



Special Educational Needs 2020-2021



Introduction

Scoil an Chlochair is a co-educational mainstream primary school catering for children from mixed social and cultural backgrounds. The Board of Management, parents and staff of Scoil an Chlochair are committed to the creation of an inclusive, supportive learning environment for all pupils.

We believe where practical, children should be educated in their own community with their siblings and peers. Inclusive education relates to “the process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from the curricula, cultures and communities of local mainstream educational institutions” (Booth and Ainscow 1998). Inclusion means the school accommodates to the needs of the child and enables all students to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream settings.

Special educational needs are defined as:

‘a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition’ (*Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004*)

Rationale

During our SEN meeting in September 2020, we agreed to review our support services in light of new changes in special needs education of learning support. This review will be implemented during the 2020/2021 academic year. All teachers are involved in implementing the new proposed policy.



The purpose of this policy is

- To cater for the enrolment of pupils with special education needs in a mainstream setting.
- To provide practical guidance for teachers and parents on the provision of effective additional support to pupils with special educational needs as well as pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties.
- To comply with legislation and recent department circulars.
- To review existing policy and to streamline the provision of supplementary support in the school.

Aims:

- To enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/learning in relation to pupils with special education needs.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of children with special needs in the school.
- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all partners in the education of pupils with special educational needs.

Objectives:

- To enable these pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level.



- To develop self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for these pupils in English and Mathematics.
- To involve parents in supporting their children's learning through efficient parent-support programmes.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for these pupils.
- To establish early intervention programmes and other programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

We place particular emphasis on

- Early detection and intervention
- In class support
- Communication between principal, class teacher, support teacher, parents and pupils.

Enrolment

In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs, the Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical or psychological report or where such a report is not available, may request that the child be assessed. All relevant reports and test results pertaining to the child in question should be provided. The purpose of these results and reports is to assist the school in establishing the educational and learning needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support service required.



Children with special educational needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Science to the Board of Management. These resources may include access to or provision of any or a combination of the following: a special education teacher, a special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other.

The school will meet with the parents/guardians of the child to discuss the child's needs. Where necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held, which may include parents/guardians, principal, class teacher, resource teacher or psychologist, as appropriate.

Provision for children with emerging special educational needs. (The Staged Approach)

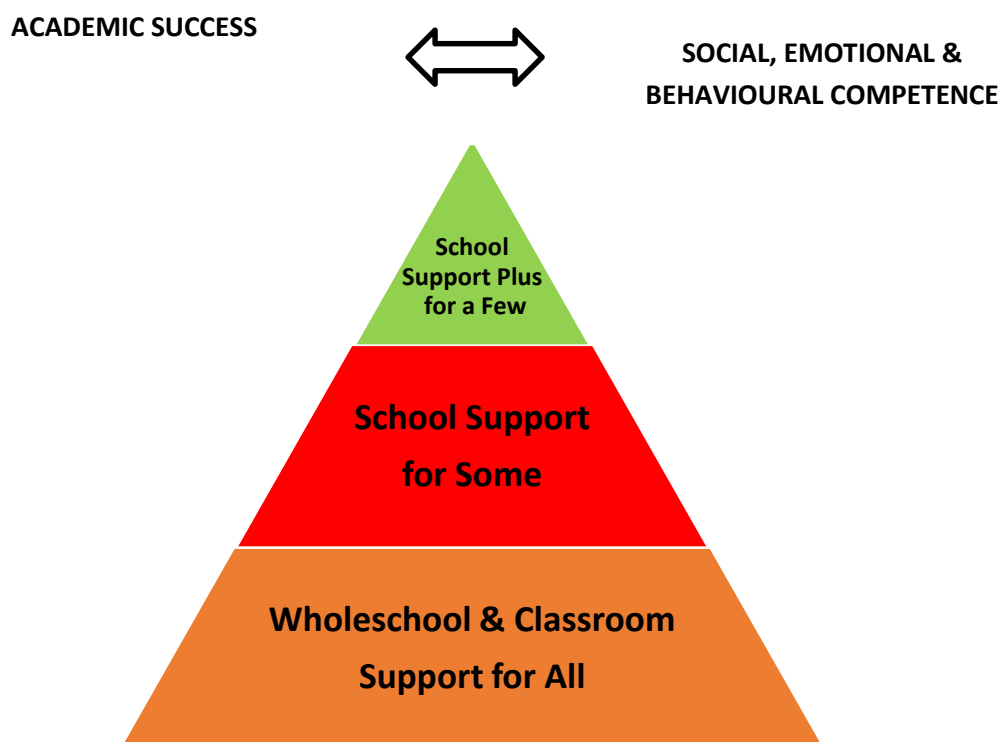
The following categories of pupils will receive supplementary teaching from the Special Education Team under the guidance of the Continuum of Support Framework. Using this model Scoil an Chlochair will identify pupils' needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. It is important to look at a pupils' needs in context and use our resources to support this. Pupils with the greatest level of support will have access to the greatest level of support.

Early detection of possible learning difficulties is crucial and the formal monitoring of the impact of learning support and instructional modifications informs the next stage of assessment of needs and further interventions. Assessment is not an event but a process, grounded in the child's response to appropriate teaching and learning support. The student's parents, class teacher and special education needs teacher are the main players and their effective collaboration is the key to successful interventions.



The approach outlined in 'Guideline for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Education Needs in Mainstream School' involves a phased process of assessment and intervention (Figure 1 & Table 1)

A Continuum of Support (Figure 1)



Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.



Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
Classroom Support	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records ☒ • Teacher-designed measures /assessments ☒ • Basic needs checklist * • Learning environment checklist* • Pupil consultation – • My Thoughts About School Checklist ☒ • Literacy and numeracy tests ☒ • Screening tests of language skills <p>A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
School Support	<p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures / assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures <p>Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties</p> <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition.</p> <p>A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
School Support Plus	<p>This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc.



Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.

Prevention Strategies and Parental Involvement

Effective Whole-School Approaches/Prevention Strategies:

- A print-rich school environment.
- Use of real books in classrooms.
- Consistent language in Maths throughout all classes
- Consistent approach to learning Spellings.
- Language games in Junior & Senior Infants.
- Paired Reading programme for 1st and 2nd classes (8 year programme in 2nd term)
- A whole-school approach to handwriting with the introduction to cursive handwriting from 2nd class to 6th.
- Maths games for 5th & 6th classes.
- Shared Reading programmes for parents and children throughout the school – reading logs or similar record of books read to be maintained.
- Annual book fair.
- Use of library facilities is encouraged within school and outside of school.
- Games that promote literacy and numeracy are used within the school.
- Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading/Drop Everything and Read
- Use of the newspaper in the classroom (especially special children's supplements in the senior classes)
- Use of various teaching strategies in the classroom.
- Books on CD/taped version of some reading texts.



- Use of ICT to support literacy and numeracy.
- Use of programmes e.g Weaving Wellbeing, Cool Kids for social skills development.

Early intervention is a vital component of the learning-support provision in this school, caseload permitting. Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class teacher and/or by the SET in accordance with the Staged Approach outlined in Circular 02/05 pp21-22. Close collaboration and consultation between the class teachers and the SET will identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration and respect in the selection of pupils for early intervention programmes.

Inclusion: A whole-school approach

The whole-school approach involves valuing and welcoming diversity and striving to eradicate barriers to learning and participation for all. It is about creating a supportive learning community.

- In-class support will be promoted and implemented where it can effectively address the needs of the pupils.
- In as much as possible, children will be withdrawn in small groups rather than one-to-one teaching.

Deployment of Staff

The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Education Needs:



SET: Brenda Watts, Carmel Campbell (on leave), Katie McDonnell (on leave), Rebecca Hannevig (EAL). Substitutes: Gillian Heeney and David Wallace.

Mainstream SNAs: Mona Kelly, Irene Hanlon, Debbie Coughlan

The duties of the SNA involving tasks of a ***non-teaching nature*** such as:

- Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
- Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing and writing.
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- Record keeping by SNA completed daily

Collaboration and Communication

Teamwork, mutual support and trust all come into play in this collaborative process. The training, experience and expertise of teachers are taken into account when deciding which pupil(s) to assign to which teacher.



- The school year will be divided into 2 instructional terms of approximately 16 weeks each.
- Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency.
- A system of **withdrawal and/or in-class support** will operate in response to the needs of the pupils.
- The SET decides the **size of groups**, taking into account the individual needs of pupils and the overall caseload.
- The Class Teacher and the Special Education Team meet to devise **School Support Plans (SSP)** or **School Support Plan Plus (SSPP)** in consultation with the teacher, Principal and parents. The pupils may also be involved in setting their own short-term targets.

The Special Education Team meet at various times during the year in order to;

- Plan collaboratively for in-class support.
- Discuss strategies and interventions.
- Contact and meet with others involved in the child's education e.g. parents, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, SENO, psychologist etc.



Drafting and implementing education plans: SSP, SSPP

The *Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004* places a strong emphasis on 'education plans'. The SSP and SSPP is a system which formulises the evaluation and monitoring of the individual student's progress. The SSP and SSPP provides a framework for looking at the whole child and his or her needs and addressing these effectively in an inclusive context.

The SSP and SSPP will be in accordance with the criteria as advised in the "Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools".

The SSP and SSPP must include the student's present level of performance in reading, writing, spelling etc. and give a detailed account of the severity and impact of the individual's learning difficulties, including the emotional and motivational effects. It could spell out the unique educational needs that arise as a result of the student's disability. It should also spell out the student's strengths and talents. Next, it should specify exactly what the school would do to address the child's needs.

Targets must be objective and measurable to ensure that we can track and monitor the efficacy and appropriateness of interventions and supports. They should also be age-appropriate and functional for the child's age and level of ability.

The curriculum materials used must be age-appropriate even if the skill being taught is a skill you would expect the child to acquire at a younger age.

A detailed review will take place at the end of each instructional term. Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation; the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback. The support teacher and /or class teacher may meet parents to discuss the child's progress in light of the review.



Time-tabling

- The provision of learning support/special needs teaching is in addition to regular teaching.
- The school will endeavour to ensure that pupils do not miss classes they particularly enjoy such as Art, P.E. or Computers.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

According to the Learning Support Guidelines (2000), in general children should not stay for more than two years in supplementary teaching unless they are still at or below the 10th percentile.

Following the end of instructional term, review as detailed above, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching.

The criteria on which this decision is made include:

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

A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a review of the pupil's SSP/SSPP. The decision-making process will involve consultation between the class teacher, learning support teacher and parents. Account will also be taken of the overall learning support demands in the school.



Provision of Resources

Resources include a variety of textbooks, library books, oral language development materials, games, computer software and ancillary materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, reading attainment, phonological awareness and maths attainment tests.

Our diagnostic tests include;

- Quest
- MIST – middle infant screening test
- Jackson Get Reading Right – Phonic test
- NRIT – non reading intelligence test
- Dolch Sight Vocabulary 220 words
- 100 most frequently used words in reading
- 100 most frequently used words in spelling
- Checklist for Comprehension Questions (ppds website)
- Checklist for Assessment of Phonological Awareness (ppds website)
- York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension
- Malt – Mathematics Assessment for Learning and Teaching

In general, the Special Education Team is responsible for storing, maintaining, sourcing and acquiring additional resources. Recommendations by all staff members and outside bodies will be taken into account. Class teachers and support teachers can both access and share these resources.



Transfer to post-primary school or to another primary school

The transition from primary to post-primary can be a stressful event for all students and their parents, and this can be compounded when the child has special educational needs. To minimise potential difficulties that may accompany the move to post-primary, transition planning will at the very least begin in 5th class or early in sixth class.

The following procedures can minimise the student's anxiety and ease their difficulties around the transition period:

{Some of these targets can be outlined on a student's SSP or SSPP}

- Teach the students how to read school timetables and get samples from post-primary schools – this can be done within whole class maths lessons.
- Give the class different due dates for certain pieces of homework in order to prepare them for a more complex timetable.
- Consider colour coding copies and books. For example, place a red sticker on the edges of the Maths book and Maths copy, blue on English, etc. This strategy can facilitate organisational skills.
- Teach key words for specific subjects such as Home Economics, Metalwork (Materials and Technology), Business studies etc. This can be done within the oral language strand of the English curriculum.
- Integrate transition activities into the SPHE programme. For example, teach students about post-primary school, dealing with change, etc.
- Attend open evenings in the post-primary school. This is a good opportunity to take photographs of rooms, etc. These can be used to familiarise the student with the school prior to entry.



- Identify key personnel in the post-primary school and explain their roles to the student: e.g. class tutor, year head, chaplain, guidance counsellor, etc.
- Model and practice recording homework in a journal at the end of lessons as opposed to the end of the school day.
- Encourage parents to inform the post-primary school as soon as possible in relation to their child's SEN, as resource hours and assistive technology may need to be reapplied for by the receiving school.
- Be prepared for the post-primary school to make enquiries once the student has enrolled.
- Every year the special education team will meet with the relevant post-primary school personnel to discuss the pupils' needs.
- Organise a process consultation with the school psychologist and parents regarding the transition process.

Record Keeping

The Special Education Team will maintain the following documentation in individualised files and stored securely. The principal and relevant class teachers will be involved in the planning process and will be kept updated on test results/progress etc.

1. School Support Plans or School Support Plans Plus.
2. Planning and programme record.
3. Review of progress.
4. Test papers and results.
5. Samples of written work.
6. Reading analysis records.
7. Reports from outside agencies.



Bearing in mind the child's entitlement to confidentiality, the class teacher, SEN teacher, SENO, psychologist, inspector, parents, special needs assistant, health workers, etc will have access to these records on a need to know basis. These records will be retained until the child in question is twenty-one years of age. *(Under Section 28 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, it is a requirement of the Board of Management that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress be communicated between schools).*



Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of our policy will be supported as follows:

Principal:

- To co-ordinate Learning Support and Special Needs services.

Special Education Team

- Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.
- Development of SSPs and SSPPs for pupils who are selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with other partners in education.
- Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress.
- Setting specific time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal.
- Maintaining short term plans for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of supplementary support.
- Regular meetings with parents to discuss pupil's progress.
- Providing teaching in English and/or Mathematics to pupils who experience low achievement.
- Contributing to the development of policy at the whole school level.
- Liaising with class teacher on individual pupil's need and progress.
- Meeting with relevant professionals in the child's interests e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists and visiting teachers.
- Maintaining and reviewing pupil records.
- Liaising with principal, teachers and parents.



Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the pupil's learning needs within his/her class. Their responsibilities include:

- Making parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress
- Completing Classroom Support Plans (CSP) in consultation with parents.
- Outlining the school's practice with regard to diagnostic testing and follow up procedures.
- Where possible attending meeting between learning support teacher and pupil's parents.
- Consult and co-operate with SEN Teachers on pupil's individual plan.
- Be alert to the possibility that some children may have a specific learning difficulty and bring it to the attention of the learning support teacher.
- Modify class programmes to suit the needs of pupils.
- Where there is a classroom assistant outline their duties clearly for the instructional term.

Parent

- Support for and participation in their child's learning.

Pupil

It is important for the students to have an input into the development, implementation and review of their own learning. By doing so they can:

- become more independent as learners.
- become aware of different learning styles.



- become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs.
- enjoy success and evaluate their progress.
- excel at and enjoy many curricular and extra curricular activities which would not be practical in the mainstream class due to class size.
- develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught during supplementary teaching and apply these strategies and skills in their mainstream class situation.

Board of Management

Oversee implementation and review of the learning support policy and the provision of adequate resources, accommodation and storage.

Implementation and Review

The implementation of this policy will commence after ratification. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.