

# *Scoil Náisiúnta Ghlinse*

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*Glinsk N.S.*



Glinsk,  
Via Castlerea,  
Co. Galway

## Special Educational Needs Policy

### Situation

Glinsk National School is a co-educational, vertical school with 74 pupils, situated in the village of Glinsk, in East County Galway under the patronage of the bishop of Elphin. At present there are three Mainstream Classroom Teachers, one Special Education Teacher and two Special Needs Assistants.

### Mission Statement

Glinsk NS is an inclusive school that ensures that each individual is allowed to develop to the best of his/her potential, accepting the varying abilities of each child. Our mission is to provide an atmosphere where all children can develop socially, emotionally, physically, academically and spiritually.

### Aims of SEN Support

- To support the inclusion of SEN pupils in primary schools.
- To ensure that the Staged Approach / NEPS Continuum of Support is implemented.
- To *“optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school”* (Learning-Support Guidelines [LSG]: p. 15). This support may be provided by the Class Teacher and / or the Support Teacher (Appendix 1: The Staged Approach, described in Circular 02/05).
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in English and / or Mathematics
- To enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum
- To encourage differentiation in the classroom
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils
- To support attainment, and behavioural, social and emotional functioning
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
- To involve parents in supporting their children.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on Special Educational Needs for pupils
- To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning
- To guard the self-esteem and self-image of the learner.

## Principles

*"The intensity of additional support that is provided for pupils with low achievement and pupils with special educational needs should be based on their needs and should be provided differentially through the continuum of support process" (Circular 13/17: p. 16).*

Effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Quality of teaching. *"Research has consistently shown that the quality of teaching is the most critical factor in enhancing pupils' learning and educational experiences"* (2017 Guidelines: p. 27).
- Effective whole-school policies
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need
- Implementation of a staged approach to support provision at Class Support / School Support / School Support Plus
- Provision of the Model of intervention appropriate for the pupil and the difficulty they are experiencing.
  - (1) Withdrawal Model:
    - 1:1 interventions (vital when e.g. difficulties are very significant; when pupil needs do not match to form a small group)
    - Small group interventions
  - (2) In-Class Support Model:
    - Station teaching / Team Teaching / Peer tutoring etc...
- Parental involvement
- Collaboration between Teachers
- Maintenance of Support Plans by Class Teachers and Support Teachers at Class Support / School Support / School Support Plus
- Thorough Assessment procedures
- Regular contact with SEN pupils
- Manageable caseloads / timetables
- Prevention of failure
- Provision of intensive early intervention
- Support from Outside Agencies
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

## 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; SET Teachers; SNAs; Parents; Pupils and External Bodies & Agencies. It is important that everyone contributes to the implementation of our school plan on SEN Provision.

### The Board of Management

- 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.

## The Principal

- has overall responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring of learning support and special needs services.
- works with teachers, parents and special needs assistants in the development of school policies and procedures related to special educational needs
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN and special needs on an on-going 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/or 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 in initiating referrals.
- Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of Special Education teaching.
- Encourage and facilitate staff members to attend CPD courses.
- Liaise regularly with Special Education teacher.
- Organise the funding and provision of appropriate assessment tests.
- Complete application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE; NEPS; CAMHS etc...
- 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.

## Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the pupils' learning needs within his / her class. *"Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes" (2017 Guidelines: p. 12).* 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
- discuss outcomes of standardised testing with Special Education teacher 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 Student Support File (SSF) once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support before school support is implemented
- collaborate with staff to develop Student Support File (SSF) for each pupil in receipt of School Support or school support plus
- meet with Special Education Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify targets for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- regularly meet with Special Education Teachers and relevant staff to review SSFs
- meet regularly with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff and parents to review SSF

- 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
- 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**

- Provide supplementary teaching commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.
- Research the pupil's learning difficulty / SEN, to become familiar with this impediment to learning.
- Implement suitable recommendations from outside agencies, wherever possible, and liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children on their caseload.
- Develop a Support Plan for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with Class Teachers and Parents
- Maintain Logs of Action for each individual in receipt of support.
- Provide supplementary teaching in English and / or Mathematics to pupils who experience low achievement and / or learning difficulties at School Support / School Support Plus
- Deliver intensive early intervention programmes, caseload and selection criteria permitting.
- Assist the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Contribute to the development of policy on SEN at the whole school level.
- Provide advice to the Class Teacher (if requested) about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties.
- Meet 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.
- Meet 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, to review the pupil's attainment of agreed targets, to revise the pupil's support plan
- Contribute 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.
- Liaise with external agencies such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, NEPS psychologists, behavioural therapists etc...
- Implement school policies on preventing learning difficulties, screen pupils for learning difficulties, interpret the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and provide supplementary teaching, where it is deemed necessary.
- Administer a range of formal and informal assessments and maintain records of the outcomes of those assessments.
- Utilise a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support.

### **Special Needs Assistants**

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:**

- 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...

The tasks noted above are the primary care support tasks for which access to SNA support is provided.

### Secondary Care Associated 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 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<sup>1</sup>, 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.

## Parents

- Provide 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.
- Support 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 the range of their child's experiences
  - Using Information and Communications Technology (ICTs), where available, to support learning in English and / or Mathematics
- Talk positively about school and school work.
- share any information, reports 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
- Avail of real-life situations to discuss the importance of language, literacy and mathematics.
- Modell involvement in language, literacy and mathematical activities at home by engaging in and talking about these activities.
- Work on agreed Targets at home.
- Keep the Class Teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home.
- Discuss their child's progress with the Support Teacher, when a child is in receipt of supplementary teaching.

## Pupils

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

- Outline his / her interests, aspirations, strengths.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.
- Contribute to the Support Plan.
- Complete 'My Thoughts about School' questionnaire
- 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.
- Excel at and enjoy many curricular and extra-curricular activities which would not be practical in the mainstream class due to class size.

## External Bodies and Agencies

Support and guidance are 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.

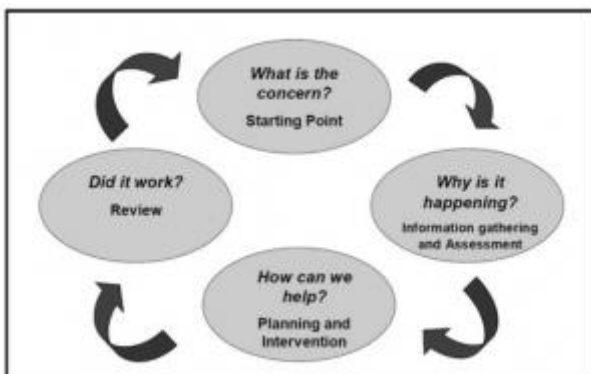
## Identifying and Selecting Pupils to Receive Supplementary Teaching

### 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, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

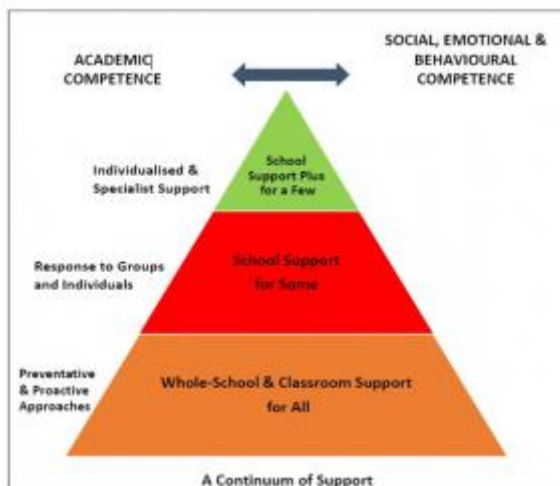
The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



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:



## Staged Approach to Special Educational Needs (as Outlined in Circular letter SP ED 24/03)

### Stage 1- Classroom Support

A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. The teacher or learning support teacher will then administer screening measures, which include screening checklists and profiles for children in Senior Infants and first class, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older children and behavioural checklists where appropriate.

The class teacher will then draw up a short, simple plan for extra help within the normal classroom setting in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The success of the plan will be reviewed on a regular basis, with appropriate parental involvement.

### Stage 2- School Support Stage.

In the case of children with learning difficulties, if the class teacher's plan fails to achieve the desired outcome, then the child shall be referred to the Special Education Teacher, with parental permission, for further diagnostic testing. If this diagnostic assessment indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, then this shall be arranged. Parents and class teacher shall be involved with the special education teacher in drawing up the support plan, complementing the plan with supplementary activities in class and at home and in implementing the plan.

The special education teacher and the class teacher shall review on a regular basis, in consultation with the parents, the rate of progress of each child receiving supplementary teaching. If significant concerns remain after a period of at least one school term then it may be necessary to implement Stage 3.

### Stage 3- School Support Plus Stage.

The school formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist from outside the school in respect of children with learning difficulties and mild/moderate behavioural problems who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or behavioural programme and of children with serious emotional disturbance and/or

behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists etc. In consultation with the relevant specialist/s, the learning support resource teacher, and class teacher shall then draw up a learning plan, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement



the plan. The parents shall be fully consulted throughout this process. This plan should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary.

\*\*\*while most pupils' initial needs should be met through classroom-based interventions, a small number of pupils may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan. Most of the pupils to whom this applies will be new to the school. However, it may also apply for some pupils following an event which impacts significantly on them in school. \*\*\*

### Parental Permission

- Parents are consulted at the earliest possible stage- i.e. classroom stage.
- Parental consent is sought prior to commencement of any additional learning support.
- Parental consent is sought for the conducting of diagnostic assessment.

### Screening Assessments

All pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests, administered by the Special Education Teacher and Class teacher.

Junior Infants	Belfield Infant Assessment Profile ( B.I.A.P)
Senior Infants	Middle Infant Assessment Profile (MIST) ( January) Drumcondra Early Literacy Screening Test Drumcondra Early Numeracy Screening Test MICRA-T SIGMA-T
1 <sup>st</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> Class-	MICRA-T SIGMA-T NNRIT Drumcondra Spelling Test

### Diagnostic Assessment and Profiling

Once pupils have moved from classroom support to school support, and parental permission has been granted, a wide range of assessments are used to profile pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

Assessments:	Aston Index Get Reading Right Jackson Schonell Graded Word Reading Scale Schonell Graded Spelling test Marino Word reading Test Spar Spelling Test Neale Analysis of Reading Attainment YARC Maths Tracker Two Peas Phonological Awareness Assessment Cloze Test 1, 2, 3. WRAPS
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Westwood 1 Minute Number Tests  
Westwood Maths Checklist  
Basic Number Screening Test  
Basic number Diagnostic Test  
Diagnostic Reading Programme Checklist  
Early Literacy and Numeracy Checklist  
Curriculum Profiles  
Teacher – designed tasks & tests  
Portfolio assessments  
DST-Junior

## Selection Criteria

Circular 13/2017 states - *"Pupils under the new allocation model will be identified by schools for additional teaching support in accordance with the Continuum of Support Guidelines, and the Guidelines which accompany this Circular"*

Pages 15 and 16 of the Circular go into the following detail -

- Standardised tests can be used to screen and identify pupils' performance in reading and mathematics. Those pupils performing below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile should be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils who were previously in receipt of supplementary teaching from a resource or learning support teacher and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
- Pupils who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention as set out in the Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2010). This will be evidenced through school-based assessment of attainment, and behavioural, social and emotional functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes. Schools should also take into account needs set out in professional reports, where available.
- Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties. Pupils who have specific learning disabilities.
- Pupils with significant Special Educational Needs. For example, pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs. These pupils need additional teaching support because they require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are tailored to their needs.
- Schools should also carefully consider the needs of other pupils who may present with a range of learning whose interaction may present a significant barrier to the pupils' learning and ability to access the curriculum.
- Pupils who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those pupils who need additional English Additional language Support.

The intensity of additional support that is provided for pupils with low achievement and pupils with special educational needs should be based on their needs and should be provided differentially through the continuum of support process.

Support may be provided to pupils at Classroom Support / School Support / School Support Plus level of the NEPS' Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2010).

### 1. Class Teacher (NEPS' Classroom Support):

Pupils deemed to need additional support with their learning (literacy & numeracy) and / or specific needs (oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning) will be supported in the classroom by the Class Teacher.

## 2. Support Teacher (NEPS' School Support and School Support Plus):

The Support Teacher may provide additional support for the following pupils, through withdrawal (1:1 or in a small group) or in-class support (e.g. station teaching / team teaching / in-class support / peer tutoring), depending on the child's needs.

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

*"Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support"* (2017 Guidelines: p. 19).

1. Pupils previously in receipt of "Resource hours" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
2. Pupils previously in receipt of "Learning-Support" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties (scoring below the 12<sup>th</sup> %ile on standardised assessments).
3. Pupils diagnosed as having "Low Incidence Learning Disabilities".
4. Pupils diagnosed as having "High Incidence Learning Disabilities".
5. Pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) i.e. (a) pupils who arrive to our school without any English (b) pupils who have lived in Ireland less than two years, and whose English needs further support.
6. Pupils scoring at/below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
7. Pupils scoring at/below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised assessments in literacy (to allow for a margin of error).
8. Pupils scoring at/below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics.
9. Pupils scoring at/below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics (to allow for a margin of error).
10. Early intervention in literacy - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
11. Early intervention in Mathematics - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early numeracy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
12. 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 (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
13. 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 (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
14. 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 (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
15. Transition to Post-Primary School (Appendix 4).
16. Gifted Pupils (those scoring above the 95th%ile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments and / or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a "superior IQ"). Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at

Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.

### 3 Step Approach from the 2017 Guidelines

#### 1) Identify Needs

*"The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables schools to gather and analyse data" (2017 Guidelines: p.6).*

*"Identification of educational needs is central to the new model. Using the Continuum of Support framework, schools can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. The framework emphasises the importance of looking at a pupil's needs in context, and provides useful resources to support this (for example, Learning Environment Checklist, Teacher Checklist for Whole-class Structures and Supports) ...Of course, the principle that **pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support** is of primary importance. This approach is also supported by information and engagement with external professionals, as required" (2017 Guidelines: p.7).*

*"For pupils with significant, enduring and complex needs, collaboration with external professionals, including multi-disciplinary teams, is advised (for example, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and psychologist)" (2017 Guidelines: p.11-12).*

Planning: *"A Student Support File has been developed to enable schools to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support" (2017 Guidelines: p.10).*

The 2017 Guidelines provide a template to support Teachers in maintaining a list of pupils who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework (Appendix 6).

#### 2) Meeting Needs

*"Having identified a pupil's needs and the educational planning required to meet those needs, this second step emphasises the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies. The benefits of early-intervention and prevention programmes are highlighted. Guidance is also provided on target-setting" (2017 Guidelines: p.10).*

See also the sections in this policy that address:

- the Roles of everybody involved in our whole-school policy
- Prevention and early intervention
- Maintaining Support Plans at each level of support.

Target Setting:

*"Good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with special education needs. There are four guiding principles when devising targets for pupils. Targets should be:*

- *Linked to assessment*
- *Strengths-based*
- *Linked to interventions*
- *Developed collaboratively*
- *SMART*

Best practice indicates that targets should be few in number; they should be informed by priority learning needs and directly linked to suitable interventions. Targets should be based on the evidence collected through both formal and informal assessment approaches. Schools should consult with parents when setting targets and reviewing progress. The views of pupils should also be included in this process, through their direct involvement in the discussion or by gathering their views in advance of the review process. This collaboration will help ensure that targets are relevant, meaningful, realistic, and that they draw on the strengths and interests of pupils.

Targets should be expressed in a way that is measurable and observable, and should reflect the specific special educational needs of individual pupils (for example, focus on social and emotional difficulties if that is a primary area of concern). While targets should be achievable within a specified time frame, they should also challenge and build on existing knowledge and address pupils' holistic needs.

### **3) Monitor and Record Progress**

*"It is important that school leaders oversee a whole-school approach to monitoring and recording of progress. Pupils' progress in relation to achieving their targets should be regularly and carefully monitored."*

Each support plan will be monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback.

Reviews take place regularly. SET Teacher and/or Class Teacher may meet parents to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review.

## **Continuing and Discontinuation Supplementary Teaching**

An instructional term is generally taken to mean 13-20 weeks of instruction. However, where the Support Teacher is shared between schools and is unable to meet pupils more than 2-3 times a week, an instructional term may be longer than 13-20 weeks.

- If possible, reviews will be held regularly where supplementary teaching is to be continued, to discuss the revised learning targets and activities in the pupil's Support Plan.
- Supplementary teaching will normally be discontinued where the targets have been met and the pupil (on assessment) is performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some pupils (who have made satisfactory progress)
- Due consideration will be given to the overall needs of the school and all of its pupils.

The criteria on which this decision is made include:

- Has the pupil achieved some/all of the learning targets set?
- Will the pupil be able to cope in the classroom learning context?

## **Record Keeping**

The SET teacher will maintain the following documentation in individualised files in a locked filing cabinet in the SET room:

- School Support Plans

- School Support Plus Plans
- Logs of Action
- Short term planning and programme record (fortnightly)
- Assessments
- Samples of written work
- Reading analysis records
- Parental permission
- Parental questionnaire
- Notes from individual parent teacher meetings
- Psychologist reports (if applicable)
- Speech and Language reports if applicable
- Occupational therapy reports if applicable

## Time-tabling

The provision of learning support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths. Efforts are made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend learning support except where a pupil has been exempted from a subject by the DES. Likewise, the school will endeavour to ensure that pupils do not miss classes they particularly enjoy such as Art, P.E. or ICT. The provision of learning support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition /In-class support, if appropriate.

## Early Intervention Programmes and Prevention Strategies

Prevention / Early intervention is a cornerstone of supporting learning.

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class. (See Whole School Plan for English and for Mathematics).
- Careful development of phonological awareness and rhyming skills in the classroom, before the introduction of formal reading of words and books.
- The use of concrete materials at every opportunity.
- Implementation of whole school parental involvement programmes e.g. developing children's oral language skills; shared reading at home; developing early mathematical skills etc...
- Ongoing structured observation 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 Support Teacher.
- Thorough Assessment procedures throughout the school
- Provision of additional support in language development / early literacy / early mathematical skills to pupils who need it
- Promotion of literacy e.g., Print-rich environment, Paired Reading, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), Use of graded readers
- All children are benchmarked using the PM benchmark assessments in Senior Infants & 1<sup>st</sup> class, and subsequently read at their own level.
- Promotion of Numeracy e.g., Maths Eyes, Maths trails, Use of Khan Academy
- Team Teaching/Aistear/Maths stations

- Programmes such as Weaving Wellbeing & *FRIENDS for Life* as a means of preventing anxiety and building resilience.

### Early Intervention Programmes

- Early intervention is a vital component of the NEPS Continuum of Support model.
- Early intervention programmes may be provided by the Class Teacher and / or by the Support Teacher, in accordance with the Staged Approach and the NEPS Continuum.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the Support Teachers, should identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of pupils for early intervention programmes at Classroom Support / School Support level.
- Intensive early intervention programmes in the early primary classes can be an effective response to meeting the needs of children with low achievement. Such programmes will:
  - Be set within a specific time frame (13-20 weeks)
  - Be based on a shared expectation of success by everyone involved
  - Involve small group teaching or one-to-one teaching where small group teaching has not been effective / difficulties are significant
  - Include a strong focus on oral language, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and further development of language and comprehension skills
  - Emphasise the development of phonemic awareness
  - Develop phonic skills, once phonological awareness has been developed well
  - Develop word identification skills
  - Engage the pupils in frequent supervised oral and silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty and monitor their comprehension
  - Stress the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing
  - Focus on language development in mathematics, and in the development of mathematical procedures and concepts.

### Professional Development of Staff

The Principal and B.O.M. are very supportive of the professional development of staff in respect of making appropriate provision for pupils with special learning needs.

### Ratification and Policy Review

Ratified by Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)

Review \_\_\_\_\_