



Scoil Phádraic Cailíní, Donabate, Co. Dublin

SEN Policy

Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in a Mainstream School Setting

October 2021

1. Introductory Statement

This policy was redrafted in June 2020 by Ciara Greene, Principal, Una Kelly (Special Needs Coordinator) and the SEN team, Anne Bermingham, Sineád Freeney and Michelle Barry. The document was subsequently discussed and agreed by the stakeholders as draft and was put forward for ratification to the Board of Management.

2. Rationale

- To cater for the enrolment of pupils with special educational needs in a mainstream setting.
- To comply with legislation and department circulars.
- Existing policy is in need of review.
- To manage the provision of special needs support in the school.

The following principles underpin our SEN policy

- the child is at the centre of all teaching and learning
- our school team strives to provide a holistic education for every pupil
- we take a whole school approach to planning for provision for additional needs
- we recognise parents as the primary educators of the child and as partners in education
- we recognise the importance of early intervention for greater success in moving towards a pupil's potential
- we aim to target resources according to needs.

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 (EPSEN), Section 1 defines a special educational need as "a restriction in capacity to participate in and benefit from education due to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition and cognate words shall be construed accordingly"

Learning Support Guidelines 2000 p. 1 refers to pupils whose achievement is at a very low level and who are at risk of not reaching adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

This policy will address all needs on the continuum of support. It will include those children at both ends of the ability spectrum. See Special Educational Needs: A continuum of support, NEPS, 2007.

- The school as a community recognises the importance of a unified approach to supporting the inclusion of pupils with additional needs of any nature. For example pupils are supported at break times to facilitate access during social engagement.
- This policy complements other school policies for example the EAL Policy, Admissions Policy, see section 14 of this document.

3. Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Our mission statement:

Scoil Phádraic Cailíní is a Catholic primary school which aims to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and aesthetic needs of the pupils are identified and supported.

The school community is defined by a strong sense of pastoral care as evidenced by pupil teacher interactions, positive relationships and an established culture of learning and growing together. Our school motto is "Together We Learn, Together We Succeed". This culture has endured as the school has developed over its sixty years both in and with the local community.

This is a catholic school where a spirit of inclusion, openness and transparency are paramount. Each member of our school community is treated with respect and encouraged to develop themselves personally and professionally to their full potential.

4 a. The aims of this SEN policy document

Scoil Phadraic Cailíní plans to achieve the following by introducing this policy:

- To describe the school's whole school approach to teaching and learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
- To set out the procedures for the enrolment of children with special needs in the school.
- To assist parents/guardians in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in the school.
- To describe procedures, practices, roles and responsibilities to be followed in relation to supporting the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with special educational needs. (*ref. Learning Support Guidelines*)
- To comply with legislation - to promote equality of access to and participation in education and to promote the means whereby students may benefit from education" S. 6 (c) Education Act.

4 b. Aims of Special Education Needs Education

The principal aim of this SEN policy statement is to optimise the teaching and learning process within Scoil Phádraic Cailíní in order to enable children with special educational needs to experience success at school and to strive to achieve their potential levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy, among other social and behavioural skills before leaving primary school.

The following subsidiary aims arise from the principal aim of this SEN policy:

- To identify children experiencing learning difficulties and to put in place appropriate support for these children.
- To establish early intervention programmes (In-class co-teaching for Numeracy "Number Worlds Adapted Programme", Aistear, Paired Reading Programme, Drumcondra, Screening Test) designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.
- To develop positive self - esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning in these children thus is aligned to the aim of developing the lifelong learner.
- To enable these children to participate in the full curriculum to the best of their ability.
- To adapt the curriculum where necessary to meet the needs of children experiencing learning difficulties.

- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support and resources in English Language and / or Mathematics, English as an Additional Language (EAL) (*see EAL policy*), social, emotional and behavioural needs for those children identified as needing support.
- To work closely with parents/guardians as partners in their child's education, including in assisting them make an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school (*see Enrolment Policy*).
- To comply with relevant legislation "to promote equality of access to and participation in education and to promote the means whereby students may benefit from education" S. 6 (c) Education Act.

5. **Provision for the enrolment for children with identified SEN (refer to enrolment policy)**

The BOM will consider the following factors in coming to a decision re enrolment of a pupil with additional needs

(1) EPSEN Act 2004, Section 2 (1) EPSEN Act 2004, Section 2 "*A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with -*

a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or

b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated"

(2) Education Act 1998: 15.-(2) d. *A board shall.... publish... the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to.... the participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy, principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected*

Communication

Prior to the child's enrolment the principal meets with the parents/guardians of each child individually. In addition, the principal may meet with preschool staff where appropriate to gather information in relation to the child's needs and to determine the level of need. The Principal will oversee gathering of reports, assessments etc.

from NEPS, SENO/parents and other agencies as appropriate. (See Section 2.1 *Gathering Information pp. 12-17 Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process, NCSE, 2006.*)

Transition

The principal meets parents/guardians individually to ensure a smooth transition to school for both the pupil and the school. The school holds an open forum parent night in May prior to enrolment to introduce the parents to the culture of the school community. In June, pupils with their parents visit their classroom and meet their teacher. As appropriate principal, SEN coordinator and class teacher visit special schools/special units or pre-school settings to help support transition to and from Scoil Phádraic Cailíní. The school is aware of the role played by all school employees and pupils in facilitating the inclusion of all pupils. (EPSEN Act) The school will liaise with the SENO to request additional personnel (Special Needs Assistants) and additional resources as appropriate. Individualised strategies are employed to support SEN pupils during their settling in period.

If there are health and safety issues arising from a child's mobility and care needs, these will be carefully considered and strategies will be developed to address them. The level of support a child receives is in accordance with the guidelines and circulars. (see *Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007 and Circular 02/05*).

6. Provision for children with emerging special educational needs:

The school follows the staged approach as outlined in the following circular

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

See Appendix 3 of SEN manual.

The Continuum of Support framework is used to identify children's educational needs and includes academic, social and emotional needs as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.

The children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support.

Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
<p><u>Classroom Support</u></p> <p>Personnel involved can include: Class teacher SET SNA Principal Teacher NEPS/ Assessment of Need/ School Age Team/ OT/ SLT/ Other professionals Parents</p>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all children in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those children who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This is informed by the following as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consultation • Teacher observation • Teacher-designed assessments • Learning environment checklist • Pupil consultation - for example <i>My Thoughts About School Checklist</i> • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills <p>A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p> <p>The responsibility of the preparation and coordination of the child's classroom support plan rests with the principal, SEN Co, the SET, classroom teacher, parents and pupils. (Pg 68 Learning Support Guidelines)</p> <p>Classroom Support Plans & Reviews are completed and stored on a school gsuite for ease of access and security of information</p>

<p><u>School Support</u></p> <p>Personnel involved can include: Principal Class teacher SET SNA Principal Teacher NEPS/ Assessment of Need/ School Age Team/ OT/ SLT/ Other professionals Parents</p> <p>List of children on School Support held by SET and SENCo.</p>	<p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by the following as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation • Teacher-designed assessments • Parent and child interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition.</p> <p>A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period and is subject to review.</p> <p>When parents or guardians accept a place for their child in learning support parents/guardians will sign relevant consent school forms.</p> <p>Should the situation arise that classroom support is offered to a parent or guardian for their child and this is declined by the parents or guardians the school will document this and all parties will sign off on it.</p> <p>Children with similar needs may be grouped to make best use of supplementary teaching resources</p> <p>School Support Plans are completed and stored on a school intranet for ease of access and security of information</p>
<p><u>School Support Plus</u></p> <p>Personnel involved can include: Class teacher SET SNA Principal Teacher</p>	<p>This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and child interviews • Results of standardised testing (measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning, etc.)

NEPS/ Assessment of Need/ School Age Team/ OT/ SLT/ Other professionals Parents List of children on School Support Plus held by SET and SENCo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from other professionals <p>Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can be used as a baseline to map progress.</p> <p>The responsibility of the preparation and coordination of the child's school support plus plan rests with the principal, SEN Co, the SET, classroom teacher, parents and pupils. (Pg 68 Learning Support Guidelines)</p> <p>Parents/guardians, the class teacher and SEN teachers sign School Support Plus Plans.</p> <p>Children with similar needs may be grouped to make best use of supplementary teaching resources</p> <p>A support plan at this level is more detailed and individualised and includes longer term planning and consultation.</p> <p>School Support Plus Plans are completed and stored on a school intranet for ease of access and security of information</p>
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Planning templates for all levels of support (checklists/diagnostic windows/plans/reviews etc) are available on the school shared electronic drive.

The responsibility of the preparation and coordination of the child's school support plan and school support plus plan rests with the principal, SEN Co, the SET, classroom teacher, parents and pupils. (Pg. 68 Learning Support Guidelines)

Their participation is facilitated by face to face meetings, phone calls. Consultation is facilitated by face to face meeting, completion of information gathering forms and other means in order to gather the necessary information for creating

There are two instructional terms in each school year. Term 1 runs until the end of January. Term 2 runs until the end of June. Pupil progress at the end of each term with reference to the learning targets for that period. The learning support teacher and classroom teacher in consultation with the SEN Co and Principal are involved in the review as needed and as appropriate.

Further meetings may take place at the request of the Special Education teacher and/or parents. Supplementary teaching will normally be discontinued where the targets have been met and/or the child (on assessment) is performing above the percentile laid down in the criteria for receiving learning-support.

The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children in order for the learning-support team to provide support to more needy children. Due consideration will be given to the overall needs of the school and all of its children.

Monitoring Progress

- Monitoring progress and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the children 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 children for supplementary teaching in English and / or in Mathematics by administering and scoring standardised tests. Monitoring the academic progress of the children in this school will be accomplished by:
 - Ongoing structured observation
 - Standardised and diagnostic testing by the learning-support teacher/resource teacher.
 - Record keeping
 - Non-academic progress of children in this school will be reviewed informally, for example under the headings of improvements in the child's self-esteem; school attendance; attitude to learning; attitude to school and general behaviour.

7. Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Children with Additional Educational Needs

Additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis.

When allocating the schools resources, the benefit of early intervention and prevention programmes is taken into consideration, based on identified needs and the school context.

Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support.

The following actions form part of our planning in the allocation of additional teaching supports:

Action 1: Review existing information on children's needs, using school based data, and any information from parents and external professionals.

Engage in additional screening and data gathering/informal and formal assessment approaches.

Identify all children with additional educational needs and match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support

Initial Screening:

- Class teachers will carry out teacher-designed tests at every class level at varying times in the school year. As part of our whole school approach to assessment, monthly maths tests are administered from 1st to 6th classes. Weekly assessments of work done in Maths World take place in Junior and Senior Infants. Weekly spelling tests are used from 1st to 6th classes.
- Class teachers will use Micra-T and Sigma-T screening tests in classes 1st to 6th in May. Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on Aladdin by class teachers.
- Senior Infant class teachers will screen children using the Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy Screening (DTEL-S).
- The NNRIT will be used to assess children in 2nd and 5th in the first instructional term.
- The Primary School Assessment Kit will be used to assess children with English as an Additional Language as needed during the year.

Teacher Observation

The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tests, projects and homework (informal assessment). These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and communicated to parents at the Parent-teacher meeting and the school report issued at the end of the school year. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing.

Children who require additional support are identified and through consultation with class teachers/ SET the interventions required are matched to the students' needs on the Continuum of Support.

8. Consultation or referral for NEPS Assessments

The criteria used by the school as it selects candidates for assessments via NEPS is detailed in Appendix 4 from the SEN school manual.

Assessments take place on the school premises and within school hours in a setting appropriate for the assessment. Furthermore, parents can engage a professional to assess their child. (See the Protocol for Release of Information for Pupil's External Assessment, appendix 9 in SEN manual).

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board will fulfil its statutory responsibilities towards pupils with SEN.

- The BOM oversees the development, implementation, ratification and review of school policy in relation to SEN
- provides a secure facility for storage of records pertaining to data in relation to pupils with special educational needs
- We need to get secure locked drawer/filing cabinet in every classroom for assessment

Principal

The principal, Ciara Greene, has overall responsibility for the SEN in the school, with the day-to-day operational management of this area delegated to the deputy principal, Una Kelly.

Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

The Deputy Principal, Una Kelly undertakes the role of SENCo in Scoil Phádraic Cailíní.

The SEN Coordinator will:

- Co-ordinate and/or liaise with parents and guardians, class teachers and other professionals such as psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, in consultation with class teachers, to inform planning and assessment for teaching and learning for pupils with additional needs
- Coordinate with Principal and SEN team in the selection of pupils for assessment with NEPS Psychologist, The school is allocated three such assessments per school year.
- Manage the ordering and distribution of standardised testing pupil booklets and manuals.

- Manage available resources to support teaching and learning in relation to pupils with additional needs
- Track and monitor the progress of pupils with SEN in collaboration with the Principal SEN team and class teachers
- In collaboration with the Principal allocate resources for SEN with consideration of the maxim "those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support" (2017 Guidelines, p. 19)
- Maintain the living document "Special Education Needs: Provision for Scoil Phádraic Cailíní" detailing the provision, protocols and assessment data in our school, referred to as the SEN manual in this policy document.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has the primary responsibility for the educational progress of all children in the class, including those receiving supplementary teaching from the SEN team.

The class teacher will:

- Create a positive and engaging learning environment
- Use observation, teacher designed, class tests and standardised tests to identify children who need support
- Adapt learning materials for children with additional needs as necessary in consultation with SET
- Engage in ongoing collaboration with SET to monitor pupil progress
- The class teacher will open a Student File and prepare and implement a Classroom Support Plan in collaboration with the relevant SEN teacher where appropriate. The class teacher will maintain and store this classroom support plan until such a time as a pupil may advance along the continuum of support and may receive support from the learning support team outside of the classroom setting.
- Actively engage with parents/guardians and develop and maintain open channels of communication between parents/guardians and relevant staff in support of pupil learning
- Review class/children's targets regularly with relevant staff
- For pupils with SNA access the class teacher will work collaboratively and provide guidance and direction to the SNAs in their work with pupils
- Liaise with stakeholders collaboratively in relation to the flow of data from external agencies for communication of new information from an external agency or other source. The class teacher will communicate this to the SET and other relevant members of the school community. (see appendix 9 SEN school manual).

Special Education Teacher (SET)

The main focus of the SET will be the provision of supplementary teaching to children, in the classroom setting, in a SET room, or other school environments as appropriate. Responsibilities will include:

- Using screening/diagnostic assessment tests to establish the children's learning needs
- Devising, implementing and coordinating strategies to enhance early learning and to promote greater access to the curriculum and positive learning outcomes to include co-teaching models (eg Maths World and Aistear in Infants)
- Developing a student support or support plus plan for each child in receipt of support teaching, in consultation with class teacher, parents/guardians, pupils and other staff and stakeholders as relevant
- Maintaining short term and long term plans and progress records for these children
- Contributing to the development of policy on special education needs at whole school level and to decision-making regarding the purchase of learning resources for children with special education needs
- Liaising with parents/guardians, class teachers and other professionals such as psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, in consultation with class teachers, to inform planning and assessment for teaching and learning
- A teacher from the SEN team will manage the *Paired Reading Programme* in conjunction with a Parent Facilitator.

Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

The role of an SNA in Scoil Phádraic Cailíní is to assist in the support inclusion of children with special education needs within the mainstream school. This involves supporting the child, the teacher, and the school. The role of the SNA is outlined in detail in the school SNA policy document. The SNA will record the work of the day in their log book. This is stored securely. (see Record Keeping and Storage, Section 13 of this document).

Role of Parents/Guardians

Scoil Phádraic Cailíní recognises that the parent/guardian are the primary educator of the child.

Parents/Guardians have the responsibility to:

- Communicate all relevant information about the child including reports in relation to the child's needs
- To accept or reject (in writing) the offer of support for their child
- Work collaboratively with regard to the plan drawn up by the Special Education teacher/class teacher, including any differentiated work to be completed at home
- To accept or reject (in writing) the offer of support for their child
- To attend meetings to consult with the Special Education Teacher/class teacher and other relevant school staff/outside agency staff in order to facilitate assessments and to plan and review progress for pupils with additional needs

10. Inclusion

Scoil Phádraic Cailíní strives to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included as fully as possible in the community of the classroom/school.

- Pupils in 6th class facilitate our *Cara* yard programme. Their role is to ensure that junior pupils are included in play activities.
- Through the implementation of the SPHE curriculum all pupils are taught an awareness of themselves, others and the wider world facilitating inclusion.
- The Catholic ethos of our school helps to support inclusiveness

11. Deployment of Staff

- The Principal and the Deputy Principal allocate class teachers to ensure the most effective deployment of staff in meeting the overall SEN requirements of the school taking into account the experience/expertise of teachers, part-time teachers, newly qualified teachers, SNAs (Circular 02/05 - p. 7, p. 23).
- The Principal assigns duties to SNAs in line with Circular 07/02
- The SNAs assist in the care of pupils with disabilities (Circular 07/02)

12. Resources

The range of educational resources available to teachers and staff when working with children with SEN include materials to support literacy, numeracy, behavioural and sensory needs, among others.

For our list of diagnostic tests and remediation programmes. See Appendix 3 in the SEN manual.

The following are examples of resources available in our school:

- newly kitted out sensory room
- outdoor garden area
- graded reading series
- adapted scissors
- various pencil grips
- modelling putty
- puppets
- Slanted writing boards
- 'Move and Sit' cushions among others

The management and allocation of a budget to support the resourcing of SEN teaching in the school rests with the principal. Resources for SEN are stored in each SEN room. These resources are readily accessible and are shared amongst the team as needed. Class teachers may borrow resources as required and a log-in log-out system is in operation.

13. Transfer to post-primary

The SENCo and relevant SET and the sixth class teachers will liaise with secondary schools regarding the transfer of pupils with SEN to second level. Pupils can visit the local secondary school for the purpose of orientation and to ease the transition process for the pupils who may experience anxiety in this regard. Best practice is followed in regard to the completion of The Education Passport as per the guidelines from NCCA 2014/2015.

14. Record Keeping and Storage of Records

Each child in receipt of additional support has a school file (see Appendix 6 for Contents List for SEN pupil's file). The instructional plan is digital and is available on the school's shared drive. This digital file is updated as needed. A hard copy of this file is stored in secure filing cabinets in each SEN teacher's room. The hard copy is updated at the end of each learning support instructional term. Access to this file is available to relevant personnel, including the principal, the class teacher, SET, SENO, inspector and parents with due consideration of the child's right to confidentiality and our Data Protection Policy.

Relevant reports from external agencies including psychological reports, HSE assessments, SNA applications, etc. are stored in the secure filing cabinet in the Principal's office. The SET team can access the reports from the principal's office.

Access to standardised test results is through each child's profile on the school's Aladdin system.

SNA staff keep records under the direction of the Principal. These records are stored securely in locked cabinets.

Inactive pupil files i.e. pupils who have transitioned to another school, are archived in Room 11a in a secure filing cabinet. In addition, see Appendix 7, Protocol for the Management and Administration of Data Relating to SEN pupils in the SEN school manual.

Records are stored until the pupil is 21 years of age in a secure location in the school. As required under section 28 of the Education and Welfare Act 2000, records of children's educational progress are available with the approval of the Board to other agencies including other schools when a pupil transfers to another primary school.

15. Other Related Policies

Some aspects of this policy relate to other policies in the school. Among those related policies are the following:

The Code of Behaviour Policy

Data Protection Policy

Enrolment Policy

Child Protection and Child Safeguarding Statement

Assessment Policy

English as an Additional Language EAL policy

Health and Safety Policy

Wellbeing Policy statement and Framework for practice NCCA (2018-2023) revised October 2019.

16. Criteria of Success

Practical indicators of the success of the SEN policy are present in the following instances. Pupils with special educational needs are included in every aspect of school life, wherever practicable. The teaching and learning environment is adapted and differentiated to facilitate their access to the curriculum, where practicable and teaching staff and other school personnel alike act to include all pupils in the life of the school, as fully as possible. Pupil's progress is monitored regularly to measure progress in relative terms. This progress is reported to parents/guardians through the year and in the final end of the school year written progress report.

17. Implementation Date

Following the draft policy having been shared for review by stakeholders, commented on and a draft policy finalised, it will then be sent to the board for ratification. The policy will be implemented thereafter.

18. Timetable for Review

In accordance with best practice the policy will follow a cyclical plan of review redraft and formulation of policy in 1-3 years' time.

19. Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 6th October 2021. It will be reviewed as the need arises.



Signed by:

Lisa English (Chairperson)



Signed by:

Ciara Greene (Principal)

Date: 6th October 2021