

Special Educational Needs Draft Policy **Working Document**

Introduction:

This Special Educational Needs policy outlines how Ardscoil na mBráithre will attempt to enable all students to belong to an educational community without prejudice and within which individual difference is celebrated. The legacy of Edmund Rice and by extension, the Gospel, challenges our school to be inclusive, to be especially mindful of the disadvantaged and of those with special needs. The school strives to create a secure, accepting, collaborating and stimulating community in which every student is encouraged to achieve to the highest degree possible, according to his potential.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- to provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.
- outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.
- comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000).
- fulfil DES circular 0014/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Post Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Post Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools).

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- To update the SEN policy in line with Dept. of Education Circular No. 0014/2017
- identify additional needs that our students may have.
- allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of children with additional needs.
- divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to students with additional needs.
- track, monitor, review and report on the progress of students with additional needs.
- communicate information between the SET team, principal, staff and parents/guardians.
- To attempt to fulfill the holistic needs of students at a whole school level.

Definition:

Students have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision made for them. According to the 'Education for Special Needs Act 2004' the definition for special educational needs means 'a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from

education on account of 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’.

Admissions Policy:

Admission procedures are in accordance with the school’s Admission Policy and makes provision for all students, including students with disability and special educational needs, in accordance with the resources provided by the DES and otherwise available to it.

Role of School Principal

The Department’s post-primary guidelines on inclusion outlines the role of the school principal in supporting students with special educational needs. It states that ‘Under current legislation the principal of the school has overall responsibility for ensuring that the special educational needs of students are met. As a consequence, the principal has the general responsibility for establishing and promoting whole-school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students, including those with special educational needs’ (Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines; DES, 2007, p 67).

The role of the school principal includes the following:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school’s policies and procedures relating to the inclusion of students with special educational needs.
- Oversee a whole-school approach to assessment and screening to identify needs and to guide the allocation of appropriate supports.
- Ensure effective engagement with feeder primary schools to support the transition of students with special educational needs.
- In collaboration with the in-school management team, discharge a key function in the deployment of staff, allocation of resources, organisation of students and timetabling.
- Ensure that systems are in place for effective sharing of relevant information on students’ needs with all subject teachers.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of students with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (subject teachers and special education teachers, guidance counsellors, special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, students and external professionals/agencies.
- In implementing the new resource allocation model, principals should give careful consideration to the formation of a special education needs team whose members have expertise and interest in special education so that provision can be co-ordinated efficiently and flexibly to meet a range of needs.
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needs. Subject to his/her overall statutory responsibilities, the 28 principal may delegate the performance of specific responsibilities to other staff members, including members of the special education needs team.

Role of Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO): The SENO will be responsible for co-ordinating and facilitating delivery of educational services to children with disabilities at local level. SEN co-ordinator (SENO) should:

- communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis.
- liaise with external agencies about the provision for students with additional needs.
- liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS).
- liaise with SET's to monitor and review students with additional needs.
- co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for students with additional needs.
- collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support.
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their student, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress.
- co-ordinate the screening of students for additional support, using the results of standardised tests.
- maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support at each level of the Continuum.

Role of Special Education Teacher/Core team

- The Special Education Teacher will assist the school in providing support for students with special educational needs arising from disability by:
- Assessing and recording students needs and progress.
- Setting specific, time-related targets for each student.
- Direct teaching of the students, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class/team teaching.
- Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of Information Technology and a range of other related matters.
- Meeting and advising parents/guardians, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher.
- Meeting with relevant professionals, in the student's interest, e.g. psychologists, speech therapists, visiting teachers, or class teachers.
- Applying for Special Arrangements for State Examinations.
- Referring and completing application forms for psychological assessments.)

Role of the Class Teacher:

The Role of the Classroom Teacher Section 22 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy role of the teacher in the education and personal development of students in schools. The classroom teacher is responsible for educating all students in his/her class, including any student with a special educational

need. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in his/her classroom, including students with special educational needs.

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that each student is taught in a stimulating and supportive classroom environment where all students feel equal and valued.

In line with Continuum of Support Guidelines, the class teacher may gather 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 students 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.

The classroom teacher will also make specific accommodations for students within the class as a result of concerns about a student's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers and the development of a programme of differentiated instruction for that student.

(To identify students who are experiencing difficulty (refer to 'definition' section) To differentiate within the classroom and to provide appropriate opportunities and resources To monitor and record the progress of the student as an ongoing process. To inform parents/guardians of areas of concern and to seek support from parents/guardians. As new members of staff join the school they are advised about the special needs arrangements and their responsibility towards the implementation of the policy.)

Role of the Parent/Guardian:

The school will ensure that parents/guardians are notified and consulted if special educational needs provision is being considered for their son. Partnership with parents/guardians plays a key role in enabling students, with special educational needs, to achieve their potential. The school recognises that parents/guardians hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a student's needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents/guardians of students with special educational needs will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valued role in their son's education. Developing good relationships with parents/guardians is seen as crucial to success.

Parents/guardians can contact the SENO directly when necessary and are fully encouraged to do so.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to give their support at home whenever possible with the emphasis on raising self-esteem and building a positive attitude.

The Continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provide valuable opportunities to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of students with special educational needs.

Role of Student

The Student Support File offers a useful framework for promoting student engagement and participation at all stages of The Continuum. The student is encouraged to;

- To participate in the construction of IEP.
- To work in implementing the IEP and achieving targets.
- To review their learning targets.
- To work and cooperate with teachers in implementing IEP and achieving targets.

Role of Special Needs Assistant (SNA): In regard to Special Needs Assistant support, the school may proceed to make the necessary staffing adjustments on receipt of the decision from the SENO. Their role includes giving general assistance to the class teacher, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. Duties shall be modified to support the particular needs of the student concerned.

1. Identification of Students with Special Educational Needs: Individual's need of students are identified across a broad range including academic, social, communication, emotional and behavioural.

This is achieved by;

- Screening tests of CAT 4 and young cloze reading test of all 1st years in March prior to the start of the academic year
- Transition Year Pilot Programme
- Documentation on application allows teachers to identify academic needs of students in terms of language exemptions, psych report, OT report, NEPS reports, use of assistive technology
- Reports sent in by outside agency through parents
- Parents ringing to voice concerns prior to commencement of academic year
- Collating information from feeder schools on prospective students areas of academic need
- Student's Passport from Primary Schools include STENS, academic progress in English, Irish, Maths, SESE and arts Education, teacher comments
- Students who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those students who need additional English Additional language Support.

Students in the School

- Teacher observation
- Transition Programme Parental Review
- Teacher Resource liaison document
- Pupil progress forms
- Resource Schemes of Work
- Student feedback
- Care Team
- Parent feedback
- SNA feedback
- Class tests
- Christmas and Summer Reports
- State Examinations

How do we identify Social, Communication, Emotional and Behavioural Needs.

Incomings Students

- Transition Programme Pilot
- Transition Programme Parental Review
- Documentation on school application allows parents to identify SEBD needs of students in terms of psych report, OT report, NEPS reports
- Reports sent in by outside agency through parents
- Parents ringing to voice concerns prior to commencement of academic year
- Collating information from feeder schools on prospective students areas of EBD need
- Student's Passport from Primary Schools include students social and personal development, attendance and punctuality.

2.Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

Once students needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet students' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of student with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some students may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of students. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

At the end of each term the SET's meet class teachers and review children's needs, the resources in place and progress made using the Continuum of Support problem-solving model of assessment and stage approach flow charts. The SET's then brings this information to the end of term SET team planning meetings. As a SET team, we review all support and allocate resources for the subsequent term. We cross-reference the needs of students at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

Timetabling

- Ardscoil na mBraithre now have a core team of teachers allocated to SEN.
- Timetables are flexible to accommodate changing needs.
- Timetables are flexible to cater for the specific needs of students.
- All endeavour is made for continuity of support of SEN students at senior cycle.
- Provision is made to support subject teachers through team teaching/in class/co-operative teaching and joint planning

Transition Primary to Post Primary:

To ease the transition from primary to post primary the following practices are encouraged:

SEN Coordinator visits all feeder schools to initiate the profiling system, which highlights a student's strengths, needs and concerns. This information is then collated.

To reinforce the transition students are encouraged to attend Open Night.

To assist and provide information for the parents of transition pupils, an Open Night is held. Literature is provided to reinforce the information presented.

Parents of SEN students are encouraged to make an appointment with the SEN Coordinator to ensure early intervention and planning of IEP's.

Curriculum and Integration: All students are taught in mainstream classes alongside their peers with the majority of learning taking place in ordinary lessons incorporating differentiation. Students who receive support are either taught within the class situation or are withdrawn for intensive support from the learning support/resource teachers, individually or in small groups.

3.Educational planning-monitoring and reviewing

Educational planning is an essential element of our whole-school approach to meeting students' needs. Educational plans are differentiated in line with student's needs.

A student's educational support plan will include clear, measurable learning targets, and specify the resources and interventions that will be used to address student needs in line with the continuum of support process.

Individualised support plans for students will be developed through a collaborative process involving relevant teachers, parents/guardians, the students themselves and outside professionals, as necessary.

The individualised planning process will include regular reviews of learning targets as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment, target setting, intervention and review.

Student Support Plan

A Student Support File is used to plan interventions and to track a student's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to students, in line with their level of need. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the student. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support. The Student Support File has the following features:

- A checklist which can be used (in part or in full) across all levels of the Continuum
- A flexible, generic 'Support Plan' and 'Support Review Record' that can be used at all levels of support
- An easy-to-view 'Log of Actions' page to summarise

Continuum of Support

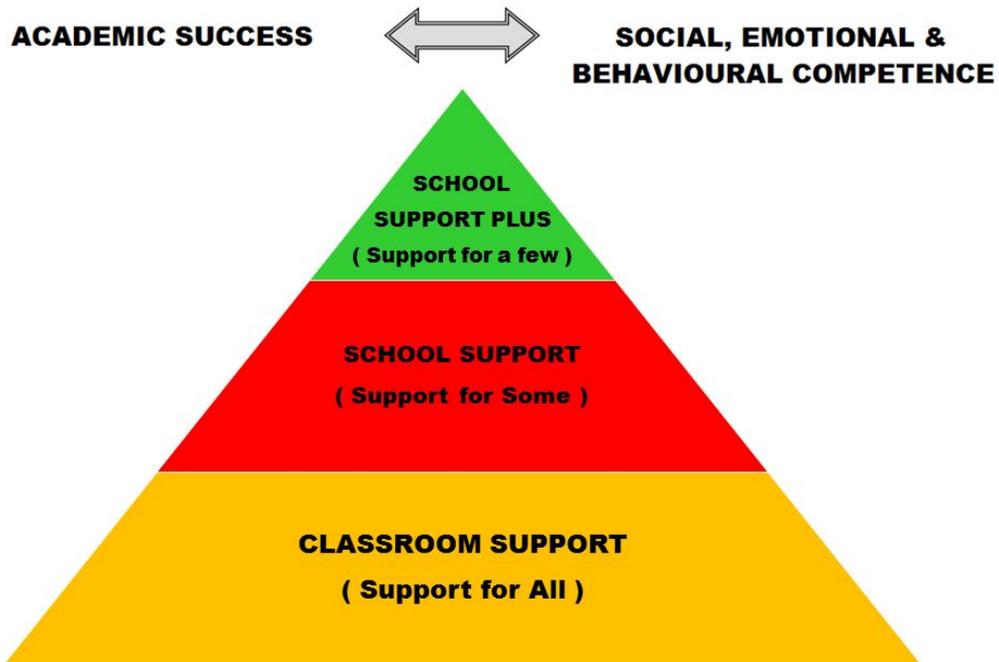
We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support students with additional needs. Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:

Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify students' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:



STAGE 1 CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for students who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other students in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual student. The teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

STAGE 2 SCHOOL SUPPORT

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the student's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

STAGE 3 SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

If a student's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan.

A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines

Testing

It may include:

- Screening tests in literacy, numeracy and overall general ability, for all incoming first year students -CAT4 and DATS in 5th year.
- Diagnostic tests to clarify and identify the exact area of difficulty, with parental consent - WRAT 4 and WIAT 11 for teachers.
- Informal tests – these can yield valuable information. Definitive conclusions will not be drawn from these tests. They will, however, be used as part of a wider assessment involving: a) Information from primary schools – consultation with class teachers, learning support teachers and resource teachers in all primary feeder schools. b) Consultation with parents of students with Special Educational Needs. c) Consultation with students. d) Feedback from subject teachers. e) Consultation with outside agencies that are involved with students.
- All procedures, test results and information received will be documented and filed. In addition, all information in relation to a student’s specific educational needs will be brought to the attention of relevant staff.)

Individual Educational Plan (IEP):

An IEP will need to be prepared for every student and it will be considered best practice to prepare an IEP for every student receiving learning support.

Content of an IEP: The nature and degree of the student’s abilities, skills and talents. The nature and degree of the student’s special educational needs and how these needs affect his educational development. The present level of educational performance of the student. The special education and related support services to be provided to the student to enable the student to effectively make the transition from primary school education to post-primary school education. The goals, which the student will attempt to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months. *A copy of the IEP will be available upon request to the parent/guardian, the SENO and other appropriate persons pending national agreement by all the education partners on the issue of IEPs. Parents/guardians may appeal against: Any statement or description of their son’s special educational needs that they consider to be incorrect or inadequate to meet their son’s needs. The failure of the school or health board to implement any part of the plan.

Resources and Accommodation:

The SET's have access to rooms where students can work individually or in small groups. Resources have been gathered to help target general areas of learning – literacy and numeracy, visual and auditory discrimination etc. There is also information available on dyslexia, dyspraxia, speaking and listening, ADHD, autism, social skills etc., as well as books, concrete and multi-sensory apparatus, games, CDs, and multimedia software (DVDs etc). Some items are kept as a specialist resource to provide a fresh start, or a new approach, but resources are generally for all staff to use if necessary. A copy of resources is available to view on request.

Support services and links to outside agencies:

We have established links with the following agencies: NCSE, SENO, School Psychologist, Health Board Legislation:

The School Authorities are committed to complying with the following legislation and guidelines: The Education Act 1998, The Education Welfare Act 2000, The Equal Status Act 2000, The Comhairle Act 2000, The Disabilities Bill 2004, The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, The NCCA Draft Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Learning Disabilities 2002.

Recommendations ; SCOT's analysis

Targeted Areas of Improvement Regarding Identification of Students Needs

- Review of support plans bi termly with parents and students
- More inclusion of students in IEP meetings
- Template for collaboration with subject teacher

Targeted areas of improvement on meeting the needs of students with SEN.

- All teachers need access to student support files ,thereby accessing relevant information from the student plan. This information can then help teachers to differentiate their subject teaching to meet the needs of their students and to set specific targets related to their subject.
- Whole school approach to early intervention to address literacy.
- Intervention programmes should be carefully monitored to assess and record their impact on student progress, participation in learning and in school life.
- SET's need to apply the four guiding principles when setting targets for students.Targets should be
 - linked to assessment
 - strengths bases
 - Linked to interventions
 - developed collaboratively
- SET's need to engage in regularly monitoring outcomes.

- The Student review record which is part of the student support file, needs to be used to make adjustments to support plans and to guide teachers when monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes with parents and students

Targeted areas of improvement on how we monitor and review student's progress.

- Reviews need to be conducted bi termly.
- Parents, students and classroom teachers need to be part of the review.
- Parents need to be consulted regularly through planned meetings or phone call/email.
- Teachers need access to the Student Support Plans. This can be achieved by sharing information on Team Drive.
- Targets need to be few in number.
- More involvement of Students in target setting.
- Targets need to be linked to evidence based interventions
- SET's need to apply the four guiding principles when setting targets for students.
- Targets should be - linked to assessment
 - strengths bases
 - Linked to interventions
 - developed collaboratively

Targeted areas of improvement on allocating resources to effectively meet its needs.

- Move towards more team teaching. At present only in maths classes. Discussion around team teaching with English Dept.
- Time given at start of new term for co-ordinating, planning and reviewing activities to ensure effective and optimal use of supports.
- More flexibility in SET timetables to address changing needs during the year.
- Member of the SEN team should be consulted when the timetable is being developed

Targeted areas of improvement at whole school level to ensure effective provision of Students with SEN

- CPD
- Evidence based intervention programmes
- Sharing CPD information to all teachers
- More resources ; novels, key skills, grammar, punctuation, subject based textbooks.
- ICT for SEN students ; new laptops, new software, notebooks,ipads

