

Special Education Needs and Inclusion Policy

Ballyfacey N.S.

18257N

Introductory Statement.

In Bayfacey N.S., we value the individuality of all our children. We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experience and needs.

Rationale.

The purpose of this policy is 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 0013/17 – Circular to Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools; supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream School.

Belief Statement.

Our school aims to be a truly inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. We believe that all our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their individual needs. We strive to ensure that all our children feel that they are a valued part of our school community. This policy aims to enable children with Special Education Needs (SEN) and children whose first language is not English, to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child participate in them.

Aims of the Policy

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

- Identify additional needs that our pupils have.

- Roles and Responsibilities.
- Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of children with additional needs.
- Divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with additional needs.
- Track monitor review and report on the progress of children with additional needs.
- Communicate information between the SET team, principal, staff and parents/guardians.

Board of Management:

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN. They also ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources are provided.

Principal:

The principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the principal's leadership role is central and includes the following:

The School Principal should:

- Implement and monitor the school's Special Education Needs policy on on-going bases.
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.
- Ensure that the whole school procedures are established to facilitate needs and that progress is monitored methodically.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special education needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) is clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher (i.e. SENCO)
- Communicate with the SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser).
- Oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme.
- Allocate time within the school year for the Special Education Teacher to plan and consult with teachers and parents.
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.

SEN Co-ordinator

SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) should:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis.
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision of pupil's with additional needs.
- Liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS).
- Liaise with class teachers to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs.
- Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs.
- Collaborate with the mainstream teachers in creating timetables for additional support.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress.
- Co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests.
- Select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted.
- Maintain lists of pupils who are receiving support.

Class Teachers:

Class teachers have primary responsibility for teaching and learning of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for additional support. They should:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils to the greatest extent possible, to prevent the emergence of learning difficulties.
- Create a positive learning environment with in the classroom.
- Differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class.
- Administer and correct standardised testing with SEN team to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
- Gather information and assesses children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support.
- Develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support.
- Collaborate with staff to develop School Support Plan for each pupil in receipt of School Support.

- Meet and collaborate with Special Education Teacher, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an individual Education Plan.
- Meet regularly with Special Education Teachers, SNA, pupils and parents to review IEP.
- Where applicable, collaborate with SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching.
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subjects/activity during each session.
- Co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class (es) to which they are assigned.

Special Education Teacher (SET)

The SET teacher should:

- Familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs.
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at presentation and early intervention.
- Collaboratively develop School Support Plans for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff.
- Meet with class Teacher, parents/guardians and their staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an individual Education Plan(IEP)
- Collaborate with class teachers and relevant staff to develop an individual Education Plan for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus.
- Regularly meet with Class teachers, SNA's, pupils and parents to review IEPs.
- Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or groups of pupils in receipt of school support.
- Provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in class support basis.
- Support whole school procedures for screening.
- Administer and interest diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
- Co-ordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload.
- Discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings.
- Provide necessary information to a SEN pupils receiving school once a transfer letter has been received.

Special Needs Assistants.

The duties of the SNA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills and under the direction of the principal / class teachers, the SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupil to which they have been assigned.(circular 10/76)

The SNA should-

- Support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum.
- Contribute to the quality of care and welfare of pupils
- Support learning and teaching in the classroom.
- Attend, where possible, training courses/ workshops provided by the BOM
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- Attend IEP meetings and /or meetings with relevant professionals when necessary.
- Ensure the safety of the SEN pupils in the schoolyear, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with teachers on duty.
- Accompany SEN pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate.

Parents / Guardians:

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our SEN policy. Parents/ guardian through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning.

Parent / Guardian should:

- Share information, reports or report pending from health professionals and / or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage.
- Support the work of the school and keep class teachers informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning.
- Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team.
- Support targets outlined in their child support plans and engage in all suggested home based activities.
- Inform the post-primary school of their child's needs at the transition stage.

Pupils.

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short term learning targets.
- Become familiar with the targets that have been set for them.

- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies and skills to improve their own learning.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.

Identifying Pupils with additional needs.

Continuum of Support.

We use the continuum of support framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. Like this framework, we recognise that special education needs occur along a continuum ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term and those pupils 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.

Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the continuum of support framework, we can identify 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 One- Classroom Support.

Classroom support is the most common and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and /or behaviour which are additional to those required by other pupils in their class. Problem solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual about an individual pupil. 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 Two- School Support.

In some cases, intervention at classroom level is not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School support may therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to

involve the special education teacher in the problem solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and development and monitoring of a school support plan.

Stage Three - School Support Plus.

If a pupil'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 will continue to be an important element of his / her individual education plan.

Information gathering and assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher designed tasks and test. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum. In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening including standardised testing is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from those formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupils support plans.

Assessment and Screening Tests:

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- Junior infants: Observation checklists teachers designed tests.
- Senior infants: Observations checklists MIST
- 1st class – 6th classes: Observations, teacher designed assessments Micra T English and Sigma T Maths Assessments.

We continually review the assessment and screening test that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the needs to provide information for the appropriate support.

Therefore we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date:

- Inventory tests
- Standardised Testing – Sigma & Micra/ Drumcondras
- Middle infants Screening Test (MIST)
- Diagnostic Test

In our school the following tests are available for administration.

- Jolly Phonics Diagnostic Reading Assessment

- Schonell Reading Test
- Non Reading intelligence Test 1-3 (NNRIT 1-3)
- Prevention and early intervention Strategies.

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in language development and any relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- Ongoing structured observations and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the infant teacher and the SET team.
- Promotion of literacy e.g. print rich environment, Literacy Lift Off, DEAR (drop everything and read)
- Promotion of Numeracy, e.g. station teaching, hands on approach.
- Parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy.
- Differentiation – adapting the learning environment.
- In class support from SET team.
- Team Teaching / Aistear.
- Withdrawing individuals / groups.

Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources.

Once pupils needs have been identified the special education teacher will address these needs as required in a variety in ways in order to effectively meet pupil's needs. We aim to strike a balance between in class supports, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

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

In planning the allocation of additional teaching support, the overriding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly these 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 teacher meets class teachers and reviews 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. As a staff we review all support and allocate resources for subsequent term. We cross reference the needs of pupils 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.

Selecting Process/ Criteria for allocating additional teaching supports

- Children scoring at or below the 12th percentile on standardised assessment in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Children diagnosed as having low incidence learning difficulties.
- Children diagnosed as having high incidence learning difficulties.
- Prevention & Early Intervention progress (Aistear, station teaching, Literacy Lift Off) Parallel teaching.
- Children who have English as an additional language & whose English needs further support. (EAL)
- Children with an identified need assessed by an external professional who are not on or below the 12th percentile in Literacy and Numeracy.

Timetabling

When drawing up timetables it is important to remember that:

- Timetables should be continually reviewed
- Children shouldn't miss the same subject each time if they are withdrawn(unless they have Irish exemption)
- Most support is provided in class so as to ensure pupils do not miss valuable teaching time.
- Interruptions to classes/classrooms should be kept to a minimum.

Tracking recording and reviewing progress.

Provision for pupils with special education needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning on intervention to address academic and or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential of an integrated and collaborative problem solving process.

Student support file.

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the continuum of support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Our student support file is based on the NEPS template and is stored on the school server. All support files should include:

- Cover sheet with pupil's details.
- A timeline of actions
- Records of support received
- Standardised/diagnostic test scores
- Support plans
- Checklists.

Support Plans

We use three support plans for the three stages of support on the Continuum of Support.

Stage 1 Classroom Support

A support plan at stage 1 is a **Classroom Support Plan (CSP)**. This is a simple plan which is drawn up by the Class teacher in collaboration with the SET which outlines the pupil's additional educational needs and the actions including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil's needs. The plan may also include home based actions to be taken by pupil's parents to support their child's development. The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date. This could be at the end of the school term.

Stage 2 – School Support.

A Support Plan at stage 2 is a **School Support Plan**. This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and SET teacher. It will set out the nature of the pupils learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behaviour targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should for most part be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by focused school based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a small group of individual or a combination of both either class to on a with drawl basis.

Stage 3 – School Support Plus.

A support plan at stage 3 is an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**. This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and special education teacher in consultation with the child's, parents/guardians, professional external to the school and (if appropriate) the child based on the information gathered. It will set out:

- The nature and degree of the pupil's abilities, skills and talents.
- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/ her educational development.
- The present level of educational performance of the pupil.
- The special educational needs of the pupil.
- The special education and related support services to be provided to the pupil to enable the pupil to benefit from including:
 - Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion in the classroom setting.
 - Individual and/or small group/special class interventions/programmes.
 - Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented.
 - Support required from the Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if appropriate.
 - The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months
 - The pupil's priority learning needs, long and short term targets to be achieved, the monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place.

IEP meetings are coordinated by SETs. Parents are invited twice yearly to these meetings.

Health & Safety Issues.

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

Supervision / Child Safeguarding.

- Where pupils receive support on a one to one basis the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both they and the pupils are visible through the glass panel in the door.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SET teacher should collect and return children to their classroom.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

Ratification and Communication

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management in September 2022.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented from the 28th September 2022. It will be reviewed as necessary by the staff at Ballyfacey N.S., pending a future review of the SEN allocation Model by the Department of Education. A review will be carried out by the end of the school year 2024-25 at the latest.

Signed: Thomas O'Leary

Date: 28th Sept. 2022