



**Presentation Primary School
Clonmel**

S.E.N Policy

**Presentation Primary School ,Clonmel
Learning Support and Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy**

1. General principles

This school is committed to providing optimal learning experiences for each student to access a broad and balanced curriculum, in ways that maximise opportunities for students with learning needs to learn within the classroom, alongside peers. This inclusive approach recognises each individual pupil's right to develop a secure sense of belonging and sense of identity, in relation to:

- their class group
- the team of adults working with their class
- their school.

Effective learning programmes will be based on the following principles:

- Early screening and intensive early intervention to prevent failure
- Three-stage approach to assessment and intervention

- Structured programmes based on clear evidence from assessment
- Student and parental involvement in assessment and programme planning
- Teacher collaboration through team teaching
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

2. Aims

The S.E.N. policy aims to:

- Ensure that the pupils with the greatest levels of need have access to the greatest level of support
- Establish early screening and intervention programmes to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning
- Support students with learning needs to develop self-esteem and positive attitudes about school, learning and socialisation
- Enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve optimum levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy, before leaving primary school.

Subsidiary aims:

- To enable students to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
- To promote student involvement in their own learning through co-operative and active learning opportunities (paired work, ability and mixed ability group work, cross-age tutoring), thus encouraging students to become independent learners
- To maximise in-class support using teamteaching approaches
- To involve parents/guardians in supporting their children's learning through effective parent-support programmes
- To liaise with other agencies to support SEN students.

3. Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need

In allocating resources, priority will be given to:

1. Children with significant, enduring and complex needs
2. Early intervention programmes Junior Infants- Rang 2
3. Children scoring at or below the 12-15th percentile on a standardised test in English
4. Children scoring at or below the 12/15th percentile on a standardised test in maths

4. Team teaching

Team teaching is a collaborative and flexible approach to delivering supplementary teaching that focuses on:

- Maximising class-based support opportunities for students with learning needs
- Maximising the use of teacher time and school resources in supporting students.

The focus of teacher collaboration is on:

- Involvement of students and parents/guardians in setting learning targets for literacy, numeracy, personal and social development, behaviour, and other subject areas where appropriate
- Adaptation of curriculum and differentiation of activities to meet the student's individual learning needs (See Differentiation, **Appendix 1**)
- Planning instructional activities
- Agreeing which teachers deliver which aspects of programme (class teacher/ special education teacher)
- Agreeing where the supplementary teaching takes place (in classroom/in another place)
- Regular monitoring of instructional and organisational arrangements
- Regular monitoring/assessment of learning targets and progress of pupils receiving supplementary teaching.

Consultation meetings will be timetabled before each 6 to 8 week intervention block and supervision arrangements put in place in order to facilitate this process. The focus of these meetings is as follows:

- Development/Review of pupils' Support Files.
- Organisation of teaching arrangements and responsibilities
- Planning for the following intervention block for literacy and numeracy or other areas such as social skills

5. Staged approach to addressing learning difficulties

A three-stage approach to assessment and intervention will be used as outlined in the NEPS *Special Education Needs: A Continuum of Support* document:

- Classroom support: Classroom Support Plan

- School support: Involvement of S.E.T team, Development of a School Support Plan
- School support plus: Involvement of external agencies, Development of a School Support Plus Plan

6. Roles and responsibilities:

Delivering an effective special education/supplementary teaching programme is a shared responsibility between students, parents/guardians, board of management, principal, class teachers, special needs assistant, special education teacher team and external agencies.

Students

Students will be supported to take responsibility for their own learning, in an age-appropriate manner, by:

- Being helped to identify their own learning styles, and their own learning strategies based on their interests, experiences and skills
- Being involved in co-operative and active learning opportunities, including paired work, ability and mixed ability group work, cross-age tutoring.
- Encouraged to ask for help when they are experiencing difficulties in their learning
- Encouraged to engage in self-assessment
- Being supported to become more independent in their learning by being involved in meetings with staff and parents, setting their own learning targets and goals, and being active in monitoring their own progress.

Parents/guardians of children with SEN

Parents/guardians, with their unique understanding of their own child, have a crucial role to play in supporting their child's learning.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the class teacher when they first identify that their child is experiencing difficulties in their learning.

In student-parent-teacher meetings, teachers will:

- Develop open, respectful and trusting relationships between the student, parent/guardian and teacher/s
- Give a clear message of support and encouragement to the student in his/her learning, by focusing on the student's interests and strengths as the basis for meeting the student's learning needs

- Hear how the student is experiencing school (class and playground), relationship with the class teacher/ other staff, friendships etc.
- Share understandings of the child's strengths and needs, interests, aptitudes, behaviour and motivation for learning
- Record SMART learning targets agreed with the student and parent/guardian (for school attendance, academic subjects, personal/personal development, behavioural etc)
- Give parents/guardians a copy of the timetable for supplementary support, along with the details of how the learning is organised (in/out of student's classroom, 1-1/groupwork, size of groups involved, ability based/mixed ability grouping, names and roles of teachers and assistants, roles of any parent volunteers involved)
- Give guidance to parents/guardians (or model) what approaches are used particularly with reading, writing and maths so that there is consistency between home and school.
- Encourage parents to carry out activities at home which support the plan

Board of management

The board of management will contribute to the implementation of the school learning support (SEN) plan. This will include discussing S.E.N. issues at meetings, providing resources and funding training, as required for staff.

Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for the operation of the school's S.E.N programme and the operation of services for SEN children. Part of this work involves ensuring that the teachers and parents/guardians of pupils who are selected for diagnostic assessment and supplementary teaching are enabled to fulfil their roles as outlined in the school plan. The principal will delegate certain responsibilities to other teachers.

The principal will:

- Consult regularly with class teachers and the learning support team in relation to SEN
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on pupils with greatest need
- Liaise with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO)
- Support teachers to be well informed about the role of the external assessment services and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals

- Support staff to avail of training opportunities that enhance learning support teaching in the school, including screening, diagnostic testing, preventative programmes, assistive technologies
- Support staff to establish programmes to enable parents/guardians to become effectively involved in their child's learning support programme.

S.E.N. Co-ordinator

The S.E.N. co-ordinator will:

- Lead and manage the S.E. T. (Special Education Teacher) team
- Co-ordinate the prioritisation of needs process for all pupils with S.E.N. needs in line with the new model for S.E.N. provision
- Oversee all planning, target-setting, etc.
- Ensure that all parents of SEN pupils meet both class and SEN teachers in September/October and that there is genuine collaboration from the start.
- Research and introduce new methods, strategies, etc. (e.g. early intervention, different team teaching models, more in-class support for all pupils – where appropriate)
- Liaise with all class teachers re pupils in need of support
- Oversee annual standardised testing, ensuring all eligible pupils have been tested
- Print and file all standardised test results and oversee diagnostic testing.
- Complete applications for SNAs/assistive technology/all extra equipment for SEN pupils
- Oversee/make applications/referrals to all outside agencies
- Support other staff when meeting parents of pupils for referral to external agencies when necessary
- Keep up to date with developments in Standardised testing and Diagnostic testing
- Purchase all SEN resources/equipment/test materials
- Attend annual ILSA conference and organise relevant CPD for staff
- Assist principal in reviewing S.E.N. and Assessment Policies

Class teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in her class, including SEN pupils. On the basis of observation, screening

and discussion with a student and/or parent/guardian, the class teacher will focus on early identification of learning and/or social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The first response to emerging needs will be to put in place an individualised Classroom Support Plan, ideally with a home-support plan . This is Stage 1/Classroom support level of SEN assessment and intervention. The teacher will maintain regular contact to keep parents/guardians informed and involved. When classroom level support is not enough to fully meet a child's needs, the class teacher will involve the learning support team (SEN School Support).

Special Needs Assistants

The role and responsibility of assistants are outlined in the school policy on special needs assistants (see school policy on special needs assistants).

Special Education Teacher

The main role of the S.E.T. team is to provide supplementary teaching to pupils who have been identified and selected for supplementary teaching as outlined in the priorities above. All members of the S.E.T. team may work with children with complex needs, literacy/numeracy needs, E.A.L. needs or Social, Emotional or behavioural needs.

The S.E.T. team will work closely with the S.E.N. coordinator, the principal and class teachers to achieve the following:

- Promote and monitor whole-school strategies, together with class teachers, to develop language, literacy, numeracy, positive behaviour, high self-esteem and motivation for learning
- Work to support all class teachers (Junior Infants to Rang 6) and parents/guardians in providing for children with learning and/or socialisation difficulties
- Administer diagnostic tests to pupils who need further assessment after screening tests
- Collaborate with class teachers to develop a School Support Plan for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching (SEN Stage 2)
- Plan for two instructional terms each year: Sept.- Jan. and Feb. – June, each broken into 6-8 week blocks
- Maintain a weekly/fortnightly planning and progress record for each individual on her caseload
- Deliver intensive early intervention programmes, and provide supplementary teaching in English and/or mathematics, to pupils in the junior section of the school (junior infants to Rang 2).

If, following intervention, a pupil's difficulties continue to create a significant barrier to her/his learning and/or socialisation, then referrals for specialist assessment and support will be made (School support plus stage).

External professionals and support agencies

The principal, S.E.N. co-ordinator and the S.E.T. team will oversee the effective links with other agencies and specialist services. Assessment and intervention at School Support Plus stage will include the involvement of agencies including the visiting teachers, SENO, National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, educational welfare service, speech and language therapists, occupational therapist etc.

6. Strategies for preventing failure and learning difficulties

Teachers in junior and senior infant classes will do early screening of all pupils in order to identify children at risk of experiencing difficulties in learning. Early referrals, with parental permission, will be made for further assessments to other services, as required, e.g. hearing, vision, speech/language, sensory integration, psychology, and psychiatry.

Screening measures will include:

- School enrolment form and discussion/input from parent/guardian
- Teacher observation
- Student Support File Checklist
- Teacher designed tasks and tests (documented and dated by teacher)
- BIAP for specific pupils.

The Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T) is administered in senior infants in order to identify children in need of early intervention for reading and writing. The follow-on Forward Together Programme is carried out with the parents/guardians of children who are identified in the M.I.S.T.

The class teacher and prevention of learning difficulties

The class teacher is the key person responsible for creating a supportive classroom environment that optimises the learning of all students in all subject areas, preventing learning difficulties arising. The class teacher, in consultation with the learning support team, will:

- Implement a positive approach to classroom management and discipline

- Support students to understand their own learning styles, and develop their own strategies for learning and problem-solving
- Assess the learning needs of students, provide for structured learning activities within the classroom, use of a variety of teaching strategies and varied arrangements for meeting needs - team teaching and in-class support, group/individual withdrawal, use group work effectively for instruction (ability/mixed ability) and differentiate activities in all subjects
- Assess and record learning outcomes very regularly – analyse and record progress from samples of work, do error analysis to pinpoint specific difficulties, use checklists and teacher-designed tasks, use analysis of standardised tests results for class programme planning
- Plan class-based and home supported programme as soon as difficulties present, setting SMART targets
- Organise extra tutoring e.g. effective use of assistants, volunteer adults, peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring
- Give direction to parent/guardian (or model) strategies for helping with reading, writing, spelling, maths, homework so that there is consistency between home and school
- Maximise use of resources available – use variety of material resources including ICT

Whole-school strategies for the prevention of learning difficulties

Whole-school strategies implemented to prevent failure will include:

- A focussed programme for oral language, phonological awareness and early phonics in infants, Rang 1 and 2, that is further developed through the school
- Intensive Literacy input in infant and junior classes using approaches such as Literacy Lift Off, Station teaching with small group tuition given by several teachers simultaneously
- Consistent implementation of whole-school maths plan
- Shared reading programmes for parents and children throughout the school (CAPER) and peer reading programmes
- Print-rich school environment and use of real books in classrooms, audio version of some reading texts, annual school book fair, use of library facilities in school and Clonmel town
- Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) and Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Writing (USSW) in all classes 3 times weekly
- Use of ICT to support literacy and numeracy
- Use of games that promote literacy and numeracy

- Organise extra tutoring e.g. peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, effective use of assistants, volunteer adults, parents and Transition Year volunteers in support programme.

7. Early Intervention Programmes

Early intervention is a vital component of the learning-support provision in this school. Close collaboration and consultation between the class teachers and the learning support team will identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Intensive early intervention programmes will be provided by the class teacher S.E.T. team to address low achievement.

These programmes will:

- Be set within a specific time frame (6 to 8 weeks)
- Be based on a shared expectation of success by everyone involved
- Involve whole class/small group teaching, station teaching or one-to-one teaching where whole class/small group teaching has not been effective
- Include a strong focus on oral language, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and further development of language and comprehension skills
- Emphasise the development of phonological awareness, sight words/tricky words, phonics and a range of other word identification skills
- Engage the pupils in frequent supervised oral and silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty and monitor their comprehension
- Stress the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing
- Focus on language development in mathematics, and in the development of mathematical procedures and concepts.
- Focus on letter formation, pre writing, pencil grip, fine motor skills

8. Selection of students for learning support supplementary teaching

(i) Preliminary screening

Each year, class teachers will routinely undertake a range of screening measures in order to draw up Classroom Support Programmes (see sample DES (2007) Resource Pack) to meet a child's individual learning and/or socialisation needs. These screening measures will include (ref. school policy on assessment):

Junior Infants: Checklists, discussion with parents/guardians, BIAP
Senior Infants: Middle Infants Screening Test and checklists.

Ranganna 1-6:

- Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (DPRT)
- Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (DPMT)
- Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test
- CHipps phonic test (Rang 1 and 2 and other selected pupils)
- CAT4 Cognitive abilities test (Rang 2 and 5 in February/March each year)

The class teacher, with the permission of a parent/guardian, will make referrals for other screening or assessments required, including hearing, vision, speech and language, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc (see referral forms, **Appendix 3**).

(ii) Selection for diagnostic assessment

If, in reviewing the Classroom Support Programme, a parent/guardian and teacher continue to have concerns about a child's progress, diagnostic assessment will be considered. Priority will be given to children scoring at or below the 12/15th percentile on standardised tests and children who are under performing. The teacher/s will meet the child's parent/guardian to:

- Listen to parent's insights into their child's development, health, learning style, experience of school, and learning strengths and difficulties.
- Give parent/guardian a clear picture of the teachers' concerns, using the evidence of work samples, sharing STen results and results of criterion-referenced tests etc.
- Explain the school's staged approach to learning difficulties, team teaching, support from other agencies
- Outline school practices for diagnostic testing and seek approval of parents to do testing
- Indicate that a follow-on meeting will be arranged after assessment.

The student will be included at the end of the meeting to affirm the child's strengths and explain testing procedure, as age appropriate, if testing is being planned.

(iii) Diagnostic assessment

The learning support teacher will administer a diagnostic test(s) if a parent/guardian has given consent (ref. school policy on assessment policy for range of tests used). A parent's decision to permit a diagnostic

test(s) to be administered will be given in writing, and similarly a decision not to allow such testing to take place will also be given in writing (see sample letters, **Appendix 4**). The interpretation of the assessment and the feedback to a parent/guardian will be done in consultation with the class teacher.

(iv) Drawing up and implementing a School Support Plan

Following assessment, and prior to commencement of supplementary teaching, the class teacher (and learning support team, if considered relevant) will meet a parent/guardian (and student) to:

- Give parent/guardian a clear picture of the outcomes of the assessment, giving examples of successes and difficulties
- Consult with parent and student to draw up a School Support Plan including SMART learning targets based clear evidence from assessment. Targets will be few in number, achievable within a certain timeframe and will be expressed in definitive language to facilitate monitoring and review of progress.
- Indicate how the student's class programme and homework will be modified in order to achieve the targets
- Give parents a copy of the programme and timetable for supplementary support, indicating whole class/groupwork/1-1 breakdown, group size, ability/mixed ability arrangements, names teachers of teachers involved
- Make arrangements for the parent/guardian to observe the teacher engaging in or modelling specific learning activities with their child to help a parent/guardian with the home-based elements of the plan
- Agree plan for on-going communication so that progress can be positively affirmed and difficulties in implementing learning programme at school or at home can be either anticipated and avoided, or addressed without delay.
- Agree to consult at end of instructional term, or more regularly if necessary, to review the child's general progress in relation agreed learning targets, to discuss level of supplementary teaching (if any) that will be provided in the next instructional term, or revise plan as necessary.

The teachers involved will monitor the student's progress and the organisational arrangements on an on-going basis at planning meetings.

In the case where a child is selected for supplementary teaching but the parents do not wish for the child to receive such support, a written letter

from the parents will be sought outlining that, while the school made them aware of the difficulty their child was experiencing and while supplementary teaching was made available, they have decided that they do not wish the child to avail of this support (see sample letter, **Appendix 5**).

(v) Programme review at end of the instructional term

Assessment of the pupil's progress and evaluation of the School Support Plan will take place again approximately 12 weeks after the commencement of the programme. This review will involve consultation with the student, parent/guardian and teachers, and will assess if the teaching and/or behavioural interventions were:

- Based on clear evidence from assessment
- Well-planned and given sufficient time to work
- Sufficiently well supported by all involved.

(vi) Defining progress

It is a matter of professional judgement to assess the degree to which the needs of an individual are being met. It could be considered that a pupil is making adequate progress if

- there has been an improvement in the pupils rate of progress
- the pupil demonstrates an improvement in social and personal skills
- the pupil demonstrates an improvement in behaviour
- the pupil's progress is similar to that of peers in the same instructional group
- the targets set out have been achieved.

(vii) Continuation or discontinuation of supplementary teaching

In consultation, with the students and parent/guardian, the following outcomes are possible:

1. Continuation of appropriate support in mainstream class. The teacher will indicate to parent/guardian the particular arrangements in the classroom that will continue to support the child (Classroom Support Plan) and continued home-based programme, if required.

2. Continuation of School Support plan for a further instructional term.(stage down/monitoring)

The school acknowledges the recommendation in the DES Guidelines (2000) that

‘the duration of supplementary teaching should not exceed two to three years for the great majority of pupils. Although some level of support may be offered to pupils by the learning-support teacher after this time, only those with very serious difficulties should continue to require ongoing supplementary teaching’. Decisions to continue or discontinue supplementary teaching will take into account this recommendation.

3. Referral of the pupil to School Support Plus stage of assessment and intervention, with written parental permission. The decision will be made based on the review of Classroom Support and School Support Plans previously completed, when the pupil continues to

- have needs that are causing significant barriers to learning and/or socialisation
- is not making adequate progress despite the planned support already provided.

(vii) *Consultation School Support Plus*

One of the S.E.T. team will take responsibility for co-ordinating the planning of the school support plus stage, gathering information from student, parents/guardians, teachers, assistant staff, other professionals, doing more detailed school-based assessment and requesting the involvement of external professionals.

The S.E.T. team and principal meet with NEPS in September each year to agree priorities for educational psychological assessment and support and to receive guidance from the NEPS psychologist on issues with various pupils.

10. Monitoring progress of SEN students

Monitoring the academic progress of the pupils will be accomplished by:

- On-going structured observation, screening and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the students in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties by the class teacher
- Implementing whole-school policies on screening and the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in English and/or mathematics - standardised and diagnostic testing by class teacher and learning support teacher

- Recording of observation and use of checklists for improvements in the student's self esteem, school attendance, attitude to learning, friendship patterns and general behaviour
- Record keeping – including details of learning support programmes/IEPs, dated work samples with teacher comments, test results.

11. Record Keeping

Individual and class records will be kept in accordance with the school policy on record keeping (ref. school policy). Class teachers and the S.E.T team will keep a file with details of any Classroom Support Plans, School Support Plans or School Support Plus Plans , as well as dated work samples with teacher analysis, checklists, test results, records of Student Parent Teacher meetings etc. There is an individual file for every pupil on each special education teacher's caseload.

Each member of the S.E.T. team will be responsible for keeping records for the children on their caseload. The following records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Room 15:

- File for each child – record of earlier classroom and school support processes, current and past plans, records in relation to parental consent/lack of consent for involving specialist agencies, dated work samples with teacher comments, assessment results,
- File for each class – standardised test results, end-of -year notes/general recommendations from class teacher
- Handover file at the end of each school year giving salient information to the following year's class teacher

13. Review of policy

This special educational needs policy was reviewed by staff and discussed by the board of management in January 2019. It will be reviewed biannually or as the need arises, in accordance with Department and Education and Science guidelines and circulars.

Signed: 
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 16/01/19