

Gaelscoil Raifteirí

Polasaí Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais



School Context:

Gaelscoil Raifteirí is situated in Castlebar town. It is an all-Irish Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of Archbishop Frances Duffy, Archdiocese of Tuam. There are 13 teachers in the school including the principal, 9 mainstream class teachers, three special education teachers and three Special Needs Assistants (2 fulltime postes and 1 post of 0:83).

Gaelscoil Raifteirí's Special Educational Needs Teaching Allocation is 70.00 hours (September 2017/18) with 5 hours shared with St. Aidans N.S., Kiltimagh.

Mission Statement:

Gaelscoil Raifteirí is a co-educational all Irish Primary School and operates under the regulations and programmes of the Department of Education and Science.

As a Gaelscoil we aim to instil in our pupils, a respect for our unique national culture by providing opportunities for them to experience as many aspects as possible of their heritage.

As a Catholic school, we continue to live, practise and proclaim Christian values, while acknowledging and respecting other cultures, religions and ethnic groupings.

Great emphasis is placed on developing the children's full academic potential in order to prepare them for further education and life-long learning. This is achieved by combining traditional and innovative teaching and learning methods in a broad curriculum delivered alongside an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

We also strive to nurture the spiritual, moral, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical development of all children.

An atmosphere of respect for all people and care for our world is fostered, enabling the children to develop a sense of individual responsibility.

We promote team spirit and co-operation between all partners in education: teachers, pupils, parents, school management, ancillary staff and the wider community.

Introduction

This policy was formulated in consultation with the Board of Management, SE Team, Teaching Staff and Special Needs Assistant of Gaelscoil Raifteirí. The implementation of the original SEN policy commenced in February 2004. It was reviewed in September 2013, December 2020 and May 2023 and was ratified by the Board of Management (BOM).

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

The focus of the policy is on the process the teachers may use to identify and cater for the special educational needs of individual pupils in proportion to the impact of those needs on their learning and socialisation. Our SEN provision is guided by the Continuum of Support Framework devised by NEPS (DES, 2010).

Rationale

- This policy document aims to outline the school's provision of additional support for pupils with S.E.N.
- It outlines the philosophy that underpins this provision.
- The policy is written in the context of the various pieces of legislation listed below.
- The policy is a working document and will be reviewed every three years.
- The policy is a reflection of our current practice

Legal Framework

Gaelscoil Raifteiri sets out to provide education for all its pupils, with reference to legislation regarding pupils with S.E.N. as listed below:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- The Equality Act (2004)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

- DES Circular Letters
- The guidelines published by the NCSE
- The guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The Guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Primary Schools (NEPS)
- The guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service (SESS)

Child Protection/Supervision

- Where pupils receive support on a one-one-basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both they and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door/window.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SEN teacher should collect and return pupils to their classrooms.
- Where a pupil has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the pupil from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher (for further details see Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment)

Aims:

The principal aim of Special Education Needs Support in Gaelscoil Raifteirí is to meet the individual needs of all pupils in an inclusive way, in so far as is possible, irrespective of whether they have physical, sensory, emotional, behavioural, specific or general learning needs. Special Education Needs Support provision also seeks to:

- To support the inclusion of SEN pupils in primary school.
- To ensure that the Staged Approach/ NEPS Continuum of Support is implemented (Circular 02/05).
- Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in English and/or Mathematics.
- To optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school (LSG p.15). This support may be provided by the Class Teacher or SET.
- To enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum.
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- To encourage differentiation in the classroom.
- Involve parents in the support of their child's education, and also involve the pupil in the collaboration and planning process (where appropriate).
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for pupils.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils experiencing educational and behavioural difficulties.
- To establish an early intervention programme designed to enhance learning and to reduce difficulties in learning.
- To seek the help of outside agencies where appropriate.

Admission of Pupils with SEN

The Department of Education acknowledges the significant progress made by schools in developing inclusive practices and the provision of learning support for pupils with special educational needs attending mainstream schools. It also recognises that a small minority of pupils with significant and enduring needs may require a more specialist setting (for example, special class or special school placement).

Gaelscoil Raifteirí aims to meet the needs of any pupil whom the parent wishes to register 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 Gaelscoil Raifteirí solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

Elements of the Admission Policy that relate to pupils with SEN are as follows:

The BOM, through the Principal, reserves the right to request a copy of the child's Medical/ Psychological/ Psychiatric/OT/SLT/Physiotherapy/Behaviour Support Plans/School Support Plans/School Reports etc. 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 reports the BOM will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the reports.

Roles and Responsibilities

Effective learning support requires a high level of collaboration and consultation involving the Board of Management, Principal, SEN Team, Class Teachers, Parents and relevant professionals. The roles and responsibilities of each of these are detailed below.

Board of Management

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

Role of the Principal

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

- Developing inclusive whole-school policies and monitoring their implementation
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN and special needs on an ongoing basis
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching ensuring that this service is focused on pupils with very low achievement.
- Assigning staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education and classroom assistant roles.
- Coordinating teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.
- Organise for the provision of SEN funding, assessment tests and resources.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals / agencies
- Ensuring that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored regularly
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs and ensure that all school staff (classteachers, SET's and SNA's are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.

Role of Special Education Team

In conjunction with the Principal and the Deputy Principal the Special Education Teachers in Gaelscoil Raifteiri will:

- Assume responsibility for the implementation and review of school policies on SEN
- Manage a tracking system at whole-school level to identify and monitor the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and of high achieving pupils.
- Consult with the class teacher to profile the needs of a pupil in receipt of support on the continuum. (Appendix 1)
- Produce weekly/fortnightly plans for each pupil or group s/he is withdrawing. This weekly plan will be informed by the content in the SSF.
- Maintain the safe storage of psychological reports re: pupils with special needs.
- Coordinate the caseloads and timetables of SET, class teachers and SNAs.
- Coordinate the implementation of whole school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in line with school policies and the continuum of support practice.
- Carry out comprehensive diagnostic and screening assessments of pupils identified as experiencing learning difficulties.
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
- Prepare and apply for supports for pupils with SEN – access to SNA support, Assistive Technology, specialised equipment and furniture.
- Complete NCSE forms and applications such as School Care Needs Profile, School Leavers and Confirmation forms, school transport and SNA portal applications and appeals when required.
- Complete Transfer to Post-Primary Student Profiles for SEN pupils when transitioning to Post-Primary school. (Appendix 10).
- Liaise with parents of children with special needs and with external personnel – psychologists, therapists, SENO etc. and arranging and accommodating meetings when required.
- Maintain established links with feeder secondary schools and arrange meetings, handovers and follow up to facilitate the transition of SEN pupils.
- Continue to coordinate and extend the use of Aladdin to allow shared access to class support records, student support plans and collaborative progress reviews
- Promote professional development opportunities in relation to SEN within the Special Education Team, with class teachers and SNAs.
- Remain informed of current best practice within the Special Needs area.

Role of Class Teacher

The class teacher has overall responsibility for the progress of each pupil in his/her class, including those with special educational needs (*Guidelines for Primary Schools - Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools p.12*). The class teacher will:

- Create a positive learning environment within the classroom.
- Differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles of the pupils in their class
- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible to be aware of the emergence of learning difficulties.
- Discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SEN Coordinator to assist in the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Inform the principal and SEN Coordinator if she/he has concerns re a pupil's educational progress.
- Gather information and assess pupils presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support.
- Open and develop a SSF for pupils in need of Classroom Support once additional needs have been identified and review this regularly.
- Collaborate with SEN team to develop a SSF and Learning Programme for each pupil in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus as required.
- Meet with the Special Education Teacher, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of support at each stage of the continuum.
- Coordinate the work of any Special Needs Assistants assigned to pupils in their class on a daily basis.
- Work with Special Needs Assistants to develop a pupil care plan (PCP) for pupils with SNA access and upload this to Aladdin (Appendix 8).
- Update Aladdin to record all communication with parents in re: pupils with SEN, in their class.
- Collaborate with the SET team, where applicable, regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching.
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session or essential SPHE lessons.
- 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.

Role of Special Needs Assistant:

The duties of the SNA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Science and under the direction of the principal/class teachers, the SNA will meet the care needs of

the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned (Circular 0030/2014). The purpose of the SNA scheme is to provide for the significant additional care needs which some pupils with special educational needs may have. Primary Care Needs (Circular 30/2014) may include:

- Assistance with feeding: Where a pupil with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.
- Administration of medicine in emergency situations in agreement with parents and subject to the child's Health Care Plan; Where a pupil requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene: Where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation: On an ongoing basis including assisting a pupil or pupils to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport, or to help a pupil to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards).
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds: At recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision.
- Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: Such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a pupil may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of pupils, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc...

The indicative list of Secondary Care associated tasks (Circular 30/2014) which SNAs will often perform, listed below is not definitive and is reflective of the tasks detailed in Circulars 08/02 and 71/2011. The associated support tasks which may be carried out include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a pupil who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.
- Assistance with the development of Pupil Care Plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.

- Assist Teachers and / or Principal in maintaining a journal and care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with Class Teachers and other Teachers such as the SET and School Principal, attending meetings with Parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.
- Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including Class Teachers or support teachers.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.
- Attend, where possible, training courses/workshops recommended by the BOM
- Ensure the safety of the SEN pupils in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty

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. The school operates an open-door school policy. Teachers consult with parents of any child experiencing on-going difficulties regularly. Parents are welcome to make an appointment to meet with teachers at a suitable time.

Parents/Guardians are asked to:

- Share any information and reports pending/to hand from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development (Appendix 5).
- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges that they observe in their child's learning.
- Attend planning meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team in relation to their child.
- If, following diagnostic assessment, their child has been identified as requiring supplementary teaching, the Parents should attend a meeting with the Support Teacher to:
 - Discuss the results of the assessment.
 - Discuss the learning targets in the child's Support Plan
 - Explore how the attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
 - Provide written consent for their child to be withdrawn for supplementary teaching (Appendices 3&4).

- Where a child is in receipt of supplementary teaching from the Support Teacher the Parents should:
 - Discuss their child's progress with the Support Teacher at the end of each instructional term, and, in cases where supplementary teaching is to be continued, discuss the revised learning targets and activities in their child's Support Plan.
 - At the discontinuation of supplementary teaching, discuss with their child's teachers how the child's future learning needs can continue to be met at school and at home.

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 outcomes. The role of the pupil with SEN in Gaelscoil Raifteirí will be that of active participant in their own learning; the extent and nature of this will depend on their strengths and needs (Appendix 6).

Role of External Bodies and Agencies

Our school liaises with external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive) Túsla and the Inspectorate in order to optimise the quality of provision for pupils with SEN at the individual, group or whole-school level. 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.

We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and education services. We therefore liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and facilitate meetings between parents and various support services. We endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

Whole School Planning and Intervention

The whole-school approach involves collaboration and consultation with parents, pupils SNAs, Class teachers, SETs and Principal to improve pupil learning, behaviour and well-being. It encompasses a process of reflection, planning and review of policies and practices, and includes an evaluation of how pupils with special educational needs are identified by the school, the interventions that are put in place to meet their needs and how the outcomes of those interventions are measured and monitored.

The whole-school approach in Gaelscoil Raifteirí addresses the full continuum of needs - ranging from milder and more transient needs to difficulties that are severe and enduring (for example, significant learning, sensory, physical, communication, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties).

Behaviour Management

In exceptional circumstances where a child with special educational needs has been identified as posing a Health and Safety risk to themselves or others a Crisis Management Plan will be put in place. For children who exhibit challenging behaviour an ABC form is used to track the nature, frequency and duration of the behaviour. A Behaviour Support Plan is then drawn up using this information. These are specific to the needs of the individual child (Appendix 9).

Early Intervention and Prevention Programmes

When implementing the revised allocation model to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs, Gaelscoil Raifteiri has adopted a whole school approach to programme planning and the implementation of early intervention and prevention programmes. The whole-school approach involves collaboration and consultation with parents, pupils SNAs, Class teachers, SETs and Principal to improve pupil learning, behaviour and well-being. The following strategies are in place.

- A print-rich school environment
- Use of real books in classrooms
- Consistent language in Math throughout all classes
- Consistent approach to learning spellings
- Shared Reading programmes for parents and children throughout the school
- Buddy Reading programme between junior and senior classes
- 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 time
- Use of varied teaching strategies in the classroom
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness programme
- Sound Linkage by Peter Hatcher in use in the Infant classroom
- Use of ICT to support Literacy and Numeracy e.g. Wordshark, Lexia, Maxlex, IXL, Readtheory, Reading Eggs, Type to learn.
- Use of IWB and iPads
- TTRS for pupils with AEN from 3rd to 6th class
- Zippy's Friends
- Weaving Wellbeing
- Friends for Life
- The Friendship Formula
- The Incredible Years Programme

Identifying difficulties and providing support as early as possible underpins much of our work as a special educational team. Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class Teacher and/or the Support Teacher, in accordance with the Staged Approach (NEPS Continuum).

- The pupil will receive additional in-class support from either the class teacher or SET.
- Secondly, the content of lessons may be differentiated and a specific area may be revisited to give the pupil extra consolidation.
- The pupil's parents/guardians are given resources and activities to practice at home to help
- When pupils progress into the next class level, teachers will inform their colleagues of pupils who required extra support so that close monitoring can continue.
- The SEN Team will track these pupils closely and note their performance on the Middle Infant *Screening Test (MIST)*, Test 2R, and the *Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy (DTEN)* administered in Senior Infants.

The following early intervention strategies are in place:

In-Class Literacy Infant Support

A special education teacher provides in-class literacy support for Junior and Senior Infant Classes. It involves the special education teacher working with pupils with an ongoing or specific concern as observed by the class teacher. Work is based on the development of early phonics and literacy skills to complement work covered by the class teacher. Parental consent is not sought as pupils are not being withdrawn. We follow the Sound Linkage and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Programmes to develop phonological (sound) awareness. Newell Literacy and Primary Phonics are also used.

Reading Recovery

This programme provides the screening for and implementation of the Reading Recovery Programme for pupils in Senior Infants and First class. It aims to identify the lowest achieving pupils and involves daily withdrawal. It involves liaising with both the class teachers and the member of the SEN team providing in class to senior infants to help identify candidates. Pupils are selected and are taken for a period of approximately 20 weeks.

Literacy Lift-Off

Following the success of Reading Recovery, the Lift off to Literacy programme was devised so that more children in Senior Infants will benefit from Reading Recovery strategies. The children are grouped according to their reading ability so that they are working at an appropriate level with other children of similar ability. Each group takes turns to participate in the following stations:

1. New Book
2. Phonics/Word Study
3. Writing
4. Familiar Reading
5. Independent Reading

The teacher adapts the activities of each station to the ability of the group. Each station lasts 10 minutes and then the children move on to the next station.

Station Teaching in Mathematics

Station teaching in Mathematics is organised in six week blocks from first to sixth class, with pupils rotating around pre-planned practical math activities and games revising and reinforcing key math concepts. Pupils work on tasks that are linked and differentiated to refine a skill or extend a concept. Problem solving is developed to increase thinking skills in children.

Ready Set Go Maths

The Ready Set Go Maths programme is implemented in Junior and Senior Infants. The programme focuses on small group teaching, with the aid of concrete materials and games-based activities to provide individualised differentiation at class level for pupils who are experiencing difficulty. It also facilitates the extension of learning outcomes for all pupils.

TSI

Team Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) is an approach to literacy teaching and learning that is implemented in the third term from 3rd to 6th class for a six-week period. This intervention supports pupils to independently apply comprehension strategies and develop skills such as; working in groups, developing vocabulary and giving effective feedback in a collaborative and inclusive way.

Team Teaching and In-class Support

Giving consideration to the profile of individual classes, members of the special education team may work alongside mainstream teachers to provide support to pupils in literacy, numeracy or other areas of concern. In-class support will be considered in relation to individual class circumstances and withdrawal for supplementary teaching will be dependent on individual pupil profiles and their progression on the Continuum of Support.

Identifying and Selecting Pupils for Supplementary Teaching (2017 Guidelines)

Step 1. Identification of educational needs is central to the new model. Using the Continuum of Support framework, schools can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. **Step 2.** Meeting Needs. Having identified a pupil's needs and the educational planning required to meet those needs, this second step emphasises the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies. The benefits of early-intervention and prevention programmes are highlighted. Also good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with SEN.

Step 3. Monitor and record Progress- Monitoring outcomes is part of a dynamic process of identification, target-setting, intervention and review, which in turn should lead to adjustments in support plans. In addition to monitoring outcomes at the individual level, it is also important to review outcomes at group, class and whole-school level. This review could include measures of attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social inclusion and well-being for pupils with SEN.

The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning

The Staged Approach to assessment is outlined by the *National Educational Psychological Service NEPS/Appendices 2 and 7* and in the Circular for Special Education 02/05 (DES). It can be broken

Stage 2: School Support

- If interventions at Classroom Support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs, School Support will be required. The SET will become involved, with the parent's permission, for further diagnostic testing.
- A process of gathering information and developing and monitoring a SSF will begin.
- Supplementary teaching will be offered. A pupil receiving mostly group support or occasional individual support in addition to classroom support is considered to be at stage 2.
- The SET and the class teacher will review regularly, in consultation with the parents, the rate of progress of each pupil receiving supplementary teaching.
- If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews and adaptations to the learning programme then it may be necessary to provide interventions at stage 3.
- In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be required. In these cases, the pupil's difficulties should, with the parent's consent, be discussed with the relevant NEPS psychologist and NCSE advisor. If appropriate the case should be referred to the services of the Health Service Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment (Stage 3).

Stage 1: Classroom Support

A class teacher may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. The teacher will:

- Administer screening measures, which may include screening checklists for pupils in Infants and 1st Class, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older pupils and behavioural checklists where appropriate. They may seek advice or guidance from the SET.
- Gather information and assess pupils presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support.
- Open and develop a SSF for pupils in need of Classroom Support once additional needs have been identified and review this regularly.

If concerns remain after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the S.E.N. team in the school may be consulted re: intervention at stage 2 and for advice on testing that may be useful.

Stage 3: School Support Plus

- If the pupil's special educational needs are severe or persistent they will require extra support. This stage is for pupils with complex and/or enduring needs, whose progress is considered inadequate despite interventions at the previous levels.
- School Support Plus involves personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. Such specialist advice may be sought from N.E.P.S., psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc.
- The information from Classroom Support and School Support will provide the starting point for the problem solving and will be an important element of the Student Support File (SSF)/Individual Education Plan (IEP), which will include identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme.
- The parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This programme should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revision of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary.

In exceptional circumstances the school may be required to by-pass this process where a pupil presents with unexpected, immediate or severe needs and where a formal referral or assessment to allocate appropriate support is not forthcoming in a timely manner. In such cases, the staff may operate with autonomy and discretion under the leadership of the principal to provide appropriate support to that pupil until such time as a formal assessment can take place, e.g. where the pupil's needs pose a health and safety risk to him/herself or to other pupils.

Implementation of the Revised Allocation Model

In September 2017, following the recommendation of the NCSE, a revised model for allocating special education teaching supports was introduced by the Department of Education and Science for all mainstream schools. The following principles are used by Gaelscoil Raifteirí to guide the implementation of the revised model for allocating special education teaching supports. They form a whole-school approach to provision for pupils with special educational needs in our school.

Principles to guide the Implementation Process

- Resources provided to support pupils with SEN are used to facilitate inclusion.
- Supports provided to pupils with SEN are based on identified needs and are informed by regular reviews of progress, in consultation with parents and pupils.
- The class teacher has primary responsibility all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with SEN.
- Special education teaching supports provided to schools are used solely for the support of pupils with identified SEN, including those pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL) and supports are not used to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Neither are the supports used to allow any SET sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class.
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need have access to the greatest level of support.
- The school establishes and maintains a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with SEN. All members have access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs.

When timetabling, priority will be given to the pupils with the greatest level of need, starting from group one and working down subject to capacity:

Priority to be followed:		
Group 1	<p><u>Pupils in the following categories of special educational needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical Disability ▪ Hearing impairment ▪ Visual impairment ▪ Emotional disturbance ▪ Severe emotional disturbance ▪ Moderate general learning disability ▪ Severe/profound learning disability ▪ Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders ▪ Assessed Syndrome ▪ Specific Speech and Language Disorder ▪ Multiple Disabilities ▪ 	<p>They have been formally allocated Resource Teaching Hours and/or SNA provision for the current school year by the NCSE's SENO following a clinical or educational psychological assessment, i.e. pupils with Low Incidence Disabilities.</p>
Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Below 10th Percentile in Reading ▪ Below 10th Percentile in Mathematics 	
Group 3	<p><u>Educational Needs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Borderline Mild General Learning Disability ▪ Mild General Learning Disability ▪ Specific Learning Disability 	<p>Eligible for Stage 2 support</p>
Group 4	<p><u>Early Intervention Strategies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils selected for Reading Recovery Programme ▪ In-class Junior infant literacy support ▪ In-class Senior infant literacy support ▪ Literacy Lift-Off for Senior Infants ▪ In-class support for both literacy and Maths programmes in junior classes* ▪ Ready Set Go Math Programme for Infants ▪ Station-teaching for a block of six weeks in First to Sixth classes. 	<p>*Suitability for in-class support may vary depending on range of needs in the class and in particular if a teacher has a high number of pupils deemed as being at Stage 1. Possible withdrawal may be required alongside in class approaches to support individual pupils.</p>
Group 5	<p>New Pupils enrolled from 1st class – Support with Gaeilge for Term 1</p>	<p>An assessment will be made at the end of T.1 with a view to level of support required in .2</p>

Group 6	Pupils falling between the 10th and 20th Percentiles in reading or mathematics.	
Group 7	Pupils with learning difficulties, including pupils with mild speech and language difficulties, pupils with mild social/emotional diffs and pupils with mild co-ordination or attention control difficulties associated with identified conditions such as dyspraxia, ADD, ADHD	Pupils about whom teachers have concerns but whom have no formal reports.
Group 8	Pupils falling below the 25th Percentile in reading or mathematics.	
Group 9	Pupils falling below the 30th Percentiles in reading or mathematics.	
Group 10	Pupils who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage One	Depending on capacity
Group 11	Exceptionally able pupils NRIT 130 or above	Depending on capacity

Exceptionally Able

The *New Non Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)* is administered in 2nd and 5th class and will be used as a guideline when selecting exceptionally able pupils. Pupils with a score of 130 or above may be selected for supplementary teaching, depending on capacity.

Learning Programme Review

The progress of each pupil will be monitored on an on-going basis throughout the instructional term. A more in-depth review will be conducted at the end of the term of instruction (i.e. after 13 – 20 weeks). This may involve:

- An assessment of the pupil's progress and an evaluation of the learning programme.
- Consultation between the special education teacher, class teacher and possibly parents
- A decision with regard to the level of support now required by the pupils.
- Updating the SSF's (completion of the Support Review Record will be completed by the SET for each pupil in June).

The Special Education Teachers timetable will be drawn up in September and reviewed regularly during the school and in June. Where possible, pupils who will require supplementary teaching will be identified in June for the following September to prevent any delay in starting. If timetables are to be amended in any way during the course of the school year, the Deputy Principal/SENCO will be consulted.

Exemption from Irish

Gaelscoil Raifteirí when appropriate, will take account of the literacy and language learning needs of individual pupils who are challenged by communicating through the medium of Irish. To support inclusive practices, the expectation of fluency in oral and written Irish for pupils with specific literacy and language learning needs will be differentiated. These pupils will be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and cultural activities in line with their ability and interests.

Continuation/Discontinuation of Pupils in receipt of Supplementary Teaching

Continuation of Supplementary Teaching

If, following the programme review at the end of an instructional term, a decision is taken to continue the provision of supplementary teaching to an individual pupil, it will be necessary for the SET and the class teacher to consult parents with regard to the level of support now required by the child

Discontinuation of Supplementary Teaching

If, following the programme review at the end of an instructional term, a decision is taken to discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching for an individual pupil, the pupil will continue to be monitored in the mainstream class. This decision will be communicated to parents by phone.

Record Keeping

A full record of psychological reports, other reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual student's file in a central, secure location (in a locked press or cabinet) in the school. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Mainstream Testing Schedule

Administration

All whole class tests from 2nd to 6th are administered by class teacher. Whole class tests in Senior Infants and 1st Class are generally administered by class teacher supported by the SEN team. MIST and NRIT and October retests are administered by SEN team.

School Testing

The following tests are available in the school for use by class teachers at Stage One and by SET's at all stages. This is not an exhaustive list of assessments. Others may be used from time to time to assess the needs of individual pupils.

Phonics Testing – Junior and Senior Infants

Jolly Phonics and Jackson Phonics assessments that provide teachers with an easy and quick method of assessing children's decoding and comprehension knowledge.

The Drumcondra Primary Reading Test

The Drumcondra Primary Reading Test is a standardised reading test developed specifically for group administration in Irish primary schools. The tests are divided into six Levels, each with parallel forms, and are designed for pupils at the end of First class through to the end of Sixth class.

New Drumcondra Maths Test

The DPMT-R is a set of standardised mathematics achievement tests developed specifically for group administration in Irish primary schools. The tests are divided into six Levels, most with parallel forms, and are designed for pupils at the end of First class through to the end of Sixth class.

New Drumcondra Gaeilge Test

The TGD-R is a set of standardised tests of achievement in Irish, developed specifically for group administration in English-medium primary schools – schools in which Irish is taught as a subject, and is not the main language of instruction.

NNRIT

The NRIT tests assess aspects of language and thinking that are not necessarily represented in measures of pupil attainments, and help to pinpoint low-achieving and slow-reading pupils whomay have high underlying ability. This is conducted in 2nd and 5th classes.

Additional Educational Needs Tests in use- (as required)

QUEST II

This is a literacy screening and diagnostic kit. Suitable for children age 7-8

NARA/DRA/YARC

These assessments test oral reading, based on a series of short narratives, providing summative measures and detailed diagnostic information.

PM Benchmarking

The PM Benchmark Reading Assessment Resource has been designed to assess students' instructional and independent reading levels using unseen, meaningful texts. This is used as a means of assessing which level the pupil will start on in the Literacy Lift-Off programme

Aston Index

Aston Index is comprised of a series of tests for the screening and diagnosis of language difficulties. The Aston Index can be used to indicate the particular learning pattern of the child and identify specific types of learning patterns. Age suitability: 5 to 14 years

MIST

The *Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)* focuses on reading, writing and listening skills and provides a comprehensive screening and diagnostic package for younger children. *MIST* is group administered in the fifth term of Infants by the SET screening for pupils needing extra support.

MALT

MaLT is an approach to mathematics assessment for pupils aged 5–14. It is a nationally standardised test and can be used at any time during the school year – for screening, monitoring and tracking progress, as well as for individual diagnostic profiling.

BIAP

The BIAP is a screening instrument designed to assist teachers in identifying the particular strengths and needs of pupils in the Infant classes. It lays the foundation for a continuing process of structured observation, diagnostic remediation and recording of a pupil's learning development as he/she progresses through primary school. The BIAP is suitable for administration to pupils aged 4 to 7 years old.

WRAT

The widely respected WRAT-4 accurately measures the basic academic skills of word reading, sentence comprehension, spelling, and maths computation. This quick, simple, psychometrically sound assessment of a student's important fundamental academic skills serves as an excellent initial evaluation, re-evaluation, or progress measure for any student.

WIAT

The WIAT-III is a comprehensive diagnostic test designed to assess Single Word Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Speed, Reading Rate, Reading Comprehension and Single Word Spelling of pupils aged 6-16 yrs

Drumcondra Early Literacy Test

Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy Screening test. Suitable for pupils in 1st to 6th classes.

The DTEL is a screening and a diagnostic test suitable for use with pupils at the end of Senior Infants and the beginning of First Class who are experiencing some difficulty in learning to read.

Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test

The DTEN is a screening and a diagnostic test suitable for use with pupils at the end of Senior Infants and the beginning of First Class who are experiencing some difficulty in acquiring basic numeracy concepts.

Maths Tracker

This is a numeracy screening test. Suitable for pupils from 1st – 6th class.

Test 2R

This test comprises both an initial screening test for 5 and 6 years and a follow-up diagnostic test for individual pupils who may be at risk of developing literacy difficulties.

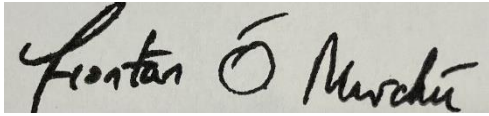
Two Peas in a Pod Phonological Awareness Test

This diagnostic assessment is used with emerging readers experiencing difficulty with literacy. The assessment is designed to assess 16 different phonological awareness skills from most foundational (easiest) to the least foundational (more difficult) covering skills in Infants and First class curriculum.

Schedule of Mainstream Tesing		
Class Level	Test Name	Month
Naíonáin Bheaga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Designed Tests - phonics • Teacher Designed Tests – early number 	November May
Naíonáin Mhóra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) • Teacher Designed Tests - phonics • Teacher Designed Tests – early numeracy 	Termly January-February May
Rang 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marino Word Reading Test • Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (standardised) Level 1 • Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (standardised) Level 1 	Sept May May
Rang 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRIT Level 2 • Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (standardised) Level 2 • Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (standardised) Level 2 • Drumcondra Irish Test (caighdeánach) Leibhéal 2 	May May May
Rang 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (standardised) Level 3 • Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (standardised) Level 3 • Drumcondra Irish Test (caighdeánach) Leibhéal 3 	May May May
Rang 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (standardised) Level 4 • Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (standardised) Level 4 • Drumcondra Irish Test (caighdeánach) Leibhéal 3 	May May May
Rang 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NNRIT Level 3 • Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (standardised) Level 5 • Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (standardised) Level 5 • Drumcondra Irish Test (caighdeánach) Leibhéal 4 	May May May May
Rang 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (standardised) Level 6 • Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (standardised) Level 6 • Drumcondra Irish Test (caighdeánach) L • Leibhéal 4 	May May May

This policy was ratified on 8.12.2020 and reviewed at a BoM meeting on 19.5.2023

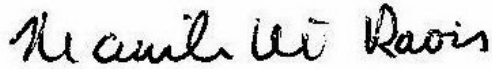
Siniú:



Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bhainistíochta

Dáta: 19.5.2023

Siniú:



Príomhoide

Dáta: 19.5.2023

FAQ's to accompany SEN Policy

1. What is SEN?

SEN means special educational needs. Under the new model of allocation, the term special educational needs is broad and includes pupils who have difficulty attaining literacy and/or numeracy skills, pupils with fine or gross motor skills in so far as they impact on the pupil's progress and pupils who have diagnosed disabilities. The new model of allocation for SEN teaching provides for appropriate teaching for these pupils using what is called a staged approach.

2. What do you mean by a staged approach?

We take a step-by-step approach to understanding and supporting pupils who are presenting with a special educational need. There are three main stages and they are outlined in the policy document under the heading Continuum of Support. The Continuum of Support is developed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and is used in all primary schools.

3. What is a Student Support File?

A Student Support File enables the school to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. The Student Support File facilitates a graduated response across the different levels of the Continuum: Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus. For pupils with significant, enduring and complex needs, collaboration with external professionals, including multi-disciplinary teams, will be engaged to work with the child (for example, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and psychologist).

4. Who decides which teacher works with my child?

It is the Principal's responsibility to allocate teachers to classes. The Principal is mindful of the needs of our pupils and the particular strengths and interests of our teachers.

5. Who has access to my child's reports?

Professional reports are often provided to the Principal to assist us in planning appropriately for your child. The reports are confidential and are only shared with teachers of your child.

6. What is Aladdin? Is it secure?

Aladdin is our Information Management System. It is cloud based and secure. It is GDPR compliant (data protection regulations). Teachers only have access to records for pupils in their current class.

7. What is an SNA?

An SNA is a Special Needs Assistant who is employed to assist with the care needs of a specific child or children while in the care of the school. The allocation of SNAs is governed by DES Circular 30/2014.

8. What is a Pupil Care Plan?

A Pupil Care Plan outlines a pupil's special care needs and shows how the SNA will be deployed to assist the pupil. The plan is developed with the parents and teachers of a pupil, and refers to the pupil's support plan (based on the Continuum of Support).

9. Can my child have support from an SNA?

If your child has a disability and has care needs, please talk to the Principal or Deputy Principal to discuss an application for SNA access.

10. What is NEPS?

NEPS is the National Educational Psychological Service and is a service of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and aims to support the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education. It has particular regard for children with special educational needs.

11. What is NCSE?

The National Council for Special Education. It was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special education needs. The NCSE is responsible for the allocation of teaching supports and SNAs to support children with special education needs. This is organised locally through Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs).

12. What is HSE and why is it involved in schools?

The HSE is the Health Service Executive and part of its duties concern the care and welfare of children. The HSE provides services to children through its Early Intervention Teams, its School Age Teams, its Speech & Language and Occupational Therapy services etc. The HSE also offers vision and hearing screening to pupils in our school.

13. What is a screening measure or test?

Screening tests are easy to administer, contain relatively few items, and can be completed in a relatively brief time, sometimes only a few minutes per child. They can be paper and pencil tests, rating scales, checklists or observations of skills/abilities. They are used to alert the school to a possible problem and can be followed up with more in-depth assessment.

14. What is a diagnostic test?

A diagnostic test or assessment can provide a profile of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses and can help the teachers develop appropriate teaching plans for the pupil. These plans form part of the Pupil Support Plan.

15. What is a STEN score?

Basically a STEN score means a score out of ten. It is used as a marker to compare children's results on a standardised test with other children who took the same test. About 68% of children score between 4 and 7 as this is the average range.

16. What is a percentile score on a test?

A percentile score compares a child's test score with other children who took the same test. For example, a child who scores the 60th percentile has done better on the test than children who score 59th percentile or below on the same test. Standardised tests give teachers norms to compare scores with so that we know how children score compared to other children in Ireland taking the same test.