, though class disruption must be minimised.
- The provision of Learning Support/Resource may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition
- In class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and the Learning Support/Resource Teachers.

Procedures for the Provision of Resources

- Resources for the provision of Learning Support include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.
- Learning Support resources will be used in the learning Support Room solely.

Procedure for Referring pupils to out of School Agencies

- The Learning Support/Resource Teacher co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist, Speech Therapist
- The Principal and/or Learning Support/Resource Teacher and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent
- The Class Teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
- The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, Class Teacher and the Learning Support/Resource Teacher as appropriate, and the assessment is conducted
- This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.

Selection of children for Intervention:

The triggers for intervention for resource could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme the child

- Makes little or no progress over a long period of time
- Continues to work at Primary Curriculum levels substantially below that of children of a similar age
- Continues to have literacy and/or numeracy difficulties

- Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's learning, or that of other children, despite an appropriate behaviour management programme and IEP
- Has sensory and/ or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service
- Has an ongoing communication or difficulty that prevents social development, and acts as a barrier to learning.

Approaches to Involving Parents

The role of parents supporting the Learning Support for their children is vital to its success. Specifically, parents contribute through:

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher
- 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 the library
- Developing the child's oral language
- Developing the child's social mathematics and tables

Parents are encouraged to contact the Special Educational Teacher if any difficulties arise during an instructional term and to attend a meeting during the first instructional block. If a decision is taken to continue to provide supplementary teaching, parents of resource children are invited to discuss revised learning targets and activities.

Whole School 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:

- Class Teacher and the Learning Support/Resource Teacher following a low score on a screening test
- Principal and/or Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval of further diagnostic assessment and/or provision of supplementary teaching
- Regular communication between the Learning Support Teacher and the Class Teacher.
- Regular communication between the Learning Support Teacher and parents

Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupils learning in the following ways:

- Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of Learning Support based on positive assessment results
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupil's progress.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 25th April 2016.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management