

Educational Provision for Children with Special Needs

Table of Contents	
Introductory Statement	2
Rationale/Belief Statement	2
Aims	3
Staff Roles and Responsibilities	3
Board of Management.....	3
Principal	3
Class Teachers.....	4
Learning Support/Resource Teacher	4
Special Needs Assistants.....	5
Prevention Strategies.....	5
Early Intervention	6
Timetabling	8
Liaising with Parents	8
Links with Outside Agencies	8
Cluster with other schools in the area	9
Monitoring and Review of this Policy	9
Ratification and Communication	9
APPENDIX.....	10
IEP Template	11

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up by the Special Educational Needs Team in consultation with school staff, at a series of consultative meetings, which took place between February 2010 and May 2010.

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and interested persons on the provision of effective learning to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties.

The school aims to meet the needs of any child, whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. Parents are required to notify the school of their child's special needs in advance of enrolment. No child can be refused permission solely on the grounds that he/she has special needs except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

Description of the School

Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire has a current enrolment of 185 pupils and is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. It is a mainstream primary school.

There are currently 12 teachers on staff including an administrative principal, learning support teacher, EAL teacher and two shared Resource/Learning Support teachers. There are also 5 Special Needs Assistants, a full time secretary, a part time caretaker and a part time cleaner.

Rationale/Belief Statement

Our school's vision statement is "Each one working for the good of all". With reference to this,

- We believe that all of our children have a right to an education which is appropriate to them as individuals
- We want all of our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community
- As far as possible, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience
- We are dedicated to helping each child achieve his/her individual potential and
- We aim to provide a quality system of learning support and inclusive curriculum as an integral part of this commitment.

We take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning throughout the school.

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we strive 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 Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire
- Develop positive self esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning
- Enable pupils to monitor their own leaning and become independent learners
- Establish early intervention to enhance learning and prevent/reduce difficulties in learning
- Enhance basic skills and learning strategies to a level which enables pupils to participate in the full curriculum
- Expose children to stimulating learning experiences so that reading and writing are enjoyed and valued
- Develop a partnership with parents/carers in order that their knowledge, views and experiences can assist us in assessing and providing for their children
- Take into account the ascertainable wishes of the children concerned and, wherever possible, directly involve them in the decision making process in order to provide more effectively for them
- Promote co-operation among teachers and the SEN team in the implementation of this policy
- Ensure that all staff are aware if their responsibilities towards children with special needs and are able to exercise them
- Ensure that all children, regardless of their ability are included and are part of the school community in Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire
- Monitor our effectiveness in achieving the above aims.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

In attempting to achieve the above aims, the Board of Management, principal and staff will all take reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document and the Learning Support Guidelines (2000).

Board of Management

The Board of Management will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of the school development plan. Members will be knowledgeable about the school's special educational needs provision – funding, equipment and personnel.

Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for the day to day management and monitoring of the provision. She will work closely with the learning support and resource teachers and will keep the Board of Management informed about the working of this policy. She will encourage staff to participate in training that will help them meet the objectives of this policy.

She will help to co-ordinate the caseloads/work schedules of the learning support and resource teachers. In consultation with the learning support and resource teachers, she will liaise with the SENO with regard to support hours and is responsible for personnel appointments. She will also liaise with the learning support/resource teachers and external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessment and special provision for pupils with special needs.

Class Teachers

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class including those selected for supplementary teaching or receiving resource hours. Class teachers will endeavour to create a classroom environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or alleviated. Class teachers will implement teaching programmes that optimise the learning of all pupils, and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties. The class teacher will also contribute to developing the learning targets in the pupil's IPLP (Individual Pupil Learning Profile) or IEP (Individual Educational Profile) and adjust the class programme in line with the agreed learning targets. Class teachers will differentiate the class curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils within the class. Class teachers will also identify children who are experiencing difficulties and work with the learning support teacher and/or resource teacher and parents to decide on the appropriate plan.

Learning Support/Resource Teacher

The learning support / resource teacher will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the day to day operation of the SEN policy
- Providing supplementary teaching in English and Maths to groups of pupils or individuals in the school that have been selected for supplementary teaching
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs
- Assist in the implementation of the whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties
- To consult with the class teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment, taking into account pupils' scores on an appropriate standardised
- To carry out a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and /or learning difficulties and then in consultation with the class teacher and parents, identify the type and level of learning support that is needed to meet the pupil's needs
- To maintain a record of the attendance of pupils at supplementary teaching sessions
- To develop an IPLP or IEP for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with the class teacher and parent
- Maintain appropriate planning and progress records for each individual or group in receipt of learning support/resource

- In consultation with the parents, demonstrate techniques and strategies to them that will enable them to help with their child's development in such areas as oral language, reading, writing and mathematics
- To provide advice to class teachers in such areas as individual pupil assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing learning difficulties
- To 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 learning support/resource classrooms
- Oversee the records of all children with special needs and store copies of all assessments, tests and IPLPs/IEPs in the locked filing cabinet of the learning support room

Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants form part of the SEN Team. Their role will be to:

- Foster the participation of special needs pupils in the social and academic process of the school and to enable pupils to become independent learners
- Work as part of the SEN team and the wider school community to promote an inclusive curriculum and environment for children with special needs
- Be available to work with other children in the school with special needs, apart from the child that they have been appointed to
- Work closely with the class teachers and SEN team to develop a plan as to how best to support an individual child's needs
- To liaise with parents and SEN team to discuss the child's social, emotional and physical needs and to plan together on how to meet those needs in school

Prevention Strategies

Learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated by implementing appropriate whole school programmes in English and Mathematics. Our school plan indicates the strategies that have been put in place to prevent learning difficulties. The strategies that we employ at Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire to prevent learning difficulties are as follows:

- An agreed approach to language development and to teaching other aspects of English and Maths in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class
- Provision of additional support in language development and in relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it
- Implementation of a whole school parent involvement programme that focuses on developing children's oral language skills, sharing books with children and developing their early mathematical skills
- Implementation of paired reading programmes involving adults in the community and pupils in the school

- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties. We do this via our Infant checklist which is completed by the Junior Infant teacher during the Junior Infant year.

Early Intervention

We believe that it is very important to identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible so that effective measures can be put in place.

In Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire, we adopt a staged approach to Early Intervention. These stages can be viewed in the table below.

Staged Approach to Early Intervention for pupils with Special Educational Needs		
Observation	Process	Personnel Involved
<p><u>Preliminary Stage</u></p> <p>Screening of new enrolments including contact with personnel from local playschools, crèches and Montessori school.</p>	<p>In June, the school principal reviews completed enrolment forms for students that are starting school the following September and identifies any children that, in her opinion, may require supplementary teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Learning Support Teacher • Local playschool • Local crèches • Local Montessori school personnel
<p><u>Stage 1</u></p> <p>Class teacher/parent has concerns regarding a pupil's academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teacher observes and monitors pupils in class until Parent/Teacher meetings in early November. • Class teacher administers appropriate screening measures and completes checklists as each child progresses. • Class teacher devises a plan which aims to meet pupil's identified needs within the normal class setting. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Teacher • Parent <p><u>Additional Support Available</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEPS Psychologist

Educational Provision for Children with Special Needs

Observation	Process	Personnel Involved
<i>If concern remains after a number of reviews, the SEN team in Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire may be consulted about the desirability of a move to Stage 2.</i>		
<p><u>Stage 2 (A)</u></p> <p>Child is referred to learning support teacher with parental permission for further diagnostic teaching</p> <p>(Parental permission slips are included in each student's enrolment pack)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If diagnostic testing indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged. • Parent, class teacher and learning support teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil's IPLP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Teacher • Parent • Learning Support Teacher <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Additional Support Available</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEPS Psychologist
<u>Stage 2 (B) : Continuance/Discontinuance of supplementary teaching</u>		
<p>The decision to continue or discontinue supplementary teaching involves consultation between the class teacher, the learning support teachers and the pupil's parents. Account is also taken of the overall learning support demands of the school.</p>		
<p>The decision to continue/discontinue supplementary teaching is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has the pupil achieved some/all of the learning targets set in their IPLP? ➤ Will the pupil be able to cope independently/semi independently in the classroom learning context? ➤ Have they scored above the 12th percentile in the Drumcondra standardised tests in May? ➤ Do the class teacher and learning support teacher feel that the child no longer needs supplementary teaching? 		
<p>If the decision is made to continue with the supplementary teaching, the student's IPLP needs to be reviewed.</p>		
<i>If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3</i>		
<p><u>Stage 3</u></p> <p>School formally requests a consultation, and where appropriate, an assessment from a specialist outside of the school. E.g. NEPS, CAHMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. • Parents are fully consulted throughout this process • The learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Teacher • Parent • LS Teacher • Resource Teacher • Relevant Specialist <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Additional Supports Available</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEPS Psychologist • S&L Therapists • OT • Psychiatrist

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audiologist• CAMHS• GP• CEIS
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Timetabling

The provision of learning support and supplementary teaching is in addition to the regular class teaching of English and Maths.

Efforts are made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular areas each time they attend learning support. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by class teachers while class disruption is minimised and children will be taken through work they have missed.

The provision of learning support includes withdrawal of pupils from their classroom.

Liaising with Parents

Parents are the child's primary educators. Therefore, it is particularly important that there are close links between the learning environments of home and school. A collaborative approach between parents, teachers and others involved in the child's education is essential.

There will be regular communication between the learning support teacher and the parents/carers. Support is available to the parents from the learning support teacher to assist them to work effectively with their child.

Parents are actively involved in the achievement of targets set for their child e.g. through homework that reinforces the work done in supplementary teaching and shared reading.

Links with Outside Agencies

The school principal co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies e.g. educational psychologists (NEPS). The following are the steps that are taken during this process:

- The class teacher or learning support teacher meets with the parents to discuss the need for referral and seek consent.
- The class teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the learning support teacher.
- Parents are asked to complete their section of the referral form.
- The external professional (e.g. NEPS psychologist) visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, class teacher and learning support teacher and the assessment is conducted.
- This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.

Educational Provision for Children with Special Needs

- When concerns arise regarding the manner or speed of the follow through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the principal with the out of school agency concerned.
- The local SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser) is contacted, if appropriate.

Occasionally, our school uses private psychological assessments in cases where need has been identified and the NEPS service is unable to facilitate the assessment.

The Board of Management will make every effort to provide financial assistance to families where a private psychological assessment is deemed necessary.

Cluster with other schools in the area

Clustering arrangements may be put in place as and when low incidence hours allocations arise/change. In the past, successful clustering arrangements have been put in place with schools in the parish and also schools in neighbouring parishes. It is envisaged that such arrangements would continue.

Monitoring and Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed in May 2013 or as legislation requires us to do so, and at least every 3 years after that.

The Board of Management and the school principal will ensure the special needs provision is an integral part of the school development plan.

Through the school wide implementation of this policy, we aim to enhance pupils' learning in the following ways:

- Improved standards of academic achievement
- Enabling of the discontinuation of the provision of learning support based on positive assessment results
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs

Ratification and Communication

This policy was originally ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire, Newmarket on Fergus at a meeting in June 2013. It was revised in February 2015.

Parents may obtain a copy of this policy from the school and the policy is available to be viewed in the school.

Signed: Gerard Ryan

Date

APPENDIX

IEP Template

Student Name:		Date of Birth:
Class:	Teacher:	
SNA:	Learning Support Teacher:	
Speech Therapist:		Occupational Therapist:
Educational Psychologist:		
Support Resources:		
Objectives:		

General Information:

In Class Strategies:

Resource Room Strategies:

In Class Differentiation:

Parent Input:

Review Date:

IEP Organiser: