



St. Ita's N.S.

Special Education Policy

Introductory Statement:

This is the Special Education Teaching Plan of St. Ita's N.S., Loughrea. At present there are 21 positions in the school, the principal, 15 mainstream class teachers, 5 full time and 1 part time Special Education Teachers (SET) and 1 EAL teacher (please refer to EAL policy). The Special Needs Assistant Allocation is 3.99 posts which is divided into 5 part time posts for the school year 2023/2024. This plan conforms to the requirements of the revised model for allocating special education teaching supports (circular 0013/2017). The revised copy of this plan will be uploaded to our school website in June 2023.

Beliefs and Principles:

St. Ita's N.S. seeks to promote the fullest possible development of every child as a whole person. To achieve this, the school provides a broad education in line with the curriculum guidelines for Primary Schools, including coherent and practical planning for the inclusion of children with special needs, and children whose first language is not English, allowing each child to reach the highest level of academic attainment consistent with his or her abilities or talents.

Rationale:

Our Special Educational Policy was devised at this time:

- To outline the school's provision of additional educational support for pupils with S.E.N.
- To review the existing policy.
- This policy is a reflection of our current practice.
- This Policy applies to all students with S.E.N., including students with exceptional ability.
- To comply with legislation and Department circulars.

The policy is informed by the relevant legislation regarding pupils with SEN. This legislation includes the following:

- Education Act (1998)
- Education Welfare Act (2000)
- Equal Status Act (2000)
- Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- Equality Act (2004)
- Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)
- GDPR (2018)
- Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

- This policy is also drafted in the context of Department of Education & Skills (DES) Circular Letters
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE) guidelines
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) guidelines.

Aims of the Policy:

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

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

Aims of Special Education Needs Support:

The principle aim of Special Education in St. Ita's is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of pupils with learning difficulties and to enable each child to realise their individual potential.

Special Education Needs Support provision also seeks to:

- Support the inclusion of children with SEN in our school
- Ensure that the Staged Approach/Continuum of support is implemented
- Enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.
- Protect and enhance the self-esteem of the learner.
- Provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success.
- Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy, language, numeracy, social skills, life skills and other relevant and appropriate skills.
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own level.
- Involve parents in the support of their children's learning.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for pupils.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of child/ren with special needs in the school.

Changes in Allocating Special Teaching Supports:

The Department of Education & Skills (DES) introduced a revised allocation model for all mainstream schools with effect from September 2017. Under the revised model, the Department provides special education teaching supports directly to schools based on their profiles (including a baseline component). A fundamental objective underpinning this revised model is that special education teaching resources are utilized in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for pupils with special education needs. **Pupils with the greatest levels of need have access to the greatest level of support**, and whenever possible, these pupils are supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.

A Three-Step Approach to Support Pupils with Special Educational Needs

A three-step process is in place to guide identification and monitoring of outcomes for pupils with special education needs. Identification of needs is supported by the administration of standardized tests annually at the end of the school year. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupils' support plans. Pupils scoring on or below 12th percentile should be prioritized for support. Students who require EAL support will be identified and prioritized in June of each year. EAL pupils joining our school during the school year will be assessed and provided with support if necessary.

Step 1 – The 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. The Continuum of Support framework recognises 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 educational needs. Pupils with the greatest level of need, particularly pupils with complex needs, will have access to the greatest levels of support. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualized support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of pupils. This approach is also supported by information and engagement with parents and with external professionals, as required.

Level 1 – Classroom Support: The first response to emerging needs:

Classroom support is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are additional to or different from those required by other pupils in their class. A classroom support plan is developed by the class teacher.

This is informed by:

- Teacher observation records
- Parental observation and consultation
- Teacher-designed checklists/assessments
- Basic needs checklist*
- Learning environment checklist*
- Pupil consultation – My Thoughts About School Checklist*
- Standardised Test results

*These checklists are included in every teacher's S.E.N Folder (provided by S.E.T) and they are also available in the Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers

A "Log of Actions" is populated with actions from the classroom support plan prior to a school support plan being devised. A classroom plan is discussed with parents and runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

Level 2 – School Support

If concern remains after the above differentiation has been implemented for a period of about 6 weeks, the SET and classroom teacher will work together to develop a support plan to meet the pupil's special education needs.

This may be informed by:

- Teacher observation records
- Parental observation and consultation

- Basic needs checklist
- Learning environment checklist
- Results of Standardised Tests
- Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy
- Observation of behaviour and frequency measures
- Pupil consultation – My Thoughts About School Checklist or pupil interview

A support plan will detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual teaching. A School Support Plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review. It is discussed with parents and if deemed acceptable parents sign the plan and receive a copy (if requested).

Level 3 – School Support Plus

If a pupil's special educational needs are severe and/or persistent, they are likely to need intensive support. 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 professionals (as appropriate). The support plan may include:

- Teacher observation and teacher designed measures
- Parent and pupil interviews
- Results of Standardised Testing such as measures of cognitive ability
- Educational Psychological Report
- Speech and Language Report
- Occupational Therapist Report
- Medical Report
- Physiotherapist Report

A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualized. It will run for an agreed period of time and is subject to review. Parents will be involved in developing the plan and if deemed acceptable will sign the plan and receive a copy (if requested).

Educational Planning:

Provision for pupils with special education needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Planning reflects the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests.

Student Support File:

A student Support File Template is available in (all) teachers Special Ed. Folders. The Student Support File enables the school to gather information – (Checklist), to plan interventions – (Support Plan) and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support – (Support Review Record). It includes an easy to view log of actions page to summarise actions taken by the school. The Student Support File 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.

Support plans set out:

- the agreed targets

- the resources required
- the strategies for implementation

The SET and classroom teacher set targets which are recorded in the plan. The SET discusses the targets with the parent, adds to or amends the targets if necessary, and the agreed upon plan is then signed by the parents and receive a copy (if requested). Following a period of intervention and review process, 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. Support plans are reviewed by the SET and classroom teacher in February and June (as deemed necessary). SET and classroom teachers collaborate regularly throughout the year to discuss progress and if concerns have changed since devising the plan.

Step 2 – Meeting the Needs:

Having identified a pupil's needs and the educational planning required to meet those needs, this second step emphasizes the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all the school community.

Board of Management:

The Board of Management will:

- ratify the SEN policy
- ensure the satisfactory classroom accommodation and teaching resources are available.
- Provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to children in receipt of SEN support.

Role of School Principal:

The Learning Support Guidelines (2000, p.39) outlines that the principal teacher has overall responsibility for the education of children with special education needs. Under the new allocation model the principal's leadership role is central and includes:

- Ensuring that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored
- Ensuring that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Assigning staff to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinating teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision of all pupils
- Communicate with SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers and SNAs in relation to education of pupils with special education needs
- Prepare and apply for supports for children with SEN – access to SNA support, Assistive Technology, specialised equipment and furniture and Irish exemptions
- Liaise with parents of children with special needs and with external personnel – psychologists, therapists, SENO, etc. and arranging and accommodating meetings when required

- Maintain links with feeder secondary schools and arrange meetings, handovers and follow up to facilitate the transition of SEN pupils.

Role of Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENC)

In conjunction with the principal the SENC

- Prepare and apply for supports for children with SEN – access to SNA support, Assistive Technology, specialised equipment and furniture and Irish exemptions
- Liaise with parents of children with special needs and with external personnel – psychologists, therapists, SENO, etc. and arranging and accommodating meetings when required
- Maintain links with feeder secondary schools and arrange meetings, handovers and follow up to facilitate the transition of SEN pupils.
- Assumes responsibility for the implementation and review of school policies on SEN
- Manage a tracking system at whole – school level to identify children with learning difficulties and high achieving children – (school provision plan)
- Co-ordinate the implementation of whole school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in line with the continuum of support practice
- Co-ordinate the case-loads and timetables of SETs
- Remain informed of current best practice within the Special Needs area

The Role of the Class Teacher

Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their class. Classroom teachers plan their lessons carefully, differentiating their lessons to address the diverse needs within the classroom. These needs may include a pupil's progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers. Teaching approaches and methodologies are adapted to facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special education needs.

The Class teacher will:

- Support the identification of learning difficulties.
- Provide Classroom support/stage 1
- Log actions in the Support Plan
- Communicate with parents/guardians
- Collaborate with the support teacher in the development of a Support Plan for each child who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support/School Support Plus level on the Continuum.

A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and cooperation between the Class Teacher and the Support Teacher. This consultation will be achieved through formal timetabling at least once per instructional term, and through informal consultation as the need arises.

The role of the Special Education Teacher (SET)

- Special education teachers provide additional teaching in literacy, language, numeracy and social skills to pupils with special education needs.
- Special education teaching may be delivered through in-classroom or withdrawal support models.

- Special education teachers are familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, early intervention and small group or individual support.
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention.
- Developing a Support Plan for each child who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class teachers and parents.
- Reviewing the progress of each child at the end of an instructional term and recording it in the child's Support Plan.
- Logging actions in the Support Plan.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc, and implementing suitable recommendations, wherever possible.
- Collaborate with class teachers to identify the priority learning needs of pupils with special education needs.
- Collaborate with class teachers, SNA's, parents, pupils and outside agencies where necessary to identify targets and develop school support plans and Student Support Files.
- Collaborate with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
- Support whole school procedures for screening.
- Provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received.
- Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special education needs may be supported at classroom level or through additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.
- Administering a range of formal and informal assessments and maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments.

Role of SNA

The role of an SNA will be to carry out duties based on the care needs of the child. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature (Circular 0030/2014).

The primary care support tasks may include:

- Administration of medicine.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds, and at recreation, assembly and dispersal times.
- Assisting children while at play as appropriate.
- Provision of non – nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a child from a classroom when essential.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for children with physical difficulties or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties.

The secondary care support tasks may include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child 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.
- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans (PPP) for children with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the child concerned and the reviews of such plans.
- Assistance with maintaining a journal and care monitoring system for children including details of attendance and care needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities.
- Attending meetings with Parents, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENO), National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.
- Assistance with enabling a child to access therapy or psycho – educational programmes such as anger management or social skill classes, under the direction of appropriate personnel.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities – walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

Parental Engagement:

The staff and management of St. Ita's N.S. recognize that good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special education needs.

Parents are consulted

- In relation to their children's needs and strengths
- On the supports and strategies being developed to support their children
- And are involved in reviews of progress

The continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provide valuable opportunities for the school personnel to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. . Copies of support plans are available to parents

Pupil Engagement:

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 needs. Engagement is enhanced when schools listen to and build on pupils' interests, aspirations and strengths when developing educational interventions. This involves including pupils in a shared assessment for learning process, setting shared learning objectives and jointly reviewing progress. The Student Support File offers a useful framework for promoting pupil engagement and participation at all stages of educational planning and review.

Engagement with External Bodies and Agencies:

Support and guidance is available to teachers from external professionals such as NEPS, Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO), the Inspectorate, Enable Ireland and Allied Health Services e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist. Collaboration with these services is vital in order to optimize the quality of provision for pupils with special education needs at the individual,

group or whole school level. We believe this is especially important for pupils with more significant and enduring needs who benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach to identification of need and the development of interventions. Relevant recommendations from health and other external professionals are recorded and incorporated in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

Early Intervention and Prevention:

- SET's meet with Early Intervention Staff and Parents in advance of pupils starting in St. Ita's
- SET is allocated to infant classes for the first two weeks in September to –
 - Provide support to classroom teacher
 - Observe pupils and identify potential areas of need.
 - Familiarize themselves with pupils with a diagnosed difficulty/ disability
 - Collaborate with class teacher and SNA's regarding visual charts, positive behaviour charts etc
- Differentiation of the curriculum by the mainstream class teacher to cater for individual strengths and needs.
- Development and implementation of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics to ensure progression and continuity from class to class, including the Aistear programme, "lift off to Literacy" in 2nd class, reading buddies
- Careful development of phonological awareness, rhyming skills and oral language skills, before formal reading of words and books.
- The use of concrete materials as appropriate.
- Provision of additional support in language development/early literacy/early mathematical skills to children who need it, this intervention can be in- class support or withdrawal.
- Support for children experiencing social/emotional difficulties and problems with concentration.
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents/guardians of incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings.

Early Intervention Strategies:

Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class Teacher and/or the Support Teacher, in accordance with the Staged Approach (NEPS Continuum). Collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the Support Teachers, should identify children who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of children for early intervention programmes at Classroom Support/School Support level.

Early intervention programmes will include:

- Implementation of an English language programme for Junior Infant and Senior Infant children who have English as an additional language, with emphasis on basic vocabulary. Intensive language programme for such children in more senior classes with emphasis on basic vocabulary and the language of Maths. This acknowledges the literacy skills already acquired in mother tongue (refer to E.A.L policy)
- Reading buddies
- Active learning programme for all Junior Infant children with specific emphasis on oral language development, underpinned by the principles of the Aistear programme and the new Language Curriculum.

- Early intervention literacy and language support programme (Guided Reading using A - Z Readers) in 2nd classes.
- Withdrawal of children to a support teaching room, in-class support, team teaching, group work and individual support will be provided, as appropriate and if it is in a child's best interest.

When identifying and selecting children for additional teaching support; children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of supports.

Selection Criteria:

The following criteria will be used by our school to select children for supplementary teaching in line with the new model of Special Education Teaching (Circular 13/2107). If and when children are supported on a withdrawal basis no group will exceed 4 children (those 4 children must be of similar ability/percentiles with compatible targets). The SET will be allocated according to the needs of the children rather than a class (refer to selection criteria below).

- 1) Children previously in receipt of "Resource hours" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties and children diagnosed as having Low Incidence Learning Disabilities since 2017.
- 2) Children experiencing serious difficulties with social, emotional or behavioural development or 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.
- 3) Children scoring at or below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Maths.
- 4) Children scoring at or below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Maths (to allow for a margin of error).
- 5) Children diagnosed as having High Incidence Learning Disabilities.
- 6) Children on and under the 13th Percentile in the Drumcondra Spelling Test will be withdrawn for short and targeted interventions.
- 7) Further intervention in literacy and/or Maths – Infant and 1st class children 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.
- 8) Children scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy and/or Maths and 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.
- 9) Transition to Post-Primary School.
- 10) Exceptionally Able/Gifted Children. 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. Support from Centre for Talented Youth Ireland (CTYI) is accessed as appropriate

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching:

- At the end of each instructional block/term the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the child's class teacher and where appropriate, the child's parents/guardians. A decision will be made following this consultation.
- A decision will be made regarding their continued level of support and revised targets will be set in their Support Plan.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when targets have been met and when SET and class teachers feel they can manage in class without the support of the SET, this child's progress will be monitored carefully
- The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support; however, if both the class teacher and support teacher feel such a child needs scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group.

Target-Setting:

We believe that setting SMART targets is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with special education needs. Targets are expressed in a way that is measurable and observable, and reflect the Specific special educational needs of individual pupils. SETs endeavour to set targets which are realistic, building on prior knowledge and achievable within a specified Time frame.

Best practice indicates that **targets** should be:

- Few in number
- Strengths based
- Informed by priority learning needs
- Directly linked to suitable interventions
- Based on evidence collected through formal and informal assessment approaches
- Developed collaboratively- teachers consult with parents when setting targets and reviewing progress. The views of pupils are included in the process through discussion of their strengths, interests and progress.

Step 3 – Monitoring and Recording Outcomes for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Monitoring outcomes is part of a dynamic process of identification, target-setting, intervention and review, which in turn leads to adjustments in support plans. The Student Support File provides teachers with a useful resource to support and record this process. It includes a Support Review Record to guide teachers when monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes with parents and pupils. We believe that such monitoring of progress and subsequent adaptation of support plans are key components of effective practice. Support plans are reviewed by the SET and classroom teacher at the end of each instructional period. SET and classroom teachers collaborate regularly throughout the year to discuss progress and if concerns have changed since devising the plan.

Allocating Special Education Teaching Resources to Effectively Meet Needs:

Special education teachers are deployed to address the needs of pupils with special education needs.

An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. This gives schools greater autonomy and flexibility in how they allocate special education resources. Those with the highest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support. Schools may deploy special education teachers in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs e.g., in-class support, group or individual withdrawal. We recognize the need to maintain time for co-ordinating, planning and reviewing plans and programmes to ensure effective and optimal use of supports.

We acknowledge the fact that flexibility in terms of resource allocation is required to allow for emerging needs during the school year. New pupils with educational needs may enrol in our school during the year. After an initial settling in period additional teaching for such pupils will be addressed. Review points for the caseload of SET is as follows end of September, Christmas and Easter and June. (in preparation for coming year).

Record-Keeping and Storage of Records:

- The Student Support Files of each child are stored in their folder, in a locked cabinet, with the lead SET assigned to that pupil that year and are transferred to each subsequent special education teacher.
- Copies of the Classroom Support Plans are kept by the class teacher, in a locked press.
- The Student Support Files will be uploaded on to Aladdin and they will be updated and amended as necessary by the relevant staff.
- Psychological reports and other reports that are active are kept in the individual student's file, in a locked cabinet, in room number 20. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.
- Diagnostic assessments and other checklists administered by the Support Teacher will be put in the child's folder in the SET room.
- Results of completed Standardised Tests will be kept in room 13. Results of standardised Tests of children in classes 2nd – 6th will be reported to parents/guardians on the end of year reports. Results of standardised Tests of children in 1st class will not be reported on the end of year reports as these tests are screening tests.
- End of year school reports will be issued to parents/guardians in June.
- Monthly reports from the Support Teacher will be sent to the principal.
- Personal Pupil Plans for children with SNA access will also be kept in the child's folder in the classroom.

Transitions:

Good planning and support for transition helps to ensure the successful transfer of pupils with special education needs from primary school to post-primary. Links are already established with St. Raphael's College and St. Brigid's College. Visits by pupils with special education needs, the 6th class teacher and SET to these schools and other secondary schools may be arranged to help ease anxiety associated with transfer to secondary school. To support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools St. Ita's utilizes:

- 6th Class Educational Passport
- My Profile sheet (optional for children)
- My Child's Profile sheet (optional for parents)
- Post primary transfer review

Continuing Professional Development (C.P.D.):

St. Ita's has established and intends to maintain skilled special education support teams to guide provision. Since all teachers have responsibility for teaching pupils with special education needs, all staff members are encouraged to engage in appropriate CPD to develop the capacity of our school to meet the educational needs of all pupils.

Admission Policy for Pupils with SEN/Enrolment of Pupils with SEN:

The Department of Education acknowledges the very significant progress made by schools in developing inclusive practices and provision whereby the vast majority of pupils with special education needs now attend mainstream schools. It also recognizes that a small minority of pupils with significant and enduring needs may require a more specific setting (for example, special class or special school placement). St. Ita's aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to enrol at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that "*A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs*". No child will be refused admission to St. Ita's solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

The Admission Policy for pupils with SEN is as follows:

- The BOM through the principal has the right to request a copy of the child's medical/psychological report or where such a report is not available to request that the child be assessed immediately.
- The purpose of this assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the education and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability and special needs and to profile the support services required.
- Following receipt of the report the principal will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report.
- Where the principal advises the BOM that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment request the Department of Education & Skills (DES) to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include for example access to or the provision of any of a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, SNA, specialized equipment or furniture, transport services or other. It will be necessary for the BOM to identify health and safety issues arising from the enrolment of a special needs child, for example, access, toilets, supervision and administering of medication.
- The school will meet with the parents or if necessary, a full-case conference involving all parties should be held.
- It may be necessary for the BOM to decide to defer enrolment of a particular child pending the provision of appropriate resources.
- SEN children will be fully integrated unless it is inconsistent with the best interests of the child with effective educational provision for other children.

Communication

Communication with Class Teachers

- SET will be in regular informal liaison with class teacher.

- SET and class teacher will formally develop support plans by October, review progress and develop new plans in February and review progress in June.

Liaising with Parents/Communicating Information:

- Class teacher meets with parents/guardians initially to discuss concerns and outline supports available in the school.
- Learning Support teacher and Class Teacher meet with parents to agree a School Support Plan for the child.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in February.
- An information meeting is held for the parents of Junior Infants in September.
- An end-of-year report goes home in June each year. Opportunities to discuss this report are made available before the end of term.
- If a parent or teacher has any concerns an appointment can be made to discuss said concerns

Communication with the BOM:

- The BOM will be kept informed of the SEN provision on a regular basis by the principal.

Whole-School Collaboration:

- SEN issues will appear on the agenda of staff meetings and post holder meetings when necessary.

Communication with Outside Agencies:

- Regular liaison with outside agencies will be maintained by the principal, SEN Co-ordinator and SET.

Communication with Principal:

- The principal will be in regular contact with all SET and will be updated regularly by the SEN Co-ordinator on all relevant matters.

Attendance:

An attendance record of children who are withdrawn to the SEN rooms will be kept by each teacher.

Exemptions from Irish:

The School Management of St. Ita's N.S. is required to observe the prescribed protocols and procedures in relation to granting pupils exemptions from the study of Irish. These protocols and procedures are set out in DES Circular 0052/2019

Communication and Review

This revised policy will be implemented from September 2022 following ratification by our Board of Management. It will be necessary to review the policy on a regular basis to ensure optimum provision of Special Education teaching. Review of the policy will be due in June 2024.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 16/06/2022

Amended and Ratified by the B.O.M. on the 28/06/2023.

Signed: Monsignor Cathal Geraghty
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 28/06/2023

Appendix:

List of additional documents used in SEN planning:

- Permission to allow access to reports
- Basic Needs Checklist
- Learning Environment Checklist
- Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support
- Student Support File for St Ita's (Continuum of Support document)
- Permission for child to attend Support Teaching/Parents' Consent Form
- Permission for teacher to administer screening/diagnostic tests
- Personal Support Plan

School Testing

- MIST test Senior Infants – Senior Infants in May.
- Drumcondra Standardised reading test for 1st – 6th in May.
- Drumcondra Standardised Maths test for 1st – 6th in May.
- Drumcondra Spelling Test for 1st – 6th in May
- NNRIT
- Teacher Observation

Tests for use in SEN setting

- Benchmarking – to establish entry level to A – Z readers
- Running record for any reader
- Jackson Phonics Test
- Dolch List
- Towre Test
- WIAT 111