



Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore NS

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Whole School Policy for SEN Provision.

This Policy on SEN Provision in Scoil Chéile Chríost, Rathmore N.S. was ratified in 2018 and updated in 2022, taking cognisance of the directives contained in:

- The 1998 Education Act;
- The Learning-Support Guidelines (2000/2017/2020).
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004;
- Department of Education and Skill Circulars, especially Circular 13/17 and 02/05.

This Policy was discussed and further developed by the teaching staff of Scoil Chéile Chríost, Rathmore N.S. in February 2022.

The Policy was discussed, accepted and ratified by the Board of

Management of Scoil Chéile Chríost, Rathmore N.S. on 16th February 2022.

Signature of Chairperson: _____

Date: 16th February 2022

Whole School Policy for SEN Provision (2022).

This Policy on SEN Provision in Scoil Chéile Chríost, Rathmore N.S. contains the following elements:

- 1. Situation.**
- 2. Aims of SEN Support.**
- 3. Principles and Continuum of Support**
- 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities.**
 - 4.1 Role of the Board of Management.**
 - 4.2 Role of the Principal Teacher.**
 - 4.3 Role of SEN Co-ordinator**
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 - 4.5 Role of the Support Teacher.**
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 - 4.7 Role of Parents.**
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- 5.0 Prevention and Early Intervention.**
 - 5.1 Prevention Strategies.**
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 - 6.5 Allocating Additional Teaching Supports.**
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 - 6.8 Review of this SEN Policy.**
- 7. Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching.**
- 8. Monitoring Progress.**
- 9. Liaising with Parents.**
 - 9.1 Communication with Parents**
 - 9.2 Principal Teacher Liaising with Parents.**
 - 9.3 Class Teacher Liaising with Parents.**
 - 9.4 Support Teacher Liaising with Parents.**
- 10. Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy.**

1. Situation.

Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore National School is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. It is a 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 (2021-2022) has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Education Needs:

- ❑ 4 Fulltime S.E.N. Teachers
- ❑ 7 S.E.N. hours (Teacher based in Caragh N.S.)
- ❑ 2.83 SNAs
- ❑ CLASS Hours: 375 Hours for the 2021-2022 school year.

2.Aims of SEN Support

- To support the inclusion of SEN pupils in primary schools using a whole school approach.
- To ensure that the Staged Approach / NEPS Continuum of Support Guidelines are implemented.
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in English and /or Mathematics.
- To enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum.
- To encourage differentiation in the classroom.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils.
- To support attainment, and behavioural, social and emotional function in pupils.
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of inclusive whole-school policies on learning support for pupils.

3. Principles.

"The intensity of additional support that is provided for pupils with low achievement and pupils with special educational needs should be based on their needs and should be provided differentially through the continuum of support process" (Circular 13/17: p. 16).

Effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Quality of teaching. "Research has consistently shown that the quality of teaching is the most critical factor in enhancing pupils' learning and educational experiences" (2017 Guidelines: p. 27)
- Effective whole-school policies
- Resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils and those pupils with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support.
- Implementation of a staged approach to support provision at *Class Support / School Support/ School Support Plus*.
- Provision of the Model of intervention appropriate for the pupil which reflects the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and the difficulty they are experiencing, with the overall aim of striking a balance between in-class support, group and individual support.

1. Withdrawal Models:

- (a) 1:1 interventions (vital when difficulties are very significant/specialised; when pupil needs do not match to form a small group.

(b) Small group interventions

"There appears to be little evidence to date that in-class models of support are effective in teaching reading. Shinn et al. (1997) found that an in-class model of support was not effective in raising the achievement of failing readers. Not surprisingly, many of the highly effective intervention programmes reviewed by Brooks (2007) are delivered in one to one or small group settings" (NEPS, 2015) http://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Information/NEPS/LiteracyResource/neps_literacy_good_practice_guide.pdf

2. In-Class Support Models: Station Teaching / Team Teaching / Peer tutoring etc...

- Parental involvement
- Collaboration between Teachers
- Maintenance of Support Plans by Class Teachers and Support Teachers at *Class Support / School Support / School Support Plus*
- Thorough Assessment procedures
- Regular contact with SEN pupils
- Manageable caseloads / timetables
- Prevention of failure
- Provision of intensive early intervention/prevention
- Support from Outside Agencies
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

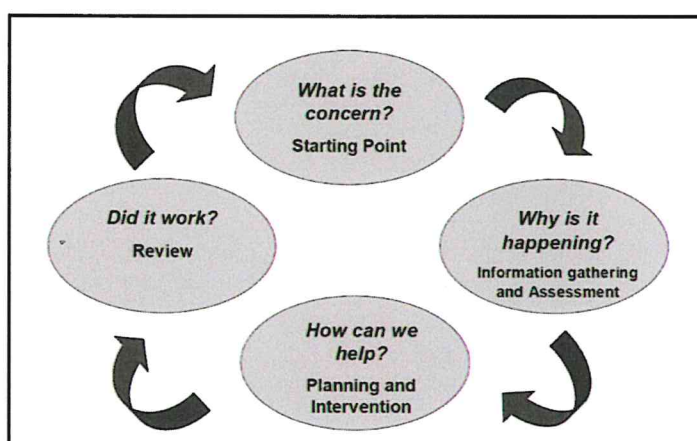
Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs

Continuum of Support

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education (DES) to identify and support children with additional needs. Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The *Continuum of Support* is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

The Continuum of Support Suggests the Following Levels of Support:

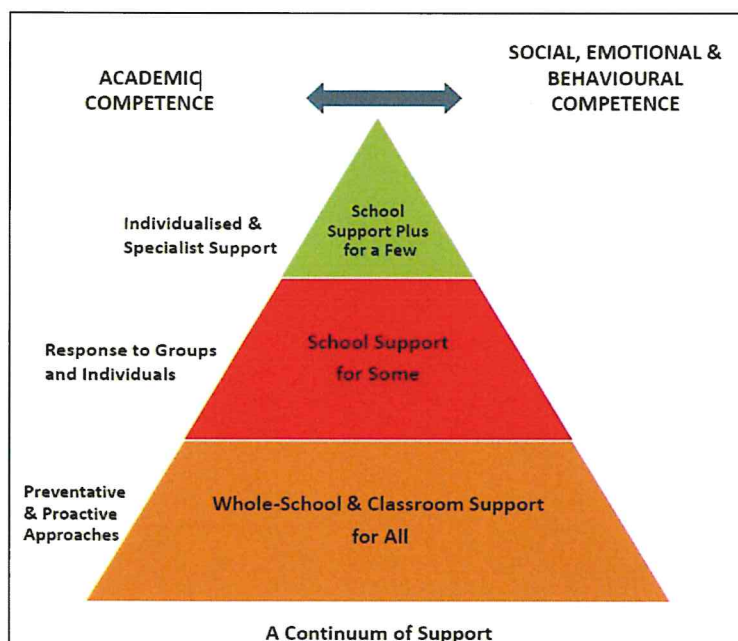
STAGE 1 CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and/or emotional, social or behavioural needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher, SEN Teacher (where appropriate) and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. *Classroom Support* incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

STAGE 2 SCHOOL SUPPORT

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. *School Support* may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a *School Support Plan*.

STAGE 3 SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS



If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. *School Support Plus* will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. *Classroom support* and *School Support* will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan (IEP)

A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities.

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all the school community: - The Board of Management; Principal Teacher; Class Teachers; Support Teachers; SNAs; Parents; Pupils and External Bodies & Agencies. It is important that everyone contributes to the implementation of our school plan on SEN Provision.

4.1 Role of the Board of Management.

"The special education teaching supports cannot be used to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Neither can they be used to allow any special education teacher sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class" (2017 Guidelines: p. 5)

The Board of Management shall:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on Special Educational Needs.
- Ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation is provided for the Support Teachers.
- Ensure that teaching resources are provided for the Support Teachers.
- Provide adequate funds for the purchase of SEN materials.
- Provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SEN.

4.2 Role of the Principal Teacher.

"The principal teacher has overall responsibility for the school's learning-support programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs". (Learning Support Guidelines 2000).

The Education Act (1998) and the EPSEN Act (2004) have all reiterated this responsibility, along with Circular 13/17 and the accompanying Guidelines (201/2020)

The Principal Teacher is required to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of inclusive whole school policies on special needs in co-operation with the Support Teachers.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles.
- Work with teachers in the development of the school plan on learning-support and special needs.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN and special needs on an ongoing basis.
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with very low achievement.
- 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 procedures to be followed for initial referrals.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers, and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Liaise regularly with the Support Teachers.
- Arrange classroom accommodation for Support Teachers.
- Arrange for the provision of SEN funding and resources.
- Organise and co-ordinate the construction of Support Plans. Ensure that individualised planning takes place.

- Ensure that pupils who have been allocated SEN provision receive it.
- Organise the funding and provision of appropriate assessment tests.
- Complete application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE; NEPS; CAMHS etc...
- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordinating SEN and special needs services.
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and / or special educational services.
- Co-ordinate the caseloads / work schedules of the Support Teachers.
- Oversee and organise the implementation of a tracking system at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties.
- Advise Parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Co-ordinate and organise SNAs' work and timetabling.

4.3 Roles of SEN Co-ordinator

A SEN Co-ordinator currently undertakes the following duties, delegated to her by the Principal Teacher (to be undertaken in conjunction with the Principal)

Policy:

- (1) Taking responsibility for formulating and updating the school's SEN policy.
- (2) Collaborating with the Principal Teacher and meeting with her at least once each school year to discuss issues relating to the development and implementation of the school plan on SEN, and to the provision of SEN.

Selection:

- (1) Monitoring the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching with the Principal, ensuring that support is focused on pupils with the greatest need.
- (2) Identifying the level of support that is needed to meet the pupil's needs, in conjunction with the Principal, Class Teacher and Parents.
- (3) Assisting the Principal Teacher to co-ordinate the caseloads / work schedules of the Support Teachers.

Assessment:

- (1) Overseeing 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.
- (2) Consulting with Class Teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment, considering: the pupils' scores on an appropriate standardised screening measure; teachers' own views of the pupils' difficulties and needs; Support Teacher caseload.
- (3) Co-ordinating comprehensive diagnostic assessment for each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and / or learning difficulties.
- (4) Keeping teachers informed about external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals, when requested. Researching current assessments for primary schools.

Support Plans:

- (1) Advising the Principal Teacher on the construction of Support Plans in accordance in the 2017 Guidelines

- (2) Advising the Principal on current individualised planning best practice, when requested.
- (3) Advising Class teachers and Support Teachers about Support Plans, when requested.

Co-ordination Activities:

- (1) Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching at each stage of the Continuum of Support - *Classroom Support / School Support / School Support Plus*.
- (2) Distributing copies of relevant reports to all teachers in September and collecting in June.
- (3) Advising Parents on procedures for availing of special needs services, when requested.
- (4) Advising Class Teachers on procedures for availing of special needs services when requested.
- (5) Liaising with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- (6) Supporting the Principal Teacher to implement a tracking system at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties.
- (7) Advising the Principal Teacher about pupils who have been allocated SEN provision, when requested.
- (8) Completing application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE; NEPS; CAMHS etc..., in collaboration with Class Teachers and the Principal Teacher, as required.
- (9) Advising on Transition, when requested.

4.4 Role of the Class Teacher.

Effective teaching and learning:

- The Learning Support Guidelines (2000) advocate a significant change in the role of the Class Teacher, in terms of increasing emphasis on differentiation and consultation with the Support Teacher and with Parents. Circular 13/17 reiterates that position.
- The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in her / his class, including those selected for supplementary teaching.
"Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p. 12).
"A particular responsibility of the class teacher is to create a classroom environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated" (Learning-Support Guidelines 2000 p. 42).

This can be achieved by:

- Grouping pupils for instruction
- Providing lower-achieving pupils with strategies for reading, spelling and problem solving
- Adapting learning materials for lower-achieving pupils and higher achieving pupils (through differentiation)
- Liaising closely with their Parents.

All class teachers receive copies of professional reports for children in their classes (educational psychological/O.T./Speech and Language/A.O.N.). Teachers will read these reports and implement recommendations that can be supported in the classroom. These recommendations can form part of the *Classroom Support File*. Teachers will ensure that these reports are kept in a secure, locked cabinet for the duration of the school year.

"Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued... classroom teachers should ensure that they plan their

lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom... adapt their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p.12).

"Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p.13)

- "To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons. This can be achieved by:
 - Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
 - Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests
 - Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
 - Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology.
 - *Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly" (2020 Guidelines: p.13).*
 - *"Teachers can make lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access" (2020 Guidelines: p.13).*
- With regard to teaching pupils, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:
 - Modifying presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
 - Placing an emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
 - Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills of literacy and numeracy
 - Setting learning targets at an appropriate level
 - Providing learning activities and materials 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, for particular attention in subsequent lessons
 - Setting up 'buddy systems' in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers) if required.

Identification of Learning Difficulties:

- The Class Teacher plays a key role in the initial identification of pupils who may have general or specific learning disabilities.
- In supporting the development and implementation of the school SEN Policy, the Class Teacher will administer and score appropriate screening measures and discuss the outcomes with the Support Teacher(s).
- The Class Teacher will liaise closely with Parents and elicit relevant information from them regarding e.g. hearing / vision checks.

Classroom Support / Stage 1:

- Circular 02/05 demands the implementation of a Staged Approach for the provision of additional support, as does the NEPS Continuum of Support.

- Stage 1 of the Staged Approach and NEPS' Classroom Support requires Class Teachers to support their pupils' learning, in the first instance.
- Stage 1 / Classroom Support will continue when School Support / School Support Plus is being phased out or discontinued, to meet the pupil's changing needs.

Support Plans:

- The Staged Approach requires Class Teachers to construct a simple, individual plan of support, to implement the plan and review its success regularly, before referring the child for Stage 2 interventions. The Class Teacher will open a *Support Plan* for the pupil *at Stage 1 / Classroom Support* level of interventions, including S.M.A.R.T. targets, interventions and progress.
- Circular 02/05 demands that, "*Interventions with pupils at stages 2 and 3 should include a classroom support plan to ensure that the pupils' needs are met for the whole school day*" (p.7).

The Class Teacher will collaborate to complete and update the Support Plan at *School Support and School Support Plus*.

- Log actions in the Support Plan.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at *School Support / School Support Plus*, the Class Teacher will collaborate with the Support Teacher in the development of a Support Plan by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, the Class Teacher will adjust the class programme in line with the agreed learning targets and activities in the pupil's Support Plan and maintain a record of the pupil's progress towards achieving those learning targets.
- A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the Support Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Support Plans. This consultation will be achieved through formal timetabling at least once per instructional term, and through informal consultation as the need arises. The school year is divided into two instructional blocks: Nov – March; March – Oct.

Communicating with Parents:

- It is accepted practice for Class Teachers to consult with the Parents of all pupils in the class from time to time. However, for Parents of pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching, additional time should be devoted to consultation and collaborative planning.
- In the case of each pupil who has been identified as having a special educational need following administration of an appropriate screening measure, the Class Teacher should:
 - (i) Make Parents aware of concerns about their child's progress.
 - (ii) Outline the support that is available to pupils with special educational needs (Classroom Support / School Support or School Support Plus).
 - (iii) Collaborate with Parents and Support Teachers on the formation of a Support Plan.
 - (iv) Indicate to Parents how the pupil's class programme will be modified to achieve the agreed learning targets in the pupil's Support Plan.
- Parental permission for school-based tests / assessments is sought for all children with support plans.

4.5 Role of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Teacher

Support Teacher activities should include both teaching and non-teaching duties. According to the Learning-Support Guidelines (2000):

“The particular balance that the Learning-Support Teacher achieves between supplementary teaching and consultative activities will depend on the specific circumstances of the school” (p. 32).

The Support Teacher’s activities should include, where possible:

- Providing supplementary teaching commensurate with the child’s particular and individual needs.
- Researching the pupil’s learning difficulty / SEN, to become au-fait with this impediment to learning.
- Reading all reports relevant to their S.E.N. pupils and ensuring same are included in Student Support Files, liaising with class teacher to prioritise recommendations for instructional term.
- 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" (2017 Guidelines p.13).
- Implementing suitable recommendations from outside agencies, wherever possible, and liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children on their caseload.
- Supporting class teachers in the implementation of recommendations in reports.
- Developing a Support Plan for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with Class Teachers and Parents. *"Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, should plan their interventions carefully to address pupils’ priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant Continuum of Support Plan"* (2017/2020 Guidelines p.14).
- Maintaining a Forward Planner and Progress Record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of support.
- Providing supplementary teaching in English and / or Mathematics to pupils who experience low achievement and / or learning difficulties at *School Support / School Support Plus* (as per Selection Criteria).
- Delivering early intervention programmes, caseload and selection criteria permitting.
- Assisting the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Contributing to the development of policy on SEN at the whole school level.
- Providing advice to the Class Teacher (if requested) about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties in such areas as:
 - Individual pupil assessment
 - Programme planning
 - Curriculum differentiation
 - Approaches to language development
 - Approaches to reading
 - Approaches to spelling
 - Approaches to writing
 - Approaches to Mathematics
 - Behaviour difficulties
- Meeting with Class Teachers of each pupil who is in receipt of *School Support / School Support Plus*, to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported throughout the school day.
- Meeting with Parents of each pupil who is in receipt of support, if possible, to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
- Meeting with Parents of each pupil who is in receipt of School Support Plus at the end of each instructional term
 - To review the pupil’s attainment of agreed targets
 - To discuss the next instructional term
 - To revise the pupil’s Support Plan.

- Contributing at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Support Teacher's room.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc...
- Implementing school policies on screening pupils for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching, where it is deemed necessary.
- In addition to providing supplementary teaching to pupils, the Support Teacher is involved in administering a range of formal and informal assessments and in maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments. The Support Teachers shall:
 - Conduct an initial assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having a special educational need, based on results of an appropriate screening measure and record the findings of the assessment in the pupil's Support Plan.
 - Monitor 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 record the observations in the Forward Planner and Progress Record, or equivalent.
 - Review the progress of each pupil at the end of an instructional term and record it on the pupil's Support Plan.
 - Log actions in the Support Plan.
- *"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 classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p. 13)*

4.6 Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNAs)

The purpose of the SNA scheme is to provide for the significant additional care needs, which some pupils with special educational needs may have. 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.

□ 1. Primary Care Needs SNA Tasks:

An SNA's role is to carry out duties based on the Primary Care Needs of the pupil (Circular 30/2014).

These may include:

- Assistance with feeding: Where a pupil with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.
- Administration of medicine: Where a pupil requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene: Where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation: On an ongoing basis including assisting a pupil or pupils to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a pupil to access school transport), or to help a pupil to avoid hazards in

or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards).

- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds: At recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision.
- Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: Such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a pupil may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of pupils, operation of hoists and equipment.
- 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. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc...

The tasks noted above are the primary care support tasks for which access to SNA support is provided.

□ 2. Secondary Care Associated Tasks (SNA Tasks):

The following tasks are the type of secondary care associated tasks which SNAs will often perform, but only once they have been allocated on the basis of the primary care support tasks listed above. The indicative list of secondary associated tasks listed below is not definitive and is reflective of the tasks detailed in Circulars 08/02 and 71/2011.

The associated support tasks which may be carried out 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. To assist with cleaning of materials.
- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
- Assist Teachers and / or Principal in maintaining a journal and care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with Class Teachers and other Teachers such as the Resource Teacher and School Principal, attending meetings with Parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.

☐ Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including Class Teachers or support teachers.

☐ Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

4.7 Role of Parents.

"Parents through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child's learning programmes" (Learning-Support Guidelines 2000, p.52).

"Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p. 23).

Parents can support the work of the school in supporting their child by:

- Providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy and mathematical activities in the early years before formal schooling begins.
- Supporting the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as:
 - Working on agreed Targets in the Support Plan at home.
 - Using "Mindful Tuesday" as an opportunity to help child in a fun, informal way
 - Book sharing / reading stories
 - Storytelling
 - Paired reading (listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading)
 - Discussions about school and other activities to build vocabulary and thinking skills
 - Writing lists and short accounts about children's experiences
 - Counting and measuring and other activities involving number
 - Visits to the zoo, museum, library etc... to broaden the range of their child's experiences
 - Using Information and Communications Technology (ICTs), where available, to support learning in English and / or Mathematics
 - Talking positively about school and schoolwork.
 - Availing of real-life situations to discuss the importance of language, literacy and mathematics.
 - Modelling involvement in language, literacy and mathematical activities at home by engaging in and talking about these activities.
- Parents should keep the Class Teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home. If, following diagnostic assessment, the child has been identified as requiring supplementary teaching, the Parents should attend a meeting with the Support Teacher to discuss:
 - The results of the assessment
 - The learning targets in the child's Support Plan
 - The ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
- At the discontinuation of supplementary teaching, discuss with their child's teachers how the child's future learning needs can continue to be met at school and at home.

4.8 Role of Pupils.

"Good engagement and participation in their own education has many associated benefits for pupils. This

is particularly important for pupils with special educational needs and can help enhance their academic and social and emotional outcomes" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p. 24).

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

- Outline his / her interests, aspirations, strengths (where appropriate)
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.
- Contribute to the selection of texts and other learning materials that are relevant to the attainment of their learning targets (where possible)
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning.

4.9 Role of External Bodies and Agencies.

"Support and guidance is available to teachers from external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the NCSE Support Service, the Inspectorate, and allied health professionals. It is important that schools have established procedures / protocols for liaising with these services and bodies to optimise the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs at the individual, group or whole-school level. This is especially important for those pupils with more significant and enduring needs who benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach to identification of need and the development of interventions.

The needs of many pupils span both health and education services. Health services (HSE and HSE-funded services) will continue to play a key role in early identification, assessment and diagnosis, intervention and review for pupils with special educational needs.

It is important that schools are familiar with the range of health services in their locality, including referral pathways. Co-ordination is enhanced when schools liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and when they facilitate meetings between parents and various support services. Schools should endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p. 25).

5.0 Prevention and Early Intervention.

Prevention / early intervention is a cornerstone of supporting learning.

5.1 Prevention Strategies.

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class. (See Plean Scoile for English and for Mathematics).
- Careful development of phonological awareness and rhyming skills in the classroom, before the introduction of formal reading of words and books.
- The use of concrete materials at every opportunity.
- 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.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Infant Teachers and the Support Teachers.
- Thorough Assessment procedures throughout the school.

- Provision of early intervention programmes/additional support in language development / early literacy / early mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- Maintaining small numbers in infant classes where possible.

5.2 Early Intervention Programmes.

- Early intervention is a vital component of the NEPS Continuum of Support model.
- Early intervention programmes may be provided by the Class Teacher and / or by the Support Teacher, in accordance with the Staged Approach and the NEPS Continuum.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the Support Teachers 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 in the early primary classes can be an effective response to meeting the needs of children with special educational needs. Such programmes will:
 - Be set within a specific time frame
 - Involve small group teaching or one-to-one teaching where small group teaching has not been effective / difficulties are significant
 - Include a strong focus on oral language, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and further development of language and comprehension skills
 - Emphasise the development of phonemic awareness
 - Develop phonic skills, once phonological awareness has been developed well
 - Develop word identification skills
 - Engage the pupils in frequent supervised oral and silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty and monitor their comprehension
 - Stress the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Focus on language development in mathematics, and in the development of mathematical procedures and concepts.
 - In September 2018, a new graded reading scheme (Engage Literacy) was introduced in Senior Infants. This scheme has proved very successful and is expanded every year to include new titles and a greater range within each level.

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

6.1: Parental Permissions:

Written parental permissions are required for children who receive *School Support / School Support Plus*. From 2020 onwards, consent forms are emailed to parents and they must accept by return email. They can also consent to diagnostic testing through email.

6.2: Initial Screening:

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

6.3 Diagnostic Assessment:

The Support Teacher will discuss each class's recorded results with the Class Teacher and carry out further screening tests and / or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary. The results of these tests will inform the caseload selection process.

6.4 Selection Criteria:

Selection Criteria for Providing Pupils with Additional Teaching Support:

1. Class Teacher (NEPS' Classroom Support):

Pupils deemed to need additional support with their learning (literacy & numeracy) and / or specific needs (oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning) will be supported in the classroom by the Class Teacher.

2. Support Teacher (NEPS' School Support and School Support Plus):

The Support Teacher may provide additional support for the following pupils, through withdrawal (1:1 or in a small group) or in-class support (e.g. station teaching / team teaching / in-class support / peer tutoring), depending on the child's needs.

The following selection criteria encompasses current DES Circulars, Guidelines and general good practice. The school will select pupils in accordance with these criteria, starting at point (1) and continuing on through the selection criteria until caseloads / timetables are full.

"Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p. 19).

1. Pupils previously in receipt of "Resource hours (L.I.T.H.)" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
2. Pupils diagnosed as having "Low Incidence Learning Disabilities". (Since resource hour allocation stopped).
3. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy (to allow for a margin of error).
4. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics (to allow for a margin of error).
5. Pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) i.e.
 - (a) pupils who arrive to our school without any English
 - (b) pupils who have lived in Ireland less than two years, and whose English needs further support.
6. Pupils with educational /multidisciplinary/speech and language/ O.T. assessments who continue to experience significant learning difficulties and whose needs can not be adequately met with classroom support.
7. Early intervention in Literacy - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
8. Early intervention in Mathematics - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early numeracy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.

9. Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy, who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.

10. Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in mathematics, who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.

11. Pupils experiencing difficulties with oral language / social interaction /behaviour / emotional development / application to learning, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.

12. Transition to Post-Primary School (if required)

13. Gifted Pupils (those scoring above the 95th percentile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments and / or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a "superior IQ"), where their needs can not be adequately met within the classroom.

6.5 Allocating Additional Teaching Supports:

The 3 Steps from the 2017/2020 Guidelines

Step 1: Identify Needs - *"The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables schools to gather and analyse data"* (2017/2020 Guidelines: p.6).

Step 2: Meeting Needs -

"Having identified a pupil's needs and the educational planning required to meet those needs, this second step emphasises the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies. The benefits of early-intervention and prevention programmes are highlighted. Guidance is also provided on target-setting" (2020 Guidelines: p.16).

See also the sections in this policy that address:

- Roles of everybody involved in our whole-school policy
- Prevention and early intervention
- Maintaining Support Plans at each level of support.

Target Setting: Good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with special education needs.

Best practice indicates that targets should be S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based) and few in number; they should be informed by priority learning needs and directly linked to suitable interventions. Targets should be based on the evidence collected through both formal and informal assessment approaches. Schools should consult with parents when setting targets and reviewing progress.

"Targets should be expressed in a way that is measurable and observable and should reflect the specific special educational needs of individual pupils (for example, focus on social and emotional difficulties if that is a primary area of concern). While targets should be achievable within a specified time frame, they should also challenge and build on existing knowledge and address pupils' holistic needs" (2017/2020 Guidelines: p. 16).

Step 3: Monitor and Record Progress -

Determine current level of performance ► Identify specific time-bound targets ► Measure progress.

"In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning." (2017/2020 Guidelines: p.19).

6.6 Staff Meetings.

SEN provision in our school will be included on the agenda for staff meetings at least once per instructional term. Any shared Support Teachers attend staff meetings at their base schools.

6.7 Parent-Teacher Meetings.

The nature of SEN support means that meetings with parents are on-going and regular. Shared Support Teachers will fulfil the 'out of school' requirement of parent-teacher meetings at the base school.

6.8 Review of this SEN Policy.

At least one meeting per year will accomplish regular review of the policy.

7. Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching.

- An instructional term is generally taken to mean 13-20 weeks of instruction.
- Supplementary teaching will normally be discontinued where the targets have been met and the pupil (on assessment) is performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some pupils (who have made satisfactory progress), for the Support Teacher to provide early intervention / prevention for Senior Infants, after for example the analysis of the MIST screening test results in February (pupils who have not responded to Stage One interventions by the class teacher, under the Staged Approach).
- Due consideration will be given to the overall needs of the school and all of its pupils.

8. Monitoring Progress.

Monitoring the academic progress of the pupils in this school will be accomplished by:

- Implementing Step 3 of the 2017/2020 Guidelines, as previously mentioned in this policy.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties by the Class Teacher.
- Formal and informal testing and observation of work by the Class Teacher.
- Implementing the school policies on screening and the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in English and / or in Mathematics by administering and scoring appropriate measures.
- Standardised assessments administered by the Class Teacher.
- Diagnostic testing administered by the Support Teacher.
- Record keeping (Children have a file in their classroom where records, test results and assessments are kept in a secure filing cabinet). Results of tests are also on "Aladdin".
- Support Plans - opened, maintained and updated by Class Teachers at Classroom Support level.
- Support Plans - opened, maintained and updated by both Class Teachers and Support Teachers at School Support / School Support Plus level.

- Non-academic progress of pupils in this school can be reviewed informally: eg: under the headings of improvements in the pupil's self-esteem; school attendance; attitude to learning; attitude to school and general behaviour.

9.0 Liaising with Parents.

Effective communication with parents is critically important to the success of a support programme.

9.1 Communication with Parents.

- Teachers will take every opportunity to make parents familiar with the purpose and procedures of the school's support team.
- Parents will be encouraged to support their child's learning through:
 - Developing children's oral language through discussion
 - Motivating children to read more
 - Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive
 - Selecting books that interest children
 - Counting, measuring and other activities involving number.

9.2 Principal Teacher Liaising with Parents.

While the Support Teacher will consult with parents and outside agencies on an ongoing basis, the Principal Teacher can facilitate the involvement of parents in the support process by:

- Encouraging the organisation of information sessions for all parents on issues relating to the school's support procedures.
- Overseeing the development of links between teachers and service providers e.g. Speech and Language Therapists etc....

9.3 Class Teacher Liaising with Parents.

- Once a pupil has come to the attention of the school because of identified special educational needs it will be possible for the Class Teacher (in the context of ongoing contact with the parents) to make them aware of the situation and to ascertain parental views about the child's performance at school.
- Meet with the parents of each pupil who has been selected for diagnostic assessment (if such a meeting is requested at this point by the parents).
- Indicate that a meeting with the Class Teacher and / or the Support Teacher and parents will take place following diagnostic assessment.
- If the pupil is selected for Classroom Support, the Class Teacher will:
 - Discuss priority learning needs and learning targets for the child's Support Plan with parents.
 - Discuss ways in which attainment of the agreed targets can be supported at home.
 - Communicate regularly with parents of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching at Classroom Support.
 - Consult with parents when Classroom Support is to be discontinued (or escalated) and identify ways in which the pupil's learning can continue to be supported at school and at home.

9.4 The Support Teacher Liaising with Parents.

In addition to providing general information to parents about the support provision that is available in the school, the Support Teacher should:

- After diagnostic assessments have been completed, meet with each pupil's parents to discuss the outcomes of the assessments, if deemed necessary.
- If the pupil is selected for *School Support / School Support Plus*, the Support Teacher will:
 - Seek written parental permission for their child to receive supplementary teaching at School Support / School Support Plus.
 - Discuss priority learning needs and possible learning targets for the child's Support Plan with the parents of children in receipt of School Support Plus.
 - Discuss ways in which attainment of the agreed targets can be supported at home.
 - Communicate on an ongoing basis with the parents of each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support / School Support Plus, so that progress can be positively affirmed and any difficulties in implementing the pupil's learning programme at school or at home can either be anticipated and avoided or addressed without delay.
 - Consult with parents when supplementary teaching is to be discontinued at *School Support / School Support Plus* and identify ways in which the pupil's learning can continue to be supported at school and at home.
 - Demonstrate techniques and strategies to parents that will enable them to help with their child's development in such areas as oral language, reading, writing, spelling and mathematics, as appropriate.
 - Where relevant, collaborate with other teachers to advise parents on ways in which they can support their children's learning at home.

10. Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy.

The SEN Co-ordinator has overall responsibility currently for Monitoring and Reviewing this SEN Policy. It is an ongoing and developmental process. Staff and the Board of Management will engage in the developmental process, and the policy will be reviewed as necessary.