

Special Education Policy – Killurney N.S.

Introduction:

Our Special Educational Needs Policy was revised in 2012 and 2016. This document was reformulated in 2019/2020 as a consequence of developments in the area of special educational needs (Circular 0013/2017 and The Primary Guidelines. This policy has been designed to cater for the identification/enrolment of pupils with special educational needs in a mainstream setting.

Special Educational Needs means... “a restriction in the capacity of the person to benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition” (EPSEN Act, 2004).

The plan has also been designed to comply with current legislation. It also caters for those children who have learning needs which do not fall under the category of Special Educational Needs.

Aims:

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that the NEPs Continuum of Support is implemented.
- To create an environment where each pupil’s social, emotional and academic strengths are met and self-esteem is fostered.
- To ensure that the best possible opportunity for learning/teaching can be afforded to the pupil/teacher.
- To encourage Differentiation in the classroom.
- To enable the individual teacher to respond to the needs of the individual child so that they can achieve their true potential.
- To ensure the parent and teacher work in partnership.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of children with special needs in the school.
- To support attainment, behavioural, social & emotional functioning.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all of the school community: the Board of Management, Principal Teacher, Class Teachers, Support Teachers, SNAs, Parents, Pupils and External Bodies and Agencies. It is important that everyone contributes to the implementation of our school plan on SEN Provision.

Role of the Board of Management

“Schools should ensure that the additional Special Educational Teaching supports are used in their entirety to support pupils identified with special educational needs, learning support needs, and additional literacy needs such as English Additional Language Support. The additional Teaching Supports which are being provided under this model cannot be used for mainstream class teaching, or to reduce the pupil teacher ratio in mainstream classes, or to provide additional subjects for pupils who do not have special educational needs.” In cases where there is misuse of Special Educational Needs Teaching resources and where these resources are being used for purposes other than intended, as set out in this Circular, the Department reserves the right to review the allocation of Special Educational Needs Teaching Supports which have been made to those schools” (DES Circular 13/17 p21).

"The special education teaching supports **cannot** be used to reduce the pupil - teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Neither can they be used to allow any special education teacher sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class" (2017 Guidelines: p.5).

The Board of Management shall:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy.
- Ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation is provided for the Support Teachers.
- Ensure that teaching resources are provided for the Support Teachers.
- Provide adequate funds for the purchase of SEN materials. “Funds provided for these materials should not be limited to the learning - support grant provided by the Department of Education and Science”, (Learning - Support Guidelines, p. 47), or extra capitation provided. Note: the LSRT grant was cut several years ago and has not been replaced.
- Provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SEN.

Role of the Principal Teacher (Mrs O'Brien)

“The principal teacher has overall responsibility for the school’s learning - support programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs”. (Learning-Support Guidelines, p.38). The Education Act (1998) and the EPSEN Act (2004) have all reiterated this responsibility, along with Circular 13/17 and the accompanying Guidelines.

The Principal Teacher is required to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school’s policies on special needs in co-operation with the Support Teachers.
- Work with teachers and Parents in the development of the school plan on learning-support and special needs.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN and special needs on an ongoing basis.
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with very low achievement.

- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals.
- Help teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning-support.
- Encourage and facilitate staff members to attend CPD courses.
- Liaise regularly with the Support Teachers, *“In order to support the implementation of school policy on learning support as outlined in the school plan, the principal teacher should arrange a meeting with the Learning Support Teacher at least once each school term to discuss the implementation of the school plan on learning support”*. (Learning Support Guidelines, p.40).
- Arrange classroom accommodation for Support Teachers.
- Arrange for the provision of SEN funding and resources.
- Organise and co-ordinate the construction of Support Plans. Ensure that individualised planning takes place.
- Ensure that pupils who have been allocated SEN provision receive it.
- Organise the funding and provision of appropriate assessment tests.
- Complete application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE; NEPS; CAMHS etc.
- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordinating SEN and special needs services.
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and / or special educational services.
- Co-ordinate the caseloads / work schedules of the Support Teachers.
- Oversee and organise the implementation of a tracking system at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties.
- Advise Parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Co - ordinate and organise SNAs' work and timetabling.
- The 2017 Guidelines add the following:

“The Learning Support Guidelines (2000, p.39) outlined the principal teacher’s overall responsibility for the education of children with special educational needs. Under the new allocation model the principal’s leadership role is central and includes the following:

 - Developing inclusive whole-school policies and monitoring their implementation
 - Assigning staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
 - Co-ordinating 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 professional/agencies
 - Ensuring 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 education needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.

Depending on the school's size and context, some of these actions will be delegated to teams or other members of staff while the principal retains overall responsibility for the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs" (p.23)

A Post Holder (Ms. Meagher) currently undertakes the following duties, delegated to the Post Holder by the Principal Teacher:

Policy:

- Collaborating with the Principal Teacher and meeting with her at least once each school year to discuss issues relating to the development and implementation of the school plan on SEN, and to the provision of SEN.

Selection:

- Monitoring the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching with the Principal, ensuring that support is focused on the pupils with very low achievement.
- Identifying the level of support that is needed to meet the pupil's needs, in conjunction with the Principal, Class Teacher and Parents.
- Assisting the Principal Teacher to co-ordinate the caseloads/work schedules of the Support Teachers, when requested.

Assessment:

- Overseeing the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- Co-ordinating the administration by Class Teacher of a whole-school screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties in English and Mathematics.
- Consulting with all teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment, take into account:
 - The pupils' scores on an appropriate standardised screening measure
 - Agreed criteria for identifying pupils
 - Teachers' own views of the pupils; difficulties and needs
 - Support Teacher caseload
- Co-ordinating comprehensive diagnostic assessment for each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties.
- Keeping teachers informed about external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals, when requested. Researching current assessments for primary schools.
- Ordering standardised assessment scripts each year.
- Distributing standardised assessment scripts to Class Teachers each year.
- Maintaining the results of standardised assessment each year and share the results with the Principal Teacher.

Support Plan:

- Advising the Principal Teacher and SET teachers on the construction of Support Plans.
- Advising the Principal on current individualized planning best practice, when requested.
- Advising Class teachers and Support Teachers about Support Plans, when requests.

Co-ordination Activities:

- Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching at each stage of support – Classroom Support/School Support/School Support Plus.
- Advising Parents on procedures for availing of special needs services, when requested.
- Advising teachers on procedures for availing of special needs services, when requested.
- Liaising with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Supporting the Principal Teacher to implement a tracking system at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties.
- Advising the Principal Teacher about pupils who have been allocated SEN provision, when requested.
- Completing application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE; NEPS; CAMHS etc., in collaboration with SET Teachers and the Principal Teacher, as required.
- Advising on "effective timetabling practices that ensures continuity " (Circular 13/17), when requested.
- Advising on Transition, when requested.

Role of the Class Teacher: (Mrs O' Brien and Ms Meagher)

"Since all teachers have responsibility for teaching pupils with special educational needs, it is important that all staff members engage in appropriate CPD " (2017 Guidelines: p. 27).

Effective Teaching and Learning:

- The Learning Support Guidelines (2000) advocate a significant change in the role of the Class Teacher, in terms of increasing emphasis on differentiation and consultation with the Support Teacher and with Parents. Circular 13/17 reiterates that position.
- The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in her/his class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. "Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes" (2017 Guidelines: p.12).
- "A particular responsibility of the class teacher is to create a classroom environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated" (Learning-Support Guidelines, p. 42).

This can be achieved by:

- Grouping pupils for instruction
 - Providing lower-achieving pupils with strategies for reading, spelling and problem solving.
 - Adapting learning materials for lower-achieving pupils and higher achieving pupils (through differentiation)
 - Liaising closely with their Parents
- "meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued.... Classroom teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom... adapt their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behavior or interaction with peers are causes for concern)2017 Guidelines p. 12).

- “Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils’ levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies” (2017 Guidelines p.13)
- “To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons. This can be achieved by:
 - Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
 - Adapting lessons to take account of pupils’ interests
 - Matching tasks to pupils’ abilities and needs
 - Adapting and utilizing resources, including the use of technology
 - Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly” (2017 guidelines p.13)
- Teachers can make lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access” (2017 Guidelines p.13)
- With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:
 - Modifying presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities.
 - Placing an emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum.
 - Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
 - Setting learning target at an appropriate level.
 - Providing learning activities and materials which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress.
 - Carrying out error analyses of a pupil’s work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty, for particular attention in subsequent lessons.
 - Setting up ‘buddy systems’ in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers).

Identification of Learning Difficulties:

- The Class Teacher plays an important role in the initial identification of pupils who may have general or specific learning disabilities. (Particularly the infant teacher as SEN needs are often spotted in these classes)
- In supporting the development and implementation of the school SEN Policy, the Class Teacher will administer and score appropriate screening measures, and discuss the outcomes with the Support Teachers.
- The Class Teacher will liaise closely with Parents and elicit relevant information from them regarding e.g. hearing/vision checks.

Classroom Support:

- Circular 02/05 demands the implementation of a Staged Approach (Appendix 1) for the provision of additional support, as does the NEPs Continuum of Support (Appendix 2).
- Stage 1 of the Staged Approach and NEPs Classroom Support requires Class Teachers to support their pupils' learning, in the first instance.
- Stage 1 / Classroom Support will continue when School Support / School Support Plus is being phased out or discontinued, to meet the pupil's changing needs.

Support Plans:

- The Staged Approach requires Class Teachers to construct a simple, individual plan of support, to implement the plan and review its success regularly, before referring the child for School Support level interventions. The Class Teacher will open a Support Plan for the pupil at Classroom Support level of interventions, including targets, interventions and progress.
- Circular 02/05 demands that, "Interventions with pupils at stages 2 and 3 should include a classroom support plan to ensure that the pupils' needs are met for the whole school day" (p. 7). The Class Teacher will collaborate to complete and update the Support Plan at School Support and School Support Plus. Log actions in the Support Plan.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support / School Support Plus, the Class Teacher will collaborate with the Support Teacher in the development of a Support Plan by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, the Class Teacher will adjust the class programme in line with the agreed learning targets and activities in the pupil's Support Plan.
- A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the Support Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Support Plans. This consultation will be achieved through formal timetabling at least once per instructional term, and through informal consultation as the need arises.

Communicating with Parents:

- It is accepted practice for Class Teachers to consult with the Parents of all pupils in the class from time to time. However, for Parents of pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching, additional time should be devoted to consultation and collaborative planning.
- In the case of each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and / or a learning difficulty following administration of an appropriate screening measure, the Class Teacher should:
 - Make Parents aware of concerns about their child's progress.
 - Outline the support that is available to pupils who experience low achievement (Classroom Support/School Support or School Support Plus).
 - Inform Parents that a meeting with the Support Teacher(s) and/or the Class Teacher will follow diagnostic assessments.
 - Attend, if possible, the meeting between the pupil's Parents and the Support Teacher(s).
 - Collaborate with Parents & Support Teachers on the formation of a Support Plan.

- Indicate to Parents how the pupil's class programme will be modified in order to achieve the agreed learning targets in the pupil's Support Plan.
- Parental permission for school-based tests/assessments is sought when the child enrolls in our school and is retained by the Class Teacher in the pupils' files in the classroom.

Role of Special Educational Teachers (SET) :

"It is envisaged that schools will establish and maintain skilled special education support teams to guide provision " (2017 Guidelines: p. 27).

Support Teacher activities should include both teaching and non-teaching duties. According to the Learning Support Guidelines (2000): "The particular balance that the Learning Support Teacher achieves between supplementary teaching and consultative activities will depend on the specific circumstances of the school" (p.32) The Support Teacher's activities should include, where possible:

- Providing supplementary teaching commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.
- Researching the pupil's learning difficulty/SEN, to become au fait with this impediment to learning.
- Being "familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs " (2017 Guidelinesp.13).
- Implementing suitable recommendations from outside agencies, wherever possible, and liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children on their caseload.
- Developing a Support Plan for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class Teachers and Parents. "Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, should plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant Continuum of Support plan" (2017 Guidelines p.14).
- Maintaining a Progress Record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of support.
- Maintaining a Progress Record (together with the Class Teacher) for In-Class support.
- Providing supplementary teaching in English and / or Mathematics to pupils who experience low achievement and / or learning difficulties at School Support / School Support Plus (as per Selection Criteria)
- Delivering intensive early intervention programmes, caseload and selection criteria permitting.
- Assisting the implementation of procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Contributing to the development of policy on SEN at the whole school level, if requested.
- Providing advice to the Class Teacher about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties in such areas as:
 - Individual pupil assessment
 - Programme planning
 - Curriculum differentiation
 - Approaches to language development
 - Approaches to reading/ spelling/ writing
 - Approaches to Mathematics

- Behaviour difficulties
- Meeting with Class Teachers of each pupil who is in receipt of School Support/School Support Plus, to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported throughout the school day.
- Meeting with Parents of each pupil who is in receipt of support, if possible, to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
- Meeting with Parents of each pupil who is in receipt of support at the end of each instructional term, if possible:
 - To review the pupil's attainment of agreed targets
 - To discuss the next instructional term
 - To revise the pupil's Support Plan.
- Contributing at the school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Support Teacher's room.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc.
- Implementing school policies on preventing learning difficulties, screening pupils for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching, where it is deemed necessary.
- In addition to providing supplementary teaching to pupils, the Support Teacher is involved in administering a range of formal and informal assessments and in maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments. The Support Teacher shall:
 - Conduct an initial diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having low achievement and / or a learning difficulty, based on results of an appropriate screening measure and record the findings of the assessment in the pupil's Support Plan.
 - Monitor the ongoing progress of each pupil in receipt of supplementary teaching in relation to the attainment of agreed learning targets and short-term objectives that arise from them, and record the observations in the Progress Record.
 - Review the progress of each pupil at the end of an instructional term and record it on the pupil's Support Plan.
 - Log actions in the Support Plan.
- "Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, cooperative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models " (2017 Guidelines: p. 13).
- "It is also beneficial for teachers to become involved in local professional networks (within the school itself and with other schools) where good special educational needs practice and disability awareness can be shared and promoted" (2017 Guidelines 0.27).

Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

The purpose of the SNA scheme is to provide for the significant additional care needs, which some pupils with special educational needs may have.

Primary Care Needs SNA Tasks:

An SNA's role is to carry out duties based on the Primary Care Needs of the pupil **(Taken from Circular 30/2014)**.

- Assistance with feeding: Where a pupil with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.
- Administration of medicine: Where a pupil requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene: Where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation: On an ongoing basis including assisting a pupil or pupils to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a pupil to access school transport), or to help a pupil to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards).
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds: At recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision.
- Non - nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: Such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a pupil may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of pupils, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.

Secondary Care Associated Tasks (SNA Tasks):

The following tasks are the type of secondary care associated tasks which SNAs will often perform, but only once they have been allocated on the basis of the primary care support tasks listed above. The indicative list of secondary associated tasks listed below is not definitive and is reflective of the tasks detailed in Circulars 08/02 and 71/2011.

The associated support tasks which may be carried out include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a pupil 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. To assist with cleaning of materials.
- 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 Teachers and / or Principal in maintaining a journal and care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with Class Teachers and other Teachers such as the Resource Teacher and School Principal, attending meetings with Parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.
- Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho - educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including Class Teachers or support teachers.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff. (See Appendix 3 Personal Pupil Plan (PPP))

Role of Parents:

“Parents through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child’s learning programmes” (Learning - Support Guidelines, p.52). " Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs " (2017 Guidelines: p. 23).

Parents can support the work of the school in supporting their child by:

- Providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy and mathematical activities in the early years before formal schooling begins.
- Supporting the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as:
 - Book sharing / reading stories
 - Storytelling
 - Paired reading (listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading)
 - Discussions about school and other activities to build vocabulary and thinking skills
 - Writing lists and short accounts about children’s experiences
 - Counting and measuring and other activities involving number
 - Visits to the zoo, museum, library etc. to broaden their child’s experiences
 - Using Information and Communications Technology (ICTs), where available, to support learning in English and / or Mathematics
- Talking positively about school and school work.
- Availing of real-life situations to discuss the importance of language/literacy/maths
- Modelling involvement in language, literacy and mathematical activities at home by engaging in and talking about these activities.
- Working on agreed Targets at home.
- Parents should keep the Class Teacher informed of the progress or learning difficulties that they observe in their child’s learning. If, following assessments, the child has been identified as requiring supplementary teaching, the Parents should talk with the Support Teacher to discuss: the results of the assessment; the learning targets in the child’s Support Plan; the ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.

- Where a child is in receipt of supplementary teaching from the learning-support teacher, the Parents should:
 - Discuss their child's progress with the Support Teacher regularly, and, in cases where supplementary teaching is to be continued, discuss the revised learning targets and activities in their child's Support Plan.
 - At the discontinuation of supplementary teaching, discuss with their child's teachers how the child's future learning needs can continue to be met at school and at home.

Roles of Pupils:

"The involvement of pupils in the development, implementation and review of their own learning programmes is an important principle underlining effective supplementary teaching" (Learning - Support Guidelines, p.54). " Good engagement and participation in their own education has many associated benefits for pupils. This is particularly important for pupils with special educational needs and can help enhance their academic and social and emotional outcomes " (2017 Guidelines: p. 24).

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

- Outline his / her interests, aspirations, strengths. (My thoughts about school checklist)
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.
- Contribute to the Support Plan.
- Become familiar with the medium and short-term learning targets that have been set for them and they should be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of such targets.
- Contribute to the selection of texts and other learning materials that are relevant to the attainment of their learning targets.
- 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.

Role of External Bodies and Agencies:

"Support and guidance is available to teachers from external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the NCSE Support Service, the Inspectorate, and allied health professionals. It is important that schools have established procedures / protocols for liaising with these services and bodies in order to optimise the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs at the individual, group or whole - school level. This is especially important for those pupils with more significant and enduring needs who benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach to identification of need and the development of interventions.

The needs of many pupils span both health and education services. Health services (HSE and HSE-funded services) will continue to play an important role in early identification, assessment and diagnosis, intervention and review for pupils with special educational needs. It is important that schools are familiar with the range of health services in their locality, including referral pathways. Co-ordination is enhanced when schools liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and when they facilitate meetings between parents and various support services. Schools should endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support " (2017 Guidelines: p. 25).

School Mission Statement and School Ethos:

We aim to do the very best we can for every child who comes into our school, to maximise their talents and potential, to give them a solid grounding in basic academic work and to open their eyes and minds to the world that awaits them.

Our school aims to give the children a sound religious and moral education within the established Catholic ethos of the school and to help them establish a faith in God which will grow and develop. The ethos of Killurney N.S. can be seen in the everyday dealings that all those who work in the school have with each other. It is manifested in the respect and consideration shown by teachers to pupils and vice versa. We are proud of the children who are part of our school and hope they go on to become fulfilled adults.

Enrolment of Children with Identified Special Needs:

The EPSEN Act (2004) states that “A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with –

- (a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or
- (b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.”

The Board of Management shall take into consideration the above clause of the EPSEN Act when considering the enrolment policy of Killurney N.S.

Given that the enrolment of the child with special educational needs is in the best interests of the child and that an effective provision of education can be made for the children with whom the child is to be educated, then the following procedure may apply:

- The Principal shall meet with the parents/guardians of the child with special educational needs to discuss their expectations for their child. The child may also be requested to attend.
- Copies of reports, assessments and other relevant data to be obtained from the Parents/Guardians.
- The Principal will contact the S.E.N.O. and other relevant agencies involved with the child (if necessary) to determine the level of supports available to the child.
- The Principal ensures access to all the supports necessary e.g. individual/group tuition by SET's, support for particular mobility and care needs, S.N.A., by liaising with the relevant agencies.
- Once the supports are in place the Parents/Guardians meet with the Principal, class teacher, SET and S.N.A. (if applicable) to ensure a smooth transition into the school for the child with special educational needs.

- If necessary a review of the child’s placement in mainstream will take place termly for the first two years and yearly thereafter, to ascertain if the child’s needs might be better catered for in a more specialised setting. Parents, Principal and relevant teachers will attend.

Early Intervention and Prevention of Learning Difficulties:

The following are some of the key early intervention strategies used in our school.

- The promotion of agreed approaches to language, literacy, and numeracy development in order to ensure structured progression and continuity from class to class level.
- Close collaboration between the Junior classroom teacher and the S.E.N team.
- Priority is given to students in the Junior classes (up to and including 2nd class) when allocating and timetabling additional support resources. (However, we must remain mindful to the level of need in the Senior Room also.
- A carefully focused delivery of Early Intervention Programmes (which may include In-Class support for Numeracy and Literacy, Phonological awareness, Aistear)

Identification of Children with Emerging Special Educational Needs:

The school will use the following staged approach as advised by N.E.P.S:

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
Classroom Support	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over the time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Basic needs checklist • Learning environment checklist • Pupil consultation – My Thoughts About School Checklist • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>

<p>School Support</p>	<p>At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behavior including ABC chart, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approached including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition.</p> <p>A school support plan operated for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
<p>School Support Plus</p>	<p>This level of the continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professional (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc. <p>Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualized, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>

(a) Classroom Support.

In the case of pupils who do not respond to the classroom differentiated programme:

- The class teacher will discuss concerns with support teacher and/or Principal and draws up a Continuum of Support-Classroom Support Plan for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting for an agreed period of time, which may vary from case to case.
- A child with learning difficulties, physical difficulties, social, behavioural or emotional difficulties is identified by teacher observation, use of checklists or screening measures (e.g. standardised tests).
- Concerns are documented in a variety of ways - Pupil Behaviour Chart, record keeping of screening tests, teacher notes on individual children, etc.
- Parents/guardians are consulted about concerns the teacher may have. Further information is sought regarding difficulties at home, parental observation and reports, etc.

School Support

If a concern remains after review(s) of this plan, it may be necessary to consider intervention at School Support (in certain situations it may be necessary, following screening, to consider intervention at School Support sooner.)

At School Support stage, a child is referred to the SET teacher, following consultation with the parents/guardians, for further diagnostic testing as a result of teacher recommendation/screening assessment results. Diagnostic Testing is carried out by the SET's throughout the year, as necessary. The SET interprets the results of these diagnostic tests and when necessary, the child may be referred for supplementary teaching (subject to the availability of resources) following this screening. The parents are then invited into the school where they will meet with the class teacher and SET where the results of diagnostic testing are shared with the parents. Following this, the child's intervention programme is discussed, and parents are offered an opportunity to suggest targets for inclusion in the pupil's educational programme (Continuum of Support-School Support Plan). All parties collaborate to create a complete picture of the child's strengths and needs and the process of drawing up a programme of work for the child is initiated. Pupils complete a 'My Thoughts about School' form. The results of these diagnostic tests and questionnaires in conjunction with the teachers' analysis of the child's needs dictate the learning/behavioral plan devised for the student. The SET has the responsibility for drawing up the educational plan, in conjunction with the class teacher, the Principal, the parents/guardians, the SNA and the pupil (as appropriate).

In order to facilitate the preparation and review of the educational plans, the SET will meet regularly with the class teacher to review progress. The Principal will facilitate this meeting. The SET /class teacher will meet with the parents/guardians to get their views on the progress of the child. The plan will be reviewed twice yearly or more frequently if necessary. The SET, the class teacher, the SNA and the Principal may attend the review. Parents/guardians will be consulted as to the progress of the child and amendments will be made to the plan as necessary. If additional resources are required or ongoing consultation is necessary, the Principal or the SET will liaise with the relevant agencies to acquire them. Co-ordination of educational plans, sharing of relevant information and transfer of information from class to class will be responsibility of the SET and the relevant teacher.

Team teaching is a recognised model of additional teaching support at this stage.

Written permission is sought from parents to consent to their child to attend supplementary teaching by the SET. Where parents refuse to allow their child to participate in this process, a note to this effect will also be required of parents. These forms will be stored in pupil's individual files in the Principal's office.

School Support Plus.

School support plus is the level of intervention for children with complex needs and whose levels of attainment and progress are considered inadequate despite carefully planned interventions at previous levels. If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews and adaptations to the school support programme, then it may be necessary to provide intervention at School Support Plus. In the case of pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties more urgent action may be needed. In these cases, School Support may be passed over and School Support Plus implemented sooner.

At School Support Plus, the school may refer the case to the NEPS psychologist and other professionals (Speech and Language therapist, OT, Clinical Psychologist etc). Following the decision taken by the Principal, in conjunction with the class teacher and SET, to move to School Support Plus, the parents are requested to attend a meeting where the concerns regarding the child are outlined. Parents/guardians are advised of the procedures for assessment by an outside agency. Their permission is sought to allow their child to go forward for assessment. Occasionally, depending on the nature of the concern, the Principal may request the parents to make the referral themselves through G.P. The Principal or the Special Education Needs teacher will generally make the referral and liaise with the outside agencies. Documentation and forms will be filled in by the appropriate class teacher in conjunction with the SET, and parents/guardians will be consulted and asked to fill the relevant sections. The forms once completed are forwarded to the Psychologist. If possible the assessment will take place in the school in a room designated by the Principal. Parents/Guardians will be involved in the assessment. They will, where possible, meet with the Psychologist directly after the assessment. Priority for assessments will be given to those children identified by the staff as being the most in need. Parents may choose to have assessments done privately. The recommendations in the ensuing assessment and the precise nature of each individual child's special education needs will be carefully considered by all partners in the drawing up of the intervention programme for the student.

A School Support Plus Plan will be developed, implemented and reviewed for students who fall into the category. The SET, in conjunction with the class teacher will prepare this educational plan or a behaviour modification plan for the child, based on their needs. Parents/Guardians will be consulted in the drawing up of the plan. A review of the plan will take place in February and June of each school year. The support teacher and the class teacher will review the progress of the child. The S.N.A. where applicable will also be consulted. If necessary, new targets will be set for the child. Re-testing using diagnostic tests may take place. Continuing, reducing or discontinuing supplementary teaching will be decided at the review meeting.

Psychological reports are stored in the student's individual file in a locked filing cabinet. All students' written results of standardised testing are also kept in their individual files in a locked filing cabinet. Other assessment results are kept in the students' individual files. It is imperative that

comments relevant to the student are recorded in an objective, constructive and instructive manner. Special care is taken of sensitive data which is always kept securely locked in the filing cabinet of the Principal's office.

Recording the Results of Assessments:

(See Policy on Data Protection and Record Keeping for specific information on recording, storage and transfer of information based on Standardised Tests, Screening Tests, Diagnostic Tests and other assessment material)

For full details of the assessment of pupils please refer to our [Assessment and Reporting Policy](#). This outlines the methods we use to assess learning, procedures regarding Standardised Testing and screening procedures & a list of diagnostic tests used. (I have yet to review and update this policy!)

Criteria for Selection for Support Teaching:

The following are the criteria to be used when deciding which pupils will receive supplementary teaching (School Support) in this order of need;

- Pupils previously in receipt of "Resource hours" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties
- Pupils previously in receipt of "Learning Support" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties (scoring below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments.
- Pupils diagnosed as having "Low Learning Disabilities".
- Pupils diagnosed as having "High Incidence Learning Disabilities".
- 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.
- Pupils scoring at/below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
- Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy (to allow for a margin of error).
- Pupils scoring at/below the 10th percentile on standardised assessment in Mathematics.
- Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessment in Mathematics (to allow for a margin of error).
- Early intervention in literacy – Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy skills, despite intervention made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support level of the NEPs Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**
- Early intervention in Mathematics – Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early numeracy skills, despite intervention made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support level of the NEPs Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**
- Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy, who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support level of the NEPs Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**

- Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in mathematics, who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support level of the NEPs Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**
- Pupils experiencing serious difficulties with oral language/social interaction/behaviour/emotional development/application to learning, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support level of the NEPs Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the intervention in it. Pupils may move up in the order depending on the urgency of their needs.**
- 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” intervention will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support level of the NEPs Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the intervention in it.
- When the above categories are catered for the remaining support time (if any remains) will be at the discretion of the Principal.

Discontinuation of Support Teaching:

The school’s procedure in relation to discontinuing support teaching/discharging pupils from support teaching is as follows:

Discharge from Support Teaching

- Children may also be discharged in the following circumstances:
- Children with diagnosed specific learning difficulties or high incidence disabilities who are consistently performing above the cut-off scores for support teaching.
- Where a child, following a sustained period of support teaching, is performing to his/her ability level as determined by reference to attainment and cognitive ability assessments, and has achieved adequate/expected levels of competency in language, literacy and numeracy attainment.
- Discharge from support teaching may involve the provision of a differential support programme for pupils which include steps to be implemented in the classroom and home settings.

Students ON School Support Plan and School Support Plus

Students may be discharged where it is determined, following review and analysis of progress made and in consultation with parents and relevant professionals (where necessary) that the intensive support is no longer required. Where adequate progress has been made the pupil will revert to the previous level of support e.g. A pupil who have achieved targets on School Support Plus will revert to School Support. Those on School Support will revert to Classroom Support. Those on Classroom Support will return to normal classroom differentiation.

Inclusion

Children with SEN will be afforded the same rights, respect and dignity in accordance with the school mission statement. The awareness of the needs of a person with disabilities is instilled in all pupils through the S.P.H.E. programme..

Children with SEN are required to abide by the school rules and the Code of Behaviour unless precluded from doing so.

Resources:

Resources are kept in the Support Room where all teachers have access to them where necessary. Standardised tests and Diagnostic tests are sourced and stored by the S.E.T. and principal.

Transfer to Post-Primary

Every effort is made to ensure smooth transition to post-primary schools for children with special needs. The following procedures apply:

- The S.E.N.O. is informed of the transfer of a pupil with special needs to the post-primary school.
- Written parental permission is sought for the transfer of copies of reports and assessments to the relevant post-primary schools.

Record Keeping:

Copies of all assessments and reports are stored in the students' individual file in a locked filing cabinet. The class teacher and the S.E.T. have access to these reports as necessary. Parents are issued copies of the reports by the relevant agencies. Copies of the plans of work for individual students are kept in the students' files in the Support Room. Copies of group plans are kept in a central file in the filing cabinet in the Support Room. Original Psychological Assessments are kept in individual students' files in a locked filing cabinet. Records are updated twice yearly and as necessary at other times during the year. . All records on pupils with special needs who have left the school are stored securely until they have reached the age of 21.

For full details of our record keeping see Data Protection / Record Keeping Policy for Killurney N.S.

Resources:

The BOM funds resources. At present resources are stored in the Support Room.

Timetable:

The timetable for special education needs students is agreed between the Principal, Class Teacher and S.E.T. at the beginning of September. The following factors are considered when drawing up this timetable:

- Advantage of frequent tuition.
- Organising timetable to minimise disruption for class teacher.
- Co-ordinating with the class teacher to ensure the best possible time is chosen for each student.
- Group or in-class support.
- Review timetable termly to allow for emerging needs, sporting events, Religious ceremonies, tours, concerts and other school activities.

Liaising with parents and other professionals may be done during a child's sanctioned time.

Support Models:

Instruction may be individual, in pairs or within a group as benefits the needs of the child. It may be in-class or involve withdrawal of students. In-class support is given priority and is increasingly being

used to support the maximum number of students accessing individual help. Team teaching / Station teaching is being used where appropriate.

Meetings:

- Regular collaboration between the Class Teacher, SET, S.N.A. (and Principal if appropriate).
- Parent / Teacher meeting by appointment

Success Criteria:

The success of the policy will be measured by how smoothly and efficiently this policy runs throughout the school. As a result of the screening process those students most in need would receive supplementary teaching at the earliest possible time. Benefiting pupil learning is central to the whole process. The success of this policy will also be judged from Staff feedback, Parent feedback and the Inspector’s Report.

Implementation:

This Special Needs Policy was amended, presented to, considered and readopted by the Board of Management on the [redacted]. The operation of the procedures contained in this policy will be reviewed again during [redacted]. If amendments are necessary before this date they will be made following agreement by the staff.

Signed:

Chairperson of the BoM

Date

Principal

Review Date