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AUGHACASLA NATIONAL SCHOOL

Whole School Policy for SEN Provision

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Introductory Statement

Our SEN policy was coordinated by the learning support team, in consultation with the staff. The policy was drawn up in accordance with the Circular No 0013/2017 and the Guidelines for Primary schools document 2017.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.
- outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.
- comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000)
- fulfil DES circular 0013/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools).

Belief Statement

Our school is dedicated to the implementation of an effective system for meeting the needs of all our pupils in accordance with our mission statement, the resources provided by the DES and the Board of Management.

We believe that all our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their individual needs. We strive to ensure that all our children feel that they are a valued part of our school community. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion. This policy aims to enable children with Special Education Needs (SEN) to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

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 and parents/guardians

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN. They also ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources are provided.

Principal:

The *Learning Support Guidelines (2000, P.39)* outlined the principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the principal's leadership role is central and includes the following;

The school principal should

- implement and monitor the school's Additional Needs policy on an on-going basis.
- assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education (SET) roles
- co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET

Class Teacher:

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of **all** pupils in his/her class, including those selected for additional support. They should

- implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- create a positive learning environment within the classroom
- differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class
- discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SEN to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- open a Pupil Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support
- collaborate with staff to develop Support Plan for each pupil in receipt of School Support
- meet and collaborate with Special Education Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an Individual Support Plan
- regularly meet with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff to review Support Plan.
- where applicable, collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching
- adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session
- 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 (SET)

The SET teacher should:

- familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs
- assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention

- collaboratively develop Support Plans for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff
- meet with class Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an Individual Support Plans
- regularly meet with class teachers, relevant staff to review Support Plans
- update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- support whole-school procedures for screening
- administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at staff meetings
- communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- liaise with the NEPS psychologist and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- collaborate with principal and class teachers in creating timetables for additional support
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy
- co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted
- maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support

Parents/Guardians:

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

Parent/Guardian should:

- 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
- support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team
- support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities
- inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage

Pupils:

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

- be given the opportunity to contribute to the planning of the medium and short-term learning targets
- become familiar with the targets that have been set for them
- develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning

- contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment

Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs

Continuum of Support

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, 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.

Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

STAGE 1 CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

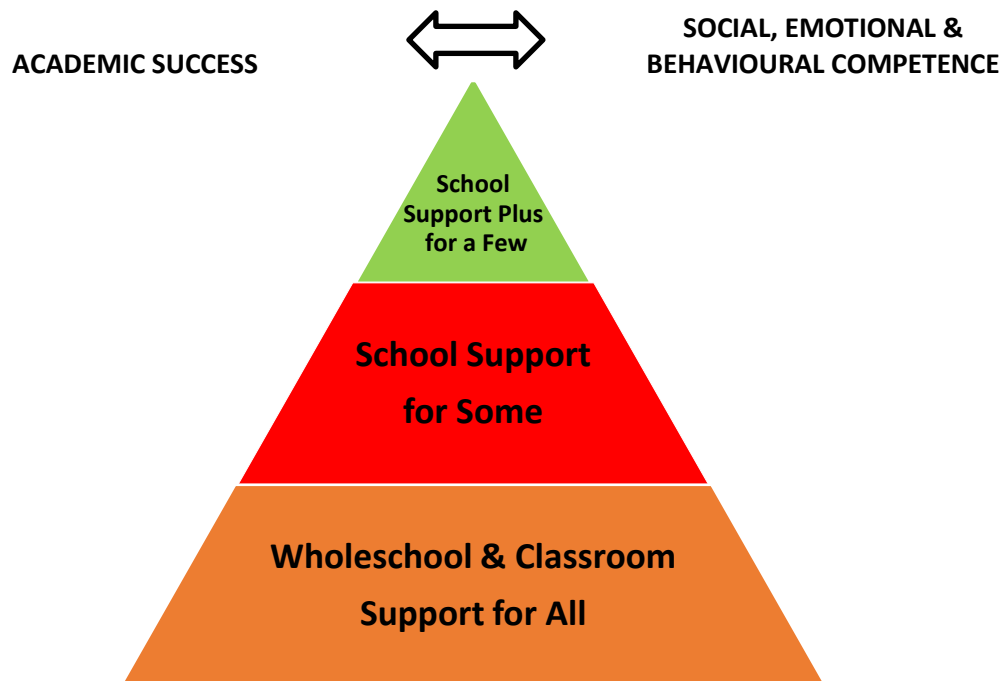
STAGE 2 SCHOOL SUPPORT

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

STAGE 3 SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her Individual Support Plan.

The flow diagrams below outline how we gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs. A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be found in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers



Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening; including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupil's Support Plans.

Assessment and Screening Tests:

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- Junior Infants: Observation, Checklists
- Senior Infants: Observation, Checklists, MIST
- 1st class: Observation, Checklists, Drumcondra English, Sigma T
- 2nd class: Observation, Checklists Drumcondra English, Sigma T
- 3rd class: Observation, Checklists, Drumcondra English, Sigma T
- 4th class Observation, Checklists, Drumcondra English, Sigma T
- 5th class: Observation, Checklists, Drumcondra English, Sigma T
- 6th class: Observation, Checklists, Drumcondra English, Sigma T

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date.

Inventory of Test Materials

Screening Tests

- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Micra-T
- Sigma-T
- Drumcondra English
- Non- Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)

Diagnostic Tests

In our school the following tests are available for administration:

- Jackson Phonics Test
- Aston Index
- Neale Analysis Reading Attainment (NARA)
- Single Word Reading Test

Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in language development and any relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- 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 SET team.
- Promotion of literacy e.g. Print-rich environment, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), Buddy Reading System, ICT and literacy
- Promotion of Numeracy e.g. Print-rich environment, ICT and numeracy
- Parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy e.g. Maths for Fun, Homework Policy Guidelines for Parents.
- Differentiation - adapting the learning environment.
- In-class support from the SET team.
- Team Teaching and Aistear.
- Withdrawing individuals and groups.

Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

Once pupils needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, team-

teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

Twice yearly the SET Team and class teachers review children's needs, the resources in place and progress. The SET Team then use this information to allocate resources for the subsequent term.

We cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

Timetabling

When drawing up timetables it is important to remember that:

- timetables should be continually reviewed
- children should not miss the same subject each time they are withdrawn with the exemption of subject exemptions
- if a pupil is unavailable for their supplementary session due to special circumstances, the Special Education Teacher will attempt to reschedule the session with the co-operation of another teacher.
- interruptions to classes/classrooms should be kept to a minimum.

Tracking, recording and reviewing progress

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process.

Student Support File

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File is based on the NEPS template and is kept in the SEN Team's filing cabinet. All support files should include:

- Cover sheet with pupil's details
- A timeline of actions
- Record of support received
- Standardised/ Diagnostic test scores
- Support plans (See below)
- Checklists

A class teacher should open a Student Support File once a child is placed on Stage 1 – Classroom Support on the continuum. This is stored in the class teacher's filing cabinet and the SEN Team's filing cabinet. At the end of the year, a copy of the information gathered is moved to the child's assessment folder and passed on to the next class teacher.

If, after a number of reviews, the child's case is moved to School Support it is the responsibility of the class teacher and SET to update the information in the Student Support File. The same system is in place for children on School Support Plus.

Support Plans

We use three different support plans for the three stages of support on the Continuum of Support.

Stage 1 – Classroom Support

A Support Plan at stage 1 is a **Classroom Support Plan**.(CSP) This is a simple plan which is drawn up by the Class Teacher in collaboration with the SET Team which outlines the pupil's additional educational needs and the actions, including targets, individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil's needs. The plan may also include home-based actions to be taken by the pupil's parents to support their child's development. The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date.

Stage 2 – School Support

A Support Plan at stage 2 is a **Group or Individual Support Plan**. This plan is drawn up by the SET Team in collaboration with the class teacher. It will set out the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should, for the most part, be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by focused school based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis. Home-based actions may also be included. After the plan has been drawn up, it should become a working document through the careful monitoring of the pupil's response to the actions taken.

Stage 3 – School Support Plus

A Support Plan at stage 3 is an **Individual Support Plan**. This plan is drawn up by the SET Team in collaboration with the class teacher and in consultation with the child's parents/guardians, professionals external to the school and (if appropriate) the child based on the information gathered. It will set out;

- The nature and degree of the pupil's abilities, skills and talents
- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her educational development
- The present level of educational performance of the pupil
- The special educational needs of the pupil
- The special education and related support services provided. Also including:
 - ▪ Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion in the classroom setting
 - ▪ Individual and/or small group/special class interventions/programmes
 - ▪ Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented
 - ▪ Specific equipment/materials and/or IT supports, if required to support learning and access to the curriculum
 - ▪ Support required from a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if appropriate
 - ▪ The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months
 - ▪ The pupil's priority learning needs, long and short term targets to be achieved, the monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place

Support Plan meetings are coordinated by the SET Team.

SEPTEMBER

Discuss caseload and formulate timetables.

SET Team and Class Teacher gather further information by completing formal and informal assessments

Support Plan targets are formulated by child's SEN Team. Support Plan targets and strategies are put into action

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Support Plan is reviewed and amended if necessary

MAY/JUNE

End of year gathering of information by completing formal and informal assessments to inform progress and Review

JUNE

Final Support Plan Meeting, consultation between SET Team and Class Teacher and parents, if necessary, regarding progress and the next academic year.

SEN Records

Support Plan Files

All pupils' SEN files are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SET Team's. It is the responsibility of the SETs to update and manage the files of the children on school support and school support plus. It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to update and manage the files of children on classroom support. The following should be stored

- Student Support File
- Psychological Report
- Copy of referrals made to outside agencies
- Copy of reports from outside agencies
- Record of SEN meetings with parents, outside agencies and inter- school meetings
- Record of SEN correspondence between parents, outside agencies and school staff

Whole Class SEN Files

Whole class files are stored in a locked filing cabinet in each class room. It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to manage and update these. These should include:

- Whole class test results (Drumcondra Reading/MICRA – T, SIGMA – T)
- children in receipt of any interventions, classroom support plans and record sheets

Communication between SET Team/Principal/Class Teachers

Consultation between SET team, principal and class teachers is regular and constant throughout the school year. Special Education is reviewed monthly and discussed in staff meetings as a whole staff. Meetings are scheduled throughout the school year as issues arise.

Health and Safety Issues

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

Supervision/Child Protection

- Where pupils receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both themselves and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SET teacher should collect and return children to their classrooms.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in Aughacasla National School on _____.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented from 2018. It will be reviewed in June 2020 by the Special Education Team and all staff at Aughacasla National School, pending a proposed review of the New SEN Allocation Model by the Department of Education and Science in 2019.

Signed: _____

Date: _____