

# Special Educational Needs Policy

**YoughalarraNS**

**Roll : 16810B**

## **Introduction**

Youghalarra National School is co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Diocese of Killaloe. It is an 'ordinary' mainstream primary school, catering for a full cross section of children. The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective Special Education Teaching to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998. This Policy also reflects Circular 13/2017

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

- An allocation of 47.63 hours SET time
- This allocation employs 1 full time teacher
- We are the base school of a cluster arrangement with Kilbarron NS and Portroe NS. We contribute 22.63 hours to this cluster.
- As part of this arrangement our second SET must travel to the above schools for an agreed period of time.
- We have 1 full time SNA post and 3 children currently have SNA access.

Access to and participation in the above facilities is governed by the following:

- Below average scores on MICRA and SIGMA T tests compared to peers.
- Diagnosis of emotional/behavioural disturbance.
- Diagnosis of specific learning difficulty.
- Where English is an additional language in the home.
- Where staff feel a child would benefit from additional help.
- Consent from parents

## **Implementation and Review**

The implementation of this Policy will commence in January 2018. 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 web site. Parents will be informed of its availability there through our school newsletter and will be able to request a paper copy if they so wish.

**The principal aim** of Special Education Teaching is to 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.

## **Specific Objectives of Special Education**

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level.
- 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.

## **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 in greatest need.

## **Prevention Strategies**

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

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to languages development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English
- Delay in introducing the formal process of reading as per the Revised Curriculum
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of Maths, e.g. our whole school approach to the Language of Tables and Subtraction
- 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 booklet, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings, and provision of regular school newsletter, as well as ongoing collaboration with Parents' Association where possible.
- Implementation of Shared Reading Programme from Junior Infants to Rang 2.
- Class based early intervention by the Special Education Teacher, where possible, from Infants to Rang 4 resulting in the provision of additional individualised support if necessary. In JI this will be primarily focused at identification of pupils who may be in need of SET
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher and consultation with other teaching staff and parents

## **Selection of Pupils for Learning Support**

- The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils from Junior Infants to Second Class are given priority in the allocation of SET
- In Junior Infant pupils are screened using teacher and SET observation
- From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.
- Priority for SET is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> Percentile, excluding in the main pupils who receive Resource Teaching.
- In the case of pupils performing at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile, the screening process is followed by a consultative meeting between the Class Teacher, the SET and the parents concerning the pupil's performance, and supplementary teaching is offered
- In the allocation of places for Special Education, the following are prioritised:
  1. Senior Infants identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in literacy
  2. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in literacy
  3. Children from Rang 3-Rang 4 at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in literacy
  4. Senior Infants, identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in numeracy
  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. In class support for children presenting at 12<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> percentile in literacy and numeracy in all classes up to Rang 4 where appropriate.

### **Provision of Supplementary Teaching**

- The primary work of the SET is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above.
- The school year will be divided into 2 Instructional Terms of approximately 20 weeks each.
- The maximum case load at any one time shall be 30 pupils.
- One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective.
- 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 individual pupil.
- The Class Teacher and the SET will meet to devise a Student Support File in consultation with the Principal and parents. The pupil involved can also contribute to setting their own short-term targets.
- The SET will maintain the following documentation in individualised files:
  1. Short term planning and programme record
  2. Other records, e.g. recordings of oral work
  3. Samples of written work
  4. Reading analysis records.
  5. Relevant assessments.

### **Student Support File**

The Student Support File will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in

The file will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:

- Details of child
- Support Checklist
- Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
- Learning strengths and attainments
- Priority Learning Needs.
- Possible reasons for concerns
- Learning Targets
- Strategies to help achieve targets
- Staff involved and resources needed
- Home Support Activities.
- Support Review Record.

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 at the end of each Instructional Term. The Learning Support Teacher and/or the Class Teacher will meet the parents to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review.

### **Timetabling**

- The provision of SET is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths.
- As we have multi-grade classes and where the needs of a class exceed the norm consideration will be given to SET taking an entire class group.
- Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend SET. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher, though class disruption must be minimised.
- The provision of SET may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition
- In class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and the SET.

### **Provision of Resources**

- Resources for the provision of Learning Support include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading experience, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.
- Following consultation between the SET, Principal and Class Teacher, funding for materials may be provided from the learning support Grant, materials Grant, and/or funding that may be available through the Board of Management.
- Special Education resources will be primarily be used in the Special Education Room. These resources may be made available to Class Teachers following consultation with the SET.

### **Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching**

- In general, children should not stay for more than 2 years in Supplementary Teaching.
- Following the end of Instructional Term review as detailed above, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of Supplementary Teaching.
- The decision making process involves consultation between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher, and the pupil's parents, and account is also taken of the overall Learning Support demands in the school.
- The criteria on which the decision will be made include:
  1. A consideration as to whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets set
  2. A consideration as to whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi independently in the classroom learning context
    - A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's Student Support File.

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

- ❑ The SET/Principal/Class Teacher co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist
- ❑ The Principal and/or SET 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 appropriate school personnel.
- ❑ The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, Class Teacher and the SET as appropriate, and the assessment is conducted
- ❑ This is 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 with the out of school agency concerned.

### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

Special Education Teaching is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experiences. It is important that all partners contribute in the planning and implementation of our school plan on learning support.

### **Board of Management**

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of Special Education Teaching in the school

- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Learning Support Teachers
- Provide a secure facility for storage of records in relation to pupils in receipt of Special Education Teaching
- Budget for ongoing support for Professional Development in SET for staff.

### **Principal**

The role of the principal is to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Special Education in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children.
- 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 Special Education in the context of Special Needs Services
- 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 referrals
- Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of Special Education.

### **Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. In supporting the development and implementation of the school policy on Special Education, the class teacher should:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching 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 supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the SETs in the development of a Student Support File by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to differentiate the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
- Monthly plan of work in English and Maths to be provided to the SET in advance.

With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:

- Such children should be prioritised when accessing information from previous class teacher
- Priority when establishing parental contact
- Group teaching
- Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
- Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
- Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
- Setting learning targets at an appropriate level
- Providing learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
- Carrying out error analyses of a pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty
- Setting up 'buddy systems' in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers, e.g. peer tutoring / paired reading) where appropriate.
- Applying assessments and tests which offer challenge and opportunities for success to children of all levels of achievement.

A key role of successful Special Education is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the SET. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Student Support File

### **Special Education Teacher**

The role of the Special Education Teacher is to:

- Develop an individual profile and learning programme for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents
- Maintain planning and progress records or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Special Education
- Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school's selection criteria
- Contribute to the development of policy on Special Education at whole school level
- Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Special Education room
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychologist to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support
- Track the progress of pupils who have discontinued Learning Support.

### **Parents**

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

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and SET
- Creating a home environment where literacy and numeracy can thrive
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Participation in shared reading programme
- Encouraging the child to visit library
- Developing the child's oral language
- Developing the child's social mathematics

### **Communication Strategies**

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

- Class Teacher and the SET following a low score on a screening test
- Principal and/or SET and/or Class Teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval of further diagnostic assessment and/or provision of supplementary teaching
- Regular communication between the SET and the Class Teacher and the through formal and informal meetings
- Regular communication between the SET and parents

### **Success Criteria**

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

- Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of Special Education 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

- Special Education provision continuously focused on children from Junior Infants to Rang 2.

## **School Support Plus**

### **Entitlement to Support Plus Teaching**

When a child continues to experience difficulty and is not making progress above the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile in literacy and numeracy, the child will normally be referred for psychological assessment, in consultation with parents, and may then be supported by an SET.

Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be referred for assessment and may be allocated SSPT .

Children with learning difficulties who are integrated into mainstream education may also be allocated resource time.

Children who have physical difficulties, e.g. deafness, sight impairment, cerebral palsy are usually allocated resource hours.

### **The Role of the Special Education**

The SET helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having difficulties. In addition, the SET should advise and liaise with other teachers, parents and other professionals in the children's interests. More specifically, the SET has responsibility for:

- Developing an Student Support File for each pupil 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
- Direct teaching of the child, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class
- Team teaching when the child concerned will derive benefit from it
- Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, ICT and other related matters
- Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
- Meeting with other relevant professionals, in the child's interests, eg psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teachers.

## **Integration of Children with a Disability and/or Special Education Needs in Youghalarra NS**

### **Enrolment of children with a disability and/or special education need**

Application for all children, including children with a disability and/or other special education needs, is governed at all times by the school's current Enrolment Policy. However, the attention of parents of children with a disability and/or other special education needs is also drawn to the following points:

- Youghalarra National School is an 'ordinary' mainstream school, and has higher pupil/teacher ratios such as those that apply in 'special' schools

- In general, the teachers in our school are trained and qualified to teach in mainstream education. They do not, necessarily, have any Special Education Needs Teacher Training, experience, or Qualifications, such as teachers in special schools may have
- While pupils with special needs can be integrated into a mainstream class, and may be supported by a Special Needs Assistant and SET, as allowed by the DES, this is not the same as the intensive one to one teaching s/he would enjoy in a special school
- An ordinary mainstream school does not have ancillary services enjoyed by special schools, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy
- The school is accessible to wheelchairs and has toilet facilities for same.
- A child with special needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will by the nature of such integration experience the normal day to day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices. Every child in the school, including those with a disability and /or special educational needs is bound by school policies both in existence and those developed from time to time by the Staff and Board of Management. The school cannot offer any additional tuition, support and supervision beyond that which is offered to any other pupil in the school, at times other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year. The Class Teacher, SET (if any) and Special Needs Assistant (if any) will periodically be required to participate at Staff Development and Curriculum Training Courses. Such professional development events take place within the existing school year, and all the children, including pupils with a disability and/or special educational needs are in the care of their parents at the times. Such extraordinary closures will be notified to parents of all pupils through the medium of the school wide text, email, website and newsletter.
- A child with a disability and/or special educational needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will not have any separate or additional provisions put into place from his peers in the event of staff illness, absences or whole school events such as school visits, parish liturgy etc
- Allocation or Special Education hours are reviewed biennially by the DES and as a result staffing and availability may change.

Notwithstanding the above points, the school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with a disability/ special educational needs. To ensure this, we require:

- A close level of co-operation between parents, the Class Teacher, and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.
- To enable us 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 psychological and medical 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
- An assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility as a school is primarily to ALL the children in our care, and that therefore if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the integration of an individual child with a disability and/or special educational needs is having an ongoing detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the enrolment of the individual child.

## **Introduction**

Youghalarra National School welcomes pupils of all nationalities and cultures, and its current enrolment includes children with EAL. This document sets out our policy in relation to the enrolment and education of these children.

## **Principles**

- Our school supports the principle of inclusiveness
- Our school respects the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life of all its pupils
- All children have an equal right to education. In order to fulfil this right, differences will be respected and valued in our school.
- Our school will be pro-active in challenging racism
- Our school is committed to the principle of inter-culturalism, and seeks to actively promote an environment in which cultural differences can be explored and respected, where pupils can learn from each other, and where cooperative learning activities are employed across the curriculum.

## **Enrolment of Children with EAL**

- The school's Enrolment Policy governs enrolment of all pupils.
- The enrolment procedure for overseas pupils is exactly the same as that for Irish pupils
- Overseas children are welcome to enrol in our school, provided there is a place in the appropriate class, in line with our enrolment policy
- Parents of overseas children will be afforded help in completion of enrolment documentation, should they require it
- Every effort will be made to create a warm and welcoming environment for overseas parents who approach the school to enrol their children.

## **Education of Children with EAL**

- Children with EAL pupils will be placed in an age appropriate class as far as possible
- Every effort will be made to help the pupils to settle socially in the class.
- The child will not be required to study Religion, should the child be non – Catholic. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in his/her class during Religion time. Parent is welcome to withdraw their child during Religious Education.
- In general, as per Circular 12/96, if English is not the first language of the child, s/he may qualify for exemption from the study of Irish, and the school will complete the necessary documentation to obtain this exemption. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in his/her class during Irish time.
- While we recognise that all new pupils need time to settle in and adjust, we require all pupils to adhere to the school's Code of Behaviour, in the interest of all. Children with EAL enjoy the same rights and privileges, and the same responsibilities, as all other pupils.

## **Provision of Supplementary English Support for Overseas Children**

- The amount of SET time allocated to any child will depend on his/her current command of the language, and his age.
- Time will be offered on a one to one basis, or in a small group setting, depending on the needs of the child. This will be determined by the Class Teacher and SET and Principal.
- This time may be offered on a withdrawal basis, or by the Resource Teacher working with the child in his/her classroom. This will be decided by the teachers, based on the needs of the child.

## **Whole School Measures to ensure successful integration of overseas pupils**

Schools with an inclusive curriculum, which reflects and affirms diversity of culture, ethnicity and religion, will help to ensure that children from ethnic minorities feel valued and accepted. To promote appreciation of diversity, our school is committed to

- The delivery of an intercultural education to all pupils which is cross curricular, and which permeates the ethos of the school
- The provision of books that give a world view from a variety of perspectives and that portray characters from different ethnic backgrounds

- The provision of arts education experiences which reflects different experiences and cultures
- The effective delivery of the SPHE programme
- The affirmation of the languages and cultures which our overseas pupils bring with them
- The school will make every effort to combat racism, and this will be underpinned by the schools Code of Behaviour
- The school will encourage parents to become actively involved in Parents' Association activities.

This policy was adopted on \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

It will be reviewed after three years or when the need arises.