**St. John’s N.S., Kenmare**

**Bunscoil Eoin Naofa, An Neidín**

**Special Education Needs Policy**

**Introduction:**

This policy was drawn up by the Principal and SEN Team of St. John’s National School at a series of consultative meetings which took place during 2020 - 2021. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and practical guidance to school personnel and parents on how we organise provision for teaching and learning support for children with special educational needs in our school and also to comply with legislation (***Education Act, 1998***). It is based on ***‘Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools’*** ***(2017).***

**School Information:** St. John’s N.S. is a co-ed primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kerry and caters for children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. The school currently has sixteen mainstream class teachers, one teacher for an ASD Class, six SETs (a seventh SET is shared with Scoil Eoin N.S., Tahilla), 1 temporary EAL post, 7 SNAs (one position is a job share) and an admin. Principal.

Our Special Education Allocation for 2020-2021 is: Special Education Teacher Allocation: 154.5 hours Special Class Teacher Posts: 1 SNA Mainstream Posts: 5 SNA Special Class Posts: 2

**Guiding Principles**

* All children have a right to an education that is appropriate to their individual needs and so we strive to create a learning environment in our school where every child is encouraged and enabled to develop to their full and unique potential.
* All children should feel secure within the parameters of their classroom and should also feel that they are a valued part of our school community.
* Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest levels of support
* Resources provided to support pupils with SEN will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible.

**4. Aims and Objectives of SEN Support**

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. We strive to achieve this by:

* Supporting the inclusion of children with SEN and children whose first language is not English, to become fully integrated members of our school community.
* Using the ***‘Continuum of Support*** ***Process***’ to identify educational needs to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.
* Directing the greatest levels of resources towards pupils with greatest needs
* Providing supplementary teaching and additional support in English and /or Maths
* Involving parents and supporting them in taking an active role in their child’s education
* Promoting a collaborative approach, involving teachers, parents, relevant support personnel and pupils, where appropriate, to the planning and implementation of individualised learning programmes tailored to the specific needs of pupils
* Developing positive self-esteem and a positive attitude to school and learning
* Supporting children’s development both socially and emotionally
* Encouraging appropriate differentiation in the classroom
* Enabling pupils to engage with the curriculum at their class level
* Supporting early intervention programmes
* Providing models of intervention appropriate to the needs of each pupil, including In-Class Support and/or Individual / Small Group Withdrawal.

**Continuum of Support – Staged Approach**

**Stage 1.** ***Classroom Support*** If a class teacher or parent has concerns about the academic, physical, social or emotional development of a child, the class teacher will administer screening measures. The resulting information will inform the development of a short simple plan to be implemented in the normal class setting. The plan will be reviewed after each instructional term and if it is working well for the child it may be decided to continue with it. If concerns remain and insufficient progress is made then intervention at Stage 2 level support is considered.

**Stage 2. *School Support*** If further intervention is deemed necessary and the child is to receive supplementary teaching at School Support Level then a letter of consent will be sent to the parents by the SET in question. The class teacher and SET then draw up a plan of appropriate learning outcomes for the child. The child’s parents/guardians will be informed of this plan, invited to contribute and asked to sign it. Pupils with school support plans will have access to a mixture of withdrawal and in-class support throughout the school year.This plan will be reviewed in February and if significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to move to Stage 3 level support.

**Stage 3. *School Support Plus*** The school may formally request a consultation from other professionals outside the school in respect of children who fail to make sufficient progress following implementation of a programme of support at School Support level. Such professional advice is sought from psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists etc. This is carried out in consultation with and with the permission of the child’s parents/guardians. Following consultation, the class teacher, SET, parents, pupil (where appropriate) and relevant support personnel will draw up an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the child. In case of children identified at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at Stage 3 will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such children and primary responsibility for the child will remain with the class teacher in consultation with the designated SET. Pupils with school support plus plans will be prioritized for withdrawal throughout the school year.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

***Board of Management*** The Board of Management will:

* Oversee the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy.
* Ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation is provided for Support Teachers.
* Provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SEN support.

***Principal***

The principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. He/She will work closely with the SEN co-ordinator and will keep the Board of Management 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
* 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
* Facilitate 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, SETs and SNAs) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area

***SEN Co-ordinator***

The Special Needs Co-ordinator will be responsible for:

* Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy
* Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs
* Overseeing the timetable for support teaching
* Liaising with and advising fellow teachers and contributing to in-service training of staff
* Liaising with and advising SNAs with regard to supporting children with special needs
* Liaising with parents of children with special needs
* Monitoring and evaluating SEN provision
* Keeping a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching
* Facilitating planning for class teachers with support teachers
* Supporting the implementation of a tracking system at a whole-school level to monitor the progress of children who avail of additional support
* Overseeing the drafting of IEPs, IPLPs and classroom support plans
* Keeping teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals
* Advising parents on procedures for availing of special needs services
* Selecting children for psychological assessment in consultation with class and support teachers and with the (NEPS)psychologist
* Liaising with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of children with SEN
* Liaising with SENO regarding all aspects of special education provision
* Storing confidential information (Psychological Assessment Reports etc.) regarding SEN children and shares same with principal, class teachers, support teachers, SNAs, other agencies where appropriate.
* Arranging for exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils for whom this is appropriate.

***Class Teacher***

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all the children in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching.

The class teacher will:

* implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
* use a wide variety of teaching approaches and strategies and adapting them to address the diverse range of needs within the classroom
* implement teaching programmes and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with SEN
* meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
* gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning
* open a Pupil Support File once additional needs have been identified and develop classroom support plans for those pupils
* collaborate with staff to develop Individual or Group Profile and Learning Programmes (GPLP)for each pupil in receipt of support at School Support level
* collaborate with SETs, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals and develop Individual Education Plans (IEP) for pupils in receipt of support at School Support Plus level
* regularly meet with SETs and other relevant staff to assess outcomes / progress
* meet with SETs and other relevant staff to review IEP plans at least twice a year
* where applicable, collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching
* adjust the class timetable to ensure, as much as possible, that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session
* where applicable, co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN in their classroom
* assign homework each night for every child in their class including those in receipt of supplementary teaching

***Special Education Teacher (SET)***

The role of the Learning Support teacher will be to support class teachers in optimising teaching and learning opportunities for pupils with SEN in their classes. This will involve:

* Familiarizing themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs
* Providing supplementary teaching to meet children’s additional needs on a withdrawal and/or in-class support basis
* Working collaboratively with class teachers , parents/guardians, SNAs and where appropriate, pupils, to develop a School Support /School Support Plus plan for each pupil selected for school support teaching
* Providing advice to class teachers as to how the attainment of targets can be supported throughout the school day.
* Regularly meeting with class teachers to monitor progress
* Meeting with parents/guardians regarding any concerns about their child and updating them regarding their progress
* Providing advice to parents/guardians as to how the attainment of targets can be supported at home
* Meeting twice a year with class teachers, parents/guardians and other relevant personnel to review IEPs - October and February
* Conducting and interpreting initial diagnostic assessment tests
* Maintaining a Short Term Plan and Progress Record for each individual or group of children in receipt of supplementary support
* Logging actions in the Support Plan
* Liaising with external agencies e.g. Speech and Language therapists etc.
* Contributing to the development of SEN Policy at whole school level
* Assisting in the implementation of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
* Assisting in the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching
* Submitting a copy of each child’s support plan and reviews to the Principal in June of each year.

***Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)***

The role of an SNA will be to carry out duties based on the care needs of the child. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature. (Circular 0030/2014)

The **primary care support tasks** may include:

* Administration of medicine
* Assistance with toileting and general hygiene (see ‘Intimate Care Needs’ Policy)
* Assistance with mobility and orientation
* Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds, and at recreation, assembly and dispersal times.
* Assisting children while at play as appropriate.
* Provision of non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
* Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a child from a classroom when essential.
* Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
* Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for children with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties.

The **secondary care support tasks** may include:

* Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks; to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. .
* Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities.
* Attending meetings with Parents, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENO); National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS); or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.
* Assisting with enabling a child to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of appropriate personnel.
* Assisting with enabling a child to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.
* Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
* Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
* Assisting Teachers in the implementation of programmes/strategies to achieve learning targets for each child.
* Assisting Teachers in the review of monthly learning targets for each child.
* Keeping a log of CPD undertaken and of activities undertaken during Croke Park hours.

***Role of Parents/Guardians***

The central role of parents/guardians of children with SEN is to support the work of the school and to optimize teaching and learning opportunities for their child at home. This can be done by:

* Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.
* Reading and telling stories to their child/children.
* Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading.
* Implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child’s teachers.
* Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding withdrawal for support teaching.
* Talking positively about school and school work.
* Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child’s progress.
* Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children’s learning.
* Helping children to develop their organisational skills.
* Helping children to look after school books and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home.
* Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

***Role of Pupils***

The role of the child with SEN is that of active participant in their own learning. The extent and nature of this will depend on their strengths and needs.

***Role of External Bodies and Agencies***

Our school liaises with external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the Health Service Executive (HSE), Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Visiting Teachers for children with hearing loss, Tusla and the Inspectorate. We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and education services therefore we liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and the delivery of interventions. We facilitate meetings between parents and various support services and endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in our support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

**Enrolment**

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parents/guardians wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that ‘A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his/her overall needs’.

Parents are required to notify the school of their child’s special needs in advance of enrolment. The Board of Management will request a copy of the child’s medical or psychological report. No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that he/she has special educational needs except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

**Special Facilities**

St. John’s N.S. is a two storey building with a lift to facilitate access to the second floor when required. There are wheelchair-accessible toilet facilities on both floors and a shower facility upstairs. There is an ASD Classroom (Class Neidín) on the ground floor specially equipped for pupils with such a diagnosis. Where specialised equipment is to be used training will be given to staff as required.

**Prevention and Early Intervention**

***Prevention Strategies***

* The development and implementation of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
* Development of agreed approaches to language development before the introduction of the formal process reading.
* The use of concrete materials at every opportunity.
* Implementation of whole school parental involvement programmes e.g. developing children’s oral language and early mathematical skills; shared reading at home
* Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy, numeracy, social and behavioural skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties
* Close collaboration and consultation between the Infant Teachers and the Support Teachers.
* Thorough Assessment procedures throughout the school
* Provision of additional support in language development / early literacy / early mathematical skills to pupils who need it
* Provision of Assistive Technologies as appropriate
* Support for children experiencing social/emotional difficulties and problems with concentration
* Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents/guardians for incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings

***Early Intervention Strategies***

Collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the SETs should identify children who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of children for early intervention programmes at Classroom and School Support level. Early intervention strategies include:

* Implementation of an English language programme for Junior Infant and Senior Infant children who have English as an additional language, with emphasis on basic vocabulary.
* Implementation of an Intensive language programme for such children in more senior classes with emphasis on basic vocabulary and the language of Maths. This acknowledges the literacy skills already acquired in the mother tongue.
* Active learning programme for all Junior Infant children with specific emphasis on oral language development, underpinned by the principles of the *Aistear* programme and the new Language Curriculum.
* Early intervention literacy and language support programmes e.g. Reading Recovery
* Guided Readingusing *PM Readers* in Junior Infant to 2nd classes daily.
* Withdrawal of children to a support teaching room, in-class support, team teaching, group work and individual support will be provided, as appropriate.

**Identification and selection of children for additional teaching support**

***Selection Criteria*** The following selection criteria are based on current DES Circulars, Guidelines and general good practice. The school will select pupils in accordance with these criteria, starting at point (1) and continuing on through the selection criteria until caseloads / timetables are full.

1. Pupils previously in receipt of "Resource hours" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
2. Pupils previously in receipt of "Learning-Support" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties (scoring below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments).
3. Pupils diagnosed as having "Low Incidence Learning Disabilities".
4. Pupils diagnosed as having "High Incidence Learning Disabilities".
5. Pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) i.e. (a) pupils who arrive to our school without any English (b) pupils who have lived in Ireland less than two years, and whose English needs further support.
6. Pupils scoring at/below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
7. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy, STEN score of 4 (to allow for a margin of error).
8. Pupils scoring at/below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics.
9. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics, STEN score of 4 (to allow for a margin of error).
10. Early intervention in literacy - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy skills, despite interventions made at Classroom Support level
11. Early intervention in Mathematics - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early numeracy skills, despite interventions at Classroom Support level .
12. Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy, who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions at Classroom Support level.
13. Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in mathematics, who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made at Classroom Support level.
14. Pupils experiencing serious difficulties with oral language / social interaction / behaviour / emotional development / application to learning, despite interventions made at Classroom Support level.
15. Gifted Pupils (those scoring above the 95th percentile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments and / or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a "superior IQ")**.** Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support level.

**Tests Administered in St. John’s N.S.**

Drumcondra Early Literacy Test (Senior Infants -May)

Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test (Senior Infants - May)

New NRIT (1st and 4th Class – November)

Revised Drumcondra Reading Test (1st -6th Class – May)

Revised Drumcondra Maths Test ( 1st -6th Class – May)

Drumcondra Spelling Test (1st -6th Class – May)

***Diagnostic Tests***

Drumcondra Early Literacy Diagnostic Test

Drumcondra Early Numeracy Diagnostic Test

Schonell Word Recognition Test

Schonell Spelling Test

Jackson Phonics Skills Test

Neale Analysis of Reading Ability

YARC: York Assessment of Reading Ability

Dyslexia Screening Test – Junior

WIAT – III: Wechsler Individual Achievement Test

**Continuing/Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching**

At the end of each instructional block/term the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the child’s class teacher and where appropriate, the child’s parents/guardians. A decision will be made, in consultation with parents/guardians, regarding their continued level of support and revised targets will be set in their Support Plan. The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when satisfactory progress has been made and targets have been met or with children who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support. However, if both the class teacher and support teacher feel such a child needs scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group. This may also take the form of reduced withdrawal time, movement from withdrawal to In-class support.

**Monitoring Progress**

Progress will be monitored in the following way:

* The Support Review Record on the Continuum of Support will be completed by the SET in collaboration with the Class Teacher and Parents /Guardians, where possible, at the end of each instructional period.
* Weekly Tests if applicable (eg. Spellings/Tables).
* Termly Assessments if applicable (teacher designed or from publishers).
* Standardised Tests at end of year (1st – 6th) English and Maths.
* Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy Tests (Senior Infants)
* Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the children in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties

**Record Keeping**

* Class Teachers will keep a record of teacher designed tests, end of term tests and checklists in an Assessment Folder for their class.
* A file for each child in the class is kept in a locked filing cabinet in the classroom and is passed on from teacher to teacher as the child moves through the school.
* A copy of diagnostic assessments and other checklists administered by the Support Teacher will be put in the child’s file in the classroom.
* A copy of Continuum of Support documents for Children with SEN are also kept in the child’s file in the classroom.
* Personal Pupil Plans for children with SNA access will also be kept in the child’s file in the classroom
* Psychological Reports that are active at any given time are kept in a locked cabinet in the Deputy Principal’s classroom. Copies may be held by the class teacher in the child’s file.
* Results of Completed Standardised Tests will be uploaded to Aladdin and a copy of each will be filed in the Assessment folders in the Principal’s office
* Monthly Reports outlining the work undertaken by the SET with groups or individual children will be sent to the Principal.
* End of Year school Report will be issued to parents/guardians in June. These reports are saved in Aladdin.
* Digital or hardcopy of each child’s support plan, reviews and end of year summary of work to be submitted to the Principal in June of each school year.

**Timetabling and Work Schedule**

* Supplementary teaching that children receive is in addition to their regular class programme in English and Maths, in so far as is practicable.
* In so far as is practicable children should not miss out on the same curricular area each time they receive supplementary teaching.
* Co-teaching, where two teachers work together to plan, organise, instruct and make assessments on the same group of students, sharing the same classroom can operate during English and Maths times in class. If deemed more beneficial to the group being taught by the Support Teacher, they can be withdrawn to a quiet space.
* Class teachers and SET’s to work together each term on a timetable for team teaching which will be reviewed at the end of each term.

**Liaising with Parents**

Effective communication with parents is critically important to the success of a support programme.

* Class teacher meets with parents/guardians initially to discuss concerns and outline supports available in the school.
* Special Education teacher and Class Teacher meet with parents to agree a School Support Plan for the child
* Special Education teacher liaises with parents of children in receipt of supplementary teaching to demonstrate methodologies that could be useful at home to further the child’s learning.
* Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child’s learning.
* Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November.
* An end-of-year report goes home in June each year. Opportunities to discuss this report are made available before the end of term.

**Resources**

* Learning Support resources will primarily be used in the Learning Support Rooms. These resources may be made available to class teachers following consultation with the SET. All resources borrowed are to be returned at the end of a school term.
* Classroom resources will be made available to the SET following consultation with class teachers. All resources borrowed are to be returned at the end of a school term.

**Success Criteria**

A whole school approach to the implementation of our SEN policy will:

* ensure that children with SEN gain access to a broad, balanced curriculum and have opportunity of access to an appropriate education.
* develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning among our pupils.
* improve standards of academic performance and achievement.
* enhance parental involvement in supporting their child’s learning.
* increase collaboration between school personnel.

The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through: feedback from teachers, children and parents/guardians; children’s achievements; ongoing analysis of children’s academic performance and attainment of personal targets.

**Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy.**

A review of this policy will take place every two years after NCSE school profiling is completed. Next review date September 2023.