

Recognise my worth, realise my potential

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*Scoil Réalt na Mara,
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Very Rev Fr Patrick Mernagh
(Chairperson of Board)
Micheál Martin, Principal*

Policy on Provision of Support for Pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Introduction

Scoil Réalt na Mara is a co-educational mainstream primary school catering for children from mixed social and cultural backgrounds. It comes under the DES Rural DEIS scheme for primary schools.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the provision of additional learning support to pupils with special educational needs in Scoil Réalt na Mara under the New Model of Special Education Provision 2017. Following the publication of circular 13/2017, a review of our Special Education Needs Provision was completed (Appendix 1) collaboratively among our SEN team and principal and consisted of the completion of a Self-Reflective Questionnaire with the aim of establishing best practice across the following headings.

- How can we identify pupils' needs?
- How can we meet these needs?
- How can we monitor and report on progress?
- How can a school allocate its resources to effectively meet needs?
- How can our school plan at whole-school level to ensure effective provision for pupils with special educational needs?

Mission Statement:

The mission statement of our school is "Recognise my worth, Realise my potential".

The school community, the Board of Management, teachers and parents of Scoil Réalt na Mara are fully committed to the ideal of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible. Our policy as set out in this document aims to enable pupils with Special Educational Needs to become fully integrated members of the school community by carefully considering the needs of each pupil and providing additional support appropriate to the individual's needs. We endeavour to help all of our pupils to reach their personal best.

Guiding Principles:

- All our pupils have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all our pupils to feel that they are a valued part of our school community.

- The resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school.
- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support and whenever possible, these pupils will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.

Aims:

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class at a level appropriate to them.
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes towards school and learning in these pupils.
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning through parent- school collaboration.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of this policy.
- Provide early intervention programmes and other programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Our SEN policy envisages a whole school approach that takes into account the roles of the Board of Management, the principal, class teacher, special education teachers, parents and pupils.

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BoM, 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 educational 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. The BoM:

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on support for pupils with extra needs
- Provides adequate class accommodation and teaching resources.
- Provides a secure facility for storage of records.

Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. He will work closely with the SEN co-ordinator and will keep the BoM informed about the working of this policy. It will be the role of the principal in collaboration with the SEN co-ordinator to:

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles.
- Assign SNA duties in consultation with class teachers.
- Co-ordinate teachers work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.

- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies.
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils needs and that progress is monitored methodically.
- Support the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to 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.
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals.
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
- Select children for NEPS involvement in consultation with the class and support teachers and NEPS psychologist.
- Select pupils for psychological assessment in consultation with the principal, class and support teachers and NEPS psychologist
- Liaise with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of children with SEN
- Liaise with SENO regarding all aspects of special education provision.
- Store confidential information (Psychological Assessment Reports etc.) regarding SEN children and share same with SEN co-ordinator, class teachers, support teachers, other agencies where appropriate.
- Arrange for exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils for whom this is appropriate.

Special Needs Co-ordinator

The Special Needs Co-ordinator is required to:

- Oversee the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy.
- Co-ordinate provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Organise the timetable for support teaching.
- Liaise with and advise fellow teachers and contribute to in-service training of staff.
- Liaise with and advise SNAs with regard to supporting pupils with special needs
- Liaise with parents of pupils with special needs.
- Monitor and evaluate SEN provision.
- Keep a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching.
- Facilitate planning for class teacher with support teacher.
- Support the implementation of a tracking system at a whole-school level to monitor the progress of pupils who avail of additional support
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals.
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services
- Select pupils for NEPS involvement in consultation with the principal, class teacher and support teachers and NEPS psychologist.
- Select pupils for psychological assessment in consultation with the principal, class and support teachers and NEPS psychologist.
- Liaise with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of pupils with SEN
- Store confidential information (Psychological Assessment Reports etc.) regarding SEN children and share same with principal, class teachers, support teachers, other agencies where appropriate.

- Participate in and advise on the drafting of Classroom Support Plans, School Support Plans, and School Support Plus Plans.
- Arrange for exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils for whom this is appropriate.

The Role of the Class Teacher:

Mainstream class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom. The role includes:

- Initial identification of pupils who may have general or specific learning difficulties.
- Ensure that plans identify clear, relevant learning objectives that are contextualised to pupils' learning needs.
- Administering and/or scoring screening tests and discussing outcomes with Support Teachers and Principal.
- Maintain assessment records that are clear, useful, easy to interpret and share and tailored to pupils' individual learning needs.
- Support for identified pupils in the first instance through a Class Support Plan (Stage 1 of the Staged approach)
- Adapting the classroom environment as appropriate to suit the needs of individual pupils.
- Liaising with parents to gather further information, devise support plans for children and review progress
- Collaborating with support teachers to construct and review School Support, School Support Plans and School Support Plus Plans (for pupils at Stages 2 and 3 of the Staged Approach)
- Differentiating class programmes by task, output, instruction etc. in line with agreed targets and maintaining a record of pupil's progress.

The Role of the Special Education Teacher:

Special education teachers should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. 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.

The S.E.T. will

- Provide supplementary teaching commensurate with each pupils/group of pupils particular and individual needs.
- Develop a support plan for each pupil/ group of pupils assigned to them in consultation with class teacher and parents.
- Implement suitable recommendations from outside agencies wherever possible and liaise with outside agencies involved with children on their caseloads.
- Keep a Planning and Evaluation record for each pupil or group of pupils on their caseload.
- Keep a Planning and Evaluation record (together with class teacher) for in-class support.
- Meet with class teacher of each pupil at school support or school support plus level regularly throughout the year.

- Meet/consult with parents of each pupil receiving support regularly throughout the year where possible.
- Implement school early intervention programmes.
- Administer informal assessments, screening and diagnostic assessments as suitable and maintain records of their outcomes.
- Contribute to the ongoing development of policy on SEN at whole school level.

The role of the S.N.A is clearly outlined in *circular 05/15* and can be summarised as to provide general assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. Detailed record keeping will be kept in consultation with the class teacher and principal.

Parental involvement:

Parents through their unique knowledge of their own child have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between teachers and parents is of critical importance for children with SEN. Parents will be invited to attend meetings with class teacher, SET and principal as necessary and their concerns and contributions sought.

Prevention and Early intervention:

1. Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- Development of agreed approaches to teaching of Literacy and Maths in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Whole school promotion of Reading -Readathon, Book Fair, World Book Day activities, visiting authors, storytellers.....
- In-class support for Building Bridges of Comprehension Strategies.
- In-class support for Genre Writing.
- Literacy Lift-off in senior infants and 1st class and other classes is deemed necessary.
- Print rich environment
- Shared/paired reading programmes.
- Peer –tutoring.
- Story time, Library time, DEAR time, Book Fair, Reading buddies, visiting authors/storyteller
- Access to Literacy and Numeracy apps on school I pads.
- Availability of a wide range of concrete materials for teaching maths.
- Screening tests in Snr Infs. –linked to LLO and RR
- Friends for Life programme

2. Early Interventions:

Some or all of the following will be implemented in a school year:

- Literacy Lift Off for all pupils in Snr. Infs.-(Assessment before intervention begins to determine suitable starting point for each pupil and three check-ups during the year.)
- Reading Recovery for some individual pupils in Snr. Infs. and 1st.class
- Literacy Lift Off for all pupils in 1st class and other classes is deemed necessary
- Support for oral language development in-class in Junior Infants through Aistear

- Team teaching in Maths in classes where there is an identified need.
- Roots of Empathy-

Selection of pupils for additional teaching:

Under the new model pupils will be identified for supplementary teaching support in accordance with the Guidelines for Schools in Supporting pupils with SEN in mainstream schools 2017.

In identifying pupils for additional support we will take into account the following: (as outlined in Circular 13/2017)

- Standardised tests scores- those who perform below the 10th percentile will be prioritised for support in numeracy and literacy
- Pupils previously in receipt of learning support and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
- Pupils who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention through the Continuum of Support Process.
- Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, co-ordination or attention difficulties.
- Pupils who have specific learning difficulties. (SLD)
- Pupils with significant SEN e.g. pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical or sensory needs who need highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes tailored to their needs.
- Pupils who present with a range of learning difficulties whose interaction may present a significant barrier to learning and to accessing the curriculum.
- Pupils who need additional English Language Support

Support will be provided under the guiding principle that pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support.

Catering for pupils with Exceptional Ability

Pupils who meet the criteria for exceptionally able will be catered for within the classroom based on a differentiated programme of work **or** if deemed possible by the Principal/SEN Coordinator may be offered extension classes on a withdrawal basis, subject to the approval of the pupil and their parents. Any pupil who scores over the 90th percentile in standardised tests is referred to CYTI.

Providing for pupils with SEN:

Identified SEN pupils will be listed as being on a particular stage on the Continuum of Support.

Support will be provided to pupils at either Classroom Support, School Support or School Support Plus level of the Continuum of Support.

Stage 1 .Classroom Support

Some pupils deemed to need additional support with their learning (literacy and numeracy) and/or specific needs (oral language, behaviour, social interaction, attention) will be supported in the classroom by the Class Teacher. Their needs and provisions will be drawn up on the Classroom Support Plan and reviewed regularly.

If a concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan the Special Ed Co-ordinator may be consulted about intervention at Stage 2.

Stage 2. School Support

Further diagnostic testing by the Special Education Teaching team will be administered at this stage. A learning programme to include appropriate interventions for the individual pupil will be agreed in consultation with class teacher and parents and supplementary teaching with S.E.T. arranged. A School Support Plan will be drawn up and interventions recorded and reviewed regularly.

Stage 3 School Support Plus

Some pupils who continue to present with significant learning needs require more intensive intervention. At this stage the school may request a consultation with or an assessment from a specialist source e.g. psychologist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, paediatrician etc. The SET in consultation with the class teacher and parents and using recommendations/ information from specialist's reports agree a learning programme to include appropriate interventions for the individual pupil. A School Support Plus plan will be drawn up and reviewed twice yearly.

Additional teaching support at Stages 2 and 3 can be provided in a variety of ways. The S.E.T. may work in the classroom with the class teacher or withdraw pupils in small groups and /or individually for a period of time for intensive teaching of key skills.

Parental permission will be sought for pupils who receive additional teaching outside of the classroom, this will be obtained through the permissions section on Aladdin Connect.

Continuing and discontinuing supplementary teaching:

At review stage and taking into account a pupil's progress and targets met it will be decided whether to continue or discontinue supplementary teaching. A pupil may revert from School Support/ School Support Plus level to Classroom Support level at this stage or a further plan with revised targets is agreed and the pupil continues the intervention with SET.

Due consideration will be given to the overall needs of the school and all its pupils at this stage

Monitoring and reviewing this policy:

The principal has overall responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this policy

It is an ongoing and developmental process. The policy will be reviewed in September 2024.

Ratified by the Board of Management on ____ 13th October 2022_
