

Special Education Needs Policy

Statement:

Scoil Eoin aims to provide a caring, happy and secure atmosphere for every child. It is a school where we strive to nurture and support children in fulfilling their potential in an environment of mutual respect and trust among pupils, parents, teachers and ancillary staff.

Scoil Eoin wishes to comply with its moral and legal obligations in providing for the inclusion of all its pupils in accordance with the Education Act 1998, the Disability Acts of 2000 and 2004 and the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004. This policy also complies with the new allocation model as explained in Circular 0013/17.

Enrolment policy

Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register as long as a place is available and that the admission criteria, according to the Enrolment Policy, are fulfilled.

However, in order to meet the needs of a pupil with special educational needs, the school will request that any reports from outside agencies will be made available prior to the child commencing school. This will assist the school to meet the needs of the pupil and to access extra support eg. S.N.A. access, where necessary.

When enrolling a new pupil, all parents are asked to sign a consent form giving the S.E.T. permission to work with their children in a variety of capacities. If a Classroom Support file is opened for a child, parents will be informed of the reasons for same and, if a review shows that additional support is necessary, they will be notified.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all-The Board of Management, Principal teacher, Class teachers, Support Team, parents and children. It is important that everyone contributes to the planning and implementation of our school plan.

Board of Management

The BOM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special needs.

They shall:

Oversee the development, implementation and review of the policy.

Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided.

Be knowledgeable about the school's S.E.N. provision.

Principal Teacher

The principal has the overall responsibility for the school's S.E.N. programme and for the provision of services for children with special educational needs.

The principal should:

- Implement and monitor the school's S.E.N. policy on an ongoing basis
- Consult with the S.E.N. co-ordinator on all areas of S.E.N.
- Keep the BOM informed of the working of this policy.
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching ensuring that the service is focussed on pupils who most need it
- Help teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the area and encourage further training.
- Liaise with the S.E.N.O. , N.E.P.S and other relevant outside agencies.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the 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 and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties.
- Create a positive learning environment within 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 tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines
- Discuss outcomes of standardised testing with S.E.N. 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 assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- Open a Pupil Support file once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- Develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of classroom support-new system commenced with new entrants to school in 2017
- Collaborate with staff to develop IPLPs or GPLPs for pupils in receipt of School Support
- Meet with S.E.T. , parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for pupils in receipt of School Support Plus.
- Regularly meet with S.E.T. to review I.P.L.P.s
- Where applicable , collaborate with S.E.T. 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 subject/activity during each session
- Help to co-ordinate the role of and the responsibilities of the S.N.A. in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the classes to which they are assigned

SEN co-ordinator

SEN co-ordinator should:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an ongoing basis
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- Liaise with the NEPs psychologist , the S.E.T. and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments
- Co-ordinate regular S.E.T. planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs
- Collaborate with S.E.T. in creating timetables for additional support
- Meet/arrange meetings with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special services and update them regarding their progress
- Assign a member of the team to co-ordinate the whole school standardised testing
- Co-ordinate with the S.E.T. to screen pupils for additional support ,using the results of standardised tests
- Co-ordinate selection of children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been granted
- Maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support

Special Education Teacher

The S.E.T. 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 prevention and early intervention
- Collaboratively develop IPLPs for pupils selected for school support with class teachers and other staff
- Meet with class teachers, parents and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for pupils in receipt of School Support Plus
- Regularly meet with class teachers and other staff members to review IPLPs
- Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual and group of pupils in receipt of school support
- Provide supplementary teaching in literacy and, in some cases numeracy, on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- Support whole school procedures for screening

- Administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcome
- 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
- Prepare SEN pupils for transition to secondary school and to provide the necessary information to the receiving school

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 S.N.A. will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils 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 care and welfare of the pupils
- Support learning and teaching in the classroom
- Attend, where possible, training courses/workshops to upskill
- Attend meetings with parents and relevant professionals ,when necessary
- Maintain a record of support provided to their SEN pupil
- Accompany SEN pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate
- Be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty to help with the supervision and safety of their assigned SEN pupils

Parents/Guardians

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

Parents/Guardians should:

- Share any information, report or reports 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 the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or S.E.T.
- Support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in 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 targets
- Become familiar with the targets which are set for them
- Develop "ownership" of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning 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 educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified 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. This is informed by careful monitoring of progress

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

This problem-solving process follows this process:

1. Starting point- What is the concern?
2. Information gathering and assessment-Why is it happening?
3. Planning and Intervention-How can we help?
4. Review- Did it work?

Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' 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 pupils 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 pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and put in place strategies which may be effective. The teacher may also collaborate with the S.E.T. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs. This support will be reviewed after an agreed period of time. If some progress is made, plan can be amended and support can continue at class level.

Stage 2 School Support

However, in some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may therefore be required. The classroom teacher and support teacher will gather relevant information. A School Support Plan will be developed and monitored. Pupils may attend support teacher individually or in groups. Classroom interventions may also take place. Children who meet the criteria for a Stage 2 intervention after Standardised testing also qualify for School Support. This support will be reviewed termly and a decision will be made whether a pupil will continue in School Support or in some cases need more intervention.

Stage 3 School Support Plus

If a pupil has not made sufficient progress after interventions at School Support level or if a pupil meets the criteria for a Stage 3 intervention they are in 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. Advice and recommendations on how best to teach a pupil will be sought and followed. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting work for problem solving at this level. Classroom and School Support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual educational plan. Monitoring and review will be carried out on an on-going basis.