

Holy Angels National School

Clogher,
Claremorris,
Co. Mayo.
F12RC95



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Special Education Support Policy

Introductory Statement

This Special Education Support Policy (previously known as Learning Support / Resource Policy) was reviewed and updated by the teaching staff during the first term of the 2021/22 school year. It reflects the revised model for allocating special education teaching resources which was introduced by the Department of Education and Skills in September 2017. (Special Education Circular 0013/2017)

Context

The New Allocation Model provides allocations based on the profiled needs of each school.

Current Cluster arrangements

	School Name	Roll Number	Special Education Needs hours in clustered post
Base School	Holy Angels N.S. Clogher	17482P	20hrs 38mins
2 nd School	Mountpleasant N.S.	13500R	5 hours

***Balance of 38 mins will be banked via the OLCS system (22.8 hours per year) and used to support the special education provision in the school.*

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested persons on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties and to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act, 1998.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

In our school we are dedicated to helping each child to achieve his/her individual potential. The provision of a quality system of Special Education Support is integral to this commitment.

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

1. Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level.
2. Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.

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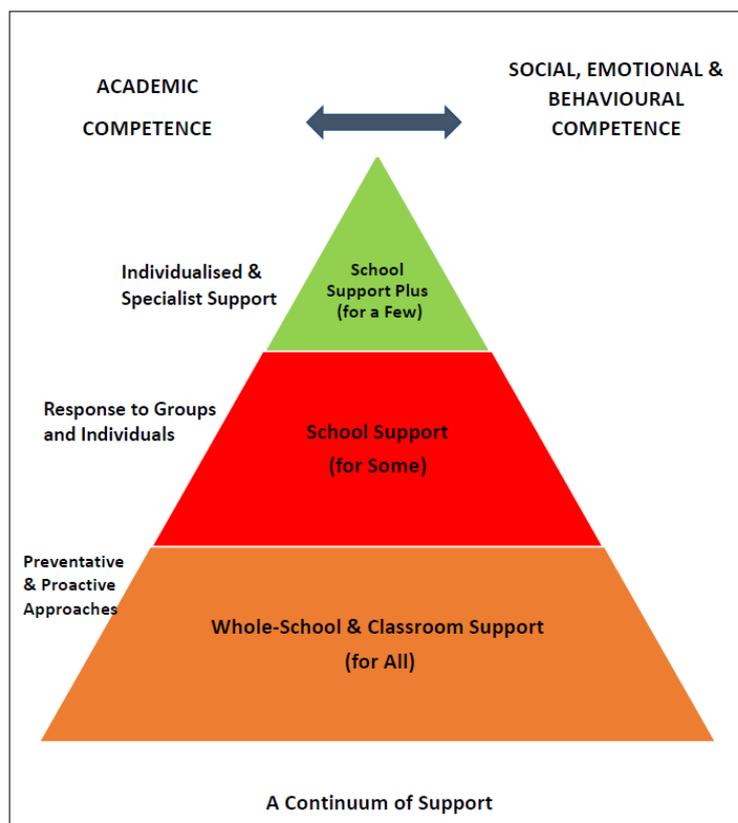


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3. Enable pupils to become independent learners and reach their potential.
4. Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
5. Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for these pupils.

Continuum of Support Process.

At Holy Angels N.S. we are guided by the Continuum of Support framework (DES 2010) to assist in identifying and responding to pupils' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs.



The continuum of support described in these guidelines encompasses a graduated problem solving model of assessment and intervention in schools comprised of three distinct school based processes which are summarized below:

- Classroom Support is an intervention process coordinated by the class teacher and carried out within the regular classroom.

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- School Support is an assessment and intervention process which is usually co-ordinated by the Special Education Teacher working alongside the class teacher. Interventions at this stage will be additional to those provided through classroom support.
- School Support Plus is generally characterised by the school requesting the involvement of relevant external services in more detailed assessment and development of intervention programmes. This level of intervention is for children with complex and/or enduring needs and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned interventions at the previous levels.

Guidelines

The following procedures are being implemented as a means of responding effectively to pupils' individual learning needs.

1. Prevention Strategies

- As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties, the following strategies are being implemented:
- development and implementation of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and maths programmes in the school
- class-based early intervention by the class teacher resulting in the provision of additional individualised support
- promotion of parental involvement for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the provision of relevant booklets e.g. 'Tips for Parents' and the arrangement of formal and informal Parent/Teacher Meetings.
- creation of a positive reading climate which fosters enjoyment and promotes reading for pleasure e.g. shared reading, story time, class libraries, book reviews etc.
- ongoing observation and assessment.

2. Early Intervention Programme

- In line with Continuum of Support Guidelines, the class teacher gathers information through formal and informal means, with a view to informing interventions.
- The classroom teacher also has a central role in identifying and responding to pupils with additional needs including differentiating the curriculum as appropriate. These responses will be informed and assisted by collaboration with colleagues, parents/guardians and others such as the school's NEPS psychologist and the local Special Educational Needs Organiser.

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- Based on teacher observation, parental information and the use of checklists and profiles, the class teacher will identify children with learning difficulties from Junior Infants onwards.
- Early intervention begins for pupils in Senior Infants in response to the class teacher's observations and the results of the Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST).
- The school year is divided into two instructional terms.
- The Special Education Teacher, in consultation with the class teacher and Principal, decides the size of groups, taking into account the individual learning needs of pupils and the overall caseload.
- One-to-one teaching is provided where necessary.
- Lessons focus on the development of phonemic awareness, speech and language, word identification strategies, oral work, comprehension skills and mathematical procedures and concepts.

3. Selection of Pupils for Supplementary Teaching

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

- From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually using standardised tests. The tests in use are MIST (Senior Infants), Micra T and Sigma T (1st – 6th classes) and are administered by the class teacher and/or special education teacher.
- Priority for Learning Support is given to the following:
 - those pupils who perform at or below the 10th percentile on Standardised Literacy and Numeracy tests.
 - Pupils who were previously in receipt of supplementary teaching from a resource or Special Education Teacher and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
 - Pupils who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention as set out in the Continuum of Support Process. This will be evidenced through school-based assessment of attainment, and behavioural, social and emotional functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes.

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- Needs as set out in professional reports will also be taken into account, where available.
- Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties.
- Pupils who have specific learning disabilities.
- Pupils with significant Special Educational Needs. For example, pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs.
- In the case of pupils performing at or below the 10th percentile, the screening process is followed by a meeting between the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher concerning the pupil's performance.
- Parents are consulted and are kept informed throughout this process and should a child require supplementary teaching, a consent form is signed by the parents/guardians.
- Diagnostic tests are then carried out by the special education teacher including the following: M.I.S.T.; M.A.L.T.; Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA), B.I.A.P.; Dolch Word List; and S.W.S.T. Spelling. This list is not exhaustive and is reflective of our policy on assessment. Staff will take account of recommendations from professionals and other educational developments.

4. Provision of Supplementary Teaching

- The primary work of the special education teacher is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified in section 3 above.
- The class teacher and the special education teacher meet to devise Individual Education Plans as part of the Student Support File and Continuum of Support process
- Such plans address the pupils' full range of needs and include:
 - priority concerns (teachers and parents)
 - details from the pupils' class teacher;
 - assessment results;
 - other relevant information
 - learning strengths and attainments;
 - priority learning needs;
 - learning targets;
 - supplementary support strategies; and
 - home support activities.
- Each plan is monitored through teacher observation and the keeping of planning and progress records.

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- A detailed review takes place at the end of each instructional term. The Special Education Teacher and/or the class teacher meet the parents to discuss their child's progress in the light of the review.
- The Special Education Teacher maintains the following documentation in individualised files:
 - individual profile and learning programme;
 - short-term planning and programme record;
 - samples of work
- A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support operates in response to the needs of the individual pupil.

5. Procedures for Continuing/Discontinuing Pupils

- Following the end of instructional term review as detailed in section 4 above, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching.
- The criteria on which this decision is based include:
 - has the pupil achieved some/all of the learning targets set?
 - will the pupil be able to cope independently/semi-independently in the classroom learning context?
- The decision-making process involves consultation between the class teacher, the Special Education Teacher and the pupil's parents and account is also taken of the overall Learning Support demands in the school.
- A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's IEP.

6. Communication Strategies

The operation of an effective communication system between all the parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential. These include:

- meeting of class teacher and Special Education Teacher following class teacher's concerns and/or a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval for diagnostic assessment and provision of supplementary teaching, as required.
- ongoing communication between the Special Education Teacher, class teacher and parents throughout the instructional term.

7. Parental Involvement

- Regular communication takes place between the Special Education Teacher and parents.

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- Parents are actively involved in the achievement of the targets set for their child e.g. helping children with specific tasks at home .
- The parents and Special Education Teacher meet at the end of each instructional term as well as at annual parent/teacher meeting and informally, to review the child's progress.

8. Referral to Out-of-School Agencies

- The Class teacher in consultation with the Special Education Teacher and parents, co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies e.g. NEPS Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist etc.
- The Principal and/or Special Education Teacher and/or class teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent.
- The class teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with parents and the appropriate school personnel.
- The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, Principal, class teacher and Special Education Teacher (as appropriate) .
- Recommendations from the external professional are discussed and incorporated into the student's support plan.

9. Provision of Resources

- Resources for the provision of support include:
 - a wide variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials, concrete materials and activities / programmes to support Literacy and Numeracy.
 - A variety of equipment and resources to support children with behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs.
- Following consultation between the Special Education Teacher, Principal and class teachers, funding for materials are provided through the Board of Management.
- Resources will be sourced based on recommendations from relevant reports/professionals and after detailed staff discussions.

10. Timetabling

- The provision of special education teaching support includes withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and in-class tuition, as appropriate.
- This is in addition to the regular class teaching.
- Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend learning support. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by class teachers while class disruption is minimised.

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11. Special Education Teacher's Work Schedule

- The work schedule of the Special Education Teacher, in addition to providing supplementary teaching, may include the overseeing of early intervention and prevention programmes, the conducting of diagnostic assessment, the maintenance and review of pupil records, the co-ordination of special needs services and consultation with teachers and parents.

Success Criteria

Board of Management

The school-wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupil learning in the following ways:

- an inclusive atmosphere where children are fully supported in their personal development
- improved standards of academic achievement within the pupil's individual learning programme;
- improvement in child's ability to work independently in the classroom.
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupils' progress

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of our policy will be supported as follows:

Roles	Person(s) Responsible
Co-ordinate Learning Support and Additional Needs services	Principal
Provide supplementary teaching, conduct diagnostic assessment,	Special Education Teacher
Maintain and review pupil records and liaise with Principal, teachers and parents	Special Education Teacher
First line responsibility for the pupil's learning needs	Class Teacher
Support for and participation in their child's learning	Parent
Special Education Support Policy and the	Board of Management

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provision of adequate resources, accommodation and storage	
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Implementation and Review

This policy will be reviewed again in January 2024.

A review of the provision of in-class / out of class support will be ongoing, as children's needs and circumstances change.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on . The policy is available to all our partners in education.

Signed:

Chairperson BOM
Date: _____

Principal/ Secretary BOM
Date: _____