

# **Scoil Mhuire Clifden**



## **Polasaí RS SEN Policy**

**Revised 2021**

# Special Educational Needs Policy

**Scoil Mhuire NS**

**Roll: 19973V**

## **Introduction**

Scoil Mhuire is a mixed rural DEIS Primary School which caters for a full cross section of children. It has an enrolment of 226 pupils and 8 class teachers. The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective SEN support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.

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

- ❑ 3.4 Special Education Teachers
- ❑ 6.25 Special Needs Assistants.

## **Rationale:**

The purpose of this policy is to define the practices to be used in the school in order to provide effective learning resources for pupils with special educational needs.

## **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo):**

Special Educational Needs will be coordinated by the principal and by SENCo post holder, Attracta McEvaddy

## **Aims:**

- ❑ To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to pupils with special needs.
- ❑ To outline our whole school approach to teaching/learning in relation to pupils with special needs.
- ❑ To enable pupils with disabilities to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as is possible.
- ❑ To facilitate communication structures between all parties involved, in the area of special needs.

## **Specific Objectives**

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- ❑ Include all children in Scoil Mhuire who have a special educational need.
- ❑ Optimise the teaching and learning process so as to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.
- ❑ Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level.
- ❑ Deliver early intervention initiatives from Infants to Second class.
- ❑ Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.
- ❑ Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability.
- ❑ Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- ❑ Promote collaboration among teachers.

### **Enrolment:**

- ❑ General issues regarding enrolment are covered in the school enrolment policy – please refer
- ❑ Parents of children with special needs are requested to meet with the principal or SENCo prior to enrolment and prior to acceptance by the school of the child.
- ❑ To enable Scoil Mhuire to provide the best services for the pupil, and to access any additional support/s that may be available, we require parents to supply the school with copies of the most recent professional assessments and reports prior to enrolment. These will be treated in the utmost confidence at all times.
- ❑ Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available, on an ongoing basis.
- ❑ Further clarification may be sought by the principal or SENCo from NCSE, SENO, DES, the Health Executive and other relevant bodies.

### **Guiding principles**

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- ❑ Effective whole-school policies
- ❑ Whole school involvement
- ❑ Prevention of failure at Infant level
- ❑ Provision of intensive early intervention up to and including second class
- ❑ Direction of resources towards pupils with greatest need

### **Prevention Strategies**

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible, the following strategies are being implemented:

- ❑ Early Intervention in Infant classes through the introduction of initiatives such as **Aistear, Ready-Set-Go Maths** and **Team Teaching** which focuses on the development of **Expressive and Receptive Language, Phonics and Fine Motor Skills**.
- ❑ Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the provision of the tips for parents in the enrolment booklet, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings as well as ongoing collaboration with Parents' Association.
- ❑ Implementation of use of PM readers from Junior Infants to Rang 2. (Children to read at their level)
- ❑ Accelerated Reader programme: Middle and Senior Class pupils read at their level. They are levelled by STAR reading and use Accelerated reader throughout the year.
- ❑ Introduction of **Literacy Lift-Off Programme** in Senior Infants.
- ❑ Class based intervention by SEN Teachers resulting in the provision of additional in-class, individualised or group support.
- ❑ Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher.

### **Identification of Pupils for SEN Support**

- ❑ Pupils who were previously in receipt of SE support and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
- ❑ Children who have been assessed by external agencies which include Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and are deemed to have a difficulty that requires SEN support.
- ❑ Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social and emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties.
- ❑ Pupils with specific learning needs.

- ❑ Pupils with significant learning, behaviour, emotional, physical and sensory needs require additional teaching support because they require highly individualised and differentiated programmes that are tailored to their needs.
- ❑ The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils from Senior Infants to Second Class who are experiencing difficulties with Literacy or Numeracy are given priority in the allocation of SEN Support.
- ❑ Children whose first language is not English and who are therefore experiencing difficulties in accessing the curriculum.
- ❑ All pupils are screened annually using standardised tests which include Infant related tests BIAP and MIST, and Drumcondra Reading Tests, Drumcondra Spelling Tests and Drumcondra Maths from First to Sixth Classes. Priority for Literacy and Numeracy Support is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> Percentile in a standardised English or Maths Test.

**In the allocation of places for Literacy and Numeracy Support the following are prioritised:**

1. Pupils entering Senior Infants who have been identified by their Junior Infant Class Teacher, through teacher observation, SEN Teacher observation or teacher based screening tests, as having difficulties in Literacy or Numeracy. These observations are backed up by simple Literacy and Numeracy Tests carried out by SEN Teachers on all pupils entering Senior Infants in September.
2. Pupils entering First Class who have already been in receipt of SEN support for Numeracy or Literacy or those who have been identified by their Senior Infant Class Teacher, through teacher observation, SEN Teacher observation or teacher based screening tests, as having difficulties in Literacy or Numeracy.
3. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in Literacy
4. Children from Rang 3 and Rang 4 at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in Literacy
5. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in Numeracy
6. Children from Rang 3 and Rang 4, at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in Numeracy
7. Children from Rang 5 and Rang 6, at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in Literacy
8. Children from Rang 5 and Rang 6, at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in Numeracy
9. In certain circumstances, children above the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile may avail of SEN support.

**Prior to a pupil attending SEN Support the following recommendations are carried out:**

- ❑ Parental permission is requested for referral to SEN support.
- ❑ Parents/Guardians are informed of referral to SEN support by the class teacher.
- ❑ Consent forms are given to parents/guardians to be signed and are then kept in pupil's file in the school office.
- ❑ If parental permission is denied parents/guardians must sign a statement indicating that they were made aware of their child's difficulties and they chose not to avail of additional support.
- ❑ Diagnostic testing is carried out by an SEN teacher. Diagnostic Tests may include: Jackson Phonic Tests, Miscue analysis/running record, Neale analysis of reading ability, Schonell Reading and Spelling Tests, Dolch Lists for Sight Vocabulary, Primary School Assessment Kit, Movement Ability Profiles (MAP-Smart Moves), Mathematic Assessment for Learning and Teaching (MALT), Drumcondra Early Numeracy, Tried and Tested Assessments, A-Z Benchmarking, PM Benching Kit, Informal testing of print awareness with left-right coordination, visual discrimination and oral language. Also included can be a sample of unaided writing, informal testing in Maths to include the conservation of number, problem solving, computation, Mathematical concepts and procedures.
- ❑ The SEN teacher discusses the outcome of the diagnostic assessment with the class teacher and with the child's parents/guardians either in September or at the parent-teacher meeting in early November.

### **Referral to out of School Agencies:**

- Pupils are referred for further assessments according to department guidelines/staged approach- DES Circular SP ED 02/05 ( Stage 1 – *Whole Class Stage; Parents, class teacher, child.* Stage 2 – *School Support Stage: Parents, class teacher, child, SEN teacher.* Stage 3 - *Consultation/Assessment Stage: Parents, class teacher, child, educational psychologist, other professionals*)
- The SENCo coordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist, Speech Therapist, OT.
- The Principal and/or SENCo and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent.
- The Class Teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the parents and the appropriate school personnel.
- The completed referral forms are forwarded to the external agency by the SENCo.
- The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, class teacher, principal and SENCo/SEN teacher as appropriate, and the assessment is conducted.
- This may be followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.
- Where concern arises regarding the manner of speed of the follow-through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal/SENCo with the out of school agency in question.

### **Provision of SEN Support**

- The primary work of the SEN Teachers is to support inclusion, assistance with learning difficulties, and early intervention.
- Special education support is deployed based on each pupil's individual learning need in line with the Continuum of Support Guideline.
- The SEN team decides on the intensity and frequency of support in recognition of the needs of the pupils.
- SEN support will include team-teaching, small group teaching and, where necessary, individualised teaching to address specific learning needs.
- The school year will be divided into 2 Instructional terms of approximately 20 weeks each.
- The case load for SEN teachers should not exceed 30 pupils if possible.
- The SEN Teachers will maintain the following documentation in individualised files:
  1. Individual Support Plan (IEP/IPLP)
  2. Short term planning and progress record
  3. Diagnostic Assessments and Assessments of progress and reading analysis records
  4. Other relevant records, e.g. tape recordings of oral work
  5. Samples of written work

### **Individual Support Plans**

- Individualised support plans (IEP/IPLP) for pupils will be developed through a collaborative process involving class teacher, SEN teacher, parents/guardians, the pupils themselves and outside professionals, as necessary.
- A pupil's support plan should include clear, measurable, attainable learning targets, and specify the resources and interventions that should be used to address students needs.
- The individualised plan process will include regular reviews of learning targets as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment, target setting, intervention and review.

The support plan will address the pupil's full range of needs and will include:

- Details from the Class Teacher
- Assessment Results
- Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
- Learning strengths and attainments
- Priority Learning Needs
- Learning Targets
- Class based Learning Activities
- Supplementary support activities to include ICT
- Home Support Activities

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback.

A detailed review will take place in January and in June. The SEN Teacher will meet/communicate with the parents/guardians to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review. Provisions will be put in place to allow the class teacher to attend meetings.

A copy of the IEP/IPLP will be made available to class teachers, and to parents via the parent portal on Aladdin.

Following the review at the end of the year, a decision is made to continue or discontinue the provision of SEN support and/or amend the frequency of support. This decision will involve consultation between the SEN teacher, the class teacher and the parents. Other relevant professionals e.g. Speech Therapists, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists may be consulted.

The basis for this decision will include:

- Achievements of set targets
- Results of assessments
- Input from outside agencies
- Capacity of the pupil to cope independently in the classroom
- A decision to continue the provision of SEN support will result in a revision of the IEP/IPLP

### **Timetabling**

- The provision of SEN Support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition and/or team teaching.
- In-class support and team teaching, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and the SEN Teachers.
- In the case of withdrawal the following will apply:
  - Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular subject each time they attend SEN Support.
  - Effort is made to withdraw pupils who are exempted from learning Irish during the time when Irish is being taught in class.
  - Pupils will not miss the subject areas of Art or Physical Education.
  - Effort is made by the SEN Team to co-ordinate withdrawal of pupils in order to minimise classroom disruption.

### **Provision of Resources**

- Resources for the provision of SEN Support include a variety of textbooks, workbooks, library books and ancillary materials, language development materials, gross and fine motor development materials, social/emotional/well-being materials and materials to address challenging behaviour and attention problems. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading experience, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment. (An inventory of resources is included with this policy)
- Following consultation between the SEN Teacher, SENCo and Principal, funding for the purchase of new SEN materials will be made available.

- ❑ SEN Support resources will primarily be used by SEN teachers and kept in SEN classrooms. These resources may be made available to Class Teachers following consultation with an SEN Teacher and/or the SENCo.
- ❑ We ensure the effective use of resources by having inventories of resources in each SEN Teacher's classroom.
- ❑ SEN teachers who work in the classrooms mentioned above are accountable for the maintenance of the Resource Materials stored in these rooms and should ensure that materials borrowed from these areas are returned and kept in good condition.

### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

SEN Support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experience. It is important that all partners contribute to the planning and implementation of our school plan on SEN support.

### **Board of Management**

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- ❑ Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of SEN Support in the school.
- ❑ Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the SEN Teachers.
- ❑ Provide secure facilities for the storage of records in relation to pupils in receipt of SEN Support
- ❑ Budget for ongoing support for Professional Development in SEN Support for staff.

### **Principal and/or Special Educational Needs Coordinator:**

The principal and Special Educational Needs Coordinator should work closely together in fulfilling the following duties:

- ❑ Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's Special Educational Needs Policy in co-operation with the Board of Management, teachers, parents and children.
- ❑ Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on SEN support.
- ❑ Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN Support on an ongoing basis.
- ❑ Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with lowest levels of achievement.
- ❑ Assume direct responsibility for co-ordination of SEN support in the context of Special Needs Services.
- ❑ Make applications for Special Needs Assistants to the S.E.N.O. when necessary. On receipt of approval, inform parents immediately with a proposed timetable of commencement of SNA support. The proposed timetable will take into account the appointment of said post.
- ❑ Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- ❑ Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedure to be followed in initiation of referrals.
- ❑ Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of SEN support.

### **Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including pupils with special educational needs. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on SEN Support, the class teacher should:

- ❑ Ensure that all children are taught in a stimulating and supportive classroom environment where all pupils feel equal and valued.
- ❑ Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties.
- ❑ Gather information through formal and informal means, with a view to informing interventions in line with the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- ❑ Identify and respond to pupils with additional needs and differentiate the curriculum and/or adjust the classroom as appropriate.
- ❑ Make specific accommodations for a pupil within the class as a result of concerns about a pupil's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers and develop a programme of differentiated instruction for that pupil.
- ❑ Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for SEN Support in English and Maths by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures.
- ❑ For each pupil who is in receipt of SEN Support, to collaborate with the SEN Teacher in the development of an IEP/IPLP by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets.

A key role of successful SEN Support is a high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the SEN Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of IEPs/IPLPs.

### **Special Educational Needs Teacher**

The role of the SEN Teacher is to:

- ❑ Assess and record the pupil's needs through conducting Diagnostic Assessments of SEN pupils.
- ❑ Assess and record progress of SEN pupils.
- ❑ Develop an IEP/IPLP for each pupil who is selected for SEN support in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents.
- ❑ Set specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-related (SMART) targets for each pupil and agree these with the class teacher.
- ❑ Maintain plans and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of SEN Support.
- ❑ Provide direct teaching and support to SEN pupils, either in an SEN classroom or within the mainstream class.
- ❑ Engage in team teaching when the children concerned will derive benefit from it.
- ❑ Advise class teachers in regard to differentiating and/or adapting the curriculum, devising teaching strategies, using specific textbooks and ICT to suit the needs of individual pupils.
- ❑ Establish in-class support programmes and intervention initiatives in collaboration with class teachers.
- ❑ Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to speech and language development, social and emotional development, managing challenging behaviour, reading, writing and mathematics improvement for pupils experiencing difficulties.
- ❑ Meet and advise parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary.
- ❑ Meet with other relevant professionals, in the child's interests, eg psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teachers.
- ❑ Provide teaching in Literacy and Numeracy to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school's selection criteria.
- ❑ Liaise with principal, SENCo, class teachers and parents.
- ❑ Attend regular meetings with SEN Team to discuss progress and develop SEN support.



- ❑ Contribute to the development of the Special Educational Needs Policy at whole school level.
- ❑ Contribute to decision making regarding the purchase of SEN resource books and materials.
- ❑ Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving SEN teaching support.
- ❑ Track the progress of pupils who have discontinued SEN Support.

### Parents

The role of parents supporting the SEN Support for their children is vital to its success. Specifically, parents contribute through:

- ❑ Regular communication with the Class Teacher and SEN Teacher.
- ❑ Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child.
- ❑ Contributing to the production of their child's IEP/IPLP.
- ❑ Carrying out recommendations of SEN Teachers.
- ❑ Assisting with shared reading, Literacy Lift-Off and Friends For Life Programmes.
- ❑ Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive.
- ❑ Encouraging the child to visit the library.
- ❑ Developing the child's oral language.
- ❑ Developing the child's social mathematics.

### Communication

The operation of an effective communication system between all the parties involved in meeting the needs of the child is considered essential.

### Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupil learning and wellbeing in the following ways:

- ❑ Inclusion of pupils with special needs in our school.
- ❑ Progress of pupils with special needs (assessments showing progress).
- ❑ Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme.
- ❑ Feedback from teaching staff, special needs assistants, pupils, parents, external agencies.
- ❑ Enabling the reduction or discontinuation of the provision of SEN Support based on positive assessment results.
- ❑ Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs.
- ❑ Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupil's progress.

### Implementation and Review

This policy was reviewed in light of DES Circular 13/2017 regarding the New Resource Teaching Allocation Model. This revised version was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October, 2021. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

### Communication

This policy will be available on our school website. It will also be made available to parents/guardians via Aladdin.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_