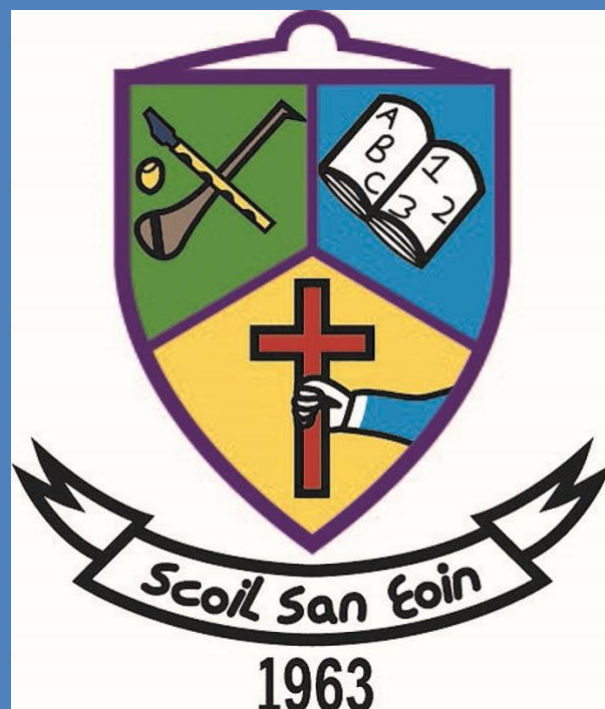


# SCOIL SAN EOIN SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY



## **INTRODUCTION**

Scoil San Eoin is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Arch diocese of Dublin. It is a mainstream school catering for a full cross section of children. Scoil San Eoin is an inclusive environment which embraces and celebrates the uniqueness of every pupil. Staff members strive to nurture and cater for the needs of all pupils within the school. Pupils with SEN are integrated into mainstream classes but receive additional support where possible and necessary.

The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support/resource to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning/physical/behavioural 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:

- One shared Special Education teacher for three days per week

## **RELATIONSHIP TO ETHOS**

Scoil San Eoin strives to create learning opportunities for all children and that commitment is evident in all school policies and planning. We particularly strive to cater for children with Special Education Needs, as their presence in the school enriches the entire school community.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

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

Other aims/objectives include:

- To ensure that our duties, as set out in The Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Education Welfare Act 200 and Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004, are fully met, to enable pupils with special education needs to join in the normal activities of the school.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To ensure that all pupils gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have an equal opportunity to receive an education that is appropriate to their needs.
- To identify and assess pupils with special education needs as early as possible.
- To use our resources as efficiently and equitably as possible when assessing and meeting the special educational needs of our pupils
- To provide a graduated approach in order to match educational provision to pupils' needs.
- To develop a partnership with parents/guardians in order that their knowledge, views and experience can assist us in assessing and providing for their children.
- To take into account the ascertainable wishes of the pupils concerned and, whenever possible, directly involve them in decision making in order to provide more effectively for them.
- To ensure collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills in order to take effective action on behalf of pupils with special education needs.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities towards pupils with special needs and are able to exercise them
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning for all pupils
- To monitor our effectiveness in achieving the above objectives.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

All our pupils have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. Staff in Scoil San Eoin want all our pupils to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. As far as possible, therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that pupils may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

### **Three Principles for Inclusion:**

#### **1. Setting Suitable Learning Challenges**

We aim to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### 2. Responding to Pupil’s Diverse Learning Needs

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

### 3. Overcoming Potential Barriers to Learning and Assessment for Individuals and Groups of Pupils.

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

## CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

The continuum of support encompasses a graduated problem-solving model of assessment and intervention comprised of three distinct processes – Classroom Support, School or In-class Support and School Support Plus. These stages are outlined below:

<b>A Staged Approach to Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Special Educational Needs</b>		
<b>Observation</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Personnel Involved</b>
<b>Stage 1</b>		
Class teacher or parent has concerns regarding a pupil’s academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development	Teacher will vary the use of strategies to meet the learning needs of the pupil. Where the pupil is unable to participate in the class curriculum, a plan will be devised in consultation with the SEN teacher, which aims to meet the pupil’s identified needs within the normal classroom setting. There will be a balance between the provision for the pupil’s academic and social needs and ICT may be used to further facilitate the pupil’s learning.	Class Teacher Parent/Guardian Principal SEN teacher
If concern remains after a number of reviews, the SEN teachers may be consulted about the desirability of a move to Stage 2		

<b>Stage 2</b>		
Pupil is referred to LS teacher with parental permission for further diagnostic testing if deemed necessary.	If diagnostic testing indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged. Parent/guardians, class teacher and LS teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil's learning plan.	Class Teacher Parent/Guardian Principal SEN teacher
If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3		
<b>Stage 3</b>		
School formally requests a consultation, and where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school.	A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. Parents/guardians should be fully consulted throughout this process. This learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary	Class Teacher Principal SEN Teacher Parent/Guardian Relevant Specialist(s)

### **EARLY INTERVENTION**

We believe it is very important to identify and assess pupils with special education needs as early as possible, so that effective interventions can be put in place. Some triggers for early intervention will be:

- The pupil makes little progress even when teaching approaches are directed at identified area of weakness.
- The pupil is slow to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
- The pupil has social difficulties (communication, relationships etc.)
- The pupil has emotional/behavioural difficulties, which do not respond to behavioural management techniques.

Screening tests (MIST) are administered to all pupils in senior infants during the second- term of the school year. Pupils who present with scores below a given point are selected to participate in the 'Forward Together Programme'. The parents/guardians of these pupils are invited to attend weekly meetings for an 8-10 week period.

## **EARLY INTERVENTION**

These meetings are facilitated by the Special Education Teacher. The focus of these meetings is to effectively promote literacy in the home and to support parents/guardians regarding best practise in this area. Each week a particular aspect of literacy is explored through various activities. During the following week, parents/guardians put into practise the strategies and activities explored at the meeting. At the end of the 8-10 weeks, every participating pupil is retested (using MIST) to measure progress made as a result of this early intervention.

If the strategy of differentiated support does not work, the class teacher will inform the parents that their child's needs might be better served in a small group with a support teacher. The class teacher and the LS teacher will differentiate the curriculum with realistic targets being set. The LS teacher will implement an educational plan for the pupil either as part of a small group, as part of the whole class or on an individual basis.

Where progress is such that the pupil is no longer giving cause for concern, s/he will revert to the class curriculum.

## **ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

When a pupil enrolls in Scoil San Eoin, parents/guardians are given an enrolment form and information booklet. They must fill out the enrolment form, in which, they are asked to give details of all assessments the pupil may have had. Both the form and the booklet stress the importance of parents/guardians informing the school of any 'special needs' their child may have. If a pupil has an identified special need and is already receiving a service from another organisation, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to notify the school. The SENO is contacted at the earliest opportunity so as to apply for resource teaching/SNA assistance/technology etc. for the pupil. Parents/guardians will be informed at all times of progress and meetings will be arranged with them to discuss concerns etc. The class teacher and Special Education teacher will read all current reports on the child, prior to receiving the pupil in school.

No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN, except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school. The Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that 'A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs'.

## **Student Support File**

As per NCSE recommended guidelines a student support file will be opened for each child. The file will address the pupil's full range of needs and will include:

- General personal details of the pupil
- Formal and informal assessment results
- Any relevant additional information in the log of actions
- Pupils strengths and interests
- Priority concerns
- Learning targets (IEP)
- Class, support and home based activities
- Materials and resources
- Commencement and review date
- Support review record

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and occasionally through the pupil's own feedback.

A detailed review will take place twice yearly (October and March). The LS teacher and/or the Class Teacher will meet the parents to discuss the pupil's progress in the light of the review if deemed necessary.

## **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLANS**

Based on psychologist's reports, test results and other infringing factors, the special education teacher, with the class teacher, parents and representatives of outside agencies, if necessary, will formulate an individual support plan or individual education plan (I.E.P.). This I.E.P. aims to break down the existing levels of attainment, into manageable, achievable targets, which ensure that the pupil experiences success.

This plan includes:

- The pupils strengths and interests
- Priority concerns for the pupil
- Targets for the pupil to achieve over the period of half a school year
- Strategies to help the pupil achieve these targets
- The staff involved and resources needed to achieve these targets

The strategies set out in the I.E.P. will, as far as possible, be implemented in the normal classroom setting.

### **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLANS**

The management of the I.E.P. strategies will be the responsibility of the special education teacher and class teacher. Three copies of the I.E.P. will be distributed to the class teacher, parents and special education teacher.

### **REVIEW OF PLANS**

The special education teacher will ensure that the review is conducted twice yearly (October and March). They will consult with the class teacher and pupil (where necessary). They agree on the expected outcomes of the I.E.P. A draft copy is formulated and sent home to the pupil's parents/guardians. The parents/guardians are invited to attend a meeting to discuss or make recommendations to the draft review if they so wish. Again, outside agencies may play a part in formulating the final copy. The review will be recorded on the support review record in the pupils support file.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the Board of Management, Principal and Staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

#### **Board of Management:**

The BOM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of the school development plan. Members will be knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision – funding, equipment and personnel, through the Principal's report.



## **Principal:**

The role of the Principal is –

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

## **Class Teacher:**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. In supporting the development and implementation of the special education plan, the class teacher should:

- 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.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the special education teacher in the development of a student support file by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets. The teacher must also adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities.

### **Class Teacher:**

- A key role of successful support, especially in a cluster situation, is a very high level of 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.E.P.s. Also, a long term plan of work in English and Maths to be provided to the special education teacher in advance along with regular informal discussions on proposed classroom activities.

### **Special Education Teacher:**

The role of the special education teacher is to:

- Develop a student support for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with the class teacher and parents/guardians.
- Maintaining and planning a progress record for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of support
- Provide teaching of English and/or Maths and occasionally social skills to pupils in the school who experience low achievement in accordance with the school's selection criteria.
- Contribute to the development of a special education policy 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.
- 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 both in their mainstream classes and in the support room
- Perform a defined role in co-ordinating the provision of special education services in the school
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychologists to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with needs.
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support
- Track the progress of pupils who are attending support teaching in the school.

### **Parents/Guardians:**

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

- Regular communication with the class teacher and special education teacher-attending meetings, development of an I.E.P. etc.
- Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive.
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child.
- Participating consistently in shared reading programme such as Oxford Reading Tree.
- Encouraging the child to visit the library.
- Developing the child's oral language skills.
- Developing the child's social/day to day mathematics.
- Participating in and monitoring any further home activities given by the LS/Class teacher to their child.

### **Other Professionals:**

Other professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Behavioural Therapists, Visiting Teachers etc., may be involved indirectly, offering consultation and advice in relation to appropriate approaches for pupils presenting with early difficulties.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

This will include the Principal, class teacher, special education teacher and parents/guardians and will focus on:

- The pupil's response to learning /behavioural interventions
- Progress made by pupil
- Extent to which pupil's needs are being met
- Parents/guardians views on progress at home in supporting plan

### **The result may be that:**

- The pupil continues to receive support
- The pupil no longer requires support and reverts to a classroom plan instead
- The parties involved decide to initiate the School Support plus plan and involve outside agencies

## **SELECTION OF PUPILS FOR SUPPORT**

- The principle of Early Intervention applies; therefore pupils in the junior class will get priority according to their needs and the resources of the school at the time. From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.
- Priority for support teaching is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile, excluding those who receive resource support.
- However, due to the nature of this school being a large multi class setting, this criteria is flexible and pupils who may achieve at or above this percentile may still be put forward to receive support teaching following a consultation between class teacher, Principal and special education teacher.
- A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the individual pupil/pupils.
- Team teaching will operate in the case of numeracy, where the class teacher and special education teacher feel this will suit the needs of all classes appropriately. Again, due to the nature and setting of the school (multi-class with cluster arrangement), this is often the most appropriate use of the allocated support time.
- One to one teaching and small group teaching will also be provided.

## **TIMETABLING**

The provision of support is in addition to the regular class teaching in numeracy and literacy. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend Support. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by both the class teacher and special education teacher, though class disruption must be minimised as much as possible. A timetable will be established in Term 1 of the school year, however, this can be adjusted and adapted where needed throughout the year.

## **RESOURCES**

Resources for special education include a variety of textbooks, library books, ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials is also in use and stored in the LS room. Following consultation between the special education teacher and Principal, funding may be made available if necessary through the BOM. All resources will be used primarily by the special education teacher, but will be made available to class teachers where necessary.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

One copy of each pupil's psychological or other assessment together with their student support file will be kept in the pupils file in a locked filing cabinet in the main office. The assessments and reports are stored in the school until the pupil reaches the age of 21.

## **CONTINUING AND DISCONTINUING SUPPORT TEACHING**

- Following each end of year review, a decision is made as to whether to continue/discontinue support teaching. This will take into account the pupils needs but also the overall special education demands within the school.
- Consideration is made as to whether the pupil has achieved some/all of their learning targets and also whether they would be able to cope independently/semi independently in the classroom learning context.
- A decision to continue the provision of support teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's support file.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

The Board of Management will ensure that special education is an integral part of school development and will evaluate the effectiveness and success of this policy by monitoring:

- The standards obtained by pupils with needs
- The level and pattern of help, especially in relation to cluster agreements and timetabling
- Views of parents/guardians
- Staff views

## **RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil San Eoin on \_\_\_\_\_ . It will then be circulated to each teacher. It will then also be made available on the school website.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson for the Board of  
Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_