

# Special Educational Needs Policy

## **Introduction**

Children with special educational needs will be educated in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to the Board of Management. We understand the term Special Needs to be that as defined by the D.E.S. in Circular 8/99. Children with special educational needs are allocated Resource Teaching by the N.C.S.E. on the basis of reports furnished by appropriate specialists.

## **Situation**

An Mhodscoil is a co-educational primary school with 622 pupils, 22 class teachers, an administrative principal, 4.2 learning support teachers, 2 full-time resource teachers and 1.5 Special Needs Assistants (SNA's)

## **Belief Statement**

All the school community, Board of Management, teachers and parents fully support the ideal of inclusion. We believe that where practicable, children with special or educational needs should be educated in their own communities / classrooms with their siblings and peers.

## **Aims**

To optimize the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning and/or social & emotional challenges to achieve his/her full potential in literacy, numeracy and social & emotional skills before leaving primary school. Support will be administered in, an in-class setting with the co-operation of and in consultation with class teacher unless this support can **only** be provided outside class setting.

## **Implementation and Review**

This policy is currently in use since 2014 and will be reviewed at the end of every second school year or as circumstances may warrant.

# Learning Support Policy

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

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

## **Board of Management**

The role of the Board of Management is to:

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

## **Principal**

The role of the principal is to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Learning Support in co-operation with the Board of Management, teachers, parents and children
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning Support in the context of Special Needs Education
- Monitor the implementation of the school's Learning Support Plan on an ongoing basis
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with the lowest levels of attainment
- 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 necessary support

## **Assistant Principal for Special Education (P.Ó Cearbhalláin)**

Responsibility for:

- Following consultation with and information supplied by the Principal, Class Teacher, SWEEP Teachers, Parents, Special Duties Teacher for Special Education (NEPS, NCSE, HSE, MIST, BIAP, SIGMA, MICRA agus obair

ranga) for the identification of and provision for the educational needs of the pupils identified as in need of special education

- For the safe keeping of all IEP's, GEP's, IPLP's and record of all interventions undertaken by the SWEEP team (Locked filing cabinet S.18) (All templates of the above forms are available on the School-Share)
- To forward all IEP's, GEP's, IPLP's and records of interventions by the SWEEP team to the principal
- Liase with outside agencies

### **Special Duties Teacher for Special Education (Jean Halpin)**

Responsibility for:

- Correctly complete, photocopy and send letters to NEPS, HSE and NCSE
- The safe keeping of reports from NEPS, NCSE, HSE and/or other professional reports (Locked filing cabinet S.18)
- Distribution, Collection and Storage of Sigma/Micra/Drumcondra Gaeilge Test Booklets – (ordering of same)
- Print class results and forward to principal for analysis
- Distribution of these reports on a need to know basis

### **Class Teacher**

The class teacher has first line responsibility for each child to reach his/her full potential in their care, including those with special educational needs. S.W.E.E.P. Programme will be designed to ensure that every child has opportunity to reach his/her full potential. (If parents are unwilling to allow their child to be assessed, by the School SWEEP team and/or external professional assessment, then it is school policy to ask parents to confirm same in writing.)

The class teacher should:

- Implement teaching programmes and use teaching styles which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- Implement the school policy on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching
- Make the designated Learning Support teacher aware of his/her concerns and be collaborative in the development of an IEP/ IPLP/ GLP and organise classroom activities to achieve the targets outlined in these documents

### **Learning Support Teacher**

The role of the Learning Support Teacher is to:

- Develop an Individual and Learning Profile for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the class teacher and parents
- Maintain a planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group in receipt of Learning Support
- Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils with low achievement in accordance with the school's selection criteria
- Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as assessment and programme planning for individuals, as well as approaches for language development, reading, writing and mathematics
- Maintain a list and attendance sheet of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support
- Track the progress of pupils who have discontinued Learning Support

### **Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

An Mhodscoil recognises the Circular SP. ED 07/02. An SNA's duties are assigned by the Principal Teacher in accordance with Circular 10/76: "Duties and responsibilities of Principal Teachers" and sanctioned by the Board of Management. Their work is supervised by the Principal and by the class teachers they work in.

Those duties involve tasks of a *non-teaching nature* such as:

- Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
- Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with *duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act either as substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class).*
- Where a Special Needs Assistant has been appointed to assist a school in catering for a specific pupil, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of the pupil concerned.

### **Parents**

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

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Participation in Shared Reading Programme / Accelerated Reading Scheme
- Develop the child's oral language
- Develop the child's social mathematics

### **Prevention Strategies**

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible, the following strategies have been implemented

- Shared Reading is initiated in Junior Infants. Parents are invited to the school usually in November
- Reading Buddy System in Junior & Senior Infants
- Phonological Awareness is emphasized in all classes
- "*Sounds Abound*" is used in Junior Infants and Senior Infants

### **Early Intervention Strategies**

The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils in Junior and Senior Infants and 1<sup>st</sup> Class are given priority in the allocation of Learning Support. Therefore the following strategies have been adopted:

#### Junior Infants

- Literacy Groups - Withdrawal (follow Jolly Phonics Programme & Sounds Abound Programme)

#### Senior Infants

- Literacy Groups – Withdrawal (follow Jolly Phonics Programme & Sounds Abound Programme)
- Maths Co-Teaching – In Class (Follow Class Curriculum and Teacher Designed Programme based on Ready Set Go Maths Programme)

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Class

- Literacy Lift Off Programme (Rotating 6 week programme)

### **Other Intervention Strategies**

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class

- Accelerated Reading Programme

## 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class

- Gaeilge – On review of Drumcondra results, an intensive listening and reading course has been introduced

## 4<sup>th</sup> Class

- Pilot Programme of Irish Station Teaching has been introduced similar in format to the Literacy Lift Off Programme

## **Selection of Pupils for Learning Support**

Priority for Learning Support is given to those pupils who

- Perform at or below the 16<sup>th</sup> Percentile, excluding pupils who receive Resource Teaching
- Discrepancies between classwork and Micra-T / Sigma-T
- Discrepancies of 20 + between Sigma-T and Micra-T Percentiles

## Standardised Tests - English

Junior Infants	British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS II) / Oral and Written Language Scales (OWLS) (when necessary)
Senior Infants	Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) - children identified follow the “ <i>Forward Together</i> ” At Home Programme with their parents/guardians (MIST administered in 5 <sup>th</sup> term of school as per guidelines)
1st –6 <sup>th</sup> class	Micra T

## Standardised Tests – Maths

1st –6<sup>th</sup> class          Sigma T

- Both Micra and Sigma tests administered in September to all classes and re-administered to 2<sup>nd</sup>,4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class in May in accordance with DES guidelines

## Standardised Tests – Gaeilge

2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> class          Drumcondra

- Drumcondra test administered in September to 2<sup>nd</sup>,4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class in May in accordance with DES guidelines

## Diagnostic Tests

- 1) Oral and Written Language Scales, Second Edition (OWLS II)
- 2) Pearson Dyslexia Screening Test

- 3) Quest Reading Diagnostic Test
- 4) Quest Mathematics Diagnostic Test
- 5) Neale Analysis of Reading Ability
- 6) Schonell Word Reading Test
- 7) Schonell Spelling Reading Test
- 8) Basic Number Screening Test 7-12 years

#### Informal Assessment Tools

- 1) Teacher Observation
- 2) Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests
- 3) Teacher Designed Checklists
- 4) Portfolios
- 5) Project Work
- 6) Class/Homework Copies

#### **Liaising with Parents**

Following screening tests / diagnostic tests, the **class teacher** will contact parents if he /she has a concern about a child. A meeting will be arranged where both class teacher and learning support teacher will discuss with parent concerns and possible need for learning support.

**No member of staff will make contact with a child's parents without the prior knowledge or without the specific request of a class teacher.**

#### **Group Education Plan (GEP) / Individual Pupil Learning Profile (IPLP)**

The GEP/ IPLP will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000. Templates of all Plans may be found on An Mhodscoil's School-Share in a designated folder. The plans will address the pupil's full range of needs and will include

- Details from Class Teacher
- Assessment Results
- Other Relevant Information (Outside Agencies)
- Learning Strengths and Attainments
- Priority Learning Needs
- Learning Targets (SMART)
- Class Based Targets
- Home Support Activities

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

A detailed review of targets will take place at the end of each teaching term (3 terms per year). New targets will be set where necessary. The Resource Teacher will meet with parents, with the prior knowledge of the class teacher, to discuss the child's progress in light of this review.

### **Who Requires a GEP?**

Any child attending Learning Support within a small group must have a GEP

### **Who Requires an IPLP?**

- Any child attending Learning Support who has a report from an outside agency and has been granted hours under the General Allocation Model
- Any child attending Learning Support who has a report from an outside agency stating that he/she requires additional help but has not been granted Resource/Learning Support Hours
- Any child attending Learning Support who has scored under the 16<sup>th</sup> Percentile in Micra T / Sigma T tests

### **Continuing / Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching**

- At the start of each instructional term a consultation between Class Teacher, Learning Support Teacher/Resource Teacher, Parent, Child and outside agents (Psychologist, Speech Therapist etc.) will evaluate a plan for the child.
- The criteria on which a decision will be made include:
  - 1) Were targets reached? Do we set new targets?
  - 2) A consideration as to whether the child has reached a level where he/she can cope independently/semi independently in class
- The child is monitored closely by class teacher if supplementary teaching is discontinued

### **Class Timetabling**

- The provision of Learning Support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths
- Every effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss the same curricular area each time they attend Learning Support. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class teacher, though class disruption are kept to a minimum
- Support will be administered in, an in-class setting with the co-operation of and in consultation with class teacher unless this support can **only** be provided outside the class setting



- In class support design and planning will be the responsibility of both the Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher

### **Planning Time**

The school recognises the importance of a co-ordinated approach and therefore ensures that class teachers and learning support /resource teachers have an opportunity to meet each other and with parents to draw up plans for working with child.

Two weeks prior to the end of each instructional term supervision is provided to release class teachers enabling them to meet to discuss child's needs and educational targets for the upcoming term. This is facilitated by:

- Infant Teachers oblige and take classes occasionally
- Principal takes class
- Haddington Road Hours

# Resource Teaching Policy

## **Entitlement to Resource Teaching**

- Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be referred for assessment and may be allocated Resource Hours
- Children who have physical difficulties e.g. sight impairment, or a gap between ability and in-class performance may also be allocated Resource Hours
- When a child continues to experience difficulty and is not making progress above the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile in literacy and numeracy, the child may be referred for psychological assessment, in consultation with parents and may then be allocated Resource Hours

## **Role of Class Teacher, Parents, Principal, Board of Management**

The role of the above in the education of children who have been allocated Resource Hours is as in the Learning Support Policy

## **Role of the Resource Teacher**

The Resource Teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having difficulties. In addition, the Resource Teacher should advise and liaise with other colleagues, parents (with prior knowledge of class teacher) and other professionals in the interest of the child. More specifically, the Resource Teacher has responsibility for

- Developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for pupils under their care, in consultation with other partners in education
- Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress
- Keeping records of same
- Setting specific, time related and attainable targets for each child and agreeing those with class teacher and parents
- Direct Teaching of the child for the allocated daily time, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class
- Team Teaching when the child's learning objectives can be facilitated
- Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, ICT and other related matters where able

- Meeting and advising parents when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as requested
- Meeting with any other relevant professionals, in the child's interests, e.g. psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teacher

### **Individual Learning Plan (IEP)**

The IEP will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000. Templates of all Plans may be found on An Mhodscoil's School-Share in a designated folder. The plans will address the pupil's full range of needs and will include

- Details from Class Teacher
- Assessment Results
- Other Relevant Information (Outside Agencies)
- Learning Strengths and Attainments
- Priority Learning Needs
- Learning Targets (SMART)
- Class Based Targets
- Home Support Activities

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

A detailed review of targets will take place two weeks prior to the end of each instructional term (3 terms per year). New targets will be set where necessary. The Resource Teacher will meet with parents, with the prior knowledge of the class teacher, to discuss the child's progress in light of this review.

### **Who Requires an IEP?**

- Any child who has been granted Resource hours by the NCSE

The IEP must be signed by all the class teacher, special education teacher and parents and given to the Assistant Principal for Special Education (P.Ó Cearbhalláin) for storage and safe keeping.